CHAPTER 7

Emotional awareness program

*It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.* ~ C. S. Lewis

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters the researcher focussed on the theory regarding emotional awareness, neurological development influencing emotional aspects, the learner in the middle childhood developmental phase and the role of the educational system on the subject of emotional development. The researcher will subsequently focus on the the program developed to aid in enhancing and developing the emotional awareness of learners in their middle childhood developmental phase within the educational system.

The emotional awareness program, utilized in this study, was developed by the researcher for this purpose and developed from a Gestalt play therapy background. The aim of the research is to determine whether emotional awareness skills could successfully be developed during class activities through the utilization of this emotional awareness program.

The program was developed for learners in their middle childhood developmental phase, and consequently applicable to all primary school grades, with adjustments for higher and lower grades. The program was tested on grade three learners in an Afrikaans primary school and therefore in its current state applicable to that age group.

The complete program was written in Afrikaans due to it being presented to Afrikaans learners in an Afrikaans school. A summary of the program is translated to English to reflect its content and intent in this English thesis.
The program was presented by the educator to her class during class time and as part of their daily class activities. The program is divided into seven modules each containing three to four activities relating to the topic of the module. Each module is the “theme” of the week and no more than one activity is to be covered per day. The activities are developed to be utilized on their own or as part of the curriculum, as stories could also be utilized as listening tests and words from activities as spelling tests, to write sentences or paragraphs or to serve as topics for speeches, etc. The educator took own initiative in when, where and how the activities of the week were presented to efficiently incorporate it into her weekly planning, as long as all activities in a module were covered and thoroughly conversed.

The educator involved in presenting the Emotional Awareness Program received training, which was based on the literature review of this study, by the researcher. The themes which form part of the training were the following:

- emotions, emotional awareness and emotional intelligence;
- the child in middle childhood;
- the classroom as a resilience enhancing context;
- the intention behind emotional development within the classroom; and
- brain development or underdevelopment due to emotional input.

Each module and activity was also explained and discussed to ensure that it is properly understood and thus correctly implemented. The researcher was available to the educator while the program was administered but it was never necessary to intervene or give additional explanations as the program is developed to be self-explanatory and user friendly.

The following section will focus on the seven modules included in the program and endeavour to give a summarized but thorough indication of the content of these modules, their aim, activities utilized to achieve the planned outcome and the material required to administer it. Although the program is developed to be presented by an educator, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is in many ways still a therapeutical intervention. The educator therefore needs to be trained by a
professional specifically equipped in child development and emotional aspects in this regard. It is furthermore essential that a professional also oversee the program and its presentation.

In order to understand the goal, objectives and activities of the developed Emotional Awareness Program it is relevant to briefly revisit the contextual background of Gestalt in terms of its applicability to this study. Blom (2006:215) states that to her:

“the goal of Gestalt is to help children become aware of their process, which is what they do, how they do it and how they satisfy their needs. Heightened awareness is created when children are able to identify who they are, what they feel, what they like and dislike, their choices and how their needs are met”.

The researcher’s amended version of Blom’s (2006:215) portrayal of the content necessary for heightened awareness provides the rationale for utilization of the Gestalt approach in the development of the EA program, namely:

Heightened awareness is created when children are able to identify who they are (identify and own their emotions), what they feel (be aware of the emotions’ effect on themselves and others), what they like and dislike (determine if the emotion is a positive or negative one), their choices and how their needs are met (decide on the appropriate action to take in order to regulate their emotional state).

This abridged version of what emotional awareness, within the Gestalt approach, entails and how the EA program fits within each of these constructs clarifies the motivation for utilization of the Gestalt approach as the theoretical frame of this study.

Although the Gestalt approach was comprehensively discussed in chapter two, Gestalt Play Therapy as a method is the “tool” that was utilized for the development of the EA Program and the following section will converse on Gestalt play therapy and its relevance within this study.
7.2 GESTALT PLAY THERAPY

Thompson, Rudolph and Henderson (2004:196) quotes Oaklander in describing the process of Gestalt play therapy as “a dance that is sometimes led by the counsellor and other times by the child, meeting the child where he or she is at that moment, suggesting but not pushing”.

Gestalt play therapy is described by Blom (2004:5) as:

“a psychotherapeutic technique making use of the principles and techniques of the Gestalt approach during play therapy with children, by developing a therapeutic relationship and contact with the child according to a specific process. Children are given the opportunity to confirm their sense of self verbally and nonverbally, express their thoughts and nurture themselves”.

Geldard and Geldard (2002:65) add that “raised awareness through Gestalt play therapy enables the child to clearly identify issues, get in touch with and release strong emotions”. Furthermore, Thompson et al. (2004:195) also evaluates that “the child's capacity to represent experiences in symbolic fashion allows a self-reflective manner that helps the child develop a greater sense of self”. Blom (2006:51) summarizes that the aim of Gestalt play therapy with children is to “make them aware of their own process”, in terms of this study the aim is thus to make them aware of their own emotional process.

Thompson et al. (2004:195) notes that the concern of Gestalt play therapy is the integrated functioning of all aspects of the person so that senses, body, emotions and intellect are well coordinated in a creative adjustment. Thompson et al. (2004:196) continues this reasoning with his reference to Oaklander’s view on the importance of contact in Gestalt play therapy. Contact is “having the ability to be completely present in a situation by using one’s senses, being aware of feelings and using the intellect to become in contact with the environment”. Recognizing what is happening and how it is happening is an important part of the contacting process. When children are anxious or troubled, they are not able to make optimal use of their senses and they block emotions and inhibit contact. Gestalt play therapy includes exercises and experiences that involve the senses and the expression of feelings.

Blom (2004:137) discusses emotional expression as a phase in the Gestalt play therapy process and indicates that the initial focus will be on aspects such as what emotions are, the kinds of emotions
and the body’s reaction to various emotions. Fontana and Slack, in Oaklander (1997:310), suggest that the more children are allowed to acknowledge and experience their emotions, and gain insight into the fact that emotions are a natural part of human nature, the easier it will be for them to learn skills to express their emotions in a healthy and socially acceptable manner. Ray (2011:59) agrees that the Gestalt approach emphasizes the need for children’s expression of awareness of their worlds. Blom (2004:138) confirms this perception in her indication that “if children succeed in identifying their body’s response to specific emotions, they can use it as guideline to become aware of their emotions”.

Many different Gestalt play therapy techniques are available to utilize in therapeutic interventions with children (Blom, 2004; Oaklander, 1997). Some of these techniques were utilized and adapted to serve the objective of this program. The activities included in the program were developed by the researcher, utilizing Gestalt basics in order to raise the emotional awareness and emotional knowledge of the respondents.

The following section of this chapter will describe the content, goals, activities and presentation of the developed Emotional Awareness Program as utilized in this study.

7.3 EMOTIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Emotional Awareness Program is developed to address different emotional aspects that are essential for the expansion of emotional knowledge in order to grow to be emotionally aware. The researcher identified aspects most applicable for developing insight regarding emotion and its effect on the daily life of the learner in the middle childhood phase. These aspects aim to achieve six main goals, namely to:

**Build and strengthen the relationship between the educator and the learners**

An environment where the learners feel that they are in a safe and secure connection within their relationship with their educator is beneficial for the learners to develop emotional awareness.
Supply knowledge of different emotions

Emotional awareness is achieved when a learner is able to distinguish between different emotions and possesses the ability to associate different experiences with the specific emotion that would accompany it. Knowledge of different emotions and their consequences is thus the first step in acquiring emotional awareness.

Obtain emotional language

Emotional language enables learners to express the feelings that they feel inside but are not able to describe due to a lack of emotional vocabulary. Emotions of emotional trauma need to be expressed in some way and if not through the correct means, it would be expressed through deviant behaviour, aggressiveness, overreacting in emotional situations.

Develop and show empathy

When learners are acquainted with different emotions and their effect on their lives, they are also able to recognize and understand these emotions in others. It is therefore important to have them understand what empathy is and how it is a useful asset in one’s relation with others.

Develop emotional regulation

The mere knowledge of emotion and the ability to become aware of certain emotions in one’s daily life would not benefit much without the ability to regulate these emotions to one’s best interest. This entails the ability to assess a situation and anticipate the emotion which it might bring about. The emotional knowledge that one already has will serve as a guide to the manner in which the emotion is to be handled, but emotional regulation will determine whether the learners would be able to use this knowledge to their advantage and to the best interest of the situation.
Acquire and expand problem solving and decision making skills

Emotions usually occur along with certain decisions or problems. Problem solving or decision-making techniques are hence hand in hand with emotional growth and the expansion of emotional knowledge. The program therefore focuses on this skill and attempts to teach the learners how to address problems, make decisions and acquire solutions to their problems.

These goals were integrated into seven different modules with different activities aiming to achieve the goal of the module, namely:

- Build and strengthen relationship with learners.
- Knowledge of different emotions.
- Emotional language.
- Empathy.
- Emotional regulation.
- Problem solving.
- Summarizing and termination.

The remaining part of this chapter focuses thus on the seven modules, their activities and content as a translated summary of the actual program.

### 7.3.1 Module 1: Build and Strengthen Relationship with Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1.1:</th>
<th>“Who am I?”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Learners can internalise much more and much quicker if it is presented within a relationship and atmosphere where they feel secure and safe. In order to achieve this it is therefore necessary that learners come to the understanding that they are recognized as worthy and hold a significant and special place within their class.</td>
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<td>This module thus fertilizes the soil for the seeds that are to be sown during</td>
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</table>
the course of the program. Learners are directed to discover their own uniqueness and they experience that others take note of them and are interested in them in their effort to get to know each other better.

| Activity | Each learner has a turn to be “friend of the day”. This entails a series of activities, which introduces the learner to the class, focussing on deeper aspects than the basic name, age, address or academic achievement.

A form with questions on interests and other relevant matters is to be completed by each learner. A photo of “friend of the day” is then attached to the form and displayed on a bulletin board for that day.

The rest of the class also has the task of gathering information from the “friend of the day” with the result that the learner is the main attraction for that day and experiences that he/she is important and special to the rest of the class. |

| Material needed | “Who am I?” checklist. Photo of each learner. Instructions to the educator to conduct the discussion on “friend of the day”. |

| Activity 1.2: | Class Compliments |

| Goal of activity | Solidarity and a sense of belonging are of utmost importance to learners in this developmental phase. If learners experience themselves to be part of a successful group (class), the positive feeling of being successful and worthy will spill over to the individual’s mindset regarding his/her behaviour, involvement and input. The goal of this activity is thus to promote group cohesion through highlighting the class’ collective successes and achievements. This joint recognition thus aims at the underlying goal, namely individual self-confidence and contentment with oneself. |

| Activity | The educator and other personnel make an effort to compliment the class |
on different aspects conveying their good behaviour, exemplary work in class, academic achievement, manners, obedience. A chart for this purpose is affixed in the class and learners are encouraged to write the compliments they get on the chart. This activity is to be preceded with an explanation by the educator that he/she wanted them to share in the pride that he/she experiences when her class is complimented by the headmaster.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material needed</th>
<th>“Class Compliment Chart”. Instructions to the educator.</th>
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### Activity 1.3: My rights in class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal of activity</th>
<th>To strengthen relationships in class through highlighting the concept of personal rights and that everyone is allowed to expect respect, but also carries the responsibility to respect the rights of others.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>A story about an animal classroom, where everything went wrong due to monkey’s doing, is read to the class. The story hints to specific rights and responsibilities, which the educator will utilize afterwards to direct the class in compiling a set of “rights” for the learners in the class.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material needed</th>
<th>“My rights in class” chart. “Chaos in animal land” story. Instructions to the educator.</th>
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### 7.3.2 Module 2: Knowledge of Different Emotions

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<tr>
<th>Activity 2.1</th>
<th>Emotion Bingo</th>
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| Goal of activity | In order to develop emotional awareness one needs to be able to distinguish between different emotions. It is further necessary to acquire the ability to associate different experiences with the emotion it would bring about. This activity focuses thus on acquiring the correct word for |
| **Activity** | Each learner receives an Emotion Bingo Card and ten individual Emotion Labels, which they pick out of a bag without peeping at the pictures. The educator calls one emotion at a time if a learner has that emotion, it is placed on the Bingo Card. The first learner who has four in a row (horizontally, vertically or across) calls “BINGO”. That learner then gets to answer a question on the emotion that completed his “BINGO”. The educator asks the questions from the “Bingo question card” supplied to her. |
| **Material needed** | Bingo play set. Instructions to the educator. |

### Activity 2.2 Memory match

#### Goal of activity
To recognize emotions and group them together. This activity causes the learners to recap on the new emotion words that were taught to them and the acquired knowledge is then reinforced through a fun game.

#### Activity
Learners play this game in pairs. Each pair receives a Memory Match play set and the rules. The educator explains the objective of the game to the learners.

#### Material needed
Memory match play set. Instructions to the educator.

### Activity 2.3 Speech

#### Goal of activity
Emotions were identified, recognized, reinforced and inculcated. It is now expected that learners should be able to expand on emotions and appropriately discuss an emotion, as it would occur in daily life. Learners are thus guided to own the knowledge that they have obtained and to apply that knowledge according to their comprehension of the situation that is chosen for the speech. Parents usually assist in the preparation for speeches and discussions regarding emotions and obtained knowledge between learner and parent are also aroused through this activity.

#### Activity
Each learner draws a card from a bag with 30 cards, each with a different
emotion on it. The learner prepares a speech on the topic, “The day when I was _____________. “ E.g., the day when I was sad / the day when I was ashamed / the day when I was confused.

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<tr>
<th>Material needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic cards.</td>
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<td>Instruction to the educator.</td>
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### 7.3.3 Module 3: Emotional Language

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity 3.1</th>
<th>“Zaki’s balloon full of mixed up feelings”</th>
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</table>
| **Goal of activity** | Developing the learner’s emotional language with a broadened emotional vocabulary.  
This is achieved through the identification of emotions (that they had already learned) in a story. The aim is to develop the ability to identify these emotions in the context of a practical example and weigh the positive and negative traits of the emotion. This promotes the learners’ comfort with the emotional language being taught to them. |
| **Activity** | Read the story of “Zaki’s balloon full of mixed up feelings” and discuss the learner’s feelings regarding the story (the educator helps organize their thoughts and puts them on the right track).  
Read the story again and this time the learners have to write all the emotions they can identify down. A competition can determine who gets the most with a small prize (toffee) for the winner.  
The educator conducts a listening test afterwards and incorporates more questions on the emotions involved and the context in which they were experienced. This serves as the normal listening test for the week but also reinforces the knowledge regarding emotions. |
| **Material needed** | Story. |
### Activity 3.2  
#### Emotional vocabulary

**Goal of activity**

Bruce (2010:6) defines emotional literacy, as “a developed awareness and understanding of one’s own and the emotions of others. This information guides our thinking and is expressed in our communication and thinking”. Developing emotional language has benefits at school and at home. Acquiring emotional vocabulary enables learners to efficiently express themselves and therefore aids their overall perception of themselves, their friends, the world around them and their position within this environment in which they have a part to play.

**Activity**

Flashcards containing different emotions portrayed in different situations where the emotion might be experienced are used to guide the learners in identifying the emotion involved. The aim is to find emotion words to replace words like sad, glad, good, bad. E.g., glad to ecstatic, bad to dreadful, good to fabulous and sad to gloomy. Each learner chooses one positive and one negative emotion with the assignment to search for situations where these emotions occur, during the day. A paragraph is then written on the next day on the emotion and the situation where it occurred.

**Material needed**

Flashcards on emotional situations.  
Instructions to the educator.

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### Activity 3.3  
**Charades**

**Goal of activity**

Expand emotional vocabulary.

**Activity**

Emotion picture cards are drawn from a bag and the learners are expected to determine the emotion depicted according to the knowledge attained with the flashcard activity. The emotion is then demonstrated with a game of charades. They are thus not allowed to demonstrate elementary emotions like sad, glad or bad – they need to utilize higher-level vocabulary. The person who correctly determines the emotion has the next turn.
7.3.4 Module 4: Empathy

This module is introduced with additional information to the educator on empathy and its value and essence in the lives of children. It further furnishes indicators on the empathic mindset of the educator in teaching this ability to learners.

### Activity 4.1
Understanding emotions of others.  
Facial expression and body language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal of activity</th>
<th>Introduce the concept of empathy and lay the foundation for the notion of how empathic reactions have value for oneself and others.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Explanation of what empathy entails with specific reference to four aspects, namely:</td>
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<td>- the meaning of the word empathy;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the capacity to attempt to understand what another person is feeling; and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the correct reaction to another person’s feelings according to the ability to understand what he/she is feeling.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This is followed by a discussion where the learners get to brainstorm their ideas on how to know what another person is feeling without that person telling what he/she is feeling.

When the learners had enough time to deliberate on this aspect they each receive a picture in which a situation is depicted where a person is comforted by another in an empathic manner. Each learner has to write a story of what happens in the picture and concludes the story by stating the best empathic reaction for the situation.
| Material needed | Discussion material for the educator.  
|                | Empathy pictures.  
| Activity 4.2   | Development of empathic feelings  
|                | “Bessie must stay dry”  
| Goal of activity | To illustrate a practical example of empathy in a manner easily  
|                | comprehendible to kids of this age. The goal of this activity is for the  
|                | learners to develop an understanding of empathy and recognition thereof,  
|                | should they experience it in their lives.  
| Activity       | The story is read to the class. This story is about a family dog that became  
|                | old and frail and the attempts of a boy to ensure that she stays dry when  
|                | she has to go out. His planning regarding this originates from his own  
|                | discomfort in when he finds himself in wet weather. This story thus  
|                | illustrates the concept of attempting to feel what another is feeling and  
|                | reacting accordingly to assist them.  
|                | A list of questions is discussed afterwards and the educator ensures that  
|                | the class comprehends and buys into the idea of being empathetic to  
|                | others.  
| Material needed | Story.  
|                | Instructions to the educator.  
| Activity 4.3   | Reinforcement – Construct sentences  
| Goal of activity | Learners in this developmental phase require sufficient repetition of a concept  
|                | before owning it and incorporating it into their daily lives. This activity’s  
|                | goal is to furnish the learners with the opportunity to put the information they  
|                | received concerning empathy to practice from their own viewpoint and  
|                | disposition regarding it. This activity also serves as a measuring instrument  
|                | for the educator to determine whether the learners mastered the concept of  
|                | empathy and to evaluate their ability to feel and show empathy.  
| Activity       | Learners construct sentences on five themes provided to them on a
sentence sheet. These themes are compiled to encourage reactions where learners place themselves in another person’s shoes. It will therefore evidently elicit empathic sentences from learners who understood empathetic feelings and reactions from earlier activities.

| Material needed | Sentence sheet with themes.  
|                | Instructions to the educator. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4.4</th>
<th>Empathy modeling and speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Bodily awareness guides learners to self-knowledge and moves them to inner control and a better grasp on assertiveness and insight. This activity combines two aspects, namely further development of empathic abilities and bodily awareness techniques. Different skills are thus utilized and a stronger sense of mastering is obtained.</td>
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| Pre -activity | Learners choose an emotion card from a bag and demonstrate it to the class by only making use of facial expressions and body language (e.g. not only a depressed face but also hanging shoulders and an arched back).  
|               | The educator instructs learners to demonstrate with their face and body how they feel. The rest of the class guess what is being demonstrated.  
|               | When all the basic emotions were covered, the educator encourages learners to expand the emotions to higher-level feeling words, e.g. unhappy to miserable, gloomy, despondent or hopeless.  
|               | When this is mastered the rest of the class stop guessing what the emotion is, but provide a reaction which will help, support or acknowledge the problem situation or troubled person.  
|               | Learners divide into five groups and each group receives a situation to portray. The situation is to be played out and the group is to react |
empathetically towards the person experiencing the problem.

It is explained to the learners that they showed empathy in this activity and they are encouraged to keep on practicing this ability in situations around them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Learners prepare a speech on one of three provided topics. Example: You were best friends with Diana/David since you were both in pre-school. From the beginning of this year, you also became friends with Anne/Aaron. Yesterday Diana/David told you that she does not like Annie/Aaron and that you should not be friends with him/her either. Annie/Aaron sits alone on the playground during breaks and looks very sad due to this decision. What are you going to do?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material needed</td>
<td>Emotions in bag. Emotion situations for group activity. Speech topics. Instructions to the educator.</td>
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7.3.5 Module 5: Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to express a variety of emotions in the correct context and to react in the correct manner on each emotion. Learners who have emotional regulation abilities easily adapt to new situations or to people unknown to them. They consist of high frustration tolerance, are able to control their negative emotions and take the needs and preferences of others into consideration. Learners without emotional regulation abilities display limited emotion, signs of depression, excessive tearfulness, an inability to cope, excessive worrying and behaviour resulting from intense emotions (Wittmer, Doll & Strain in Charlesworth, 2010:327).

Identifying verbal expressions of emotions is the first step in acquiring emotional regulation. Learners may fail to express their emotions verbally because of their incorrect notion that other
people obviously know what they are thinking. They further do not possess the emotional vocabulary in which to express themselves or are too unsure of themselves to make use of the emotional vocabulary they do have (Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, Stein & Gregory, 2002:234).

Educators can motivate learners to express emotions in an acceptable manner by reminding them to make use of words that explain their feelings and needs. Phrases which can be utilized in emotional situations can be suggested by the use of examples from their frame of reference.

Regulating negative emotions, especially the potentially destructive and aggressive ones, is important in different facets of functioning. It should also be noted that the mere suppression of a negative emotion is not the desirable way to handle emotions as it usually brings about additional, negative repercussions. Emotional regulation is hence important to equip the individual with the capacity for prolonged healthy emotional discharge. It also aids in determining when emotional discharge is heading in a direction that will have negative consequences for themselves or others. It has been found that a well-adapted person should be able to experience an emotion like anger and express it efficiently. The skill that needs to be mastered is thus to be able to determine when and under which circumstances anger can be expressed and which form of expression is acceptable. This important concept of emotional regulation is thus to develop the ability to regulate unacceptable, impulsive behaviour when a strong emotion is experienced in an effort to control that emotion and the consequences thereof.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 5.1</th>
<th>Visualisation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Emotional regulation is a complicated concept for learners of this age but it is necessary and possible for them to take note of it. This activity thus aims to introduce learners to the idea behind emotional regulation and to explain it in a practical manner.</td>
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<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>This activity should be performed in a place where it will not be interrupted, for example by someone entering the classroom or the intercom going off. The rugby field, gym class or tennis court away from the normal school activities would be a sensible choice.</td>
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</table>
There must be enough space for everyone to lie down without touching each other. They close their eyes and listen while the provided text is read to them in a very calm, collected and tone-measured voice. This text commences with instructions aiming to relax the body and focus the learners’ attention on the voice they hear and the content of the text. They are then systematically led into visualising the text that is read. The aim is that they experience this narrative as if they are experiencing it in real life.

After the visualisation exercise is through, the activity is concluded with a discussion with prescribed questions, which aims to reinforce the concept of being in charge of emotions if one chooses to be. An uncomplicated explanation is given. This is then linked to the visualisation where the learner experienced the uneasy effect of being out of control when hit by a wave in the ocean. This is then compared to the follow-up in the visualisation and the feeling of mastering when the knowledge of the wave’s strength was utilized to stand firm and strong against it. Because the wave’s capability was known, the learner was not caught off guard, thrown down and hurt.

The above is then compared to the way an emotional situation is handled and how this visualisation experience can serve as an example of preparing oneself to have emotional regulation abilities.

The learners receive an activity where they have to sort nine pictures in the correct order to indicate the process of gaining control over a situation which was previously unknown – in other words acquiring control over the wave and control over emotional situations: “emotional regulation”.

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<th>Material needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualisation text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarification to draw the link between visualisation and emotional regulation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pictures to reinforce the activity’s message.</td>
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<td>Activity 5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enact the incident on the flashcard by playing out a reaction to the event as if one knows and understands the emotion, and is prepared to handle it.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Material needed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructions to the educator and learner regarding the water bottle activity. Flashcards.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 5.3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Activity** | Distribute the “Win the Wave” worksheet. The learners are instructed to identify incidents where they or someone else was knocked over by the “wave” and they have to come up with a better reaction or solution to that problem. The other side of the worksheet is for incidents or situations where they or someone else was able to see the “wave” that was approaching and reacted with a plan (emotional regulation) and therefore “won the wave”.

This activity is to be done over two school days or during a weekend at home. The learners can be encouraged to educate the rest of the family on how to see the wave of emotions when it approaches and how to keep standing through it. This provides the opportunity for the educator to recap the steps with them when giving the assignment. Explaining this at home is a further method of repetition for the learners and will aid their perception and insight regarding it. |
<p>| <strong>Material needed</strong> | Win the wave worksheet. Instructions to the educator. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 6.1</th>
<th>Generate a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>This simple activity aims to highlight that potential problems should be dismantled logically and systematically to understand it better before attempting to solve it. The idea is that a systematic approach to a problem promotes solving the problem. If there is no plan or method in the way a problem is approached, the probability of solving it successfully is limited. Emotions play an important role in problem solving. One finds that learners with weak emotional associations find it hard to make even undemanding decisions, for they are uncertain about how their choice would make them feel. This activity is a practical introduction to the systematic approach to a problem in order to highlight the process of problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Learners divide into groups of five or six learners. Each group receives a pre-built figurine with the instruction to observe it and then take it apart. They most probably will not pay much attention to the way it was constructed and where each part fits. When they are finished, they are instructed to rebuild it to the exact figurine that they received. The learners will attempt to rebuild it correctly but will most likely be unsuccessful. If they realize that they cannot succeed or that it has pieces left over, they are introduced to the correct process of approaching a problem or decision in contrast to just jumping in and taking unmitigated steps. The correct process is as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Generate solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate possible solutions and decide on the best plan of action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and apply it.

- Evaluate the outcome/solution and if unsuccessful go back to step two.

These steps are then also reformulated in child-friendly language (in the program) with descriptions of what it entails and with a graphic presentation in the form of “The decision making tree”. It is further also linked to the figure building activity – for thorough comprehension by the learners.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans &amp; Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The educator draws ‘n rough sketch of the decision-making tree on the black board and explains that this is an easy way to remember the steps to problem solving. The idea is that a problem, which occurs in the roots of the tree, will have an effect on the branches and leaves of the tree when the problem is transported to them via the trunk. A problem (roots) should thus be addressed through plans and decisions (trunk) to provide solutions (healthy branches and leaves).

The educator works on two or three examples of problem solving with the learners in the form of a class discussion.

- Example in child-friendly language
  What is the problem?: My dog is lost
- Plans that may solve this problem:
Go search all the dog’s hiding places.
Ask the neighbours if they saw the dog.
Put notices of your lost dog in the neighbourhood

- Decide on the best plan for your problem and implement your decision:
  You realize that the dog has only been gone for a very short time and may therefore not be too far away. You look under the bed, in the cupboard, in the dirty washing and behind the T.V., but still cannot find him.

- Think about this solution, if it did not solve your problem – go back to step 2:
  You thought the dog was in the house but did not find him there, so you need to try another plan. The learner goes back to his/her plans and go on to his/her second plan, “go ask the neighbours”.
  The neighbours did see him being hit by a car. He was not hurt badly, but it seemed like his leg was broken. The driver stopped and drove away with the dog, so they advise him/her to check with the vet. The learner contacts the animal clinic and they indicate that a dog with a broken leg was delivered to them. The learner’s parents take him/her to the vet and he/she finds the dog.
  PROBLEM SOLVED!

**Material needed**
- Figurine to take apart and rebuild.
- Poster of decision making tree.
- Instructions to the educator.

**Activity 6.2**

**Problem solving skills**

**Goal of activity**
Learners are guided to make decisions in the correct manner to emphasize the steps in problem solving.

**Activity**
The story of Maraai Maroela tree is read to the learners and the concept of problem solving is discussed according to the content of the story. The
The idea is to put the steps in problem solving in figurative description and reiterate the “problem solving tree”.

**Step 1:** Identify the problem (roots)

**Step 2:** Devise plans (trunk)
- Decide on the best plan and implement it (trunk transport plan to branches and leaves)

**Step 3:** Solution (branches and leaves grow, and the tree is happy and healthy, but if not go back to step 2)

### Material needed
- The story of Maraa Maroela tree.
- Poster of “The decision making tree.”
- Instructions to the educator.

### Activity 6.3 Assess problem solving skills

#### Goal of activity
Assess the learners’ problem-solving skills and their ability to apply it.

#### Activity
Each learner receives a worksheet with the problem solving steps. They will be solving three problems with this:

1st: **A fictional problem** – guided by the educator.

2nd: **A problem that they have personally experienced previously**
- maybe with friends, bad test results, friction at home.

3rd: **An example problem they go search for** at home, in break time or amongst their friends.

#### Material needed
- Worksheets.
- Instructions to the educator.
## Module 7: Summarizing and termination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 7.1</th>
<th>Revision of different emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Revision of the emotions that were learned and reinforcing the different meanings and experiences that are linked to each of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Guide the learners in their attempt to name as many emotions as possible and thereafter provide short explanations of what each emotion entails. The learners are guided past the elementary emotions like angry, scared, sad, glad and happy. The aim is to broaden their focus to more complicated and complex emotional experiences, like:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• disappointed - I got bad marks in a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• anxious - there is a noise outside my window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• betrayed - my brother told my mom that I broke a glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• surprise - grandma came to visit unexpectedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• humiliated - I fell in front of the other kids and they laughed at me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• concerned - my dog is ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• tolerant - I listen patiently to my friends’ daily complaint about her sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• inferior - a educator said to me that I am the naughtiest kid in her class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• affectionate - I think how much I love my grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• excited - we’re going on holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• envious - my friend invites another girl to play with us and I am scared that she would push me aside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activity further aims to enhance the comprehension of learners regarding the vast difference between the ways your body experience different emotions.
The learners write the emotions that they can recall on the worksheet “Emotions for smart kids” and add a situation which would evoke the emotion in the column provided for it.

In the next activity the learners receive the worksheet “Emotions in colour”. The learners are guided to allow themselves to experience the bodily sensation each of these situations brings about. They are led to feel as if they are really giving a loving hug to mom and therefore experience the warm loving feeling it brings about. The “emotions in colour” worksheet has different emotions written in different fonts. After the learners experienced the emotion according to the instructions provided in the program they choose the emotion in the font that best fits the experience that the emotion brought about. The word is then coloured in the colour that the learner feels goes well with the emotion. In this manner the right brain is incorporated in settling this emotion and its bodily effect for the learner. This will further prepare them not to feel overwhelmed when specific emotions are experienced in future. Each emotion is dealt with separately as prescribed in the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material needed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Emotions for smart kids” worksheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Emotions in colour” worksheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions from program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 7.2</th>
<th>Revision of different emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Emphasize higher level emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Learners divide into pairs and play “Your face – my face” with the aids and instructions provided in the program. This game analyses the learners’ knowledge of different emotions and their ability to demonstrate and describe it correctly. This is done through a fun game, which actively involves every learner and serves as a measuring instrument for the educator to determine if the emotions are correctly understood and incorporated by the learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material needed</td>
<td>“Your face – my face” game. Instructions in program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 7.3</strong></td>
<td>Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of activity</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate the learners’ ability to match higher-level emotions correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Each learner receives a form with different emotion words to cut out. The form also contains a list of different emotional events. The learners need to match the emotion that would be the result of the event in the list, correctly. Another activity in the same manner is also included in this session. A discussion of the correct answers follows; there will be instances where different emotions will be applicable to the same situation – depending on the learners own experience of it. The aim is that learners should display a thorough comprehension of the emotional effect of these practical situations and the specific emotions accompanying it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material needed</strong></td>
<td>Emotional awareness checklist A and B. Instructions to the educator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.4 SUMMARY

The emotional awareness program is developed in language and with activities that can be utilized for learners from grade one to grade seven. Younger learners will only spend more time on every activity and handle it at a slower pace where older learners will be able to grasp the concepts much faster. The educator involved will also present the program to older learners in a different manner than it is presented to younger learners.

The Emotional Awareness Program covers six aspects which promote emotional growth and abilities and which aim to guide the learners to enhanced emotional awareness. The program was developed in its current form with features to enable the researcher to measure the learners’ progress and to fit into a given time frame. It was therefore limited to a seven-week programme,
but will ideally be extended to be implemented throughout the whole of the school year in a much more extended form.

If implementation of a seven-week program indicates positive emotional development in learners it will be safe to say that a program with a longer term or even daily input in the emotional development of learners will benefit them even more.

The respondents in this study were tested with a standardised questionnaire for measuring the levels of emotional awareness in children, before and after they were exposed to the program. A further comparison through the results of the questionnaires would be the amount of emotional words the learners were able to use before and after the program, as well as the level of emotional words that they possess after they were exposed to the program. A comparison group who did not work through the program was also tested on the same dates as the experimental group in order to measure the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Program.

The following chapter focuses on the results obtained from an experimental and comparison group’s pre-test and post-test results after the experimental group had been exposed to the Emotional Awareness Program prior to the post-test. The analysed data will be empirically presented and interpreted in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 8
Research Methodology

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Emotional awareness and education as discussed in previous chapters present the potential to be successfully incorporated with each other. Emotional awareness, being the ability to recognize and communicate what you are feeling and to have empathy for what others are feeling, is evidently a significant component in an individual’s overall existence. Stanton, Parsa and Austenfeld (2002:278) indicate emotional awareness to be of importance in different facets of functioning, for it:

- contributes to resilience;
- is critical in forming healthy relationships;
- is critical in goal attainment; and
- is necessary for overall mental health.

It is therefore important to take note of the importance of meaningful emotional development in order to enhance the quality of life for children who successfully develop this ability.

Children in the middle childhood developmental phase are spending the most part of their daily lives in school and subsequently in the presence of their educators and friends. The researcher is of the opinion that this system is therefore best suited to be utilized in teaching indispensable emotional knowledge within the educational system in the same way and at the same time as cognitive abilities. This viewpoint is supported by the findings of Tew (2007:34) when she suggests that learning can be enhanced by supportive learning relationships and a healthy level of challenges as it has emotional as well as cognitive components. Integrating social and emotional learning into school curriculums is vital in the preparation of children for life in the twenty first century. Bahman and Maffini (2008:2) agree with this statement in their indication
that many schools hold educators accountable only for the academic achievement of their students. They place little or no emphasis on the social and emotional growth of these children, while these are the very skills they will need to manage themselves effectively to go forward in life.

The need to enhance the emotional awareness of children in middle childhood will thus not only fill a research and educational gap, but also improve the academic, social and emotional performance of primary school learners in the South African context. In order to fulfil this need, the focus of the study was to develop, implement and evaluate an emotional awareness program for children in middle childhood meant for utilization within the educational system.

The goal and objectives of this study are listed below.

### 8.1.1 Goal

To develop, implement and evaluate an emotional awareness program (EA program) for children in middle childhood for utilization in the South African educational system.

### 8.1.2 Objectives

- To conceptualize emotional awareness theoretically with specific emphasis on children in middle childhood, in the context of the educational system.
- To develop an EA program for children in middle childhood for utilization in classroom context.
- To train an educator in implementing the EA program for children in middle childhood within the classroom context.
- To implement the EA program in a classroom context, by the trained educator.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the EA program through measuring the responses of the learners (respondents).
• To make recommendations based on the research findings, regarding the enhancement of the EA program for learners in middle childhood within the educational system.

Against this background the following hypotheses were guiding the study.

8.1.3 Hypotheses

The following main and sub-hypotheses were applicable in the context of this study:

Main hypothesis:

If an EA program is implemented for children in middle childhood within the educational system, then the learners’ level of emotional functioning will be enhanced.

Sub-hypotheses:

• If an EA program is implemented for children in middle childhood within the educational system, their ability to be in contact with their emotions will be enhanced.

• If an EA program is implemented for children in middle childhood within the educational system, their ability to discriminate between different emotions will increase.

• If an EA program is implemented for children in middle childhood within the educational system, they will gain the ability to verbalize and “own” their emotions.

8.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher utilized a quantitative research approach in the execution of this study, because a structured approach to inquiry is usually classified as quantitative research, and an unstructured approach as qualitative research, according to Kumar (2005:12). He indicates further that:

“everything that forms the research process – objectives, design, sample and the questions that the respondents will be asked – is predetermined
when making use of the structured or quantitative approach and is more appropriate to determine the extent of a problem, issue or phenomenon”.

This study lends itself to predetermination of the objectives, design and sample, which thus correlates with the above description of Kumar. A standardised questionnaire was further utilized as measuring instrument contributing to the structured nature of the research, which distinguishes it as a quantitative approach to research.

Fortune and Reid in Fouché and Delport (2005:73) elaborate on the description of the quantitative approach in adding the following aspects which correlated with the execution of this study:

- The study was focused on specific hypotheses that remained constant throughout the investigation.
- Planning about research procedures, design, data collection methods and types of measurement were developed before the study began.
- Data collection procedures were applied in a standardised manner, as all participants answered the same questionnaire.
- Measurement was focused on specific variables.

The researcher objectively measured the effectiveness of the EA program on the emotional functioning of children in middle childhood within an educational context, thus in a primary school class. The research, more specifically, measured the effectiveness of the program on specific variables namely, the learners’ ability to:

- be in contact with their emotions;
- discriminate between different emotions;
- verbalize and “own” their emotions.

The measurement of the above-mentioned variables was done by utilizing a standardised questionnaire, developed by Lane and Bajgar (2003) namely LEAS-C, “Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children”. See Appendix A.
8.3 TYPE OF RESEARCH

This study resorted within the description of applied research. Applied research is defined by Unrau (2008:25) as studies aiming to: “…develop solutions to problems and applications in practice”.

The South Australian Community Health Research Unit’s Glossary of definitions [Sa] elaborates further on the definition by stating that “applied research is research aiming to apply the results of the research to a specific problem”. Kumar (2005:4) adds that “it is through the application of applied research methodology that a profession is strengthened and advanced”.

This study was applied in nature because it focused on a problem in practice namely a need for an emotional awareness program for children in middle childhood which is scientifically tested to be suitable in the South African education system. Such a program will enable educators to enhance the emotional awareness of their learners and will consequently add new knowledge to the existing knowledge base of emotional awareness.

In the context of applied research, intervention research was applicable to this study. Technology in this context consists of all the technical means by which such a profession achieves its objectives”. Intervention research aims to address the application of research in practice. Rothman and Thomas, in Fouché and de Vos (2005:394), further indicate that different kinds of studies may be subsumed under intervention, namely:

- intervention knowledge development,
- knowledge utilization, and
- design and development.

In the context of this study, the sub-type of intervention research namely design and development was applicable in light of the researcher’s aim to design and develop technology, namely the EA program for children in middle childhood, to implement the program (intervention) and to evaluate the effectiveness thereof for further implementation within the educational system. In accordance
to De Vos’ (2005:394-407) description of the process of intervention research, the research process followed in this study can briefly be described as follows:

### 8.3.1 Phase 1: Problem analysis and project planning

Hastings, in De Vos (2005:395), defines a social problem as “a condition affecting a significant number of people” and “about which is felt something could be done through collective action”. A Lack of emotional awareness amongst children in middle childhood as a social problem and the analysis of this problem, rooted from a master’s degree study conducted by the researcher in 2006 (Knoetze, 2006). This study’s findings indicated that educators found emotional awareness to be a valuable developmental area which was, in their opinion, underdeveloped in their learners. They further expressed that they did not have sufficient knowledge on the subject and were eager to address the development of emotional awareness within their classroom context.

Children in the middle childhood phase spend most of their time at school and the educational system is therefore an ideal system to utilize for the enhancement of emotional awareness. Children are also among their peers as well as among authority figures at school where academic and other developmental achievements are measured, which sets the scene to implement gained emotional knowledge practically.

The project planning that resulted from the above-mentioned study (Knoetze, 2006) was thus to develop a program on emotional awareness for utilization by educators in their classroom context. The aim was to fulfil a need to optimize children’s functioning as a whole and contribute to a positive atmosphere within the classroom context, which can then in turn expand to the whole school’s system. The Department of Education in the Limpopo Province approved the study. Grade three, Afrikaans-speaking learners were the respondents in the study. Written consent of parents (Appendix E) and the educator involved (Appendix F) as well as assent of respondents (Appendix G) were obtained.
8.3.2 Phase 2: Information gathering and synthesis

Fawcett, Suarez-Balcazar, Balcazar, White, Paine, Blanchard and Embree, in De Vos (2005:398), indicate that information gathering and synthesis are essential to discover what others have done to understand and address the problem. Knowledge acquisition involves using existing information sources, studying natural examples and identifying functional elements of successful models and programs.

The researcher acquired information regarding children in middle childhood and their emotional awareness through a thorough literature study. Interviews with experts in the field of psychology and education further broadened the researcher’s knowledge on the existing need as well as most suitable ways of addressing the identified need. The researcher also studied examples of international successful models of emotional awareness learning programs.

A synthesis of the gathered information resulted in the compilation of an EA program for children in middle childhood for utilization in the South African educational system.

8.3.3 Phase 3: Design

De Vos (2005: 400-401) describes the design phase of the intervention process as designing a way of observing events related to the phenomenon, as well specifying procedural elements of the intervention.

The researcher designed a program for the development of emotional awareness from the Gestalt Approach and utilized Gestalt play therapy techniques to do so. Knowledge gained from the literature study concerning the child in the middle childhood phase and the educational system was combined for the development of the program. The researcher utilized the standardized questionnaire developed by Dr. Richard Lane and Jane Bajgar (2003) (Appendix A), for measuring of the levels of emotional awareness in children. The questionnaire is constructed to be user friendly, taking into consideration that the respondents are young and thus need to have a clear understanding of the questions asked in order to obtain valid and reliable responses. The
questionnaire consists of twelve scenarios on which the respondents were to respond and was thus not too extended which could result in them losing interest to the end of the questionnaire.

8.3.4 Phase 4: Early development and pilot testing

Thomas, in De Vos (2005:401), defines development as the process by which an innovative intervention is implemented and used on a trial basis, developmentally tested for its adequacy, and refined and redesigned as necessary. According to Fawcette et al., in De Vos (2005:402), this phase includes the important operations of developing a prototype or preliminary intervention, conducting a pilot test and applying design criteria to the preliminary intervention concept.

The utilization of a standardized questionnaire eliminated the need for pilot testing the measuring instrument. However, the educator involved was trained; the EA program was thoroughly discussed with her and her input was gained. Problems identified in the content of the preliminary program, training of the educator and input from the educator, were isolated for revision and adaption before conducting the main study.

8.3.5 Phase 5: Evaluation and advanced development

According to De Vos (2005:403), this phase comprises the following steps of operations: selecting an experimental design, collecting and analyzing data, replicating the intervention under field conditions and refining the intervention. She indicates that this phase helps to demonstrate causal relationships between the intervention and the behaviours and related conditions targeted for change.

In the context of this study, the most applicable design for this study was the comparison group pre-test – post-test design. Fouché and de Vos (2005:139-140) explain that the comparison group pre-test – post-test design elaborates on the one-group pre-test – post-test design, by adding a comparison group. The dependent variable (emotional awareness) was measured (pre-test) before implementing the independent variable (EA program) with the experimental group. The independent variable was subsequently introduced (EA program), followed by a repeated
measurement (post-test) of the dependent variable (emotional awareness) after the EA program was completed. The comparison group received both the pre-test and the post-test but did not participate in the EA program/independent variable. Measurements of the pre- and post-tests of both the experimental and comparison group regarding the dependent variable (emotional awareness) were compared in order to evaluate the impact of the independent variable (EA program).

The researcher collected and analyzed data by comparing the pre- and post-test data of both groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed EA program.

8.3.6 Phase 6: Dissemination

This phase did not form part of this study.

8.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

As mentioned and described in phase 5 of the process of intervention research in the previous section the researcher made use of the comparison-group pre-test – post-test design for this study. Due to the nature of the study, namely the implementation of an educational program and measuring its effectiveness, two factors needed to be present:

- Comparison between the emotional awareness levels of respondents before and after exposure to the EA program.
- Comparison between respondents who were exposed to the EA program and respondents who were not exposed to the EA program.

The comparison group pre-test – post-test design was thus best suited as research design for this study.
8.5 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHODS

8.5.1 Population

Arkava and Lane, as quoted by Strydom and Venter (2002:198), refer to a universe as “all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested”. The universe in this study was all learners in the middle childhood developmental phase, namely grade three learners, eight years of age, involved in primary education in South Africa.

Bickman and Rog (1998:164) note that a population is the group about which the researcher would like to speak. Arkava and Lane (in Strydom, 2005a:193) define the term population as: “A term that sets boundaries on the study units. Population refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics relevant to the study”. The population in this research study was learners in the middle childhood developmental phase, namely grade three learners, eight years old and involved in primary education in the Waterberg district of the Limpopo Province.

8.5.2 Sample

Hendricks (2006:2) indicates that samples allow the researcher to generalize results to the larger population from which the sample was drawn.

Reid and Smith (in Strydom, 2005a:194) are of the opinion that feasibility is the main reason for sampling. It is almost impossible to include a total population in a specific study, mostly because all of them are simply not reachable. For the purpose of this study, it would imply that every child in middle childhood (grade three, eight year old learners), in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province should have completed questionnaires and needed to be included in the program for emotional awareness. This was simply not feasible.

A sample of 49 learners in the middle childhood developmental phase of a specific primary school in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province was selected for the study according to the following criteria:

- **Location**: A primary school in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
- **Level of education:** Grade three learners
- **Manner of education:** Learners who spent the most of their school day in the presence of the same educator.
- **Age:** Eight year old learners.
- **Language:** Afrikaans-speaking learners.

The sample for this study was drawn regarding three aspects namely:
- A school to include.
- The grade to include.
- The classes to include.

### 8.5.3 Sampling Method

The *school* included in the study was selected through utilization of availability sampling/convenience sampling, based on the headmaster and personnel’s motivation for involvement in this study and their (a) accessibility; (b) appropriate age of learners in the school; and (c) their willingness to participate. This is a public school and the approval of the Department of Education in Limpopo (Appendix C) was thus obtained as well as approval from the governing body of the school involved (Appendix D).

The sampling method best suited for sampling of the *grade* to involve was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is described by Babbie (2004:183) as a type of non-probability sampling where the respondents are selected on the basis of the researcher’s own judgment regarding which respondents possess the attributes needed and who will add the best representation to the study. This study needed to be conducted with learners in a specific developmental phase, namely the middle childhood phase and more specifically grade three learners, about eight years of age. It was also aimed at the educational system and in a classroom context to determine the effect of the EA program on the respondents. Grade three was thus the grade purposively sampled for inclusion in this study.
Random sampling was used to select the two grade three classes to involve in the study. Bernard (2006:146) indicates that random sampling entails that every unit of analysis has an equal chance of being chosen for study. In the context of this study, two grade three classes needed to be selected, namely one class to serve as the experimental group and one class to serve as the comparison group. The selected primary school had four grade three classes consisting of three Afrikaans classes and one English class. In order to achieve optimal comparison it was beneficial to utilize groups of the same language. Two grade three Afrikaans-speaking classes were thus available and a random selection, according to the simple random sampling method (Strydom, 2005a:200), was done to determine which class was to be the experimental group and which one the comparison group for the main study. The experimental group consisted of 25 respondents and the comparison group of 24 respondents. Absent learners during the pre- or post-test resulted in 21 useable questionnaires from the experimental group and 19 from the comparison group, thus 40 respondents.

Informed consent was signed by the educator involved (Appendix F) as well as the parents/guardians of the respondents involved (Appendix E) and assent was given by learners in both the experimental and comparison group (Appendix G) for their involvement in completion of the questionnaires as well as the experimental group’s participation in a seven module program for the development of emotional awareness.

8.6 DATA-COLLECTION METHOD

The collection of data for this study was done by utilizing the standardised questionnaire “Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children (LEAS-C)” developed by Dr. Richard Lane and Dr. Jane Bajgar (2003) (Appendix A). This questionnaire was obtained from the Department Psychiatry of the University of Arizona, U.S.A. and used for this study with their approval (Appendix B).

8.6.1 Measuring Instrument

The LEAS-C consists of the questionnaire, a scoring manual and a glossary of words. The emotional vocabulary in this glossary of words is divided into four levels (level zero, level one,
level two and level three) according to the emotional weight of a word, as determined by the developers of the LEAS-C. The questionnaire depicts twelve emotional scenarios where the respondent’s response is scored based on the complexity of emotional experiences described for himself/herself as well as another person depicted in the situation. Each scenario thus obtains two scores, one for “self” and one for “other”. A total is then also calculated from these two scores.

The glossary of words that accompanies the scoring manual aids the scoring of emotion words according to the emotional value attached to it. Complexity of emotional awareness is therefore ultimately assessed on five levels. Bajgar and Lane’s scoring manual is available from the University of Wollongong and explains scoring of the questionnaire as follows:

A low awareness level 1 response may stress somatic features, e.g. “I would feel sick”, or may directly state a lack of emotional response, e.g., “I would feel nothing”. A level 2 response may reflect action e.g., “I would feel like smashing the wall” or a more global generalised response e.g. “I would feel good”. Level 3 responses reflect undimensional emotions e.g., “I would feel sad”. Level 4 and 5 responses reflect greater complexity in awareness with emotion blends evident e.g., “I would feel angry but maybe a little bit sad as well”. Where there is no response or the response reflects cognition e.g. “I would feel like she did it deliberately”, a score of 0 is given.

Three scores are allocated for each scenario: Self-Awareness, Other awareness and Total Awareness. The Total Awareness score is the higher of the Self and Other Awareness scores. Each scenario is rated on a 5 point scale. Ratings for each scenario are summed to give a score out of 60.

The questionnaire tested respondents’ level of emotional awareness with specific emphasis on their ability to be in contact with their emotions, their ability to discriminate between different emotions, their ability to verbalize and “own” emotions and their ability to strengthen social relationships. The questionnaire with twelve open-ended questions (scenarios), arranged in an intricate and differentiated manner, was utilized as a pre- and post-test.
The respondents in this study were eight years of age and the questionnaire was developed for children of this age group. The questionnaire’s content was thus comprehensible for eight year old learners. It is further constructed in language applicable to the age and developmental level of respondents and in a manner that enabled respondents to easily indicate their answers. The questionnaire and its scoring measurements were translated from English to Afrikaans (due to the fact that the respondents are Afrikaans-speaking), with the permission of its developers (Appendix B). Dr. Lane indicated that translated questionnaires were already successfully utilized in other languages (French, German, Portuguese and Japanese) as well. In the event of this being a standardized questionnaire it was consequently ensured that it is an age appropriate and user friendly measuring instrument. The fact that a standardised questionnaire was used also annulled the purpose of a pilot test as the validity and reliability of the questionnaire was already tested.

8.6.2 Validity and Reliability of the Measuring Instrument

Babbie (2005:148) explains that the conventional usage of validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning or the concept under consideration and accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. The following techniques were utilised to assess the validity of the measuring instrument in this study.

**Face validity:** Delport (2005:161) indicates that a measuring instrument should be structured not only to accurately measure the attributes under consideration, but should also appear to be a relevant measure of those attributes. The questionnaire utilized in this study is a standardised measuring instrument and was thus proved to have validity. Its general purpose is to question issues regarding emotional experiences and the reaction to and effect of emotions on the respondent. The questionnaire furthermore did measure the three variables of the study, namely:

- Being in contact with emotions
- Discriminating between different emotions
- Verbalizing of emotions

The questionnaire’s face validity therefore adequately appeared to be a relevant measure of the variables in question.
Criterion validity: Babbie (2005:148) states that criterion validity can also be called predictive validity and is an indication of the degree to which a measure relates to some external criterion. The criterion against which the scores on the instrument could be compared was the different variables mentioned and their individual features.

Construct validity: Delport (2005:162) indicates construct validity to be concerned with determining the degree to which an instrument successfully measures a theoretical construct. It further involves not only validation of the instrument itself, but also of the theory underlying it. The questionnaire utilized in this study is standardised and therefore constructed from theory and literature on the subject and thus of high construct validity.

Reliability: According to Rubin and Babbie (2010:91) reliability refers to the likelihood that a given measurement will yield the same description of a given phenomenon if that same measurement is repeated. Baigar and Lane (2003), developers of the LEAS-C, provide preliminary evidence for the reliability and validity of the LEAS-C. They state the following: “Total scores have acceptable internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .66) and good inter-rater reliability (r = .89)”.

8.6.3 Pilot Study

According to Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001:1) the term pilot study refers to a mini version of a full-scale study (also called ‘feasibility’ study), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire. The pilot study is a crucial element of a good study design. Conducting a pilot study does not guarantee success in the main study, but it does increase the likelihood.

De Vos (2005:402) states that pilot testing is designed to determine whether the intervention will work. Fawcett et al. (in De Vos, 2005:402) elaborate on this statement in their opinion that the pilot test helps to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and identifies which elements of the prototype may need to be revised.
During the execution of this study the pilot testing of the measuring instrument seem to be unnecessary due to the utilization of a standardised measuring instrument. However, the educator involved within the study was trained to implement the program before conducting the main study. The training and input of the educator served thus as ‘pilot testing’ of the content and application of the developed program. Discussion of the different modules of the program led to amendments where necessary for incorporation in the normal curriculum and daily activities of a grade three class.

8.6.4 Administration of the Measuring Instrument

The questionnaire was administered as a group-administered questionnaire. Delport (2005:169) indicates that:

“in using group administered questionnaires the respondents who are present in a group should each complete a questionnaire on their own. Preferably, each respondent should receive the same stimulus and complete his own questionnaire without discussion with the other members of the group”.

The researcher explained the purpose and way of completing the questionnaire to all the respondents in both the experimental and comparison group. Each question was read to all the respondents in similar manner, which ensured a similar interpretation of questions. By implementing such a procedure the researcher ensured that respondents had the same understanding, considering their young age. The researcher was present during the completion of the questionnaire, in order to be available to clarify and assist respondents if needed. This method of questionnaire completion also rendered the benefit that the researcher was in control of the completion of questionnaires and a 100% completion and retrieval ratio was achieved for those present. Some learners were absent during the completion of questionnaires, and only the questionnaires of respondents present for pre- and post testing could be used. A total of 40 respondents was present for both tests and their questionnaires were thus utilized for data analysis.
8.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Kruger, de Vos, Fouché and Venter (2005:218) note that data analysis is the categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data, in order to obtain answers to research questions. The purpose of analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relation of the research problems can be studied and tested, and conclusions drawn.

The collected data was processed and interpreted by the researcher through the use of computerized data analysis to configure the collected data into comprehensible information. The SPC XL Software for Microsoft Excel provided the statistical analysis features applicable for the analysis of the type of data collected in the study. Research results, namely the influence of the EA program, developed by the researcher on variables as measured in a pre- and post-test of the experimental group and the comparison group, were statistically analysed and presented through graphical presentations in graphs, diagrams and tables to give order, structure and meaning to the collected data.

8.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Balnaves and Caputi (2001:239) state that the purpose of ethics is to make researchers aware of the issues that may arise in their work, and to encourage them to educate themselves and colleagues to behave ethically.

Robertson and Dearling (2004:33) highlight that ethics is about the moral position adopted by the researcher and those funding that piece of research. Each of these groups has a moral obligation to protect people from any mistreatment that could result from taking part in the research itself.

The following ethical concerns were relevant in the context of this study:
8.8.1 Avoidance of harm

Strydom (2005b:58) indicates physical or emotional harm may be done to respondents during a research study. Harm to respondents during a study in social science may be more emotional. Darlington and Scott (2002:22) indicate that it is the responsibility of the researcher to see to it that respondents involved in the study will not be harmed and to take the necessary measures in this regard.

Aronstam in Blom (2004:52) urges that awareness brings clients into contact with their own needs and emotions and they thus learn to accept responsibility. Emotion is an unavoidable part of children’s daily life (Maritz 2005), they are inevitably confronted with positive and negative emotions whether involved in the study or not. The development of emotional awareness provided the learners involved in the study with insight, skills and understanding of the emotions they are experiencing and they learned constructive reactions to it.

The researcher is thus of the opinion that the risk of emotional or physical harm to respondents in this study was limited. The study focused on a positive addition to a child’s development and therefore benefitted the learners involved. It furthermore added knowledge to the educational skills of the educators involved in the study. The study was an enriching experience, for learners and educator. The researcher was however alert to detect any form of emotional harm, due to exposure to the Emotional Awareness Program and was prepared to take measures if necessary or to refer those respondents to the psychologist involved at the Help Centre of the involved school.

8.8.2 Informed consent

Informed consent, according to Kumar (2005:212), implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information you want from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study and how it will directly or indirectly affect them.
The retrieval of informed consent implies, according to Strydom (2005b:59), that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures which will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential subjects. Letherby and Bywaters (2007:78) indicate that informed consent ensures on the one hand that participants know their rights and it protects the researcher from later accusations made by study participants. On the other hand, informed consent might have the effect that people may be discouraged to participate.

An informed consent letter was formulated for the parents (Appendix E) as well as an assent letter (Appendix G) for the children to explain the goal, methods and risks involved in the study. These letters were formulated in a respondent friendly manner using language and explanations regarding the subject that clarified the study and its aim, to the learners and their parents. Special effort was taken to ensure that the learners understood, according to their age level, the goal of the investigation and procedures which was to be followed during the investigation. Emotional awareness and what it entails needed to be thoroughly explained to parents to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how inclusion in the study would affect their children. Both parents and learners were requested to sign the informed consent and assent letter.

Parents were furnished with the motivation that emotions inevitably influences their children on a daily basis but that awareness thereof has the potential to transform the experience to a skill that can serve as edification to the child, as was stated above. This statement is supported by Thomson, Rudolph and Henderson (2004:196) in their comprehension of Gestalt methods when they indicate that enhancement of the self increases a person’s ability to be in contact, with the goal being to restore the child’s natural functioning and self regulatory processes. Parents might have been uncertain whether or not emotional manipulation was a positive venture and was therefore enlightened with this information to indicate through literature and previous studies that the anticipated outcome of the study had the potential of positive enhancement. This enabled parents to come to an informed decision regarding their children’s involvement in the study. The process of pretesting, training of the educator, implementing of the program, post-testing and the
motivations thereof was also explained to parents. They were also informed that they will be given the opportunity to discuss their children’s test results if they felt the need to.

Voluntary participation was emphasized. The confidentiality of respondents’ identities was highlighted to ease the fear of misuse of information gained through the research intervention.

Educators already indicated their willingness to be included in the study but were also made aware that their participation was voluntary, and signed consent was obtained for their participation in the study.

8.8.3 Deception of respondents

Neuman (2000:229) notes that misleading or deception of respondents occurs when the researcher intentionally misleads subjects by way of written or verbal instruction, the actions of other people, or certain aspects of the settings.

The educators’ training and daily involvement with children furnished them with a reasonable understanding of the term “emotional awareness” where an explanation of the researcher’s intent in this matter was given. The goal and objectives of the study was clearly stated in a cover letter to educators, learners and parents. Respondents were thoroughly informed of the value the study will add to the educational system and individual learners. Parents, educators and learners thus took an informed decision regarding their willingness to take part in the study.

8.8.4 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality

Babbie (2005:64) states that the clearest concern in the protection of the subjects’ interests and well-being is the protection of their identity. If revealing their survey responses could harm them in any way, the adherence to this norm becomes all the more important. He indicates that a response may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with
a given respondent. Confidentiality becomes applicable where the researcher can identify a given person’s responses, but essentially promises not to do so publicly (Babbie, 2005:65).

No information on identity or other identifying particulars is required to meet the goals of this study, if parents are comfortable with this arrangement. A coding system was used to compare pre- and post-test results. The researcher assigned a specific number to each respondent for differentiation between respondents and to adhere to confidentiality of identities. This proved useful in the processing of information without violating the anonymity of respondents. Referral to specific respondents or classes in publications on the study will also adhere to the anonymity of respondents and confidentiality of information.

Information gained by the researcher through the respondents’ involvement in the study was handled with the utmost confidentiality. The fact that social workers operate within the realm of confidential information on a daily basis will assure respondents that the study will not in any way reflect on their competence or abilities.

8.8.5 Actions and competence of researcher

Balnaves and Caputi (2001:239) state that a researcher should not accept work that he/she is not qualified to carry out and should not claim expertise in areas outside those that would be recognized academically as their true field of expertise.

The researcher is a registered social worker with 20 years of field experience in family care. The researcher has sufficient experience in social work with children, especially children that have been traumatized because of maltreatment resulting in problem behaviour and emotional numbness.

The researcher attained a master’s degree in play therapy from the University of Pretoria. Educators’ knowledge and viewpoints regarding emotional awareness were researched as part of the above mentioned degree and added to the theoretical foundation of this study. The researcher had thus already investigated educators’ knowledge of emotional awareness and their opinion on
the necessity of implementing a program, as was researched in this study. The researcher already had substantial experience in the field of research and as such, competent and adequately skilled to undertake this investigation.

### 8.8.6 Release of publication and findings

Information acquired from the research study ought to be objectively formulated and unambiguously conveyed to avoid or minimize misappropriation by subjects, the public or colleagues (Strydom, 2005b:65).

A written report under supervision of a study leader was compiled after the investigation was completed. The acquired information is in this manner made available to the broader public and recommendations, based on the findings, was made.

The researcher is obliged to furnish an accurate version of findings, as well as the shortcomings of the study. The school involved in the study received specific feedback regarding findings and recommendations.

This study was conducted as intervention research with the aim being to address the application of the research in practice. The Emotional Awareness Program proved to be effective and useful within the educational context it will be further developed, introduced and marketed for further implementation after completion of this study.

### 8.8.7 Debriefing of respondents

Strydom (2005b:66) clarifies the debriefing of respondents after completion of the investigation as follows: “the researcher has to rectify any misconceptions that may have arisen in the minds of participants. They will get the opportunity to work through their experience and its aftermath and handle the termination and withdrawal of therapy or involvements that stemmed from the study”.
The aim of an emotional awareness program is mostly empowerment of the respondent through heightened emotional awareness. The effect of emotional awareness assists the children to understand their actions according to the emotion involved. The anticipated outcome of the study was that learners will gain an understanding of their emotions and obtain skills for positive channelling of their emotional experiences. This study’s risk of harm to respondents was thus foreseen as limited and a debriefing of traumatic experiences was indeed not necessary. If the need for therapy of child respondents, involved in the study does arise at a later stage, it will be addressed through play therapy by another therapist or referred to the psychologist of the school’s Help Centre.

8.9 SUMMARY

This quantitative study was carried out according to research methodology best suited to supply the most reliable results. This chapter focused on the research methodology, which formed the basis of this research study. The practical implementation of the different facets that formed part of the process in its entirety was discussed according to the methods in which it was implemented, how it progressed and concluded.

The following chapter provides discussions and graphical representation of the empirical findings from the study. A reflection on the results obtained and an analysis of this information forms part of the content of this chapter, and serves as an indication of the outcome of the study.