

4.1 INTRODUCTION

While analysing the accumulated data upon which this study is based, I remained mindful of the definition provided by Merriam (1998:193) when she states that a case study is an intensive and a holistic description and analysis of a single bounded unit. My main purpose in analysing the data in this way was to arrive at a clear understanding of the many and varied factors involved in the case study. I therefore analysed all the experiences of the participants and the principal role players, and the meanings that they attributed to those experiences, as they reacted to the various transitions that the individuals within a township made between Grade R and Grade 2. Although Chapter 3 already explains, in a comprehensive, detailed and in-depth way, the methods I used during my analysis of the data, I will once again briefly describe my data analysis process in this chapter together with a comprehensive explanation of the research findings of this study.

Every interview, observation, photograph and field note, together with my research journal entries, constituted the raw material upon which the intensive phase of data analysis in this case study was based. The results of this intensive phase of data analysis was that all the information that I had obtained, together with the putative meanings that were attributed to that information, were brought to the surface and given coherent shape (Merriam, 1998:194). My constant intention as I engaged in interpretive analysis was to remain close to the data and faithful to my understanding of what it meant so that I would be able to interpret the data from a position of emphatic understanding (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:139). This was made easier by the fact that I was the only person who was present at every data collecting session and by the additional fact that I personally collected all the data myself.

In order to prepare myself for the data analysis process, I continually read and reread through all the transcriptions of the data. This resulted in what researchers

call familiarisation and immersion, both of which provided me with opportunities to break down the data into categories. During this process, I made use of different colours and symbols to divide the data into the different categories that I had identified. The final stage in this process occurred when I elaborated and further interpreted the data that I had categorised in this way analysed (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:140).

The following section contains an in-depth description of the context of this study, which was provided by the individuals within a township, their family and home environment, as well as their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 environments. What follows after that is a description of the three themes that underlie the primary research question in this study. An introduction will be provided for each theme, together with an outline of tables, quoted self-descriptions obtained from the participants, and concluding reflections on each of the themes that is presented. This chapter will conclude with the answers that I provided to the secondary research questions.

4.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

My conclusions and comments in this section are based on my personal observations, my field notes, and my interviews with all of the principal participants, and they are intended to give the reader a clear, in-depth and reliable (trustworthy) description of the participants and the research process as a whole. By describing every interview and the participants in detail, I was able to incorporate characteristics and descriptions that I might have overlooked if I had derived my descriptions only from my own field notes and personal observations. These descriptions are therefore obtained from my technique of holistically incorporating all participants who was involved in this study.

4.2.1 PARTICIPANT 1 - ALEX⁸

This section presents a detailed description of Alex from the data provided by his directly quoted self-descriptions, my observations as the researcher, my field notes

⁸ “Alex” is a pseudonym for participant 1, and it is not his real name. The pseudonym “Alex” was used throughout this study, and it always refers to participant 1, who was one of the individuals within a township. The use of pseudonyms was designed to protect the participant’s identity and ensure his anonymity.

and my research journal. I have also made use of descriptions and observations provided by Alex's Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers, and by his mother.

When I began my fieldwork in 2008, Alex, who is one of the individuals within a township, was 5 years of age. He subsequently turned 6 in his Grade R year. He turned 8 in 2010, and was attending school in Grade 2 at the point where I completed my fieldwork. Alex has blond hair and blue eyes, and is short in comparison to other children in his age group. Alex is generally relaxed and calm in his approach to life. He is very sensitive to the feelings of others, and when someone else is in obvious discomfort or crying, this upsets him and he might become emotional. He is not a temperamentally competitive person, and although he enjoys coming first in any group activity or doing well, such concerns are not his main focus in life and do not reflect his primary motivations. Whenever he does do well, he regards such an achievement as a "bonus". He likes watching television, and enjoys a wide variety of sports such as rugby, swimming, tennis, gymnastics and athletics. He also enjoys relating any story in rich detail. Alex is very obedient where necessary, he clearly has a strong sense of what is right and wrong, and he knows what is expected of him in all the situations in which he finds himself. While Alex is the kind of person who doesn't boast about his achievements, he grasps information quickly and without much effort. His written scholastic work sometimes displays a degree of carelessness. Maybe this is because he tries to complete his academic work as quickly as possible. Alex is, by and large, a loving, caring and compassionate person who is popular among his peers.

It is clear to an observer that Alex takes pride in the fact that he is an obedient child, and that he has good manners. During interaction, it becomes rapidly obvious that he is in touch with his feelings and is proud of himself as an individual.

"I listen to my mom when I have to go to bed." (Interview 1, Alex, line 25)

"I always say thank you." (Interview 1, Alex, line, 31)

"I feel sad when someone is not nice to me." (Interview 3, Alex, line 12)

"When I'm happy, my heart beats fast." (Interview 3, Alex, line 21)

"When I think of being scared, I think of the colour blue." (Interview 3, Alex, line 20)

"When I think of being happy, I think of the colour yellow or orange." (Interview 3, Alex, line 23)

Some of the most salient characteristics that I observed in Alex throughout the study were his sensitivity towards others and his aversion to people who would say and do things that were offensive to him and to others. Even though he had no special need of prominence in his groups and no overwhelming desire to be centre-stage, he appreciated some degree of recognition and positive feedback from time to time. Because of his sensitivity, he sometimes reacted with strong emotions when confronted with unpleasant responses from others, as when, for example, they teased him about his unusual height (he was shorter than average for a boy in his age group). His unhappiness about this only appeared during our second-last session, although he had, according to his own testimony, been unhappy about it for quite some time, it appeared that no one had been aware of his unhappiness. On the whole, however, Alex's experiences of school were constructive and positive rather than negative.

“Alex was very angry after school when I saw him because some of the other children had said rude things to him.” (Interview 5, researcher, field notes, line 1)

“While observing Alex at his Grade R school, they were playing outside. Alex went to look for his brother, who was hiding. Alex and a friend went to look for Rick. Some of the girls told me that Alex was very nice and that they liked to catch him while they were playing. Alex doesn't like the attention from the girls and is shy. While some of the boys were running a race, all the girls cheered Alex all the way. Alex plays with lots of other boys and is popular among his friends.” (Interview 9, researcher, field notes, line 1-10)

“Alex wanted to sound all his words during our session. I could see that that was what they were doing in class. Alex also practised writing words on his own the whole time. I reached the conclusion that Alex may feel proud when he got things right which he did so at school, and that he was motivated to practise the work. Alex enjoys learning new things that he couldn't have done before, for example, he learned to write “ (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 32)

“Alex is very happy at school and at home.” (Interview 16, researcher, field notes, line 1)

“Alex rushed through his work. He wasn't neat but wanted to get his work done as quickly as possible. For him, to complete his work as quickly as possible, no matter the number of mistakes, is better than taking his time with fewer mistakes and neater work.” (Interview 26, researcher, field notes, line 3)

“I made the observation today that although everyone always assumes that Alex is strong and fine, he also needs motivation and he wants to hear compliments about himself. Sometimes, when he is upset about people teasing him about his height, he forgets about all his talents and the things that he is good at. It is especially in these vulnerable times that he needs some encouragement and positive feedback from his loved ones. The problem is that he won’t always tell his loved ones that he is upset or feeling down, and so they are not always aware of his feelings, which complicate the situation a little.” (Interview 27, researcher, research journal, line 2)

“I could see that Alex and Rick are happy at school and in control of the things happening around them at school. Alex is also feeling better about the teasing because he told his teacher about it. I can see that he is not completely happy yet, but he is feeling much better. Today he could easily tell me about his talents and strengths.” (Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 1)

“While visiting their classroom for observation, I could see that Alex was participating well in the class activities. They were busy with speeches. During the period, I could see that Alex was getting a little bit bored listening to all the speeches. He then began to fidget with the boy next to him, and with his pens and books. I need to add that it was the last period of the day, and that it was very hot outside and in their classroom. He also answered the questions successfully. He is very relaxed and he listened to his fellow classmates’ speeches even though he was bored.” (Interview 31, researcher, field notes, line 9-15)

It seems that Alex’s teachers felt kindly towards him, and that his Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers in particular were aware of his easy-going personality. Alex’s Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers commented on the calmness of his manner. All his teachers were aware of his kind-heartedness and loving attitudes. But Alex’s teachers also noticed that, in contrast to his general calmness, he displayed a tendency to rush through his work, and that this sometimes resulted in incorrect and untidy work. Alex’s teachers experienced him, by and large, as an obedient, academically talented and devoted learner while he was in their classrooms.

“Alex is very relaxed and protective of his younger sister.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 30)

“Alex has a very laid-back personality, and is very relaxed. He hasn’t reached his full potential yet because he gets lost in his own little world.” (Interview, 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 136)

“Alex can talk a lot and he will tell a story in great detail. You mustn’t rush him while he is busy telling his story; you must listen to the whole story. He is good in mathematics, but because he always rushes through his work, he makes unnecessary mistakes. He thinks that when he finishes first, he is the best, regardless of the number of mistakes he has made.” (Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 77-79)

Alex’s mother also emphasized his easy-going personality and the way in which he rushes through his work. Apart from the fact that Alex find it pleasurable to win, he has no need to be concerned about his abilities. He is aware of all his talents and strengths.

“With the homework, Alex tries to see how fast he can finish his work so that he can go and play.” (Interview 24, mother, line 24)

“Alex enjoys it when I tickle him and physically play with him.” (Interview 24, mother, line 46)

“Alex doesn’t have the will or motivation to give his all. When the teacher asked the class to colour in a picture on their own, Alex asked if they had to. When the teacher replied it was not necessary but that it would be nice, Alex stated that he would not colour in the picture. He is also very witty in class. His teacher also said he can do better with a little more effort. So I want to try to motivate him more. If I promise a Nintendo game if he gets 4s for all his subjects, then he will put some effort into his school work.” (Interview 24, mother, line 74-78)

“Alex is not the bragging type. But sometimes when Alex finishes his speech quickly, he will automatically say Rick’s speech too.” (Interview 24, mother, line 91)

“At times, you can see that Alex wants to tell you that he is good at something, but he doesn’t. He likes to win. You can see that he knows he is good, but he is down to earth. He doesn’t have to hear that he is good the whole day long.” (Interview 24, mother, line 98-103)

4.2.2 PARTICIPANT 2 – RICK⁹

This section provides a detailed description of Rick. It is compiled from his own directly quoted self-descriptions, from my observations as the researcher, from entries in my research journal, from my field notes, and, finally, from the descriptions and observations that were made by Rick’s Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers and by his mother.

Rick who is one of the individuals within a township. He has brown hair and brown eyes. Rick is an active and energetic person. Achievements are important to him and he enjoys competition as one of the important components in his life. Rick was, for example, tremendously pleased when he was made class captain and when he obtained an award. He is very proud of his achievements. Even though he is inclined to boast about his accomplishments, he always does so in a healthy, enthusiastic and charming manner. When he experiences victory or when he achieves something, he is clearly filled with satisfaction and delight. Although he takes pleasure in winning, he is also happy when his brother, Alex, does well. Rick has a great sense of humour and laughter forms a regular part of his daily life. He is also a sports enthusiast and participates in rugby, cricket, swimming, tennis, gymnastics and athletics. In the academic field, Rick needs to put in effort. Although he experienced reading problems at first, he improved after exercises, attending extra classes, and obtaining the correct medical prescription. The work in Rick’s school books is very precise, and he takes enough time to write tidily, a skill of which he is very proud. Rick has a large number of friends, and he is popular among his peers. Rick is a loving and caring person, and he greatly admires and appreciates his family.

It is clear to an observer that Rick is proud of his personal talents, advantages and achievements. All this emerges when he refers to his personal identity. It was also clear to me that the way in which others perceived him was important to him. He also had a strong need to be noticed and to be considered to be a talented and intelligent person.

⁹ “Rick” is a pseudonym for participant 2, and it is not his real name. The pseudonym “Rick” was used throughout this study, and it always refers to participant 2, who was one of the individuals within a township. The use of pseudonyms was designed to protect the participant’s identity and to ensure his anonymity.

"I am good at drawing." (Interview 1, Rick, line 18)

"I've got lots of friends." (Interview 16, Rick, line 96)

"I am Rick, and you must tell people that I behave well." (Interview 20, Rick, line 50)

"I must give my trophy back tomorrow, I had it yesterday and the day before." (Interview 21, Rick, line 115)

"This week I enjoyed helping my mom, and I got a achiever sticker because I cleaned the bathrooms at school." (Interview 23, Rick, line 28)

It became apparent to me during our sessions that Rick placed enormous value on all his achievements and accomplishments – from being class captain, to getting an achiever label into his achievements in sport. It was also clear to me that Rick's awards and accomplishments contributed to his sense of self-worth. Another prominent aspect of his personality that I noticed was his love of fun and his sense of humour. He also had the ability to become excited about any situation or task. Rick's school work was always very neat, and I observe the amount of effort and time he invested in his work. He did this because he arrived great self-satisfaction from the high quality of his work. It seemed to me, on the whole, that Rick really enjoyed school and everything that happened in it.

"During our session, Rick went to fetch his Grade R books to show me all his hard work." (Interview 9, researcher, field notes, line 46)

"Later on, he showed me more of his books." (Interview 9, researcher, field notes, line 66)

"Rick was extremely playful during our session." (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 31)

"Rick likes to play, to do silly things, and to have fun during our sessions." (Interview 12, researcher, field notes, line 2)

"Rick is very happy and content." (Interview 16, researcher, field notes, line 2)

"I feel so proud of Rick because he no longer becomes so upset and angry when he loses. He has really matured. Although he still doesn't like to lose, he handles losing far better than he did last year." (Interview 21, researcher, research journal, line 2)

"Rick was very playful and silly, and didn't want to do any work today." (Interview 25, researcher, field notes, line 15)

“Rick’s work is very neat and precise.” (Interview 26, researcher, field notes, line 3)

“Rick likes to blow his own trumpet about his achievements, although he does so in an inoffensive way..”(Interview 27, researcher, field notes, line 1)

During my observations in Rick’s Grade 2 classroom, I wrote the following: *“Rick listened carefully to his fellow classmates. When it was his turn to speech, he was a little bit nervous but he performed very well and with confidence. He carefully gathered all his thoughts. With every question from the teacher, he raised his hand to answer. The teacher made his day when she asked Rick to choose a winner for today’s speeches. He stood proudly while observing all the speeches. He was very obedient in class and he enjoyed announcing the winners.”* (Interview 30, researcher, field notes, line 6-14)

Rick’s fun-loving personality was also observed by his teachers, together with his love of activity. Rick’s teachers experienced him as a pleasant and eager learner. Both his Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers felt that Rick and Alex needed to be separated in Grade 2. Rick’s Grade 2 teacher noted the strength of his character as it emerged in Grade 2.

“Rick is the clown of the classroom. Sometimes he gets very silly. He is very protective of his younger sister.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 29) and

“Rick would have got left behind if they had been in the same class in Grade 2.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 122)

“Rick is definitely very active and energetic.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 138)

“I don’t have any problems with Rick in my class.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 80)

It is evident from their interactions that Rick’s mother knows exactly how to deal with him as an individual. She is realistic about his strengths and weaknesses and seems to strive to do what is best for him. Rick’s mother also confirmed that he became frustrated when he struggled to do something, and that he tended to want to give up in those situations.

“Rick never complained about his Grade 1 work, but he did struggle with his reading. The speech therapy is also helping in combination with the Ritalin, although it is not necessary for him to take it every day.” (Interview 18, mother, line 72)

“Rick likes to brag, and he will always make a story bigger than it really is. I always tell him not to tell lies and how important it is for him to tell the truth. He always wants to know how much the other person got and so forth.” (Interview 18, mother, line 83)

“If Rick struggles with something, he will give up.” (Interview 24, mother, line 24)

“If Rick struggles, he will become very frustrated and angry. The same thing happens when things doesn’t go his way. But if I accommodate him in what he wants, he is the most wonderful little angel.” (Interview 24, mother, line 28 -30)

“It is important for me to handle Rick with love and sensitivity. You must spend quality time with him. Rick and I act as master chefs together. When Rick and I went for all his extra reading lessons, he really enjoyed our individual, alone-time together.” (Interview 24, mother, line 44-50)

“Rick is also clever, but he sometimes doesn’t get things right as quickly as his brother (Alex). It may take him a little longer. He knows this and is OK with it, but when he is feeling tired, it becomes an issue. He will get frustrated, impatient and will start crying.” (Interview 24, mother, line 79-89)

“One aspect that I am very relieved about is that no one teased Rick because of his glasses. His glasses weren’t an issue at all.” (Interview, 24, mother, line 155)

4.2.3 THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN A TWINSHIP

My aim in this section is to provide rich and in-depth descriptions of the individuals within a twinship and the various roles they played as a co-individuals within a twinship as they related to one another. I also provide additional information about factors such as their competitiveness, their relationship in school and in class, how they perceived each other, and their individual roles within a twinship. Though I am tentative about this, I also make some comparisons between the participating individuals within a twinship. I also discuss how other role players, including their teachers and mother, experienced them at school and outside of school.

When I examine the transcriptions of my interviews and my field notes, there is very little data of competition between Alex and Rick. On the contrary, they usually

support one another. But since Rick is more competitive by nature than Alex, he will sometimes become upset when he is not first in achievement or recognition. While Alex was usually fairly indifferent to coming first, it was obvious that he liked it when it happened. On the whole, their relationship with one another is healthy and supportive rather than competitive.

“Yes, I came last in gymnastics one time when Rick won.” (Interview, 15, Alex, line 20)

When his brother Rick had become upset because he had lost the game again, Alex said the following: *“We can go again, it’s okay.”* (Interview, 15, Alex, line 64)

“Alex is not competitive at all, and that is why certain things like competition, or not winning, do not bother him.” (Interview, 18, mother, line 82)

“Alex is always first. I am not going to work with you today.” (Interview 15, Rick, line 15)

“Rick wanted all Alex’s animals and Alex didn’t mind giving them to Rick.” (Interview 13, researcher, field notes, line 21)

“Rick doesn’t like to lose, and it makes him very upset and emotional, and results in him becoming out of control at times.” (Interview 15, researcher, field notes, line 1)

“I want to be first.” (Interview 15, Rick, lines 13, 27, 29 and 41)

“I am always last.” (Interview 15, Rick, line 37)

“I came first in gymnastics and Alex came 5th.” (Interview 15, Rick, line 118)

“I got two achiever labels and Alex only got one.” (Interview 23, Rick, line 32)

“Rick is much more competitive than Alex.” (Interview 24, mother, line 93)

“Rick told me about, and then showed me the medals that he had won for gymnastics. He is very proud of them.” (Interview 25, researcher, field notes, line 14)

“Can I quickly tell you something? Alex and I are among the top ten gymnasts.” Interview 26, Rick, line 76)

On one day during interview 15, I saw Rick really upset. It was the only time that I saw him upset in this way. It happened because he was defeated in some informal game with his brother. Although he displayed a lot of negative emotion, that was the only time in which he was upset to that extent during the three years of my research. During that session I observed that Rick was tired because he had an unpleasant day. Even though I knew winning was important for Rick, the day on which this

happened wasn't a normal day for Rick, and so I assumed that there may have been other factors unknown to me that might have explained his unusual behaviour on that day.

During the course of my research, the only things that Alex and Rick didn't like about one another was when they caused one another physical pain, and when they would take one another's personal belongings (mainly toys). All these situations occurred in their home environment.

"I get angry when my brother takes my toys." (Interview 5, Alex, line 14)

"I didn't like it when my brother punched me at home because it hurt." (Interview 23, Alex, line 8)

"When we fight is it quick; then it is over and done with." (Interview 23, Alex, line 25)

"It makes me angry when Rick is naughty and hurts me at home." (Interview 27, Alex, line 84)

"Alex pinched me at home. I didn't like it." (Interview 23, Rick, line 28)

"I get angry when Alex takes my things at home because it is bad." (Interview 27, Rick, line 80)

While they were in Grade R and Grade 1, Alex and Rick were in the same classroom and had the same teacher. Before they were promoted to Grade 2, their mother, in consultation with their Grade 1 teacher, decided that it would be better for them both to be placed in separate classes in Grade 2. They decided this for a variety of reasons that will be explained later in this section. From my own personal observations and from Alex and Rick's descriptions of their experiences, it seemed to me that although they had enjoyed being in one another's company when they had been placed in the same class, it was time for them to attend separate classes in Grade 2. It should, however, also be noted that most of the children from their pre-school had gone to other primary schools. Alex and Rick were two out of five children from their pre-school to attend the same primary school. It was my opinion that it had been helpful to keep them together in their Grade 1 classroom, especially in view of the fact that it was a new environment and that they would have to make new friends. But I had no reservations about the desirability of them being separated

in Grade 2. They themselves were quite happy about it because they met up during break times when they played together. From this I concluded that the time that they spent together during breaks, was more important for the individuals within a twinship than any time they would have spent together in the same Grade 2 class.

"We enjoy being in the same class." (Interview 10, Alex, line 7)

"I enjoy it at school when my brother plays with me." (Interview 15, Alex, line 39)

"It is nice to have my brother in my class because he is my brother." (Interview 15, Rick, line 65)

"I enjoy it when my brother plays with me at school." (Interview 15, Rick, line 68)

"I don't miss Rick in the class because I see him at break." (Interview 21, Alex, line 69)

"We play together every break when we play 'opies' (open the gate)." (Interview 21, Rick, line 134)

"I've noticed that being in different classrooms was not a problem in any way for either of them" (Interview 21, researcher, field notes, line 174)

Alex and Rick enjoyed a brotherly relationship with one another in school. Because they had a special bond with one another, they would protect and support each other whenever necessary. They would always support one another and there were no reports of quarrels or physical fights between them at school. Both of them were aware that they could rely on support from one another at school. They would always enjoy their times of recreation together. But at the same time, they were also obviously able to function successfully and independently of one another. This is perceptible by their independence of one another in their Grade 2 year when they were no longer in the same class together. They therefore proved that it was possible for both of them to stand on their own feet and to be separate and distinct individuals whenever their co-individual within a twinship was not physically present.

I have used the following categories in order to provide a clear description of Alex and Rick's perceptions of one another. These categories are: their fondness for one another, their distinctive differences, the way in which they constructed individual meanings about being individuals within a twinship, their personal characteristics, and their distinctive individualities. It is my opinion that their perceptions about one

another might to some extent have affected their experiences of their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

It was clear that both Alex and Rick experienced a great deal of compassion for one another. Even in those relatively rare situations in which they were upset with one another, they would both nevertheless still answer questions about their co-individual within a twinship in an affectionate manner. Even though they were two distinct individuals and were proud of being so, I observed that there was an intense and profound connectedness between them although they generally enjoyed a relaxed relationship. Although both of them appeared to be proud of being an unique and individual human being, they were at the same time just as proud of being members of a twinship.

“My brother is nice.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 100)

“I like my brother Rick.” (Interview 16, Alex, line 108)

“During the three years with Alex and Rick, there wasn’t one incident which I could recall in which I heard that they didn’t like each other. Whenever I asked them about each other, it would always be positive. I really experienced the fondness they felt for one another throughout this study.” (Interview 34, researcher, research journal, lines 3-5)

When Alex and Rick answered my questions about whether they were alike or whether they were different, they both agreed that they were different for the following reasons: their distinctive physical appearances, their different friends and, and for the different sports in which they participated. I immediately noticed that neither of them referred to their different *personalities* or *characteristics* in order to explain their differences or similarities. I also observed that neither Alex nor Rick assumed that either of them was “superior” to their co-individual within a twinship. Whenever they as individuals talked about being different and unique within the context of their twinship, they simply stated this in a matter-of-fact manner and justified their opinions with reference to physically verifiable facts. It was also apparent to me that neither of them wanted to be similar to his co-individual within a twinship. They were both proud of their individual differences from one another within a twinship.

"We are a little bit different. Rick's hair is darker than mine. We look different." (Interview, 20, Alex, line 11)

"We are different. Alex's feet are bigger than mine and I am taller than Alex." (Interview 20, Rick, line 56)

"We have the same friends, mostly." (Interview 20, Rick, line 63)

"We do different things. I play rugby and Rick plays cricket." (Interview 20, Alex, line 36)

"We play the same sports, but Alex doesn't play cricket like me." (Interview 20, Rick, line 70)

Alex and Rick were both quite confident that they were distinctive individuals within a twinship. The significance of a twinship to both of them was that each of them had a brother. One could sense their pride in their individuality from the fact that they always referred to themselves as two people rather than as one. Both of them liked the idea of being part of a twinship, and their special bond with one another was observable at all times during my interactions with them. I regarded their approach to being part of a twinship as healthy and natural because of the fact that they were comfortable both as individuals and as members of a twinship. I also observed on different occasions that both Alex and Rick perceived themselves primarily as individuals and secondarily as individuals within a twinship.

"We are two people." (Interview 20, Alex, line 16)

"Twins means to have a brother." (Interview 20, Alex, line 41)

"It is nice to be twins." (Interview 20, Alex, line 42)

"We are two people." (Interview 20, Rick, line 60)

"Twins means brothers." (Interview 20, Rick, line 73)

"I don't want to be like my brother. I want to be me." (Interview 20, Alex line 18)

"I don't want to be like Alex. I want to be Rick." (Interview 20, Rick, line 61)

"On many occasions, it was clear to me that both Alex and Rick were proud of the fact that they were part of a twinship. I observed their relationship and the meaning of being part of a twinship as special and unique, and as something that not everyone has. It felt like something they could show off at school and something that was "untouchable". (Interview 21, researcher, research journal, lines 10-14)

“During the course of this study, it was clear to me that both Alex and Rick were proud of the fact that they were part of a twinship, but at the same time, they were proud of who they were as individuals. For me, they perceived each another as unique individuals, and a twinship part was just an added bonus for them, something that added fun to their lives.”
(Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 5-8)

During that time when they were in Grade 1 and Grade 2, it became clear to me that they flourished when they were together but also when they were placed in separate classrooms. When they were together in Grade R and in Grade 1, and when they were placed separately in Grade 2, both of them appeared to be equally content and satisfied. It was noticeable, however, that they are certain of their independence from one another more clearly during the year when they were placed in different classrooms in Grade 2. It was during that year that they were perceived more as separate individuals than as individuals within a twinship. In the long run, the different role players in this study agreed that it would be more rewarding to separate Alex and Rick, mainly because it would give each of them opportunities to be and act as individuals, each with its own distinctive accomplishments and identity.

Grade 1

“It was a relief to have a friend with them. It was easier to have a brother with them in class because they were able to borrow stationary from one another and they always possessed a back-up system. When one of them got into trouble, they were able to help one another. Although they were good friends, their closeness could lead to conflict because they shared common friends and always wanted the same things as one another. It was a coping mechanism for each of them to have a friend with them at all times because then they knew that they didn’t have to do everything alone.” (Interview 18, mother, line 29-36)

“The two of them have different interests. The one is not stronger or better than the other one. They are just different personalities. That is also one of the reasons for separating them next year.” (Interview 18, mother, line 77)

“It will be better to separate the twins in Grade 2 for academic reasons. Alex and Rick both exert positive and negative influences on one another. The negative influence became evident when Rick forgot his pencil. And Alex would always go and help Rick when he got behind in his work.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 128-135)

And Alex also gave Rick the correct answers when Rick got his answers wrong. The positive influence was evident in the fact that both Alex and Rick were never jealous of one another.” (continue - Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 128-135)

Grade 2

“The fact that they are in separate classrooms this year is for the best. They are more on their own now. Otherwise the one is class captain and the other one is not. When they are in their own classes, it is better. The teachers can’t see how cute they are as twins anymore. The teachers can see them now as individuals now, and that is good.” (Interview, 24, mother, line 63-66)

“I think I will from now on always keep them separated in class. When they are in separate classes, it always feels to me as though I’ve got four kids. When they were together, it felt more like a package. Now it is literally one-one. It is more difficult for me. The ‘twin-package’ was easier to handle.” (Interview 24, mother, line 140-143)

“I think it is better to separate them in class. It gives each child the opportunity to make his mark when he is not always categorised as his brother’s twin. Both of them have different characters. It gives them the chance to be themselves and to achieve things on their own.” (Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 66-68)

4.2.4 THE FAMILY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN A TWINSHIP AND THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT

Since I have already presented a rich and detailed description of the individuals within a twinship’s family in Chapter 3, I will now focus on the descriptions and experiences of the family that I recorded during the interviews. It is clear to me from the outset that the mother and father enjoy a strong, healthy and stable marriage, and that they see eye to eye and support and encourage one another in all matters regarding the discipline of their children. My perception was that the individuals within a twinship felt secure and contented with the individual roles their mother and father played in the family. I also perceived that the mother exercised the more nurturing and caring functions while the father assumed the role as head of the household and planner and executor of entertainment events. It seemed obvious to me from my personal observations and my interviews with the participants that both Alex and Rick received unconditional love, attention and support in their home environment.

“Our family is close but not that close. We have got a very good backup system because all the grandparents also stay on our plot. Sometimes, when I have to work, their grandfather will pick them up from school. I make sure I take them to school every morning. While we talk about everything, it is sometimes necessary for me to drag information out of them. The kids will play more with their father than talk to him. On the other hand, they will rather talk to me about things. With their dad, there is a lot more physical contact. He plays rough with them, wrestling with them, or having pillow fights. The boys enjoy that.” (Interview 18, mother, lines 43-51)

“I love my new baby brother. It is nice to have him at home.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 104)

“With both the new baby and the new au pair girl, the adjustments were excellent for everyone. There were absolutely no issues.” (Interview 24, mother, lines 25)

“I am a strict mother, but the kids also take lots of chances with me. They know I don’t only talk once, but ten times. I won’t hit them, but if they push me to the limit, then I will punish them in the bathroom. So I will say that I am strict, but in a loving manner. I also try to teach them things in a loving manner. I am not the fun one: their father is. When he comes home, he will wrestle with them. I will draw with them, for example. I strive to raise them with Christian values.” (Interview 24, mother, lines 1-10)

“If they have a problem, they will rather talk to me than to their father. If someone hurts them, then I am like a tiger. I will go and fight with that person.” (Interview 24, mother, lines 12-17)

“Their father is very strict. He only talks once. Both I and my husband support one another when it comes to discipline. He will always back me. With values, morals and discipline, we are on the same team.” (Interview 24, mother, lines 36-41)

4.2.5 GRADE R ENVIRONMENT

When I entered their Grade R classroom, I was instantly welcomed by their sincere, warm and loving teacher. She was very spontaneous and natural, and willingly showed me around the school ground. Their preschool was situated in a fairly high socio-economic area in a safe environment. The surrounding houses were neat and tidy. The majority of the children attending this specific school came from a single- or dual-income family. The school had the appearance of what might have once been a private residence before it was refurbished as a preschool (Addendum contains digital photos of the Grade R environment). Both the surroundings and the

school building appeared to be very neat, safe and carefully planned. The inside of the classroom was filled with colourful posters. There were an ample number of plastic containers that were filled with all kinds of useful and appropriate adjuncts such as blocks, Lego, craft materials, and puzzles. The atmosphere in the classroom was warm and cheerful. The children seemed to be contented, relaxed and affectionate towards their teacher and towards their fellow class mates both in the classroom and outside in the play area. The teacher appeared to be in control of her class, and order and discipline prevailed both inside and outside the classroom. Because I visited the preschool towards the end of the year, the children were mostly engaged in revising and finalising their work in addition to being able to enjoy a lot of free time outside in the play area. The outside play area was highly suitable for pre-schoolers. It was spacious, and was furnished with a wide variety of play areas and equipment that was designed to encourage and extend the skills of pre-schoolers during their school hours. The Grade R teacher also showed me the school's library, which served a dual purpose as a library and as a therapy room for the speech and occupational therapists. Their Grade R teacher has been a teacher for 32 years all in all, and had spent a total of 20 years in this particular school. When one considers the words below, one can understand why the individuals within a township regarded play as their most enjoyable and main activity in Grade R.

"Today we've played outside, on the jungle gym, and we ran and played rugby. We also played in the sand, we did some work, and we ate and played again." (Interview 1, Rick, line 10)

"I enjoy it the most when someone jumped with me on the trampoline at school. It is so nice!" (Interview 1, Alex, line 12)

"The boys ran outside, and they also played in the sand and on the jungle gyms. They are very active in the playground outside, and they are really enjoying themselves." (Interview 9, field notes, lines 1, 6, 9 and 10)

4.2.6 GRADE 1 ENVIRONMENT

The primary school that the individuals within a township attended is a very popular and growing school situated in a prestigious area although it prides itself as being a

school with a farm-like atmosphere within the city. The majority of the children who attended this school came from families who lived within a large security estate close to the school. The Grade 1 classroom was situated on the ground floor (Addendum A-2 contains digital photos of the Grade 1 environment). The class itself was spacious, neat and well organized. All the walls were decorated with the letters of the alphabet, numbers, words, posters and colourful and striking posters and faces. The teacher in charge of the class displayed great warmth and a great deal of confidence in her work. One could immediately feel and sense respect that the children had for their teacher. By making reference to the following lived experiences of the participants, I was able to establish that their activities in the Grade 1 environment consisted mainly of work that was prescribed for Grade 1, of sports, and of various recreational activities with one another and with their friends in Grade 1.

"We get homework in Grade 1." (Interview 10, Alex, line 20)

"During our session, I could see that Alex was really intrigued with his school work. He was busy making plus sums the whole time and enjoying it." (Interview 13, researcher, field notes, line 2)

"We don't get lots of homework." (Interview 17, Alex and Rick, line 68)

"Their teacher helps Rick a lot with his reading. She will sit with him and help him." (Interview 24, mother, line 137)

"We've got friends and we help other children." (Interview 10, Alex, line 35)

"This one boy sits in the back of the class and our teacher doesn't even know he is there because he so clever. He is our friend." (Interview 17, Alex, line 40)

"Most of our friends went to another primary school. We miss them but we still see them sometimes at gymnastics or competitions." (Interview 17, Alex, line 50 -55)

"The school didn't make a big deal out of the transition to Grade 1. The school isn't very big and so the teachers will tell us immediately if there are problems. I thought it was going to be more difficult to adjust for the twins because they didn't know the children in the school. But they were fine and happy." (Interview 18, mother, lines 39-41)

"Grade R is not nice... Grade 1 is." (Interview 10, Alex, line 50)

"Grade 1 is the best." (Interview 10, Rick, line 58)

“Both of the individuals within a township enjoyed drawing their school on the cardboard and they seemed really happy and contented in Grade 1. They really enjoy school. Rick showed me all his Grade 1 books and Alex sounded all his words.” (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 1)

“It is nice at school.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 94)

4.2.7 GRADE 2 ENVIRONMENT

The individuals within a township attended the same primary school in Grade 2 that they did in Grade 1. Although the Grade 2 classrooms were in the same building as the Grade 1 classrooms, the Grade 2 classrooms were on the second floor now rather than on the ground floor, as they had been the year before (Addendum contains digital photos of the Grade 2 environment). Both of their classrooms attended by the participants were spacious, well organised and full of interest and character. All of the walls were covered with examples of cursive writing, weather charts, birthday charts, life skill posters, achiever sticker posters, and posters with black stickers for those occasions when the children were disobedient. Each child was provided with adequate workspace. The atmosphere in both of their classrooms was warm, orderly, disciplined and pleasant. Alex’s teacher had already served as a teacher for the previous 16 years, and this was her third year as a Grade 2 teacher in this school. She enjoyed Grade 2 because, as she humorously noted, it was the year “in which the children were out of their nappies but had not yet moved into high heels”. Rick’s teacher also happen to be the Head of the Department. She had been a teacher for 30 years, and when I met her, she was serving her sixth year as a Grade 2 teacher in this particular school.

In order to illustrate the vivid realities of the lived experiences of the individuals within a township and to enrich the description of the Grade 2 environment enjoyed by the participants, I organised everything that the participants related to me during the interviews in terms of a number of categories. These categories included their physical characteristics during that year, their friends, their work and academics, their teachers, and their overall attitudes to what they experienced in Grade 2.

Alex's experiences in Grade 2 were different from what they had been in Grade 1, and they related mostly to the physical differences that they observed during the course of the year.

"Grade 2 is different from Grade 1 because we sit in a different place now in another classroom. My teacher has a white board. In Grade 1 the teacher had a green board. The chairs are also different. Our chairs are black now. In Grade 1 we had wooden chairs."
(Interview 21, Alex, line 53-55)

While Alex regarded the children in his class as his new friends, Rick referred to his friends from last year as his friends. He seems to have made only one new friend in Grade 2.

"My friends are different now from those I had in Grade 1. My friends now are the kids in my class." (Interview 21, Alex, line 84)

"I still have the same friends I had in Grade 1. I have just one new friend." (Interview 21, Rick, line 140)

It was evident that the workload that they had to cope with in Grade 2 made a definite impact upon the participants. The mother of the individuals within a township recalled that the excessive workload in Grade 2, and the fact that Alex and Rick were in separate classrooms (and therefore did not have exactly the same homework every day), placed an extra strain upon her as their mother. The individuals within a township also seemed to experience the workload as somewhat overwhelming and certainly challenging.

"Grade 2 is different from Grade 1 because we didn't get achiever stickers in Grade 1. We didn't have as many books in Grade 1 as we have in Grade 2. We also didn't have time tables in Grade 1 and we didn't have a white board in Grade 1. We make sums on our white boards." (Interview 21, Rick, line 118-122)

"One thing that I've noticed is the heavy workload in Grade 2. It is much more than it was last year. It is hard for them if they want to play and they must first do their homework."
(Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“They get the same homework. But sometimes one of them has lost his paper or the paper is not in their books. Then it is chaos.” (Interview 24, mother, line 145)

“Everything is the same in Grade 2 as it was in Grade 1 except for the workload. We have much more work.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 55)

“Grade 1 is boring because you have to sound all the words the whole time.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 80)

“I don’t like the workload in Grade 2, but it is good for us.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 83)

“Yes, the work is nice in Grade 2.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 84)

“When they talk about Grade 2 , they always refer to the workload. But they still enjoy Grade 2. They are very proud of their achievements in gymnastics. They are stressed about Grade 3 already because they are going to write with pens in cursive writing. They won’t be able to erase their mistakes. I can see that the workload is making great demands on them, but they are still able to cope with it. They both seem very happy, active and lively.” (Interview 26, researcher, research journal, lines 1-5)

Both of the individuals with a twinship were delighted with their Grade 2 teachers – as was their mother who was of the opinion that each of the individuals within a twinship had been allocated the teacher that was most suitable for him. Alex’s teacher was more informal and calm in her approach. Rick’s teacher was more strict and formal. I observed that both of these are teachers brought out the best in each of them and complemented the strength and weaknesses of their individual personalities.

“I am very happy with each of their teachers and I think both of them are in the right teacher’s class. Alex’s teacher is a loving teacher. She said when Alex smiles at her then everything is over. Both of their marks were better this term than in the first term.” (Interview 24, mother, line 68)

“Rick’s teacher is much stricter than Alex’s teacher. Rick’s teacher won’t let any mistake pass whereas Alex’s teacher is very relaxed and doesn’t mind a small mistake here and there. Both of the teachers encourage the children to do everything on their own. This is different from what it was like in Grade 1, where everything was done for them.” (Interview 24, mother, line 135)

“I am very pleased with both their teachers. Both of them get along very well with each of the boys.” (Interview 24, mother, line 139)

All in all, the participants experienced Grade 2 as positive. I further observed that although both Alex and Rick truly enjoyed Grade 2, it represented a challenge for them. Both the work and workload made significant demands on them. During our sessions and interviews, they told me that they have struggled, but that the struggles were challenging to them (they made special reference to the challenge of getting so much homework). It was in Grade 2 that Alex was teased about his height, and this was an unpleasant experience for him. But when he had dealt with that uncomfortable situation, he felt relieved.

“If I close my eyes and see Grade 2 in front of me, I become angry because the kids are teasing me about my height.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 109)

“I feel better this week because the kids aren’t teasing me so much anymore. The teacher said she would give them black stickers for their books if they kept on teasing me.” (Interview 28, Alex, line 1-8)

“Grade 2 is nicer than Grade 1.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 71)

“Rick needs to put in great efforts to succeed.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 111-113)

“If I close my eyes and see Grade 2 in front of me, it looks nice!” (Interview 27, Rick, line 105)

“I enjoy Grade 2 because I am always behaving and so the class captains never write my name on the board. I am the class captain tomorrow.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 110)

“Grade 2 is much nicer than Grade 1.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 124)

“Rick definitely needs to put in some extra effort to grasp all the work. Even though he is also clever, he needs to work harder than Alex to do well. The work is definitely easier for Alex than for Rick.” (Interview 24, mother, line 172)

“We play hide and seek in Grade 2, me and my brother play together.” (Interview 22, Rick, line 150 and 154)

I made the observation that Rick struggles with the work in Grade 2 – even though he struggles to admit it. (Interview 26, researcher, research journal, line 22)

4.3 FINDINGS UNDERLYING THIS STUDY

In the following section I will set out answer to my primary research question. Three themes emerged from my analysis of the data. Theme 1 emerged most prominently from the accumulated data. Certain aspects from theme 1 are also subsumed in theme 2 and theme 3.

4.3.1 THEME 1

The transitions of the individuals within a township from Grade R through to Grade 2 were largely uncomplicated

When I consider the overall import of the research, it seems to me that the transitions made by the individuals within a township from Grade R through to Grade 2, were largely uncomplicated. I generated the following nine factors (illustrated in Table 4.1) during the data analysis process to indicate possible reasons why the transitions of the participants from Grade R through to Grade 2 were generally uncomplicated. Seven of the nine categories collected in the table below were experienced as positive and affirmative by the participants, whereas two of these categories represented experiences that were both positive and negative (mixed). I shall provide a detailed explanation for each of the following nine categories of experience.

Table 4.1: Possible reasons why the transitions of the participants from Grade R through to Grade 2 were largely uncomplicated

+	Their positive attitudes and behaviour
+	Their self-confidence and pleasurable new experiences
+	Their position as co-individuals within a township
+	Friendships
+	Their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers
+	Learned life skills
+	Their Grade 1 and Grade 2 expectations
+ & -	Homework and academics
+ & -	Bullies and Disobedient ¹⁰ children

¹⁰ For the purpose of this study, the mentioned ‘disobedient children’ were the perceptions of both the individuals within a township. I did not pertinently focus on disobedient children during this study, but rather on the perceptions of the study’s participants.

What follows below are detailed explanations of each of the possible reasons why the participants' transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2 were largely uncomplicated.

4.3.1.1 Positive attitudes and behaviour

The individuals within a township maintained positive attitudes to whatever they experienced in Grade 1 and Grade 2 during their transition processes. Their **positive attitudes** may therefore have made their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2 generally uncomplicated. On numerous occasions they used words and phrases that demonstrated that they were contented with their school and that they experienced their home life as satisfying. The individuals within a township frequently referred in different ways to Grade 1 and to Grade 2 as evoking pleasant experiences, feelings and emotions. There was numerous data in the data to demonstrate that both of them took pleasure both in their work and in their recreational activities. The individuals within a township both agreed that they enjoyed many more positive experiences than negative experiences at school. My field notes and observations also confirmed that they were contented and satisfied in both their home and school environments.

I also observed that the individuals within a township developed an increasing sense of **accomplishment** and **maturity** in their year in Grade 2. It was also obvious to me that they were extending their range of activities and skills of their Grade 2 year, and that they had the sense of increasing **accomplishment** and **maturity**. They may also have transferred the benefits of such experiences into the later grades that they attended. Alex also noted quite explicitly that there were many more pleasant sides to life in Grade 2 than there were negative features, and this may have been the reason why he chose to focus on the positive aspects of school life rather than on the negative aspects. For the purposes of this study, it is my opinion that Alex and Ricks' positive attitudes and their predominantly positive emotions were of fundamental importance for achieving satisfying and mainly uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

Positive attitudes

"Grade 1 is much better than Grade R." (Interview 10, Alex, line 50)

"We had a good day. We played and worked." (Interview 11, Rick, line 22)

"Both of the twins enjoyed drawing their school on the cardboard and they seemed really happy and contented in Grade 1. They really enjoy school." (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 1)

"Grade 1 is so nice!" (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 155)

"Rick is very happy at school and at home." (Interview 16, researcher, field notes, line 1)

"Alex is very happy and contented at school and at home." (Interview 17, researcher, field notes, line 2)

"It is going well in Grade 1." (Interview 17, Alex and Rick, lines 11 and 12)

"I enjoy Grade 2." (Interview 21, Alex, line 23)

"Grade 2 is much nicer than Grade 1." (Interview 21, Alex, line 61)

"I enjoy Grade 2. It is nice." (Interview 21, Rick, line 108)

"I am very happy in Grade 2." (Interview 21, Rick, line 164)

"There are more nice things at school than bad things." (Interview 27, participant Alex, line 42) and

"I could see that Alex and Rick were happy at school." (Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 1)

Both Alex and Rick manifested positive behaviours in Grade 1 and in Grade 2. I noted that their behaviour and body language was **relaxed**, **participative** and attentive (**listening**) in class, all of which I regard as indicators of positive behaviour. Their Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers also confirmed their **relaxed**, **obedient** and **good-natured** behaviour in class. I therefore made the assumption that the good behaviour mentioned by their teachers referred to their relaxed participation in class activities, the attentive way in which they were listening to their teacher, their obedience to legitimate orders and their good-natured reactions to events around them. I regarded all of these manifestations of good behaviour as indicators of the largely uncomplicated transitions they made between their grades.

Positive behaviour

"Alex is very relaxed at school." Interview, 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 136)

“Alex is playful and will hide the books of the person sitting next to him.” (Interview, 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 144)

“I enjoy Grade 2 because I’m always behaving so the class captain don’t write my name on the board.” (Interview 21, participant Rick, line 110)

“I don’t have any problems with Rick in my class.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 80)

“After every question from the teacher, he raised his hand to answer.” (Interview 30, researcher, field notes, line 10)

“While visiting their classroom for observation, I could see that Alex was participating well in the class activities.” (Interview 31, researcher, field notes, line 9)

“Alex was very relaxed and listened to his fellow classmates’ speeches even though he was bored.” (Interview 31, researcher, field notes, line 15)

4.3.1.2 Their self-confidence and pleasurable new experiences

Alex and Rick demonstrated a **healthy** and **realistic self-confidence** together with feelings of pride in themselves and in their talents. Rick’s **positive** and **obedient behaviour** (his principal was referring to how efficiently he cleaned the bathrooms and how well he presented good work to his principal), may also have contributed to his sense of **self-worth**. I also observed that both Alex and Rick were **in control** of school-related matters – something that may be an indicator of **self-confidence**. I assumed that in order to effect a successful transition, it would be necessary for them to have a high degree of self-confidence. I therefore came to the conclusion that because both Alex and Rick showed positive attitudes and indications of a healthy level of self-confidence, their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2 were generally uncomplicated.

Self-confidence

“I am good at drawing.” (Interview 1, Alex, line 18)

“I am good at rugby.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 74)

“I want to be my own person.” (Interview 20, Alex, line 23)

“I am also clever.” (Interview 20, Rick, line 54)

"I will be class captain tomorrow." (Interview 21, Rick, line 110)

"I feel proud to wear my glasses." (Interview 21, Rick, line 148)

"I got an achiever sticker because I had cleaned the bathrooms at school." (Interview 23, Rick, line 28)

"You can see that Alex knows he is good in academics, but is modest about that. He doesn't have to hear it the whole day." (Interview 24, line 100)

"This week is nice because I am the class captain." (Interview 27, Alex, line 20)

"It was also nice when I could show off my good work to the principal." (Interview 27, Rick, line 47)

"I could see that Alex and Rick were in control of the things that happened around them at school." (Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 1)

"Although he was a bit nervous with his speech, he performed very well and with confidence. He stood proudly while observing all the speeches. He was very obedient in class and enjoyed announcing the names of the winners." (Interview 30, researcher, field notes, line 8-14)

Both Alex and Rick **took pleasure** in being confronted with and in **embracing** the challenges of new opportunities. Both the possibilities of the tuck-shop and the events on the rugby field were new and pleasurable experiences for them. They both eagerly embraced and **succeeded** in the opportunity of making and developing new friendships because most of their Grade R friends had been enrolled in other primary schools. Other additional normal and pleasurable experiences were learning the skills of typing, performing mathematical calculations, and participating in athletics. All of these new skills also have given them an additional sense of **accomplishment**. This was confirmed in my opinion by the fact that they took great pleasure in all of these new experiences. It also seemed to me that the prefects and headmaster created an ambient atmosphere of **safety and comfort** in their new, unfamiliar school environment. It was obvious to me that Alex and Rick managed to make the most of these new experiences because there was more than enough data to show that they found them **pleasurable** and **exciting**. By taking pleasure in their new experiences and by embracing new opportunities that came their way, Alex and Rick were able to enjoy the largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

Pleasurable new experiences

“I like it when we drink cold drink at school from the tuck-shop.” (Interview 10, Rick, line 36)

“We enjoy playing tennis, rugby and doing maths in Grade 1.” (Interview 10, Alex and Rick, line 38)

“The prefects take good care of us, but if we don’t know something, we go to the headmaster to get help.” (Interview 10, Alex, line 55)

“We like our headmaster.” (Interview 12, Rick, line 165)

“The nice things at school are our work, play, our teacher. We are also getting better at having friendships, kicking the ball, eating during break, and making new friends.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 31, 34, 36, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50)

“We are getting more clever at school. It is nice to buy something at the tuck shop, and it is nice to learn.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 41, 42, 44, 46.)

“It was nice in the computer room because we could type.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 52)

“Most of the time we were more on the rugby field than in the classroom because we do a lot of athletics, which we love.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 34)

“One of the things I like most about Grade 2 is doing athletics.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 105)

4.3.1.3 Their co-individual within a twinship

During the course of the fieldwork sessions, the only negative response that I recorded between the co-individuals within a twinship, occurred in their home environment (4.2.3). There may have indeed been other negative incidents between the individuals within a twinship at school, but there were no such indications of any such negative incidents in my data. On the contrary, the data I was able to collect during my interviews and sessions with the participants, made it clear that Alex and Rick **supported** and **protected** one another at school. Each of them probably also felt safe in the company of his co-individual within a twinship and valued the friendship of his co-individual in the classroom and during break. I regarded the fact that both of them appeared to be confident and contented in Grade 2 without their co-individual within a twinship in their class, as an indicator of the possibly solid, strong and trustworthy bond that they developed in their relationship, as well as an indicator of each individual’s independent identity. Additional positive indicators of the strength of the bond between Alex and Rick were their sympathy and empathy

towards one another and intuitive way in which they understood each other. After a careful examination of all the data, I came to the conclusion that the support, protection, trust and camaraderie that Alex and Rick demonstrated towards one another was fundamentally important in helping them to effect largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

“It is nice to have my brother in my class because then I have a friend.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 23)

“It won’t bother me if we are not in the same class next year.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 29)

“We enjoy playing together during every break.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 41)

“My brother and I never fight with each other at school.” (Interview 15, Rick line 78)

“It is nice having my brother with me in class because I have a friend.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 82)

“I like having my brother in my class because he is my brother and I enjoy it when he plays with me during break.” (Interview 15, Rick, line 139 & 142)

“It was a relief for each of them to have a friend with them. It made it was easier for them to have a brother with them in class. It was a coping mechanism to have a friend with them at all times because they knew they didn’t have to do everything alone.” (Interview 18, mother, line 29 and 36)

“Rick and I are not in the same class anymore, but it doesn’t bother me because we meet each other every break when we play ‘opies’ (open the gate). So then we know where the other one is..“ (Interview 21, Alex, line 66)

“In the majority of our sessions, the positive attitudes between Alex and Rick were evident. I observed their sympathy and empathy towards each other, as well as their affection and understanding, especially in particular school situations. They would always back one another and it seemed as though each of them really understood their co-individual within a twinships’ lived school experiences.” (Interview 21, researcher, research journal, lines 8-14)

4.3.1.4 Friendships

During the course of this study, I observed that both Alex and Rick were popular among their peers. Not only did they have one another as friends, but they also enjoyed numerous other friendships as well. Both Alex and Rick found it easy to

form new friendships, and they both took pride in their friends. Even though they admitted missing their previous friends from Grade R, they compensated for that loss by making new friends. In the absence of their co-individual within a twinship, it appeared that both of them maintained their confidence and their ability to feel contented in the company of their other friends. In my opinion, this also illustrates the health of the relationship between Alex and Rick because it indicates how both of them were able to form and benefit from friendships independently of their co-individual within a twinship. The data in the study confirmed my perception that their individual skills in making friends and maintaining a healthy relationship with one another, contributed to their largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

“Alex plays with lots of other boys and is popular among his friends.” (Interview 9, researcher, field notes, line 10)

“We made good new friends.” (Interview 10, Alex, line 27)

“One of the nice things at school is that we are able to make new friends.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 31 & 50)

“I like having friends.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 39)

“Today was nice because I played with my friends on the rugby field.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 104)

“The thing I most enjoyed at school today was making friends. I made new friends.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 110 & 112)

“Grade 1 is nice... We have lots of friends.” (Interview 16, Alex and Rick, line 105 & 106).

“We made other friends in this school but not so many. Our old friends will come and visit us at our home.” (Interview 17, Alex, line 60)

“Yes, we miss them but we have other friends now.” (Interview 17, Rick, line 62)

“We have the same friends and separate friends.” (Interview 20, Alex, line 29)

“I’ve got friends other than those I had in Grade 1. I am now friends with the kids in my class.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 84)

“I don’t mind not being in the same class as Alex anymore because I have lots of friends.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 136)

4.3.1.5 Their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers

Both Alex and Rick were explicit in appreciating the valuable role that their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers played in their encounters and experiences. During the interviews with the participants, it became evident to me that their Grade R teacher displayed sincerity, warmth and love, and that they experienced these qualities. Their Grade 1 teacher was also helpful and comforting. The fact that Alex twice referred explicitly to his Grade 2 teacher as pleasant, is probably an indication of how much he appreciated his teacher's ability to be sensitive towards him as well as her ability to display empathy, which he also greatly appreciated. It therefore became apparent that Alex's Grade 2 teacher probably made him feel safe in situations in which he felt vulnerable. Alex's Grade 2 teacher also mentioned to me that one should never rush Alex when he is telling a story (which he usually did with rich circumstantial details in a time-consuming way). These admirable qualities on her part demonstrate her sensitive understanding of Alex as an individual child in her class and her patience and empathy in coping with them.

Rick's Grade 2 teacher also experienced him as a positive individual. On the day when I visited the school to see Rick's Grade 2 class and interview his teacher, it became evident to me that she took notice of him and supported his leadership role in overt ways. This indicated to me that she was aware that one of his main talents was that he was able to be responsible in leadership roles. She asked Rick, for example, to choose the winner for the best speech on the day that I attended her class. Rick demonstrated great delight in this exercise and appreciated his teacher for giving him such opportunities. In the context of this study, I was able to observe that the positive and commendable qualities that their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers demonstrated in their dealings with the participants, played an essential role in effecting their largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

Grade R

My experience and perception of the characteristics of the individuals within a township's Grade R teacher illustrates her personal sincerity, warmth and love. The children appeared to be contented and relaxed in her presence. She was in control of her class. According to their Grade R teacher, it was extremely important to emphasise the transition to Grade 1 during the last term of the year (Interview 10, researcher, field notes, lines 4-8).

Grade 1

"We like our teacher." (Interview 10, Alex & Rick, line 25)

"One of the nice things at school is our teacher..." (Interview 12, Rick, lines 36)

"I like our teacher because she helps us..." (Interview 12, Alex, lines 36)

Grade 2

"I enjoy Grade 2 because the teacher is always nice to me because I am the shortest person in the class." (Interview 21, Alex, line 25)

"My teacher is nice to me because I am the shortest child in the class." (Interview 21, Alex, line 31)

"I am very happy with their individual teachers and I think both of them are in the right teacher's class. Alex's teacher is a loving teacher. She said that when Alex smiles at her, then she knows everything is over." (Interview 24, mother, line 68)

"Alex can talk a lot and he will tell a story with lots of detail. You mustn't rush him while busy telling his story. You must listen to the whole story..." (Interview 29, Alex's Grade 2 teacher, line 77)

"I don't have any problems with Rick in my class." (Interview 29, Rick's Grade 2 teacher, line 80)

The teacher made his day when she asked Rick to choose a winner for today's speeches. (Interview 30, field notes, line 13)

4.3.1.6 Learned life skills

From the data that I collected during our sessions and interviews, it became evident to me that the learned life skills that I taught them may have contributed to the success of Alex and Rick's largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. With reference to their **friendship skills**, it also became clear to me that both of them were able to learn and successfully apply the friendship skills that they had learned in their transitions. I noticed that they were also able to make the right choices and decisions at times, especially with regard to the bullies in their school. Both of them successfully managed to cope successfully with the bully-situation, firstly because they were no longer afraid of the bullies they encountered, and secondly because they were in control of their choices whether to resist or not rather than automatically engaging in counter-bullying activities. It also became evident to

me that both Alex and Rick were comfortable in dealing with and experiencing some of their normal day-to-day emotions. They are also diligent in practising their useful coping skills. The data gathered during the course of this study therefore led me to conclude that the life skills that they had learned from me, possibly played a significant role in their ability to deal with bullies, to form friendships and to cope with some of their emotions in a creative and constructive way. While it is not always easy to ascertain which of these life skills were already available to the individuals within a township prior to the sessions I conducted with them on learned life skills, my data from the study indicates that the learned life skills may have been useful, or at least complementary, in effecting the largely uncomplicated transitions between their various grades.

“The tips you gave us were also part of the good things at school.” (Interview 10, Rick, line 68)

“I made a friend today. We played and then I was friendly towards him, and then we played some more together.” (Interview 12, Rick, line 52)

“We mustn’t be afraid of bullies.” (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 131)

“I feel proud and happy when somebody bullies me and I don’t bully him back. Instead of bullying him, I told the teacher.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 69-76)

“You taught us that we are not allowed to bully someone who bullies us.” (Interview 17 Alex, line 74)

“You are allowed to get angry. When you get angry, then all the fire comes out.” (Interview 17, Alex, line 82)

“You helped us with bullies.” (Interview 17, Alex and Rick, line 98)

“The life skills you taught them definitely changed their thinking patterns, especially the positive coping cards you gave them. They would have thought twice before hitting a bully.” (Interview 18, mother, line 63)

“Alex and Rick’s social and emotional skills were definitely intact. I don’t know if somebody worked with them previously to teach such skills. They were never in fights, and they would always be concerned about any new child in class.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 142-149)

“If you are angry, you must scream inside your pillow.” (Interview 22, Alex, line 123)

“The things you taught us helped.” (Interview 22, Rick, line 132)

“If I am angry and I scream inside my pillow, it feels like I have screamed all the anger out.”
(Interview 25, Alex, line 155)

4.3.1.7 Their Grade 1 and Grade 2 expectations

During the course of this study, I came to the conclusion that Alex and Rick’s expectations of Grade 1 and Grade 2 played part in effecting their largely uncomplicated transition from Grade R through to Grade 2. I came to this conclusion because Alex and Rick both demonstrated realistic expectations of Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes. They accurately predicted that they were going to have pleasant friends, friendly teachers, and that they were going to play rugby with their friends. They also accurately predicted that they would be able to do some homework in class, and that they would obtain new information. They also predicted that they expected to be disappointed when other kids were trying to harm them, that they expected to be contented at school and looked forward to taking part in recreational activities. Their last expectation was that they expected that their work in Grade 2 would be more difficult than it had been in Grade 1. Their expectations were in all cases largely realistic, and portrayed their lived experiences of Grade 1 and Grade 2. I further concluded that, because of their accurate expectations, there would be few surprises for them with regard to their lived experiences during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. In this sense they seemed well prepared for what was likely to occur in Grade 1 and Grade 2.

“Our new friends will be pleasant, the teacher will be friendly, and we are going to play rugby with our friends. We are going to do homework in the class. We are going to listen to our teacher and we will go to play with the friends we make in class.” (Interview 2, Alex and Rick, line 3-5)

“I feel happy when I think of Grade 1.” (Interview 2, Rick, line 7)

“There are things in Grade R that we will also find in Grade 1. These are: friends, rugby, and a teacher. We are going to learn, we are going to be sad when other kids hurt us, and we are going to be happy.” (Interview 2, Alex and Rick, 4-10)

“When I see Grade 1 in my mind, I see nice things, friends, tables, a teacher, toys, bottles, naughty children, bicycles and trees.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 20)

“We are going to work and play in Grade 1.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 27)

“Alex and Rick told me that Grade 2 was going to be nice because they were going to have the same friends... They also said that the work would be more difficult than it was in Grade 1.” (Interview 20, researcher, field notes, line 1 & 5)

4.3.1.8 Homework and academics

According to the data gathered from the participants' annotations on Alex and Rick's homework and academics, there were some mixed feelings. In the first instance, there were some positive evaluations which I took to be indicators of their largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. These positive indicators were demonstrations of personal confidence, pride and feelings of accomplishment after they had internalised useful new skills and knowledge. These indicators were data for their largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. In addition to this, their unappreciative comments about children who did not want to work in class were likely indicators of the seriousness with which they approached and respected their work, and this may indicate that they did in fact realise the importance and value of succeeding in academic performance at school. I adduce as data of their possible realisation of the value of succeeding in academics Rick's comment, “Although we don't like to work, we know it is good for them (i.e. the children who were averse to work).”

On the other hand, I also observed that there were a few obstacles that Alex and Rick had to overcome as they effected their otherwise largely uncomplicated transitions between their grades. First of all was the amount of homework that Alex and Rick had to cope with during their Grade 2 year while also accommodating a fairly strenuous extra-mural schedule. My data confirms that the excessive amount of homework (according to the participants) that they had to attend to after certain school days were a possible cause of stress for both of them. My observations in this regard were confirmed by their mother and by their Grade 2 teachers. This state of affairs was evident to me in their Grade 2 year. The necessity to complete this homework, occasionally resulted in both Alex and Rick becoming emotional and

frustrated at such times. It was at these times that they were given to emotional outbursts.

Academics

“Alex enjoys learning new things that he couldn’t done before, such as, for example, writing.” (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 32)

“We had a good day. We played and worked.” (Interview 11, Rick, line 22)

“It was nice in the computer room today because we learned something.” (Interview 13, Alex lines 7)

“One of the things that wasn’t so nice today was when two boys didn’t want to work in class.” (Interview 16, Alex, line 29)

“They bother us because they don’t work, and just want to play in class.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 36)

“Grade 2 is more difficult than Grade 1.I struggle a bit.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 56)

“Grade 2 is nice because it is nice to have all the books and to write is nice.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 142)

“One thing that I’ve noticed is the intensive workload in Grade 2. It is much more than last year.” (Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“The only reason I say the adjustment to Grade 2 was more difficult than Grade 1 is due to the workload, not their separate classes.” (Interview 24, mother, line 105)

“In Grade 2 we write in cursive script of, and that is very nice.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 81)

“I don’t like all the work in Grade 2, but is good for us.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 83)

“The workload is much more in Grade 2 than in Grade 1.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 10)

Homework

“I enjoy homework.” (Interview 10, Alex, line 21)

“Rick proudly showed me all his Grade 1 books and Alex sounded all his words.” (Interview 11, researcher, field notes, line 1)

“Rick showed off his homework and was very pleased about his hard work.” (Interview 13, field notes, line 1)

“During our session, I could see that Alex is really intrigued with his school work. He was busy making plus sums the whole time and enjoying it.” (Interview 13, researcher, field notes, line 2)

“The workload was stressful. Because of their hectic extra-mural activities and their homework, both of them would sometimes be emotional.” (Interview 18, mother, line 53)

“One of the things that I can see which was hard for them was the work. Especially the homework. It is a lot more than in Grade 1.” (Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“Everything is the same in Grade 2 as it was in Grade 1 except for the homework. That is much more.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 55)

“It is nice when we are allowed to do our homework in class.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 104)

“The intense amount of homework was tough for Alex, but the work in general was really tough on Rick.” (Phone interview 3 November 2011, mother, line 5).

4.3.1.9 Bullies and perceptions of disobedient children

My observation was the bullies and the disobedient children (as perceived by the individuals within a township) created both positive and negative experiences for the individuals with a township as they effected their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. The positive effect of such encounters was that Alex and Rick found that they were able successfully to cope with and deal with the bullies. My observation was therefore that this manifestation of successful coping techniques increased their self-confidence and their self-esteem and possibly so contributed to their largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

The negative side of these encounters was that both of them were occasionally harmed by bullies. Alex was especially teased about his height. Bullies caused Alex and Rick to experience feelings of sadness, emotional pain, anger and distress. These negative feelings are probably indicators of some of the difficulties they experienced as they coped with their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

“I don’t like it when kids steal things.” (Interview 10, Alex, line 40)

“Bad things at school are bullies.” (Interview 12, Alex, line 11)

“Today there were three bad things at school: one guy kicked me at the rugby poles, another boy lied to our teacher, and another boy said a swear word to our teacher.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 89, 93, 94 & 99)

“We are not afraid of bullies anymore.” (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 133)

“The bully on the rugby field wasn’t nice. He doesn’t bother us in the class, only on the rugby field when we play rugby.” (Interview 13, Alex, line 27)

“I observed that Alex and Rick have gained confidence in their methods of coping with bullies, and that they know how to deal with bully-related challenges.” (Interview 13, Field notes, Researcher, line 47)

“I was very angry and sad at school because some kids made jokes about my height. They called me ‘Shorty Maloty’.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 59)

“Something that wasn’t nice today was that the one boy had to write his name in the monkey manners book, someone stole from the tuck shop, and someone handed in a fake R10 note.” (Interview 28, Alex, lines 11 and 29)

4.3.1.10 Conclusion

My general conclusion by the end of this study was that the following factors played a significant role in enabling the largely uncomplicated transition that the individuals within a twinship were effect from Grade R through to Grade 2:

- The positive and helpful attitudes of the individuals within a twinship
- Their natural, cooperative, kind and agreeable behaviour at home and at school
- Their self-esteem and self-confidence, and their ability to take pleasure in assimilating new experiences
- The supportive presence of their co-individual within a twinship, initially in the same class, but later in the same school
- Their ability to form and maintain successful and healthy friendships
- The emotional, wise and practical support that was provided by their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers
- The usefulness in practice of the life skills that they learned and practised
- Their ability to largely predict, before their arrival in those classes, the conditions and environments that they would encounter in Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Their conscientiousness in completing their homework and in applying themselves to their academic studies
- Their ability to cope with the challenges presented by bullies and disobedient children without knee-jerk, unconscious reactions

All of these factors probably enabled the individuals within a township to make largely uncomplicated transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

4.3.2 THEME 2

The transition of the individuals within a township to Grade 2 was, to some extent, more stressful than their transition to Grade 1. They nevertheless still experienced Grade 2 as pleasurable.

For the purpose of this study, Theme 2 will be answered in two divisions consisting of part one and part two. The first part of the theme will be answered first (The transition of the individuals within a township to Grade 2, was to some extent, more stressful than the transition to Grade 1...). Followed by the answering of the second part of the theme (They nevertheless still experienced Grade 2 as pleasurable).

4.3.2.1 Part one: ‘The transition of the individuals within a township to Grade 2, was to some extent, more stressful than the transition to Grade 1’

The following two tables summarise the experiences of the individuals within a township, as well as general stressors by other children according to the participating teachers in this study, as they were compelled to deal with both the positive and negative stressors that they encountered during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. Each of the stressors they experienced is illustrated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, and each of them in turn is discussed and explained in detail in section 4.4.2. The highlighted stressors are those general stressors mentioned by the participating teachers, but not experienced by Alex and Rick.

Table 4.2: Positive (+) stressors experienced by the participants

Grade R	Grade 1	Grade 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Friends + Playing + Their teacher + Gaining knowledge + Feeling contented at school + Their expectations of Grade 1 + Their excitements for Grade 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Homework + Their teacher + Friends + Helping others + Sport + Prefects + Playing + Gaining new knowledge + The tuck shop + Their co-individual within a twinship + Supporting parents + Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Their teacher and friends + Work (school work) + Completing homework in class + Writing incursive + Separate classes + Sport + Playing during break + Achievements

Table 4.3: Negative (-) stressors experienced by the participants

Grade R	Grade 1	Grade 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullies - Friends harming them - Time - School work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disobedient children - Prefects - Making friends - Bullies - Social skills - Threats in Grade R - Not being able to read and write immediately - School work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demanding school work - Bathroom rules - Bullies - Excessive homework - Grade 3's - Disobedient children - Getting teased - A new teacher - Friends being separated in classrooms - People who are upset

My data shows that the largest number of negative stressors were experienced by the individuals within a twinship during their Grade 2 year (Table 4.3). This enabled me to infer that their Grade 2 year had been more stressful than their Grade 1 and Grade R years. I make this inference with some caution because a mere increase in the number of stressors encountered by an individual does not *necessarily* indicate an increased amount of stress experienced by that individual during the same time period. After an in-depth examination and analysis of the available data, I was,

however, able to conclude that these individuals within a township had indeed experienced greater *amount* of stress in Grade 2 than they had experienced either in Grade 1 or in Grade R.

I was interested to note that, apart from the highest amount of negative stress that the individuals within a township experienced in their Grade 2 year, in comparison to the negative stressors of their Grade 1 year (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3), the participants also indicated that they enjoy the greatest amount of positive stress during their Grade 1 year. With regard to their Grade 1 year, I had identified twelve positive stressors in comparison to the eight positive stressors that I was able to identify during their Grade 2 year. The only additional positive stressor that was present in their Grade 2 year (that I could not identify as a stressor in their Grade 1 year), was the fact that the individuals within a township were placed in separate classrooms in Grade 2. The positive stressors that were present in their Grade 1 year (but which were not identified during their Grade 2 year) included the establishment of new friendships, the ability to be of assistance to others, the proximity of helpful and kindly prefects, the novel experience of being able to purchase food from the tuck-shop, their proximity for either of them of their co-individual within a township, the support of loving and nurturing parents, and the life skills that they learned.

There were also a number of the identified positive stressors during Grade 1 that might have enabled them to take pleasure in several new experiences in their primary school (see section 4.3.2.2 for more details). These included the novel experience of being able to purchase food from the tuck-shop, taking pleasure in the successful completion of their homework, their success in forming and maintaining new friendships, the practical assistance of kindly and helpful prefects in the school, and the enjoyment they derived from playing on the rugby field during break. Even though my data did not indicate that the individuals within a township had identified any of these “new” experiences during their Grade 2 year as specifically positive stressors, it appeared evident that they derived a great amount of pleasure and satisfaction from these “new” experiences in Grade 2. It is for this reason that I have also included these experiences as positive stressors, with the proviso that they were already familiar with most of these experiences when they arrived in Grade 2.

I mentioned earlier in the text that because of the presence of certain negative stressors in Grade 2, both Alex and Rick regarded Grade 2 as the most stressful year of the three years that are within the scope of this study. Even though Alex and Rick asserted on a number of occasions that the workload was demanding, they were also of the opinion that the focus on demanding academic work and preparation was “necessary”. Although I have already adduced the following supportive data earlier in this text (see section 4.3.1.8), I include some of it again here to illustrate how they experienced their academic work and the apparently large amount of homework that they were given in Grade 2.

“Grade 2 is more difficult than Grade 1. I struggle a bit.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 56)

“One thing that I’ve noticed is the intensive workload in Grade 2. It is much more than last year.” (Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“The only reason I say the adjustment to Grade 2 was more difficult than Grade 1 is because of the workload, not their separate classes.” (Interview 24, mother, line 105)

“The workload is much more in Grade 2 than in Grade 1.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 10)

“The workload was stressful. Because of their hectic extra-mural activities and their homework, both of them would sometimes be emotional.” (Interview 18, mother, line 53)

“One of the things that I can see which was hard for them was the work. Especially the homework. It is a lot more than in Grade 1.” (Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“Everything is the same in Grade 2 as it was in Grade 1 except for the homework. That is much more.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 55)

“It is nice when we are allowed to do our homework in class.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 104)

“The intense amount of homework was tough for Alex, but the work in general was really hard on Rick.” (Phone interview 3 November 2011, mother, line 5)

The individuals within a twinship in this study also had to cope with a demanding extra-mural schedule. Even though both of them took great pleasure in these, this was one of the main concerns and challenges in Grade 2. Their mother explained to me that the noticeable increase in the number of extra-mural activities occasionally exhausted the individuals within a twinship. Their exhaustion also sometimes

caused emotional outbursts (in this study, I regarded “emotional outburst” as a euphemism for tears and crying).

It was mainly because of the amount of homework that the individuals within a township received in their Grade 2 classes that the transition from Grade 1 to Grade 2 was experienced by them as more stressful than the transition from Grade R to Grade 1. In my discussion of theme 1, I identified and explained how the participants personally experienced their homework and workload in Grade 2 (see section 4.3.1.8 for further details). I will therefore not repeat the explanation that I gave there, but will rather provide some additional information about the present theme.

“The transition from Grade 1 to Grade 2 was much more difficult than for them than the transition from Grade R to Grade 1. Grade 2 is much more difficult, and it is a bigger adjustment. They are subjected to much more pressure. In Grade 2 they are supposed to be big and brave. On some days, they only get home at 21:00 in the evening, and by then it is too late to do any homework. For me and them it was much more difficult.” (Interview 24, mother, line 55-61)

“Grade 2 was emotionally challenging for both of them. Even though Alex would show his emotions more frequently by, for example, crying for something or someone who was upset or hurt, the Grade 2 experience was equally emotionally challenging for both of them.” (Phone interview 3 November 2011, mother, line 6)

“They participated in more extra-mural activities during their Grade 1 year. In Grade 1, they participated in rugby, gymnastics, swimming lessons, Lego and extra-mathematics lessons. Rick also played cricket during his second term in Grade 1. In Grade 2, I decided that they should stop their swimming lessons because they were already too busy in the afternoons and had too much homework. Rick no longer played cricket in Grade 2. In Grade 2, their extra-mural activities included rugby, gymnastics, Lego and extra-mathematics classes.” (Phone interview 5 July 2012, mother, line 4)

This finding was somewhat unexpected to me. At the commencement of this study, I had identified and read an enormous amount of literature about the transition from preschool to primary school. In spite of that reading, it had never occurred to me that the stress evoked by the transition from Grade 1 to Grade 2 might well be greater than the stress engendered by the transition from Grade R to Grade 1. I also

made the assumption that because parents, teachers and schools often focus strongly on the difficulties inherent in the transition from preschool to Grade 1, the concerns of the Grade 1 children entering primary school for the first time would be taken care of, and that they would probably receive a lot of attention, assistance and care. The assumption was that when they entered Grade 2, they would be responsible, mature and self-efficient. My findings in this study indicate that these assumptions may need to be revisited and revised.

On the other hand, it might well be the case that the far more demanding extra-mural schedule that the individuals within a township experienced in Grade 2 was actually the reason why they experienced the transition to Grade 2 as far more challenging than their transition to Grade 1. It has already been pointed out that the individuals within a township participated in more extra-mural activities during their Grade 1 year than they did in their Grade 2 year. In Grade 1, both the individuals within a township took part in rugby, gymnastics, Lego, extra-mathematics classes and swimming lessons. Rick also played cricket during his second term in Grade 1. In their Grade 2 year, they both participated in rugby, gymnastics, Lego and extra-mathematics classes. It was at that point that their mother decided to withdraw them from swimming lessons in their Grade 2 year because of the demands that were being made upon them by their academic school work. The swimming lessons and Rick's cricket were therefore additional extra-mural activities in their Grade 1 year, that they did not have to cope with in their Grade 2 year.

One may therefore assume that the demands made on them by their extra-mural activities did not constitute the main reason why their transition to Grade 2 was more stressful than their transition to Grade 1. One may also therefore conclude that their more demanding transition to Grade 2 was probably caused by greater demands placed upon them by the increased volume and complexity of their schoolwork and homework when one considers all of the above-mentioned factors. The data that was accumulated for this study (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3) indicates that there were more positive stressors for the participants in Grade R and Grade 1 than there were negative stressors during these same two years. It was in their Grade 2 year that the individuals within a township experienced the greatest number of negative stressors of all the three years represented in this study. I

nevertheless find it interesting that both Alex and Rick referred to this year, their most challenging year, as enjoyable and interesting (see section 4.3.2.1).

4.3.2.2 Part two: ‘They nevertheless still experienced Grade 2 as pleasurable’

In spite of the fact that, as the data proves, the participants experienced Grade 2 as the most stressful of their three years, they still maintained that their experiences were, on the whole, both pleasurable and exciting. Even though Alex and Rick expressed the opinion on a number of occasions that the workload was intense and demanding, they mitigated the force of this opinion by stating that the academic and other work was “necessary”. They also indicated that it was pleasurable and satisfying for them to be exposed to new knowledge and to learn how to write in cursive script – both of which activities they mastered in Grade 2 (see section 4.3.1.8).

It would therefore be necessary to refrain, within the context of the overall findings of this study, from concluding that the total amount of negative stress experienced by the individuals within a township translated into a negative experience of Grade 2 as a whole. The strain caused by what seems to be an excessive workload for children so young is to be balanced with a large number of positive experiences and the significant amount of satisfaction they both enjoyed in that grade. Few experiences in life are either wholly positive or negative, and the overall experience of Grade 2 was coloured by the number of predominantly positive experiences that they enjoyed in that grade. Even though I have already presented the following extracts from the data in an earlier point in this chapter, I decided to include some of these extracts here again at this point to indicate the extent to which the participants’ overall experiences of Grade 2 were pleasurable, despite the significant number of negative stressors with which they had to cope in that grade.

“I enjoy Grade 2.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 23)

“Grade 2 is much nicer than Grade 1.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 61)

“I enjoy Grade 2. It is nice.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 108)

"I enjoy Grade 2 because I am always behaving and so the class captains never write my name on the board. I will be the class captain tomorrow." (Interview 21, Rick, line 110)

"Grade 2 is much nicer than Grade 1." (Interview 21, Rick, line 124)

"I am very happy in Grade 2." (Interview 21, Rick, line 164)

"We play hide and seek in Grade 2. My brother and I play together." (Interview 22, Rick, line 150 and 154)

"Grade 2 is nicer than Grade 1." (Interview 26, Rick, line 71)

"In Grade 2 we write in cursive script, and that is very nice." (Interview 26, Rick, line 81)

"I don't like all the work in Grade 2, but is good for us." (Interview 26, Rick, line 83)

"If I close my eyes and see Grade 2 in front of me, it looks nice!" (Interview 27, Rick, line 105)

"I feel better this week because the kids aren't teasing me as much anymore. The teacher said she is going to give them black stickers for their books if they keep on teasing me." (Interview 28, Alex, line 1-8)

"I could see that Alex and Rick were happy at school." (Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 1)

"I don't have any problems with Rick in my class." (Interview 29, Rick's Grade 2 teacher, line 80)

"While visiting their classroom for observation, I could see that Alex was participating well in the class activities." (Interview 31, researcher, field notes, line 9)

It is my opinion, that a researcher should never attempt to eliminate or minimise the importance and impact of negative stressors in a study so as to influence the final conclusions. In the case of this study, an elimination or mitigation of the impact of the negative stressors would probably have resulted in a finding that the transitions were more pleasurable and less stressful than in fact they were. This emphasis on the negative stressors reduces the overall effect of indicating that although learners may experience difficulties in a particular year, they may nevertheless make an effective transition through the grades if they are equipped to deal constructively and consciously with negative stressors before and during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. This approach was justified by my conclusion that even though the individuals within a township experienced a greater number of

negative stressors in Grade 2, they still considered their Grade 2 experiences as pleasurable, interesting and challenging.

4.3.3 THEME 3

Although their learned life skills may have eased their transition, the overall support structures of the individuals within a township were probably the most important reasons why their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2 were largely uncomplicated

To illustrate the conclusions that I reached with regard to this theme, I identified four features of the inherent support structures that existed within the relationship of the individuals within a township as relevant to my conclusions. These features were the life skills that I taught the participants in anticipation of their transitions, the support that the participants received from their parents in their home environment, the support provided by their school(s), and various factors already present in their personalities, that made effective transitions more probable (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Relevant support features illustrated by Theme 3

Relevant support features illustrated by Theme 3
Learned life skills
Parents and home environment
School(s) support
Alex and Rick's personalities

4.3.3.1 Learned life skills

Because of the information that I received directly from the participants, I was able to conclude that the learned life skills that I taught them probably played an essential role in the ability of Alex and Rick to specifically deal effectively and successfully with bullies, to value friendship and to utilise their friendship skills, and to make efficient use of positive coping skills to lubricate and control their emotions (see section 4.3.1.6). The selected extracts presented below illustrate the various ways in which the participants made use of their newly learned life skills.

“The advice you gave us [about how to cope with various situations] were also some of the good things at school.” (Interview 10, Rick, line 68)

“You taught us that we were not allowed to bully a person who bullied us.” (Interview 17 Alex, line 74)

“You helped us with bullies.” (Interview 17, Alex and Rick, line 98)

“The life skills you taught them definitely changed their thinking patterns, especially the positive coping cards you gave them. They would have thought twice before hitting a bully.” (Interview 18, mother, line 63)

“The things you taught us helped.” (Interview 22, Rick, line 132)

The presence of bullies was a consistent problem throughout all of the three years during which the individuals within a township made their various transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. It was one of the negative stressors with which they had to cope continually. While this study did not specifically focus on the problem of the bullies and the ways in which they influenced the children's lives, I very soon realised that the bullies that compelled a response on the part of the participants made it necessary for me to include methods of coping with bullies in their learned life skills sessions. I therefore decided to help them refine their bully-coping skills. It became evident from what subsequently happened that both of them applied these skills successfully during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2 (see section 4.3.1.9).

Because Alex and Rick were two out of only seven children from the same pre-school to enrol in their primary school, it was necessary for them to form new friendships in certain phases of their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. The friendship skills that I taught them in our life skills sessions were therefore probably essential in facilitating their transitions through the grades. The data that was accumulated for this study shows that Alex and Rick were both extremely successful in forming and maintaining new friendships (see section 4.3.1.4).

During the various phases of their transitions through the grades, Alex and Rick both experienced a range of emotions. These included, for example, feeling excited

about the following school year (see section 4.3.1.7), Alex's feeling of anger and disappointment about being teased about his height (see section 4.2.7), and the negative pressure that both Alex and Rick experienced because of demands of their homework in Grade 2 (see section 4.3.1.8). The bullies with whom they had to cope also elicited negative emotions of anger, hurt and disruption. But these negative emotions were balanced by their pride and their sense of accomplishment (see section 4.3.1.9) when they discover that they were able to deal effectively with these bullies. Their ability to exercise control of their emotions is therefore a skill that probably enabled Alex and Rick to make successful transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. The way in which the participants personally confirmed to me the way in which their seemingly mastery of their positive coping skills enabled them to gain emotional control and ascendancy is reflected in the data that was accumulated for this study (see section 4.3.1.6). Even though I have already adduced the following data as data in section 4.3.1.6, I include once again to illustrate how the individuals within a township were able to master a number of important life skills during the course of this research.

"I made a friend today. We played and I was friendly towards him. After that, we played together." (Interview 12, Rick, line 52)

"We mustn't be afraid of bullies." (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 131)

"I feel proud and happy when somebody bullies me and I don't bully him back. Instead, I told the teacher." (Interview 15, Alex, line 69-76)

"You are allowed to get angry. If you get angry then all the fire comes out." (Interview 17, Alex, line 82)

"You helped us with bullies." (Interview 17, Alex and Rick, line 98)

"Alex and Rick's social and emotional skills were definitely intact. I don't know if somebody worked with them to strengthen these skills before. They were never in fights, and they would always be concerned about new children in their class." (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 142-149)

"If you are angry, you must scream inside your pillow." (Interview 22, Alex, line 123)

"The things you taught us helped." (Interview 22, Rick, line 132)

"If I am angry and I scream inside my pillow, it feels like I have screamed all the anger out." (Interview 25, Alex, line 155)

4.3.3.2 Parents and home environment

My experiences with the family and my observations during my visits to the home of the individuals within a township provided data for confirming that the following characteristics of the home environment of the participants were present. The atmosphere in their house was characterised by positive attitudes, unconditional love for the participants from both parents, stable and consistent relationships, and supportive values. Alex and Rick's mother taught them how to exercise life skills in various practical situations. I also observed the prevalence of feelings and emotions associated with safety and with satisfaction with oneself in their household, together with joyousness, light-heartedness and laughter. Their parents were parents who protected their children and who demonstrated practical sympathy when the participants needed it (referring to the way in which their mother sympathised with their demanding amount of homework in Grade 2, and then proceeded to help them to complete it in a satisfactory way).

"We have got a very good backup system with all the grandparents also staying on our plot. Sometimes when I have to work, their grandfather will pick them up from school. I make sure I take them to school every morning. We talk about everything. But sometimes it is necessary for me to drag information out of them." (Interview 18, mother, lines 43, 44 & 46)

"I love visiting their house. The positive atmosphere, the light-heartedness and the laughter in the house always lift my spirits. After talking to their mother, I once again experienced the unconditional love, the support, and the safe and protective environment that the parents establish in the house. Alex and Rick are blessed for having parents who accept them just as they are, without pressure and negative criticisms. These parents create a stable home in which good values can be taught and in which children will reach their full potential." (Interview 18, researcher field notes, lines 8-17)

"So I will say that I am strict, but I am strict in a loving manner. I also try to teach them things in a loving manner. I strive to raise them with Christian values." (Interview 24, mother, lines 3, 4 & 10)

"Both my husband and I support one another when it comes to discipline. He will always back me. With regard to values, morals and discipline, we are on the same team." (Interview 24, mother, lines 38-41)

“They will talk about the bullies, and then I will ask them whether they remembered the things you taught them, and they show that they did remember them. I must remind them about it constantly.” (Interview 24, mother, line 123-123)

The data that I accumulated for this study shows that the individuals within a township were given ample opportunities to practise life skills in their home environment from Grade R right through to Grade 2.

4.3.3.3 School(s) support

The data that Alex and Rick gave me in the interviews and their accompanying explanation of their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers' attitudes, showed that they experienced **support, comfort, safety, interest and acceptance** (see section 4.3.1.5), as some advantages. Their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers also all used the various opportunities that arose during school time to teach life skills to their children in their classes. Although I have already used some of the data cited below earlier in the text, I include it once more at this stage to support the assertions that I have made above.

“We teach the children about their emotions. We use an emotion poster. We also use the fruits of the spirit in the Bible to teach life skills.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, lines 15-17)

“My experience and impression of the Grade R teacher of the individuals within a township was that she demonstrated sincerity, warmth and love. The children appeared to be content and relaxed in her presence. She was in control of her class. According to their Grade R teacher, an emphasis on the transition to Grade 1 was of greatest importance during the last term of the year.” (Interview 10, researcher, field notes, lines 4-8)

“I like our teacher because she helps us.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 36)

“When we teach them emotional life skills, we use Bible lessons to teach those skills.” (Interview, 19, Grade 1 teacher, Line 51)

“I enjoy Grade 2 because the teacher is always nice to me because I am the tiniest person in class.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 25)

“I am very happy with their individual teachers and I think both of them are in the right teacher's class. Alex's teacher is a loving teacher. She said when Alex smiles at her then everything is over.” (Interview 24, mother, line 68)

“Their teacher helps Rick a lot with his reading. She will sit with him and help him.”(Interview 24, mother, line 137)

“I am very pleased with both their teachers. They get along very well with each of the boys.”
(Interview 24, mother, line 139)

“The life skills that we teach the children normally fit in with a lesson such as, for example, a Bible lesson. Learning life skills is an ongoing process. We therefore have life orientation periods as well.” (Interview 29, Grade 2 teacher (A), line 35)

“The teacher made his day when she asked Rick to choose a winner for today’s speeches.”
(Interview 30, field notes, line 13)

The data obtained from this study indicates that Alex and Rick and their mother all enjoyed positive experiences with the Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers of the participants. Apart from the fact that the participating teachers were all sympathetic characters who supported the individuals within a township, all of them also taught the children in their classes certain life skills when opportunities presented themselves. An in-depth description of the methods that were used by the participating teachers as they taught the children life skills, follows in section 4.4.4. But the data shows that, in addition to this, the individuals within a township enjoyed numerous opportunities for practising life skills in all their grades between Grade R and a Grade 2.

4.3.3.4 Alex and Rick’s personalities

Although I have already cited the following data previously in this chapter, I am citing it once again here to support the assertions I have made in connection with theme 3. Alex and Rick revealed certain positive characteristics throughout this study. Some of these characteristics included **positive attitudes** and appropriate **self-confidence** (see section 4.3.1.2).

“I want to be my own person.” (Interview 20, Alex, line 23)

“I am also clever.” (Interview 20, Rick, line 54)

“I will be class captain tomorrow.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 110)

“I feel proud to wear my glasses.”(Interview 21, Rick, line 148)

"I got a achiever sticker because I cleaned the bathrooms at school." (Interview 23, Rick, line 28)

"You can see that Alex knows he is good in academics, but he is also down to earth. He doesn't have to hear about it the whole day long." (Interview 24, line 100)

"This week is nice because I am class captain." (Interview 27, Alex, line 20)

"It was also nice when I could show off my good work to the principal." (Interview 27, Rick, line 47)

"I could see that Alex and Rick were in control of the events that were happening around them at school." (Interview 28, researcher, research journal, line 1)

"Although he was a bit nervous with his speech, he performed very well and with confidence. He also stood proudly while observing all the other speeches. He was very obedient in class and he enjoyed announcing the winners." (Interview 30, researcher, field notes, line 8-14)

Both Alex and Rick showed that they were **willing** and **brave** when they tackled new challenges (see sections 4.3.1.4, 4.3.1.6 and 4.3.1.9).

"We made some good new friends." (Interview 10, Alex, line 27)

"One of the nice things at school is to make new friends." (Interview 12, Rick, lines 31 & 50)

"What I enjoyed today at school was making friends. I made some new friends." (Interview 12, Rick, lines 110 & 112)

"We have made other friends in this school, but not so many." (Interview 17, Alex, line 60)

"I made a new friend today. We played and I treated him in a friendly way, and then we played together." (Interview 12, Rick, line 52)

"We mustn't be afraid of bullies." (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 131)

"I felt proud and happy when somebody bullied me but I didn't bully him back. Instead, I told the teacher." (Interview 15, Alex, line 69-76)

"If I am angry and I scream inside my pillow, it feels like I have screamed all the anger out." (Interview 25, Alex, line 155)

Both Alex and Rick demonstrated sensitivity towards others. They also showed that they were kind and helpful (see section 4.3.1.4), and that they were gentle by nature (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).

“I listen to my mom when I have to go to bed” (Interview 1, Alex, line 25)

“I always say thank you.” (Interview 1, Alex, line, 31)

“I feel sad when someone is not nice to me.” (Interview 3, Alex, line 12)

“Alex is very relaxed and protective of his younger sister.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 30)

“I am Rick and you must tell people that I behave well.” (Interview 20, Rick, line 50)

“It is important for me to handle Rick with kindness and sensitivity. One must spend quality time with him... He really enjoyed our individual times alone together.” (Interview 24, mother, line 44-50)

The participants handled their transitions from one grade to another with confidence in themselves. They also demonstrated positive and caring attitudes in their new environments, in spite of the transition’s challenges and unfamiliarity. In addition to this, both of the participants showed courage by being willing to participate fully in the new situations in which they found themselves. Alex and Rick also demonstrated various kinds of desirable behaviour including sensitivity, gentleness, kindness and helpful attitudes towards others, during their various transitions. All of the characteristics and forms of behaviour demonstrated by Alex and Rick (those mentioned here above) seemed to assist them to make largely trouble-free transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

4.3.3.5 Conclusion

Some of the factors that enabled Alex and Rick to make largely trouble-free transitions between Grade R and Grade 2 were the consistent and encouraging support that they received from their parents in their home environment, the appropriate support that they received in their school environment, certain personality traits that both of them possessed, and the life skills that they learned in preparation to make these transitions.

The data from this study makes it clear that Alex and Rick received a tremendous amount of support, not only from their parents in their home environment, but also from their teachers during the transitions that they made between Grade R and Grade 2. In addition to their various support systems, Alex and Rick were also familiar with certain life skills that their mother and their Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers had taught them during the period encompassed by this research. It was clear to me that I was not the first person to teach them the life and coping skills that possibly made a difference in their lives during this period.

By the time I had completed this research, I was convinced that the life skills with which the participants were familiar with, had to an extent already been imparted to them by the circumstances of their home environment, with the involvement of their parents in their lives, the ways in which their parents made themselves available to the participants, the impact of the various social norms and values that they had been taught from their earliest years, the support systems that were operative in the schools, and their own unique personalities that gave them a possible advantage in coping with other people and with the challenges in their environment. All of these factors made it easier for me to teach them the necessary life skills when the opportunity to do so presented itself.

It became clear to me when I began explicitly to teach them useful and appropriate life skills that the ground had already been prepared by all of the factors that I have mentioned above. Even so, I decided that the individuals within a township would probably benefit greatly from formal instruction in the life skills that they subsequently used to cope with various challenges. I nevertheless remained aware that the participants had already been made receptive to the kinds of attitudes and states of mind that are reflected in these life skills by the time they were making the transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

4.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the following section, I will answer the secondary research questions that I proposed at the commencement of this study and I will explain my reasons why I answer as I do.

4.4.1 WHICH LIFE SKILLS ARE NECESSARY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN DURING THEIR TRANSITION FROM GRADE R TO GRADE 2?

I answer this research question by adducing some of the research that I presented in the literature study in Chapter 2 in conjunction with some of the findings in this study. The data that I collected from the participants in fact complements and confirms the research from the literature study that I cite below.

Li *et al.* (2012:5) named the following skills as being valuable and helpful to children who were required to make the various transitions from pre-school to primary school: Problem solving skills, interpersonal communication skills, an ability to express emotions in an appropriate way and an ability to understand and practise stress coping techniques.

Hemmeter *et al.* (2006:583) identified certain important skills that helped young children to make smooth transitions between the grades in their school. These skills included the ability to maintain positive social relationships, the ability to communicate one's emotions effectively, and the ability to solve problems as they arise.

Brooker (2008:14) asserts that children who make trouble-free transitions between their grades need to have a strong sense of self-worth and a positive sense of identity. Von Suchodoletz *et al.* (2009:565) argue that behaviour regulation skills are essential for children who make successful transitions between grades and that *early* interventions to provide them with these skills are essential.

Samanci (2010:147) argues in his research that one of the most important aims of primary education should be to help children to acquire those skills that will enable them to enjoy a healthy social life. He regards all of the following abilities as indispensable for children who wish to participate happily with their peers and teachers and who wish to enjoy a satisfying and fulfilling social life: the ability to communicate what one thinks and feels, the ability to understand other people, the ability to harmonise in an appropriate way in one's social environment, the ability to form and maintain satisfying friendships as well as the capacity to display appropriate and acceptable forms of behaviour. Furthermore, the ability to express

oneself in a suitable way on various occasions, the ability to cope satisfactorily with whatever problems arise and the ability to establish good relationships with one's skills were referred to.

Bilmes (2004:4) asserts that there are six important life skills that children need to develop if they are to negotiate successfully with the world around them. These include attachment, affiliation, self-regulation, initiative, problem solving and respect. She also asserts that, through managing one's emotions, a child will come to realize that all actions have consequences, that some forms of behaviour are acceptable while others are not, and that it is they themselves who have the power to control their behaviour for better or for worse. She notes that there are some children who struggle to make successful transitions because they remain unaware of the fluctuations in their feelings and the fact that they do not have to let their emotions control their behaviour (Bilmes, 2004:7). Furthermore, Bilmes (2004:9) also asserts that it is important for children to learn various problem solving skills.

McClelland and Morrison (2003:206) note that the most important social skills include independence, responsibility, self-regulation and cooperation. They assert that all of these social skills can exert a beneficial influence on the academic achievements and school success of pre-primary children. Brackett *et al.* (2012:219) are of the opinion that certain skills are more valuable than others for helping children to adjust to their school challenges. The particular skills that they mention include: the ability to recognise and manage emotions, the ability to display empathy towards others, the ability to enter into, shape and maintain positive relationships, the ability to make responsible decisions as well as the ability to use tried and tested coping techniques to cope with challenges.

Fisher (2003:56) is of the opinion that it is essential to develop a positive self-esteem and confidence in children if they are to be successful in dealing with routine stressors in their daily lives. Saunders and Remsberg (1987:12) are of the opinion that self-confidence is the most valuable quality that the child can have because it is indispensable for dealing with stressful situations and challenging people.

During the course of their research, the participating teachers who were identified by Hanley *et al.* (2007:277) agreed that the most important life skills for early school

success were the ability to communicate effectively, delayed gratification and the ability to form and maintain satisfying friendships. Zins *et al.* (2003:58) refer in their research to the work undertaken by Elias *et al.* (1997) with regard to the functioning of the child brain, in which they identify five different useful skills which, they maintain, give children direction in every facet of their lives. These skills are self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management skills, and relationship building skills (Zins *et al.*, 2003:58).

In the following section I will discuss the various life skills and coping skills that the participants in this study thought were essential for negotiating the obstacles and challenges of early school years. The mother of the individuals within a township and the Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers of the participants identified specific life skills as necessary for making smooth transitions between Grade R through to Grade 2. The table sets out these life skills in reference to the participants in this study. While all of these findings are subjective, they are nevertheless pertinent to this case study.

Table 4.5: A summary of life skills that participants in the research considered to be necessary for making smooth transitions between Grade R through to Grade 2

Necessary life skills identified as essential by participants for making smooth transitions between Grade R and Grade 2	
○ Coping skills	○ Self-esteem
○ A positive sense of identity	○ Responsibility
○ Emotional skills	○ Independency
○ Communication skills	○ Values
○ Emotional control skills	

Please note that some of the following supportive data may make reference to more than one of the life skills that were perceived as being essential by the participants in question.



“Coping skills are necessary skills for children. Because discipline is such a big problem (which is caused largely by absent parents who overcompensate), children will often be labelled as naughty just because they can’t cope with daily demands. I also think it is very important for a child to feel that he or she **belongs somewhere.**” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 3-5)

“I think that **emotional life skills** are very important. When they go through a transition, they enter a new environment and make new friends. Once they had been equipped with the necessary life skills, they will know how to handle these new situations. Other important life skills include **positive self-esteem**. When one possesses positive self-esteem one can deal with a lot. A child should be able to **show their emotions**, as when, for example, they are sad or happy. Or they must be able to cry when they are sad. But they must also be able to **be in control of their emotions**. Even though they are still very young, they need to understand the meaning of life skills, and they must have the necessary knowledge and self-confidence to be able **to speak to a parent or teacher** when there is a problem.” (Interview 18, mother, lines 2-13)

“Their **emotional life skills** should be developed to some extent when they enter Grade 1 if they are to cope successfully with the transition. **Emotional skills** are definitely the most important life skills of all.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 1-6)

“There is **definitely a place for life skills** in the class and school environment.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, lines 70-80)

“During the transition from Grade 1 to Grade 2, it is important for the children to be able to **adapt socially to life in a group**. An ability to **communicate** with friends who might be very different from oneself, is also very important. Because everyone is different, they need to possess the skills to handle and socialise with those friends who act and think differently from themselves.” (Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 3-5)

“The children also need to learn to **take responsibility**. There are still a lot of children who wants to have the kind of ‘babysitter’ they had in Grade 1, where the teacher used to erase their work or cut out their worksheets for them.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 6)

“Yes, that is one of the areas in which this transition is a big leap forward for some children. In Grade 2 we expect for them to be a lot **more independent.**” (Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 8)

*“There is **definitely a place for life skills**. We are seeing a generation of kids who don’t take any responsibility for their actions. It is their parents who are fighting their battles for them. The children also rush from one activity to another and rush through their homework.”*

(Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 22-28)

*“To me it feels like a whole new generation who’s **life skills are not on an standard at all**.”*

(Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 29-33)

⌘ **Conclusion**

I shall now categorise these life skills that were perceived as being necessary by the participants in the study and from the annotated research review in Chapter 2 in terms of Ebersöhn and Eloff’s (2006:59) “Fields of Life skills” that I used to orientate my material in Chapter 2. The four themes in terms of which I will categorise the life skills are adaptation skills, interpersonal self-regulation skills, intrapersonal self-regulating skills, and group effectiveness skills. I decided to place all of the skills that are being discussed in these categories because I felt that they would enable me to discuss these skills in a more coherent fashion. During this discussion I will relate the life skills from the literature that I analysed in Chapter 2 of the life skills that were identified as being necessary and indispensable by the mother of the participants and by their teachers in the various grades that were included within the scope of this study. I will conclude that discussions with an in-depth consideration of each of the life skills that I mention.

Table 4.6: Life skills regarded by selected participants as indispensable, and categorised under Ebersöhn and Eloff’s “Fields of Life skills” (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006:59)

Adaptation skills	Interpersonal self-regulation skills	Intrapersonal self-regulating skills	Group effectiveness skills
Problem solving skills	Emotional expressions	Stress coping techniques	Positive social relationships
Interpersonal communication skills	Emotional communication	Initiative	Social skills
Behaviour regulation skills	Self-worth	Respect	Friendship skills
Acceptable behaviour	Positive sense of identity	Independence	Positive environmental relationship skills
	Affiliation	Responsibility	Attachment
	Self-regulating skills	Trust	Cooperation
	Emotion regulation and control	Delayed gratification	Empathy
	Confidence	Responsible decision making	Social awareness
	Self-awareness		Communication skills
	Self management skills		Social differences
	Positive self-esteem		

For the purposes of this study, I chose to categorise the life skills that were identified by the mother of the participants and by all their grade teachers as necessary and indispensable as adaptation skills. Under this category heading I identified the following specific adaptation skills: problem solving skills, interpersonal communication skills, behaviour regulating skills, and the manifestation of various acceptable forms of behaviour. Problem solving skills enabled children to deal with those typical daily problems that they need to solve during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. Children need to be able to solve problems of that kind if they are to adapt successfully to each of the new environments they encounter during their transitions.

Interpersonal communication skills allow children to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively to other people and fellow learners while they engage in the adaptation processes required by the transition. Throughout the study, my assumption has been that it is possible to learn interpersonal communication skills, and that such learned skills can be improved by means of understanding, practice, feedback, and reflection. Children who are effective in

behaviour regulation are able to understand and accept the consequences of their behaviour. This enables them to accept, and take responsibility for their behaviour during transition processes. It is my assumption that children should be able to learn not only from their own behaviour and actions, but from the behaviour and actions of their peers as well. In this way, they familiarise themselves with the consequences of the various forms of behaviour that are typical of their generational group.

Under the heading of the following overall descriptive theme, namely, interpersonal self-regulation skills, the participants identified eleven life skills that they regarded as indispensable for smooth transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. These eleven life skills are emotional expression skills, emotional communication skills, a sense of self-worth, and a positive sense of identity. They also identified affiliation skills, self-regulating skills, and emotion regulation and control skills. It is significant to note that confidence, self-awareness, self-management skills, and the development of positive self-esteem were also identified by both the data that I accumulated for this study and by the literature which I examined on this topic.

I conducted this research in terms of the assumption that if children are in touch with their feelings and emotions, and are furnished with the correct vocabulary to express their feelings and emotions, such skills may probably relieve the possible stress that arises during transition periods. I also proceeded from the assumption that it is important for a child to be heard by his or her peers and by significant adults. When a child has mastered the correct vocabulary of emotional expression, he or she is probably more likely to be heard and understood. The ability to express one's emotions is important because it enables children's peers and their teachers to become aware of the difficulties and challenges that children may experience during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

Before a child is able to respect himself or herself, he needs to have an intact sense of self-worth. From the theoretical point of view, I regard an individual's sense of self-worth as closely related to a positive sense of identity and a positive sense of self-esteem. It is by being given opportunities to explore these three concepts in practice when a child may become familiar with his or her strengths and weaknesses, his or her characteristic traits, and uniqueness of his or her individual personality. Even though children in grades between Grade R and Grade 2 may not

possess the intellectual equipment to fully understand such concepts, I believe that they can be given opportunities during these early years to develop their sense of self-worth, their sense of their own identity, and a sense of self-esteem. My own experience as a life skill facilitator made me realise how important it is for children to develop such skills as early as possible.

I also believe that it is important to develop affiliation skills, especially in the context of the whole school experience and the particular conditions that prevail during the first four years of education. It is my premise that if a child is to succeed socially and academically in school, they need to feel that they are part of the larger social unit of the school and that they are accepted and part of that unit. For the purposes of this study, I defined the larger social unit of the individuals within a township as their friends, their class mates, their teachers, and other children in the wider school context.

I also believed in the efficacy of self-regulating skills because these skills enable children to concentrate in class, to participate in group activities, and to restrain themselves from disruptive and impulsive forms of behaviour. Self-regulating skills are therefore valuable during a child's transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

The skill of emotion regulation and control enables children to control their actions and behaviour. During the transitions between Grade R and Grade 2, children may experience a wide variety of emotions. Children who are in control of their emotions and actions, may be in a position to benefit themselves, their families, and their schools. Children who are unable to control their emotions, may be prone to manifestations of impulsive behaviour that may be harmful and disruptive to themselves and to those around them.

I also undertook this study by assuming that children who have confidence in themselves, their teachers, and their friends, would be more likely to make largely unproblematic transitions from one grade to another and thus derive satisfaction from their school experiences. I also assumed that it would be valuable for children to be able to approach new experiences with confidence and therefore be willing to participate in new experiences without paralysing fears or inhibitions. I also assumed that an appropriate degree of self-awareness in children would enable

those children to be able to draw the necessary distinctions between themselves and their environments. It is self-awareness that enables a child to experience himself or herself as an autonomous individual who exists independently of the opinions of others. Such self-management skills are necessary for children to make smooth transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. I also made the assumption that it is important for children to be able to be aware of their own behaviour, to participate in classroom routines and instructional activities, and to make creative use of appropriate social interaction skills at school. It is by making use of such self-management skills that children may achieve their objectives and enjoy successful school careers.

I also designated eight life skills as indispensable and categorise them under the category of intrapersonal self-regulating skills. I identified the first of these skills as stress coping skills because it seems that an ability on the part of a child to make constructive use of stress coping skills will facilitate smooth transitions between grades. By taking the initiative in an appropriate way during transitions, a child may be able to approach new experiences and challenges in such a way that he or she will be able to make smooth transitions and not be overcome by fear or inhibitions. I therefore also made the assumption that the ability to assume the initiative at vital points during transitions enables children to make such transitions without being hampered by any major obstacles. I also worked on the assumption that although it is natural for children to be apprehensive about any new situation or challenge, it is nevertheless advantageous to a child if he or she can take the initiative when challenges arise.

I was also of the opinion that the ability to show respect facilitates a child's transitions between the grades. It seemed to me that children who were able to inspect their school, their teacher and their friends, would be in a better position to display the appropriate forms of obedience when the occasion arose. An ability to act independently of others and of the teacher (where appropriate) is also beneficial for children. Children who are able to behave and complete tasks independently of others may be more likely to strengthen their self-confidence. Although I strongly encourage teachers and parents to provide assistance to children where necessary, it is my belief that children should be able to act more independently as they progress through school.

Children who have the ability to take responsibility for their own actions and make responsible choices may facilitate smoother transitions for themselves from Grade R through to Grade 2. I was also of the opinion that children may only function optimally in safe and secure environments. It is therefore necessary for parents, teachers, the principal, companions and for the child himself or herself to be able to trust others and be trusted by others.

I was also of the opinion that delayed gratification is another indispensable life skill for making largely trouble-free transitions. I deduced that this particular skill was especially important on the basis of remarks made by the Grade 1 teacher when she noted that some Grade 1 children were upset when some of the learners who had only just entered Grade 1 were annoyed because they found they were unable to read and write immediately. These children probably were unable to defer the gratification that they would have felt when they eventually began to master the skills of reading and writing in slow degrees.

I identified the following life skills that the participants perceived as essential under the fourth category, namely group effectiveness skills. The first of these skills that I identified was the skill of entering into and maintaining positive social relationships, which included the ability to make use of appropriate social skills and friendship skills, all of which I regard as being closely related to one another. There will probably be many occasions during the transitions between Grade R and Grade 2 when children will need to be able to enter into and maintain healthy social relationships with their peers and their teachers. In such situations, appropriate communication skills are also indispensable because it seems difficult to develop social relationships without appropriate communication skills.

Another skill that the mother and teachers regarded as indispensable was the ability to maintain a positive relationship with the environment. This ability may be closely related to the ability to show respect, which was mentioned earlier in this chapter. It is valuable to children to be able to develop and maintain respect for and positive relationships with their environment. It is also important for children to play a practical part in maintaining their school environments and those who are committed to developing them. It is my belief that children are able to connect with their

environment by means of attachment. Such positive connections may play an important role in facilitating transitions. The ability to cooperate, especially in group activities and social relationships, are also helpful for effecting largely trouble-free transitions. I also believe that it is important for children to be able to identify the needs and desires of their groups as alternatives to their own needs and desires.

Children may be able to make use of the skill of social awareness in order to understand what constitutes socially acceptable behaviour. This deal also enables them to demonstrate empathy towards others and to respect social differences in others in the school context.

I am of the opinion that all of the above-mentioned life skills exert a reciprocal effect on one another. I also believe that the greater the number of skills that children have developed, the more easily will they be able to develop additional skills because many of these skills are similar in their intention. One may therefore also assert the contrary case: the fewer the life skills that a child has mastered, the more difficulty he or she might have in developing additional skills. But this is a point that is not covered by the scope of this study.

According to the literature that supports this study and the findings of the data, it appears to be the case that children acquire an adequate mastery of numerous life skills for smoother transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. Each life skill seems to have its own particular rationale. I do not, however, believe that the life skills that I have identified here include all the life skills that are necessary for largely trouble-free transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. There may well be other vitally important life skills that have not been mentioned in this discussion.

4.4.2 WHAT PERCEIVED STRESSORS WERE EXPERIENCED OR IDENTIFIED BY EACH OF THE PARTICIPANTS DURING THE TRANSITION FROM GRADE R TO GRADE 2?

In order to answer this question, I categorised the perceived positive and negative stressors in terms of grade years (see sections 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2) so that I would be in a position to compare differences and similarities between these stressors during Grade R through to Grade 2. I compiled the above-mentioned stressors from data that I collected from the individuals within a township, their mother, and their

Grade R, Grade 1 and two Grade 2 teachers. As mentioned earlier, the highlighted stressors in Table 4.2 are some general perceived stressors by the participating teachers. However, these stressors weren't experienced stressors by Alex and Rick.

4.4.2.1 Positive stressors in Grade R

The positive stressors that were experienced by the participants in Grade R were inflicted by their friends with whom they played in school, outside the play area, and on the rugby field. It was apparent to me that playing was a significant part of their lives. Even during our sessions, they could hardly wait to get their work done so that they could go outside and play. On some occasions they even try to reduce our sessions into playful activities.

Both Alex and Rick experienced their Grade R teacher as kind and loving. This enabled me to identify her as a positive stressor during Grade R. Both Alex and Rick appreciated her warmth and her caring attitudes. They described her as “friendly”. They also experienced obtaining new knowledge in class and feeling content and comfortable in school as positive stressors. During our sessions together, both Alex and Rick took great pleasure in sharing their newly accomplished skills with me, skills such as being able to write their names or demonstrate their newly learnt numbers.

I therefore identified their expectations and their excitement about Grade 1 as positive stressors. According to their Grade R teacher, some Grade R teachers and parents focus attention strongly on attending Grade 1 in the following year. The children's expectations of Grade 1 therefore received a lot of attention, and they welcome it.

The day of my school visit, I was able to observe that the more active the individuals within a township were allowed to be, the more pleasurable their day was. Even in their own home, the individuals within a township occupy themselves with creating and starting games throughout a number of our sessions. Play was therefore the most significant of all their activities at this stage.

“Today we played outside on the jungle gym, we ran and we played rugby. We played in the sand, we did some work, we ate, and we played again.” (Interview 1, Rick, line 10)

“I enjoyed it most when someone jumped with me on the trampoline at school. That is so nice!” (Interview 1, Alex, line 12)

“Positive stressors in Grade R includes friends, playing rugby, their teacher, learning new things, and feeling happy at school.” (Interview 2, researcher, field notes, line 4)

“I am never afraid at school because I know my school.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 85)

“Positive stressors with regard to the transition from Grade R to Grade 1 are their expectations. The children can’t wait to go up to Grade 1, and the excitement of doing that is evident among them.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 10)

“The boys ran outside, and they also played in the sand and on the jungle gyms. They are very active on the playground outside, and they are really enjoying themselves.” (Interview 9, Field notes, researcher, lines 1, 6, 9 and 10)

During my school visit, it was apparent to me that both Alex and Rick valued their teacher. From my point of view, she appeared to be very warm and caring.” (Interview 9, field notes, researcher, lines 49-52)

4.4.2.2 Negative stressors in Grade R

Friends who inflicted the physical or verbal harm on Alex and Rick constituted the main negative stressors experienced by the participants in their Grade R year. Every time this stressor appeared, it represented a significant ordeal for both of them. During our sessions, they would explain to me in great detail how they got hurt, the person involved, exactly what happened, and how offended they were in those situations. Some of the children who harmed them were their friends. Whilst most of the incidents were accidental, others were not, and these they described as bullies. Alex and Rick’s perceptions of bullies are set out in verbatim quotations below.

They also experienced schoolwork as a negative stressor probably because they preferred to participate in recreational activities outside rather than work in the classroom, even though they asserted that they derived pleasure from obtaining new knowledge. It was the view of their Grade R teacher that insufficient time was a major negative stressor for these children because of their demanding extra-mural activities.

“Negative stressors included feeling sad when friends were hurting them.” (Interview 2, researcher, field notes, line 4)

“I was angry at school when someone said rude things to me. The rude things he said to me were swear words.” (Interview 5, Alex, line 24- 28)

“I was very angry at school when another boy slapped me through my face.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 34)

“I was sad at school because other children hurt me.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 67)

“They bully me.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 71)

“A bully kicked me between my legs.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 30)

“It is nicer to play outside than to work in the classroom.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 70)

“Bullies don't have good manners.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 31)

“Bullies tease you.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 59)

“Bullies tease you and kick you.” (Interview 6, participant Y, line 60)

“Bullies take your things.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 58)

“Bullies hurt you and they swear at you.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 51)

“Bullies tease you and are rude to you and they make you angry.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 54)

“Bullies slap you and they make you sad.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 58)

“Bullies will drag you off your bike.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 60)

“Bullies will throw you down the slide, and that hurts your back.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 61)

“Negative stressors during the transition from Grade R to Grade 1 include insufficient time. Children have to engage in too many activities and they are forced to participate in all these activities.” (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, line 6)

4.4.2.3 Positive stressors in Grade 1

Throughout Grade 1, the participants experienced homework as a positive stressor. I also observed that both of them experienced a sense of accomplishment in this grade. Both of them felt more mature and enjoyed a sense of growth while completing their homework. They also displayed pride in being able to do their homework in my presence, and they would boast about being in the “big school”.

They also regarded themselves as being “clever” because they were attending Grade 1 and receiving homework. Alex and Rick also regarded their kindly teacher as a positive stressor. Even though most of their friends from Grade R had enrolled in another primary school, Alex and Rick still experienced their new friends in class and in the playground as positive stressors. There were times when they admitted that they missed their old friends, but the data from the interviews shows how well they managed to form new friendships and maintain those friendships. They also experienced being able to help others such as children who had got hurt or who were upset, as positive stressors. Both Alex and Rick would take great pride in telling me when they were able to assist someone at school.

Other positive stressors experienced by the individuals within a township were being able to participate in sport socially and competitively during competitions. For Alex and Rick, the more physically they could be engaged, the more energised they would feel. I observed the intense amount of excitement they showed every time they were physically active or involved in sports.

They also experienced the prefects who protected them as positive stressors during Grade 1. I noticed during the course of the interviews how safe Alex and Rick felt with the prefects at school. They experienced prefects as people who would help them if they needed help.

Acquiring new knowledge in class was another positive stressor for them. I observed the same feelings of accomplishment in Alex and Rick as they acquired new knowledge that I observed in them when they successfully completed their homework. I identified these feelings from our sessions in class and from my own observations.

I also identified buying food from the tuck shop as another positive stressor. I observed being able to purchase something from the tuck shop was exciting for Alex and Rick mainly because it was a new experience in Grade 1 which was different from what they experienced in their Grade R year than they used to have completely different things in their daily lunchboxes.

The participants also experienced the presence of their co-individual within a twinship in their class as a positive stressor. I construed this positive reaction as the security derived from being able to rely upon someone familiar in an unfamiliar setting. I observed how each of them felt confident and relaxed in the presence of his co-individual within a twinship in the class.

The individuals within a twinship also confirmed that the life skills that they learned during Grade R, made them better able to cope with school and so they regarded these life skills as positive stressors. They were also eager to discuss the life skills that they had learned with me, and describe to me how they applied them at school. They considered them to be helpful. I observed that these life skills they most valued were the socially orientated life skills that included how to deal with bullies and make friends, although they also valued the emotion-related life skills.

According to their Grade 1 teacher, supportive parents were another positive stressor. Their Grade 1 teacher explained to me how valuable an accommodating parents could be on the development of the child in contrast with parents who were not at all interested in their child's development. In this study, Alex and Ricks' parents showed supportive characteristics.

"It is nice to help other children at school and to get homework." (Interview 10, Alex, line 35)

"We enjoy playing at school, and even though we fell hard a few times, we are not scared."
(Interview 10, Alex, line 89)

"Today we played and work, and we enjoyed it." (Interview 11, Alex and Rick, line 25)

"I like our teacher because she helps us. I like having friends. We are getting smarter at school because we can buy something at the tuck shop and that is nice, and we can learn."
(Interview 12, Alex, lines 36, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46.)

“Today was nice because I played with my friends on the rugby field. We did some work in the class and I liked the teacher in the computer room.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 104, 111, 117)

“ One of the things I enjoyed today at school was making friend. I made new friends, and we played with our friends on the rugby field. I also enjoyed asking our teacher questions.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 110, 112, 116)

“It was nice in the computer room today because we learned something. On the rugby field it was also nice because we just played.” (Interview 13, Alex, lines 7, 13)

“I was good in class and I got a gold sticker. That was nice.” (Interview 13, Rick, line 22)

“It is nice when my brother plays with me at school.” (Interview 15, Alex, line 92)

“It was nice when we bought something at the tuck shop today.” (Interview 16, Alex, line 50)

“It was nice in the computer room because we can type.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 52)

“Grade 1 is nice. We like our teacher and we have lots of friends.” (Interview 16, Alex and Rick, line 94-106)

“Our teacher is not nice to the naughty boy but she is nice to us.” (Interview 17, Rick, line 39)

“We miss our old friends but we made new ones too.” (Interview 17, Rick, line 62)

“During my classroom observation, both Alex and Rick seemed confident and content in the presence of one another. It also seemed to me that the fact that they were in the same class as their co-individuals within a township, made them relaxed and comfortable”. (Field notes, researcher, Interview 19, line 24-28)

“Supportive parents are a positive stressor. Such are parents who are honest and who accept the fact that their children need help in a specific field. We can solve the problem and help the child if we have the cooperation of the parents. If the parents are in denial, it is hard to help the child. We can’t do it alone. The parents must regard us as their partners for the 6 hours we spend with their child each day and they must trust us and our opinions.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 81-97)

4.4.2.4 Negative stressors in Grade 1

Disobedient children and bullies were some of the negative stressors experienced by Alex and Rick during their Grade 1 year. My accumulated data enabled me to

identify disobedient children as problematic for Alex and Rick, mainly for two reasons. My first reason (and, according to my observations, the most important one) for reaching this conclusion was the fact that disobedient children distress their teacher and this emotional distress becomes visible in her face. The second reason was that disobedient children distract other children in class, including Alex and Rick, from their work. Alex in fact related how disobedient children don't bother him because he covers his ears when these situations arise. I took this as a confirmation of the way in which they disturbed him.

In addition to this, prefects who were very strict, were perceived as a negative stressor by Alex and Rick. Although the same prefects were experienced as a positive stressor (see the discussion about positive stressors in Grade 1), their strictness and rules were also regarded as a negative stressor.

The individuals within a township regarded the workload in Grade 1 as a negative stressor. But this was once again experienced as both a positive and a negative stressor by Alex and Rick. They described how they were able to acquire new knowledge and perform their homework satisfactorily as a positive experience that they identified as a positive stressor. Both of them, however, regarded the workload as challenging and categorised it as a negative stressor.

The following stressors were indicated by their Grade 1 teacher as perceived negative stressors by some children. However, these stressors weren't experienced as negative stressors by Alex and Rick. Their Grade 1 teacher noted that when some Grade 1 children found that they were not able to read or write for the moment they entered Grade 1, they were upset and regarded this, as well as the necessity of making new friends, as negative stressors. Their Grade 1 teacher told me in the interview that some of the Grade R children entered Grade 1 with a number of "ominous" expectations, which some of their Grade R teachers, their parents and their older siblings had stimulated in them before they arrived in Grade 1. Adequate social skills were also mentioned as neglected in some children according to their Grade 1 teacher and thus categorised as another negative stressors during Grade 1.

“The naughty kids are bad in Grade 1. They are bullies. They grab your things and kick you between the legs.” (Interview 10, Alex, line 13)

“Bad things at school are bullies, kicking someone when someone punches you, when a friend hurts you, and sometimes also my teacher when I get into trouble.” (Interview 12, Alex, lines 11, 14, 18, 23)

“Things I don’t like at school are those who punch others or kick others, or when someone steals from you, or when the prefects bothering us because they are too strict.” (Interview 12, Rick, lines 13, 15, 17, 21)

“The bully on the rugby field wasn’t nice. He didn’t bother us in class, but only on the rugby field when we were playing rugby.” (Interview 13, Alex, line 27)

“Things that weren’t nice today was when two boys who didn’t want to work in class didn’t listen to our teacher.” (Interview 16, Alex, line 29)

“They are bothering us because they don’t work. They just play in class and our teacher gets angry with them.” (Interview 16, Rick, line 36)

“It doesn’t bother me. I just put my hands over my ears so that I don’t hear them.” (Interview 16, Alex, line 43)

“Today wasn’t nice because there was a bully who picked me up and threw me on the ground.” (Interview 17, Alex, line 25)

“My view is that the stress that occurs during the transition from Grade R to Grade 1 is caused mainly by parents who tell them all these terrifying stories about primary school and Grade 1. When they arrive in Grade 1, some children will say, ‘Oh, but this isn’t so bad, and you are not so strict as I thought.’” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 23-26)

“Another negative stressor is the fact that most of the children think when they start Grade 1, they will be able to read and write. But unfortunately it takes a while before they can. That is quite a disappointment for them.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 27)

“The social skills required to make new friends are very stressful for some children when they lack these skills. We try to help them in these situations by giving them practical advice.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 35)

4.4.2.5 Positive stressors in Grade 2

In Grade 2, the positive stressors experienced by Alex and Rick included having a good teacher and friends. I observed that Alex and Rick were treated with respect

and with a positive and kind attitude by their peers and teachers. This positive experience gave them some form of gratification. Obtaining new knowledge and mastering academic skills were an additional experienced positive stressor, especially when they learned to write in cursive script. Even though this was occasionally challenging, this experience was positive. Their participation in recreation during break was another one of their highlights during the school day. It was during break and during active playing, as well as during their sport-related activities, that most of their social interactions and social activities took place. During these interactions, opportunities arose for Alex and Rick to apply the life skills that they had learned.

Another positive stressor was being able to complete their homework in class. The individuals within a twinship and I observed this activity as a positive stressor because it gave them more recreation time in the afternoon, as did the completion of their homework in the afternoon or late at night after their extra-mural activities. Being class captain and receiving achiever labels were also positive experiences for both Alex and Rick, and the more so for Rick because of his competitive nature. I observed that both Alex and Rick were more aware of their awards and responsibilities in class during their Grade 2 year than in the previous grades.

Being in separate classes was another positive stressor, and it was one of great importance to the participants in the study because their teachers and parents were confident that Alex and Rick were able to work and learn independently of one another. Alex and Rick's separation into different classes in Grade 2 was therefore a positive stressor, and they welcomed being in separate classrooms. I observed that both Alex and Rick adapted well because they promptly made new friends in their classrooms and still managed to spend time with each other during breaks. It appeared that they regarded being separated as temporary because they knew they would see each other during break times.

"Grade 2 is more difficult than Grade 1. I struggle a bit." (Interview 21, Alex, line 57)

"Grade 2 is nice." (Interview 21, Alex, line 23)

"Grade 2 is nice because my teacher doesn't get angry at me but with the others."
(Interview 21, Alex, line 27)

“In Grade 2 it is nice to work, to play games, and to do sums.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 43 and 49)

“I only like Grade 2 and my teacher a little because she gives out work too easily.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 128)

“Grade 2 is nice because it is nice to have all the books and because it is nice to write.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 142)

“A positive stressor was the fact that they were not in the same class anymore. They still play together during break. They can be individuals now.” (Interview 24, mother, line 63)

“Grade 2 is nicer than Grade 1 because we can write in cursive script.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 71)

“It is nice when we are allowed to do our homework in class.” (Interview 26, Alex, line 104)

“One thing I like most about Grade 2 is doing athletics.” (Interview 26, Rick, line 105)

“Today was nice when we played rugby and cricket on the rugby field, and we swapped rugby cards. It was also nice when I could show off my good work to the principal.” (Interview 27, Rick, lines 39 & 47)

“This week is nice because I am class captain.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 20)

“It was also nice because we played ‘opies’, and because the children don’t cheat anymore.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 26)

4.4.2.6 Negative stressors in Grade 2

A negative stressor in Grade 2 included the challenging amount of school and homework. I observed that the children in Grade 1 received an ample amount of assistance from their teacher with regard to their work in class. In Grade 2, the teachers expected the children to work more independently and to do the work on their own with less assistance from their teachers comparing to Grade 1.

Bullies, disobedient children and getting teased were additional negative stressors for the participants. It appeared that Alex was teased mainly because he was the shortest person in his class. When Alex was teased, he realised that this was an ideal opportunity for him to practise and apply some of the life skills that they had learned. Another negative stressor in their lives occurred when various Grade 3 children began to “bother” the Grade 2 children.

Alex and Rick also experienced a challenging amount of homework then given in Grade 2 as a negative stressor – an observation made initially by their mother and subsequently confirmed by themselves. According to the testimony presented both by Alex and Rick and by their mother, the participants received far more homework in Grade 2 when they had received in Grade 1. Furthermore, since the individuals within a township had by that time been placed in separate classes, homework was very often dissimilar in quantity and detail. This situation placed a great burden on their mother because she then had to assist them individually with their homework instead of being able to provide the same assistance for both of them as she had done when they were in Grade 1. The sheer amount of homework they were given in Grade 2, together with their more demanding extra-mural schedule, consumed much more of their time and resulted in them having less recreation time after school. This occasionally increased the amount of strain on both of them. Strict bathroom rules by their teachers in class, together with certain individuals who appeared upset at times, were both experienced as negative stressors by Alex and Rick.

According to their Grade 2 teachers, the necessity of having to adapt to new teachers at the beginning of the year and their separation from the friends they had previously made, were both negative stressors for some children, although not for Alex and Rick. The appearance of a new teacher is an ordinary experience for children promoted to a new grade. Their Grade 2 teachers mentioned that most of the children in their care adapted quite easily to having to cope with their new teachers. For some children, separation from their best friends of the previous year, is sometimes stressful. It appeared to me that Alex and Rick both adjusted well to their new Grade 2 teachers. My own observations together with what they themselves told me led me to believe that both Alex and Rick adjusted well to their new classes even though they were thus effectively separated from their co-individual within a township.

“Grade 2 is more difficult than Grade 1. I struggle a bit.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 57)

“One of the things that is not nice in Grade 2 is that we are not allowed to go to the bathroom between first and second break.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 79)

“There are still bullies in Grade 2.” (Interview 21, Alex, line 90)

“There are bullies in my class. They pinch and kick me.” (Interview 21, Rick, line 154)

“One of the things that wasn’t nice in Grade 2 was that we didn’t play ‘opies’ anymore because some of the children cheated and swore.” (Interview 22, Alex and Rick, lines 140 and 142)

“One of the things that I could see was hard for them was the work. Especially the homework. They got a lot more homework than they got in Grade 1.” (Interview 24, mother, line 22)

“Grade 2 is much more difficult for them, and it is also a bigger adjustment than it was for them in Grade 1. They also have to cope with much more pressure. In Grade 2 they are supposed to be big and brave. On some days they only came home at 21:00 in the evening, and then it was too late to do homework. For me and them it was much more difficult.” (Interview 24, mother, line 55-61)

“The only reason I say the adjustment to Grade 2 was more difficult for them than it was in Grade 1 was because of the workload, and not because of their separate classes.” (Interview 24, mother, line 105)

“One of the boys pushed and hurt me today. It wasn’t nice.” (Interview 25, Alex, line 127)

“The Grade 3s also hurts us.” (Interview 25, Alex, line 141)

“The naughty boy is still in my class and he is still naughty.” (Interview 25, Rick, line 13)

“All the work in Grade 2 isn’t so nice....” (Interview 26, Rick, line 83)

“Today somebody punched me in the face. It didn’t feel nice.” (Interview 27, Rick, line 18)

“It wasn’t nice today when our teacher cried. I felt sorry for her.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 4)

“On the rugby field it wasn’t nice when a boy fell and cried. I felt sorry for him and I helped him.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 112)

“Something that wasn’t nice today was when one boy had to write his name in the monkey manners book, and when someone stole from the tuck shop because they gave a fake R10 note.” (Interview 28, Alex, lines 11 and 29)

“The workload was stressful. Because of their hectic after extra-mural activities and their homework, both of them would sometimes be emotional. At such tough times, I just let them go to bed to sleep. Sometimes they weren’t able to cope with all the demands.” (Interview 28, mother, line 53-56)

“It appeared that both Alex and Rick adjusted well without the presence of their co-individual within a township, but with their Grade 2 teachers.” (Interview 29, Field notes, researcher, Line 87-90)

“I would say that the stressors which the children experienced in Grade 2 were the new teacher at the beginning of the year, and the new and unfamiliar setting. They had become used to their Grade 1 teacher for a year. But as the year progressed, it became easier for them.” (Interview 29, Alex’s Grade 2 teacher, line 13)

“Another thing that I perceived as a stressor was when best friends were placed into different classes in Grade 2. Sometimes that was also stressful for the parents as well. But we stick to our decisions, and some children need to be separated and placed in different classes.” (Interview 29, Rick’s Grade 2 teacher, line 17)

“Grade 2 was academically tougher for Rick than it was for Alex. The extensive amount of homework was also tough for Alex, but the work in general were really tough on Rick. Emotionally Grade 2 was challenging for both of them, even though Alex would show his emotions more readily by, for example, start crying about something or when someone was upset or hurt. The Grade 2 experience was equally emotionally challenging for both of them.” (Phone Interview, 3 November 2011, mother, line 5).

In the following two tables, I set out the four positive stressors that the participants experienced from Grade R through to Grade 2, followed by the two negative stressors that they experienced from Grade R through to Grade 2.

Table 4.7: Positive stressors that were present in all three years

Positive stressors that were present in Grade 0, Grade 1 and Grade 2
○ Friendships
○ Recreation outside the classroom and participation in sport
○ The supportive teacher
○ Acquiring and mastering of new knowledge

Table 4.8: Negative stressors that were present in all three years

Negative stressors that were present in Grade 0, Grade 1 and Grade 2	
○	Bullies
○	Disobedient children

There were four positive stressors that were present in all the three years from Grade R through to Grade 2. These positive stressors were the friendships they made, there are opportunities for outdoor recreation and participation in sport, their supportive teachers, and opportunities for acquiring and mastering of new knowledge. During these years, there were two negative stressors that were present from Grade R through to Grade 2. They were the presence and activities of disobedient children who disobeyed their teacher, friends who sometimes harmed them, and bullies.

4.4.3 WHICH COPING STRATEGIES WERE USED BY THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN A TWINSHIP TO COPE WITH CERTAIN IDENTIFIED STRESSORS BEFORE AND AFTER LIFE SKILL FACILITATION TOOK PLACE?

During the data analysis process, I identified four categories of events that stimulated the individuals within a twinship to practise their life skills. Their practice of these life skills enabled me to explore and explain how the individuals within a twinship made use of life skills and methods before and after life skill facilitation had taken place. These categories included their emotion-coping skills, bully-related skills, friendship skills and skills associated with coping with their demanding school-related work.

Table 4.9: Categories of events on which the participants practised their coping skills

Coping before and after life skill facilitation	
○	Emotions
○	Bullies
○	Friendships
○	School-related work

Before they were trained in life skills, it appeared in our sessions that Alex and Rick both thought that it was wrong to express feelings associated with anger. There had been some occasions, according to Alex and Rick, when they had shown signs of unacceptable social behaviour towards some of their friends, or to children they did not regard as their friends, because these children had harmed them, either intentionally or by accident. The data that I obtained from the interviews informed me that when the individuals within a township were angry with someone, or when someone behaved in a delinquent way towards them, they would on most of these occasions have demonstrated some unacceptable forms of social behaviour. Although Rick recalled during our interviews that he would retaliate against someone if he “wanted to”, such actions did not, as far as I could perceive, occur very frequently or on a daily basis.

“Both of the individuals within a township said that one is not allowed to get angry.”
(Interview 3, researcher, field notes, line 6)

“Sometimes when I get angry, I will hurt my friends. But then I will apologise.” (Interview 3, Alex, line 18)

“When I get angry with my friends at school, I won’t hit them. I will rather tell my teacher.”
(Interview 5, Alex, line 37)

“When I am angry with people at home or school, I kick them.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 51)

“When my friends at school hurt me, I kick them between the legs.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 74)

“I kick and slap the children at school because I want to.” (Interview 5, Rick, line 113)

Both Alex and Rick expressed an aversion to bullies. They also indicated that they had acted aggressively before they received life skill training. In both cases, they justified their aggressive behaviour in those cases where they were bullied first.

“Rick is a bully because he bent another boy’s finger.” (Interview 6, Alex, line 44)

“I have kicked bullies.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 101)

“You are allowed to hit a bully if he hits you.” (Interview 6, Rick, line 114)

During one of our role-play sessions, Alex and Rick revealed that they were not confident about how to develop new friendships. Because they were part of a secure twinship and appeared popular among their friends, it might not have been necessary for them to form *new* friendships in the past.

“Rick and Alex didn’t know how or what to say during our role play the theme of a making a new friend. They actually found it amusing.” (Interview 8, researcher, field notes, line 38-42)

Because they had never received any homework during their Grade R year (which was the year before they received life skill training), I was in no position to explore and explain their experiences of coping with homework before life skills facilitation took place. My only observation, which I made while observing events at their home and school, was that they preferred to engage in recreational activities outdoors rather than doing work in class. After they had been trained in life skills, Alex and Rick expressed the opinion that “one is allowed to get angry”. In my opinion, they acquired a good understanding of the concept that “dealing with anger in a positive manner” is healthy. According to the annotations set out below, Alex and Rick deliberately began to practise the positive coping strategies that they had learned. They seemed to have a good understanding of these concepts and were able to put them into practice.

“If you are angry or sad, you must tell your teacher.” (Interview 7, Alex, line 34)

“You are allowed to get angry. If you become angry, then all the fire comes out.” (Interview 17, Alex, line 82)

“Alex and Rick’s social and emotional skills were definitely intact. I don’t know if someone worked with them in connection with these skills before. They were never in fights, and they would always be concerned about any new child in class.” (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 142-149)

“If you become angry, you must throw the bean bag against the wall.” (Interview 22, Rick, line 126)

“I also feel less angry after I have kicked or punched my pillow.” (Interview 25, Rick, line 157)

“When I get angry at school, I kick the wall, and then I feel better.” (Interview 27, Rick, line 70)

“When I get angry at home, I throw my bean bag and I use the cards you gave me.”
(Interview 27, Alex, line 82)

“When I am sad at home, I cry in the bathroom with the door closed.” (Interview 27, Alex,
line 94)

Although Alex and Rick were “good friends” with one another before life skill facilitation took place (according to accounts of their previous behaviour and various clarifications), I detected a more positive attitude to the formation of new friendships after life skill facilitation had taken place. Their Grade 1 teachers noted how both Alex and Rick were at times concerned about new children in their class. This was also evident in their practical behaviour towards their friends and their applied friendship skills.

“If there is a friend who is upset, you must tell your teacher.” (Interview 7, Alex, line 27)

“I am a good friend because I help others and I give them sandwiches and I help them if they struggle with something.” (Interview 27, Rick, line 92-96)

“I am a good friend because I help others. I tell the prefects if someone has been hurt and I give food to kids who don’t have food.” (Interview 27, Alex, line 106)

The activities of bullies constituted a significant and definite stressor during Alex and Rick’s transition from Grade R through to Grade 2. According to my data, they encountered bullies on an almost daily basis at school. After they had been trained in skills, it seemed to me as though Alex and Rick were more confident about dealing with bullies, and they no longer displayed any fear of bullies. I observed their new perceptions of a bully as someone with whom they had to deal. This gave them permission to act in a more assertive and confident manner, rather than regarding any bully as a threat or source of disruption. Both of them were confident with the techniques they had been taught for dealing with bullies.

“You mustn’t hurt a bully. You must rather tell your teacher.” (Interview 7, Rick, line 32)

“We mustn’t hurt bullies.” (Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 143)

“We mustn’t swear at someone if they swear at us. We should rather tell the teacher.”
(Interview 12, Alex and Rick, line 145)

"I felt proud and happy when somebody bullied me and instead of bullying him in return, I told the teacher." (Interview 15, Alex, line 69-76)

"When somebody bullies me, I don't bully them back. I tell my teacher." (Interview 15, Rick, line 124)

"I don't hit or tease children who are rude to me." (Interview 15, Rick, line 162-164)

"Sometimes I fight back if I get bullied." (Interview 15, Rick, line 178)

"This one boy slapped me in the face. I told my teacher. I didn't hurt him back." (Interview 17, Alex, line 7)

"I don't get bullied anymore by this one boy because I told my teacher and she punished him. I feel happy and proud." (Interview 21, Alex, line 96)

"There are three bullies in the class who pinched me and kicked me. I told the teacher and she sent them to the principal's office. I didn't hit them back." (Interview 21, Rick, line 156)

"I think they remember the life skills you taught them. They would talk about bullies and I would ask them if they remembered the things you taught them, and they would remember them. I think they used those skills but they also forget to use them at times. I must remind them about them constantly." (Interview 24, mother, line 121-123)

"When someone hits you, you must say to them: 'You've hurt me, but I forgive you.'" (Interview 26, Alex, line 20)

"When the naughtiest boy kicked me, I just told the teacher. I didn't kick him back." (Interview 27, Rick, line 12)

"I didn't kick him back because that isn't nice." (Interview 27, Rick, line 22)

"I feel 'fantastico' if I don't bully someone back." (Interview 27, Rick, line 68)

"I don't bully someone. It is not nice. I just tell my teacher." (Interview 27, Alex, line 45)

"When I get teased, I start crying and then I tell my teacher." (Interview 27, Alex, line 70)

"When others tease me, I cry at my table." (Interview 27, Alex, line 92)

It is my opinion that one can reduce preparation time to a minimum when coping with demanding school work and homework if one devotes time to preparation and time planning. I also believe, however, that one can never be completely prepared for coping with a demanding amount of school work and homework. The life skill training that I offered the participants during the course of this study, did not include

techniques for time planning and for preparing oneself to cope with demanding school work. Alex and Rick’s experiences of the heavy load of school work and homework they received, occasionally resulted in emotional outbursts. When I asked their mother about these emotional outbursts, she confirmed that they occurred mostly when the boys were very tired and exhausted after a busy day, and then they came home and still had to do their homework. Their emotional behaviour included bursting into tears and expressing feelings of helplessness in the face of the seemingly challenging amount of work they had to accomplish.

“If Rick struggles, he will become very frustrated and very angry.” (Interview 24, mother of the twins, line 28)

“Rick is also clever, but he sometimes doesn’t get things right in the same time as his brother Alex. Rick may take a little longer. He understands it and he is okay with it, but when he is feeling tired, it becomes an issue. He will become frustrated and impatient and will start crying.” (Interview 24, mother of the twins, line 79-89)

“The workload was stressful. Because of their hectic extra-mural activities and their homework, both of them would sometimes become emotional.” (Interview 28, mother, line 53)

The following table summarises the data that I captured on the topic of this theme.

Table 4.10: Comparative results that show differences in coping before and after life skill facilitation took place

	Before life skill facilitation	After life skill facilitation
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not allowed to feel angry or sad ○ More frequently let negative emotions predominate by hurting someone back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allowed to feel angry or sad ○ Important to deal with emotions in a positive manner ○ Practised coping skills
Bullies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Justified physical behaviour when they got bullied first ○ Uncertainty in dealing with a bully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not scared of bullies ○ More assertive towards them ○ Choosing to tell someone when they were bullied rather than being a bully too
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Received no homework in Grade R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The amount of homework was overwhelming and tiring and this made them emotional

	Before life skill facilitation	After life skill facilitation
Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pleasant towards others ○ Unclear about how to form new friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned about others, and empathetic ○ Assisting friends in need ○ Effortlessly forming new friendships

⌘ Conclusion

Alex and Rick successfully used some of the important life skills they learned during their Grade R year. However, their mother confirmed (and my own observations bore this out) that they needed continuous motivation and encouragement to apply some of the skills they had learned. They began to use certain life skills at school, mostly after the encouragement and motivation they received during our sessions from myself and from their mother at home.

I was able to observe that the structured life skills facilitation sessions constituted an important supportive function for both Alex and Rick. I observed that they felt more relaxed and confident after they had been equipped with certain life coping skills such as bully-related skills. They received detailed practical advice from me, and were able to implement these skills during their interactions.

Another important principle that they understood was that they were allowed to feel angry or sad because the coping strategies they had been taught would enable them to deal confidently and constructively with these emotions. Because social skills were an important topic in this study, I assumed that the skills that they practised most frequently during their transitions from Grade R to Grade 2, were social skills.

If one examines the four main categories that I identified in this chapter, it can be seen that three out of the four categories dealt with social skills. The participants needed social skills to deal with their emotions, their friendships, and bullies. Their school-related work was the only category that did not require the practice of social skills. For the purpose of this study, one may therefore say that social skills were the main coping skill that were practised by the individuals within a township during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2.

4.4.4 WHICH LIFE SKILL FACILITATING STRATEGIES WERE USED BY THE GRADE R, GRADE 1 AND GRADE 2 TEACHERS TO THE CHILDREN IN THEIR CLASSROOMS?

During their stay in Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 2, all of the participating teachers in this study taught life skills mainly through the medium of Bible lessons. All of these teachers used the Bible as their main tool. They did this by illustrating various life skills by relating to stories and anecdotes from the Bible. The “fruits of the Spirit” was the most common lesson that their teachers used from the Bible to teach appropriate life skills. In addition to these Bible stories and teachings, their teachers made use of evocative posters, drawings and conversations about different emotions to teach the children about different emotions. Self-esteem and problem solving were some of the life skills they said they had taught to their children, and they also taught friendship skills when these were needed in practical situations. For most of the life skill lessons incorporated as part of Bible-based lessons, they also mentioned that opportunities for teaching life skills sometimes occurred at random times during various lessons that were unrelated to life skills. Only the Grade 2 teachers explained that there were dedicated life orientation periods which were designed for teaching life skills to the children. Although all of the teacher participants agreed that life skills were very important and necessary, they also noted that they were frequently neglected.

Table 4.11: Life skills facilitating strategies used by participating teachers

Life skill facilitating strategies used by participating teachers
○ The use of the Christian Bible as main textual source
○ Emotion-related skills
○ Self-esteem skills
○ Problem solving skills
○ Friendship skills
○ “Fruits of the Spirit” skills

“We teach the children about their emotions. We shall ask them how they feel, and we ask them to draw how they feel by using an emotion poster. We also use the ‘Fruits of the Spirit’ passage from the Bible to teach skills. We pay attention to their self-esteem and we teach them problem solving skills by asking them to open their own packet of chips, for example,

Our rule is that 'If you can, then you must do it yourself.' Tears don't help you to solve your problems." (Interview 9, Grade R teacher, lines 15-20)

"The social skills required for making new friends are very stressful for some children, and many children lack these skills. We try to help them in these situations by giving them practical advice." (Interview 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 35)

"When we teach them emotional life skills, and we will use Bible lessons to teach them these skills. We also talk about different emotional expressions, and then we have discussions about these specific emotions. You can't teach life skills without the Bible." (Interview, 19, Grade 1 teacher, line 51-56)

"The life skills that we teach the children, normally fit in with a lesson such as, for example, a Bible lesson. Because the learning of life skills is an ongoing process, we also have life orientation periods. It is definitely an ongoing process." (Interview 29, Alex's Grade 2 teacher, line 35 & 36)

"It is really rewarding when you teach them a certain skill and later on you see how the children observe one another. We use the 'Fruits of the Spirit' theme, and it worked really well. Every day one had to live out that specific fruit in practice. When a child doesn't act in accordance with the specific 'fruit' of the day, another child will tell him that he is not acting out his 'fruit'." (Interview 29, Rick's Grade 2 teacher, line 37)

"Yes, the 'Fruits of the Spirit' theme worked very well, and they still remember it." (Interview 29, Alex's Grade 2 teacher, line 43)

"There are definitely barriers in teaching life skills. I would say the obstacles are the different circumstances and life situations in which everyone lives in practice. Children receive various things and toys too easily." (Interview 29, Alex's Grade 2 teacher, line 46)

"We are planning a big moral and value action plan for the school. Each grade will get a responsibility. We also had a day on which everyone had to wear sunglasses, and when you spoke to someone, you had to take off your glasses and look at that person in the eyes. Children can't look people in the eyes anymore. We are also going to put all our plans on our website so that the learned skills can start at home with the parents and extend their influence straight through to school. We are also going to use 'manners for minors'. It is sad that we have to pay people to teach the children manners, but they need it. So next year we are very serious about the values and the programmes we are going to use." (Interview 29, Rick's Grade 2 teacher, line 48-55)

⌘ **Conclusion**

From the data I was able to collect, it became clear to me that the participating teachers did in fact apply various methods for teaching certain life skills to the children within their classes. I made the observation during my interviews with the participating teachers that they regarded life skills as valuable for the children. They noted that practical situations emerged for the facilitation of life skills, mostly in the middle of a Bible lesson or when a teacher saw an opportunity to assist someone with these skills during other lessons unrelated to the Bible. Even though the diversity of children and their families in a school environment presented valuable opportunities to facilitate life skills, these factors were often perceived to be barriers in the way of facilitating life skills. The Grade 2 teachers also emphasised the schools' current focus on life skill facilitation by means of programmes that involved the entire school. A private facilitation company was also used as a means to prepare children to learn basic manners in school.

4.4.5 WHAT WERE THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN A TWINSHIP'S REGARD TO GRADE 1 AND GRADE 2?

4.4.5.1 Expectations of Grade 1

The positive expectations of the participants regard to Grade 1 included the new friends that they would make. It also included rugby participation and a supportive teacher to whom they would listen. An expectation that they would be contented with their pleasurable Grade 1 experiences were additional expectations that they had regard to Grade 1. They also expected that they would be participating in recreational activities, although less, because of the demanding work that awaited them in Grade 1, together with additional and possibly burdensome homework requirements and responsibilities. Their negative expectations included the expectation of having friends who may harm them and disobedient children who could cause problems for them and their teacher.

Table 4.12: An illustration of expectations of the individuals within a township with regard to Grade 1 while they were still in their Grade R year

The individuals within a township's expectations of Grade 1	
o Contented during Grade 1	o We are going to listen to our teacher.
o Rugby	o Homework
o A supportive teacher	o Recreational activities
o New friendships	o Children are going to harm us
o We are going to work harder.	o Disobedient children
o Play less	

In Grade 1 there are also going to be friends, rugby, and a teacher. They are going to learn, and they are going to be sad when children hurt them. They are also going to be happy. They once again mentioned that other children would hurt them. Things that are going to be different from what they were in Grade R. They would have new friends. They would have to the work harder and play less . They would also have more homework.” (Interview 2, researcher, field notes, lines 4-15)

“Grade 1 is going to be nice.” (Interview 2, Alex and Rick, line 2)

“The friends are going to be friendly, the teacher is going to be friendly, and we are going to play rugby with our friends. We are going to do homework in the class, we are going to listen to our teacher, and we are going to play with our friends in class.” (Interview 2, Alex and Rick, lines the 3-5)

“I feel happy when I think of Grade 1.” (Interview 2, Rick, line 7)

“When I see Grade 1, I see nice friends, and I see a class and toys.” (Interview 2, Rick, line 9)

“Grade 1 is going to be nice. We are going to play, ride our bicycles, and there is going to be toys and homework.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 15)

“I feel good when I think of Grade 1.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 18)

“When I see Grade 1, I see nice things such as friends, tables, a teacher, toys, bottles, naughty children, bicycles and trees.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 20)

“At Grade 1 I see adults, lots of children, and lots of parents.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 25)

“We are going to work and play in Grade 1.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 27)

“Things that are not going to be nice in Grade 1 will be when other children throw sand in our eyes, when other children take our bikes, and when there is a splinter in my foot.” (Interview 2, Alex, line 54 and 56)

“When other children hurt you: that won’t be nice.” (Interview 2, Rick, line 55)

“We are not afraid of Grade 1. We are also going to work there.”(Interview 5, Alex and Rick, line 87)

4.4.5.2 Expectations of Grade 2

Alex and Rick’s positive expectations with regard to Grade 2 were as follows: They had high expectations that their existing friendships from Grade 1 would continue during Grade 2. They felt excited about attending Grade 2 instead of feelings of anxiety. They were excited of the fact that they would be climbing stairs in Grade 2 because of their classrooms being situated on the second floor. Both of them expected that writing in cursive script would be exciting as well as challenging. Negative expectations on the part of Alex and Rick included having to face more challenging work in Grade 2 than in Grade 1.

Table 4.13: An illustration of the individuals within a township’s expectations of Grade 2 (these impressions were obtained in their Grade 1 year)

The individuals within a township’s expectations of Grade 2	
o Existing friends	o Writing in cursive script
o Climbing stairs	o Absence of anxiety
o More challenging work	o Excitement

“The individuals within a township told me that Grade 2 would be nice and exciting because they would have the same friends. They are also going to climb the stairs because their classes were situated on the first floor. They would also be able to write in cursive script in Grade 2, and they are expected that that would be difficult. They also expected the work to be more difficult than it was in Grade 1. We are going to get homework again” (Interview 20, researcher, field notes, line 1)

⌘ **Conclusion**

During the course of this study, it seemed that the individuals within a township's expectations with regard to what they would find in Grade 1 and Grade 2 were largely accurate and realistic. Most of the expectations that the individuals within a township had of their future grades included elements of their lived experiences during their Grade 1 and Grade 2 years respectively. Even though their expectations were largely realistic and accurate, they did not include the entire repertoire of their lived experiences during their transitions from Grade R through to Grade 2. When I reflected on the data that I accumulated, it appeared to me that their expectations were mostly positive.

4.5 FINAL REMARKS

In this chapter, I presented a rich and in-depth exploration of the context of this study. I answered the primary research question by presenting the accumulated findings in terms of three illustrative themes. I then answered the five secondary research questions for this study. In the following chapter, I will locate the findings of this study within the existing literature on this topic. I will focus in that chapter on the correlations and contradictions as well as silences between the findings of this study and in the current literature itself. It will conclude by relating the findings of this study to the conceptual framework underlying this study.

