

CHAPTER 5

Emotional Awareness

Human emotion involves "...physiological arousal, expressive behaviors, and conscious experience". ~ David Myers

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Harold and Hay (2003:9) indicate that physical, cognitive and emotional matters as well as relationships collectively influence the adaptive or maladaptive pathways that children chart from childhood to adulthood.

Emotions, emotional development and emotional awareness are therefore imperative to the positive development of children. This study focuses on this very important aspect regarding childhood development with the emphasis on the emotional awareness of the child in the middle childhood developmental phase. Due to the capacious nature of this subject, this chapter will solely focus on relevant facets of emotions with an emphasis on emotional awareness, which we need to take note of in order to comprehend the direction and aim of this study.

Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins (2006:5) are of the opinion that Charles Darwin's book *The expression of the emotions in man and animal* published in 1872, is one of the most important publications on emotions yet written. Darwin asks two questions, namely:

- (1) Where do emotions come from?
- (2) How are emotions expressed?

In the opinion of Oatley et al. (2006:5) these are the two questions still asked regarding this topic.

Stein (2007:57) tracks the origin and importance of emotions and emotional awareness back to when man lived in caves and hunted for a living. Occasionally when a larger, stronger, carnivorous

animal was encountered, emotional intelligence meant the difference between eating and being eaten. The successful navigation of the “fight or flight” response determined whether he would survive. Stein (2007:57) points toward this being an early example of managing emotions.

Bronson (2000:148) substantiates this by saying that emotional responses exert powerful influences on self-regulation and that emotional reactions appear to evolve with behavioural responses as part of the human adaptive system for survival. In our modern society we are no longer in daily confrontation and fear for physical survival, although our hectic lives and the high expectations of modern day life present another quest for survival in itself. We therefore need to determine where emotions fit into our daily existence.

Diener, Lucas and Oishi (2005:63) investigated subjective well-being or as they stated it “*what makes a good life?*” They found that emotional reactions to events as well as the cognitive judgment of satisfaction and fulfilment thereof are the role-players here. The experiencing of emotions, low levels of negative moods and high life satisfaction are thus what makes life rewarding. It is therefore evident that we are still rotating in the same cycle of survival even though the playing field has changed.

Becoming aware of the emotions that direct our satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life is the core of this study and, as indicated, plays an important role in the cycle of “survival” from early times to our current day. Emotional awareness forms part of an emotional structure, which in turn forms the core of our well-being and the origin, components and function thereof are hence significant for the purpose of the study. Deutschendorf (2009:36) lays emphasis on the fact that one needs to become aware of emotions before they can serve a meaningful purpose. It is evident in the comparison of strong and more subtle emotions. Emotions like anger or fear are very strong emotions and thus obvious, but others like shame or guilt are more subtle and one would consciously need to become aware of them. Children’s awareness in this regard is thus just as important for their development.

Children’s knowledge about emotions and the expression of their own feelings, as well as reactions to the emotions of those around them are highlighted by Barnes (1995:138) as designated childhood tasks. Being able to recognize emotions means that children can make sense, for

example, of a parent's anger or sadness rather than experiencing anxiousness or fear as a result thereof. Macklem (2008:55) indicates in this regard that if children are punished when they experience negative feelings, they associate the emotion with negative consequences increasing their distress and the intensity of the emotion, so that it becomes difficult to regulate their emotions. Seeing that brain functioning is at the core of all systems involved in human behaviour and performance it also plays an important part in emotional development and daily operation.

As indicated and discussed in the previous chapter, Bronson (2000:148) confirms that the principal brain structures that mediate emotional reactions are situated in the limbic system, a middle area of the brain between the brain stem and the cerebral cortex. There are more neural fibres connecting the limbic system to the logical and rational centres in the cerebral cortex than travelling in the opposite direction, so emotions are more likely to influence thinking and decision making than rational processes are to change emotions. It is therefore suitable to remark that emotions are at the centre of our being and therefore a determining facet within the development of human beings. It is for that reason important within this study to determine what emotion, emotional development and emotional awareness entail in order to understand the intention, purpose and benefit of emotions within healthy development and daily life.

This chapter will discuss emotions in two parts by initially commencing with a focus on the concept of emotion and then broadening the discussion from there to emotional development and awareness and concluding with an in-depth focus on the emotions and emotional awareness of children.

5.2 EMOTION IN GENERAL

Kostelnik, Gregory and Soderman (2011:127) observe that positive emotions indicate to children that all is right with the world and prompt them to continue or repeat pleasurable activities. On the other hand, some emotions signal discontent, misfortune or danger and alert the child that something is wrong. The important role of emotions in the daily lives of children is thus evident for its indication of pleasure, danger or even only for the colour it adds to daily experiences.

The following section of this chapter will focus on the concepts of emotions and conceptualize emotion from different perspectives and discuss the theories underlying emotion.

5.2.1 Conceptualization of the Concept Emotion

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [sa], the concept emotion came from the Latin word *exmovere*, meaning to *move out*, *agitate*, or *excite*. Where emotions are stirred, they bring movement or action about, and that is how it becomes a part of us. Emotions are defined by Webster Stratton (1999:285) as “the response to stimuli or situations that affect a person strongly”. West and Turner (2011:217) define emotion as “the critical internal structure that orients us to, and engages us with, what matters in our lives; our feelings about ourselves and others”. Baumeister and Bushman (2011:161) explain emotion to be “a conscious evaluation reaction to something, and that the person who has the emotion - knows it”.

A broader description of emotions is given by Morris (2009:75), who describes emotion as “an alert system, much of which operates on a subconscious level to keep us on the right course for a flourishing existence”. Kagan (2007:1) states that “every emotion originates in brain activity. An emotion is hence first and foremost a psychological activity which is determined by a brain state because each brain profile can give rise to an envelope of emotions. The specific emotion that emerges thus depends on the setting and always on the person’s history and biology”. White (2002:166) elaborates on this notion when he further highlights that “emotions are typically accompanied by bodily sensations, although not invariably so. Some emotions may be as free of bodily sensation as to be virtually mere thoughts”. Morris (2009:75) on the other hand signifies emotions to be a concept with two basic functions: “they draw us towards objects, people and events that ensure our survival but also drive us away from objects, people and events that threaten our survival”.

Emotions are thus defined by the researcher as an internal process orientating a person regarding events or people in his or her life; this orientation implies a positive or negative experience and is accompanied by an indication of a reaction to the event or person involved. The different definitions for emotion as cited above indicate the many different viewpoints from which emotions

are approached. It is thus apparent that the concept of emotion needs to be approached from different perspectives in order to comprehend the full meaning of this concept.

5.2.2 The Concept Emotion from Different Perspectives

Due to the complexity of emotions, the concept emotion is viewed from different perspectives. In this regard Webster Stratton (1999:285) observes emotional responses to occur on three levels namely, *biological*, *behavioural* and *cognitive*. These levels seem to provide the foundation for the views of different perspectives regarding emotion. The levels on which emotions occur according to Webster Stratton (1999:285) will hence be briefly discussed followed by a discussion on the viewpoints of the different perspectives regarding emotion.

- The first, most basic level involves *neurophysiological and biochemical or biological* reactions to stimuli, including all the bodily processes regulated by the autonomic nervous system: heart rate, blood flow, respiration, hormonal secretions and neural responses. A person who feels angry, for example, will feel his/her heart race and face redden.
- The second level of emotional response is *behavioural*, where expression of emotion is a person's actions. This level includes facial expressions and behaviour such as crying, sullen gazes, withdrawal from interactions with others, defiant actions and delayed responses; thus sociological and psychological responses.
- The third level is *cognitive* and involves language (whether spoken, written or thought) by which a person labels his/her feelings as in, "I feel angry!"

The levels of emotional response as mentioned above can be incorporated in the following perspectives and is discussed according to the perspectives standpoint regarding emotions.

5.2.2.1 Biological perspective

The Miller-Keane and O'Toole Encyclopaedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health (Miller-Keane & O'Toole, 2005:189) describes emotion to be "a state of arousal characterized by alteration of feeling tone and by physiologic behavioural changes". The external manifestation of emotion is called affect; a pervasive and sustained emotional state or mood. The

physical form of emotion may be outward and evident to others, as in crying, laughing, blushing, or a variety of facial expressions. However, emotion is not always reflected in a person's appearance and actions even though psychological changes are taking place.

The biological perspective on emotions thus entails affective behaviour brought about as a result of an emotion and is externally visible.

5.2.2.2 Sociological perspective

Turner and Stets (2005:2) believe that most sociologists indicate emotions to be socially constructed in the sense that what people feel is conditioned by socialization into culture and by participation in social structures. According to these authors "cultural ideologies, beliefs and norms as they impinge on social structures define what emotions are experienced and how these culturally defined emotions are to be expressed". Sociology therefore labels emotions as social constructions.

5.2.2.3 Psychological perspective

Kagan (2007:23) states that a large number of psychologists regard the idea of human emotion as "an abstract, value free construct referring to four different, imperfectly related phenomena, namely:

- a change in brain activity to select incentives;
- a consciously detected change in feeling that has sensory qualities;
- cognitive processes that interpret and/or label the feeling with words; and
- a preparedness for, or display of a behavioural response".

Cherry (2011) a psychosocial rehabilitation specialist utilizes behavioral, cognitive and socialization strategies to help children cope with family relationships, peer interactions, aggression, social skills and academic difficulties. She echoes the above description of Kagan when she summarizes that in psychology, emotion is often defined as "a complex state of feeling

that results in physical and psychological changes which influence thought and behaviour”. He concludes that “emotionality is associated with a range of psychological phenomena including temperament, personality, mood and motivation”. It thus seems as if the psychological perspective combines a number of attributes which form part of some of the other perspectives and thereby provide a very inclusive view on emotions.

5.2.2.4 The cognitive perspective

The studies of Hynes, Baird and Grafton (2006:167-178) point toward the deficit in empathic ability after injury to the orbital frontal lobe of the brain. In a functional magnetic resonance imaging study with healthy participants, emotional perspective-taking was contrasted with cognitive perspective-taking in order to examine the role of the orbital frontal lobe in subcomponents of theory of mind processing. They found that the frontal lobe was preferentially involved in emotional as compared to cognitive perspective taking.

Lane and Nadal (2002:4) found it evident that emotion has important effects on mental functions that are indisputably cognitive such as memory, attention and perception. This important area of study clearly belongs in cognitive neuroscience. Lane and Nadal (2002:408) summarize their studies regarding the link between cognitive neuroscience and emotions in the explanation that there is a distinction between implicit and explicit processes found in many areas of cognitive neuroscience such as memory, language, perception and motor control. The process whereby emotional significance and behavioural responses are generated often steps outside of conscious awareness.

It is partly due to the notion that emotion has these strong cognitive ties that this study intends to indicate the important role the educational system can play in promoting emotional awareness of learners.

This very broad spectrum of ideas regarding emotion necessitates a focused investigation into the scientific thought behind emotion and emotional development. The theoretical basis of

understanding emotion is therefore an essential starting point in this study's attempt to add on to the existing knowledge and the current and earlier basis of emotional comprehension.

5.2.3 Theories on Emotions

The term theory is extensively defined in the *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* [sa] and provides an expanded view on the meaning of the term 'theory'. It is significant to take note of this broad explanation due to the different approaches to emotion, which need to be included in our understanding of the views, conceptions and perceptions of emotion which brought us to the understanding that will serve as the point of departure for this study.

Theory is thus described in the *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* [sa] as:

- the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another
- abstract thought or speculation
- the general or abstract principles of a body of fact, a science, or an art
- a belief, policy, or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action
- an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles, or circumstances
- plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena
- an unproved assumption presenting a concise systematic view of a subject.

If theories concerning emotion and the effect of emotional abilities are investigated, a vast amount of different theories with related different viewpoints are available. These theories are not all relevant to this study but it gives a clear indication of the immense effect of emotions on the whole of the human being. It therefore supports the importance of emotional awareness in an effort to direct the child to holistic positive development. Straker [Sa] summarizes some of these theories on the website: *Changing Minds. Disciplines, Techniques, Principles, Explanations, Theories* [Sa]. He lists the following academic theories, with a broad description, applicable to emotional influences:

- **Cognitive Appraisal Theories of Emotion:** One decides what to feel after interpreting events.
- **Durability bias:** We over-estimate how long emotions will last.
- **Focalism:** We think an emotion is driven by a single event.
- **Impact bias:** Over-estimation of the effect of emotional events.
- **James-Lange Theory of Emotion:** Physiological changes lead to emotions.
- **Love:** Difference in types of affection.
- **Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion:** Emotions lead to physiological changes.
- **Mood-Congruent Judgment:** Our moods bias our judgments.
- **Mood memory:** We recall things that match our current mood.
- **Opponent-Process Theory:** Opposite emotions can work together.
- **Social Contagion:** We catch emotions from others.
- **Schachter-Singer / Two-Factor Theory of Emotion:** We deduce feelings from our situation.
- **Affect Perseverance:** Preference persists after disconfirmation.
- **Aggression:** A learned and social act.
- **Buffer effect of Social Support:** People that are supported feel less stressed.

Specific theories attempting to explain emotion, its origin and effect arise from as early as 1872 with Darwin's theory on man and animal's expression on emotion. The investigation into emotion developed from thereon and different early theories emerged in an attempt to shed light on this phenomenon (Ten Houten, 2007:xi). The following section will focus on some early theories as well as current theories on emotion in order to put emotion within theoretical perspective in terms of this research study.

5.2.3.1 Early theories of emotion

The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals is a book by Charles Darwin published in 1872. In this publication, Darwin expresses his belief that members of a specie communicate by means of body movements and facial expressions (body language, or nonverbal communication). He suggested that although emotional expressions are initially learned behaviour, they eventually evolve to become innate in a specie because they have survival value. Recognition by one animal

that a second animal is afraid rather than angry, for example, allows appropriate survival actions to be undertaken (Sonderegger, 1998:216).

From these first thoughts on emotion evolved several different viewpoints in later times. The major early theories on emotion include three main categories, namely: cognitive, physiological and neurological theories. Cherry (sa) differentiates them as follows:

- Cognitive theories argue that mental activity and the individual's thoughts play a fundamental role in the construction of emotions.
- Physiological theories imply that responses within the body are initially accountable for the formation of emotions.
- Neurological theories suggest that brain activity leads to emotional responses.

Different theories on emotion have been developed and studied within all of the above fields of study. In order to comprehend emotions in context of this study, the following four initial theories on emotions set the foundation for this study:

i) James-Lange Theory of Emotion

Sonderegger (1998:83) signifies that two theorists, William James in 1884 and Carl Lange in 1885, independently proposed that emotions do not immediately follow the perception of an event but rather occur after the body has responded to the event. Their ideas were combined into the James-Lange Theory of Emotion as described by Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2011:333), Coon and Mitterer (2011:377) and Sonderegger (1998:83). According to this theory, you see an external stimulus that leads to a physiological reaction. Your emotional reaction depends on your interpretation of the physical reactions. They made use of the example of an individual walking in the woods when he sees a grizzly bear. He starts to tremble and his heart begins to race. The James-Lange theory thus proposes that his interpretation of his physical reactions will direct him to the conclusion that he is frightened "I am trembling, therefore I am afraid". This theory thus labels an instinctive experience (gut reaction) as an emotional state. Autonomic reaction to stimuli is observed and these physical sensations are labelled as feelings.

Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2013:311-312) indicate that the theory was regarded as a good start but was questioned regarding aspects like the fact that instinctive responses may not occur quickly enough to account for sudden emotions and some intuitive responses. The range of emotions that can be experienced is much broader and more complex than the range of physiological responses or “gut” reactions taken into account by James and Lange.

In the 1990s some new evidence gave the James-Lange theory new life, for scientists now have more sophisticated ways of measuring physiological changes by the minute which designate that the theory may have some valid conclusions (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2011:334).

ii) The Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion

The Cannon-Bard theory is another well-known physiological explanation of emotion. Nevid (2008:311) elucidates that this theory was developed by Walter Cannon and Philip Bard, who stated that emotions and experiencing of physiological reactions happen simultaneously. They took the view that feedback from physiological changes cannot cause emotion because these changes happen too slowly to explain the almost immediate experience of an emotion (Franzoi, 2011:169). Philip Bard agreed with Cannon and expanded on his work in what is now known as the Cannon-Bard Theory (also called the Emergency Theory) which argues that the thalamus, a lower brain stem structure (part of the limbic system), is necessary for emotional responses. The thalamus sends messages to the cortex for interpretation of the emotion and simultaneously to the sympathetic nervous system for appropriate physical responses. According to the Cannon-Bard Theory, then, the identification (experience) of an emotion occurs at the same time as the activation of bodily responses and not because of them (as the James-Lange theory proposed). Coon and Mitterer (2011:377) explain that this theory thus indicates that when a stimulus is presented, it activates the thalamus in the brain. The thalamus then simultaneously signals the cortex (produces emotional feelings and behaviour) and the hypothalamus (triggers a chain of events that arouses the body) for action. They simplify this with the example that if a danger becomes present (a bear), brain activity will simultaneously produce bodily arousal (running) and a feeling of fear.

Rocha do Amaral and de Oliveira [sa] compare the two physiological theories of Cannon-Bard and James-Lange with each other and depict its differences in the following schematic exposition.

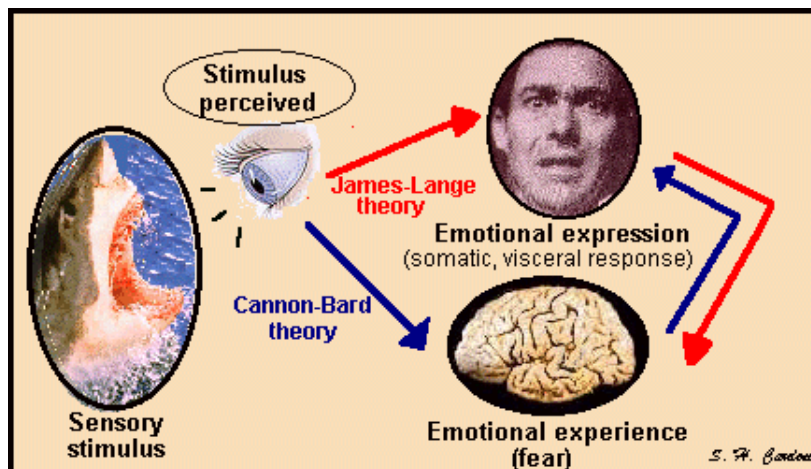


Figure 5.1: Comparison between the James-Lange and the Cannon-Bard theories on emotion. (Source: Rocha do Amaral and de Oliveira [sa])

Figure 5.1 presents a comparison between the James-Lange and the Cannon-Bard theories. The James-Lange Theory states that when the sensory stimulus (shark) is perceived a person first experiences the somatic reaction to what is perceived (racing heartbeat) which is then communicated to the brain and formed into a emotion (fear). The Cannon-Bard Theory on the other hand indicates that when the sensory stimulus (shark) is perceived the situation is first appraised in the brain and evaluated as a emotion (fear) and only after the emotion is identified does the somatic reaction (racing heartbeat) occur in accordance to the emotion identified.

iii) *The Schachter-Singer Theory/"Two Factor Theory"/Cognitive-Arousal Theory.*

Also known as the Two Factor Theory of Emotion, the Schachter-Singer Theory is an example of a cognitive theory of emotion. Shiota and Kalat (2011:15) designate that this theory advocates that physiological arousal often accompanies emotion and is essential for determining how strong the emotional feeling will be, but it does not identify the emotion.

Roeckelain (2006:536) elucidates on the reason why this theory is also referred to as the “Two Factor Theory” in his explanation that the theory indicates that emotion depends on two components being present, namely:

- some kind of objective physiological arousal; and
- a subjective cognitive process of appraisal whereby bodily changes are interpreted and labelled.

A stimulus thus causes physiological arousal; this is considered in light of environmental and social cues which then aid its interpretation as an emotional state, based on these cues. In other words, the environment and in particular the behaviour of other people is utilized to explain a physiological state.

iv) The Lazarus' Cognitive-Mediational Theory

This theory by Richard Lazarus is relatively new as it stems from 1995. Lazarus’s theory is an extension of the Schacter-Singer theory. Carter and Seifert (2012:428) explain that this theory indicates to our cognitive appraisal of a situation to determine which emotion we will feel in a specific situation. They elaborate that different cognitive appraisals explain why similar situations can create different emotions in different people. Fontaine (2012:62) elucidate this further in their indication that according to Lazarus’ Cognitive-Mediational Theory, emotions play an adaptive role in that they serve to orient and prepare a person to respond to alternative situations as a direct result of how the individual assesses the situation.

Kerig, Schultz and Hauzer (2012:20) add that in Lazarus’s model, two categories of appraisal work together to shape the quality and intensity of emotional experience, namely:

- *Primary appraisal*: determines whether an event is relevant to one’s beliefs and goals. Only when assessed that there is a personal stake in an encounter, such as preservation of self-image, does an emotion occur. Emotion thus acts as a signal to the individual and others that something of significance is at stake for the individual.

- *Secondary appraisal*: involves an evaluation of how our actions might influence a situation. Coping in stressful situations might be directed at reducing the effect of the harm or avoiding further harm. In a situation that elicits positive emotion, efforts may be directed at enhancing the benefit of the experience.

These theoretical views on emotion conclude to the fact that emotions and their dimensions have intrigued scientists for centuries, and the study of emotions is still a field of study with a magnitude of possibilities. A factor that we have learned from the different components (social, physiological, emotional and psychological) of the human being and which we need to keep in mind is that it is all inextricably connected with each other and emotions seem to play a very important part.

5.2.3.2 Current theory of emotion

Definitions on emotion are divergent and as we've seen, ultimately derived from the specific view or focal point of different perspectives or different authors. The researcher found Plutchik's (2001:344) comprehensive definition of emotion to be most applicable to this study for it incorporates the different suggestions of several other authors on the topic. He defines emotion as "not simply a feeling state, but a complex chain of loosely connected events, a chain beginning with a stimulus and including feelings, psychological changes, impulses to action, and specific goal-directed behaviour". In other words, he says that feelings do not occur in isolation; they are the responses to significant situations in the life of an individual, and often the motivation for actions.

Robert Plutchik developed significant thoughts and theoretic viewpoints regarding emotions through his extensive research of the subject. He developed a model he named *the circumplex model on personality and emotion*. Plutchik and Conte (1997:7) elucidates how emotions are generally interpreted as aspects of interpersonal interactions. He revealed that the language of emotion and of personality traits are closely related and that both can be represented by a circular structure. This circular structure or phenomenon is termed by him as a "circumplex".

Drew (2004) reports the perception formed by Plutchik to be that there are only eight basic emotions arranged in opposing pairs. The basic eight emotions plus combinations yields 32 distinct emotional states, which Plutchik suggests will cover the spectrum of human emotion. These eight basic emotions, according to Plutchik, are listed by Sotto Morettini (2010:120) as anger, fear, sadness, joy, disgust, shame, anticipation and trust. It includes different emotional states, which evidently involves different emotions, linked to the basic emotion. Plutchik developed the “Wheel of emotion” to simplify this complexity of interlinked emotions, as displayed in Figure 5.2.

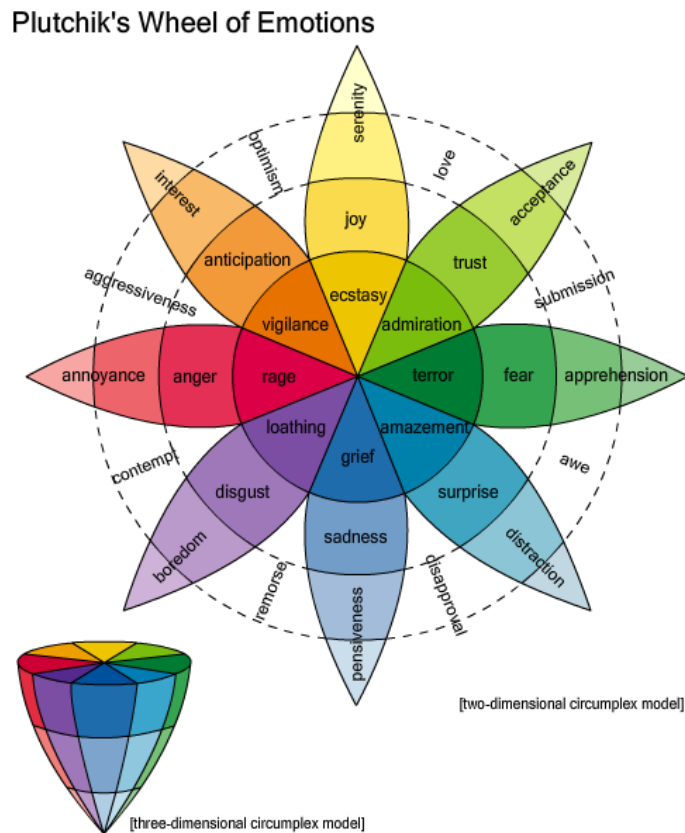


Figure 5.2: Plutchik’s Wheel of Emotion (Drew, 2004)

Turner (2000:75) points out that the idea with the “wheel of emotion” is to indicate how the basic emotions mix to produce more complex (or in his language ‘derived’) states. Sotto Morettini (2010:120) indicated that these emotions mix in various ways according to their proximity in the wheel above. The primary dyads (which are a mix of emotions above, and adjacent in the wheel) produces secondary emotions such as joy + acceptance = friendliness. Similarly secondary dyads

mix emotions once removed from each other on the wheel (sadness + anger = sullenness) and tertiary dyads are formed when emotions twice removed are mixed (anticipation + fear = anxiety) and produce secondary emotions.

The origin of emotions, its formation and the output it conveys, seem to be a complex multifaceted field. The scientific discussion, thought and reasoning regarding emotion take us back to the purpose of this study, namely the impact of emotion and emotional awareness on children in their middle childhood developmental phase.

An investigation into the emotional dimension with regard to the emotional development of individuals is evident in the explication of Goertzel's (2004) ideas regarding emotion. He states emotion to be a mental state marked by prominent internal temporal patterns that are not controllable to any reasonable extent and that emotions have the property that their state is far more easily interpretable by integration of past and future information. Such patterns will often, though not always, involve complex and broad physiological changes.

This observation of emotions along with previously discussed theories on emotions support the purpose of this study in the indication of the imperative part played by emotion in order to support children to develop and function optimally. Explanations for the origin, development and existence of emotion were investigated up to this point of this chapter. The aim of this study is development of emotional competency in children and the concept of emotional development and emotional awareness are thus of importance within the conceptualization of the emotional realm, especially regarding children.

The following section of this chapter will thus focus on specific aspects related to the emotions of children.

5.3 ASPECTS RELATED TO EMOTIONS IN CHILDREN

The following part of this chapter will attempt to funnel the information on emotion from a broad informational base, down to content significant for the purpose of this study namely, the emotions,

and in particular emotional awareness, of children in their middle childhood developmental phase. We need to determine what the benefits of emotional development within this age group are and from there focus on emotional awareness as applicable to the study.

5.3.1 The Importance of Emotional Development for Children

Macintyre (2001:33) emphasizes that meaningful emotional development is of huge importance as a part of the child's healthy development, for it allows children to:

- Approach new situations with confidence.
- Express feelings and emotions.
- Cope with anxieties and be more resilient.
- Enjoy open-ended problems.
- Appreciate works of art/music/dance.
- Cry if they want to.
- Understand the perceptions of other people.
- Develop altruism.
- Pretend to be someone else.
- Appreciate atmosphere, e.g. in church.
- Be innovative and imaginative.

This is confirmed by Mash and Wolfe (2010:44) who designate emotions and affective expressions to be core elements of the human psychological experience for emotions are a central feature of infant activity and regulation from birth. They indicate that children's emotional experience, expression and regulation affect the quality of their social interaction and relationships and thus are the foundation of early personality development.

Mosley (2005:1) notes the tendency that schools have for years used IQ tests in an attempt to predict which students will do well in both higher education and the workplace. It is now believed that these tests are inadequate and that future success is indicated much more accurately by the measurement of a child's social, emotional and behavioural skills. She further states that social

and emotional skills are learned, first at home, and then in the wider community of which the school plays an important part.

Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr and Kates (2005:37) also highlight that there is an increasing realization that the neglect of emotional aspects brings about irreparable damage to one of a child's most important sources of knowledge. Emotional awareness supplies children with knowledge to understand and process their own behaviour and the behaviour of others in relationships, class situations or in sport. It further develops self-confidence to venture out in perseverance in spite of failure, for children feel safer within a knowledgebase of the emotions that they are experiencing.

Borland et al. (1998:31) found children in their middle childhood developmental phase to engage enthusiastically in discussions about feelings, showing the ability to identify a wide range of emotions and to reflect on what circumstances might provoke them and how they might be experienced.

Researchers have discovered loads of information signifying the prominent role of emotional development in the lives of children. These important findings highlight the role and impact of emotion in children's existence and the reasons for their emotional performance. A few of these prominent studies focus on the following: emotional expressions, e.g. the ability to encode and/or decode facial expressions (De Sonnevile, Vershoor, Njiokiktjien, Veld, Toorenaar, & Vranken, 2002); explanations for emotional states (De Rosnay & Harris, 2002); explaining age- and gender-related patterns in emotion development and the understanding of emotion complexity (Rotenberg & Eisenberg, 1997); emotional dissemblance, when feelings are shown indirectly or deceptively (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997; Rotenberg & Eisenberg, 1997; Saarni, 1999); affective labelling and affective perspective-taking tasks (Dunn, Cutting & Demetriou, 2000; McElwain & Volling, 2002); and assessment of the causes of emotions in self and others (Hughes & Dunn, 1998; Dunn et al., 2000).

Emotion not only serves as an internal monitoring and guidance system for the child, but it is also designed to appraise events as being beneficial or dangerous and thus provides motivation for action. Mash and Wolfe (2010:45) note that children have a natural tendency to attend to emotional cues from others which help them learn to interpret and to regulate their own emotions.

The important role of emotions and development of emotions in the child are thus evident. The enormous amount of facets involved in emotions and its effect on human existence is too broad for thorough inclusion in a study of this nature. It is therefore essential to channel the topic to the aspects related to the aim of the study. This is then where the matter of emotional intelligence and emotional awareness fit into the discussion.

5.3.2 Emotional Awareness and Emotional Intelligence during Middle Childhood

One needs to take note of different facets of emotions when emotion is discussed within its relevance to children's emotional health. Emotional awareness and emotional intelligence are the two aspects underlying emotional education and, although closely related, they are also at variance with each other.

Emotional intelligence is a term widely utilized and well acknowledged while emotional awareness is a less familiar term and its dimensions less common to the broader community. It is therefore necessary to take note of these two terms and their significance within emotional research regarding children.

Emotions, emotional awareness and emotional intelligence are the three concepts within this study, which even though closely linked to each other are also very diverse. It is important to differentiate between these terms in order to incorporate each of them appropriately, within the study of the emotional development of children.

The term emotion was extensively discussed in the beginning of this chapter. When one needs to differentiate between the concepts, *emotions*, *emotional awareness* and *emotional intelligence* in terms of this study with an emphasis on them concerning children, we need to go back to basics. A fundamental, explanatory description of emotion will then be found in the indication of Kirk (2009) that "emotions have a reason to be. They prompt (the child) for action, they motivate (the child), help (the child) communicate with others, and give (the child) important information about what is going on in a given situation". This definition was found by the researcher to be a good

synopsis where children are the topic of our reasoning regarding emotions. However, like anything else in life, if misused or out of balance it can cause trouble. If that is the case, emotions can sometimes lead children to inappropriate behaviour. If emotions make them do things that they will regret later and are causing them trouble in different areas of their lives, they need to learn, understand and control them.

This is then where emotional awareness and emotional intelligence are relevant.

5.3.2.1 Emotional awareness

Indicating the importance and worth, as well as possibility to enhance and develop emotional awareness within the educational system is the basis, purpose and ultimate aim of this study. If *emotion* in Kirk's (2009) opinion needs "a reason to be", emotional awareness would be an understanding of that reason and will include an understanding or ability to recognize, identify and act on the result of that "reason". Kagan (2007:42) cites Lawrence Weiskrantz's uncomplicated definition of emotional awareness as "an ability to make a commentary".

Kirk (2009) elaborates that "emotions are a full-system response comprising a variety of factors and experiences, and they include bodily sensations and the individual's thoughts". In order to control emotions one will need to get in touch with one's thoughts and body signals simultaneously. This will require knowledge and hence result in emotional awareness.

Venter (1998:14) describes emotional awareness as "the individual's level of emotional functioning". These levels differ from the lowest level (emotional numbness) to the highest level (interactivity). The higher the individual's level of emotional awareness the higher his/her level of functioning. An optimal level of emotional awareness results in emotional maturity, which entails the ability to monitor own emotions as well as the emotions of others. This ability has to be obtained or taught and Deutschendorf (2009:36) elaborates that to be aware of our emotions also depends on what we have been taught to do with them. If a person is raised to believe that emotions were bad and needed to be concealed at all times, he may have buried them so deeply that he will have trouble accessing them.

Therapeutic intervention is therefore often necessary to access these repressed emotions in order to understand some difficulties or emotional obstacle in one's life. Deutschendorf (2009:36) correctly states that "in the case of emotional awareness, it is not a matter of what we do not know will not hurt us. Repressed emotions do and will continue to hurt unless it is brought into one's awareness and dealt with". Mosley (2005:14) substantiates this with her indication that the ability to manage our emotions to our own benefit is a key skill which ensures that we sustain a sense of emotional well-being despite the difficulties that life throws at us. Self-mastery puts us in the driver's seat so that we can steer ourselves through life with a heightened degree of empowerment and control.

Emotional awareness in the context of this study refers to children's knowledge of specific emotions and its impact on their general emotional and psychological development. Optimal emotional awareness explains physical and psychological reactions to specific fears in children's lives and enables them to own these feelings and directs them to take control of it, rather than allowing it to take control of them.

5.3.2.2 Emotional intelligence

Stein (2007:58) points out that two psychologists, namely Peter Salovey and John Mayer, had coined the term "emotional intelligence". Emotional intelligence is defined by Mayer and Salovey (1997:10) as "the degree to which children are able to understand their emotions accurately, to predict its worth and express it correctly, grounded on emotional knowledge, and to further regulate emotions to enhance emotional and intellectual growth". Salovey and Mayer add to their 1997 definition in Salovey, Brackett and Mayer (2004:5) in their description of emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and the feelings and emotions of others, to discriminate amongst them and to use this information to guide one's feelings and actions".

Knoetze (2006:30) defines emotional intelligence as "obtained emotional knowledge and skills of an individual, fixed through application and emotional experience resulting from emotional awareness".

Emotional intelligence can therefore be understood as emotional knowledge and a set of skills, which facilitates our way in a multifaceted life – through the individual, societal and endurance aspects of overall intelligence. It is an indication of our ability to be perceptive, sensitive and in control of our emotions in everyday life. The ultimate goal concerning emotional health would thus be the achievement of emotional intelligence which will only be accomplished after a series of emotional growth has taken place as is indicated by Salovey et al. (2004:165) in their reference to the Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence of Mayer and Salovey, namely:

- Perceiving emotion: *to accurately perceive emotions in oneself and others*
- Emotional facilitation: *using emotions to facilitate thinking*
- Understanding and analyzing emotions: *understand emotional meanings*
- Managing emotions: *emotional regulation to enhance personal growth and relations.*

These “four branches” thus refer to the developmental phases in which emotional intelligence is obtained. The following table elaborates on the different abilities present in each of these branches/phases.

Table 5.1: The four-branch model of emotional intelligence

Perception, Appraisal and Expression of Emotion			
Ability to identify emotion in one's physical states, feelings, and thoughts.	Ability to identify emotions in other people, designs, artwork, etc. through language, sound, appearance, and behaviour.	Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to those feelings.	Ability to discriminate between accurate and inaccurate, or honest vs. dishonest expressions of feeling.
Emotional Facilitation of Thinking			
Emotions prioritize thinking by directing attention to important information.	Emotions are sufficiently vivid and available that they can be generated as aids to judgment and memory concerning feelings	Emotional mood swings change the individual's perspective from optimistic to pessimistic, encouraging	Emotional states differentially encourage specific problem-solving approaches such as when happiness facilitates inductive reasoning and

		consideration of multiple points of view.	creativity.
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Understanding and Analyzing Emotions; Employing Emotional Knowledge			
Ability to label emotions and recognize relations among the words and the emotions themselves, such as the relation between liking and loving.	Ability to interpret the meanings that emotions convey regarding relationships, such as that sadness often accompanies a loss.	Ability to understand complex feelings: simultaneous feelings of love and hate or blends such as awe as a combination of fear and surprise.	Ability to recognize likely transitions among emotions, such as the transition from anger to satisfaction or from anger to shame.

Reflective Regulation of Emotion to Promote Emotional and Intellectual Growth			
Ability to stay open to feelings, both those that are pleasant and those that are unpleasant.	Ability to reflectively engage or detach from an emotion depending upon its judged informativeness or utility.	Ability to reflectively monitor emotions in relation to oneself and others, such as recognizing how clear, typical, influential or reasonable they are.	Ability to manage emotion in oneself and others by moderating negative emotions and enhancing pleasant ones, without repressing or exaggerating information they may convey.

Source: (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997:10, 11)

The abilities indicated in Table 5.1 need to be mastered in order to be emotionally intelligent. Once it has been successfully incorporated into the day to day existence of an individual, it develops into certain competencies. In this regard Goleman in Boverie and Kroth (2001:141) divides emotional intelligence into five emotional competencies, namely:

- **Self-awareness:** to identify and name one's emotional states and to understand the link between emotions, thought and action.
- **Self-regulation:** to manage one's emotional states - to control emotions or to shift undesirable emotional states to more adequate ones.

- **Motivation:** to enter into emotional states associated with a drive to achieve and be successful.
- **Empathy:** to read, be sensitive to and influence other people's emotions.
- **Social skills:** to enter and sustain satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

Pahl (2009:6) points to Goleman's view on these emotional competencies which is that they build on each other in a hierarchy. He indicates that emotions first need to be identified in order to manage them. This is thus where the distinction between emotional awareness and emotional intelligence lies. Identification and knowledge of an emotion and its effect proceeds before it can be managed due to the emotional intelligence gained through this awareness. Becoming emotionally aware evidently takes time and is achieved through mastering certain levels of awareness until it results in optimal emotional intelligence. The level of emotional awareness will thus result in an inferior or superior emotional intelligence.

To better understand the concept of emotional awareness we need to take a closer look into the emotional awareness model regarding levels of emotional awareness and discuss emotional awareness as a cognitive ability.

5.3.3 Levels of Emotional Awareness

According to Lane (2000:171) emotional awareness may be the skill most fundamental to emotional intelligence. As previously noted, Lane and Schwartz (1987) defined emotional awareness as “the ability to identify and describe one’s own emotions, and those of other people”. The construct is derived from the developmental levels of the emotional awareness model, as illustrated in Table 5.2, which focuses on the structure and complexity of emotion representations. That is, the capacity to differentiate emotions from one another and the levels of the emotion complexity inherent in the description of emotional experiences.

Emotional awareness, in terms of levels of emotional awareness, was first placed into context by Lane and Schwartz in the 1980s (1987:135). These levels can be described as representative of the abilities achieved through a developmental process in close comparison to Piaget’s developmental theory. Since then several scientists elucidated on these levels and a clearer concept, from different points of view, became available to us.

Carblis (2008:107) highlights Lane and Swartz' indication that individuals develop and differ from one another in and through the way that they structurally organize and experience emotional arousal. He adds that development through emotional levels of awareness is thus seen as a consequence of progressive and hierarchical transformation within the structural organization of emotion related cognition (Carblis, 2008:107).

Different levels of experiencing emotions are identified by Blom (2004:95), Hein (2003), Tileston (2004:30) and Lane and Schwartz (1987:142) and the specific attributes of these levels are discussed by them. Seven levels in the process of achieving emotional awareness are identified by the researcher from a comparison of these authors' opinions, and are summarized in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Levels of emotional awareness

Levels of emotional awareness	Characteristics	Perception/Sensation	Emotional Skills/abilities
Level 1	Emotional numbness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to identify and experience emotions correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No emotional skills which results in emotional numbness.
Level 2	Physical sensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical sensation • Tummy aches or headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of specific feelings accompanying specific experiences
Level 3	Primary experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction prone • Self conscious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of emotion
Level 4	Verbal blockage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive labeling for future reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the emotion • Determining the emotional need • Appropriate corrective action • More logic reaction to emotion
Level 5	Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single emotions out • Comprehension of the natural worth of emotions e.g. fear vs. protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing and identifying emotions • Emotional self-control • Achievement of positive goals • Stronger ability to complete tasks
Level 6	Causality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of amalgamation of emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on emotion: • Low awareness: Reflecting after emotion was experienced (sleeplessness) • High awareness: Experience and identification happens fast enough for reflection to take place.
Level 7	Empathy and interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of combinations of combined emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of intensity differences within different emotions • Conception of complex emotional combinations
Level 8	Prediction of emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal awareness of emotional content and its effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of similar situations e.g. where anxiety or fear was experienced • Motivated into directions where positive emotions was experienced • Consideration for others – <i>what doesn't feel good to me most probably doesn't feel good for another</i> • Better decision making skills

It should be evident from Table 5.2 how emotional awareness develops through a process as is designated by the different levels of emotional awareness. This serves as an indication of how far an individual has developed in being emotionally aware. Any given individual is thus at some level of being emotionally aware at any given time. The researcher therefore finds it important to highlight the fact that individuals are able to develop their emotional skills *up the ranks of emotional awareness levels*. This emphasizes that emotional awareness is thus an ability that can be taught in the same way that cognitive abilities are. It is hence of interest to conclude this chapter with a swift focus on emotional awareness as a cognitive ability.

5.3.4 Emotional Awareness as a Cognitive Ability

Webster Stratton [sa] labels regulation of emotional responses as a developmental achievement just like walking, talking and toilet training, which is not present at birth – i.e. it must be learned. Infants express their distress with a soiled nappy or hunger in the only way they can – through crying. The transition period from infancy to toddlerhood is accompanied by maturation in the child’s emotional regulatory system. As children develop language and communication skills, they become increasingly able to label their emotions, thoughts and intentions.

Bajgar, Ciarrochi, Lane and Deane (2005:572) value emotional awareness to be a cognitive ability, which develops through a process similar to Piaget’s theory of cognition. They are of the opinion that the ability to be emotionally aware can thus be taught to children in the same manner than cognitive abilities are, and can be learned by them through the same process cognitive abilities are mastered, according to Piaget.

Thomas (2005:192) summarizes Piaget’s cognitive development theory as an indication that knowledge is a process of acting – physically and/or mentally – on objects and symbols that the child’s perceptual lens has cast into patterns that are somewhat familiar. The objects are found in the world or direct experience, while the images and symbols can be derived not only from the “real world” but from memory as well. Bronson (2000:22) points out that according to Piaget’s model of cognitive adaptation, development occurs by means of two complementary processes. These “equilibration” processes allow information from the environment to enter and sometimes

change existing cognitive structures. If incoming information matches or is similar enough to existing mental structures or “schemas,” it is incorporated or “assimilated” into them. If incoming information is relevant to existing schemas but is inconsistent or conflicts with them, the structures are revised or alternate structures are constructed to “accommodate” the new information.

It seems thus as if it can be concluded that the development of emotional awareness (as a knowledge base of emotional intelligence) of children in their middle childhood developmental phase is an imperative developmental achievement. Educating children in this ability seems to be a task which they can master in the same way they obtain cognitive abilities and knowledge and hence move nearer to achieving wholeness or the concept of “holism” as discussed in chapter 2. It is thus evident why and how the educational system can be utilized in order to develop emotional awareness in generations of the future.

5.4 SUMMARY

Damasio in Bronson (2000:148) differentiates between “primary” reactions and “secondary” emotions. He suggests that primary emotional reactions such as startle or responses to loud noises or falling are innate and are likely to be triggered automatically. Secondary emotions, such as fear of doing badly on tests or pleasure at seeing a friend, are learned and easier to control.

This chapter indicated that a person’s experiences, perceptions and opinions in a situation do not only originate from a situation itself, but from the emotion that situation conveys based on previous occurrence, experience or knowledge of the emotional content derived by the situation.

It was therefore significant to examine the term emotion and its importance within the existence of human beings as well as the different branches in emotions, namely emotional awareness and emotional intelligence from different perspectives. The role of emotional awareness within the emotional development and emotional health of children was analysed and it was determined that sound emotional health and optimal emotional intelligence seem to be linked to emotional awareness. Being emotionally aware seems to be a factor that supports a person’s emotional

knowledge base and ability to maintain emotional balance and therefore plays an important role in the manner in which one is able to stand his ground.

The emotions that we develop through our experiences in life directly shape and affect all our subsequent interactions, experiences, relationships, and setbacks.

The ability of emotional awareness can be taught to children in the same manner as cognitive abilities are taught and therefore is a facet that needs to be developed in order to achieve the full benefit of being emotionally intelligent. Barnes (1995:139) agrees in this regard that emotions are embedded in social relations but are mediated by cognition. The concept of emotion and emotional awareness was extensively discussed in this chapter underlining the perspective that emotional awareness is a facet that can be educated. The following chapter will focus on the educational system and broaden the view of how emotional development in middle childhood and the educational system can become partners in achieving development of the “whole” learner.

CHAPTER 6

Emotional Development within the Educational System

Children hold their teachers in high regard and have strong emotional ties to them, for the teacher is an authority figure that cares for, protects, and loves them. ~ Seefeldt

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The educational system has a profound role to play in the character and success of a community through their input into the development and enrichment of future generations. The politicians, psychologists, educators, church leaders, doctors, social workers, day care mothers and business men of the future are currently on the school benches and who or what they will become are to a large extent in the hands of the educating system. Eleanor Roosevelt (1930:94) stated many years ago that: "the true purpose of education is to produce citizens". In the 1930s the message behind this statement was aimed in the direction of education in general, but it is still valid in modern day. It is important to realize that with new knowledge the content of education need to be revised and supplemented but still for the same purpose as some 80 years ago, namely "to produce citizens".

With this in mind we need to take a closer look at the current situation in our educational system and focus on the educational scope available to learners. We need to determine whether or not our schools are creating building blocks that will be steadfast and one day be part of impressive buildings in their communities.

Many children have their first experience of engagement with adults and other children who are not members of the primary family system when they start with their education in the school context. More than just academic achievement is thus required of children to be successful in this arena. They must also acquire the ability to interact with others in a socially acceptable and

effective manner (Fapiano, Norris & Haynes, 2001:47). Seefeldt (2005:134-135) highlights other factors affecting children's social development once they entered the school setting. Educators and a principal now set rules, limits and standards for behaviour and other children become models, setting new or different standards for social behaviour.

Rutter, in Cowie, Boardman, Dawkins and Jennifer (2004:25), indicates that children spend almost as much of their waking life during their formative years at school as they do at home. Altogether, this works out at some 15 000 hours during which schools and educators have an impact on the development of learners in their care.

Karpov (2005:201) states that the neo-Vygotskians have characterized learning in school as the leading activity of children in industrialized societies, during the period of middle childhood. Although interaction between emotion and acquisition of social competence starts in early infancy through the mother/infant relationship, according to Ellis and Newton (2000:266) this is later influenced by the relationship between child and educator.

This consequently implies that the educating system's stake in the development of children is not much less than those of the parent or caretaker, and thus needs to be viewed in light of the important role it has to play in this regard. EAUDE (2006:63) elucidates on this responsibility in his indication that the role of both educators and parents is to help, support and guide children in actively creating their own identity and character by providing a framework of values. He adds that "early experiences, responses and relationships affect how young children regulate their emotions and behaviour. Uncertainty provokes powerful emotional reactions, especially anxiety, which inhibit their ability to learn".

Cohen (2001:56) points to the fact that academic and social emotional learning are implacably intertwined. Learning for all children is in large part as much a social and emotional experience as it is a cognitive one. He emphasizes that we cannot and do not turn off children's emotions when trying to teach them to read or write or to solve math problems. Diekstra [sa] agrees that "education is not just a matter of fostering cognitive-academic, but should be directed at the overall, i.e. physical, cognitive, social, emotional and moral development of the child". Consequently educational systems or institutions, such as schools, that exclusively or

predominantly focus on academic or cognitive development violate children's rights, for everyone has the right to share in the benefits of scientific progress and its application. In other words, if scientific research has validly identified approaches and methods that enhance the overall development of children in and by the educational system, the child has the right to be educated through such approaches and methods.

Seefeldt (2005:134-135) postulates very clearly that:

Children in school settings need to retain their individuality, yet they must give it up by putting the welfare and interest of the group before their own. In school they must share not only materials and time but also the attention of the educator. They learn to cooperate, see the viewpoint of others and work together for common welfare.

According to Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg in Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg (2004:3) schools will be most successful in their educational mission if they integrate efforts to promote children's academic, social and emotional learning. They further accentuate the general agreement that it is important for schools to foster children's emotional development.

"Spending time in and around a school provides ample opportunity to observe learners who are having difficulty coping with stresses of their daily lives". Macklem (2008:1) made this statement as an introduction to the following description of scenes which may play out on the playground and in the classroom:

On the playground you might see a student with an angry expression pushing another student out of the way. You might hear one yelling at his playmates about whether or not he is "in" or "out" of the game. You might spot yet another student sulking long after being reprimanded by a playground monitor or one isolating herself on the edge of the playground avoiding interaction or even eye contact with any other child on the playground.

Inside the school building, you might find a parent or educator trying to calm a student or a frustrated educator trying to interact reasonably with one who has shut down completely and cannot hear anything that is being said to him. You might find an older student in the rest room, trying to calm down after he "escaped" (temporarily) from teasing he has been subjected to. You might observe a student who is always "scapegoated" by peers, or one who scribbles over an almost finished paper, or crumple it up for he has made an error. You might see a student taking a test who is dealing with so much emotion that she cannot even begin to write.

We can carry on with this list for several pages and add numerous incidents of this nature. Although not always visible to the casual observer, the proficiency and skill of the educators and staff of the school will determine whether these situations will pass without any acknowledgment and effort to assist these learners or whether they will indeed receive support and solutions.

The ideal situation is to have a school where the climate is of such a nature that children will not have to endure these kinds of circumstances or where situations like the ones depicted will not have the opportunity to develop into emotional destruction for the victim. Coetzee and Jansen (2007:1) concur that “unless the emotional needs of children are met, they cannot function effectively and do not derive the intellectual benefit of their education”.

Moynihan (2005) indicates that *Time* magazine reported on a survey of 39 child-care centres and elementary schools in 2003. The survey found that 93% of the schools said kindergartners had more emotional and behavioural problems compared with five years earlier, and over half the day-care centres said “incidents of rage and anger” had also increased. The example was given of a three-year-old “who will take a fork and stab another child in the forehead”. One answer to these problems has been to medicate them. Spending on drugs to treat children and adolescents for behaviour-related disorders rose 77% from 2000 to the end of 2003 in the United States. Sales of such drugs are growing faster than any type of medicine taken by children.

This is an undesirable way out of an unacceptable problem and we therefore need to find an adequate solution for this issue.

The goal of this chapter is to examine opinions concerning the possibilities within and the role of the educational system to develop the “whole” child in order to be most beneficial to learners. The discrepancy between the current situation where the education system primarily focuses on cognitive development and what can be achieved through the incorporation of emotional content need to be determined.

6.2 RATIONALE FOR INCORPORATING EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The researcher found through professional work with children in cooperation with their schools and educators that there is a lack of comprehension on the essential part that emotions, or deficiency thereof, play with relation to the child's behaviour, ability to perform and future healthy development. Knoetze (2006:105-109) determined that educators agree that emotional awareness, as part of a child's development, is of utmost importance and that they have insufficient knowledge on this topic. Out of the total number of respondents, 89% indicated that they would be prepared to adjust their current education methods to incorporate emotional education, and 77% indicated that they had no knowledge of any programs or courses on emotional awareness available to educators. On the question whether respondents would be interested to be trained on the subject, the researcher had a 100% positive response. It was therefore concluded that it would be of value to develop a program to address emotional awareness, provide training on the topic to educators and support the educational system on this subject which the respondents regarded as important due to their limited knowledge in this field. This formed the rationale for the initiative to utilize the South African educational system in this manner for emotional development of the child in middle childhood. The following part of this discussion will provide a broader clarification on the rationale behind the inclusion of emotional development in the educational curriculum.

Brunskill (2006:x) states that:

“research is bringing home the wide extent of various types of child neglect and abuse. The opinion is that departments of education can no longer assume that all parents are doing an efficient job in raising their children. This is further exacerbated by the breakdown of extended families and communities, which reduces support for the nuclear family, and the higher rates of divorce and subsequent one-parent families”.

There is thus a pressing need for the educational system to take co-responsibility for the emotional health of learners and to include emotional content into the daily educational curriculum.

The educational system carries the responsibility of laying the foundation of a nation and therefore needs to fulfil this task adequately. Dr. Martin Luther King made a valuable summary of his view on the purpose of education, which also serves as a motivation for the rationale of this study (Luther King, 1947). He described his view on this subject as follows:

- Education must enable a man to become more efficient, so he can achieve with increasing competence the legitimate goals of his life.
- Education must train one for quick and effective thinking.
- Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.
- The purpose of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Intelligence is not enough, intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.
- Comprehensive education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.
- Broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only accumulated knowledge but also accumulated experience of social living.

Mosley (2005:2) indicates that social, emotional, and behavioural skills are not something that we can teach in a lesson and then forget about. They are personality traits, ways of interacting and a sense of self-worth that grow with us and are nurtured through the ongoing interactions that children have every day with their peers and the adults who surround them.

Children are in school for several hours per day and Wright (2006:42) states that this is a significant amount of time to modify any inappropriate behaviour. Cowie et al. (2004:24) note in this regard that “successful schools tend to have pupils who behave well, achieve their potential, and are able to develop rewarding relationships with a variety of people”.

Cohen (2001:4) urges that it is abundantly clear to those who work with young children that how children feel about themselves and others colours and shapes their ability to learn. Their social emotional capacities powerfully affect, and even determine, their ability to listen and communicate, to concentrate, to recognize, understand, and solve problems.

Whilst experiences at school can affect emotional well-being, young people also bring to school things that are troubling them which arise outside the school. Cowie et al. (2004:25) substantiate the development and enhancement of emotional awareness through the utilization of the educational system in eight reasons why schools should be involved with the emotional well-being of their pupils, namely:

- *Rates of psychosocial problems have increased and become common.*

Visible in conduct disorder, substance use, depressive disorder, eating disorders and suicidal behaviour of learners.

- *Associated negative labels may make coping with emotional issues harder.*

One in four people are affected by a mental health problem at some point in their life. Unfortunately, social and personal views may delay the seeking of appropriate help and may compound the isolation and difficulties experienced.

- *Educational stressors are an increasingly important contributory factor particularly for middle-class girls.*

Schools run a balance between motivation and stress. Individuals perform best in an atmosphere with a low or moderate level of anxiety. However, level of achievement drops rapidly when a certain point of anxiety is reached. As this point varies between individuals, applying academic pressure will only benefit a proportion of students. Some will remain under-motivated whereas others will perform less well because stress levels have become too high. Conscientious girls are more at risk of the latter than 'laid back' boys.

- *Peer relationships are important indicators of a person's psychological health and predict their future functioning.*

Acceptance in the peer group is an extremely important determinant of indicators of psychopathology. Relationships with peers are crucial to a person's emotional well-being and form an important part of daily life in school. Schools should be encouraged to do what they can to promote healthy positive peer relations and to assist those who are withdrawn and rejected by their peers or who misuse their power by bullying others.

- *Young people say they would approach an educator for help.*

The most important aspects of this support is confidentiality and for the children to feel understood. They need to experience the feeling of being listened to and being able to trust the educator as a helper.

- *The role of the educator is multifaceted and changing.*

Schools have always had some role in health education. Although the emphasis tends to be on physical health, and specific topics such as drugs, nutrition and exercise, there is a growing realization that mental, emotional and social health need to be more prominent.

- *Academic success will be enhanced if schools promote the emotional health and well-being of their pupils.*

Children learn more effectively if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves, like their educators and feel the school is supporting them. The importance of satisfying physical, emotional and social needs, before people can concentrate on intellectual matters, has long been recognized. Maslow, in Wright (2006:10), described a hierarchy of needs that need to be satisfied at the lower level before they can deal with the tasks of a higher level.

- *It is intrinsically a worthwhile thing to do.*

Educating learners to achieve or strive to achieve happiness, emotional health and good relationships is positive in itself.

Cohen (2001:124) corroborates that children preoccupied with interpersonal conflict or consumed with other emotional tensions are unable to make friends, engage in maladaptive behaviour and are less able to focus on the academic demands of the classroom. He is of the opinion that children who are failing at math most probably do not need more math; they might rather need to relieve whatever tension prevents them from focusing on the math they are getting. He further found that children who desperately want friends gained more from learning skills to make friends than from focus on their academic skills, for they became more interested in the task-oriented demands of the classroom once they had been able to make friends. The importance of social skills development is thus clear. In this regard Seefeldt (2005:136) mentions that the focus on social skill development is threefold and should revolve around the development of the following:

- **Self-concept.** Children's feelings about themselves are the foundation from which they learn to relate to and communicate with others.
- **Pro-social skills.** Being able to cooperate and share is necessary for forming solid relationships with others.
- **Making and keeping friends.** Children who relate to and communicate with others, sharing and cooperating, are those who are accepted by their peers and can make and keep friends.

Cowie et al. (2004:35) indicate that: "both the mental health and the emotional intelligence of everyone in a school can be improved by instituting an emotional development intervention for the whole school. Issues may be highlighted where it influenced individuals, but a whole-school response can generate benefits for everyone".

A school is a place of social activity: a community, which has a personality in its own right. They are inevitably involved in the mental and emotional health of their pupils.

Prever (2006:13) refers to figures of the organisation Minds on the website Young Minds (2012) which indicates that any school of 1,000 pupils there is likely to be:

- 50 pupils with a depressive illness;
- 100 who are suffering significant distress;
- 10-20 pupils with obsessive-compulsive disorder; and
- 5-10 girls with an eating disorder

Their conclusion is that the majority of the school is made up of children with only reasonable mental health and resilience. These children may have experienced emotional distress, which though not significant enough to present as a syndrome makes their life less fulfilling and enjoyable. Life events, such as prolonged bullying or parental separation, can tip their mental health into distress or illness. Only a small number of children will have very good mental health and a high level of resilience (Young Minds, 2012).

Long and Fogell (1999:28) specify the following six skills which can be taught and practiced in the school setting and then implemented in real life situations:

- **Classroom skills:** listening, following instructions, saying thank you.
- **Friendship making skills:** introducing yourself, giving a compliment, joining in.
- **Dealing with feelings:** knowing and expressing feelings, dealing with anger or affection.
- **Alternatives to aggression:** self-control, responding to teasing, problem solving, negotiating.
- **Dealing with stress:** dealing with losing or embarrassment, reacting to failure.
- **Feeling good:** positive statements, humor, relaxation, target setting.

Webster-Stratton (sa) suggests that, as with good mental health, a high level of emotional intelligence is a desirable outcome of growing older. Previous chapters discussed the matter of becoming emotionally intelligent through the acquisition of emotional awareness. Interventions encouraging emotional intelligence will benefit everyone in the school. According to Webster-Stratton (sa) emotional intelligence acquired through emotional education will aid the learner in the following aspects:

- Self-awareness – knowing one’s internal states, preferences resources and intuitions.
- Self-regulation – managing ones’ internal states, impulses and resources.
- Motivation – emotional tendencies that facilitate reaching goals.
- Empathy – awareness of other’s needs, feelings and concerns.
- Social skills – adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others.

From the above discussion it is thus clear that there are several opinions advocating the benefits of the “whole school approach” in order to reach many more learners than only addressing the problems indicated by certain individuals. The aim would be for a school in its entirety to reach the point where they display an encouraging atmosphere and optimistic behavioural style. Along this way all learners will reap the benefits of the constructive input and positive character of the school. Emotional awareness and the benefits of being emotionally aware as discussed in chapter 5 will most probably serve this purpose to a large extent and direct learners, educators and the whole of the school’s system to reach a healthier level of emotional health.

It is thus of further importance to explore the ideal educational environment for optimal emotional development and growth. The following section of this chapter will therefore focus on the educational environment and how it is well positioned for emotional education along with cognitive education.

6.3 AN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT THAT WOULD ENHANCE THE EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

According to Coetzee and Jansen (2007:31) the three primary reasons why children acquire knowledge, are the love of learning, the desire for social relationships and the desire for practical information to use in solving immediate problems. Coetzee and Jansen (2007:1) acknowledge that “without compromising academic integrity, the school environment is challenged to develop social skills in learners that enable them to deal with their emotional needs for security and a sense of belonging”.

This study’s focal point is the fact that emotional awareness is of paramount importance to the learner in middle childhood and human beings in general, as was discussed in previous chapters. It is therefore important to take note of education as a whole to establish where the educational system and emotional awareness will be able to meet up with each other. This study aims to determine whether emotional awareness can be taught as an inclusion to the daily schooling activities of learners in an attempt to achieve optimal emotional health, social skills and belonging.

In order to determine the educational system’s structure, operation, compilation and aim, we need to investigate the present educational arrangement and viewpoints within this system. The researcher aspire to designate in this manner why and how education and emotional awareness can become a composition of optimal development.

In order to effectively incorporate the component of emotional development in the educational system, it is important to adhere to certain educational requirements. Such requirements/factors playing a role in this regard are the following:

- conditions of learning
- educator
- effective learning
- effective school settings

The following section will focus on each of these factors individually in order to shed light on what it entails and to indicate its relevance within this study.

6.3.1 Conditions for Learning

Positive conditions for effective learning are an essential factor, when the matter of optimal development of learners is raised. This is also a matter that needs to be taken into consideration when the ideal learning environment is to be established in order to fulfil in the obligation of the educational system. Bahman and Maffini (2008:19) indicate that creating and maintaining a positive, safe and healthy learning environment must be a top priority for educators. If the environment is not a positive one, a great deal of educator effort is wasted. Wright (2006:10) notes that it is a challenge to acquire learning conditions where every child will learn, but it can be done.

Ming-Tak and Wai-Shing (2008:46) postulate that educators need to gain learners' respect and confidence by showing concern for their needs. They should further know how to use praise to encourage good behaviour. Wright (2006:10) confirms this with the opinion that children will not learn if they are upset, anxious or nervous, so the approach within the classroom is important. Stress forms a barrier by causing the body to produce hormones that prepare it to either fight or run. This is a primitive defence mechanism that served human beings well when they were hunter-gatherers. These hormones block the brain's capacity for thought and the parts responsible for personal safety are in readiness, which in turn results in an inability to learn.

Kachmar and Blair (2007:152) refer to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is based on the notion that the drive to respond to individual needs motivates behaviour.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs as depicted in Figure 6.1, indicates that self-actualization will only be within one's reach once certain needs have been fulfilled. This hierarchy forms an upright pyramid indicating that physiological needs fill the base of the pyramid and is a large need to fulfil. Building on one another, we find the need for safety, the need for love, the need to feel esteemed and only then would one reach self-actualization. Once physiological needs are met we find emotional content in all the other steps to the top of this hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is renowned and utilized in many fields to establish healthy practices surrounding human basic needs, and is also applicable to this study.

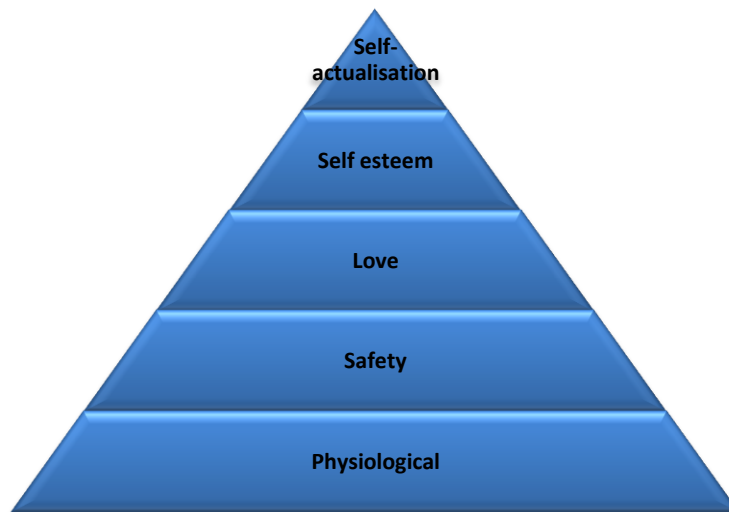


Figure 6.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Wright, 2006:10)

Wright (2012:15) recapitulates Maslow's hierarchy of needs from a perspective of modernized living, incorporating how these levels apply to the lives of children:

- **Physiological needs:** These are the most primitive needs a human organism has, which need to be fulfilled in order to survive. This includes oxygen, water, appropriate food, salt, minerals, vitamins, regulated temperature, sleep and so on.

- **Safety:** The need to feel secure, to have shelter with protection against malevolent factors in the environment. In advanced societies this can be seen in the need for good homes, insurance and retirement funds. Children's need for safety is evident in their need for some kind of undisrupted routine at home as well as early education. Children need a predictable and orderly world. When children perceive their parents' actions as being unfair and inconsistent, they are likely to feel anxious and unsafe. Parents who quarrel loudly or abuse their children promote unhealthy levels of anxiety and fear in their children. Anxiety has the power to confuse the child's development at this point preventing them from reaching stage three.
- **Love:** The need for love extends to a need to experience a sense of belonging. These needs can only emerge once the physiological and safety needs have been fairly well gratified. Human beings will feel saddened by the absence of family members or friends. This need for belonging and affection of others extend to the need to be part of a group and to feel that one is among others that need and trust him or her. Children do sport or join other organizations for this purpose.
- **Esteem:** This need can be thought of as the need that most people, including children, have to be respected by others. The self-esteem level of children is a reflection of how they interpret the beliefs of others in the environment about them, their capabilities or talents. If esteem needs are not met a strong feeling of inferiority or discouragement develops and a loss of self-confidence is evident.
- **Self-actualization:** This is the need on the highest level of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow theorized that not all people reach the point at which this step is part of their life story. Self-actualization refers to self-fulfilment and can take many forms, for example an award for the educator of the year, contentment with being a good mother and wife, acquiring a scholarship or coaching a team to a championship.

The hierarchy of Maslow captures the dimensions of what needs to be taken into consideration to provide a constructive learning environment and to lead learners to productive learning.

The learning environment should firstly ensure that learner's physiological needs are met, for example children should feel nourished and hydrated, temperature should be controlled in class, a balance between work and time to take a break should be ensured, etc. Efforts to uphold these physical and associated psychological aspects form the foundation of the establishment of an encouraging learning environment. If these needs are met the learner needs to feel secure and safe within the class environment in order to be able to learn, which will entail not being bullied, teased or shouted at by an educator. The need to have friends and feel loved is then on the foreground and the children who lack companionship, belonging and acceptance by friends or educators will have difficulty performing at their best. Actions and events within the learning environment, like praise, merit and awards, which result in developing and increasing a positive esteem are further necessary to ensure optimal learning and will result in self-actualization or most advantageous learning.

Ming-Tak and Wai-Shing (2008:47) also explored the ideal learning environment. Their comments correlate with Maslow's hierarchy and they also indicate *management of the physical environment* as the basis in creating a favourable learning atmosphere. Learners should experience their classroom as pleasant and stimulating. *Management of learning* is to them the second step in this process, and this refers to the educator's responsibility to prepare the learning material and activities in a way that will meet the diverse needs of learners. It further requires the classroom to be enjoyable and challenging while also being responsive to learners' needs and goals. The third feature they highlight is *classroom procedures* and rules, which entails the smooth and efficient running of the classroom and serves to convey the educator's message of norms and behaviour towards others. This entails that learners feel safe and secure within an environment of which they know and understand the boundaries and can act and react within a knowledge base of what is permitted and what not. In the last instance, they add *managing discipline*, with the indication that this is necessary in order to deal with difficult and bad behaviour. This is also the aspect where the educator's insight of learner behaviour and emotional health as well as the method of discipline play a very important role and where learners are constructed or demolished.

Coetzee and Jansen (2007:30) validate that the emotional climate in the classroom has a significant impact on the learners' attitude and willingness to learn. Learners feel accepted for their

uniqueness in an emotionally warm classroom atmosphere and their self-esteem will consequently enhance.

It is hence important to take note that the role of the educator and how his/her input and ability to teach, with emotional growth in mind, can make the difference in the educational experience of learners.

6.3.2 Role of the Educator

La Malfa, Lassi, Bertelli, Albertini and Dosen (2009:1406) indicate that the relationship between acquisition of social competence and emotion starts in early infancy through the mother/infant relationship, but is later influenced by the relationship between children and their educators.

An educator is the one adult, apart from members of their family, with whom children have regular and prolonged contact. Children spend most of their life (during middle childhood) in the presence of their educator's way of thinking and method of handling his/her learners. Consequently, the educator may be a significant person with the power to be a loved and respected or feared and despised adult, and even more important, the power to construct or demolish a learner's emotional well-being.

Tew (2007:11) states that children learn to imitate from the time they are born. This mimetic learning means that learners respond most strongly to and are most likely to learn the qualities that adults model rather than the ones they overtly teach. Albert Schweitzer, in Tew (2007:11), said: *“Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing”*. This is illustrated in Coetzee and Jansen's (2007:30) indication that the educator who shouts and rages at learners sends out the message that it is socially acceptable to treat others in a hostile and disrespectful manner.

Collay (2012:29) states that an equitable educator finds what each learner needs and provides it for them, so that each of them has an opportunity for success. A one-size-fits-all prescription is not the answer. Coetzee and Jansen (2007:1) affirm that the emotional state of educators and learners affects the children's attention, focus, perception, time spent on tasks and their academic

performance. They further add that educators who demonstrate emotionally intelligent behaviour in the classroom are more effective in:

- achieving academic goals;
- conveying a sense of caring towards learners;
- creating an emotional climate that enhances the learning environment;
- reducing peer conflict; and
- facilitating a desirable teaching context.

Tew (2007:11) elaborates that if educators are to help learners develop their emotional literacy, it helps if they develop their own emotional literacy first. The more aware the educators can become of own flow of emotional states as they continue throughout the day, the better they will be placed to understand and manage feelings and recognize those feelings in others. If educators thus find useful ways to examine and manage their own moods and ascertain the way in which some feeling-circumstances improve judgment and motivation they will be better positioned to develop and promote these same abilities in their learners.

Educators find themselves in the position to provide a type of listening that children may not experience elsewhere in their lives and educators possess great power with this role of listener. Milner and Carolin (1999:97) observed in 1999 trends in the U.S.A. that in education there are many voices and it seems at times that they are all shouting very loudly in contrast to the educating system of the past, when the prime voices were the voices of the learner and the educator. They elaborate further by stating:

However, in the last decade, in particular, many more voices have joined the chorus and some are being heard more publicly than they previously were. The voices now belong to politicians, parents, the media, economists, moralists and educationalists, in addition to the child and the educator. All of them have very clear views on the role of the school and the educator and they are often in conflict. The languages they speak are different. Some talk the language of money, some of management, of standards, of accountability and some of the rights of children. This can be a confusing cacophony and schools are now the topic of much debate about which

values and whose values are important and where efforts should be focused. Such debate and confusion can sometimes make it hard for educators to listen to their learners and to focus on the aspects that are supposed to be clear and evident regarding the development of the learner.

The educational system is most probably in need of leaders with educational change at heart and the researcher is of the opinion that this educational change can only be brought about through the inclusion of emotional content in order to educate the holistic child and create citizens with inclusive wellbeing, security, broadened interests and comfort within themselves. To achieve this goal we will need educators with a passion for children and insight in children and their extended needs. Mendez Morse, in Collay (2012:36), states that educators who can become leaders of educational change exhibit the following six characteristics:

- They have vision
- They believe that school is for “learning”
- They value resource
- They are skilled communicators and listeners
- They act pro-actively
- They take risks

It is thus clear that the role of the educator is unquestionably a very important part of successful emotional intervention. Emotional content in the school curriculum will not have a result worth mentioning if taught by educators without the emotional awareness and ability to successfully develop this skill in their learners, based on their own emotional maturity. If the role of the educator and the most beneficial learning climate is established, we need to divert our focus to learning in itself to determine what is required to ensure effective learning.

6.3.3 Effective Learning

Tokuhama-Espinosa (2011:45) indicates that formal education was getting underway around the world in the late 1800s. It was at that stage that Francis Galton sparked the original debate on the

nature versus nurture influence on learning and intelligence. The question connected hereto is; are you intelligent due to the genes you received from your parents, or is intelligence based on how you were raised? This question evolved through many stages to where we currently are and now emotional education is also added into this discussion. Although both nature and nurture receive support from different viewpoints, Kozulin (2003:162) indicates that it was already determined by Vygotsky that developing emotion through cognition has merit which emphasized the “nature vs. nurture” viewpoint and is supported by La Malfa et al. (2009:1407), in their referral to the importance of emotion in developing cognitive and social abilities according to Vygotsky’s theory of social cognition.

According to Mahn and John-Steiner (2002:48) the major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Classroom interactions between learners and educators, on the one hand, and intense creative collaborations among accomplished artists and scientists, on the other, might seem far removed from one another. However, an examination of their underlying commonalities provides insight into the role played by affect in learning and creativity. Vygotsky (1978:57) states:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter psychological) and then inside the child (intra psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.

Fisher (2005:1) explain that:

“to understand the world, the child must first perceive, attend to, or take in the visual and auditory stimuli around him. He must hold these in his mind while he decides what they are and how to respond. The fact that he can recognize a bird means that he has previously stored memories and has developed the concept of a ‘bird’ and developed the tools of language to communicate this experience. This process of perception, memory, concept formation, language and symbolization are the basic cognitive skills that underlie the ability to reason, to learn and to solve problems”.

It is thus evident that effective learning needs to include both cognitive and emotional education to bring effusive development about.

6.4 EFFECTIVE SCHOOL SETTING

It is observed by Long and Fogell (1999:27) that there are many ways in which schools can seek to enhance and support their learner's emotional health. These range from developing coping strategies such as the development of social and problem solving skills, the setting up of peer support and contact with a selected adult role model. They further refer to research done by Barber in 1996, which lists the characteristics of effective schools as follows:

- strong positive leadership by head and senior staff;
- a good atmosphere or spirit, generated both by shared aims and values and a stimulating and attractive physical environment;
- high consistent expectations of pupils;
- high academic standards;
- a clear and continuous focus on teaching and learning;
- well-developed procedures of assessing how pupils are progressing;
- responsibility for learning shared by the pupils themselves;
- participation by pupils in the life of the school;
- rewards and incentives to encourage pupils to succeed;
- parental involvement in children's education and in supporting the aims of the school; and
- extra-curricular activities which broaden pupils' interests and experiences, expand their opportunities to succeed and help to build good relationships.

Successful schools ensure that all learners master reading, writing, math, and science. They also foster a good understanding of history, literature, arts, foreign languages, and diverse cultures but they need to have a broader educational agenda that also involves enhancing learners' social-emotional competence, character, health, and civic engagement, within the USA context. (Metlife, 2002).

The school's role, according to Seefeldt (2005:136), during these early school years is twofold:

- The school-experience must be focused on strengthening the child's self-concept and feelings of individuality. Children who feel good about themselves can make the difficult, complex adjustments necessary for group living.
- Having aided the child's development of self-esteem, the school can then use this strong sense of self as the basis for guiding children into positive group experiences where they can learn the life-skills necessary for living in a society.

It is thus evident that the school has an important part to play in the guidance of children not only to fulfil their cognitive needs, but especially in the fulfilment of their emotional needs. If schools strive to provide their learners with the opportunities that are incorporated in emotional awareness, it is the researchers opinion that they will be then in a better position to meet Maslow's highest level of needs, namely self-actualization.

6.5 SUMMARY

Aggression and inadequate impulse control are perhaps the most potent obstacles to effective problem-solving and forming successful friendships in childhood. Without help, young children who are angry and aggressive are more likely to experience peer rejection and continued social problems for years afterwards according to Webster-Stratton (1999:184). The educating system is in a beneficial position to fulfil the task of education in emotional awareness and needs to take this opportunity to accomplish optimal learner development through development of the whole child by including emotional education not only as added learning material but also as a medium of education.

There are certain aspects of school life that need to be considered when thinking about how children are educated and aspects that can block or facilitate such learning. School is an activity children have to attend by law and they therefore come in large numbers. This is thus the ideal opportunity for emotional education and enhancing general learning through emotional awareness of both educator and learner.

Greenberg, Weissman, Utne O' Brien, Zins, Frederick, Resnik and Elias (2003:466) indicate that high quality education should not only produce students who are culturally literate, intellectually reflective, and committed to lifelong learning, but it should also teach young people to:

- interact in socially skilled and respectful ways;
- practice positive, safe, and healthy behaviours;
- contribute ethically and responsibly to their peer group, family, school, and community;
and
- possess basic competencies, work habits and values as a foundation for meaningful employment and engaged citizenship.

The viewpoint of these authors confirms that the educational system has the task of developing the “whole” of their learners. This stands in correlation with the basis of the Gestalt approach, as discussed in chapter 2, and supports the goal of this study namely to incorporate emotional education in the current educational process. Education that includes obtaining knowledge in different learning areas along with the development of emotional and associated social competencies would therefore possibly be the ideal method of optimal holistic development. In this manner it would be possible to achieve Luther King's indication that: *“intelligence is not enough, intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education”* (Luther King, 1947).