



How Educational Psychologists conceptualise risk in research

Elacia Whittingham
26215901
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**How Educational Psychologists
conceptualise risk in research**

by

Elacia Whittingham

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Supervisor:

Dr Salome Human-Vogel

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DECLARATION

I declare that **HOW EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCHERS CONCEPTUALISE RISK IN RESEARCH** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

E Whittingham

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my friend and fellow student Nicole Wonfor who was only with us on this earth for a short while. She taught me to always give of myself and to be the best that I can be.

ABSTRACT

The study is aimed at understanding how educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk in research particularly in relation to the informed consent process. Literature from Crow, G., Wiles, R., Heath, S. & Charles, V. (2006); Flewitt, R. (2005); Heath, S., Charles, V., Crow, G. & Wiles, R. (2007) was consulted. I anticipate that the findings will make a contribution to the applications made to the ethical committee when conducting research with children. The research project was qualitative with a thematic analysis being done from an *a priori* epistemology. The findings of the research study are that educational psychology researchers are not reporting the risk inherent in their research adequately, if at all to their participants. The study revealed a cognitive dissonance between educational psychologists concept of risk and actual risk posed by research. The informed consent form was not made available to the participants as it should have been. Greater reflexivity when preparing research may decrease the dissonance and therefore the risk to participants of research.

KEYWORDS

Informed consent

Risk in research

Benefit in research

Autonomy

Benevolence

Non-malevolence

Educational psychologist researcher

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Bearing in mind the requirements of informed consent on the one hand, and the special challenges presented by the contexts in which educational psychologists conduct their research, the benefit of learning about how educational psychology researchers have elicited informed consent is evident. This is especially so when their research has passed an ethics review, and communicated and presented information about the risk and benefit of their research to participants. Researchers agree that educational and psychological research should always be subject to some form of ethics review and they support this as a well-established practice (Jefford & Moore, 2008). Educational psychologists who conduct research at a higher education institution are required to abide by the rules of their profession — established by the Health Professions Council of South Africa — as well as additional impositions of the higher education institution at which their research is conducted. Consequently, educational psychologist researchers have at all times to satisfy professional and academic standards in their research. Two aspects of this practice will be discussed in detail: the informed consent process, as a critical part of the research process; and the context within which this takes place, namely academia. Understanding academic professionalism is important as the research analysed in this dissertation was conducted within this sphere. Therefore the process by which informed consent is evaluated before research has been approved is additionally more clearly understood.

1.2 Background

While students complete research as part of their course requirements and possible future career paths most, if not all research, takes place under the umbrella of an academic institution (Ferguson, Masur, Olson, Ramirez, Robyn & Schmaling, 2007) where students' supervisors are

professional academicians. For professionals in the academic world there are a very unique set of demands that are faced by each individual (Bruhn, 2008) and the research culture in each institution also differs (Ferguson et al., 2007).

Reader (1966) as cited in Bruhn, Zajac, Al-Kazemi & Prescott (2002, p.462) defines a profession as “an occupation that regulates itself through systematic training and discipline and has a foundation in technical and specialised knowledge”. It also has a service rather than profit orientation, requiring adherence to a code of ethics. The profession of academia complies with these requirements and can thus be considered a unique profession. It could further be argued that academicians should exhibit a higher degree of professionalism and adhere to a stricter code of ethics than other professions as they serve a dual role: academicians are entrusted with students — “often impressionable young people who are searching for careers and models of career types — but even more so, many are still experimenting with a system of values, beliefs, and moral standards” (Bruhn et al., 2002, p.473).

Additionally, academicians are researchers themselves and adhere to peer-based reviews of their research, thus becoming accountable to other professionals and to the organisations that fund their research (Owram, 2004). The conditions of their tenure relates to their areas of expertise, relating to both lecture presentation and their continued research (Bruhn et al., 2002). In both areas they act as professionals, with insatiable curiosity within the scope of their research, and nonetheless within ethical, professional boundaries of their field in a quest to improve what is known, and what is not known, to contribute to the wellbeing of our society (Bruhn, 2008, Wolpe, 2006).

1.3 Rationale

One aspect of the ethics review that researchers frequently debate concerns the process by which a researcher plans to obtain informed consent from prospective participants. Informed consent generally incorporates the principles of autonomy, justice, benevolence and non-

malevolence (Jefford & Moore, 2008). Researchers obtain informed consent through adequate and appropriate disclosure of information about proposed research activities to participants. For informed consent to be valid, researchers must provide participants with all information likely to be relevant to their decision to participate or not. Such information must be understood so that participants can make the decision to participate voluntarily and be considered competent to do so (Boulton & Parker, 2007).

Much (if not most) of educational psychology research in South Africa involves children in the contexts of families, schools and communities. South Africa is a culturally diverse nation. Diversity exists with regards to race, language (South Africa has 11 official languages), religion, family structure, socio-economic status and education. Furthermore, due to the high number of children living in child headed households as a result of their parents dying of AIDS, obtaining informed consent becomes even more difficult as the caregiver may themselves also still be a minor. In these contexts, informed consent can be complicated because of limitations on children's competency to consent and the additional need for parental/caregiver consent in some cases (Child Care Act, 2005; Children's Amendment Act, 2007).

The appropriate presentation of information about the research to a child-participant so that the researcher can assure that informed consent is valid, can be difficult to achieve. Likewise, ensuring that the child understands the implications of the research in terms of risks and benefits can be challenging. Making appropriate decisions concerning what information to communicate, how to communicate that information, and what information to omit, is a process.

At this point we should consider why the educational psychologist is conducting the research. Research may be in partial fulfillment of an academic programme or may be commissioned by a relevant body for example the Department of Education. Furthermore the educational

psychologist may be researching a phenomenon that is of interest to them in their work. The research would therefore advance their work in a particular area. Regardless of the reason for the research, gaining informed consent is pivotal to beginning the research and is critical to ensure good participation and will therefore have a positive impact on the research.

For the educational psychology researcher, obtaining informed consent can be more complicated particularly in school-based intervention settings. Yet further difficulty may arise when those school contexts are disadvantaged and/or under-resourced and where parent involvement may be limited (Blom-Hoffman, Leff, Franko, Weinstein, Beakley & Power, 2009, p.4). Challenging aspects in the school environment related to informed consent are, for example, making contact with the parents to obtain consent. Many schools do not give so-called outsiders access to parent details. This means that the researcher needs to work with the school and rely on the teacher to follow up on something as simple as consent forms (Blom-Hoffman et al., 2009). Often teachers are very negative in this process to begin with as they have experience of poor compliance in the return of school forms generally. This may mean that the researcher needs to motivate the teacher and constantly follow up with the teacher — perhaps causing frustration and even resentment. Teachers already feel overwhelmed with the amount of administrative work that they have and the last thing that the researcher wants to do is to make the teachers feel as if even more work is required. Furthermore according to Heath, Charles, Crow and Wiles (2007, p.405), the gatekeeper plays a crucial role in the informed consent process, in the school environment. The gatekeeper, in this context, the principal, often assumes paternal/maternal responsibility for the students and consents in principle to the research before the process is taken further to the children and the parents. It is hence imperative that research is conducted to establish how educational psychology researchers are gaining informed consent from schools, parents and children in order to facilitate the informed consent process. Such information would inform future research in this

area and may serve to improve participation rates in research increasing the validity of data gathered.

Jefford and Moore (2008) describe informed consent as a symbolic act that does not necessarily indicate understanding on the part of the participant. Other evidence indicates that participants will sign informed consent to participate in risky research even though they do not understand the activities, but because they implicitly trust that the researcher will not expose them to undue risk (Varnhagen, Gushta, Daniels, Peters, Parmar, Law, Hirsch, Takach & Johnson, 2005); (Babbie & Mouton, 2004); (Cohen, Manion & Morrisson, 2002). Such argument is of particular relevance when the participants in the research are children. There are various issues of concern when considering what may constitute informed consent from children. One concern is whether children are actually capable of giving informed consent. This in itself is contentious: the child's level of comprehension and understanding is often very difficult to assess. There is no allegorical litmus test and South African law regarding age of consent has many contradictions. According to the Child Care Act (2005), the accepted age of consent is twelve.

This does not, however, mean that children should not be part of the informed consent process because it is important that they are recognised not as 'objects' of research but as co-participants with the researcher (Heath et al., 2007). The relationship between the researcher and the child as co-participant is built upon trust. But many children are very trusting and eager to please. For this reason they may participate in a research project without actually understanding what it entails or questioning what the risks may be, even if these are explained to them.

Many challenges are unique to undertaking research in the South African context, particularly for the educational psychology researcher. This is especially so in the area of informed consent

and its interpretation. The researcher needs to be cognisant of numerous factors. South Africa has 11 official languages. A history of racism, prejudice and segregation has disadvantaged many people in this society. Many rural and urban schools are disadvantaged and/or under-resourced. The unique South African context within which all the research was proposed to have been done in will therefore have unique risks relating to informed consent and the researcher needs to remain aware of this.

It is within this context that educational psychology researchers are obtaining what is believed to be informed consent from children, parents or community leaders. The literature review conducted has not revealed any studies done in South Africa to explore the informed consent process for research by educational psychology researchers. Considering the unique landscape within which research, often with children, takes place, it seems imperative that the methods of previous educational psychology researchers that have gained informed consent from schools, parents and children be examined, not only because of the potential risks they have faced but also to realize the potential benefits implicit in a close examination of their process may yield. A noteworthy potential benefit of this study will be to facilitate the informed consent process, improving participation rates in research, and in turn increasing the validity of the research that is being done.

1.4 Purpose of the study

Bearing in mind the requirements of informed consent on the one hand, and the special challenges presented by the contexts in which educational psychologists conduct their research, the benefit of learning about how educational psychology researchers have elicited informed consent is evident. This is especially so when their research has passed an ethics review, and communicated and presented information about the risk and benefit of their research to participants. Understanding risk is an important part of the informed consent process: the nature of the risk, and therefore the possible implications for the participant as a result of participation attached to a study is often the deciding factor that participants take into

account in making their decisions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002); (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004).

This study will contribute to discourse on the conceptualisation of risk in educational psychology research and thus contribute to illuminating the ways by which informed consent can be obtained from participants in educational psychology research.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.5.1 Primary research question

How do educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk when obtaining informed consent for their research?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

What determines risk in educational psychology research?

What determines benefit in educational psychology research?

How is information about risk and benefit presented to child-participants?

How is information about risk and benefit presented to parents of child-participants?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

1.6.1 Informed Consent

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Psychology (Colman, 2003, p.365), informed consent is the “voluntary agreement by a patient to undergo a medical¹ treatment or procedure, or by a research participant or subject to take part in an experiment or other research study, given in full knowledge of the nature of the procedure and its potential risks and benefits. It is

¹ Note that in the medical context the patient can be told more or less in exact terms what the possible risks and benefits to a procedure may be. This is not the case in research as the researcher does not know with absolute certainty what the risks or benefits may be especially because one is working with individuals that are unique and one cannot predict how they will respond.

acknowledged in the ethical principles for research published by the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society that informed consent, while desirable, is sometimes either infeasible (as when the research participants lack the capacity to give it, through youth or mental disorder), or impractical (as when the nature of the investigation relies on deception).”

It is, thus, acknowledged and widely recognised that informed consent may be difficult to obtain especially when working with children which is often the case in research done by educational psychologists. Despite the difficulty, however, it may be imperative to obtain consent from any one of a parent, a guardian, a teacher or a principal (depending on the setting and nature of the research) (Cohen et al. 2002).

Diener and Crandall (1978) as cited in Cohen et al (2002, p.51) define informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in a study after they have been informed of all the facts that would be likely to influence their decisions”. Implied in this definition are the elements of competence to make an informed decision: voluntarism; that the participant is given all the information; and that the participant is able to comprehend not only what it means but also what may be implied. The Child Care Act (2005) defines competence as a child of the age of 12 and of adequate maturity to understand the decision. This could be difficult to assess in children especially if they are very young.

Educational psychology researchers planning to do research in South Africa are held accountable according to the ethical rules of conduct for practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974; Rules of Conduct pertaining specifically to the profession of psychology (Government Gazette No 29079, 2006). Accordingly a psychologist is required to “plan and conduct research in accordance with the law, particularly the national and international standards for research with human participants and animal subjects within

internationally acceptable standards of research” (Declaration of Helsinki, 2008, p.2). This statement is of particular importance in the consideration of risk in research with human participants in the literature review. Risk has evidently and necessarily to be considered against a backdrop of national and international standards. The comparison of what is required for informed consent nationally and internationally consequently forms part of this review.

According to the rules of conduct pertaining specifically to the profession of psychology (Government Gazette No 29079, 2006, p.42) of the Professional Board for Psychology, informed consent to research entails the following:

“(1) A psychologist shall use language that is reasonably understandable to the research participant concerned in obtaining his or her informed consent; (2) Informed consent referred to in subrule (1) shall be appropriately documented, and in obtaining such consent the psychologist shall – (a) inform the participant of the nature of the research; (b) inform the participant that he or she is free to participate or decline to participate in or to withdraw from the research; (c) explain the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing; (d) inform the participant of significant factors that may be expected to influence his or her willingness to participate (such as risks, discomfort, adverse effects or exceptions to the requirement of confidentiality); (e) explain any other matters about which the participant enquires; (f) when conducting research with a research participant such as a student or subordinate, take special care to protect such participant from the adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation; (g) when research participation is a course requirement or opportunity for extra credit, give a participant the choice of equitable alternative activities; and (h) in the case of a person who is legally incapable of giving informed consent, nevertheless– (i) provide an appropriate explanation; (ii) obtain the participant's assent; and (iii) obtain appropriate permission from a person legally authorised to give such permission.”

Furthermore as regards dispensing with informed consent (p.42) “before deciding that planned research (such as research involving only anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or certain kinds of archival research) does not require the informed consent of a participant, a psychologist shall consider the applicable regulations and institutional review board requirements, and shall consult with colleagues as may be appropriate.”

The process of gaining informed consent which will inform the concept of risk held by the researcher is clearly established. The process necessitates reflecting on all aspects of the research that may place the participant in harm’s way. As the researcher is very aware of not placing the participant in a position where they may be harmed, the informed consent process becomes pivotal in assessing the risk incumbent in the research that is proposed. Informed consent is vital to ensure the safety of the participants. It is implied therefore that if the researcher is not keenly aware of the informed consent process, then they will possibly not be consciously aware of the implied risks in their research.

From an international perspective, the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct 2002 (p.11) of the American Psychology Association, suggests that informed consent to research entails the following:

“psychologists inform participants about (1) the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures; (2) their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun; (3) the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing; (4) reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects; (5) any prospective research benefits; (6) limits of confidentiality; (7) incentives for participation; and (8) whom to contact for questions about the research and

research participants' rights. They provide opportunity for the prospective participants to ask questions and receive answers."

Furthermore (p.11)

"psychologists may dispense with informed consent only (1) where research would not reasonably be assumed to create distress or harm and involves (a) the study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings; (b) only anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and confidentiality is protected; or (c) the study of factors related to job or organization effectiveness conducted in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants' employability, and confidentiality is protected or (2) where otherwise permitted by law or federal or institutional regulations."

The national and international standards for informed consent are very similar. There are three major differences apparent from these approaches to informed consent, though. All three are requirements for the American Psychology Association.

- (1) Any prospective research benefits must be mentioned
- (2) Who to contact for questions about the research
- (3) Research participants' rights

This study will examine the risks and benefits of research as explained to research participants in informed consent closely; therefore it is significant that these are not overtly mentioned in the South African national requirements.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1 Archival analysis

The present study constituted a case study a priori archival document analysis of anonymous applications for ethical clearance of postgraduate educational psychology research that were approved after passing through an ethics review at an institution of higher education. A priori epistemology was employed (Boyatzis, 1998); (Crabtree & Miller, 1999); (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theory in the literature review formed the basis from which the codes were generated. A thematic analysis, using the codes created from the literature review before beginning the analysis, guided the analysis of the proposals and the production of informed consent forms.

1.7.2 Data sources

The data source in the study consisted of 44 educational psychology research proposals from 2000 to 2009 that had been cleared by a Faculty Ethics committee at a Higher Education Institution. Because the documents form part of a confidential database, permission to analyse the documents was secured from the Dean of the Faculty. The proposals consisted of the application for ethics approval of research involving human research participants, the detailed protocol, all “permission for research” forms as well as the informed consent forms which had been made anonymous. The informed consent forms and the sections in the proposals relating to the researchers evaluation of the risks and benefits of their research were used. Proposals were categorised according to the age of the participants: under 18 years; over 18 years and under/over 18 years.

1.7.3 Data analysis

Frequency analyses of the research setting, age and vulnerability of participants, data collection and analysis methods were carried out to describe the types of research being analysed. Using an a priori epistemology (Boyatzis, 1998); (Crabtree & Miller, 1999); (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the codes for use when doing the thematic analysis were

developed. Documents were analysed thematically for themes related to risk and benefit in informed consent such as letters of informed consent, disclosure, whether parental consent was obtained and how. Codes were created for themes in the data, and then the various documents were read using the codes as a guideline. The coded data was collated and a 'map' of the themes that emerged from the data was documented and recorded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Permission for this study was attained from the Dean of the Faculty of Education where the research was conducted despite the fact that no data was to be collected. Being an anonymous study, all precautions have been taken by the Chair of the Ethics committee to ensure that individual researchers whose applications were analysed could not be identified. In addition, the object of the analysis is the conceptualisation of risk in obtaining informed consent in educational psychology research, which can be described as low risk.

1.9 Quality Criteria

Throughout this study, the researcher strove to ensure that research was trustworthy by striving for credibility, transferability, dependability and the confirmability of research findings and conclusions (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). The basic premise of trustworthiness refers to the way in which the inquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of a high quality (Maree, 2007). The four constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are addressed below.

1.9.1 Credibility

Credibility addresses the issue of the researcher providing assurances of the fit between participants' view of their life ways and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of same (Schwandt, 2007). Maree (2007) further describes it as the accurate presentation of a particular context or event as described by the researcher. Credibility will be established by

applying triangulation to the methods of data collection and analysis, in order to determine if there are any discrepancies in the findings. Meetings with the researcher's supervisor will also add to the credibility of the findings (Maree, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Shenton, 2004).

1.9.2 Transferability

Babbie and Mouton (2004) describe transferability as the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. As a researcher using mixed methods, the quantitative aspect of the collected data will support the transferability of the findings. Rich encoding of the themes that emerge will ensure transferability in accordance with the methods of qualitative research.

1.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is focused on the research process and the researcher's responsibility for ensuring that the process was logical, traceable, and documented (Schwandt, 2007). Therefore the researcher should be able to provide the audience with evidence that if the research were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or a similar) context, its findings would be similar (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). The aim of this study is to understand how risk is conceptualised by educational psychology researchers when obtaining informed consent in order to either change the way that informed consent is obtained or to maintain it as is. Therefore this research will be compared to literature regarding international studies on the same topic to confirm dependability.

1.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the research and not the biases of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). Babbie and Mouton (2004) refer to Lincoln and Guba's confirmability audit trail, in which an adequate trail should be left by the researcher to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and

recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the research. In this study, a trail will be created by using methods such as the source documents, summaries and condensed notes, themes that were developed, personal notes and other relevant documentation.

1.10 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction and rationale

Chapter 1 will be an introductory chapter to the study. The purpose and rationale of the study, conceptual parameters, and the research design and methodology of the study will be outlined.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework of the study, exploring the concepts of academic ethics, value-based decision making in academia, the ethical dilemma and informed consent.

Chapter 3: Research method and results

This chapter discusses the study in terms of the research design, data analysis and interpretation. This chapter will also explore the trustworthiness of the study as well as the manner in which ethical issues were addressed.

Chapter 4: Discussion and recommendations

Chapter 4 includes the final conclusions of the study as well as the linking of these findings to the research question posed in Chapter 1. The potential value and challenges of the study will be discussed and recommendations for further research will be made.

1.11 Summary

In this chapter a general introduction and rationale for the study is explored. The primary research question: *How do educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk when obtaining informed consent for their research?* is formulated. Thereafter the key concepts of

the study are defined and clarified. A brief discussion of methodological choices and research design follows. Ethical and quality considerations are introduced, concepts which will be explored in chapter three. In the next chapter this study is contextualised within a conceptual framework by exploring existing literature on informed consent, academic professionalism and risk in ethics.

Chapter Two

Literature Review on informed consent

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 is a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework of this study. An Educational Psychologist requires informed consent from a client before being able to assist that client in a therapeutic context. This protects the client and the psychologist as the informed consent becomes a written agreement indicating what psychological intervention is to be given as well as an indication that the client understands what intervention is to be given and the limitations of such an intervention. The client is therefore also made aware of the possible risk involved in receiving assistance psychological intervention. Informed consent is a pivotal concept in research done by the psychologist. All research conducted may impose some form of risk even if it is minimal. Rosato (2000) defines minimal risk as a situation with risks no greater than those experienced in children's daily lives, with the assumption that their daily lives represent a safe and caring environment. Therefore informed consent from the research participants becomes a key factor assisting to maintain the ethical integrity of the research and to protect participants.

In order to situate and clarify this study within a conceptual framework a literature review examining specifically the concept of informed consent was conducted. The constructs of autonomy; benevolence; non-malevolence and justice are explored in detail. An important aspect of this discussion has to include legislation that makes informed consent imperative. Furthermore the relationship between the professional as researcher and how informed consent forms an integral part of this is explored. Finally the discussion examines the research aspect of informed consent. The literature review on informed consent forms the conceptual framework that creates the backdrop to the present study.

2.2 Informed Consent

2.2.1 The context of educational psychology research

Educational Psychology research most often occurs with children in school settings. A search completed using the database Academic Search Premier, reveals that between 2000 and 2010

there are 630 published articles with the keyword 'research setting' and 'school'. Similarly there are 273 articles with the keywords 'research setting' and 'child/children'. In the year from November 2009 to November 2010, 144 articles were published with the keyword 'research setting' and 'school'. Similarly there are 66 articles in this database with the keywords 'research setting' and 'child/children'. There were also 818 articles with the keywords 'Educational Psychologist' and 'school' and 507 with the keywords 'Educational Psychologist' and 'child/children'.

Therefore we should remain cognisant of the context of research among children and specifically within the school context. From the search it is evident that one of the contexts within which educational psychologists appear to work is with children and in schools. Understanding these contexts and the implications it may have on gaining informed consent for research becomes important. Children are often thought of as young people under the age of 18. Skelton (2008, p.23) indicates that while it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts 'the child' and 'childhood', using terms as these can give the impression that these identities are fixed in some way while in reality they are highly fluid and dynamic. Skelton (2008, p.23) indicates that researchers need to be aware of issues related to competence, autonomy, consent and participation when involving young people in their research. She indicates that considerations will be different for a child aged 7, for example, as opposed to a child of 17 (Skelton, 2008, p.24).

In a paper by Sue Moses (2008) titled "Children and participation in South Africa: An overview", Moses discusses the current South African literature available that examines the participation of children within a "context of historical and contemporary social and economic inequalities" (p.328). Conditions of abject poverty, high unemployment rates, inadequate access to running water and continued education in a language other than the child's mother-tongue, as well as increasing rates of HIV and Aids and related deaths (Moses, 2008, p.330-331), are indicative of the South African landscape that creates the context for all research occurring in South Africa. Educational psychology researchers must necessarily acknowledge this context when

considering prospective research. Researchers must explicitly address issues of human rights and social justice when considering their research as it is the power imbalance of the researcher that poses great risk to the participant. Furthermore, Christians (2005) cited in Mertens and Ginsberg (2009, p.94), states that “ethical behavior must be cognizant of the power relations associated with gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, race and nationality.” Indicative in this statement is that consent to research also has a cultural implication that educational psychology researchers should be aware of.

According to the UP Policy Guidelines on the inclusion of minor children in research investigations (2007) children have the following rights in research: to equality, human dignity, freedom and security (in particular the right to bodily and psychological integrity), privacy, freedom of expression, and to be protected (p.3). Furthermore, UP (2007) indicates that “children should be treated as autonomous agents with the right to self-determination. They have the right to be consulted in matters affecting them and with due consideration to their age and development, and have a right to be heard with respect to matters involving them” (p.3). For educational psychologists whose research often takes place in settings where children or schools are disadvantaged or under-resourced and where parent involvement may be limited, getting informed consent can be very difficult. Parents may be working all the time and may be difficult to communicate with which would make getting consent from parents challenging (Heath, Charles, Crow & Wiles, 2007). The obstacles to communication with parents needs to be kept in mind when considering acquiring informed consent for any research for which parental consent is required.

When working with research participants from a school, access may have to be facilitated through the principal or a teacher. The principal/teacher is considered a ‘gatekeeper’ as they decide who has access to the school/children and who doesn’t (Heath et al., 2007; Flewitt, 2005). Flewitt (2005, p.554) suggests that a gatekeeper may unknowingly pose some risk to the research participants “as the researcher risks exploiting the relationship between the gatekeeper and the person they are introducing”. If, for example, the children have a good

relationship with the teacher and they trust that person, they may participate in the research not because they want to, but because they want to please the teacher. Parents may also not necessarily consider all the risks posed by the research because of the relationship of trust with the teacher. To maintain ethical integrity when obtaining informed consent the educational psychology researcher must ensure that relationships of trust must not be exploited. Trust is one of the five principles that the Department of Education at the University of Pretoria's ethical committee functions within. Their guidelines state "The research investigator acknowledges that all research, but especially that involving child-participants implies an unequal relationship between researcher and participant that is built on trust. As such, the primary responsibility for maintaining that relationship of trust lies with the research investigator who undertakes to

1. keep child-participants fully informed about any changes, or amendments to the research project,
2. actively collaborate with all role-players¹ to promote the best interests of children and to protect their wellbeing,
3. continually discuss with child-participants the conditions of their participation,
4. refrain from any action that could constitute improper pressure on the child-participant to participate and simultaneously to create opportunities for the child-participant to discuss their concerns freely" (UP, 2007, p.10).

Therefore to maintain a relationship of trust it seems clear that the researcher must constantly communicate with the participant to keep them informed about the entire research process. A relationship of trust is based on open communication particularly regarding changes that may occur as the research progresses.

¹ Including, but not limited to, the child-participants, their parents/guardians/caregivers, community structures, organisations and institutions, and ethics review boards.

2.2.2 The Need for Ethical Research

Research in the field of Educational Psychology can give rise to ethical dilemmas which requires researchers to balance their need to search for truth with the rights and values of the research participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). Human beings frequently form the focus of research in educational psychology and this has the potential to place the participants in danger of harm. Ethical difficulties may arise from the nature of the research project itself; the context for the research; methods of data collection; the nature of the participants; the type of data collected and what is to be done with the data (Cohen et al., 2002); (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004). Informed consent is the process by which the participant is informed of the above information i.e. the nature of the research project; the context for the research; methods of data collection; the type of data collected and how and what is to be done with the data. Based on this information the participant will decide whether they want to participate in the research or not. Inherent in informed consent is therefore risk because the researcher may unwittingly be placing them under pressure due to the imbalance of power. Not only is the researcher a psychologist, but the researcher may be working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds and therefore needs to be even more aware of not placing pressure on the participant. Furthermore if participants are not adequately informed of the research, then they are placed in a position of risk. A key theme in the literature is that the ethics review is a key component to ensure that the welfare of participants is considered important (Jefford & Moore, 2008).

Informed consent is a critical component in all research to ensure the welfare of participants. But this issue in research remains contentious and consensus continues to elude researchers and commentators due to the nature of not only some research but also research settings (Wolpe, 2006). In educational psychology the participants of research are often children under the age of 18 years of age and frequently research takes place in a school setting. In South Africa, working with children is guided by the Child Care Act (38 of 2005) and the Children's Amendment Act (41 of 2007) which indicates their capacity to consent.

2.2.3 Children's capacity to consent

In South Africa, all researchers are guided by the Child Care Act (38 of 2005) and the Children's Amendment Act (2007), which gives consideration to children's right to make their own decisions. With regard to age of consent in the case of medical treatment: "Children who are of 12 years of age or over, and who are of sufficient maturity and have the mental capacity to understand the benefits, risks, social and other implications of medical treatment, may consent to such treatment without assistance from their parents or guardians" (Child Care Act, 2005; McQuoid-Mason, 2010). The statement refers specifically to consent for medical treatment but can this approach simply be transferred into psychotherapeutic practice and research? Implicit in this statement as it stands is the concept of maturity and mental capacity to understand and make decisions after evaluating the facts.

In my opinion other dilemmas present when the competency of a child according to legislation, Child Care Act (38 of 2005), The Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act (1996) and Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act (2007) is considered. My interpretation of the implications of the Children's Amendment Act (2007), are that a child may consent to psychotherapy without parental permission from the age of 12. With regard to child consent, the Child Care Act (38 of 2005) and "Article 12 of the United Nations *Convention on the rights of the child* (United Nations, 1989) clearly state children's rights to express their views on all matters that affect them" (Flewitt, 2005, p555). South African law will, for example, take into consideration where a child wants to live after a divorce i.e. with which parent: "Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child has the right to participate in an appropriate way and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration" (Child Care Act, 38 of 2005).

The Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act (1996) in conjunction with the Children's Amendment Act (2007) both from South African legislation, have now made provision for children from the age of 12 to consent to terminating an unwanted pregnancy without parental consent or even parents being informed (McQuoid-Mason, 2010). This is, however, in

contradiction to the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act (2007) which states that children may only consent to sex at the age of 16 and that even if two 15 year olds ‘consent’ to sex it is considered statutory rape by both parties. Legally speaking then, one is ‘competent’ to consent to terminating a pregnancy at the age of 12 yet not ‘competent’ to have sex until the age of 16. And, as previously referred to in this paper, the Child Care Act (38 of 2005) emphasises that “Children who are of 12 years of age or over, and who are of sufficient maturity and have the mental capacity to understand the benefits, risks, social and other implications of medical treatment, may consent to such treatment without assistance from their parents or guardians”.

The concepts of maturity and ‘sufficient maturity’ in context of such legislation are problematic: how can these constructs be measured, quantified or even defined? It is also important to note that the child must be able to understand the risks and benefits of the treatment. Therefore it seems that the two sides of the coin of informed consent are the risks on the one side and the benefits on the other side. Thus the complexity involved in deciding competence is evident. Consent for one activity may be completely different to consent for another activity. This dichotomy must be acknowledged as a criterion to evaluate the explanations in research proposals given by educational psychology researchers as justification for their research. Additionally their evaluation of potential risk to their participants in order to obtain informed consent, particularly if their participants are children may have to be considered carefully.

2.3 Towards a Definition of Informed Consent

Diener and Crandall (1978) as cited in Cohen et al (2002, p51) define informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in a study after they have been informed of all the facts that would be likely to influence their decisions”. Implied in this definition are the elements of competence to make an informed decision; volunteering to participate; that the participant is given all the information; and is able to comprehend not only what participation means but also what may be implied by participating. Definitions of informed consent encompass the principles of autonomy, justice, benevolence and non-

malevolence (Cohen et al, 2002; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004; Jefford & Moore, 2008). The literature for these principles informs the a priori codes used in the thematic analysis.

2.3.1 Autonomy:

Autonomy requires the researcher to respect participants' rights to volunteer for the research, the freedom to withdraw at any time from the research, the right to anonymity and the right to receive any information related to informed consent (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004; Jefford & Moore, 2008). The above codes were created relating to autonomy: volunteerism, freedom to withdraw, anonymity and confidentiality. The principle of voluntarism is critical for the fulfillment of informed consent. From an ethical perspective, Roberts (2002) explains that "voluntarism is the principle that embodies respect for the person as a human being with their own history and values, and as a moral agent with fundamental rights and privileges in our society. She warns, however, that even the most well-informed individual cannot truly make a decision of informed consent if choosing is inauthentic, compromised, or coerced in any way whatsoever" (Roberts, 2002, p.709).

2.3.1.1 Assent:

According to Flewitt (2005, p.555), "some researchers prefer to use the term 'assent' rather than 'consent' when referring to research among children, arguing that minors are unable to give legal consent". Flewitt (2005) suggests using the term 'provisional consent' which is food for thought. "Consent is understood to be provisional upon the research being conducted within a negotiated, broadly outlined framework and continuing to develop within the participants' expectations" (Flewitt, 2005, p.556). Flewitt (2005, p.556) suggests consent is therefore "ongoing and dependent on the network of researcher/researched relationships built upon sensitivity, reciprocal trust and collaboration". As Simons and Usher (2000) cited in Flewitt (2005, p.556) keenly observe, "once 'provisional' consent has been established, ongoing consent cannot be assumed, but is negotiated in situated contexts on a minute-by-minute basis".

Christiansen and Prout (2002, p.482) propose a model of

”ethical symmetry in research with children and young people, taking as their starting point the view that the ethical relationship between the researcher and the participant is the same with adults and children and that any differences in the conduct of research with children should not be assumed in advance but rather arise from the starting point according to the concrete experience of children”.

On this basis, a researcher might argue that there should be no differences at all between the conduct of research with children as opposed to adults. Alternatively, it may be concluded, hence, that the ethical concerns arising from research with children are indistinct, but that the practicalities of such research should nonetheless take account of individual levels of competency, both in terms of ensuring an understanding of what participation will involve and the specific methods to be adopted.

“Childhood and youth researchers may, then, pay particular attention to the appropriateness and format of any information given to children about a research project, or may seek to develop — sometimes in collaboration with research participants themselves — a child-friendly research design, such as using visual methods, drawings and stories as research tools, or choosing group interviews over individual interviews” (Heath et al., 2007, p.408).

When considering the extent to which children can make a decision based on informed consent we need to consider to what extent they are capable of making a choice for themselves. However, as Alderson and Morrow (2004) cited in Flewitt (2005, p.555) point out, “competence” is defined as having sufficient understanding and intelligence to understand what is proposed.” Furthermore Flewitt (2005, p.556) says that “explaining to young children the nature and consequences of research can make the term ‘informed’ seem even more inappropriate”. Morris, Niederbuhl and Mahr cited in Roberts (2002, p.705) explain that “children, for instance, may not yet have developed an internal capability for free, deliberate

choice". In their view this capability is not simply a concept of cognitive maturity but rather of emotional development in conjunction with cognitive maturity. Furthermore they explain that an individual's "capacity for voluntarism is affected by the person's development in terms of cognitive abilities, emotional maturity, as well as moral character. While it is clear that even very young children can and do express desires", according to Roberts (2002) "it is accepted that children are unable to make independent, cognitively complex decisions for themselves" (Roberts, 2002, p.707). Susman, Dorn and Fletcher cited in Roberts (2002, p.707) expound that "as children mature and their intellect, self-understanding, and sense of individuality develops, they are increasingly able to express sustained preferences that meet some tests of discernment, logic, coherence, and emerging personal values". According to the committee on bioethics it is only during late childhood and preadolescence that the capacity to give informed assent (to agree) becomes evident. "In adolescence the individual's emerging abilities to think abstractly, to recognise personal values in relation to those of others, to reflect on a personal place in the world, and to begin to consider the repercussions of a decision based on some accumulated personal life experience increase the adolescent's ability to voluntarily choose to participate in research" (Roberts, 2002, p.707). Perhaps it is only at this time when the participant can make a decision and choose to participate in research, fully understanding that they may withdraw at any point and making a decision without any coercion.

Alternatively, according to Christiansen and Prout (2002, p.480) there has been "a discursive shift within childhood studies from viewing children as objects of research towards a view which stresses their competency and agency as co-participants in the research process. This point of view compels researchers to reject notions of children's essential vulnerability and/or incompetence and challenges pre-existing distinctions between adults and children". According to Christiansen and Prout (2002, p.480) it is important to enter into a dialogue with participants that recognises and builds on what is common but also honours and celebrates difference. "Similar concerns face researchers working with adolescents in their mid- to late-teens. The social construction of youth, similar to that of childhood, creates a powerful assumption of distinction between 'adults' and those who are 'not adults' (Heath et al., p.408). The group

deemed to be 'not adults', is assumed to need guidance and protection from the former (Wyn & White cited in Heath et al., 2007, p.408). In the research process it means that the researcher and the participant are not equal. Researchers are looking for a "partnership for social change and challenging the status quo" (Merten & Ginsberg, 2009, p.86). Fortunately as Christiansen and Prout (2002) state, there has been a shift in literature and in studies which recognises the autonomy, competency and free will of participants of research that happen to be children.

2.3.2 Benevolence:

Benevolence requires the researcher to design research so that it will be of benefit, if not for the participants themselves, then society at large (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004; Jefford & Moore, 2008). The a priori codes are therefore benevolence to the participant or society. In accordance with the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for Research (2007) benevolence extrapolates in two ways when doing research ethically "(1) Do not cause any harm and (2) Increase possible benefits and reduce possible harm" (p. 11). Learning what will be beneficial may require exposing people to risk. In other words in order to find an intervention that will be beneficial to individuals may mean first finding out what does not work before finding an intervention that does work. We learn from our mistakes and this may expose people to risk. The problem revealed is then to decide when it is justifiable to seek certain benefits despite the risks involved, and when the benefits should be foregone because of the risks (Belitz & Bayley, 2009). In order to assess benefit it must be evaluated in relation to the risk to a participant posed by the research. It is important to recognise that participants should not be harmed for the sake of research regardless of the benefits that may result.

Understanding what constitutes minimal risk in research in comparison to the benefits of research is important. Rosato (2000) defines minimal risk as a situation with risks no greater than those experienced in children's daily lives, with the assumption that their daily lives represent a safe and caring environment. Furthermore if the research exposes the child to no more than minimal risk, only one parent needs to give permission and the child's assent should be gained (Belitz & Bayley, 2009, p.254). When the study presents more than minimal risk,

children can participate if the benefits are greater than the risks. However, in this circumstance, the permission of both parents, when applicable, and the assent of the child are required. When trying to quantify the benefit of research, the benefit to the specific participant must be at least equal to that of children who are in the same or a similar situation. Research that exposes children to more than minimal risk and offers no direct benefit to the participant can proceed only if the study is likely to generate useful data that will benefit other children who are in the same or a similar situation (Belitz & Bayley, 2009, p.254).

2.3.3 Non-malevolence:

This principle implies that research must do no harm to any of the research participants or any other person or persons (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004; Jefford & Moore, 2008). The Hippocratic maxim "do no harm" has long been a fundamental principle of medical ethics. Claude Bernard (Bernard, 2010) extended it to the realm of research, saying that one should not injure one person regardless of the benefits that might come to others. However, according to the Belmont Report (1979) even avoiding harm requires learning what is harmful and, in the process of obtaining this information people may be exposed to the risk of harm. The principle of non-malevolence cannot be evaluated in isolation of the principle of benevolence. Risk in research is measured in relation to the potential benefit of the research to the research participant or society at large (Belitz & Bailey, 2009). Risk has been coded as no risk or minimal risk to the participants.

2.3.4 Justice:

This principle means that the research participants must be treated equally and fairly (Jefford & Moore, 2008). According to the University of Pretoria Code of Ethics for Research (2007) document there are four aspects of justice that are applicable in the research environment. Contractual justice, distributive justice, contributory justice and retributive or affirmative justice must be considered when conducting research. Contractual justice refers to the fairness of specific agreements between individuals that are involved in a particular research project (p.10). Distributive justice refers to the equality of the distribution of benefits for a specific

community among its members (p.10). Contributory justice means the fairness of the contributions requested from individuals and organisations (p.11). Retributive or affirmative justice refers to the fairness of the penalty imposed on individuals for crimes or offenses committed or the compensation requested for rectifying offenses (p.11).

2.4 Risk in research

According to Belitz and Bailey (2009), risk is determined by four factors. When doing research that involves child participants one must assess:

- (a) the risk to the participant;
- (b) the benefit to the participant;
- (c) the benefit to similar children or children in general;
- (d) the minor's capacity to assent.

According also to HPCSA regulations (Seeking patients informed consent, 2007) as well as regulations regarding research with human participants as discussed in the Helsinki declaration (WMA, 2008) all research refers directly to the principles of risk in research with human participants (Panicker, 2008). One fundamental requirement is that the benefit of the research to the participant will outweigh the possible risks. This bears a close relation to the principle of non-malevolence, just as the moral requirement that informed consent be obtained is derived primarily from the principle of respect for persons. Many kinds of possible harm and benefits need to be taken into account. There are, for example, "risks of psychological harm, physical harm, legal harm, social harm and economic harm and the corresponding benefits. While the most likely types of harm to research subjects are psychological or physical pain or injury, other possible kinds should not be overlooked" (Chin, Chin & Lee, 2008, p.26).

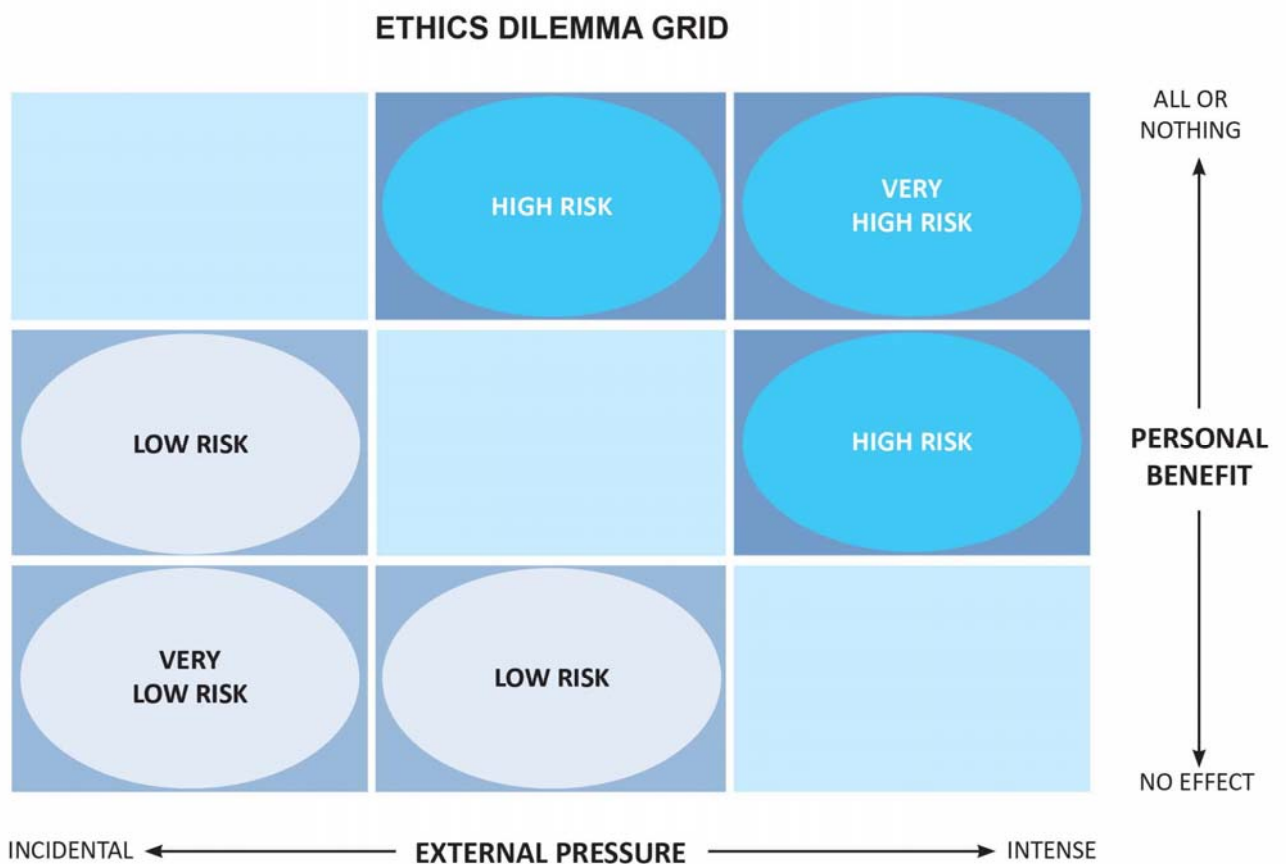
Thus, there should first be a determination of the validity of the presuppositions of the research; then the nature, probability and magnitude of risk should be distinguished with as much clarity as possible. The method used to ascertain potential risks should be explicit, especially where there is no alternative to the use of such vague categories as small or slight risk. "It should also be determined whether a researcher's estimates of the probability of harm

or benefits are reasonable, as judged by known facts or other available studies” (Chin et al., 2008, p.26).

According to Panicker (2008) much research in the behavioural and psychological sciences can be characterised as posing minimal (or even less than minimal) risk to the participants. Panicker (2008) suggests that the review boards lack guidance to determine what risk to participants is and that anecdotal evidence suggests that risks in behavioural and psychological research are often overestimated. Panicker (2008) argues that such a conservative approach to evaluating research risk can lead to the implementation of participant protections that may be inappropriate or even harmful, dilute the scientific validity of the research, or discourage behavioural research involving certain populations. The review boards frequently confound assessment of research risks with judgements regarding the vulnerability of the populations under study.

However, participants can be harmed when researchers downplay the possible risk associated with their research. Another factor involved in understating risk in the informed consent process, is what Eckmire (2008) calls the “ethics dilemma”. His conceptualisation of risk in ethics is as the result of the interaction of personal benefit to the researcher and external pressure from the environment in which research is conducted. These two dimensions, Eckmire (2008) argues, interact to create an environment that increases researchers’ vulnerability to considering the breach of their ethical standards. This claim is confirmed in the study carried out by Wadman in 2005 (Bruhn, 2008, p.18). The study explored research misconduct due to pressures experienced in research. External pressures were found to be the greatest cause of misconduct. Eckmire (2008) argues that external pressure ranges on a scale from incidental to intense. In Educational Psychology research this pressure may be caused by elements such as a limited amount of time to carry out research, research funders’ needs, and balancing too many demands to maintain research integrity while meeting the requirements of the research. Personal benefit on the vertical scale ranges from no effect to ‘all or nothing’. The personal benefit of research may be completing a qualification that therefore allows for greater earning

potential. Similarly by completing research there is a cost implication - the researcher no longer has to pay to study. Conversely, perhaps, personal benefit from conducting research is important because motivation levels remain high and the researcher's involvement in the task remains focused. Below is a depiction of Eckmire's (2008) ethics dilemma grid.



Adapted from Eckmire (2008) www.cmctraining.org

Thus, the possibility that risk cannot be conceptualised only in terms of the setting where research is conducted, but also as interacting with the context from which it springs is the evident conclusion.

2.5 Informed consent and the researcher

While informed consent protects the rights of the participant on the one hand, various authors in the literature suggest protection for the researcher as well. “It may be suggested that ethical guidelines and codes of practice serve ‘a peculiar balance of purposes’, including the enhancement of professional reputation and the provision of protective strategies for researchers” (Heath et al., 2007, p.404). It can additionally be argued that the imposition of standards of informed consent have stifled ethical debate; in particular, that informed consent has emerged not as a research ethic but as a “self-serving professional safeguard: We have now reached the point where researchers are operating the principle of informed consent not to protect their subjects but to protect themselves and to guard against the possibility that subjects will claim their rights through litigation” (Heath et al., 2007, p.404). However, seeking informed consent should always be about the participant; nonetheless valid concerns are raised that the practice of seeking informed consent is not always governed by the best interests of research participants.

Studies conducted by Crow, Wiles, Heath and Charles (2006) sought to identify and promulgate best practice in relation to informed consent in research with the goal of drawing general conclusions that relate to researchers’ experiences. In this study researchers were interviewed regarding the practice of informed consent. Some of the unintended consequences of obtaining informed consent were found to be that obtaining informed consent has an adverse effect on participation rates. Researchers felt that by starting the process with the signing of an informed consent form frightens some participants away as it is very clinical and overwhelming. Some researchers noted that the processes of gaining informed consent can inhibit the development of the rapport necessary for the generation and collection of authentic data. In addition the quality of the data collected may suffer as a result of the practical arrangements for gaining consent. Informed consent can present obstacles to rapport between researchers and participants in other ways. Researchers felt that it is difficult to establish a relationship of trust when bombarding (my interpretation) participants with forms and information.

One is the commencement of a research encounter with what can seem like unnecessarily bureaucratic procedures and potentially, “informed consent procedures can unintentionally antagonize or alienate participants” (Crow et al., 2006, p.91). According to Crow et al. (2006) the recognition that consent is on-going has rightly led researchers to re-visit the issue with participants at various points of the research process but this has also come to be “recognised as a potential obstacle to rapport” (Crow et al., 2006, p.91). It was felt that the quality of the data collected suffers as a result of the practical arrangements for gaining consent: the time required to gain consent features prominently in the comments of several interviewees. Informed consent is typically operationalised as the consent of individuals and this may manifest in tension with people’s interconnectedness within a potentially huge network of others. The commitment to use only the data for which consent has been gained raises much difficulty as a good deal of social research involves people talking about their relationships with others, from whom consent has not been gained (Crow et al., 2006, p.92).

Sometimes researchers are under tremendous external pressure, from funders, for example, to complete research in limited periods of time and with a particular sample group. Such conditions may at times exert pressure on researchers to ‘fast track’ or rush the process of informed consent in order to get the research done within the constraints that they have (Bruhn, 2008; Owram, 2004). It follows that this may lead to researchers threatening the integrity of their own research practices in order to complete the research and may result in the best interests of the research participants not always being the primary objective of researchers in the informed consent process (Ferguson et al., 2007). Denzin (1989) cited in Flewitt (2005, p.553) suggests “our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared them with us”. Flewitt (2005, p.554) argues that Denzin brings the sharing nature of the research process to prominence and while this in no means absolves the researcher of ultimate responsibility for decisions taken, “it can at the very least help to balance the unequal power balance between the researcher and the researched”.

2.6 Implications of informed consent on the research process

Studies conducted by Crow et al. (2006) sought to identify and promulgate best practice in relation to informed consent in research in relation to six groups of 'vulnerable' people with the goal of drawing general conclusions that relate to researchers' experiences. University-based and other social researchers who conduct qualitative research on or with children, young people, older people, people receiving palliative care, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems became the focal point of the research as these particular areas of research reflect the assumed vulnerability of the members of these groups within the research process (Crow et al., 2006, p.84). Researchers' views and practices around gaining informed consent from people involved in their research were explored.

The benefits of a formalised informed consent process are felt by some researchers to assist in preparing researchers and research participants for the data collection process. Furthermore researchers argue that "informed consent establishes a more equal relationship between researchers and research participants in which the latter can have confidence, as a result of which research participants will be more open and frank about the aspects of their lives that are being researched" (Crow et al., 2006, p.85). "Greater confidence on the part of the people approached to participate in research ought to improve participation rates and thereby the ability to generalise research findings" (Crow et al., 2006, p.85). Researchers feel that informed consent enhances data quality and that better data are likely to result where there is trust and rapport between researchers and participants. This rapport, resulting from informed consent promotes data quality because it has a positive effect on participation rates and people will be willing to take part in research about which they receive convincing assurances (Crow et al., 2006).

The findings of the study conducted by Crow et al. (2006) are of particular relevance to the foundations for the conceptualisation of informed consent in this study as they relate to researchers' positive and negative experiences of the formalisation of informed consent and the effect that this may have on the research process. The findings did not identify a distinct

group of researchers either for or against stricter regulations regarding informed consent procedures for research purposes. Crow et al. (2006, p.93) describe these results as “unsurprising given the frequency with which issues surrounding informed consent were described by our participants as ‘tricky’, reflecting their complexity and the political nature of the decisions that they entail”. This is also consistent with the prevailing view among researchers that “informed consent is much more a matter of striking balances between competing ideals than it is about following a set body of rules” (Crow et al., 2006, p.93). It follows then that the “rigidity of standardised regulation needs to be tempered by a degree of flexibility according to the characteristics of specific research contexts” (Crow et al., 2006, p.95). Researchers’ reflections on their experiences of how ‘informed consent’ works in practice and on the potential to improve that practice need to be included in the developing field of research ethics. (Crow et al., 2006, p.95)

This literature (Crow et al., 2006) suggests that through the informed consent process, positive or negative, researchers become more reflective about their research practices, “research participants are better prepared for their involvement in the research, and relationships between researchers and participants in their studies are mutually empowering rather than confused, risky, harmful, exploitative or coercive” (Crow et al., 2006, p.94). One purpose of ethical reflection is to balance the potential risks of research against the likely benefits, yet this calculation is far from straightforward, and short- and long-term risks are hard to predict (Alderson & Morrow (2004) cited in Flewitt, 2005, p.564). This has significant implications for how researchers use the informed consent process to conceptualise risk in research, particularly when working with vulnerable populations such as those that educational psychologists generally tend to work among.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature review has enabled this writer to position this study within a theoretical framework of existing literature. The review commenced with the exploration of various aspects of informed consent such as legislation and capacity to consent. The principles of

informed consent namely autonomy, benevolence, non-malevolence and justice were explored as were the implications of informed consent on the research process.

Based on this discussion it appears that the archival analysis that selected for this study allows the qualitative evaluation of how informed consent was obtained. The intention is to gain an understanding of how educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk in research when obtaining informed consent. Subsequent to this understanding, additional methods and practices will be suggested to add to the way that educational psychology researchers obtain informed consent. It will be proposed that methods to obtain informed consent should be rooted in a reflexive process by the researcher about informed consent which would therefore reduce any potential risk for the participant.

Chapter 3 will reveal more detail regarding the research design and findings of this study. The qualitative archival thematic analysis of anonymous applications for ethical clearance of postgraduate educational psychology research that were approved after passing through an ethics review at an institution of higher education are discussed, as are the ethical and quality considerations that have been implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter Three

Research method and results

3.1 Introduction

Based on the literature reviewed on informed consent in chapter 1 and chapter 2 a research study was designed and research conducted to explore how educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk when obtaining informed consent for their research. Using approved research proposals from a university, an a priori epistemology was used and a thematic analysis of the proposals conducted, with particular focus on the sections relating to the researchers' evaluation of the risks and benefits of their research. Furthermore informed consent forms process proposed by each study were examined, using the theory explored in the literature review as a guide. The proposals have been categorized according to the ages of the participants: under 18 years; over 18 years and under/over 18 years.

3.2 Purpose of the study

One aspect of the ethics review that researchers frequently debate, concerns the process by which a researcher plans to obtain informed consent from prospective participants. Researchers obtain informed consent through adequate and appropriate disclosure of information about research activities to participants (Jefford & Moore, 2008).

Bearing in mind the requirements of informed consent on the one hand, and the special challenges presented by the contexts in which educational psychologists conduct their research, an argument that we may benefit from learning about how educational psychology researchers whose research has passed an ethics review, communicate and present information about the risk and benefits of their research to their participants may be formulated. Understanding risk is an important part of the informed consent process since the nature of the risk, and therefore the possible implications for the participant as a result of participation attached to a study is often the deciding factor that participants take into account in making their decisions (Belitz & Bayley, 2009; Cohen & Manion, 2002).

3.3 Research questions

This study is exploratory and is expected to contribute to discourses on the conceptualisation of risk in educational psychology research and thus contribute to illuminating the ways by which informed consent can be obtained from participants in educational psychology research. The following research question will be addressed:

How do educational psychology researchers conceptualise risk when obtaining informed consent for their research?

In order to address this primary question, the following secondary questions will also be explored:

What determines risk in educational psychology research?

What determines benefit in educational psychology research?

How is information about risk and benefits presented to child-participants?

How is information about risk and benefits presented to parents of child-participants?

From the literature review on informed consent it is evident that a pivotal factor in informed consent is the risk posed to the participants by the research as well as the benefits of the research to the participants (Belitz & Bayley, 2009; Cohen & Manion, 2002; Jefford & Moore, 2008; Flewitt, 2005). In addition the principles of benevolence and non-malevolence are critical when obtaining informed consent when working with human participants in research as the maxim of 'do no harm' becomes key (Belitz & Bayley, 2009). Therefore this study focuses on the aspects of risk and benefit in obtaining informed consent from the proposals analysed.

3.4 Paradigmatic approach

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.14) describe research design as "a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material". Qualitative research is an iterative process that allows for a fluid, flexible and non-sequential approach (Durrheim, 2004, p.31). The current study is exploratory and aims to identify how researchers have conceptualized risk when obtaining informed consent. The data

will be analysed according to the qualitative thematic analysis and themes for further research will be identified.

3.5 Research design

3.5.1 Archival document case study

The present study constitutes a qualitative archival case study of anonymised applications for ethical clearance of postgraduate educational psychology research that were approved after passing through an ethics review at an institution of higher education. All successful applications for research in educational psychology between 2000 and 2009 were analysed, as was the feedback on these applications as part of the review process and the informed consent/assent forms.

3.5.2 Data sample

The data source in the study consisted of 44 educational psychology research proposals that had been approved by a Faculty Ethics committee at a Higher Education Institution. The proposals consisted of the application for ethics approval of research involving human research participants, the detailed protocol, all of the permission for research forms as well as the informed consent forms. The research proposals were anonymous and all identifying details were removed before analysis commenced.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

Permission for this study was attained from the Dean of the Faculty of Education where the research is conducted despite the fact that no data was to be collected. Precautions were taken by the Chair of the Ethics committee to ensure that identifiable information would be removed from applications, hence assuring the participants' complete anonymity. This study can be described as low risk as the study did not involve human participants but rather documentation.

3.5.4 Data analysis

Documents were analysed thematically for themes related to risk and benefit in informed consent. Letters of informed consent, disclosure, whether parental consent was obtained and how consent was given were considered. Hence the research proposals were read, codes were created for themes in the data, the coded data was collated and a 'map' of the general themes that emerged from the data was documented and recorded (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87). Frequency analyses of the research setting, age and vulnerability of participants, data collection and analysis methods were carried out to describe the types of research that had been analysed.

3.5.4.1 A Priori codes generated

A concept is a priori if it can be known independently of any experience. It can involve an innate proposition (Baehr, 2006). This means that the proposition or concept originates in or arises from one's intellect. Therefore the conceptualization of informed consent from the literature review was used to predetermine the codes that were most applicable when analyzing the informed consent forms within the research proposals. According to Boyatzis (1998, p.33) one begins with the theory (literature review) of the phenomenon and then formulate the indicators that would support the theory. The codes are inductively created and are often in specialized terminology related to the subject. The goal of a priori thematic analysis is "to obtain insights and create frameworks with which to understand the world around us." (Boyatzis, 1998, p.34)

Having used the literature to guide me, I created the following codes. Firstly, various contexts within which informed consent would be acquired were identified. I began by looking at the context within which the research occurred i.e. school, individual etc. If the research was to take place in a school then the Principal and the District office of the Department of Education would need to consent to the research process. Furthermore I then analysed the age of the participants. If the participant was under 18 years of age then the researcher would require consent from the parent or guardian. The literature review also highlighted the need to gain

assent from the participant if they were under 18 years of age. Further, if the participant was over 18 years of age then they were able to consent to participation themselves. I also created a category for other consent, for example when translators were required.

Secondly, the constructs of informed consent emerging from the literature review were applied (Jefford & Moore, 2008) as well as the requirements for informed consent as given by the HPCSA. The following categories were created before I analysed the data – (1) Autonomy: which consists of the subsections volunteerism; freedom to withdraw; anonymity and confidentiality. (2) Benevolence, which was divided into benefit for: the participant or society. (3) Non-malevolence which was divided into two categories: no risk; reasonable risk. (4) The purpose of the research. (5) The nature of the research process.

Having generated these codes a thematic analysis using the letters of consent and the research proposals as the data source was conducted.

3.5.4.2 Thematic analysis

The phases of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006; p.87) that were followed are discussed in more detail below.

	PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
1.	Familiarising oneself with ones data	A close reading and re-reading of the data, noting down initial ideas, with the theory gleaned from the literature review as a guide.
2.	Generating initial codes	<i>A priori</i> theory was employed, to enable logical deductions (Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p.3; Baehr, 2006) and decisions as to what the relevant information was. Therefore codes were created to explore the data related to the theory regarding informed consent as highlighted in the literature review. Particular phrases and sentences were isolated in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each theoretical theme specified.
3.	Searching for themes	Codes were then collated into potential themes based on the theory. All data relevant to each potential theme were gathered.
4.	Reviewing themes	Themes were checked to evaluate whether they were applicable in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. A thematic 'map' of the analysis was then generated.
5.	Themes are defined and named	Ongoing analysis occurred to refine the specifics of each theme. Clear definitions and names for each theme were generated.
6.	Producing the report	This is a final opportunity for analysis. Vivid and compelling extract examples were selected. A final analysis of selected extracts occurred and these were related back to the analysis of the research question and literature. Finally a scholarly report of the analysis was produced.

3.6 Quality criteria

3.6.1. Introduction

Throughout this study, credibility, transferability, dependability and the confirmability of research findings and conclusions were aimed for to ensure the trustworthiness of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.114). The basic premise of trustworthiness refers to the way in which the inquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of a high quality (Maree, 2007).

The four constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are addressed in the following sections.

3.6.2 Credibility

Credibility addresses the issue of the researcher demonstrating the internal validity of the research. In other words the researcher needs to illustrate the isomorphism (relationship of the two) of the research findings with reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.114). Firstly, the data source: Research proposals from a credible tertiary institution are used in the analysis, implying that this data source has credibility. The source, however, is only one representation of informed consent and does not, consequently, illustrate how Educational Psychologists conceptualise informed consent in all contexts. Further measures to ensure credibility when doing a thematic analysis are implemented – the themes generated are constantly evaluated against the theory of informed consent, explored in Chapter 2.

3.6.3 Transferability

Babbie and Mouton (2004) describe transferability as the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.14) furthermore describe transferability as the external validity of the findings, in other words, to what extent findings can be generalised. This study specifically explores the conceptualization of informed consent by Educational Psychologists within the research context. The process of research in an academic environment, for academic purposes, does not necessarily mean that the findings will be an absolute reflection of how Educational Psychologists view informed consent in other contexts. The transferability of the findings in this study, therefore, may be limited.

3.6.4 Dependability

The dependability of the findings refers to the reliability of the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.114). Dependability is focused on the research process and the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the process is logical, traceable, and documented (Schwandt, 2007). Therefore the researcher should be able to provide the audience with evidence that if the research were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same

(or a similar) context, its findings would be similar (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). An audit trail will be created by using methods such as the source documents, summaries and condensed notes, themes that were developed, and personal notes (Boyatzis, 1998).

3.6.5 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the research and not the biases of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.114). Guba and Lincoln discuss a confirmability audit trail, in which an adequate trail should be left by the researcher to enable the auditor to determine if the findings, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the research. In this study, a trail will be created by using methods such as the source documents, summaries and condensed notes, themes that were developed, personal notes.

3.7 Findings of the study

3.7.1 The data source

As an introduction to a discussion of the results of the thematic analysis, the composition of the 44 research proposals for MEd (Educational Psychology) and PhD (Educational Psychology) research in the Department of Educational Psychology should be considered. Appendix A is an example of a research proposal that was analysed.

A frequency analysis of the proposals revealed the following information about the data set that was used as the data source (Appendix B). The front page of the ethics committee document provides a summary of the research design, data collection, sensitivity or intrusiveness, research context and the primary research setting of the proposal that had been submitted for ethical clearance. In order to understand the context of the proposals, a descriptive analysis was completed to identify the overall context of the proposals submitted by the researchers.

The information regarding the proposals is divided into two sections: the research design and the research context. The “details of the research project” section explores the research design,

the data collection methods, and the sensitivity or intrusiveness of the research project. The “research context” section highlights the research population and the primary research setting of the proposals. The details of the research proposals is recorded below.

3.7.2 Details of the research project

The first section of the proposals entails the details of the research project. Having analysed the research proposals according to research design, the results are tabulated in Table 3.1 below. The research design of the proposals are categorized into one of 3 possible types according to qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. The qualitative approach is used by 60% ($n= 27$) of the proposals while only 2% ($n= 1$) use the quantitative approach. Mixed methods is used by 31% ($n= 14$) of the proposals which means that they employ qualitative and quantitative methods while 7% ($n= 3$) of the proposals use “other methods”. The results below indicate that qualitative research methods are used most often by educational psychology researchers.

TABLE 3.1 Research design

Research Design	Total	% of Total
Qualitative	27	60
Quantitative	1	2
Mixed Methods	14	31
Other	3	7
Total	45	100

Table 3.2 indicates the various data collection methods implored by educational psychology researchers. 10 data collection methods are used by researchers. The tabulated results indicate that the most popular approach in this data sample was an intervention or therapy (20%, $n= 20$). Considering that the sample is 44 educational psychology researchers, it comes as no surprise that intervention or therapy collection methods are the most popular as this fits with the profession of being a psychologist. Semi-structured, (18%, $n= 18$) open ended (16%, $n= 16$)

and structured (11%, $n= 11$) interviews as well as participatory observation (15%, $n=15$) were also used often.

TABLE 3.2 Data Collection

Data Collection	Total	% of Total	Cumulative Frequency
Questionnaires Survey	7	7	7
Structured interviews	11	11	18
Semi-structured interviews	18	18	36
Open ended interviews	16	16	52
Non-participatory Observation	6	6	58
Participatory Observation	15	15	73
Intervention/Therapy	20	20	93
Experimental	2	2	95
IQA focus groups	2	2	97
Projection plates	2	2	99
Total	99		

The following category is the sensitivity or intrusiveness of the research. The sensitivity or intrusiveness of the research is very important as it indicates the possible risk that the participants may be exposed to. The type of information that may be required from the participants as well as the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participant categorises the risk into high, medium and low. In Table 3.3, the majority of the research is deemed to be highly sensitive or intrusive (77%, $n= 34$) and this will therefore guide the informed consent process. An overwhelming majority of researchers deemed that participation in the research requires intrusive and sensitive information about participants' mental/psychological health and/ or their relationship with a person/ institution with power over them. Therefore the risk to the participant for participating in the research is very high.

Researchers will need to be cognizant of the risk to participants for participating in the research and will need to protect their rights as much as possible.

TABLE 3.3 Sensitivity or Intrusiveness

Sensitivity/ Intrusiveness	Total	% of Total
<p style="text-align: center;">HIGH</p> <p>(Participation requires intrusive and sensitive information about participants' mental/psychological health and/ or their relationship with a person/ institution with power over them)</p>	34	77
<p style="text-align: center;">MEDIUM</p> <p>Participation requires divulging of personal information but is not regarded as sensitive/intimate</p>	4	9
<p style="text-align: center;">LOW</p> <p>(Participation requires information about policies/modules/ courses/institutional processes with a view to analyse, assess and evaluate them as human artefacts)</p>	6	14
Total	44	

3.7.3 Research Context

The next category on the research forms is the context within which the research takes place. The population of the participants is first evaluated. In Table 3.4 many of the research participants (59%, $n= 30$) are under the age of 18 and therefore they would not be able to consent to participation in the research on their own. They were, however, able to assent to participating and it is important to recognise that they should also have a voice in the informed consent process. Therefore, the research proposals should not only have informed consent forms but also informed assent forms available.

TABLE 3.4 The Population of Participants

Indicate if participants come from vulnerable populations	Total	% of Total
Under 18 years	30	59
Over 18 years	17	33
Orphaned, separated or unaccompanied minors	0	0
Extreme poverty or illiterate	0	0
HIV/AIDS	2	4
Mentally compromised or physical limitations	2	4
Total	51	

Research in educational psychology takes place in various settings. Research settings include pre-schools, schools, higher education, private organizations, individuals, family, community and clinics or hospitals and 45% ($n= 24$) of the research took place within the school environment (Table 3.5). This is not surprising considering that much of educational psychology practice occurs within the school environment.

TABLE 3.5 The primary Research Setting

Primary research setting	Total	% of Total
Pre-school	1	1.5
School	24	45
Higher education	5	9
Private organization	4	8
Individual	11	21
Family	4	8
Community	3	6
Clinic/Mental Health/Hospital	1	1.5
Total	53	

3.7.4 Thematic Analysis of data

Using the a priori codes that were identified from the literature, the thematic analysis was initiated by analyzing the research population that informed consent was sought from as per the informed consent/assent forms attached to the research proposals. There were 4 proposals that did not have informed consent/assent forms attached and therefore they were not used in this analysis. From the literature regarding the context of the research, four themes had been identified. These included the school, the age of the research participant i.e. under 18 years of age or over 18 years of age and a theme for other persons for whom consent needed to be given, for example a translator.

Table 3.6 The research context

Permission Granted from	Principal	District Education Office	Parent Consent	Child Assent	Informed Consent
School	14	4	–	–	–
Child under 18	–	–	24	16	–
Participant over 18	–	–	–	–	14
Other	–	–	–	–	5
Percentage	35%	10%	60%	40%	48%

Of the 40 proposals analysed, 18% ($n= 7$) gained informed consent from the Principal while only 5% ($n= 2$) gained consent from the District Education department. These figures should have been the same, since the department of education *needs* to be informed of all research activities taking place within schools in South Africa. If the participant is under the age of 18 then consent needs to be gained from the participant's parent or guardian which in this case was 31% ($n= 12$). The number of participants that informed assent was required from should, thus, also be 31%. However the actual number is only 21% ($n= 8$) as not all the research proposals included informed assent forms. Informed consent from participants over the age of

18 was 18% ($n= 7$). Informed consent from other parties involved in the research process amounted to 6% ($n= 3$).

Table 3.7 The informed consent forms

Autonomy:		%	Benevolence: Benefit for		%	Non-malevolence:			%	Purpose & Nature of Research:		%
Volunteerism	38	95	Participant	15	37.5	Not do any harm	12	30	Purpose	37	92.5	
Freedom to withdraw	39	97.5	Society	37	92.5	Reasonable	2	5	Nature	37	92.5	
Anonymity	37	92.5										
Confidentiality	37	92.5										

From the a priori codes the following themes were identified to look for when analysing the informed consent or assent forms. These themes were autonomy, benevolence, non-malevolence, the purpose of the research and the nature of the research process. Each theme has subcategories based on the literature review. These are as follows: (1) Autonomy: Volunteerism; freedom to withdraw; anonymity; confidentiality. (2) Benevolence, benefit for: the participant; society. (3) Non-malevolence: no risk; reasonable risk.

3.7.4.1 Autonomy

The principle of autonomy involves the participant volunteering to participate, knowing that they may withdraw at any stage, and that the research is anonymous and confidential. An expectation that all 40 proposals will have conformed to this was, however, not met. Only 37 (93%) informed consent/assent forms mentioned anonymity and confidentiality; however 38 (95%) also mentioned volunteerism. Only 39 (98%) forms mentioned the freedom of the participant to withdraw from the research. That means that not all the forms mentioned all these principles which is of concern.

3.7.4.2 Benevolence

Benevolence includes a research project being beneficial either to the participant or society at large or both. Only 37 (93%) forms mentioned the benefits to society while only 15 (38%) mentioned personal benefits to the participants.

3.7.4.3 Non-Malevolence

Only 12 (30%) forms mentioned that the participant would not be exposed to any risk or 2 (5%) mentioned perhaps minimal risk from participating in the research process. That means that only 35% of the forms made the participants aware of the risk that may or may not have been involved when participating in the research. This is a great concern.

3.7.4.4 Nature and purpose of research

Only 37 (93%) of the 40 consent/assent forms indicated what the purpose of the research project was as well as the nature of the project. The purpose of the research makes participants aware of why the project was being done. The nature of the research indicates what would be required from them when participating in the research e.g. interviews, questionnaires, focus groups.

3.8 Thematic analysis of the research proposals

3.8.1 The themes that were identified

In addition to analyzing the informed consent/assent forms, a thematic analysis was also carried out informed by the research proposal. With the research question informing the process, specific sections in the proposal that discussed the risk and benefits of the research were examined. Two broad themes, risk posed by the research and benefits of the research, were identified. "Risk posed by the research" was divided into 4 subthemes: no psychological, emotional, social or physical risk is apparent from the research; psychological harm in the form of emotions elicited may occur; the identity of the participant may become known; multiple roles of the researcher may affect the participant negatively.

“Benefits of the research” was divided into 5 subthemes: the therapeutic value of the research to the participant; identification of possible problems that the participant is having; the participant is empowered through the research process; a greater understanding of the participant is gained by parents and educators; findings of the research are generated which expand knowledge and possible interventions.

The subthemes were identified by looking at the questions on risk and benefit in the research proposals.

3.8.2 Risk posed by the research

The first theme that became apparent could be described as “No psychological, emotional, social or physical risk is apparent from the research”. Many of the researchers indicated on the research proposals that they felt the aspect of risk in the research is ‘not applicable...’ (data set 6, under 18); ‘NONE’ (data set 30, under 18); ‘will not risk any harm in taking part in the research...’ (data set 10, over 18) ‘the respondents do not risk any harm by participating in the project’ (data set 12, over 18) (data set 23, under 18) ‘geen skade sal die deelnemers (sic) oorkom nie...’ (data set 25, under 18) or ‘No, learners didn’t risk any harm...’ (data set 14, under 18). Others indicated what type of risk is not present such as: ‘no risk of any physical, psychological, legal or social harm is apparent...’ (data set 7, under 18); ‘does not place the participants at any risk of physical or emotional harm...’ (data set 8, over 18); ‘the participant should not come to any physical, psychological...harm by participating in the research...’ (data set 11, over 18); ‘the participant does not run the risk of physical, psychological...harm by participating in the research’ (data set 5, under and over 18) ‘geen risiko’s- fisiek, sielkundig, wetlik, sosiaal...’ (data set 22, under 18) ‘die deelnemer loop geen risiko om fisieke, sielkundige...skade te lei weens deelname aan die navorsing nie’. Thus indicating an awareness of the types of risk that participants may be exposed to. Others indicates a more subtle awareness of the possible risk with statements such as ‘do not risk any obvious harm...’ (data set 15, under 18) ‘As far as I am concerned the participants should not experience any harm in any way in the intended research process (data set 27, under 18). Researchers appear to have

varying levels of awareness regarding the possible risk that participants may be exposed to in the research process.

The second theme that emerged was that psychological harm in the form of emotions elicited may occur. This is supported by the following comments: 'getting emotionally upset and he/she might cry....' (data set 1, under 18) or 'the child experiencing possible anxiety...' (data set 2, under 18). Further to this researchers indicated that emotions related to memories may occur with statements such as 'sensitive material may come up during the in-depth data generation...' (data set 20, under 18); 'the study may elicit negative feelings that were experienced...' (data set 18, over 18); 'moontlike risiko dat die deelneemer die herinneringe van haar boelie-ervaring as negatief kan beleef...' (data set 31, under 18); 'die navorsingsprojek hou psigologiese implikasies vir die deelneemers in aangesien hulle gevra gaan word om sensitiewe inligting te deel' (data set 21, under 18). Also the risk of psychological discomfort from the assessment tool that is used is also raised as a possibility. 'hierdie projektiewe toets mag moontlik onbewustelike inligting navore bring wat die deelneemer bewustelik nie bereid was om te erken nie of nie instaat was om te erken nie' (data set 24, under 18) 'The research is retrospective and might arouse buried experiences that can cause discomfort to learners or it might make them think of something they are trying to forget' (data set 29, under 18) 'n projeksie toets gebruik maak wat moontlik probleme of emosies na die oppervlakte kan bring...' (data set 37, under and over 18).

The third theme, although only identified by a few proposals was deemed to be significant and is therefore included. The identity of the participant may become known. This is supported by the following comments: 'that their identities could become known...' (data set 2, under 18) 'participants are at risk to have their identities become known especially because this is a qualitative study' (data set 39, under and over 18).

The last theme related to risk is the multiple roles of the researcher may affect the participant negatively. This is important because the risk relates to the responsibility of the researcher to

maintain ethical integrity and to be aware of the possible impact of their own presence. This is supported by the following comments: ‘there are a number of noteworthy risks which accompany the dual role of an interventionist and a researcher...’ (data set 17, under 18) ‘I will have multiple roles during the study as a researcher, classmate and interview facilitator which may affect my objectivity’ (data set 18, over 18); and ‘due to the multiple roles which I fulfill in this study as participant-observer and facilitator, I am aware that my subjectivity and own perceptions may influence the research process...’ (data set 39, under and over 18). Fulfilling multiple roles may affect the researchers objectivity and therefore needs to be taken into consideration.

3.8.3 Benefits of the research

The most significant benefit of the proposals appears to be the therapeutic value of the research to the participants. This illustrates the benefit of educational psychology research which often has an interventionist methodology. The therapeutic value was described as ‘improvement in class’; ‘assessment’; ‘benefit from techniques used’; ‘personal growth’; ‘give a voice’; ‘decrease stress experienced’; ‘conscious awareness’. This is supported by comments such as ‘decrease the stress levels...’ (data set 9, under 18) ‘participants constructed a conscious awareness and realization...’ (data set 14, under 18) ‘participant could benefit from personal growth...’ (data set 20, under 18) ‘the created opportunity to share experiences could be therapeutic’ (data set 19, over 18) ‘deelneemers gaan hulself beter leerken tydens die sessies...’ (data set 21, under 18) ‘have an opportunity to develop self-respect for and respect for others in a “colourful” way’ (data set 27, under 18) ‘to give feedback to participants about the personality assessment...’ (data set 41, over 18) ‘om sosiale en emosionele funksionering in die deelneemer te bevorder deur vermindering van angs en spanning tydens sosiale interaksie’ (data set 43, under 18) ‘it is hoped that the child will benefit from the very act of “telling” their story within a secure and professional environment and find it therapeutically healing’ (data set 44, under 18). As psychotherapy is one of the key area’s that an educational psychologist functions in it makes sense that this will be a focal point of research.

The second theme that was apparent is the identification of possible problems that the participant is having. In order to help someone it is necessary to identify what the difficulty is that the person is experiencing. Therefore it follows that researchers would be aware of identifying difficulties in order to help. This is supported by the following comments: 'identify children who have possible reading difficulties...' (data set 2, under 18) 'terugvoer rakende die navorsingsbevindinge, wie dan kurrikulumaanpassings en/of addisionele ondersteuning...' (data set 22, under 18) 'point out things about language that are not so easy for you in your tests and why you feel they are hard' (data set 28, under 18).

The third theme is that the participant is empowered through the research process. Indicators of this are: 'gain confidence'; 'empower parent, child and teacher'; 'growth and understanding'; 'empower participant'. Educational psychology may help the participant to 'gain more self-knowledge...' (data set 6, under 18); 'may empower the parent and child in other aspects of their existence...' (data set 9, under 18); 'the participant may feel empowered by feeling he/she makes a contribution...' (data set 19, over 18); 'set personal goals; acquire skills to determine what is available in self and environment; learn to anticipate changes in life and the environment and plan proactively' (data set 39, under and over 18). This benefit again highlights the focus of educational psychologists to intervene in people's lives and therefore make a difference. This is evident in the research process.

The context of educational psychology work is often in school and with children and therefore also their parents or guardians. Therefore it was no surprise that greater understanding of the participant (child) being gained by parents and educators is evident. Interventions/assessments that assist the educator and or parent through 'subject-choice assessment...' (data set 15, under 18); "n volledige ortodidaktiese assessering en daaropvolgende intervensies word aan die deelneemers verskaf' (data set 25, under 18) 'terugvoering die ouerskapvaardighede van die moeder kan verbeter en dus die verhouding tussen haar en haar kind' (data set 31, under 18) and 'building partnerships and the strengthening and development between the local school and the community...' (data set 3, under and over 18).

Finally, educational psychologists are professionals who seek knowledge which will inform possible interventions. The benefits of research need to be a change in knowledge otherwise the research is not worthwhile. Guidelines and understanding for interventions and support strategies; individualised treatment plan; contribute to theory and understanding; become part of curriculum; expand knowledge; professional practice. The focus is divided into focus on the individual, practice and research. 'research findings may be used to plan an individualized treatment plan...' (data set 13, under 18); 'the study can help the school to realize the role it plays in motivating learners to be resilient and the role of the Life Orientation programme...' (data set 29, under 18) 'deurdat hulle bemagtig word om bates en hulpbronne te identifiseer en mobiliseer ter bevordering van ondersteuningsdienste vir die leerders se psigo-sosiale funksionering' (data set 35, over 18) 'helping the participant to expand her knowledge on school violence theory as well as on Educational Psychology practice with regard to school violence' (data set 19, over 18). Improvements to practice are evident from 'generate findings which may contribute to a greater understanding of the manner in which children with ADHD cope as well as possible interventions which could facilitate this coping...' (data set 17, under 18); 'the area of the study is highly relevant to the training of teachers and psychologists...' (data set 8, over 18) 'die resultate van die studie kan deur die deelnemers aangewend word om hulle praktyke te verbeter of bevorder' (data set 37, under and over 18) 'the Department of Educational Psychology gains in that students acquire skills to increase their scope of practice' (data set 40, under and over 18). The findings of the research relevant to training are indicated by 'helping participants expand their knowledge on community circular engagement theory and practice as well as Educational Psychology practice and theory' (data set 18, over 18) '...elaborating on coping as a process and thus advancing coping theory' (data set 3, under and over 18) 'to assess and question the asset-based approach in the training of teaching and helping professionals and recommending possible adaptations and changes to current methods and practices' (data set 36, over 18) 'resultate van die studies al aanduidend wees of die metode gevolg kan word in ander situasies en met verskillende draaiboeke' (data set 43, under 18) 'used by health care workers in order to increase positive experiences and thereby reduce

the psychological trauma facing children who are experiencing a range of adversities in their lives' (data set 44, under 18).

3.9 Conclusion

It is evident that the benefits of Educational Psychology research far outweigh the potential risks of the research to participants. It is of concern, however, that there is such a high incidence of researchers who feel that their research poses no risk at all to the participants. Research with human participants is unpredictable and therefore there is always some measure of risk, no matter how small.

Chapter Four

Findings of the study

4.1 Introduction

The findings of this research study will be examined closely in this chapter in an attempt to answer the research question: How Educational Psychologists conceptualise risk in research. The study has been qualitative, arising from a thematic analysis of the research proposals and the informed consent forms by using an a priori epistemology. The limitations and contributions of the study are highlighted, and the chapter closes with recommendations for further research.

4.2 Findings

The findings of the research study are that Educational Psychology researchers are not reporting the corresponding risk to participants in research comprehensively, effectively or even adequately. The relationship between risk and benefit is not understood fully and is not reflected accurately in the research proposals submitted to the ethics committee focused on in this study. The understanding and implementation of measures relating to risk must be adjusted to be more in line with international standards demonstrated by the APA. The national and international standards for informed consent are only theoretically very similar. Both sets of rules should explicitly recommend that any prospective research benefits must be mentioned to participants.

If the understanding is that risk and benefit are flip sides of the same coin then it follows that by not explicitly having to indicate the benefit of the research to participants, our conceptualisation of the risk in research is not adequate either.

4.3 Research questions

4.3.1 How do Educational Psychologists conceptualise risk in research?

Educational psychologist researchers tend to conceptualise risk adequately in the initial stages of research. The possibility of harm is acknowledged in their proposal to ethics committees; some even explicitly state the extent of risk, and argue for the benefits of their research to outweigh the risk of harm to participants. It is, however, often in the practice of research that continuing assessment and consideration of risk is ignored, or at least sidelined.

4.3.2 Sub-questions

(1) What determines risk in educational psychology research?

According to Belitz and Bailey (2009), risk is determined by four factors. When doing research that involves child participants one must assess:

- (a) the risk to the participant;
- (b) the benefit to the participant;
- (c) the benefit to similar children or children in general;
- (d) the minor's capacity to assent.

According to the Child Care Act (2005) the following is important. "Children who are of 12 years of age or over, and who are of sufficient maturity and have the mental capacity to understand the benefits, risks, social and other implications of medical treatment, may consent to such treatment without assistance from their parents or guardians" (Child Care Act, 2005) The implications of the Child Care Act therefore for research is that educational psychology researchers can, through the informed consent process, ensure that participants are well informed about the risks and benefits of the research and that above the age of 12 they may consent participating in research.

Risk cannot be assessed independent of the benefits of the research. The researcher must reflect on aspects related to psychological harm, physical harm, legal harm, social harm and

economic harm and the corresponding benefits (Panicker, 2008). While the most likely types of harm to research subjects are psychological or physical pain or injury, other possible kinds should not be overlooked.

(2) What determines benefit in educational psychology research?

Benefit in research is two pronged: benefit to the individual and benefit to society. The difficulty lies in balancing these benefits. The research study indicated that while 93% of the proposals indicated benefits for society only 38% indicated benefits to the individual. It seems therefore that educational psychology research focuses learning on issues that will be beneficial to society as opposed to only the individual. Learning what will be beneficial may require exposing people to risk. The problem revealed is then to decide when it is justifiable to seek certain benefits despite the risks involved, and when the benefits should be foregone because of the risks (Belitz & Bayley, 2009). In order to assess benefits they must be evaluated in relation to the risk to a participant posed by the research. It is important to recognise that participants should not be harmed for the sake of research regardless of the benefits that may result.

(3) How is information about risk and benefits presented to child-participants?

From the analysis of the ethics applications, it was indicated that 30 participants are under the age of 18. Therefore there should have been 30 parent consent and 30 child assent forms – there were, however, only 24 parent consent forms and 16 child assent forms. This implies that 47% of research with participants under the age of 18 did not have child assent forms. This may indicate a lack of understanding from the educational psychologists regarding the informed consent process. According to the Children’s Act (38 of 2005) and the amendment brought into effect 1 April 2010, from the age of 12 a child may legally consent without the consent of their parent. Flewitt (2005) indicates, however, that regardless of the legal age of consent, the voice of the child should not be lost and they must be seen as active agents in choosing to

participate. This does not seem to have translated into practice consistently yet. Many of the child assent forms were not different from the parent consent forms at all. No changes were made in the language or presentation of the information, making it very difficult to understand for a child. The assent forms that were different for the children explained the risks and benefits of the research in very concrete and measurable terms in language that was appropriate to the age of the participants.

Educational psychologist researchers can support the process of informed consent from participants by spending time with the informed consent form and making sure that it communicates what the researcher wants (look at Annexure A for a good example). The researcher needs to ensure that the consent form clearly and simply communicates what the research is about while also informing the participant of all their rights. It also needs to excite the participant so that they want to be part of the study and therefore the researcher needs to be creative while maintaining their ethics. Researchers should carefully think about the participants and what information would encourage them to participate in the study.

(4) How is information about risk and benefits presented to parents of child-participants?

From the analysis of the ethics application it was indicated that 30 participants are under the age of 18. Therefore there should have been 30 parent consent and 30 child assent forms however there were only 24 parent consent forms and 16 child assent forms. 20% of the research did not have parent consent forms. Considering that the risk in research was generally under-reported, when it was mentioned in the parent consent forms it was mostly indicated as no risk or minimal risk, without an explanation of what the researcher meant by minimal risk. The possible benefits of the research were clearly indicated.

4.4 Conclusions

Using the a priori codes that were identified from the literature, thematic analysis was carried out by analysing the research population that informed consent was sought from as per the

informed consent/assent forms attached to the research proposals. There were 4 proposals that did not have informed consent/assent forms attached and therefore they were not used in this analysis: therefore 40 informed consent forms were analysed. 4 themes related to the context of the research that had been identified from the literature. These included the school, the age of the research participant i.e. under 18 years of age or over 18 years of age and a theme for other persons that consent needs to be given by, for example a translator. From the a priori codes the following themes were identified as focus points when analysing the informed consent or assent forms. These themes were autonomy, benevolence, non-malevolence, the purpose of the research and the nature of the research process. Each theme has subcategories based on the literature review. These are as follows: (1) Autonomy: Volunteerism; freedom to withdraw; anonymity; confidentiality. (2) Benevolence, benefit for: the participant; society. (3) Non-malevolence: no risk; reasonable risk.

In addition to analysing the informed consent/assent forms, a thematic analysis was performed using the research proposal as a guideline. With the research question in mind specific attention was directed toward at the sections in the proposal that discussed the risk and benefits of the research. Two broad themes, risk posed by the research and benefits of the research, were identified. Risk posed by the research was divided into 4 subthemes: no psychological, emotional, social or physical risk is apparent from the research; psychological harm in the form of emotions elicited may occur; the identity of the participant may become known; multiple roles of the researcher may affect the participant negatively. "Benefits of the research" was divided into 5 subthemes: the therapeutic value of the research to the participant; identification of possible problems that the participant is having; the participant is empowered through the research process; a greater understanding of the participant is gained by parents and educators; findings of the research are generated which expand knowledge and possible interventions.

Risk in research is measured in relation to the potential benefit of the research to the research participant or society at large (Belitz & Bailey, 2009). There are, for example, risks of psychological harm, physical harm, legal harm, social harm and economic harm and the corresponding benefits (Panicker, 2008). While the most likely types of harm to research subjects are those of psychological or physical pain or injury, other possible kinds should not be overlooked. Understanding what constitutes minimal risk in research in comparison to the benefits of research is important. Rosato (2000) defines minimal risk as a situation with risks no greater than those experienced in children's or participants' (writer's insertion) daily lives.

The findings of the study highlight the disparity between the conceptualised risk and the actual risk posed by the research. In other words the risk assessed and indicated on the research proposal is not congruent with the actual risk that is presented by the research. The disparity shows the cognitive dissonance between these two concepts. In the analysis of the ethics application forms 77% of the research sample indicated that the risk was high as measured against the following : Participation requires intrusive and sensitive information about participants' mental/psychological health and/ or their relationship with a person/ institution with power over them (The ethics application form). However, in the analysis of the proposals only 40% indicated some kind of risk posed by the research. There is therefore a 37% disparity between what is indicated as high risk for the ethics committee and the actual reflection of the risk as indicated in the proposal. Similarly, in the analysis of the informed consent forms, only 35% indicated some kind of risk associated with the research. That means that 65% of the informed consent letters did not indicate any risk at all. In contrast 93% of the informed consent forms indicated the benefits from the research. The focus on the benefits of research with an apparent lack of acknowledgement of the risk seems to indicate that researchers may see the informed consent process as part of a 'to-do-list' when preparing research (Crow et al., 2006). It may also be an indication that researchers want to underplay the possible risk in their research in order to get the research approved. While not intentionally meaning to place their

participants in harms way it may be plausible that researchers would rather focus on the benefits that can be gained from their research and this cause the ethics dilemma that Eckmire (2008) discusses. It is also human nature to focus on 'pleasure' (benefit) and to avoid 'pain' (risk).

The recommendation is that the letter of consent should specify the possible benefits and risks to the participant. It is clear from the results of the research study, 65%, that educational psychology researchers, while possibly aware of the risks related to their research, are not indicating these risks in their research proposals and therefore also not in their letters of consent to participants.

The context

59% of the research participants were under the age of 18 and 45% of all the research took place within the school context. This means that informed consent for the research needs to be acquired from not only the principal of the school but also the District Department of Education. Informed consent was requested/ acquired from only 18% of the Principals and only 5% of these also gained informed consent from the Education Department. There is a disparity between consent sought in the contexts that the research took place and the actual consent. This indicates that educational psychology researchers do not seem to fully understand/appreciate the risks related to their research purely from the context in which the research occurs. Within the South African context, researchers must additionally remain cognisant of the historical and socio-economic backgrounds of their research and be careful not to exploit relationships of trust. The principal/teacher is considered a 'gatekeeper' as they decide who has access to the school/children and who doesn't (Heath et al., 2007; Flewitt, 2005).

Educational psychologists as researchers have to abide by the rules and ethical principles of their institution as well as the ethical standards prescribed by the HPCSA (Allan, 2001). This makes them not only academically astute but also professionally beyond reproach. Health care practitioners should according to the National Health Act: (1) Give their patients the information they ask for or need about their condition, its treatment and prognosis; (2) give information to their patients in the way they can best understand it; (3) the information must be given in a language that the patient understands and in a manner that takes into account the patient's level of literacy, understanding, values and belief systems; (4) refrain from withholding from their patients any information, investigation, treatment or procedure the health care practitioner knows would be in the patient's best interests; (5) apply the principle of informed consent as an on-going process; (6) allow patients access to their medical records (general guidelines) (Belitz & Bailey, 2009). The HPCSA has clear prescriptions regarding informed consent for any psychotherapeutic process in which a psychologist engages with a client.

Universities as institutions of higher learning and research have a tremendous task to not only instruct students but also to continue being students in a sense themselves as they continue with research. The tenure of staff is based not only on the classes that they instruct but also their own research. The university also receives grants and research funding not only from the government but also other institutions. Often this funding is based on how much research is generated by the university (Owram, 2004). What is apparent then is that there is a constant cycle of teaching and learning and the teacher is also constantly learning through their research. Bruhn et al. (2002, p.473) frame this idea beautifully when they say "academics are perceived as scholars, seekers and purveyors of knowledge, with insatiable curiosities about what we do not know and a critical and questioning attitude about what we do know." This gives them great power and responsibility to model the correct values to students. Morals based on sound ethical standards in research that are not just applied for research but are lived

by the academic lead to a good citizenship (Bruhn, 2008). This is not only necessary on an individual basis but also at the institutional level.

Vaughan as cited by Bruhn et al. (2002, p.484) succinctly notes that “once the [university] commits itself to a decision-making process based upon ethical values and applies these values in the general interest of all concerned, the [university] will be well on its way to creating a culture that inculcates these values and that judges its process and products based upon these values.” This is a very important paradigm to understand. The ethics review committee will make its decisions about implied risk and assessment of informed consent for research from this foundation.

Academic professionalism is not only a code of conduct but is a value system according to which academia base their decisions as they position the Hippocratic maxim in research “to do no harm” (Bernard, 2010). It becomes apparent then that informed consent as a construct is not only an ethical requirement of research but a pivotal point to measure the ethics of risk in research: to rephrase – to determine not only risk but also benefit in research to the participants of the research. The academic setting highlights some of the external pressure experienced by the researcher. This environment creates a high external locus of control as opposed to an internal and this increases the probability for ethical risk. The supervisor also places pressure on the researcher for the research to be approved as this approval has a direct effect on their tenure at the university (Owram, 2004).

4.5 Limitations

The conclusions of this study regarding educational psychologists’ conceptualization of risk are limited because the research has taken place within a specific case study related to a higher education institution. This does not, therefore, mean that the apparent unawareness of risk in research applies to all educational psychology researchers or professionals, nor to all institutions of higher learning. The research sample size is also not necessarily large enough to

enable the results to be generalized to all educational psychology researchers. A study that compares risk awareness across a number of higher education institutions may deliver a more comprehensive picture of the general conceptualization of risk.

4.6 Contributions

The study highlights the disparity between educational psychology researchers' concept of risk and the actual explicit indication of such risk in the proposals and informed consent forms utilised. The relationship between the benefits of research and the risks thereof has been highlighted and shown to be an integral construct in the concept of informed consent.

4.7 Recommendations

4.7.1 In practice

Educational psychologists' cognitive awareness of informed consent and risk in psychotherapy must go beyond being a 'form' that is filled in. With increased reflexivity in practice, informed consent should be negotiated with clients on an on-going basis and should not be something that is neglected in any stage of practice or research.

4.7.2 For training

A primary recommendation is that when universities teach risk ethics an understanding of the cognitive dissonance between the concept risk and actual risk must be incorporated. Reflexive practice needs to be acknowledged and adhered to by the researcher to align the concept of risk with the actual risk posed by research thereby decreasing the cognitive dissonance exhibited by researchers.

4.7.3 Further research

This study has indicated that further research into the conceptualisation and understanding of risk in the process of informed consent will be illuminating. Risk in research seems to be an abstract theoretical concept that has yet to be fully processed into a concrete and measurable

construct. Yet it is critical, and acknowledged widely, that researchers and practitioners ensure that participants are not harmed when participating in research. Research incorporating the effect of reflexivity in the research process as a method to increase awareness of risk in research could additionally be further researched.

4.8 Concluding remarks

Informed consent is an ethical construct that educational psychologists are cognitively aware of. However this understanding is not being reflected in research proposals and informed consent forms resulting in applications to the ethics committee for research to be delayed. It appears as though this construct is not adequately being interpreted by researchers out of the realm of theory into a concrete and practical application that is measurable. A focus on increased awareness and reflexivity of informed consent and risk in research in order to translate these constructs into a reality in research will ensure the protection and benefit of research participants. Educational psychology researchers also need to continue to be at the forefront of advocating the competence and agency of child participants in research, viewing them as co-contributors rather than as objects of research.

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The termination of pregnancy Act

<http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=77860>

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APPENDIX A


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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Reference:

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN RESPON

APPLICANT DETAILS

Surname:	
Email address:	
Qualification:	M.Ed PhD  Honours
Supervisor:	

DETAILS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Title of project	Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners
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Research design (tick with x)	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed methods	Other x Action research design
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Data collection ¹ (tick appropriate boxes with an x)	Questionnaires Survey x	Structured interviews x	Semi-structured Interviews x	Open ended Interviews x
	Non-participatory Observation ²	Participatory Observation	Intervention/ Therapy x	Experimental

Sensitivity/intrusiveness (tick with an x)	HIGH x (Participation requires intrusive and sensitive information about participants' mental/psychological health and/or their relationship with a person/institution with power over them)	LOW (Participation requires information about policies/ modules/ courses/ institutional processes with a view to analyse, assess and evaluate them as human artefacts)
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RESEARCH CONTEXT

Indicate if participants come from vulnerable populations (tick one or more of the applicable descriptions)	1. Under 18 years x	2. Over 18 years x	3. Orphaned, separated or unaccompanied minors
	4. Extreme poverty	5. HIV/AIDS	6. Mentally compromised

¹ Please note: particulars of data collection methods can not be supplied during the application phase. Each student is responsible to design constructivist modes of gauging participant information – including foci for interviews, graphic exploration, designing questionnaires. As each student chooses a specific learning support and/or career development focus for their intervention, their innovation is one of the pillars of the project design. By implication, set documentation of their intervention techniques can not be provided at the onset.
Monitoring strategies:

2007

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PERSONAL DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

Reference:

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Research project:

Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners

1. I declare that I am cognisant of the goals of the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education to:
 - develop among students and researchers a high standard of ethics and ethical practice in the conceptualisation and conduct of educational research;
 - cultivate an ethical consciousness among scholars especially in research involving human respondents; and
 - promote among researchers a respect for the human rights and dignity of human respondents in the research process.

2. I subscribe to the principles of
 - voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
 - informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
 - safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
 - privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
 - trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

3. I understand what plagiarism entails and I am aware of the University's policy in this regard. I undertake not to make use of another student's previous work and to submit it as my own. I also undertake not to allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of using it as their own work.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Reference:

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

 STUDENT APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF
 RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN RESPONDENTS

APPLICATION FORM
1. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Please provide a brief summary of the nature and purpose of the research in non-technical language (1-2 pp.)

In South Africa, socio-economic factors such as HIV&AIDS, poverty and unemployment negatively influence learners' career development and learning. Clearly the impact of these life circumstances – both present and future - on the lives of adolescents is significant. This project aims to address the issue of the most susceptible in the process - those learners in the adolescent developmental phase: aged 16-18 years.

The focus of the project is twofold:

- 1) The identification and intervention of learning support and career development risk of learners within a specific school; and
- 2) Learners' acquisition of skills to problem-solve future learning and income generation related career challenges in their life worlds.

In the last two years, a collaborative partnership has been established with a rural school in Mpumalanga. The proposed action research project will be a new focal point or expansion of this collaboration. The approach of the exiting collaboration was for educators to develop enhanced networks of support based on current challenges and available resources within the community and in this way participate in building the community. This collaboration did not focus specifically on learners. However, it is clear that focusing on adolescents would be a most significant extension. Also, educators requested specific learning and career support for learners in their school. Grade 10 learners in the rural school will be invited to join in skills transference sessions (facilitated by MEd(Educational Psychology) students) during and after school hours – focusing on supporting their career- and learning development. The envisioned project will start by targeting a specific grade in the school (grade 10 learners). The intention is to eventually capacitate all the learners at the participating school.

The dual purpose of the project is therefore:

- intervention purpose is to develop learners' capacity in terms of career development and learning support; and
- research purpose is to explore postgraduate students' development and application of educational psychological intervention strategies.

2. PARTICIPATION OF HUMAN RESPONDENTS
2.1 Describe who will be participating in the study in terms of race, sex, age range, institutional affiliation, and other special criteria

The target group will be 110 grade 10 learners each year. The learners are Black and are both male and female. These learners are in the adolescent developmental phase: aged 16-21 years. They are all attending Ngilandi High School, in Mpumalanga. In the following table I provide an overview of the participants' details:

Table 1 Details of Participants

Race	Sex	Age range	Institutional affiliation	Languages ³
Black	Male and female	16-21 years	Ngilandi High School	IsiZulu Sepedi Siswati

³ The different languages imply ethical consideration, as some of the project team members are only English and Afrikaans speaking. In order to (to some extent) address possible miscommunication, a research assistant will be familiar with some of the participants' vernacular. Similarly, educators at the school have indicated that they will also be available to act as translators where possible. Nevertheless, we remain cognisant of the fact that language issues will have to be deliberated reflectively throughout the intervention.

2.2 Describe how will you select the participants in the study; indicate whether participation is voluntary or not; and state what inducements (if any) will be offered to human subjects to participate in this study

Based on collaborative discussions with the principal and educators of Ngilandi High School, we decided to target grade 10 learners (approximately 110 learners annually) for at least five years for the intervention.

The target group learners were identified as being at risk for identity formation challenges, learning deficiencies and career planning obstacles.

All Grade 10 learners in this school will be invited orally by educators to join in skills transference sessions during and after school hours.

This invitation will be repeated by the project team at the onset of the intervention.

Participation in this study is voluntary and informed assent or consent will be obtained from the learners (see point 3 for further information in this regard).

No inducements will be offered to participants who partake in the research

2.3 Describe what the respondents will be expected to do, or what will be done to them, or what information will be required; indicate how many times observations, tests, questionnaires etc., will be administered; and state how long their participation will take for each specified task

Respondents will participate voluntarily in career guidance and learning support sessions facilitated by lecturers and students of the University of Pretoria, Department of Educational Psychology. 'Participation' in this context denotes discussions and partaking in group work activities with project members. Activities will depend on the planning of each project member – as supervised by the lecturers. Activities may include art activities, collages, study planning sessions, play sessions, ice-breaker activities, drawing, questionnaire completion.

Thus, information required from the learners includes the sharing of personal information and experiences with the facilitators. As this signifies sensitive interaction, lecturers and research assistants will be on-site for the duration of the interventions to assist student- project leaders to treat participant information sharing in a compassionate, responsible and accountable manner.

A team of professionals⁴ will visit the particular site (Ngilandi High School) twice for two days each during the years envisioned for the project. Postgraduate students will each work with a group of learners (the group size will depend on the number of enrolled grade 10 learners, but will be approximately 10 learners per group.) Learners will be divided into groups by the educator responsible for the grade 10 learners at Ngilandi High School.

The proposed intervention includes:

- Identifying individual and contextual strengths within each learner, as well as existing resources in their life world
- Mobilizing identified strengths and resources towards learning support and career development.
- Establishing networks for learning support and career planning
- Facilitating the acquisition of certain asset-based competencies by learners
- Enabling learners to problem solve their difficulties by focusing on internal resources, external capacities and extending their social networks.

The above outcomes will be communicated to the postgraduate students. Each student will develop an intervention based on their theoretical and practical competencies. These planned interventions will be submitted to the lecturers prior to the intervention for supervision purposes. Students will be allowed time to adapt their planning where necessary. Students will be responsible to provide all intervention materials for their activities.

During the interventions the lecturers and research assistants will move between the groups in order to observe and intervene where necessary to protect participants against harm. These project team members will also be available to intervene individually with participants if deemed necessary. Students will each keep a journal to reflect on their endeavours, as well as note sensitive issues which calls for further intervention or referral. Subsequent to each day's activities the lecturers will have debriefing sessions with the students to further monitor areas where participants may need more comprehensive psychological support, or other resource referral (social development, clinic referral, faith based organisations).

⁴ See 4.3 for details of the project team for 2007.

The procedure during visits are as follows:

Visit 1 – two days - sessions 1-6:*

9:00 – 15:00: *Focusing of strengths and resources*: Establishing rapport with the learners. Identifying personal strengths and deficiencies via strength mapping activity. Identifying contextual resources and barriers via asset-mapping activity. Identify existing networks for learning support and career development.

Visit 2 – two days - sessions 7-12:

9:00 – 15:00: *Mobilizing strengths and resources for learning support and career development*: Linking identified strengths and resources with identified deficiencies and barriers. – Focusing on mobilizing internal and contextual capacity: how can strengths and resources be utilized to address deficiencies and barriers? Accessing and developing stronger networks for career development and learning support. Training in skills focused on aspects such as: positive self-belief, career and achievement motivation, job seeking, study orientation.

*Each session constitutes two nominal hours of intervention time

3. SUBJECT APPROVAL AND INFORMED CONSENT

3.1 indicate whether you have received permission to conduct this research from the relevant authority⁵ - see Appendix A for permission from relevant authorities:

	Yes	No
the provincial department of education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
the school – as the school requested the project, permission here is not relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other authority (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

} N/A

3.2 describe how you will explain the research to respondents, and how you will obtain their informed consent to participate. And how is it made clear to subjects that they can end their participation in the study at any time? Please attached a written letter of consent which participants are expected to sign.

See Appendix B for an example of a letter for informed consent. Letters of informed consent from the learners in Grade 10 who are over the age of 18 years will be obtained in line with ethical guidelines regarding the acquisition of said assent. This will be accomplished by explaining the procedures that will take place in conducting the research in clear, unambiguous language that is appropriate for the developmental and educational level of the participants. The letter of informed consent the learners will be expected to sign will also include language that is appropriate to their developmental and educational levels. Participants will be informed both verbally and in the letters of consent that need to be signed by all involved in the research that they may withdraw from participation at any time.

3.3 describe how you will obtain consent in cases where subjects who are minors (under 18), mentally infirm, or otherwise not legally competent to consent to their participation. How is their assent obtained and from whom is proxy consent obtained?

See Appendix C for an example of a letter for informed consent. Letters of informed assent will be presented to learners under the age of 18 years in line with ethical guidelines regarding the acquisition of said assent.⁶ The explanation of the procedures of the research will be presented in language and grammar that is appropriate to the educational and developmental level of the learners. These measures will be taken to ensure that at the very least the learners can provide informed dissent by choosing not to partake in the research.

In addition to gaining assent from the learners themselves, the parents/guardians of participants who are minors will be expected to provide proxy consent by signing letters of consent to facilitate the participation of minors. See Appendix D for an example of a proxy consent form.

3.4 describe how you will ensure full consent and participation in cases where the research is not conducted in the mother-tongue of the subjects or in a language in which the subjects feel competent?

During site visits at least one research assistant (with capacity in the relevant vernacular) will be asked to facilitate the translation of the procedures of the research which will be presented in English to the

participants. Similarly, some of the postgraduate students are also proficient in some of the mother tongues of the learners at the school and will aid in translation of said procedures and help co-facilitate the intervention process by moving between the groups of learners to ensure that the learners fully understand the exchange of information that will take place.

4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF THE RESEARCHER

4.1 describe your experience with this kind of research.

The lecturers and research assistants involved in this project are trained in Participatory Research Methodology, and have successfully completed research projects within this design type. The two lecturers who will serve in a supervisory capacity are registered Psychologists and the research assistants both hold MEd Research qualifications. The students in training from the University of Pretoria that form part of the research team will be supervised by the qualified researchers.

4.2 do you as researcher require *registration* for any specific techniques or treatment that you will administer in this study?

The lecturers and one of the research assistants are registered educational psychologists. The other research assistant and postgraduate students all have Honneurs qualifications with psychological graduated backgrounds, enabling them to structure en deliver envisioned techniques, treatments or interventions that will be administered during the course of the intervention project. As stated previously, their planned interventions will be monitored from planning to implementation phases in order to monitor the accountable and ethical use of techniques.

4.3 list any *assistants* who might be working with you, describe what they will do, and their competence and preparation to do such tasks

Table 2 indicates members of the project team – please see Appendix E for signed forms (Personal Declaration of Responsibility).

Table 2 Project team

Person	Number	Role	Relevant Experience
LECTURERS			

5. RISKS AND DISADVANTAGES TO HUMAN RESPONDENTS OR PARTICIPANTS

5.1 Do respondents risk any harm—physical, psychological, legal, social—by participating in the research? What safeguards do you take to minimize the risks?

The research project holds psychological implications for the participants involved. Strict ethical guidelines will therefore be followed in working with the participants at all times. These guidelines will ensure that the members of the project team respect the autonomy of the participants. The research project is designed to promote nonmaleficence and beneficence, is just and fair to all involved and is conducted in the spirit of fidelity and veracity.

The safeguards employed to minimise the risks to the learners and others involved in the research project will be facilitated by the research team.

ensure that harm will not come to those involved. In the case of any problematic situations that may arise with any of the learners or others involved in the research process, steps will be taken to identify, extract and debrief any of the participants. (Please refer to, amongst others, 2.3 and 3.4 for some strategies to protect participants from harm).

6. BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES TO HUMAN RESPONDENTS OR PARTICIPANTS

6.1 In what ways—if at all—will this research benefit the participants?

We envision the possibility of the following advantages for participants. Learners' acquisition of skills to problem-solve future learning and income generation related to career challenges in their life worlds will assist learners to:

- Focus on utilising existing strengths and resources to address identified challenges
- Acquire skills to determine what is available in self and environment including strengths, resources, barriers and deficiencies
- Acquire skills to mobilise identified strengths and resources to address career aspirations and develop learning support strategies
- Establish networks with identified community resources
- Develop strategies to expand on existing networks for career and learning development
- Become aware that planning and attaining short term career goals to make a living (goal setting based on existing resources and strengths) can lead to achieving long terms career goals whereby individuals can flourish

The school may benefit, in that learners in the school acquire skills for career development and learning support. The Department of Educational Psychology (University of Pretoria) gains in that postgraduate students acquire skills to increase their scope of practice. The involvement of the Educational Psychology team may assist in promoting the development of the school's and learners' capacity to deal with societal challenges such as HIV&AIDS related issues. The intention is to eventually capacitate at least five years of grade 10 learner groups at the participating school.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMITY AND TRUST

7.1 Were the respondents offered confidentiality and anonymity for their involvement in the research? How did you go about ensuring confidentiality and anonymity to respondents?

All participants will be afforded the right to informed consent. In the case of minors, informed assent will be obtained and their parents or guardians will give permission by proxy.

Anonymity of respondents and information acquired throughout the course of the research project will be treated ethically in line with the professional training that the members of the research team has undergone or is currently undergoing. As visual data (photographs and audio-visual data) will also be collected, participants will be asked explicitly if they agree to the use of visual representation of themselves. The compromise of anonymity in this regard will be explained.

7.2 Will participants receive feedback on the research process and its conclusions? Will participants be asked to comment on drafts e.g., transcripts of interviews? If so, how will you use such comments from respondents in your research report?

The participants involved in the research project will receive feedback concerning the project. Debriefing and representation with participants will occur after the first visit at the school. Planning for the second visit will include this participant feedback. Feedback concerning participants' experiences of the intervention at large will inform planning for interventions with subsequent year groups.

7.3 Describe the ways in which the data will be stored for a period of at least 15 years.

Participants will keep the products of their intervention activities. Visual data will be stored digitally and documented observations will be stored electronically and archived at the Educational Psychology department at the University of Pretoria.

VERY IMPORTANT

To avoid unnecessary delays in the review process, please ensure the following:

1. The application forms should be signed in the appropriate places by the appropriate role-players.
2. If any research assistants will be involved, they are also required to sign a personal declaration of responsibility.

Please ensure that the following documents are attached:

1. Permission granted for conducting the research. Take note that all research conducted in public schools must be accompanied by permission from the relevant Department of Education.
2. Letters of informed consent from participants. In the case of minor children, proxy consent from a parent/guardian is necessary but not sufficient. The researcher must demonstrate that the minor child has actively agreed to participate based on sufficient information about the research.
3. Copies of questionnaires and interview schedules if and when applicable.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Angrosino, M.V. & Mays de Pérez, K.A. 2000. Rethinking observation: From method to context. In NK Denzin & YS Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: Sage Publications.

GODD

Learners' Assent for participating in a Research Study

A research project of the University of Pretoria

Project Title: Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners

To be read to children under the age of 18 years

Why am I here?

purpose

Sometimes when we want to find out something, we ask people to join something called a project. In this project we will want to ask you about yourself and we will ask you to participate in activities focused on your own development and learning. Before we ask you to be part of this study we want to tell you about it first.

This study will give us a chance to see how we, together with your school and teachers, can help you address career and learning challenges that you may have here at school. We also want to help you gain some skills in your learning here at school so that you can be better equipped to support yourself during your education and after leaving school. We are asking you to be in this study because your parents/guardians have agreed that you can be part of our study.

What will happen to me?

nature

If you want to be part of our study you will spend some time with us answering some questions and participating in some activities. This will be done at 2 different times when we come to your school this year - once some time soon then again for a second visit later on in the year. The questions and activities will be about you and your career development and learning. There are no right or wrong answers, only what you feel is best. You will also be asked to join some other children in a group, just like at school, except this time it would be playing games and talking.

If you agree, we would like to take photographs and audiovisual footage of you during some of the project activities. People will be able to see your face and hear your voice if we decide to show the images during discussions, as well as reports we write about the project. However, we will not tell anyone your name.

Will the project hurt?

Harm

No, the project will not hurt. The questions and activities can take a long time but you can take a break if you are feeling tired or if you don't want to answer all the questions at one time. If you don't want to answer a question, or participate in an activity, you don't need to. All of your answers will be kept private. No one, not even someone in your family or your teachers will be told your answers.

Will the study help me?

benefit

We hope this study will help you feel good about yourself and learn more about yourself and what you can do in school and one day when you want a job or career, but we don't know if this will happen.

What if I have any questions?

You can ask any questions you have about the study. If you have questions later that you don't think of now you can ask us at school or you can ask us next time we come to visit you here at your school.

Do my parents/guardians know about this project?

This study was explained to your parents/guardians and they said you could be part of the study if you want to. You can talk this over with them before you decide if you want to be in the study or not.

Do I have to be in the project?

You do not have to be in this project. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in the project, you just have to tell us. You can say yes no and if you change your mind later you don't have to be part of the project anymore. It's up to you.

(a) Writing your name on this page means that you agree to be in the project and that you know what will happen to you in this study. If you decide to quit the project all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of learner _____ Date _____

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

(b) Writing your name here means that you agree that we can take photographs and audiovisual footage of you during the project and share it with us during discussions, as well as reports we write about the project. We will not share your name with anyone who see the images. If you decide that we should rather not take photographs in the project, all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of learner _____ Date _____

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

If you have any further questions about this study, you can phone the investigator, or if you have any questions about your rights as a participant you can contact the University of Pretoria.

Parent/Guardian proxy consent for participation of a minor in a Research Project

A research project of the University of Pretoria

Project Title: Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners

Parent/Guardian form

Invitation to participate

We would like to invite your child to participate in a project. In order to decide whether or not to participate in the project you should know about risks and benefits of the project to be able to make an informed decision. Once you understand what the project is about you can decide if you want your child to take part in the project. If so, you will be asked to sign this consent form, giving your child permission to be in the project.

Description of the project

The purpose of this project is to help identify your child's strengths and resources to help support them in their learning at school and in planning a career. The project will also try to help the child deal with daily challenges in their life and identify their own strengths as well as the resources that exist in their environment that could help benefit them in their learning and career planning and development. The project also aims to teach the child new skills that will help them in their learning at school and for planning a career in the future. The name we use for this is Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners

If you want your child to be part of our project he/she will spend some time with us answering some questions. This will be done at 2 different times when we come to the school this year - once some time soon then again for a second visit later on in the year. The activities will be about the child and his/her learning at school. There are no right or wrong answers, only what the child feels is best. The child will also be asked to join some other children in a group, just like at school, except this time it would be playing games and talking.

Risks and Inconveniences

We do not see any risks for your child participating in this project. If any problems do arise we will speak to the child and make sure he/she understands what is going on and feels comfortable to continue in the project.

Confidentiality

We will keep your child's name private. If you agree, we would like to take photographs and audiovisual footage of your child during some of the project activities. These visual images may be utilised during discussions, as well as reports we write about the project. We will not share your child's name with the people who see these images.

If there is a serious problem about the safety of the child or any other person in the project, we are required to inform the appropriate agency. If such a concern arises we will make every effort to discuss the matter with you before taking any action. Please note that some of the questions in this project are designed to collect information that will require us to contact anyone. All the information we get from the project will be stored in locked files in research offices at the University of Pretoria.

Because confidentiality is important we would expect that any information you provide is also private and that you would not discuss this information with anyone.

Benefits

We hope this project will benefit your child and his/her learning at school and also contribute towards the development of his/her career one day, but we cannot guarantee this. There are no financial benefits to this project.

S6680/03

What are the rights of the participants in this project?

Participation in this project is purely voluntary and both the parents/guardians as well as the child may refuse to take part in the project or stop at any time without giving any reason. If the child decides not to participate or wants to stop taking part in the project after they said yes, this will not affect you or the child in any way.

Has this project received ethical approval?

This project has been submitted for approval to the faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria.

Questions

Please feel free to ask about anything you don't understand and take as long as you feel necessary before you make a decision about whether or not you want to give permission for your child to take part in the project. If you have questions later that you don't think of now you can phone _____ ask us next time we come to visit the school.

Informed consent

(a) I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, conduct, risks and benefits of this project. I have also read or have had someone read to me the above information regarding this project and that I understand the information that has been given to me. I am aware that the results and information about this project will be processed anonymously. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent for the child to participate in this project. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (if my own free will) declare that the child may participate in this project.

Name: _____ (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date _____

(b) I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, conduct, risks and benefits of having visual data collected regarding my child. I am aware that the visual project data may be shared with other people during discussions and/or written reports. I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent for visual data about my child to be collected in this project. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (if my own free will) declare that visual data may be collected of my child in this project.

Name: _____ (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date _____

Visual data

Very thorough

S6680/03

Learner's Consent for participating in a Research Study

A research project of the University of Pretoria

Project Title: Career and learning development intervention: students transferring skills to learners

To be read to children over the age of 18 years

Why am I here?

Sometimes when we want to find out something, we ask people to join something called a project. In this project we will want to ask you about yourself and we will ask you to participate in activities focused on your own development and learning. Before we ask you to be part of this study we want to tell you about it first.

This study will give us a chance to see how we, together with your school and teachers, can help you address career and learning challenges that you may have here at school. We also want to help you gain some skills in your learning here at school so that you can be better equipped to support yourself during your education and after leaving school. We are asking you to be in this study because your parents/guardians have agreed that you can be part of our study.

What will happen to me?

If you want to be part of our study you will spend some time with us answering some questions and participating in some activities. This will be done at 2 different times when we come to your school this year – once some time soon then again for a second visit later on in the year. The questions and activities will be about you and your career development and learning. There are no right or wrong answers, only what you feel is best. You will also be asked to join some other children in a group, just like at school, except this time it would be playing games and talking.

If you agree, we would like to take photographs and audiovisual footage of you during some of the project activities. People will be able to see your face and hear your voice as we decide to show the images during discussions, as well as reports we write about the project. However, we will not tell anyone your name.

Will the project hurt?

No, the project will not hurt. The questions and activities can take a long time but you can take a break if you are feeling tired or if you don't want to answer at the questions at one time. If you don't want to answer a question, or participate in an activity, you don't need to. All of your answers will be kept private. No one, not even someone in your family or your teachers will be told your answers.

Will the study help me?

We hope this study will help you feel good about yourself and learn more about yourself and what you can do at school and one day when you want a job or career, but we don't know if this will happen.

What if I have any questions?

You can ask any questions you have about the study. If you have questions later that you don't think of now you school _____ or you can ask us next time we come to visit you here at your school.

Do my parents/guardians know about this project?

This study was explained to your parents/guardians and they said you could be part of the study if you want to. You can talk this over with them before you decide if you want to be in the study or not.

Do I have to be in the project?

You do not have to be in this project. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in the project, you just have to tell us. You can say yes no and if you change your mind later you don't have to be part of the project anymore. It's up to you.

(a) Writing your name on this page means that you agree to be in the project and that you know what will happen to you in this study. If you decide to quit the project all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of learner _____ Date _____

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

(b) Writing your name here means that you agree that we can take photographs and audiovisual footage of you during the project and share these images during discussions, as well as reports we write about the project. We will not share your name with the people who see the images. If you decide that we should rather not take photographs or audiovisual footage of you in the project, all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of learner _____ Date _____

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

If you have any further questions about this study, you can phone the investigator, I question about your rights as a participant you can contact the University of Pretoria

Same as Assent form.

- no change in lang
- B different to parent form

APPENDIX B.

Context → School → permission → Principal
→ District (Education).

→ Child under 18 (~~17~~) → parent consent
→ child assent.

→ Participant over 18 → consent.

IC

Autonomy - volunteerism
- ~~right~~ ^{freedom} to withdraw
- right to anonymity.
- IC.

Benevolence - for participants } → benefit.
- society.

Non-malevolence - not do any harm.
↓
reasonable.

Justice - equal + fair

Content: A

1) School: permission

a	b
Principal	District (Educ)
14 (19)	4 (9)

2) Child under 18 :

a	b
Parent consent	Child Assent
24 (3)	16 (2)

3) Part. over 18 :

a.
Informed consent
14 (18)

Other . ||| 5 (6)

77

4 with no IC forms.

send draft of map

Autonomy

Volunteerism		38
Freedom to withdraw		39
Anonymity		37
Confidentiality		37

Benevolence - Benefit for

Participant		15
Society		37

Non-malevolence

Not do any harm		12
Reasonable		2

Justice

Equal		
Fair		
Purpose		37
Nature		37