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APPENDIX 1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Lately, there has been an increase in public concern about antisocial behaviour of students in and around American schools. In its extreme form (violence), antisocial behaviour has received notorious publicity mainly due to tragic shootings in modest American towns like Lake Worth, Florida, Jonesboro, Arkansas, Springfield, Oregon, and Littleton, Colorado. In schools in these towns, disturbed students killed other students, teachers, and in the latter case, themselves as well. When a young first-grade student was shot to death in her Michigan classroom by a fellow first-grade student, one American magazine wondered "What should we do with a 6-year-old killer?" (*Newsweek* 2000:6). These situations are especially frightening in that they arise with little or no forewarning. One author said such instances of strong violence are "like floods and tornadoes, not easy to predict or to prevent" (Toby 1993/1994:4).

Less violent antisocial behaviours such as fighting, threats, and theft receive less publicity, yet they are more common, world-wide, than murderous rampages. In a recent survey in US schools, about twenty-five percent of students and ten percent of teachers said they had experienced some form of violence on or near school property (Welsh 1999). Indeed, student antisocial behaviour has for many years been a most serious school-related concern of the American public; for each year since 1969, *lack of discipline* in school has been named in public surveys more frequently than any other problems faced by American public schools (Rose &

Gallup 1999:42). Educators have been concerned as well. Over one thousand American teachers surveyed revealed a great concern over school violence (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company 1993).

School violence and antisocial behaviour are not unique to America. Over thirty years ago, United Nations Secretary U Thant spoke of the widespread expression of violence in television, literature, and the film industry. He said that "Violence seems to have been consecrated in many parts of the world" (Menninger 1968:158). Indeed, his pronouncement remains true today, to the point where there is a growing *culture of violence* that affects young people and their school experiences (Tadesse 1997:2). School antisocial behaviour and violence are concerns in schools in South Africa (Botha 1995; Burnett 1998; Straker 1996; van Eeden 1996), Canada (MacDonald & Costa 1996), Australia (Fitzclarence 1995), Germany (Niebel 1994), Japan (Takahashi & Inoue 1995), and in third-world and emerging nations as well as industrialized nations (Ohsako 1997). During teaching visits to urban and rural Russia in 1996 and 1998, the investigator met teachers who said that Russian schools faced problems similar to western nations' schools; the only difference, one principal confided, was that "You (Americans) keep better statistics".

Among other nations, South Africa has undergone a particularly dramatic transformation over the last 25 years. As a result, its society faces multiple challenges impacting on the education of its young people, including rapid population growth, a shortage of funding for education, a multiplicity of racial and cultural linguistic mixes, as well as a disintegrating family structure and a politicised educational system (Prinsloo, Vorster & Sibaya 1996:306-307). These problems seem to be experienced most severely in Black schools and townships. Researcher Cora Burnett (1998) studied school violence in a small, impoverished community in South Africa. She investigated the experiences of 76 South African adolescents, and found that the violence they experienced to be an integral part of the social hierarchy of the school. Within the school system itself, violence was accepted to be

an effective way to gain social control, and an efficient way to discipline children. Violence within schools often exists in tandem with violence within children's families and communities outside of school. Particularly in urban centres, poor children and adolescents are at a higher risk of being a victim and/or perpetrator of violence. Chok Hiew (1992) found this to be true of *endangered children* in Thailand, where the mass exodus of farmers from remote rural areas into urban areas has caused children to be placed in situations of dislocation and parental separation, and consequently, children have been placed in situations of increased risk. In a study of 173 South African street children, Chetty (1997) interviewed children at Durban shelters and on its streets. Chetty found that these children were regarded as deviants, delinquents, and a public nuisance not only by the public, but by service providers as well. It would seem that even those adults who were sympathetic to street children were challenged by the formidable problems these children presented. Brian Rock (1997) edited a collection of papers on the effects of violence on children in South Africa. In his work entitled *Spirals of suffering: Public violence and children*, Rock presents essays on the findings of South Africa's Goldstone Commission of Inquiry in the Effects of Public Violence on Children. His work also includes an assessment of the problems of violence, and the types of interventions that can be made to relieve those problems.

In *Children first*, author Penelope Leach (1995:185) describes how all children are at risk when they are in poverty, irrespective of whether they live in wealthy nations or poor nations. She describes the lives of children who exist in these circumstances, from teenage children in Britain's "cardboard cities" to "children begging on the streets of Paris as well as Bombay; children organised into pickpocketing gangs that sound like Rio de Janeiro but are found in Rome". These children and adolescents are at especially high risk for illness and early death, due to disease and susceptibility to violence. Even in so-called first-world nations such as the United States, it is estimated that almost twenty million children live in poverty, and twenty-five percent of babies are born to mothers who received poor or inadequate prenatal care. During the 1990's, an average of ten thousand children in the United

States died each year as a direct result of poverty (Houston 1995:170). Throughout the world, all children and adolescents who live in poverty and violent circumstances bring those circumstances to school, where teachers and other educators are challenged to address the social problems that result. In some cases, poverty prevents children from getting to school at all: For instance, Mexican children attend school, on the average, for eight years, yet the poorest 30% of Mexican children attend for only three years (Dillon 2000). It is estimated that almost 25% of all the world's children between the ages of six and eleven never go to school at all (Kielburger 1998:309), with 250 million of the world's children *working in child servitude*. Kielburger (1998:168) states that "These children don't have a chance for education, to live a normal life, even a chance to play."

In cases where children in poverty do attend school, they are at times kept apart from other students. A recent report by Bollag (2000:31) detailed the plight of Romani children in eastern Europe, most of whom live in poverty irrespective of national citizenship. These children receive a *grossly substandard education* particularly in poorer Balkan countries like Romania and Bulgaria. Largely due to poverty and discrimination, these so-called gypsy children are often funnelled into inferior non-public schools. Few Romani children attend regular public schools. For many Romani children, simply attending school is difficult; due to exclusion policies, as well as due to a family's inability to afford books or proper clothing. When they do attend, Romani children are separated from White children, educated in separate classes. Bollag reported that lunchroom tables and lavatories are strictly segregated. Perhaps the most startling statistic is that almost 75% of all Romani children in the Czech Republic attend special schools for the mentally retarded, while only 3% of non-Romani children attend those schools. For many children throughout the world, they do not completely escape the effects of poverty even when they are within the school environment.

Although the era of apartheid has ended in South Africa, its legacy remains. Researcher Alistair Clacherty, of the Vuk'uyithathe Research Project (commissioned

by the Early Childhood Development unit of the Gauteng Department of Education) found that poverty, even more than juvenile delinquency, was a main barrier that kept South African children out of school (Grey 2000). "A school uniform and shoes represents a distant dream for many", he wrote, adding that a project to sensitise teachers, schools, and district educational structures to the plight of those in deep poverty was being developed.

Access to school for all poor children is particularly imperative, because historically, schools are the safest of places for children throughout the world. Children are safer being in school than working in factories or fields, safer than wandering on the streets, safer than when confined in prisons, and even safer than being in their own homes. Certainly, this safety is attributable in large part to the structured nature of schools, but it is also a tribute to educators who run those schools, particularly in light of the violence and antisocial behaviour they witness, confront, redirect, and defuse. For children in first-world and developing countries, access to school is more assured than in third-world nations. Yet, even within these relatively advantaged societies, trends in addressing student antisocial behaviour seem to be moving away from traditional preventive, educative efforts, relying increasingly on reactive, punitive measures. Over the last two decades there has been an increased emphasis on addressing antisocial behaviour through *medicinal perspectives* and *criminal justice perspectives*, instead of the traditional *educational and socio-education emphases* that schools have historically cultivated. In the schools of first-world and developing nations there has been an increasing emphasis on the administering of medications to children exhibiting antisocial behaviour. This trend toward *medicating* students with antidepressants and stimulants is particularly disturbing because it has increasingly involved young and pre-school-aged children; some as young as three years of age. A recent cartoon lampooned this trend. It depicted a large dump-truck backed-up to a schoolhouse door, about to make a delivery. The word *Ritalin* was printed on the truck's body, and in the foreground was a street sign commonly seen in American suburban communities. It warned potential drug dealers and users that this was a "Drug-Free Schools Zone", which

provided an ironic touch. Yet the problem is very real: the number of US children who have been placed on antidepressants and stimulants (drugs such as Ritalin and Prozac) has grown enormously over the past decade, and these drugs are now more likely than ever before to be administered to young children, including pre-schoolers (Zito Safer, dosReis, Gardner, Boles & Lynch 2000). Study Director Julie Zito warned that the effects of these drugs on young children has not been studied. Joseph Coyle of Harvard Medical School warned that administering psychotropic drugs to young children *could have deleterious effects on the developing brain* (Reuters 2000). Perhaps most troubling is what he believes may be behind the push to medicate children. Medical assistance programs, such as Medicaid (medical insurance for poor Americans) have lately *quite limited* their coverage for more thorough evaluation of behavioural disorders, and they limit the patient to no more than one type of clinical evaluation per day. "Thus", Coyle concludes, "the multidisciplinary clinics of the past that brought together paediatric, psychiatric, behavioural and family dynamic expertise for difficult cases have largely ceased to exist." As a result, children with behavioural disturbances *are now increasingly subjected to quick and inexpensive pharmacologic fixes.*

Even more widespread than the trend toward medicating children has been an emphasis on criminal justice measures taken in response to youth antisocial and violent behaviour. These measures emphasise typical criminal justice procedures such as detection, apprehension, and incarceration/expulsion. This approach has gained particular momentum lately in industrialized nations such as Great Britain, Australia, the United States and South Africa, where prisons are being built at a relatively rapid pace (in particular, maximum security prisons). Recently, Wackenhut Corrections Corporation announced that "its South African consortium, South African Custodial Services (SACS), has signed a Project Development Agreement with the Government of South Africa for the design, construction, financing and operation of a 3,024 bed maximum security prison at Louis Trichardt, in South Africa's Northern Province" (Wackenhut Corrections Corporation 1999). The same Wackenhut Corrections Corporation held a ribbon-cutting ceremony when it opened

its new 480 bed maximum security “youthful offender correctional facility” (prison) near Baldwin, Michigan. It began receiving inmates in July of 1999. This facility is solely for boys aged 13 through 19; adolescents who have been sent to prison under new Michigan state laws mandating adult-type sentencing and prison terms children and adolescents as young as 11, 12 and 13 years of age. The rate of incarceration in the United States has recently surpassed all other nations, and the rate of incarceration of students has been rising, amid a falling rate of incarceration of adults).

Certainly, there is a justified concern about crime in South Africa, America, and throughout the world. Societies do need secure places to detain their most dangerous citizens. Yet when a society's children and youth are increasingly considered to be among the most dangerous of a nation's citizens, a troubling state of affairs exists. Adult violence is a strong model for youths to emulate, and they do so quite well. Alexander Cockburn (1996:7-8) calls this smooth transfer of violent behaviour a *war on kids*, where adult violence is *handed down in the form of blows, sexual predation and punishment*. Aside from the damaging socialisation that is being fostered, many nations' financial resources are increasingly being channelled toward efforts that address the after effects of violence (such as building new prisons), instead of efforts to prevent those after effects from coming about, and instead of efforts to address the root causes of that violence. These national and international criminal justice efforts are made at the *macro* level, the broadest and most inclusive level of society, yet also the level that is furthest from the individual (the *micro* level), and far from the level of the community and its institutions such as schools (the *meso* level).

1.2 ANALYSIS AND STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This recent and enlarged macro-level emphasis on incarceration has filtered down to the meso-level; to the schools. In America, public schools have reacted to political pressure to take visible action by measures such as increasing their use of

metal detectors, video cameras, and trained dogs, and expansion of the hiring of security guards and police officers. Many American school districts are now spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for these security measures, often paying for them out of school funds originally earmarked for instruction and educational programs for students (Jones 1999). However, the most common and widespread reaction to antisocial behaviour by students--and the response most favoured by US high school administrators--is removing students from school through suspension and expulsion (Astor, Meyer & Behre 1999). These measures are popular despite the fact that there is no evidence that they reduce antisocial and violent behaviour by students (Skiba & Peterson 1999). They simply relocate the problem behaviours outside of school and into the community. Furthermore, there is evidence that forceful, prison-like reactions like strip searches of students and the use of dogs in school searches may worsen antisocial behaviours, and create emotional harm in students (Hyman & Perone 1998). Medical researchers (Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome & Roper 1993:11) have said that:

America's predominant response to violence has been a reactive one – to pour resources into deterring and incapacitating violent offenders by apprehending, arresting, adjudicating, and incarcerating them through the criminal justice system. This approach, however, has not made an appreciable difference.

On the other hand, and in a more optimistic vein, at the same time that there is an emphasis at the macro level on criminal justice responses, some schools and communities are addressing antisocial behaviour with measures that rely not on medication, nor on incarceration or expulsion. These responses, mostly at the meso and micro levels, are socio-educative responses, and they include responses such as those that teach and support conflict resolution. For example, the Centre for Conflict Resolution, an autonomous institute affiliated with the University of Cape Town, instituted a co-operative research programme into South African youth, and the problems and challenges they face. The report looked at conflict resolution and

peacemaking from the viewpoints of youth themselves and from educators', specifying how peace education could proceed in South African schools and the wider community (Dovey 1994). Another instance of a socio-educative response involves early intervention, such as that reported by Eckstein (1994), who looked at the situation of South African pre-school children faced with problems of poverty, abuse, poor nutrition, homelessness, and violence. He concluded that there were hopeful signs for pre-school education, including the establishment of a trust to support it, as well as an increase in the number of accredited educare courses, political support, and an increased focus by the South African media on the plight of young children. Calling it *A break with the past*, Maithufi (1997:1-15) outlined details of The South African Schools Act of 1996, which asked questions such as "What is basic education?" and "What is meant by equal access to educational institutions?" Maithufi discusses the implications of the new law with respect to discipline, corporal punishment in the schools, indemnity (payment of fees), and the establishment of the representative council of learners.

In addition to these socio-educational programme efforts, schools are attempting to modify the context; that is, the social environment that exists within a school. Modifying the context approaches the problem of antisocial behaviour from a preventive and supportive – rather than punitive – perspective. For example, many large middle-schools in the United States have begun to divide into smaller units called *houses* that provide a better level of closeness, and thus foster a sense of community. There has been activity at the micro level as well. University of California researcher Pedro Noguera (1995:206) described a novel approach to modifying a school's context by acting at the micro level. He studied an inner-city junior high school in California that hired a local grandmother (instead of a security guard) to monitor students in school. *Instead of using physical intimidation to carry out her duties, this woman greets children with hugs. When the hugs prove to be insufficient to maintain prosocial behaviour, she admonishes them to behave themselves, saying she expects better from them.* Many might laugh at the idea of hiring a grandmother instead of an armed guard, yet this school was the only

school in its district where no weapons were confiscated from students during that school year.

Some teachers have approached the challenge to teach prosocial behaviour (and improve the climate within their classrooms) by integrating conflict management into their academic curricula. Barbara Stanford teaches English at an inner-city United States high school, and she integrates conflict management into what she is teaching. She leads students to look at conflict outside themselves; through the short story (for one instance), they explore ways to deal with conflict, including role-plays and empathy-building activities (Stanford 1995). Fliegel (1993:24) summarised well the value of addressing student socialisation at the meso and micro levels in his book *Miracle in East Harlem*: "Treat a classroom full of inner-city kids like a bunch of uneducable future criminals, and they won't let you down. Treat them with love, respect, and dignity, however, and watch them bloom."

Many educators would agree with this sentiment, however, educators and research must operationalize the *love, respect, and dignity* to which Fliegel refers. Recent research has pointed out the important value of teacher interventions in the deterrence of student antisocial behaviour, with special reference to teacher interventions that are caring interventions (Astor, Meyer & Behre 1999). Yet, there is little information available, beyond these types of results. For instance, research has shown that teaching efficacy, which is a *teacher's belief that he or she can reach even difficult students to help them learn* is one of the few areas of teacher behaviour and attitude that is positively correlated with student achievement (Woolfolk 2001:389). How teacher efficacy relates to student antisocial behaviour is unclear, although one may guess that teachers who believe they can influence students' behaviour may be more successful at doing so than teachers who have a weaker sense of efficacy. However, there is little information available at present on the connection between teachers' efficacy and its effect on student behaviour. The professional literature is also not clear as to teachers' willingness or inclination to intervene, nor are there research indications of the skill levels of teachers (perceived

or actual) when they engage in interventions seeking to prevent violent or antisocial behaviour.

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In the widest sense, this research will attempt to shed light on socio-educational – rather than medical and criminal justice – responses to student antisocial behaviour. It will look at the micro (teacher-to-student) level to explore and identify factors surrounding antisocial behaviour, and examine teacher behaviours that may inhibit and/or prevent antisocial behaviour. It will also look at the meso level of teacher co-operation and communication with parents and community. As such, it will consider the school and classroom as socio-educational contexts, as well as the teacher-student relationship as central factors in teaching social behaviour, and reducing antisocial behaviour.

In addition, this research will aim to draw up a plan for teachers to deal effectively with antisocial and violent behaviour. Ultimately, the results of this research would inform teacher preparation programmes in ways that teachers can be empowered to make effective interventions in preventing and/or responding to student antisocial behaviour.

1.4 DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

Before moving ahead, it is important to clarify and define terminology used in the present investigation.

1.4.1 Antisocial and prosocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour is behaviour that is *opposed or contrary to normal social instincts or practices* (Oxford 1999, s.v. *antisocial*). Antisocial behaviour can be conceptualised as a continuum, including behaviours less physically-violent to

behaviours highly physically-violent. At the less violent end would be rudeness and incivility, while at the other end would lie violent antisocial behaviours of rape, murder, and armed assaults. Prosocial behaviour *refers to voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals . . . they are performed voluntarily rather than under duress* (Eisenburg & Mussen 1989:3).

1.4.2 Violent behaviour and violence

Violent behaviour and violence are forms of antisocial behaviour, yet imply a more forceful and more-extreme manifestation of antisocial behaviour where bodily and/or emotional injury is likely. Thus, *violent* behaviour is defined as antisocial behaviour that involves *great physical force* (Oxford 1999, *sv violent*). The terms *antisocial behaviour* and *violence* do not necessarily imply a breach of law, they are not synonymous with the word "crime".

1.4.3 Juvenile delinquency

The term *juvenile delinquency* is narrower in scope than antisocial behaviour as it refers to *the misconduct of juveniles which is a breach of law or an offence* (Coetzee 1983:75). However, for the purposes of this thesis, *juvenile delinquency* will be defined more generally as inappropriate social behaviour, identified as such by society (Botha 1977), and not necessarily as criminal behaviour.

1.4.4 Teacher interventions

Interventions by a teacher are defined as any verbal, non-verbal, and/or physical response by a teacher to an actual or threatened antisocial or violent behaviour by a student or students. Interventions can also be seen to apply to responses to prosocial student behaviour, as well. Teacher interventions may be caring (warm, supportive, enthusiastic and/or show an interest in helping the students), or they

may be non-caring (simply functional responses, or harsh, punitive and/or unhelpful responses).

1.4.5 Teacher efficacy and attribution theory

Teachers with a strong sense of *teaching self-efficacy* believe they can positively influence student achievement. Teaching self-efficacy is the belief that teachers can have an important positive effect on students (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:436). Teacher efficacy is closely related to attribution theory, whereby individuals explain their successes and failures to themselves (Weiner 1979; 1980; 1994). Attribution theory describes how teachers explain, to themselves, their successes or failures in teaching. There are four attributions: *effort, ability, luck, and task difficulty*. Teachers high in self-efficacy explain their successes to themselves in terms of their personal *effort and ability*, instead of *luck* or *task difficulty*. *Effort* is the only attribution an individual can control. Hence, teachers who feel powerless (low self-efficacy teachers) attribute their failures (and successes) to external controls such as luck ("I'm unlucky"), or task difficulty ("They are a horrid group of students!"). Teachers high in self-efficacy attribute their failures (and successes) to internal controls such as ability ("I'm a skilful teacher"), or effort ("I work at being an effective teacher").

1.5 METHODS OF RESEARCH

The present investigation involves applied research, where the starting point is a *problem in the real world, and is designed to provide information* (Biddle & Anderson 1986:236). The study will be qualitative in design, and will gather data through a naturalistic observation and interview methodology, which requires *the researcher to observe the behaviour of participants in their natural environment and to make no attempt to change or limit the environment or the behaviour of the participants* (Graziano & Raulin 2000:49). Compared to other research methods,

naturalistic observation and interview is low-constraint research, where the researcher imposes relatively few controls or limits on the research process.

There is a two-part design to the present study: Participant observation, and in-depth qualitative interviews. In *participant observations*, observations are made in order to learn about the ways in which people usually make sense of or attach meaning to the world around them (Schurink 1998:279). In-depth interviews are usually comprised of *open-response questions to obtain data of participant meaning – how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives.*(McMillan & Schumacher 2001:443). Generally, either participant observations or in-depth interviews may each be a research study's main data collection strategy, but both will be utilised in the present investigation. In other investigations, and in the present investigation, in-depth interviews will follow observations, and be a *natural outgrowth of observation strategies* (MacMillan & Schumacher 2001:443). The use of both participant observation and in-depth interview strategies is expected to yield a rich degree of data.

1.5.1 Three phases of research

The present investigation will consist of two phases, *Phase II* and *Phase III*. Research prior to the present investigation will be referred to as *Phase I*. Phase I began in 1993, with the surveying and interviewing of teachers identified as *outstanding educators* (DiGiulio 1994), which was followed by classroom observations completed in the United States and in Japan. Phase I was an informal study that helped focus the issues for the present investigation. Hence, the two phases that comprise the present investigation will be referred to as Phase II (participant observation) and Phase III (in-depth interviews).

Subjects for the first part of the present investigation (Phase II) will consist of teachers assigned to local elementary and secondary schools for the entire school day, and

for an entire semester. The schools are located in the state of Vermont, itself located in New England, in the north-eastern quarter of the United States. Vermont's population is largely White, middle class, and rural, although there are in Vermont a substantial number of families living below the poverty level. Recently, there has been a marked influx of newcomer families into Vermont, consisting mostly of refugees from Vietnam, Russia and the Sudan. These families have moved mainly into the northern part of the state, in and around the city of Burlington, which is presently Vermont's largest city. Although the majority of Vermont's teachers are White and middle-class, Vermont's student population has grown increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, and national origin.

The second phase of the present investigation (Phase III) will involve in-depth qualitative interviews completed in two different stages, with two different groups. The first stage of Phase III will involve Vermont teachers. This stage will serve as a preliminary, pilot phase, further developing issues and themes that will have arisen from the participant observations (Phase II), and the earlier observations and interviews (Phase I). The second stage of Phase III will involve in-depth interviews with African-American (Black) teachers who are working in schools outside Vermont where violent behaviour is relatively common. These interviews will be the culmination of the present investigation, yielding findings that can help identify ways that teachers and schools can prevent and lessen the effects of violent behaviour. While it cannot be assumed that most African-American educators work in violence-ridden schools, the converse generalisation is accurate: Schools where violence is common are largely, although not exclusively, located in urban areas, which tend to have the largest populations of Black and African-American students. In addition to the inner-cities, older suburbs surrounding American cities also witness more youth violence. It is hoped that focus on Black African-American educators for the in-depth interview part of the study will permit this investigation to be relevant in other nations where youth violence is also a serious problem.

1.5.2 Literature study

Jean Piaget has provided a great deal of insight into the process by which children learn. His work today is associated with the theory and practice of constructivism, where students learn by actively making sense of changes in their environment, and drawing meaning from it (Iran-Nejad 1995). Through the concepts of assimilation and accommodation, learning proceeds as the individual organises and reorganises his or her activity, in accord with stimuli from the environment. Traditional Piagetian constructivists emphasise learning within the individual, placing priority on students' sensory-motor and conceptual activity. The primary emphasis is on cognition.

On the other hand are constructivists who emphasise the central role of social interaction in human learning. These social constructivists *tend to emphasise the socially situated nature of much learning, and focus on the individual acquiring knowledge in social action* (Gipps 1999:373). Pollard (1990) presents a social-constructivist model of the teaching-learning process, stressing the role of the teacher as a reflective agent, in the sense that he or she sensitively assesses each student's needs. The social-constructivist model places emphasis on formative, ongoing and dynamic assessment of the student by the teacher. The work of Russian constructivist Lev Vygotsky has furthered this perspective. Vygotsky's approach is sociocultural, which *creates an account of human mental processes that recognises the essential relationship between these processes and their cultural, historical and institutional settings* (Wertsch 1991:6). Socioculturalists emphasise the same process by which children come to know as constructivists, but Vygotskian socioculturalists emphasise that meaning derived from individual interactions is not solely a product of the person acting (as is held by classical Piagetian constructivists), but is a sum that incorporates the individual's relational activities with others. Bruner and Haste (1987:1) said that "through social life, the child acquires a framework for interpreting experience and learns how to negotiate meaning in a manner congruent with the requirements of the culture". Through their classroom

relationships with students, teachers provide scaffolding where prosocial behaviour is learned.

Fostering a social-constructivist model in the classroom, and developing prosocial teacher-student and student-peer relationships takes effort and intervention on the part of the teacher. In his research of teachers' assessment of students in Switzerland, Perrenoud (1991:92) pointed out that students (in non-constructivist classrooms) will often do the very least that is required to pass. As a result, Perrenoud claims that a teacher must seek to "counteract the habits acquired by his pupils. Moreover, some of the children and adolescents with whom he is dealing are imprisoned in the identity of a bad pupil and an opponent." The role played by the teacher in the sociocultural environment of the classroom must be active, and address this *imprisonment* if students are to learn social and prosocial behaviour.

Despite the volume of educational research completed, relatively little is known about the ways in which teacher behaviour and other contextual variables affect children's behaviour. Gore and Eckenrode (1994) cite the dearth of school-based research in this area, attributing the scarcity of information to measurement and design limitations in assessing context and process variables. Traditional, quantitative methods may simply be inadequate tools given the complexity of the classroom context, and range of variables that affect student prosocial and antisocial behaviour. In this regard, Baker (1998:41) points out that qualitative methods "may contribute to our understanding of environmental mediators of behaviour" as "such methods permit the study of interactions between (classroom) environmental contexts and individual differences in outcomes" which are critical toward understanding *the causal mechanisms mediating behaviour*. It is hoped that the present investigation, which is qualitative in nature, will serve to enhance understanding of antisocial and violent behaviour, looking at it in its environmental context, which encompasses the teacher, peers and classroom environment.

The climate of a classroom and school environment have each been acknowledged to comprise significant factors influencing antisocial and prosocial student behaviour (Astor 1998; Lickona 1991; Morrison, Furlong & Morrison 1994, 1997). Although classroom climate is the sum of a number of complex factors and components, a teacher's behaviour in the classroom is a central component of its climate. The teacher's use of voice, and proximity to students are two behavioural variables that have been identified in the literature as having an influence on student behaviour. For example, the teacher's voice serves not only to convey cognitive information, it also serves to convey relational information including acceptance/nonacceptance, and pleasure/displeasure. The volume of the teacher's voice has been reported in terms of teacher *clarity*, which has been defined in many different ways in educational research (Dunkin & Barnes 1986:766). Usually, the term refers to teacher fluency, lack of vagueness, clear transitions, and lack of unexplained additional content (Land 1979; Smith 1977).

Another behavioural factor may involve teacher-student proximity (distance). In his classic book *The hidden dimension*, Edward T Hall describes four categories of distances in human social behaviour referred to as *proxemic patterns*: The two further distance categories (social and public distance) are where most teacher-student interactions occur. They permit insulation and uninvolvedness, if desired. *This distance makes it possible for them to continue to work in the presence of another person without appearing to be rude* (Hall 1966:123). On the other hand, close proximity may signal either caring, or be threatening, depending on the circumstances. Hall acknowledges that different cultures have different proxemic patterns. For example, some southern European cultures have personal zones that begin much closer than Americans' or northern Europeans, which explains why Americans feel crowded or stressed in France or Italy. Americans in public places will openly express annoyance when touched by strangers, while Middle Easterners express no such outrage. It will be interesting to note teachers' proxemic patterns, and to what extent they are related to teacher intervention or student antisocial behaviour. Little research has been done in this area, although it has been

suggested that the teacher's location within the classroom, in relation to the students, can improve student behaviour (Wall 1993). Whether or not interventions made at close range or distant range are more or less effective is unknown, and the present investigation may shed light on that issue.

Although gender differences are not main focal points of this investigation, they may also be a factor to be explored. The literature (as well as common observation) reveals that most antisocial and violent behaviour is the work of boys. Throughout the world, rates of aggression by girls are lower than boys' rates. In school, and at any age, boys are more likely to be initiators of violence than girls; they are also more commonly victims of violence than girls (US Department of Education 1995). In addition, when boys' aggressive antisocial behaviours such as fighting in school continue through the early grades of elementary school, these boys are more predisposed toward physically aggressive behaviour in later grades than non-aggressive young boys (Laub & Lauritsen 1998:127-155).

1.5.3 Empirical research

It is ironic that given the amount of empirical research that has been done into issues of human motivation and behaviour, there exist high rates of student antisocial behaviour. Most of the empirical research surrounding antisocial behaviour has focused on school conditions and school programs. With regard to school conditions, empirical studies have analysed school conditions that foster antisocial behaviour. These factors include a lack of clarity, a lack of rules and policy enforcement, and instruction that is ineffective (Biglan 1995; Mayer 1995). There has also been a great deal of empirical research into programs that address violence, such as conflict resolution programs, or programs that seek to prevent weapons from being brought into school. It makes sense to seek a prevention of violent and antisocial behaviour, for it is much simpler and less painful to both the individual and society than efforts to correct such behaviour after-the-fact. Early research that looked into the effectiveness of violence prevention programs was

mixed; some proved not effective at all, while others were ineffective when applied to new and different situations (DiGiulio 1999). Webster (1993) reviewed three school curricula specifically designed to prevent violence, yet he found that there was no evidence of a long-term change in students' violent behaviour in any of the schools he studied. Biglan (1995) and Mayer (1995) have described how improvement in teaching practices – the way teachers teach and the way they interact with students – may reduce the incidence of certain types of antisocial behaviour, including vandalism and dropping out of school. Advocating for more research in this area, Biglan (1995:480) states that

In short, we know a great deal about what can be done, but we have not yet translated our knowledge into widespread changes in the incidence of antisocial behaviour or the proportion of children who engage in antisocial behaviour. Indeed, at the same time that our knowledge base has been expanding, the incidence of antisocial behaviour is increasing.

While there has been research into school conditions and school programs, relatively little research has looked closely at the salience of the teacher-student relationship and its effect on antisocial behaviour. Some very recent research has suggested that higher levels of student safety in school are associated with a prevailing sense among students that teachers care about students, and that a lack of caring fosters overt and covert forms of violence within schools (Thayer-Bacon, 1999). Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999:24-25) noticed a striking connection between caring behaviour by teachers and violent behaviour in school. They identified teachers who *made efforts to ensure students' attendance, expected students to do quality work, and went beyond what the students expected in terms of personal support*. Such teachers – those whose interventions were perceived as most caring – responded clearly and unequivocally to antisocial behaviour and potential student violence. *These teachers claimed that they would intervene regardless of location and time*. They did not perceive hallways and other undefined spaces in schools as

being unowned, but felt they owned *the whole school territory or whatever space the student occupied*, expressing that they felt personally obligated *to the whole child regardless of the setting, location, time, or expected professional role*. They saw caring-in-teaching as similar to caring-in-parenting. It is interesting to note that, although these caring teachers were admired by school administrators, they were not offered overt or formal support. They acted alone, and courageously. Other teachers expressed an interest in increasing their caring involvement, but were hesitant to do so without more support from the administration. Among these latter teachers, the researchers noted *a pervasive sense of powerlessness regarding what they could and couldn't do*. While some teachers could respond strongly and in a caring way to students, it appears that many more may require the support of school administrators and systemic support before they can do so. Unfortunately, there are few similar studies that corroborate these findings.

1.6 SUMMARY

There is clearly a need to look more closely at the behaviour of educators with regard to student behaviour, particularly with respect to violent and antisocial behaviour. These forms of behaviour have great consequences not only for the education of members of society, but also the degree of progress that can be made socially, economically, and politically. Violent behaviour is perhaps the greatest challenge to world peace and stability, and underlies a great deal of human suffering from its direct and indirect effects.

CHAPTER 2

PRE-REQUISITES FOR POSITIVE SOCIALISATION OF CHILDREN: ROLE OF THE HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

While the roles of the home, school and community have long been recognised as essential in the socialisation of children and adolescents, only relatively recently have these roles seemed more vital and indispensable toward society at large. Pioneer educator Maria Montessori spoke of the importance of education as a socialisation process, and in her schools she set up an ongoing, natural social environment that was effectual, yet so indirect that it deceived some observers. Montessori abstracted the socialising qualities of home, school, peers and community and synthesised them into a highly-controlled, well-structured environment that permitted students to choose many of their activities, and except in rare instances, positioned the teacher to be more of an observer than a lecturer. Observers asked Montessori how her pupils could possibly be socialised given the non-dominant role of the teacher. How could children have a social life since they did so much on their own? The observers failed to see the subtle power of the educative environment she had set up, and they failed to see the power of the group itself in socialisation: "But what is social life", she asked, "if not the solving of social problems, behaving properly and pursuing aims acceptable to all?" (Montessori 1988:204-205). Throughout the last century, Montessori's understanding of a child's social life, and her other

innovations gradually spread to schools throughout the world. Public, private and religious schools have adopted many of the methods and materials she originated.

Most recently, however, it appears that industrialised nations are moving toward an educative model that emphasises not socialisation but medication and retributives: Since the end of the last century, medication has gradually been perceived to be increasingly valuable as a treatment for student antisocial behaviour. The popularity of the drug *Ritalin* is indicative of this perception. In addition to medication measures, retributive (punitive) measures have also come to be seen as appropriate treatments for antisocial and violent behaviour. Even more widespread than medication, the reliance upon punitive, criminal justice measures has become popularly seen as effective (or as the only) measures to address serious problems like antisocial behaviour and violence. While some medical and criminal justice measures may be fitting responses to antisocial behaviour and violence once those behaviours have occurred, such measures stand apart from the *preventive* (and thus, *educative*) measures in child and youth socialisation. In a discussion of primary prevention, the US Institute of Mental Health said that prevention was *directed toward reducing the incidence of a highly predictable undesirable consequence* (Klein & Goldston 1977:vii). While some antisocial behaviours are unpredictable (especially some forms of violence), and perhaps not preventable, much antisocial behaviour is clearly preventable.

Non-punitive prevention, which occurs *prior* to an undesirable act and involves no punitive measures, is deeply rooted in the centre of socialisation. A major study in the United States in the 1970's showed the dramatic value of preventive efforts and youth behaviour. Called the *Kansas City School Behaviour Project*, sixty teachers received intensive training over a lengthy period of time in ways to foster socialisation in their students. When the researchers looked at the changes in student behaviour over time, and across variables of race, sex, and ethnic classification, they found *that you could do something about what happens to a child in high school, in terms of social behaviour, by teaching certain skills to a sixth grade*

teacher (Hartley 1977:72). There were identifiable, positive effects demonstrated by students in the treatment group up to five years after treatment. However, the role of measures that are preventive rather than punitive, with respect to student antisocial and violent behaviour, has been the subject of very little investigation. Much research has taken for granted that consequences (rewards and punishments) are inherently motivating to students, and are thus appropriate ways to teach students prosocial behaviour.

2.2 SOCIALISATION

Socialisation has been defined as *the process whereby children become members of a social group (or the community), in the sense that they learn to behave according to the values and norms of the group or community* (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:11). Botha (1977:39-40) added that this membership includes both intimate and impersonal experiences in work and participation in groups. Socialisation is an essential component of learning to become human. It is *the general process by which the individual becomes a member of a social group, which includes learning all the attitudes, beliefs, customs, values, roles, and expectations of the social group* (Craig 1983:12). It is truly a universal process.

Although there are cultural differences between and within different nations, there are basic and universal similarities in the way children are socialised, apart from the influence of their particular culture. This cross-cultural similarity is especially true with respect to the acquisition of prosocial behaviour. Eisenberg and Mussen (1989:32) wrote that although many behaviours and values are specific to one's culture, *membership in a cultural group can account only for general tendencies; it cannot be used to explain individual variations within a culture in the propensity to act prosocially*. The authors emphasise that prosocial behaviour emerges from the child's socialisation experiences, including all the child's interactions with parents (whom they call *most significant* agents of socialisation), peers, teachers, and the mass media. *These socialisation experiences are critical in moulding the child's*

prosocial disposition (Eisenberg & Mussen 1989:33). In addition, *the child or young person is educated in particular social relationships and social situations for adequate social life, from interpersonal interaction to international coexistence* (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:4). Parents, educators, and members of society usually agree in this matter: Schools' and teachers' efforts must be prosocial, that is, oriented toward the good of society. This holds true across different cultures. A society that does not foster prosocial behaviour (at the very least, toward its own members) will almost certainly not survive.

Sociologist Emile Durkheim (1925/1961:233) emphasised that in order for children to learn prosocial behaviour, they must first become oriented toward the well-being of others. He wrote that *moral behaviour demands an inclination toward collectivity*. In other words, before one can teach children good behaviour, one must first instil in them a desire (inclination) toward the wellbeing of others. Before they learn *what to do*, children must first *want to do well for others*. Furthermore, socialisation implies that some focus must be *outer*; on other persons, to what Durkheim called *collectivity*. This inclination toward collectivity is the necessary precondition for socialisation to begin, and to carry on. It is important to note that medicinal and criminal justice (retributive) measures are not preventive, because they do little or nothing to advance one's *inclination toward collectivity*. If nothing else, *criminal justice measures may actually serve to decrease one's predisposition to do well toward others*, and work contrary to the development of prosocial behaviour. Despite universal folk wisdom that advocates strong measures in response to antisocial behaviour (such as *spare the rod, spoil the child*), there is no evidence that this is truly the case. There is simply no evidence that through the administration of medicine, or through the imposition of criminal sanctions, a child becomes oriented toward the wellbeing of others, or toward the wellbeing of herself or himself, for that matter.

2.2.1 Primary socialisation: The role of the home

Human socialisation is primarily accomplished through two different agents (Allais & McKay 1995:126): *primary socialisation*, which includes the family and home, and *secondary socialisation*, which is provided by schools, peer groups, and the media. The first social relationship of each child lies within the family; it is the parent-child bond. From the very first hours of life an infant engages in behaviours that complement and become synchronised with actions of the parent (Gormly 1997:127; Reissland 1988). This *I-you relationship* (also called attachment) is a tie of affection that the infant forms with one specific adult caregiver (usually, the birth mother) that binds them together in space, endures over time, and fosters survival (Bowlby 1980:39-41). This bond forms the foundation for future social development, by creating a secure base from which the infant can explore the physical and social environment, and gradually develop a sense of autonomy. Ultimately, *the relationship between parent and child is characterised by a common orientation towards a common goal, namely the child's becoming an adult* (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:7). This relationship is bi-directional; the child and parent are each oriented toward and attracted to the other, and the way the child responds to the parent will in turn influence the way the parent reacts to the child.

The trusting I-you relationship not only provides the child with physical security but also marks the beginning of the child's social education. This denotes *awakening a positive attitude to fellow human beings and awakening a sense of . . . social conscience* (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:11). This awakening of a predisposition or inclination toward prosocial behaviour is facilitated by a secure maternal attachment. As the child grows, he or she moves on to display this predisposition to and with non-parental adults. In sum, if the primary relationship is affectionate and nurturing, the child is more likely to imitate the parent's or teacher's prosocial behaviour when interacting with others (Eisenberg & Musser 1989:78). Studies of parenting and African adolescents reveal that this prosocial effect probably decreases as children age. Mboya (1995) found that children's distance and the

independence they want from parents increases as children grow, yet girls' relations with parents remain generally closer than the relationship of adolescent boys and their parents. Nonetheless, the strong bond created by a secure primary attachment endures throughout life, even if there is distance between parent and child through the lifespan. If that secure bond has not developed early in life, it is likely that the adolescent years will indeed be more turbulent, and place the adolescent at greater risk for displaying antisocial and violent behaviour toward self and others.

In contrast to the strong bond created by a secure, warm and loving primary attachment, abusive and harsh treatment of the infant can inhibit the development of prosocial behaviour, and foster antisocial behaviour. For example, in an American study (Main & George 1985), toddlers between one and three years of age were observed at a day-care centre. Some children had been identified as having been abused, while others had not been abused as infants. Children who had not been abused showed numerous prosocial behaviours such as concern, sadness, and empathy, when in the presence of a distressed child. However, not one child who had been abused showed any of these responses when in the presence of distressed children. In fact, the abused children responded to another child's distress with fear, anger, or aggression, responses that were almost completely absent among the non-abused group. It seems clear that there is almost a symbiotic relationship between parent and child with respect to antisocial behaviour, as *ineffective parent discipline and child antisocial behaviour mutually maintain each other* (Vuchinich, Bank & Patterson 1992:518).

Just as harsh and abusive treatment can inhibit the development of prosocial behaviour, neglect or indifference on the part of parents can be just as harmful. Such *uninvolved* parents are those not committed to being a parent, and they appear to be quite neglectful; indifferent to the child's need for affection, structure, and limits. Children of uninvolved parents show greater impulsivity, earlier sexual behaviour, greater use of drugs, and lower self-esteem (Fulgini & Eccles 1993; Kurdek & Fine 1994; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Downbusch 1991). In

addition, uninvolved parents tend to produce children who *are aggressive and show disagreeable behaviour* (Gormly 1997:225).

Moving from primary to secondary socialisation, it is tempting to consider how closely the findings about the effects of uninvolved parents on children might apply to the effects of uninvolved teachers upon their pupils, or the effects of the unavailability of schools to children. This is particularly relevant given the situation in many parts of the world where untrained, unprepared adults are hired as teachers on a temporary or permanent basis, usually to fill a vacancy that is difficult to fill and/or is poorly paid, and where in some third-world nations, a child's wishes to attend school is strong but the possibility of doing so remains dim.

2.2.2 Secondary socialisation: The role of the school

Historically, schools have emphasised academic instruction, yet they have also been key agents of socialisation, complementing the role of parents and community. The importance of the role of school in socialisation is universal; it is exemplified by the action of governments in establishing public schools, and, in many nations, by mandating attendance by children. In Great Britain and the United States, compulsory education took root in the nineteenth century, and since that era other nations, including third-world nations, have sought to improve their societies through compulsory education. (In effect, compulsory education has always existed through the educative actions of parents and community members teaching children language, life skills, and prosocial behaviour.) Compulsory education has more recently come to Asian and African countries. Recently, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo instituted *Universal Basic Education (UBE)*, a compulsory and free education programme for all Nigerian children from age six through fifteen, because the nation's present system of education slipped rapidly during the 1990's decade (Reuters World News 1999).

Even in nations with a relatively longer tradition of compulsory education, there has existed a strong connection between a child's readiness for school, and the preliminary education (socialisation) done by the parents and community prior to the child's attendance. In describing the many major forces that have shaped schools, Badenhorst (1998:58) points out that, until recently, schools could assume (and did assume) that all children who entered school were well-prepared and ready for the socialisation to be undertaken by the school. In most nations of the world, upper-class and middle-class children had (and still have) an advantage of support from the home and community that working-class and poor children lacked. As a result, these latter children either dropped out of school, or simply did not acquire the benefits from their schooling. This is still the case today, where, for example, poorer states in the United States, especially those with a high percentage of Black students like South Carolina and Georgia, are the states that have a much lower high school graduation rate than wealthier states. In southern states like Louisiana and Georgia, only about half of all students ever complete high school, whereas in wealthier, mostly White states almost nine out of ten students graduate high school. American schools governing bodies have responded to this disparity by encouraging high school completion, and reducing high school drop-outs. (All US students are officially encouraged to stay in school until graduation, yet unofficially, schools are often only too ready to suspend and expel students.) Despite the problems involved in expecting high school completion for all, from the viewpoint of socialisation, the socialising value of schools can only be realised if students are in attendance at school.

The actual staffing of schools is also vital toward the goal of socialisation. Guidance services, for example, provide an important contribution to the emotional and social well-being of students. In South Africa, guidance provided to students was instituted relatively recently. The National Education Policy Act of 1967 marked the commencement of guidance services to South African students. However, this service was delivered in an inequitable manner across different educational departments created during apartheid, namely, the House of Representatives for

Coloured affairs; the House of Assembly for *White* affairs; the House of Delegates for *Asian* affairs, and the Department of Education and Training for *Black* affairs (Berard, Pringle & Ahmed 1997). Furthermore, guidance services were not included at all in the Black education system until 1981. Today, this situation has not improved greatly. Two reports have detailed a lack of effective facilities and training for South African guidance personnel. These reports were issued by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1981 and the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) in 1992. Both reports pointed out that, in addition to poor training for school guidance personnel, there were limitations on the time guidance teachers have to spend with individuals and groups, and shortages of specialised personnel and materials (Human Services Research Council 1981; National Education Policy Investigation 1992). In an examination of high-school counselling resources available on the Cape Peninsula, investigators in 1997 concluded that little change was noted despite the two reports (Berard *et al.* 1997). The guidance teacher-to-pupil ratio was 1:897, and even given this poor ratio, full-time guidance teachers spent almost half their time in administrative tasks and formal teaching. On the positive side, however, by 1997, five Montessori schools for young children were opened in South Africa. These schools fostered the development of local teacher training programmes, with the express goal of expanding both the availability of Montessori education and teacher training (Gerhardstein 1997).

While the South African schools' guidance situation is more equitable today, the gap between White and Black schools *continue to be hindered by fiscal inequalities and political violence* (Constas 1997:682). Some have referred to this state of affairs as a *national disaster* (Novicki 1991:18), pointing out that there exists a severe shortage of classroom space for Black students, as the population of Black school-age children has been increasing at rates higher than the White population. By 1991, spending on schools serving Black children had increased, but by 1996, money allocated for Black students was 147 per cent below the amount spent on White students. Further inhibiting the socialisation value of schools has been the fact that the student dropout rate is so high for Black students. Landman (1992)

claims that in South Africa one out of every six Black children leave school during their first year of schooling, and do not ever return, while 40 percent of all Black students leave after completing only three years of school. With this situation, schools cannot effectively carry out socialisation, particularly for its Black children and adolescents. (For more information on the nature and effects of apartheid on South African education, see the annual South African Institute of Race Relations *Race relations surveys*, more recently titled *South African survey*, published since 1935 by the Institute in Johannesburg.) A parallel situation exists in the United States. While the disparity in funding between predominantly Black and predominantly White United States schools is not as dramatic as in South Africa, the well-publicised efforts of the US government to integrate its public schools beginning with the 1954 *Brown versus Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling and continuing through the 1970's have not been very successful, on the whole (Zigler & Seitz 1982). Indeed, this racial, ethnic, and class disparity affects many other schools and many other nations. Kielburger (1998:309), founder of the *Free the Children* organisation, has travelled through many third-world nations in Asia and Africa, noting that almost 25 of all the world's children never attend school at all, with girls comprising almost two-thirds of that number. This state of affairs is most pronounced in third-world nations.

Both nations have been severely challenged by violence, both in schools and in the communities. In the United States, it appears that most school violence is the result of interpersonal conflicts, that lead to a desire for revenge. Researchers Kauffman and Burback (1997:321) claim that today the triggers to violence are far more sensitive, involving a quickness to bristle, an anticipation of offence. It's a tendency to have hurt feelings with no evidence of malicious intent on the part of someone else, a quickness to anger. In South Africa, the major factors generating violence in schools and in the communities is gang activity (Bamford 2001), while other authors mention peer pressure, dysfunctional families, drugs, stress and self defence (Welsh, Thompson & Jacobs 2001). In both nations, there are similar, overarching factors that promote interpersonal violence, whether initiated through gang activity

or individual initiative. These include the availability of guns and firearms. The United States has the highest rate of murder of children, and the highest rate of homicide by firearms, which is 16 times higher than the average of other, industrialised countries (Reuters 1997). From 1979 to 1999, the number of US children who have died from gunfire (60,008) exceeds the number of US soldiers who lost their lives in the Gulf and Vietnam wars, as well as the US military excursions into Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia, combined (Children's Defence Fund, 1997). In South Africa, there are over 3.5 million firearms registered to private individuals, and up to another million unregistered firearms. These firearms are being used in ways that create dangers to students and teachers, and have redefined the relationship between students and teachers in violent communities. According to Siphwe Masuku (1998), the Safe Schools Co-ordinator for the CSVR 40 Schools Project:

When we talk about safety the first question that comes from the students and the teacher who are daily faced with the dangers of being robbed, mugged, raped or shot, is safety from what or from whom? Whilst in the past most teachers would feel unsafe from strangers or outsiders in their schools, today they sometimes feel unsafe from the very students they are teaching. When I asked a number of students why they carry weapons in schools, they said that they want to defend themselves against the teachers, and the teachers likewise.

2.2.2.1 Four views on the socialising role of school

What makes this recent and increased infiltration of violence into schools most disastrous is that in addition to the loss of human lives, is the loss of the protective value of schools. Schools are potentially and actually very *valuable*, both to the child and his or her family, and to society at large. Schools are valuable not only because children tend to be physically safe in schools, but also because schools play

an essential role in the positive socialisation of children. In the world-wide culture of violence, the role of schools takes on dramatically important implications, both for the prevention of violence and for the perpetuation of norms of civil society.

There are several different theoretical perspectives or views on the role of the school in the socialisation of children and adolescents. Badenhorst (1998:59-88) describes four views: *functionalist*, *conflict*, *interpretivist*, and *complexity*. Functionalist theory holds that each person and group plays a part in the system viewed as a whole, and each part is viewed in terms of its function, or purpose with respect to the entire system. Socialisation in that view seeks to have students *adapt to the economic, political and social institutions of their society* (Badenhorst 1998:59). Much of American schooling has emphasised functionalist theory, ranging from the most recent testing and standards movement, back to the pragmatic, essentialistic origins of its educational system that placed emphasis on pragmatic rather than social or idealistic concerns. South African governments (indeed, most nations' governments) followed functionalist ideas with respect to policy. The education system reflected clear objectives of the government, which mandated that the various South African ethnic groups develop separately, as exemplified by limits placed on secondary education in non-White areas, and legislation such as the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which had many negative consequences (Dube 1985). While the United States officially banned racist schools in 1954 with the *Brown versus Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, the negative consequences of segregated schools have continued (as have segregated schools themselves) into the twenty-first century. The functionalist emphasis in the United States' educational system is also exemplified by its legal position, formally in support of medication and criminal justice measures applied to students.

Conflict theory assumes that a tension exists within society, brought about by competing interests of individuals and groups. The theory describes, on one hand, the *haves*: Those who hold power in a society, through wealth, material goods, and the possession of privilege and influence. On the other side are the *have-nots*, who

are constantly seeking a larger share of society's wealth, which is opposed by the group in power. Research in conflict theory indicates that this tension results from conflict that is inherent in, for example, capitalist societies. For instance, access to wealth is highly controlled and limited, with schools (controlled by the wealthy) playing a key role in this exclusionary process. Throughout the world, in every society, the children of the rich attend better schools than the children of the poor. The practice of segregation, in the United States, in South Africa, and in many other nations, has served – and continues to serve – to ensure that this separation continues. Marxist interpretations of conflict theory might point out that United States' public schools are even more racially segregated today than they were during the 1950's and 1960's; years of school integration legislation and civil rights initiatives. Conflict theory holds that segregation in American and South African schools is technically illegal, yet it continues to exist. Present-day segregation is protected not by law, as was the case in the US and South Africa (*de jure* segregation), but is perpetuated by patterns of migration and mobility. This new segregation comes about as a result of the exercise of choices available to persons with the financial resources to live in desirable, relatively crime-free and racially homogeneous areas (*de facto* segregation). These circumstances result in the forming of mostly-White suburban communities, with well-funded schools that attract the most qualified teachers. The poor, largely Black underclass remain in the inner cities and older, less-desirable suburbs, with a resulting increase in school crimes and neighbourhood and school violence in their communities.

The third view on how schools socialise children is called the *interpretivist* perspective. This emphasises a scientific approach, involving observation of social behaviour that imitates the observation of natural, physical events by scientists. The ability to interpret one's surroundings is a central task of this approach. It is understood that what is taken as normal in one cultural context may be taken differently in another cultural context. Thus, the main task of this perspective is not to come up with universal principles that govern interpretation, but to *uncover the specific framework that defines the rules and meanings of cultural life for a specific*

social group (Badenhorst 1998:74). This approach would look into the causes (and solutions) to violence and antisocial behaviour as to what each meant within the context of the culture within which it is occurring.

Finally, the *complexity* view sees a world where *relationship* is the essential factor in determining what is observed, and how events manifest themselves. Schools are conceptualised as being fluid, organic institutions, instead of discrete, mechanistic structures as they are seen in the functionalist view. In the complexity view, the more one attempts to define what one means by *schools*, the more difficult and particularistic such definitions appear to be. In applying this theory to schools, it becomes evident how the status quo is not accepted, but questioned. For although the socialisation objectives of the complexity view are similar to those of the functionalist view, the *means* to achieve those objectives differ. In the complexity view, there is no prescribed, mechanical way to improve the whole by attending to separate, unrelated parts.

The complexity view recognises that chaos exists in all schools. The traditional, functionalist response to chaos is to seek order through control, and that by *fixing the right parts we will fix the whole*. Accordingly, functionalist solutions to problems such as violence and antisocial behaviour are seen as a need to increase control in schools, typically through the imposition of harsher and harsher penalties, and through greater restriction of individual freedom. For instance, when students exhibit violent behaviour, it is by functionalist definition, *unlawful* and *illegal*, criminal behaviour. Thus, the solution arrives along with the definition of the problem. Having defined the problem as *unlawful*, the functionalist solution to criminal behaviour is clear: *lawfulness*, consisting of detection, arrest, trial, and incarceration. Thus, to reduce crime in School A, one must detect, and then arrest the person. This is done by instituting or increasing the presence of police and security guards, metal detectors, and strip searches of students, all of which are thought to be deterrents to crime.

However, if the issue of school violence and antisocial behaviour were to be reframed, and seen in the broader context of numerous systems occurring at once, one may be open to a richer, more holistic, and more accurate perception of the most suitable ways to prevent antisocial and violent behaviour. Certainly, it is difficult to transcend functionalist perception, since educational institutions in western nations have a tradition derived from *scientific realism* and *logical positivism*, that hold that truth is verifiable, and the whole is the sum of its parts. By extension, if there something is perceived to be wrong or amiss, positivism directs attention to the particular part; in this case, antisocial or violent behaviour. The danger with this narrow, functionalist interpretation is that one is *missing the forest for the trees*; of not seeing the broader social context within which students exist. Hence, in order to begin to understand the socialisation provided by the school (including the teaching of prosocial behaviour), one must first see the school as a richly complex environment, and examine what teacher and students do within that environment. A recent letter-writer to *The New York Times* (King 2000:19) expressed her wish for a broader *complexity* view of what she felt needed to be done for children, especially those faced with poor home and parenting in the United States:

This country places so little value on teachers and social workers that they are the poorest paid professionals of all. Let's put families at the centre of our social order and place high value on those who work with families and children. Instead of putting children in the most run-down, dilapidated buildings in our communities, let's build schools that we can be proud of in every neighbourhood. Let's not leave it up to the poor people who live in poor neighbourhoods – and then blame them for not taking better care of their children! It takes caring and money.

2.2.3 The socialising role of the community

Just as the school is this complex environment, so too is the neighbourhood or community. *Community* is defined as consisting of a group of people who live within specific geographic boundaries at a certain point in time and who have cultural commonalities, collective activities and interests, and an identity of their own (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:38). A neighbourhood may be a community as it is a geographic entity, while a community could also refer to a cultural group within a town or city. The role of communities has changed since earlier days when they implied strong ties of kinship and family. Communities have generally become depersonalised, through forces such as increasing bureaucratisation of levels of government, and increasing centralisation of power and authority. In the United States, many are surprised to learn that their local public school's locally-elected school board is in reality under the full authority and control of a higher, centralised state board of education, seated in the state capital. In this sense, *local or community control of American schools is a myth*. The state of Hawaii unmask the myth, so to speak, for there is only one *neighbourhood* school district in Hawaii, and that *neighbourhood* is comprised of the entire state of Hawaii.

Although the role of the community has evolved, and has become more complex, the neighbourhood community still has a socialising effect. An ongoing study by the Harvard School of Public Health is examining the causes of violence, crime, and antisocial behaviour in Chicago, third largest city in the United States. So far, the study (which is scheduled to continue until 2003) has surveyed 343 Chicago neighbourhoods, and almost 9,000 residents have been interviewed. The researchers identified many neighbourhoods in inner-city Chicago that were predominantly Black and impoverished, yet they soon discovered that some of these neighbourhoods had significantly lower levels of crime and violent behaviour than other neighbourhoods with exactly the same racial balance, and the same poverty levels.

Some explanations for the early findings of the study are quite interesting: It found *lower rates of violence and antisocial behaviour in urban neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community and values* (Butterfield 1997:27). Doctor Fenton Earls, the director of the study, identified the presence of *informal social control* where residents themselves act to achieve public order, rather than relying on external control (police crackdowns, for example). Informal social control was also an example of what the authors called *collective efficacy*, defined as the *willingness (of residents) to intervene and control group level processes and visible signs of social disorder, providing a key mechanism influencing opportunities for interpersonal crime in a neighbourhood* (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls 1997:918). This collective efficacy on the behalf of residents enabled them to reduce truancy, discourage the painting of graffiti and many other antisocial acts. This finding is significant because it identifies factors other than those traditionally connected with resultant violence and antisocial behaviour (e.g., poverty, racial discrimination, unemployment, etc), and points to the importance of informal, internal neighbourhood controls instead of external, imposed sanctions. Collective efficacy is not vigilantism, which resorts to the use of force to achieve its ends. Collective efficacy is prosocial.

Sociology professor Robert Sampson explained this finding in more detail. He said the prosocial phenomenon of collective efficacy does not necessarily arise from personal or familial ties, but comes about in the presence of a *shared vision ... a fusion of a shared willingness of residents to intervene and social trust, a sense of engagement and ownership of public space* (Butterfield 1997:27). Certainly, unemployment and poverty make it difficult to achieve and maintain community cohesion to the point where adults will intervene in the lives of children, but the finding points to some new and promising directions toward a more holistic understanding of possible solutions for violent and antisocial behaviour in children.

2.2.3.1 *Communities and communication*

Looking at the Chicago study through the lens of socio-education, its findings should cause little surprise. When one speaks of social interventions, what is being referred to is *communication*, the central concept of socio-education. The informal control exerted by the community was successful because it was *effective communication*. Prinsloo and Du Plessis (1998:9) described communication as *the interactive process through which thoughts, opinions, feelings or information are transferred from one person to another with the intention to inform, to influence or to elicit a reaction*. Interventions that bring about socialisation in the community are forms of communication, but they are also, in effect, means of teaching. The community in this sense is a school in macrocosm. Equally, schools and classrooms within schools are communities in microcosm. Similar to the urban Chicago neighbourhoods that showed cohesion, classrooms within schools help create that social glue of cohesion on a person-to-person level. Teacher interventions within those classrooms may be either verbal or non-verbal, involving words, gestures, physical contact, or other combinations of words and action. In any form, interventions are most effective in building social glue when they are made before-the-fact of misbehaviour. That is, teacher interventions are most effective when they serve to *prevent* misbehaviour, and when they serve to *support* and *reinforce* ongoing, prosocial behaviour (DiGiulio 2000:61-62). Conversely, teachers and schools (and communities) do not work efficiently as corrective, punitive enterprises. Accordingly, the community – whether it be defined as a neighbourhood or a cultural group or both – has its greatest value in socialisation by providing a secure context for *communication*. Such a context serves well its individual members and family groups.

2.2.3.2 *Communities' role in fulfilment of human needs*

In addition to communication, the social context of the school works toward the fulfilment of human needs, which are essential elements in the child's development. In Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, the fulfilment of higher level growth needs

(such as the quest for knowledge, beauty and self-growth), require that lower level deficit needs must first be met (Maslow 1970). In order from lowest to highest, these needs include survival/physiological needs, safety needs, belonging/love needs, and a need for self-esteem. The most basic need for survival includes the need to be fed and sheltered. While this most basic need is generally well-met in most school situations in first world western nations, where in-school lunch and breakfast programs exist for children whose family income is low, this is not the case in many third-world school and community situations. It is an increasing problem in nations like South Africa, where Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:316) pointed out that *the percentage of children in South Africa whose basic needs are not met is growing by the day.*

Yet even in communities where a child's most-basic survival needs are being met, the next-most-basic need, for personal safety, is increasingly being identified as an unmet need in children and adolescents throughout the world. It is easy to see how safety needs are compromised by school violence and antisocial behaviour. The importance of safety and security have also been emphasised by Rapoport, Rapoport & Strelitz (1977:11), citing Talbot's (1976:171) premises, including *being needed and wanted and being attended to, cared for, and protected.* Schools' failure to provide for these needs has detrimental effects on the fulfilment of students' other basic needs, namely, belonging/love needs and self-esteem needs. In turn, this will diminish the likelihood that students' higher level needs (for self-actualisation) can be realised.

2.3 SUMMARY

Certainly, the role of primary socialisation that is carried out in the home sets the basis for prosocial and antisocial behaviour. The value of schools and the community in the process of socialisation, for long a significant presence, has lately been diminished due to centralisation and bureaucratisation, among other reasons. Indeed, schools represent what may be a society's best venue and most efficient

vehicle toward amendment of miseducative efforts of the home. And within those schools-as-communities in microcosm, the role of teachers and the interventions made by teachers can serve to confront the problem of student antisocial behaviour head-on, and foster prosocial behaviour. The ongoing results of the Chicago study, in particular, the phenomenon of *collective efficacy* is encouraging, and have dramatic policy and practical implications for schools and for those who occupy those schools. Research has shown (Astor, Meyer & Behre 1999) that the best deterrent to school violence was the presence of a teacher, particularly when that teacher made *supportive interventions* (emphasis is mine), interventions that students characterised as *caring*. Students' need for safety was well-met by teachers who made caring interventions. These forms of teacher communication (caring interventions), along with an administrative policy that was similarly caring (gave support to teachers' interventions), were identified as the *most significant contextual factors in preventing antisocial behaviour in high school*. The importance of teacher-student, and student-teacher communication is well-summed up by Prinsloo and Du Plessis (1998:9-10):

Without interpersonal communication education cannot take place. It is only through communication with their fellow man that children can achieve self-actualisation, realise their social-communicative possibilities and form a self-concept.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM AREAS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY WHICH INFLUENCE THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the past, the relationship between the individual and institutions of socialisation was less complex than today: Children were educated primarily by the mother and family in the home, and as they grew became educated as well by persons associated with local institutions such as school and church. Kidder (2000) refers to this state of affairs as a "three-legged stool ... the typical community had an ethics delivery system that rested on the three legs of home, church, and school". Historically, the home and family, and then peers, school, and work described the educative society of the child in the past. Today, however, the influence of home and church have to a degree decreased; the school remains largely alone in carrying out (or attempting to carry out) much of the educative functions that in the past were shared with parents, home, and church. Kidder describes this quite colourfully: "Modern society, it appears, has kicked away the first two legs", leaving school as the figurative last leg of a one-legged stool. In modern society, schools now serve as the major institution *devised by the adult generation for maintaining and perpetuating the culture*, providing the necessary tools for survival by transmitting values and knowledge (Ornstein & Levine 2000:277).

3.2 LEGACIES OF APARTHEID AND SEGREGATION

In all societies, and especially in industrialized societies, schools have represented the means for upward mobility; that is, for those without inherited wealth or position, schools (because of the careers they open up) have been the main and only pathways poor people had in order to achieve a better life. Historically, this opportunity to achieve a career through education has been blunted for persons living in poverty and/or those of low socio-economic status throughout the world. This situation continues to exist today, and especially acute with regard to Black African and Black African-American youth. African-American and South African authors Janine Bempechat and Salie Abrahams (1999) draw a connection between Black South Africans and African-Americans with regard to their achievement experiences. Other authors have agreed that, due to racism and prejudice, both groups have developed *an approach to education* that differs from mainstream culture (Ogbu 1994a). African-American students, for example, are hindered in school achievement, for they are perceived to be members of a *lower caste* who experience *inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance* toward success in school. They have a burden to *act White* if they are to be seen as being successful by mainstream society (Fordham & Ogbu 1986). As a result, African-Americans have developed an *oppositional frame of reference*. Young African-Americans may discourage each other from doing well in school, to avoid the stigma of being viewed as being *White*, or allowing oneself to be seen as being co-opted or subjugated by the majority White school authorities and culture.

Although they comprise a majority in South Africa, Black South Africans have been largely denied the advantages of better schools, due to a history of a policy of apartheid (state supported racial segregation). Ogbu (1994b) points out that while there are great similarities between the experiences and social contexts of African-Americans and Black South Africans, there are also enormous differences between the two contexts. In America, Blacks are a minority culture, but are *officially equal*, with institutional barriers to achievement more subtle than those that existed in the

recent past in South Africa. In South Africa during the 1980's, schools were central in the movement against apartheid. While South African schools *had been used as instruments of dispossession by the state* (Bempechat & Abrahams 1999:842), schools were *repossessed* by students, which provided a degree of political and psychology empowerment. It is possible that South African students involved in the recent struggle, because of their participation, developed *adaptive beliefs about their personal efficacy*. Unlike the civil-rights era experiences of African-Americans, where court decisions disrupted stable Black communities, Black churches, and Black schools in an effort to provide a quick legal remedy to segregated American schools, Black South Africans may have been fortified by their recent active participation in turning away apartheid, and may see themselves are more central to the ongoing process of change, as difficult as it may be. However, there is a broader challenge facing not only African-Americans and Black South Africans, but all children throughout the world.

Today, all contemporary children live in societies that are quite different from the societies of their parents and grandparents. Even for those whose societies were not marked by racism, all children live today with social phenomena that either did not exist, or were far less salient, fifty years ago. These phenomena that have changed include the population explosion, and resulting increase in socially disadvantaged children; environmental degradation; child abuse; moral and sexual licentiousness; juvenile delinquency; alcohol and drug abuse; and suicide of children and adolescents (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:xi). These phenomena are not only problem areas in themselves, but they also generate stress in other areas of modern life.

3.3 THREE LEVELS OF STRESS

In daily life today, and throughout most world cultures, stress is experienced at different levels. Kruger (1993:14) has described a stressor model that identifies the effects of stress at three conceptual levels. At the macro level, stress comes from

violence in the outside world and threat of violence within the culture. Stress also comes from the presence of poverty, and from economic, political, and social conditions that perpetuate inequity. Stress at the meso level includes stress brought on by experiencing antisocial behaviour and violence in schools, and include stresses that result, for instance, from peer group pressure. At the micro level, the cumulative effects of stress from the macro and meso levels are personally experienced. This type of stress results in physical and emotional illness. Stress at the micro level results in interpersonal conflict, antisocial behaviour, and at times violent behaviour, on the part of the individual. When this antisocial behaviour is turned against others in society, a *vicious circle* of violence-breeding-violence is formed. When this affects many people in a society, it becomes both a *meso* and a *macro* level phenomenon; institutionalised violence, producing a *culture of violent behaviour*.

3.4 STRESS AND THE MASS MEDIA

As mentioned above, children and adolescents have always experienced stress from their family relationships, their peer relationships, from school, and from the events in the natural, physical world. Of late the amount of stress in society has increased. Much of this recent increase is attributed to the mass media. (Mass media include the conveying of written and spoken words, largely through literature, radio, television, and most recently, home computers.) There is little question that mass media have become a much larger presence in the socialisation of the world's children, and are one of the phenomena that has become more significant in each person's lives. Some have called television and the media the *first curriculum*, because of the way it influences not only *what* humans know, but *how* humans know as well. It defines attitudes toward knowledge and learning, and influences socialisation (Stroman 1991; Taylor 1998). (The researcher observed that television in rural Russia seemed to consist largely of American soap operas and American shows featuring violence, aggressive police, and scheming lawyers. The Russian host family's young son asked if it was true that American men carried guns and

dressed up for cocktail parties each evening.) As a result of their rapid growth over the past fifty years, these media have become an increasing presence in the lives of children and adolescents. The positive ability of the mass media to inform and entertain is well-established. Yet some aspects of the mass media have been identified as being harmful, in that they transmit stress (from the macro level) into the lives of children and adolescents. For example, prior to the advent of television, children and adults were relatively unaware of environmental degradation, and threats posed by nuclear weapons. Before television, children and adolescents were not able to instantly receive violent, antisocial information, ideas, pictures, and words on demand, instantly, in great detail, and delivered directly to home or school.

Much research has been done over the past fifty years into the effect of television upon children, with respect to children's imitation of antisocial and violent behaviour they have viewed on television. Even as early as 1950, when television was in its infancy, there was concern by American parents and teachers about the effects of television violence on young children (Witty 1950). Over the years, violent and aggressive behaviour by children has been increasingly attributed to television viewing (National Institute of Mental Health 1982; Zuckerman & Zuckerman 1985). In a review of the body of thirty years' worth of research on how children and adolescents are affected by viewing video and televised violence, Murray (1995:10) identified three main ways. First is the *direct effects process*, whereby children and adolescents who watch a great deal of violence tend to become more aggressive themselves, and/or develop attitudes that favour or permit aggressive behaviour as a way to settle conflicts. The second effect is *desensitisation*, where children who watch much televised violence become less sensitive to violence in their daily lives, less empathetic to others, and more likely to tolerate greater levels of violence in society. Desensitised to violence, some would be less likely to intervene when others are victims of antisocial, destructive and/or violent behaviour. The third effect is what Murray called the *Mean World Syndrome*: Children who view much televised violence come to see the world as a dangerous, mean place, becoming more fearful

in general. Certainly, the content of television has become increasingly violent, and many programs viewed by children portray violence in ways that promote imitation by children (National Television Violence Study 1996-1998). Nevertheless, this simple focus on television as a variable may present an incomplete picture, especially when one attempts to see violent behaviour in a larger, global perspective.

MP In South Africa, Martin Botha (1995) conducted a major longitudinal study into the effects of television violence and aggression upon South African children. Subjects consisted of 348 children in grades 2 and 3. The author's researchers collected data from each child, the child's peers, parents, and school personnel through structured interviews. They looked at the influence of television, but they also considered the effects of several other variables thought to influence violent and antisocial behaviour, such as poverty, educational quality, poor housing and essential facilities, as well as political issues, and the replacement of the extended family in urban Black communities. Botha found that television did not play a significant role in the lives of the children and their parents; furthermore, the researchers identified violent behaviour *in the community* to have played a *far more significant role* in producing violent behaviour than television. They found that violent behaviour by children was strongly influenced by parental aggression, and parents' child rearing practices. There was a clear relationship between the number of actual (not televised) violent incidents the child had observed, and victimisation of the child by the parent. It is probably safe to generalise that children learn violent and aggressive behaviour from others, particularly parents, peers, and teachers, and they learn it even more completely than they learn it from the media. Attitudes toward violence are deeply influenced by personally-experienced violence. Unfortunately, when violence is personally-experienced, victims of violence tend to tolerate it, feel helpless to do anything about it, or even wind up approving of its use. This was borne out in a recent study conducted at the University of Durban involved one thousand South African student teachers. They perceived schools to be violent places, *characterised by political, state-linked, or gender violence*

(Suransky-Dekker 1997:1). To the surprise of the researcher, many of these student teachers approved of corporal punishment; one typical comment was "I was punished and look . . . I made it to University!" (Suransky-Dekker 1997:2). Given the amount of violence children experience first-hand in South Africa, the United States, and all other nations of the world, violence depicted on television may be a scapegoat for youth violent and aggressive behaviour that has been quite strongly learned directly from parents, peers, and school.

3.5 SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL FACTORS THAT LEAD TO ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Martin Botha's (1995) longitudinal television study serves as a fine starting point for discussion of the socio-educational problem areas in contemporary society which influence children. Broadly, these problem areas include poverty, child abuse and neglect, inadequate health and welfare, and family disintegration (Squelch 1998). In terms of their effect on the behaviour of young people, these problem areas contain specific socio-educative factors that lead to the development of inappropriate social behaviour identified by society as *juvenile delinquency*. Botha (1977:121-126) has identified four socio-educational factors that foster juvenile delinquency: *disturbed involvement* (family disharmony) and *disturbed role identification* (child-parent identification), *disturbed social-societal relationships* (peer group associations), and *disturbed entry into the social environment* (school factors). A brief description of each factor will help to show its influence on the social behaviour of children.

3.5.1 Disturbed involvement

It is said that *the family is the child's first school*, and with regard to the family's educative role, that is certainly true. "Although its organisation varies, the family is the major early socialising agent in every society. As such, it is the first medium for transmitting culture to children" (Ornstein & Levine 2000:278). At the core of this is the mother-infant bond. In all infants, the basic sense of trust-versus-mistrust is

established soon after birth, hinging on the question of whether or not the infant will be loved, cared for, and protected from harm. In all world cultures, parental rejection has a harmful, *malignant* effect on child development (Rohner 1975:166) resulting in hostility and aggressive child behaviour. A child can also be harmed even before birth. The health care a mother-to-be receives (or fails to receive) can affect the developing child *in utero*. Or the mother-to-be can be a victim of violence during her pregnancy. Once born, the new-born infant may be at serious risk of violence as well. The *shaken baby syndrome* has been identified where serious brain damage, blindness, and death result from an adult's shaking an infant. Throughout the world, violent homes often produce violent children. In highly aggressive adolescent boys, for example, patterns of violent behaviour show up relatively early in life. In fact, one of the strongest predictors of whether or not a boy will be imprisoned by the time he is a young adult is whether or not he shows serious antisocial or violent behaviour at an early age; around four or five years of age (Buka & Earls 1993; Zahn-Waxler 1987). The family is also a formidable shaper of children's self-concept, and for girls, the family may be an especially strong factor in the development of self concept. Two researchers looked at factors affecting the self-concepts of South African students at three South African high schools in the province of the Eastern Cape (Marjoribanks & Mboya 1998). They found that manifest variables for self-concept were based in family social status, most essentially, the number of parents in the family, and the quality of family housing. For girls in the study, self-concept was defined not only by their interest and involvement in school, but also by their interactions with their families. The authors concluded that family macrosocial structure, proximate family settings, and each student's personal responsibilities had moderate-to-strong associations with the adolescents' self-concepts.

The role of the family in socialisation is augmented by positive and supportive early efforts from outside the family. These can be extended to help the family toward developing the young child's potential to be a positive force in society. Atmore (1993,1994) has described South Africa's Early Childhood Education and Care

(EDUCARE) programs. Atmore tells how the community works with parents, and how the communities, by acting as a united force, assume both the right and the responsibility for participating in the political, educational, cultural, and collective matters that concern them. In the United States, Project Head Start serves a function similar to South Africa's EDUCARE. Research into the effects of early childhood education through Project Head Start has shown that social skills learned early in childhood are quite durable. Even for those Head Start children whose academic gains eventually faded, social and prosocial skills they acquired through Head Start stayed with them through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood (Whitmire 1994:10). In addition to availing themselves and their children of formal programs like Educare and Head Start, there is much that parents, teachers, and caregivers can do personally to prevent violent behaviour: (1) *give children consistent love and attention*; (2) *ensure that children are supervised and guided*; (3) *model appropriate behaviours*; (4) *do not hit children*; and (5) *be consistent with rules and discipline* (Massey 1998:3).

3.5.2 Disturbed role identification

*Children identify closely with their parents; they identify with the same sex parent, and with the opposite sex parent, in different ways. Educational neglect or outright abuse will damage this identification, while a positive role identity and a constructive relationship between parent and child--and between the child's two parents as well--will promote a healthy role identity in the child.

This appears to be a particular problem with respect to boys and antisocial behaviour. Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:163) describe *toughening*, where the boy is expected to act like a mature man, not allowed to express feelings. Harvard University researcher William Pollack describes how boys are *in a silent crisis*, forced to individuate and separate from their parents, particular their mothers (Kantrowitz & Kalb 2000:161), masking their feelings in order to appear tough and masculine. Both boys and girls need positive human role models, but boys also need positive

male role models, particularly because they tend to be more impulsive than girls, and they are less capable, in general, of forming close personal relationships by instinct (Gurian 2000:18). Looking at thirty different cultures around the world, Gurian (2000:19) said that traditional ways that boys have identified positively with older males is disappearing, especially during adolescence when *such guidance is most critical*, leaving young men *morally neglected*, surrounded with violent and sexual messages in media and music.

While schools have not given up on attempting to provide socialisation for boys, there are worrisome indications that schools may be accommodating (if not accepting) this shift toward regarding violence as a normal state of affairs. In a study of 452 African-American and European-American boys in North Carolina, researchers found that the most highly aggressive boys (tough boys) were also among the most popular and socially connected of children in their schools (Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl & Van Acker 2000). Boys who were gentle, or boys who strove for academic success, or boys who were overly sensitive to the needs of others were often referred to as being effeminate or gay. In boys, bullying is connected with poor role identification, thus it is not surprising that bullies project their fears of not being masculine upon other boys by being overly-aggressive and violent. Researcher Dan Olweus (1995) has investigated bullying among school children in Scandinavia, as well as in schools in Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada and the United States. He found that male bullies were usually reared by parents who were indifferent, lacked warmth and involvement, were permissive for aggressive behaviour, and used power-assertive disciplinary techniques, such as physical punishment. Olweus also found that 35 to 40% of boys identified as being bullies in grades 6 through 9 had been convicted of at least three crimes by the time they reached age 24, whereas this was true of only 10% of the boys who were not classified as being bullies. There is little question that bullying behaviour comes about through unhealthy role identification. The reverse is seen when boys have a healthy role identification, provided by a loving male adult figure from whom boys learn how to treat others in prosocial and caring ways. This is

especially crucial early in the boy's life. There is much wisdom in the old saying that *the best gift a father can give a son is to love and respect the boy's mother*. It is also a fine gift to society.

3.5.3 Disturbed social-societal relationships

Second in importance only to parents, the peer group is highly significant in its influence on child behaviour, and during adolescence, it exceeds the influence of parents on the individual. Peer culture is a major socialisation experience, with most students naming *their friends* as the *best thing* about their school (Goodlad 1984:76-77). Each adolescent needs to see himself or herself as being part of a peer group in order to help form his or her adult identity. In a reciprocal fashion, the peer group becomes relatively powerful in the life of the adolescent, because there is an ongoing risk of being ostracised; of being excluded from the group.

In its powerful and influential role, the peer group may provide a mostly-positive, prosocial orientation to the individual, or it may provide more-negative, antisocial direction. Van 't Westende (1998:277) identifies several ways in which a peer group may promote or cause juvenile delinquency: First, the peer group provides a channel to greater independence, and if the group is positive, then sound relationships will be cultivated. If, however, the influence is negative, then those misbehaviours will result, sanctioned by the peer group. The peer group is also a field of experience for social relations, where an adolescent can learn where she or he fits in. Information (accurate or inaccurate) is often obtained through the peer group.

In sum, the peer group provides a chance for the individual to play different roles, try on different identities, and if the group upholds deviant values and attitudes, the child may develop into an adult whose values and behaviour will clash with those in his or her future adult community. In addition to peer group relations, the individual engages in a social-societal relationship through his or her occupation

and means of employment. Indeed, unemployment and under-employment are among the most challenging of topics that face South Africa, the United States, Australia, and other industrialised nations, as well nations emerging from Communist government such as Russia and the former republics of the Soviet Union. Journalist David Orr recently interviewed leading experts on South Africa who were most concerned about the economic chasm between White and Black South Africans. It has been estimated that 84 per cent of South Africa's Black population earn less money than is needed to ensure adequate basic nutrition for themselves and their families. Orr stated that what is needed are *more schools, more housing, more extensive health care, and above all, more jobs* (Orr 1994:12), particularly for the Black population, many of whom are unemployed. In addition to the obvious economic need in this segment of South Africa's population, there is also a socialisation need that can be facilitated by a greater and more equitable number of Black South Africans in the work force, particularly in the upper civil service and in private business.

3.5.4 Disturbed entry into the social environment

Of the four socio-educational factors which foster delinquency, the child's entry into the social environment of the school holds perhaps the greatest promise for helping to mend, if not reverse, miseducative efforts by parents and family. Certainly, school cannot quickly nor completely reverse serious misbehaviour that has been strongly learned within the family. However, teachers and schools receive children at a young enough age to begin to chip away at antisocial behaviour presented by the child by instilling prosocial behaviour. For example, within each classroom a teacher can create a *small society*; a society in microcosm where positive behaviour is valued, discussed, modelled, encouraged, and clearly expected. In addition, school is a unique environment in that, unlike the home, school places each child in a setting with unrelated others; strangers with whom the child is expected to learn to work with and accept, if not befriend and love. No matter how salubrious an environment it may be, the home cannot provide this peculiar advantage; one that

serves as a microcosm of larger society, and a training ground for relating to a new and wider social group than blood relatives. This is an colossal task, with tremendous implications for world peace and co-operation, yet it is a task that appears to be growing more difficult to carry out in industrialised nations, emerging nations, and third-world nations.

Throughout the world, when children and adolescents who live in poverty and violent circumstances bring those circumstances to school, teachers and other educators are challenged to address the social problems that result. But an even more fundamental issue is the question of access to school by the poor. For many of the world's children, poverty prevents them from getting to school at all: It is estimated that almost 25% of all the world's children between the ages of six and eleven have never attended one day of school (Kielburger 1998:309). In parts of Africa and Asia, only about half of all children aged 6 through 11 years were enrolled in school in 1992, but this represented a dramatic increase from 1960 (UNESCO 1994:26-27). Walking hand-in-hand with poverty, child labour or servitude afflicts 250 million children throughout the world, providing a formidable barrier to school enrolment and attendance. "These children don't have a chance for education, to live a normal life, even a chance to play" (Kielburger 1998:168). Access to school, particularly for all poor children, is particularly imperative, because universally, schools are the safest of places for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents are safer in school than working in factories or fields, safer than wandering on the streets, and even safer than being in their own homes. Children and adolescents are immensely safer in school than as a passenger in a motor vehicle, or riding on a bicycle.

On the other hand, and although they are relatively safe places for children, in some cases schools can present an oppressive environment for children. In such cases, it can worsen the miseducative harm already experienced by the child, falling most heavily, again, on the child of poverty, irrespective of his or her citizenship, race or gender. "Unfortunately", Van 't Westende (1998:275) relates, "the school

and its teachers are often responsible for creating the very climate which may lead to delinquency". The way teachers interact with students *may be one of the most important factors affecting aggression and violence in the schools* (Van Acker, Grant & Henry 1996:317). Often, this poor interaction occurs in schools where teachers feel disempowered. South Africa Minister of Education Kader Asmal recently spoke of "low teacher morale as one of the biggest challenges we have to face"(Garson 2000), adding that violence and crime in schools throughout the world were contributing to stressful working conditions and low teacher morale. He called upon South Africa's teachers to help address the problems by showing a *new professionalism*, taking into account new and creative ways teachers can develop positive relationships with students, as well as improve the content of learning and the materials used.

3.6 SCHOOLS AS OPPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Corporal punishment is one of the more distinctive features of a school social environment that is oppressive. Some nations such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland outlaw all physical punishment of children, both in school and in the home. Corporal punishment in schools in Poland has been banned for more than two hundred years, and in nations like Italy it simply has never been part of the cultural traditions. Yet in most other nations, corporal punishment remains today a standard, cross-cultural response to antisocial behaviour. Even within cultural groups that traditionally treasure young children and provide them with much loving attention, corporal punishment exists as a way of insuring obedience. In former British colonies in the West Indies, for example, corporal punishment is common in African families, particularly those socially and economically disadvantaged (Arnold 1982). In a survey of the prevalence of corporal punishment in preparatory and secondary schools of Alexandria, Egypt, it was found that four out of every five boys (80%) had received physical punishment by teachers, while over 61% of female students had incurred physical punishment. In addition to antisocial behaviour, this sample of Egyptian students received corporal punishment for poor academic

achievement (Youssef, Attia & Kamel 1998). Other nations such as South Africa and the United States have a more ambivalent attitude toward corporal punishment. In these nations, corporal punishment continues to be practised despite a variety of prohibitions and limitations on its use. In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Organisation on Legal Problems in Education, J Prinsloo (1994) described the problem of corporal punishment, and how it was allowed to be inflicted on students, under South African common law. But less than three years after that presentation, on January 1, 1997 corporal punishment upon any learner was banned, whether administered by a parent or a teacher within schools in South Africa (Foster 1999). The 1993 Constitution of the RSA provides for certain fundamental rights for all South African citizens, yet a question remains, however, as to whether the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Section 11(2) of the Constitution) should apply to corporal punishment, in the face of parental opposition, and in some cases, parental support. In the United States, this issue like all others related to education, are delegated to the individual states. As such, corporal punishment is still legal in twenty states. The US Supreme Court has ruled that, in itself, corporal punishment is not unconstitutional, for it does not meet the definition of *cruel and unusual punishment* which is prohibited by the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution. United States courts have ruled that the ban on *cruel and unusual punishment* applies to the treatment of criminals, but not to the treatment of American schoolchildren. This authorisation of corporal punishment in US schools in states where it is legal has prompted some parents to remove their children from public schools and provide schooling at home.

Certainly, there are students who feel unsafe in school – due to an oppressive environment that includes administrative policies promoting corporal punishment, and/or due to student-to-student antisocial behaviours, allowed to exist in a *laissez-faire* environment, where adult leadership is weak or absent (as in Golding's novel, *Lord of the flies*). Oppressive environments may be either overly permissive or authoritarian environments; both have detrimental effects on students, who are less

able to focus on academics. Students in either type of oppressive environment may also be those students at highest risk for antisocial behaviour, either as an initiator, or as a victim, or as both victim and initiator, in turn. This idea takes on ominous implications when one examines the trend toward urbanisation, and the trend toward larger schools, which are identified as being unsafe places, showing a higher rate of crime than smaller schools. In the United States, serious crimes including rape, robbery, physical attacks or fights with a weapon – are three times more likely to occur in larger schools (enrolment over 1000 students) than in smaller schools. This is true even when the number of crimes is calculated on a per-student basis (US Department of Education 1998).

Recent information on crime and violence in South African society reveal that these issues have taken on crisis proportions. The NEDCOR Project on crime, violence and investment (*Business Against Crime* 1996:6) reported that in South Africa, crime showed a *relentless upward trend in the 1990s. Rape, serious assault, and vehicle theft have increased every year since 1990. Rape has increased 81% in this period, serious assault 38%, vehicle theft 43% and murder 26%.* The Project claimed that South Africa's murder rate was highest in the world, next to that of the Bahamas. In its most recent travel advisory, the United States Consular Service warned that "Crime in South Africa is perceived to be a significant threat to the country's overall stability and to the welfare of its citizens" (United States Department of State 1999:2-3), issuing cautions for Americans travelling to South Africa.

Looking at South African schools, children face violence from a number of sources, including violence from other students, and violence from teachers themselves (or teachers' ignoring violence experienced by children). Corporal punishment is still carried out in some South African schools, even though it was banned throughout the nation in 1997, and despite the fact that the ban was recently upheld by the Eastern Cape High Court (Foster 1999). But this ban has not been unchallenged, as members of Christian Education South Africa (CESA) are appealing the decision of the High Court, alleging it infringes on their religious beliefs and contradicts the

wishes of parents. "Basically, what we've said to our schools is that they need to establish what the parents believe on the issue", says Ian Vermooten, executive director of CESA. "In the meantime", Foster adds, "many of the 209 (CESA) member schools will continue to beat children."

Corporal punishment continues at rural schools in South Africa's Northern Province, which has prompted the South African Human Rights Commission to introduce a series of debates on the issue (Hammond 2000). Provincial SAHRC co-ordinator Ntshole Mabapa said that the debates would involve 14 township and rural schools. "The intention is to get the schools to come up with ideas to instil discipline instead of resorting to corporal punishment", which she claimed was not as prevalent in the schools of South Africa's towns and cities. The debates are organised in conjunction with the South African Council of Churches, which began training volunteers in early 2000 to help impart management skills to the most difficult schools in the province.

In addition to corporal punishment, children face threats to their safety in areas such as sexual abuse. In response to recent concerns about sexual abuse, South African Minister of Education Kader Asmal pledged to root out sexual violence in schools. Writing for the *Daily Mail & Guardian*, Charlene Smith (1999) reported that, in response to the Minister's pledge, the Gauteng Department of Education has just completed training district officials, social workers, child protection unit officers and Department of Health officials in ways to identify and address sexual abuse of children. Tinka Labuschagne, educational specialist with the Department of Education, said that the next stage will include training for school principals and teachers in identifying and dealing with sexual abuse of children. Without question, children who are at risk of being beaten in school, or those who are forced to remain quiet in the face of abuse, are not children who feel safe, or who are enjoying the benefits of school.

These instances of corporal punishment in South Africa and the United States are at odds with what the researcher observed in Finland and Russia. In teaching visits

to those nations in 1996 and 1998, the researcher saw or heard of no instance of corporal punishment inflicted upon children in school. Russian and Finnish teachers interviewed seemed genuinely mystified by the idea that children should be beaten – and in some schools, were beaten – by their school teachers. Several Finnish teachers answered questions about corporal punishment with the question, “Why would any teacher want to do that to a student?”

3.7 SCHOOLS AS SAFE PLACES, AND SAFE PLACES WITHIN SCHOOLS

There is a correlation between the level of violence-and-safety in a culture, and the level of violence-and-safety within the confines of schools within that culture. It is folly to suppose a violent culture or nation can have within its borders schools unaffected by the violence outside the school windows. Yet, as stated previously, irrespective of the level of violence in the social context outside the school, children and adolescents tend to be safer *in school* than *outside of school*. When one looks at the hazards children throughout the world confront from illness and accidents either at home or while riding in a motor vehicle, school provides a relatively safe haven, particularly for children whose home life is dangerous. School is safe (or should be safe) because it provides a social milieu, a social circle and environment – physical and/or social – in which the child feels at home, and can move and grow up within (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:19-20). This social milieu is an essential socio-educative component of modern schools. Within each school, however, there are varying degrees of safety. Recent research has pointed out that there are *owned* and *unowned* spaces in US high schools, and it is precisely within the *unowned* spaces that antisocial behaviour and violence is more likely to occur (Astor, Meyer & Bahre 1999:6). They are called *unowned* because teachers do not tend to see them as their area of responsibility (as opposed to their classrooms, which are *owned* in their eyes, and in the eyes of students). *Unowned* high school spaces include school hallways, cafeterias, bathrooms and outside grounds. In addition to *unowned spaces* there are certain *unowned times* as well. These are times within the high school day when antisocial behaviour and violence are likely to occur. Typically, these times are at the beginning and end of school, and during transition times such as on the way to activities, and during lunch or study hall (free time).

In Russia in 1996 and 1998, the researcher observed very similar student behaviours regarding owned and unowned spaces and times in two rural comprehensive (elementary through high school grades) schools. Outside each school, pre-adolescent male students huddled in groups of three or four, drinking alcoholic beverages hidden in paper bags, and smoking cigarettes, outside the eye of any teacher, and at a time the students' absence from the classroom would not be noticed. Typically, these students engaged in these behaviours near or behind the school building, just outside of main traffic areas. On the other hand, the visiting American and Canadian educators were impressed by the clear ownership of classrooms within the school by Russian teachers, witnessing a great deal of courtesy and deference accorded teachers and other students, by Russian children and adolescents.

Looking into the phenomenon of owned and unowned spaces in five American high schools, researchers Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999) found that in the schools they examined, violent behaviours occurred exclusively in unowned spaces. This finding seems particularly relevant to test with those who educate young children, who may not feel as safe from antisocial behaviour as adolescents or adults. In 1991, young students (12 years of age) were reported to be at greater risk of being a victim of antisocial behaviour than a young adult aged 24 years (Stein & Mulrine 1999). What the unsafe areas of elementary schools are perceived to be, and what times during the elementary school day are most unsafe, are not clear at this time.

3.8 SUMMARY

Throughout the world, schools range in the nature of socialisation provided to children and adolescents. In poorer nations and in poorer states and regions within wealthy nations, schools typically reflect the problems and disadvantages which are part of their immediate context or neighbourhood. In these poorer areas, schools seem to contribute to the problem of antisocial behaviour by, for example, using corporal punishment as a way to settle conflict or deliver justice. Schools in poorer areas are reflective of the surrounding neighbourhood and community. Although they can be relatively safe oases in violent neighbourhoods, such schools are far

from immune from the effects of outside violence and antisocial behaviour. Schools in wealthier areas rarely need to rely on strong anti-violence measures within the school, and on the whole, seem to work toward rather than against the instilling of prosocial behaviour. In the United States, it is safe to say that, irrespective of whether a state allows or prohibits corporal punishment, not one wealthy school district would utilise corporal punishment on a student, out of deference to the wishes of economically powerful parents. Even in states that permit corporal punishment, it is safe to generalise that it is absent in public schools in wealthy communities. Like many other forms of violence, corporal punishment appears in tandem with poverty and its other effects. With about half of its people living in poverty, South Africa is the second most economically polarised country in the world (next to Brazil). Of those living in poverty are sixty percent of all South African children (Goodman 1999:17). Consequently, schools in poverty areas will be dramatically different – in the US, Brazil, South Africa, and other nations – than schools in wealthier districts or regions.

Nevertheless, schools throughout the world may be the most promising institutions at the meso level of society, holding great potential to help reverse some of the problem areas in contemporary society. Of course, they alone cannot reverse the effects of poverty and inequality, but they can serve as societies *in microcosm*. The strongest challenges faced in trying to maximise the potential of schools lies not only in the securing of adequate funding to maintain and improve those schools in poorer areas, but also in the discovery of ways to ensure attendance by children in poverty. To be able to ensure mere *attendance* by children in schools that are *adequately funded* would be an important first step in bolstering the socialisation role of public schools throughout the world, serving to move the school from being a *problem* to its being part of a *solution*.

CHAPTER 4

MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS – A SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As defined above, *antisocial behaviour* is behaviour that is *opposed or contrary to normal social instincts or practices* (Oxford 1999, *sv antisocial*). As also mentioned earlier, antisocial behaviour can be seen to be a continuum, ranging from incivility and rudeness at one end, to violence and murder at the other extreme. No matter where it lies on the continuum, all antisocial behaviour encompasses two characteristics that are inherent in its definition (Van 't Westende 1998:268). First, antisocial behaviour involves a violation of social relationships, such as community and interpersonal relationships, as well as those involving public authority. Second, and more profound, all antisocial behaviour serves as *detrimental phenomena erosive to society*. Its damage affects the community itself, and involves the offenders, their victims, and even next of kin, to different degrees. Antisocial behaviour influences the nature of community and national life, to the point where quality-of-life issues are involved. The public fear of violent and antisocial behaviour goads policy-makers and legislators to re-direct funds toward crime

detection, apprehension, and incarceration, instead of toward education and other social services that would improve the quality of life of children and their families. In many Western societies, homes and communities have of late, increasingly resorted to so-called preventive measures such as the installation of security fences, burglar alarms, stronger door bolts, and utilisation of armoured and bullet-proof materials, in the construction of homes and vehicles. These measures permeate the business, home and school communities. They serve to intensify human fear, which in the case of schools, interferes with learning and in human relationships. Speaking of this situation with regard to African-American children, Prothrow-Stith and Quaday (1995:27) said: "When our children's ability to learn is being dangerously undermined, the foundation of our society is being damaged in a manner that cannot easily be repaired." If nothing else, such strong security measures in schools may reinforce the idea among students (particularly African-American students) that schools are unfriendly and adversarial contexts.

4.2 TWO PERSPECTIVES ON ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Antisocial behaviour affects both the individual, and the individual's social environment. On one hand, antisocial behaviour is a *personal problem*, where the causes and solutions lie within the individual and his or her immediate environment (Vvan 't Westende 1998:262). This perspective emphasises a psychological, individually-oriented view. Consistent with this perspective are children and adolescents who appear to lack the ability to practice self-restraint, or regulate their own behaviour (Feldman & Weinberger 1994). Such adolescents who lack the ability to control their impulses are described as *undercontrolled* (Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt & Stouthamer-Loeber 1996:157). According to this perspective, the solution lies in treating the individual, typically with medication, and secondarily, through individualised therapy such as psychotherapy and, in a growing number of instances, through adjudication and incarceration. Indeed, the public stands ready to react to antisocial and violent behaviour by individual children and adults. A recent state-wide referendum in California revealed that 70% of voters said yes to

a proposition that would increase the number of juvenile suspects who could be arrested and put on trial as adults (*USA Today* 2000:12). Echoing this sentiment are American political leaders like Florida's Governor, Jeb Bush, who spoke of Florida's recently increased prison capacity for young people: "There is room at the inn", he warned.

In a different perspective, antisocial behaviour is more than an individual issue; it is a social problem, as well, one which has its causes and solutions outside the individual and his or her immediate environment (Van 't Westende 1998:262). This perspective on antisocial behaviour considers it to also be an educational problem, since its solution or resolution involves the teaching (and re-teaching) of prosocial behaviour. Inborn, inherited traits certainly play a strong role influencing human behaviour. Humans are powerless, however, to influence the physiological make-up of the individual (except, of course, through surgery or medication). As a society, more control can be exerted over the child's social life, and the child's educational environment, than can be exerted over his or her physiological make-up. For the purposes of this study, antisocial behaviour will be seen as both a social problem and an educational problem; a socio-educational problem, rather than as a purely psychological problem, or as a medical, legal, or criminal matter. Thus the present research will seek to learn how child and adolescent antisocial behaviour can be best addressed by society, through its schools, communities, and educators.

4.3 THE FOCAL POINTS OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Antisocial and violent behaviour may also be analysed according to the direction toward which it is aimed or directed. By definition, antisocial behaviour is usually directed at others, but sometimes it is self-directed, and in some extreme cases of violence, it can both be directed at others and at one's self, as in a murder-suicide. Steinberg (1999:402) describes this issue in terms of the presence of *internalising* or *externalising* disorders. The former consist of harmful behaviours that are turned inward, directed at one's self, and show themselves as depression, anxiety or as

phobias. Externalising disorders, on the other hand, show themselves as behaviours primarily directed at others, where *the young person's problems are turned outward*, and result in antisocial behaviour and/or delinquency. Because schools are primarily educative rather than therapeutic institutions, emphasis is typically placed on those behaviours that are externalising and obvious, instead of those that are internalising and more subtle. However, a school's emphasis on a socio-educational approach to antisocial behaviour will benefit the individual, given the importance of needs satisfaction (such as self-esteem and belonging needs) that requires social participation.

4.4 ANTISOCIAL AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL

In primary and secondary schools, antisocial behaviour shows itself in many forms. At lower levels of force that are non-violent levels, antisocial behaviour may take the form of incivility: offensive or unpleasant behaviours such as minor rule breaking, name-calling, the use of vulgar expressions, and rudeness. Lower level antisocial behaviour may also involve passive-aggressive behaviour, where the child will refuse to co-operate. These lower levels are lower because the level of force is relatively slight; there is usually no physical contact involved, and none is threatened. However, lower-level antisocial behaviour can escalate into higher-level violent behaviour, which can result in physical injury or death. Higher-level antisocial behaviour involves stronger force than low-level antisocial behaviour. Typically this includes physical fighting or striking another, destruction of the property of others, strong, loud and threatening words directed at others, and at times, higher-level antisocial behaviour may involve strongly forceful, violent acts such as rape, assault, or killing.

It must be pointed out and emphasised, however, that while all violent behaviour is certainly antisocial in nature, *most antisocial behaviour in school is not violent behaviour*. This fact is reflected in recent statistics available from the US Department of Education (1998:12): The research sample of 1,234 principals revealed that

during the 1996-1997 school year, student tardiness (40%), student absenteeism or class cutting (25%), and physical conflicts among students (21%) were the three discipline issues most often cited by public school principals as serious or moderate problems in their schools. Fewer than 2% of this group identified more severe problems such as the sale of drugs on school grounds, student possession of weapons, or physical abuse of teachers as either serious or moderate problems in their schools. The report concluded that in US schools violent behaviour occurred at an annual rate of only 53 incidents per 100,000 students. Certainly, any amount of violent behaviour is unacceptable, and physical conflicts among students reported by more than one out of every five principals tells us that fighting is an all-too-common, violent event in schools.

As pointed out earlier, parents, family, and peers all play a highly influential role in socialising children toward prosocial and antisocial behaviours. It may be safe to say that, as an agent of socialisation, schools play an even greater role than ever before. Some have claimed that schools have become *the primary instrument of socialisation* (Siegel & Senna 1997:361), and *the basic conduit* through which adult and community influences reach the young person (Polk & Schaefer 1972:13). Nevertheless, and as important as the school is in the process of socialisation, identifying school-related factors that contribute to or foster antisocial behaviour has been relatively difficult to accomplish. Mayer (1995:470) attributes this to the existence of *setting events* that occur in school environments. *Setting events* are incidents or *antecedents that may occur within the same setting and closely precede the antisocial behaviour*, such as a child being poked by another as the teacher addresses him, or the student's having just argued with another during recess. The effects of setting events can be cumulative, where *several instructions followed by several errors can serve as a setting event for the next instruction occasioning problem behaviour such as aggression* (Munk & Repp 1994:391).

4.4.1 School-related violence that cannot be anticipated

To further complicate the question of causality, some violent behaviour cannot be anticipated or predicted, and some more of it, perhaps, may never be understood. Celeste Kennel-Shank (2000:49) wrote that, "in truth, there will never be any reason – whether it is television, video games, bad parenting, a secular society, or the press itself – that fully explains how an adolescent, even as young as 9 years old, can murder his or her classmates and teachers and feel a surge of power at watching them die". When tragic and horrible events occur, such as the murderous rampage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado in 1999, or the shooting of a Florida teacher by an eleven-year-old boy in 2000, one may never fully comprehend the reasons for such events. It is entirely possible that such disasters, like identifying the spot where lightning will strike, may never be predictable, nor preventable.

4.4.2 School-related violence that can be anticipated

While some antisocial behaviour cannot be predicted or anticipated, there is evidence that *some types of violent behaviour*, such as fist fights between students or physical aggression by a student directed at a teacher may have identifiable antecedents or forewarnings. Some authors have suggested that the human propensity toward higher-level, violent behaviour grows in stages, even though some or all of these stages may not be apparent to the casual observer. All violent behaviour may seem to arise suddenly, but in some instances violent behaviour is the result of or end product of lower-level aggressive behaviour that grows increasingly violent in stages or steps. Writing on *Violence and aggression in children and youth* for the United States Department of Education, Fitzsimmons (1998:2) highlighted five *stages of frustration* where students' behaviour may grow progressively more forceful, ending in violence. The stages include:

- (1) *Anxiety*, where the student will sigh, or use other non-verbal cues. This is the lowest level of aggression. It is behaviour that is not yet clearly antisocial.
- (2) *Stress*. The student will show minor behaviour problems.
- (3) *Defensiveness*. The student will argue, and/or complain. This will usually occur in reaction to a teacher's intervention, or attempt to intervene in the student's antisocial behaviour.
- (4) *Physical aggression, or violence*. At this point of escalation, the student may hit, kick, bite, or throw objects. Here, the teacher's first priority is to protect the safety of the student, the safety of other students, and his or her own safety. The student is usually escorted away, and the teacher may seek the assistance of other adults.
- (5) *Tension reduction*. This is a denouement, where the student releases tension through crying or verbal venting, or the student might remain quiet and withdrawn.

4.5 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS RELATED TO STUDENT ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The context of the classroom itself provides a potentially rich unit of analysis with regard to student antisocial behaviour. In responding to the task of identifying factors that bring about antisocial behaviour, researchers have used correlational analyses to identify situations and teacher behaviours that appear to be related to student antisocial behaviour. They found three contextual factors that appear to be related to student antisocial behaviour. These include clarity, support for teaching staff, and failure to recognise and/or allow for student differences (Mayer 1995).

4.5.1 Clarity

A lack of clarity on the part of the teacher correlates with antisocial behaviour. Students whose behaviour is antisocial lack a clear understanding of general classroom policies, as well as specific rules and expectations for behaviour. This can result in a vicious cycle of sorts, where the teacher will respond with corrective, after-

the-fact interventions that may be punitive or harsh. Thus, the student may respond with further antisocial behaviour. It is interesting to note that, in addition to its influence on student behaviour, clarity in teaching also improves student achievement (Dunkin & Barnes 1986:766).

It makes sense to assume that teachers who can clearly convey expectations, as well as those who can clarify roles and behavioural expectations through class discussions, are those likely to be more effective in managing group behaviour. Clarity in communication also requires teachers to have within themselves a clear moral sense, so they can, with assurance, convey positive goals for student individual and group behaviour, and help students perceive differences between right and wrong behaviour.

4.5.2 Administrative support

Support of staff also correlates with student antisocial behaviour. The incidence of antisocial behaviour increases when administrative support of teachers is lacking, or is weak or inconsistent, and/or when there is an absence of administrative follow-through. Lack of administrative support results in specific types of disruptions of continuity between teacher and students. For example, teacher absenteeism tends to be higher in situations where there is less administrative support (Manlove & Elliott 1979; Spuck 1974). Two studies looked at the connection between student vandalism and administrative support for teachers, and they found that when administrative support was absent or inconsistent, teachers were more likely to rely on punitive methods of managing students (Mayer, Butterworth, Komoto & Benoit 1983; Mayer & Sulzer-Azaroff 1991). Mayer (1995:471) adds that inconsistent behaviour on the part of the school administration *appears to result in inconsistent follow-through by staff, often resulting in more behaviour problems by students.*

This may be an especially pertinent issue in some South African schools. In his examination of South Africa's historically Black schools, Ngcongco found that teacher

evaluation by supervisors was poor in that it was highly judgmental rather than supportive. He also found that there was not much heed paid to teacher's concerns and hopes, as well as a lack of training available for school administrators and supervisors (Ngcongco 1996). In addition to these problems affecting Black high school principals in South Africa, Gumbi (1995) found that there were many bureaucratic expectations that guided the principals' behaviour. In addition, principals in Gumbi's study tended to work in violent school environments, disrupted by teacher and student strikes, to the point where they were unable to provide leadership. Gumbi advocated the restoring of dignity to the role of the school principal, declaring the role to be pivotal in the new education transformation under South Africa's democratic government.

The role of the Black school principal in the United States seems to have suffered an earlier though similar fate. Sociology professor Doris Y Wilkinson described how harmful the 1954 *Brown versus Topeka Board of Education* US Supreme Court decision was for Black Americans (Wilkinson 1999:129). As a result of that court decision, Wilkinson claimed that "many schools designed for African-American children were closed", with African-American children sent from schools that honoured their Black heroes to schools that were predominantly White. This deprived these children of their historical and cultural roots, and deprived them of the rich support of the economically-poor, yet socially-cohesive Black community schools. Black teachers were gradually transferred or fired, but even more damaging was the loss of positive Black leadership: *the African-American principal – often a male hero and community leader – became obsolete. The loss of this Black role model and parental figure has had far-reaching ramifications.* This was true for the students, and also severed the support African-American teachers received from that leadership.

4.5.3 Allowing for student differences

Students come to school with a variety of academic strengths, and a variety of social skills. It is perhaps obvious to point out that students who have poor academic skills and poor achievement are those most likely to engage in antisocial behaviour in school. Center, Deitz and Kaufman (1982:355) said that *failure level academic tasks resulted in significant increases in inappropriate behaviour in some students*. Failure in academic work sets the stage for antisocial behaviour, and the teacher's ability to consider and respond to varying needs of students is quite critical in moderating antisocial behaviour. The teacher's task is particularly difficult when his or her students have experienced failure in school, and have come to regard antisocial behaviour as a routine and unexceptional way of behaving. With such students, harsh and punitive responses by the teacher serve to maintain (and confirm) their antisocial behaviour. A recognition of student differences implies that the teacher recognises (and sometimes, searches for) qualities in each student that are strengths, or possible areas for success. This involves more than the administration of praise and rewards to students.

As a result of Phase I research (1993-1995) the investigator identified three axioms that point to the connection between students' academic success and prosocial behaviour (DiGiulio 2000:47-49): The axioms hold that, first, *students who feel successful in school seldom present behaviour problems*. Second, *to feel successful in schoolwork, students must actually be successful* – praise and rewards by themselves are insufficient. Third, *to actually be successful, a student must first do something of value*. Teachers should focus their first efforts on the third axiom by preparing and presenting activities and projects that allow different students – in different ways – to experience real success. All too often, schoolwork consists of a narrow band of whole-class activities (reading, writing, calculating, etc) that only some students can do well, and even fewer can do very well. For the less-successful remainder of the students, these activities represent opportunities to fail, and have that failure clearly seen by others. Consequently, these less-frequently successful

students (or even the *never-successful* students) are at a higher risk of showing antisocial behaviour in school. Conversely, they are also the ones who stand to profit most from a teacher who is attuned to their different abilities and strengths. Such a teacher is more likely to be successful herself in teaching social skills that would reduce or eliminate their antisocial behaviours that serve to provoke or harm others. No students are aided by teachers who emphasise, threaten, and deliver punishment, because there is little opportunity for success in being beaten, banned, or humiliated. Threats and harsh punishments are counterproductive; diametrically opposed to helping students be successful. In every sense, students from violent homes are those most in need of clear, caring, and strong teacher support, in the interest of their being successful in school.

Some recent research emphasises the idea that high levels of safety in school are associated with a prevailing sense among students that teachers care about students (Lee & Croninger 1995). Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999:24-25) noted a striking connection between caring behaviours by teachers and violent student behaviour in school. They identified teachers who *made efforts to ensure students' attendance, expected students to do quality work, and went beyond what the students expected in terms of personal support*. Such teachers, who were perceived as most caring, responded clearly and unequivocally to potential student violence. *These teachers claimed that they would intervene regardless of location and time*. They did not perceive hallways and other undefined spaces in schools as *unowned*, but felt they owned *the whole school territory or whatever space the student occupied*, expressing that they felt personally obligated to *the whole child regardless of the setting, location, time, or expected professional role*. These teachers saw their behaviour as similar to that of good parents. It is interesting to add that, although these teachers were admired by school administrators, they were not offered overt or formal support. They acted alone and oftentimes, courageously. Other teachers expressed an interest in increasing their caring involvement, but were hesitant to do so without more support from the administration. Among this latter group of teachers, the researchers noted a *pervasive sense of powerlessness regarding what they could and*

couldn't do. While some teachers could respond strongly and in a caring way to students, it appears that many more need support from the school administration and/or other faculty before they can do so.

This sense of powerlessness may be even stronger among teachers working in poorer, more challenging schools and communities. In her study of teacher education in South Africa's Northern Province, Mamabolo (1997) acknowledged the relatively low status of teachers, and she advocated improved in-service education, as well as preservice education. In a comparison of South African and United States' teachers' participation in decision-making, Magau (1999) noted many similarities, yet found that the South African teachers seemed particularly concerned about deteriorating school facilities, low teacher morale, uncertainty surrounding the rapid transitions in South African society, as well as powerlessness they felt in dealing with a bureaucratic educational tradition.

In both United States and South African society, implications for teacher education are particularly strong, given the likelihood that in neither setting do teachers receive training in how to effectively address and prevent student antisocial behaviour.

4.6 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is great concern throughout the world about the question of violence, particularly as it relates to the young. Historically, schools were set up not only to foster academic achievement, but perhaps more importantly, to serve as sources of socialisation for young people. Although the terms *school* and *violence* are often spoken together, the problem is deeper than violence in school or violence as it relates to schooling. Violence is a strong form of antisocial behaviour, and it exists outside of schools within every human culture. Schools represent perhaps the most potent and formidable arenas societies have to address the problem of antisocial behaviour and violence. Teachers are central figures in the structure of schools, and

what teachers do to, with, and for students has strong implications for the behaviours students will display and incorporate into their daily lives.

As suggested earlier, teachers may simply be unprepared to address students' behavioural needs. Some teachers may not be inclined to intervene. Little is known about the nature of support teachers believe they receive from within the school (from principals, other staff), and from outside the school (from parents, community members). While there has been a great deal of recent attention to issues like raising academic standards, and instituting high stakes academic testing in teacher preparation programs, the equipping of teachers to address the socialisation needs of students has taken a back seat. Specifically, teachers may not be skilled in ways to prevent antisocial behaviour, and foster and support prosocial behaviour. In order to shed light upon this problem, four research questions have been produced, to be addressed in the present investigation:

4.6.1 Research question #1

What is the nature of teachers' responses (interventions) toward student antisocial behaviour in the classroom? Are they aware of such behaviours? If so, how do teachers respond to it/them? Do they seek to stop it? Do they attempt to guide students toward prosocial behaviour? Would one apply the word caring to their interventions (warm, supportive, enthusiastic, encouraging), or non-caring (harsh, sarcastic, punitive, or unhelpful)? Which types of intervention appear to be more successful?

4.6.2 Research question #2

What level of skill do teachers show in their interventions? Do successful teachers utilise a social-constructivist model, where students build their behavioural understandings, or do teachers rely on a functionalist, behaviourist model, emphasising consequences (rewards, punishments)?

4.6.3 Research question #3

What reasons do teachers provide for their successes and failures with regard to student behaviour? Do they see themselves as efficacious; that is, capable of making a difference in students' behaviour? What ways and means are open to teachers to create a climate that is conducive to prosocial behaviour? Do they feel well-prepared to address students' social development? If not, what do they believe is a shortcoming of their preparation?

4.6.4 Research question #4

What levels of co-operation and communication exist within the school (with principals and other staff members) and outside the school (with parents and community)? What support do teachers receive from their supervisors and their communities? What support do they need?

4.7 SUMMARY

In summary, this investigation aims to closely examine the socio-educative climate within schools, focusing on teacher behaviour, and its influence upon student antisocial and violent behaviour. The ultimate aim of the present research is to draw up a plan, guidelines, or training manual for teachers that would empower them to address the problem efficiently. Answers to these research questions would represent a starting point, yet one that would also provide helpful insights for educators as well as for students, parents and school administrators. Teacher-preparation programs would also profit from this investigation. Ultimately, the aim of this research is to learn about *prevention* rather than *reaction*; to seek socio-educational, in-school educator-led measures to address antisocial and violent behaviour, alternatives to medicinal and criminal justice efforts increasingly being promoted throughout the world as appropriate responses to antisocial and violent behaviour.

Although the scope of the present investigation involves observations and interviews limited to the United States, it is hoped that this research can be universal in its implications and application for world school. In particular, it is hoped that industrialized nations such as South Africa can also profit from the cross-sectional participant observation research design, perhaps lending itself to being replicated in South Africa and elsewhere. Ultimately, the present investigation may be seen as a first step toward a deep analysis and stronger recognition of the role educational institutions can take in replacing antisocial behaviour and violence with prosocial behaviour.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Few would question the notion that a spirit of restoration rather than retribution should guide efforts to improve society through education. This spirit requires a willingness to look at, to listen, and to try to understand youth behaviour, and an inclination to examine roles educators should take in helping to shape that behaviour. Yet, despite years of research into schools in general and human behaviour in particular, the teacher-student relationship with respect to antisocial and violent student behaviour remains relatively unclear. This state of affairs may be attributed to the fact that much of the investigation that has been done has taken a functionalist, behaviourist perspective: In this view, behaviour is a result of consequences, namely, reinforcement and punishment. While this perspective has yielded quantitative data, it restricts examination beyond outward signs and symptoms. It has not permitted us to gain a broader understanding of the complexities of student behaviour in the context of schools. For instance, although a teacher's *caring interventions* are fairly obvious to a student when he or she is the recipient of those interventions, such interventions are difficult to quantify – to assign numerical values to, and/or to standardise, ahead of time, parameters for such teacher behaviour because they are not context-free. In such cases, qualitative research methods are more appropriate toward grasping this deeper, more complex phenomenon that is context-specific.

Furthermore, relatively little is known about teacher interventions, particularly those made in the context of student antisocial and violent behaviour. Qualitative investigation, again, would permit a broader, exploratory look at these behaviours in context. Toward those ends, the present chapter will focus on describing the research aims, design, methods, and the data collection as well as analysis measures for this investigation.

5.2 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

As stated earlier in Chapter One, the aims of the research is twofold:

- To explore how violent and antisocial behaviour occur and are addressed in schools through socio-educational – rather than medical and criminal justice-responses to student antisocial behaviour.
- To draw up a plan for teachers to deal effectively with antisocial and violent behaviour. Ultimately, the results of this research would inform teacher preparation programmes in ways that teachers can be empowered to make effective interventions in preventing and/or responding to student antisocial behaviour.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design incorporated in this study is qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive. A research design *describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained.* (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:10-11).

5.3.1 Qualitative

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:14-16) emphasise differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches, and they highlight these areas of distinction: Quantitative research holds different assumptions about the world, including the idea that there are stable social facts with a single reality, often free of context. Qualitative research assumes multiple realities, and is more concerned with understanding social phenomenon. These two factors are integral to the present naturalistic enquiry, which aims at understanding phenomena within their usual contexts.

Perhaps the most important and most relevant difference with respect to the present investigation is the importance of context. Quantitative research seeks to establish generalisations that are universal, and context-free. However, qualitative researchers believe that human behaviour and actions are strongly influenced by the context within which it occurs. Wilson (1977:249) emphasises that *the social scientist cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which the subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and action*. The research problem of the present investigation will be examined in context, a context that addresses the socialisation of children, and manifestations of antisocial and violent behaviour.

5.3.2 Explorative

As indicated previously, there are several areas central to the present investigation which have been either poorly investigated, or investigated not-at-all. This study is exploratory in that it seeks to understand the role of educators in preventing antisocial and violent behaviour. For example, relatively little research attention has been directed at the salience of the teacher-student relationship and its effect on antisocial and violent behaviour. Some very recent research has suggested that higher levels of student safety in school are associated with a prevailing sense

among students that teachers care about students, and that a lack of caring fosters overt and covert forms of violence within schools (Thayer-Bacon 1999:141). Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999:24-25) noticed a prominent connection between caring behaviour by teachers and violent behaviour in school. They identified teachers who *made efforts to ensure students' attendance, expected students to do quality work, and went beyond what the students expected in terms of personal support*. Such teachers – those whose interventions were perceived as most caring--responded clearly and unequivocally to antisocial behaviour and potential student violence. *These teachers claimed that they would intervene regardless of location and time*. They did not perceive hallways and other undefined spaces in schools as being unowned, but felt they owned *the whole school territory or whatever space the student occupied*, expressing that they felt personally obligated to *the whole child regardless of the setting, location, time, or expected professional role*. They saw caring-in-teaching as similar to caring-in-parenting. It is interesting to note that, although these caring teachers were admired by school administrators, they were not offered overt or formal support. They acted alone, and courageously. Other teachers expressed an interest in increasing their caring involvement, but were hesitant to do so without more support from the administration. Among these latter teachers, the researchers noted *a pervasive sense of powerlessness regarding what they could and couldn't do*. While some teachers could respond strongly and in a caring way to students, it appears that many more may require the support of school administrators and systemic support before they can do so. Unfortunately, there are few similar studies, and thus few that corroborate these findings. Since there are no studies that look at this question from the teacher's (rather than student's) viewpoint, there is clearly a need to take an exploratory approach in the present research design, examining closely the role of teachers in student antisocial and violent behaviour.

5.3.3 Descriptive

Descriptive research asks *what is or what was; it reports things the way they are or were.* (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:283). Descriptive research does not usually involve manipulation of independent variables, but provides valuable data, particularly when the study is in a new or poorly understood area. The present study seeks to explore, and then describe, how violent and antisocial behaviour occur and are addressed in schools through socio-educational – rather than medical and criminal justice – responses to student antisocial behaviour.

The second descriptive component is the drawing up of a plan for teachers to deal effectively with antisocial and violent behaviour. This plan appears in Chapter Seven. Such a plan requires a rich degree of descriptive research.

5.4 RESEARCH METHODS

5.4.1 Ethical measures

The researcher undertakes to observe ethical measures throughout this investigation. The following measures will be complied with:

5.4.1.1 *Informed consent and freedom from deception*

Each participant in the present investigation gave his or her permission to be observed or interviewed, and was fully informed of the purposes of the investigation beforehand. In addition, participants interviewed and observed were given the option to discontinue participation, for any reason whatsoever, at any time in the process.

Deception refers to the falsification of the investigation's expectations, or of giving other false information. De Vos *et al.* (1998:27) see deception as the withholding

of information, or the giving of false information, for the purpose of luring into the study participants who might otherwise decline. No deception was used in the present investigation, nor was any needed as all participants were willing to participate. The investigator clearly represented himself and his associations, as well as the aims of the investigation.

5.4.1.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

All educators who took part in this investigation were given assurances of full confidentiality. Other than identifying factors such as gender, race, or general location of a teacher's school district (city and/or state in the USA), no personally-identifiable information is divulged, nor are specific schools identified by name. Each educator was assigned a code letter (Mr A, Ms B).

5.4.1.3 Researcher's competency and relationship with participants

Researchers are ethically obliged to possess a high level of competency and skill in undertaking the study. In the present investigation, the researcher has served for 32 years as an educator, teacher, principal, and professor of education, and has completed much graduate level study in research methodology. The researcher is also a member of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). This research has been overseen by university professors with experience in supervising qualitative research investigations. The researcher endeavoured to maintain a healthy relationship with each participant, and share a high degree of trust throughout the investigation. Several participants were interested in the outcome of the investigation, and will be sent information about the study's findings.

5.4.2 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:407). In qualitative research

designs, validity rests primarily within the data collection and analysis techniques. In qualitative research, validity is important, but it is not a monolithic either-or matter. There are strategies to enhance validity. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) state that *qualitative researchers use a combination of any of ten possible strategies to enhance validity*. The present investigation used six of the ten strategies to enhance design validity. These included: prolonged and persistent field work, multimethod strategies, participant language and verbatim accounts; low-inference descriptors, mechanically recorded data, and member checking.

5.4.2.1 Prolonged and persistent field work

The first survey and field investigations (Phase I) began in 1993. The present investigation consisted of participant observation and in-depth interviews (Phases II and III) that were completed over a two-year period from 1999 to 2001. Both Phases II and III were preceded by preliminary pilot work. The participant observations (Phase II) completed in early 2001 were preceded by 61 observations in classrooms selected because antisocial behaviour and violence of some sort or another was expected to occur. The final in-depth interviews of African-American educators who worked in situations of violence (Phase III) was preceded by a series of five pilot interviews of Vermont teachers. Thus, the investigator has been working closely with this problem for eight years. This length of time has allowed for enhancement of validity, by bringing forth many opportunities for the researcher to refine ideas, and ensure correspondence between the participant's realities and the research questions under study.

5.4.2.2 Multimethod strategies

The present investigation employed several data collection techniques, from the earliest survey to the present participant observations and in-depth qualitative interviews. These also permitted triangulation, which is the cross-validation among data sources and data collection strategies (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:478).

In the present investigation, triangulation allowed the researcher to corroborate numerous themes that emerged. For example, the theme of teacher *clarity* was triangulated by the investigator's *reading* the early survey's references to teacher clarity, *observing* these behaviours by teachers in the observation phase, and *interviewing* educators themselves about how clearly (or unclearly) they convey expectations to students. This reliance on corroboration among different methods serves to enhance validity of the present investigation.

5.4.2.3 *Participant language and verbatim accounts*

With respect to the in-depth interviews of nine African-American teachers, the researcher, having taught in New York City for seven years, was able to relate to, and speak the same language as these mostly inner-city teachers. In addition, the researcher spent several hours per week for four weeks with the participants in July of 2001. In both Phases II and III, verbatim accounts were collected; field notes from the observations included verbatim recording of the behaviours of the children and teachers within the classroom and school. The in-depth interviews were tape-recorded, providing verbatim accounts. Both the pilot (early) and actual (later) in-depth interviews were transcribed, as were the field notes from the participant observations. The researcher typed these into Microsoft Word 97 documents.

5.4.2.4 *Low-inference descriptors*

During both the observation and interview phases of the research, descriptions were as literal as possible, and preserved important terms used by the participants. For the in-depth interviews, a series of five interviews was first conducted with a purposeful selected sample of five Vermont teachers. However, on the later set of nine in-depth interviews conducted with African-American participants, the researcher improved upon his earlier questioning format by making the interview about school violence much more open-ended. Through careful prompting for elaboration, the researcher tested what was heard: "So you are saying that ..." "Is

that correct?" The participant would then say "Yes, ..." or "Not exactly. What I was referring to was ...". The interviewer used concrete and precise description both in field notes and in prompts for elaboration in the interviews. This helped ensure accuracy between the beliefs of the interviewees and the researcher's perceptions of those beliefs. This enhanced validity as well.

5.4.2.5 Mechanically recorded data

Tape recorders were used to record all of the interviews, both the preliminary and the main in-depth interviews. Professional transcription was used for the transcription of the preliminary interviews. However, this proved expensive, thus cost considerations as well as a desire for greater involvement by the researcher meant that all the subsequent actual interviews (Phase III) were transcribed by the researcher.

5.4.2.6 Member checking

As mentioned above, participants were asked to verify what was heard by the interviewer during the in-depth interviews, and immediately following those interviews. Also, the researcher was able to have conversations in informal situations with the participants following interviews, discussing further the issues raised in the interviews. This allowed for verification of the data through the strategy of member checking.

5.4.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is a central consideration of the validity of the research. Just as a researcher has an obligation to act in an ethical fashion, so too is the obligation to maintain trustworthiness, or truth of findings, throughout the study. Trustworthiness (also called *truth value*) in the present investigation was ensured by abiding by Guba's trustworthiness model (De Vos *et al.* 1998:349-350;

Guba 1981). Four strategies are employed to ensure truth value: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Several of these strategies were also listed above in section 5.4.2.

5.4.3.1 Truth value ensured by the strategy of credibility

In the present investigation, credibility strategies involved the following criteria:

- **Triangulation**

The researcher used data from multiple sources, and cross-checked findings from an earlier survey and field investigations (Phase I), preliminary observations, the actual participant observations (Phase II), preliminary in-depth interviews, and the actual in-depth interviews (Phase III).

- **Prolonged engagement**

The researcher has been doing field research in this area since 1994, when the early survey and field investigations were completed. The present investigation encompassing participant observations and in-depth interviews extended over two years. In addition, the researcher spent time with each participant interviewed, both before and after each interview. In the present case, the researcher spent four weeks working with educators and teachers from whom the nine-person African-American sample was drawn.

- **Reflexivity**

The researcher is very much immersed in the phenomenon of school violence, having taught for many years in the inner-city schools of New York. In the present investigation, the researcher used his knowledge and experience in inner-city schools to prepare and foster a productive interview with each African-American

educator interviewed. To guard against bias and achieve reflexivity in the present investigation, the researcher used a tape recorder and field notes, as well as member checking, where the researcher's understandings were reflected back to the participants for a check on accuracy. These strategies helped limit researcher empathy.

■ Authority of the researcher

As mentioned above, the researcher has served for 32 years as an educator, teacher, principal, and professor of education, and has completed much graduate level study in research methodology. The researcher is also a member of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), holds a doctoral degree from the University of Connecticut, and has written several books and chapter contributions in the field of education.

5.4.3.2 *Applicability ensured by the strategy of transferability*

Similar to the term *generalisability*, applicability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to other settings, groups, and/or contexts. According to Krefting (1991:216), *a strength of the qualitative method is that it is conducted in naturalistic settings with few controlling variables. Each situation is defined as unique and thus less amenable to generalisation.* Thus, applicability in qualitative research would apply more to *fitting-ness or transferability*, when findings *fit into contexts outside the study situation.* As defined by Krefting, applicability is *more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population than that of the researcher of the original study.* Nonetheless, transferability is a strategy ensuring applicability. Strategies employed in the present study to ensure transferability are:

■ Purposeful samples

In the researcher's earlier work (Phase I), one-hundred one teachers who had been identified by the University of Vermont as *outstanding* (based on testimonials and letters of recommendation) were administered a survey developed by the researcher, and teachers who were considered to be competent were observed in early field investigations. In the present investigation, observations for Phase II were arranged purposefully but also for being accessible and would permit the researcher much time to observe, this sample did provide a deeper understanding of contemporary school and classroom dynamics, and provided the researcher with an up-to-date foundation that was useful in the subsequent in-depth interviews of African-American educators. In Phase III, sites selected were those in which African-American educators were working in schools where youth violence was known to exist.

■ Dense description

Background information and details on the context of the phases of the present investigation are provided, enabling other researchers to decide whether these findings are transferable to their investigations. The researcher has endeavoured to provide the richest descriptions possible, while safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of each teacher observed or interviewed.

5.4.3.3 Consistency ensured by the strategy of dependability

Consistency asks: *If the research investigation were to be replicated in a similar context, would findings likely be similar?* This expectation of repeatability is central to the concept of reliability, but it must be kept in mind that the idea of replication assumes a single reality, or a pre-existing set of truths that simply need to be identified and then used as a benchmark. While this is an accepted truth of quantitative research, qualitative research assumes variability, especially when the

context is different. The strict controlling of variables in quantitative design becomes the antithesis of what must be unstructured and spontaneous within the qualitative research design. Krefting (1991:216) states that *qualitative research emphasises the uniqueness of the human situation, so that variation in experience rather than identical repetition is sought.*

Nonetheless, consistency is a valid concern. The researcher is confident that these results would be consistent, given the other validity enhancers listed above. With regard to auditability, the decision trail throughout the investigation is clearly delineated, and can support an audit if necessary. In addition, all tapes and transcriptions have been preserved.

5.4.3.4 *Neutrality ensured by the strategy of confirmability*

All research must be as free from bias as possible. While quantitative research strives for neutrality through strict controlling of variables and methodological rigor, qualitative research strives for neutrality by getting close to the data (as in participant observation) by prolonged and close contact with the informants. Instead of looking at the investigator's neutrality, the *neutrality of the data* becomes the focal point. When data in such observations can be confirmed (it is believed to have truth value, for instance), the data can be thought to have met the criterion of neutrality. To ensure that the data met the standard of neutrality, and was free from bias, the researcher asked that the results be reviewed by an independent reader, Dr Bruce Marlowe, education professor at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island. Dr Marlowe teaches a graduate level course in qualitative methodology.

5.5 DATA COLLECTION

The present research is a culmination of two previous, smaller investigations (Phase I) carried out by the investigator. The first stage consisted of a survey of teachers employed at all levels pre-school through college conducted in 1993 at Johnson

State College in Vermont, USA. The second stage was completed during 1998 and 1999. It consisted of classroom observations of 61 teachers, and structured interview questions presented after each observation. The present investigation consists of Phase II, which was comprised of 101 approximately one-hour-long participant observations within Vermont classrooms, and Phase III, which consisted of preliminary in-depth interviews of a group of five Vermont teachers, followed by in-depth interviews with nine African-American educators who worked in situations where school violence was common. These phases are presented next in greater detail.

5.5.1 Three research phases

5.5.1.1 Phase One: Early survey and field investigation

The core of this group was a set of 105 elementary, middle school and high school teachers who were identified by the University of Vermont, and designated by the University as *Outstanding Vermont teachers* for their effective teaching, and their commitment to children and adolescents. Identification was based on anonymous nominations, and the review of documentation in support of each teacher nominated. After the names of successful teachers were announced, the present researcher contacted each teacher by mail, and asked him or her to respond to open-ended questions on the subject of the teachers' role in student behaviour. In these questions, teachers were asked to describe how they believed students acquired prosocial and antisocial behaviour outside of the home and family setting, and how teachers could best-facilitate student learning of prosocial behaviours in school. Fifty teachers responded (a rate of 48%) to the mailed survey.

This expert group of teachers enumerated ways that teachers can and do teach prosocial behaviour, including modelling the desired behaviour, classroom discussions, encouragement, pointing to examples to be emulated, as well as acting on antisocial behaviour, involving parents, and making expectations for good

behaviour quite clear early in the term. However, the most striking finding was the almost-unanimous shared belief that students *could* learn prosocial behaviour, even if there was not support from the home. Furthermore, the sample of teachers agreed that the *behaviour of the teacher was highly significant in how well students learned prosocial behaviour* (DiGiulio 1994), with the teacher *creating a sense of community in the classroom*, a sense that supported greatly the teacher's expectations for behaviour.

The second stage of Phase I took place in the year prior to the present investigation, when a pilot project was undertaken in order to gain some understanding of the breadth and depth of the problem of antisocial behaviour and teachers' responses to it in actual classroom situations. Open-ended, structured interview questions were composed and presented individually to two groups of teachers, one group of 46 teachers working in the public schools of Vermont (USA), and one group of 15 teachers employed at an international elementary school in Kobe, Japan. (The Vermont group was interviewed by the researcher; the Japan group was interviewed by a research assistant who was an American teacher working in Japan.) Teachers were asked to recall instances of antisocial or violent student behaviour, and to describe their responses to antisocial behaviour. In addition to the open-ended questions, teachers were observed in their natural settings. No formal statistical measures were employed in the analysis of data. However, simple enumeration reveal the following patterns:

- More-experienced teachers reported fewer instances of antisocial behaviour than less-experienced teachers (this finding was corroborated through observation).
- Successful interventions by teachers were characterized by observers as being *caring interventions*, and were carried out with a relatively low level of force.

- There were no significant differences between the American and Japanese teacher groups, except for five American classrooms where observed instances of student antisocial behaviour were greater than fifty per hour.
- When rates of antisocial behaviour were high (over fifty instances of antisocial behaviour per hour), teachers tended to intervene less and less.
- Teachers' nationality, gender, number of students, or grade levels did not appear to influence either the number of teachers' interventions, the quality of those interventions, or the success/failure of those interventions.

While some interesting research directions were generated by this preliminary research, a serious shortcoming was noted: The structured observation-and-structured question format did not provide a richness of data. It generated fairly narrow, factual data, such as gender, years teaching, and responses to antisocial behaviour. Also, there was no way to look deeply at the entire context. Student antisocial behaviour is the result of many factors, and a survey and structured observation cannot touch upon some of the more subtle factors in the classroom that foster and perpetuate antisocial behaviour. Plus, teachers' recollections are likely to be coloured by a desire to present ones' self in a positive light, and not reveal uncertainties or unsuccessful interactions with students. It was thus decided that teachers and their behaviours would comprise the focus of the present investigation, and that in-depth qualitative interviews along with participant observation would be the best processes to use in order to look more deeply into the problem area.

Following Phase I, the investigator enrolled at the University of South Africa. In the early stages of investigation, the results from the previous stages of research were considered. An extensive review of the literature was conducted in the area of antisocial and violent behaviour, and the literature data was compared with the Phase I results. As a result of this literature control, and informative advice provided by the researcher's Promoter and Co-Promoter at the University of South Africa, four

research questions were formulated to guide the present investigation (Phases II and III):

- Research question #1: *What is the nature of teachers' responses (interventions) toward student antisocial behaviour in the classroom?*
- Research question #2: *What level of skill do teachers show in their interventions?*
- Research question #3: *What reasons do teachers provide for their successes and failures with regard to student behaviour?*
- Research question #4: *What levels of co-operation and communication exist within the school (with principals and other staff members) and outside the school (with parents and community)?*

5.5.1.2 Phase Two: Participant observation

De Vos *et al.* (1998:278) credit Lindeman (1924) with having coined the term *participant observation*. Participant observation is one of the oldest methods of collecting and analysing data, coming into its own at the turn of the twentieth century. Participant observation observes human behaviour as it occurs in natural settings, where an observer can best seek to obtain *the ordinary, usual, typical, routine, or natural environment of human existence* (Jorgensen 1989:15).

There are several inherent strengths in the process of participant observation. First, it is a particularly appropriate and effective way to study *social behaviours that are best understood within their natural settings* (De Vos 1989:292). There are other ways, of course, of studying human behaviour, but those ways (such as through questionnaires and surveys) tend to be more artificial, and may force the subject into

responses that do not accurately reflect what is most accurate or truthful about a situation, opinion, or belief.

Second, the observer's participation (even to a limited degree) in the group's context and activity provides a rich understanding, when coupled with the observer's insights and empathy. Furthermore, it provides a more comprehensive perspective on the phenomena under examination. Information is obtained first-hand in this manner. Third, participant observers can make more complex inquiries. Whereas questions on a questionnaire or survey are predetermined and are *cast in stone* as it were, the participant observer is flexible and opportunistic, able to direct his focus as the situation may offer. Fourth, participant observation has an assurance of a degree of validity that other instruments and methods may lack. According to Wiseman and Aron (1970:53): "If the participant who is trying to 'pass' as a member of the group he is studying misinterprets some bit of interaction and then acts on the basis of his misinterpretation, the group will soon show him the error of his ways!"

In addition to the advantages of participant observation, De Vos *et al.* (1998:292-293) point out several disadvantages to the process. First, it can be time-consuming, and may be expensive, due to its labour-intensive nature. Second, it is quite dependent upon the observations of the researcher who launched the study. While this is an advantage if the researcher is inherently motivated and experienced, it may be a disadvantage when shaped by the researcher's possible biases. Third, because most participant observations consist of single case studies, the researcher must forego any claims toward generalisability. Fourth, particularly when there is a neophyte observer, there is the possibility that *floundering* may occur, or the feeling that little useful can come from this process. Finally, De Vos *et al.* (1998:292-293) say that because observations are time-consuming, boredom may set in when little new or remarkable has occurred over time.

In participant observation, the main recording tool is the field notebook, which is a log filled with descriptions of people, places, events, activities, and conversations;

in addition, it becomes a place for ideas, reflections, hunches, and notes about patterns that seem to be emerging. In the present investigation, field notes were taken in chronological order, into spiral notebooks. After each session, and before nightfall, the day's field notes were transcribed onto a Microsoft Word 97 document file to facilitate the coding, sorting, and interpretation of data.

Participant observations that are recorded into field notes were both descriptive and analytic. Descriptive notes included details, and dispassionate description of events as they are observed. As part of the transcription into a computer, observer comments (analytic notes) were added to the descriptive notes. This was an important part of the work, where patterns and themes emerged, as well as identification of problems, and development of questions.

5.5.1.3 Phase Three: *In-depth qualitative interviews*

For Phase III of the present investigation, teachers whose daily work involved dealing with youth violence were interviewed. Steinar Kvale (1983:174) describes the purpose of the qualitative research interview as the gathering of *descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena*. After a preliminary set of five interviews conducted with an interview-guide, the nine in-depth interviews were unstructured, in-depth interviews with the participants asked one single question: *What are your experiences with school violence?* Each interview was tape recorded, and each interview (including the five pilot interviews) were transcribed word-for-word. The transcript of each in-depth interview along with the transcribed field notes thus comprise the main source of data for the present investigation.

The in-depth interviews were guided by the four research questions. The researcher also considered Kvale's (1983:174-179) twelve aspects of the qualitative research interview as directors of the process of each interview:

- *Life-world*, which includes the life-world of the interviewee and his relation to it, as well as the central themes that the interviewee experiences.
- *Meaning*, which seeks to understand the meaning of what is said by the interviewee.
- *Qualitative* seeks the many nuances from the interviewee's experiences as possible.
- *Descriptive* emphasises the straightforward relaying of experiences by the interviewee with as little interpretation as possible.
- *Specificity* moves away from general opinions and toward specific actions, reactions and situations from the world of the interviewee.
- *Presuppositionless* implies that the interviewer should approach the interview with as few *ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation* as possible.
- *Focused* denotes attention that is paid to themes in the interviewee's life-world, being neither entirely non-directive nor strictly structured.
- *Ambiguity* should be eliminated, but not at the cost of artificially removing all contradiction from the interviewee's statements. These ambiguities may be *adequate reflections of objective contradictions of the world he lives in*.
- *Change* will occur as an interview proceeds; the interviewee may discover as he speaks that he wishes to revise something said earlier, or reflect more deeply on an earlier comment.

- *Sensitivity* is described as a *deliberate conscious naiveté on the part of the interviewer*, recognising that each interviewer possesses different abilities, yielding different depths of information gathered from the interviewee.
- *Interpersonal situation* describes the idea that interviews are interactions between two people, and the data that are generated are *constituted by the interaction itself*.
- *Positive experience* means that the interview may very well be an enjoyable, favourable experience for the interviewee, as it represents a possibly rare time when another person is actively listening to one's experiences, feelings and opinions with focus and a high degree of engagement.

5.5.2 Sampling

Sampling specifies how participants are to be selected in a study (Rosnow & Rosenthal 1996:413), involving the persons with whom the investigator will conduct the research.

- **Sampling method**

Purposeful sampling was used in selecting participants for this study. The target population for both the observation and in-depth interviews were teachers, employed in American public schools. The sampling frame for the participant observations consisted of teachers within their classrooms at elementary, middle and secondary levels in Vermont and New York. The sampling frame for the in-depth qualitative interviews consisted of African-American (Black) teachers who were working in schools (typically, inner-city schools) where violent behaviour was likely to be quite common. One teacher taught in Union City, New Jersey; one in Washington, DC; two in New York City; one teacher was from Kenya, who had recently relocated to Brooklyn, New York; one in Connecticut, one in rural Texas;

one in Alexandria, Virginia, and one in Pensacola, Florida. These educators were attending a summer residency in the West Indies, where the investigator interviewed each participant. All potential participants were Black African-American educators who were openly asked about the extent of violence within their schools. Those whose schools were characterised as being *violent* or *very violent* were invited to be included in the sampling frame. All nine (2 male, 7 female) who were invited agreed to be subjects for the in-depth interviews. Thus the sampling method was a combination of intense-case and critical-case sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:402).

5.5.3 Role of the researcher

The researcher used field observations and field notes in the participant observation phase to minimise bias. In both the observations and interviews, transcripts were made by the researcher from the field notes and tape-recorded interviews. Ethical measures were maintained, and participants were treated courteously, and thanked for their participation in the study.

5.6 DATA ANALYSIS

One of the great advantages to qualitative research is that hypotheses are not developed ahead of time. Instead of testing pre-determined guesses or ideas, participant observation in a naturalistic setting allows the researcher to *construct concepts, generalisations, models and theories that are grounded in or reflect intimate familiarity with the people in the setting under study* (Schurink 1995:282). Bogdan and Biklen (1982:29) have compared the process of data analysis to a funnel, since "things are open at the beginning (or top), and more directed and specific at the bottom".

5.6.1 Method of data analysis

Two approaches were used to analyse data in the present investigation. For Phase II (participant observation), the raw data were categorised according to eight propositional areas. These areas included: type, frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes, consequences, and human agency (Lofland & Lofland 1995:123). Examining the data in light of these propositional areas helped create an initial frame which was then used to create focused code categories (see Section 6.4.1).

For the main portion of the present investigation (nine in-depth interviews), Tesch's approach (De Vos *et al.* 1998:343-344) was used to analyse data generated. Tesch detailed eight steps in data analysis, which were followed by the investigator in the present investigation:

1. The researcher ought to get a sense of the whole by reading through all of the transcriptions carefully. He can then jot down some ideas as they come to mind.
2. The researcher selects one interview – e.g. the most interesting, the shortest, the one at the top of the pile – and goes through it asking *What is this about?* and thinking about the underlying meaning in the information. He writes thoughts that come up in the margin.
3. When the researcher has completed this task for several respondents, a list is made of all the topics. Similar topics are clustered together and formed into columns that might be arranged into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
4. The researcher takes the list and returns to the data. The topics are abbreviated as codes and the codes written next to the appropriate segments

of the text. The researcher tries out this preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.

5. The researcher finds the most descriptive wording for the topics and turns them into categories. He endeavours to reduce the total list of categories by grouping together topics that relate to each other. Lines are drawn between the categories to show interrelationships.
6. The researcher makes a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetises the codes.
7. The data material belonging to each category is assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis performed.
8. The researcher recodes existing data if necessary.

5.7 SUMMARY

The Aims of the Research, the Research Design, Research Methods, Data Collection, and Data Analysis have all been described above. The two data analysis approaches are described in greater detail below in Sections 6.4 and 6.5. The results of the research are also discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

RESUMÉ OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated earlier, the aims of the present research are twofold:

1. To explore how violent and antisocial behaviour are addressed in schools through socio-educational – rather than medical and criminal justice-- responses to student antisocial behaviour.
2. To draw up a plan for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour. Ultimately, the results of this research would inform teacher preparation programmes in ways that teachers can make effective interventions in preventing and/or responding to student antisocial and violent behaviour.

Toward this end, the present investigation collected data from two principal sources: participant observation (Phase II), and in-depth qualitative interviews (Phase III). Phase II research focused on observing the teacher-at-work, in the classroom, and it served to provide direction to be taken in Phase III, the in-depth interviews of teachers. The initial stage of Phase III consisted of in-depth interviews of five teachers teaching in schools where antisocial behaviour was a common problem, while the main stage of Phase III consisted of in-depth interviews of nine African-American teachers, all of whom were working in schools where violent student

behaviour was considered to be a serious problem. The results of data analysis are presented below. The literature control, along with conclusions and recommendations (guideline for the prevention of violent and antisocial behaviour), are presented in the final chapter, Chapter Seven.

6.2 ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING THE RESEARCH

The present research was guided by several assumptions: The school, and more specifically, the teacher's behaviour within the classroom, represents a key unit of analysis given its role in secondary socialisation. Classrooms are themselves communities in microcosm, where students learn how to get along with others, and how to get their needs met. Other assumptions are that there is a connection between a teacher's behaviour-what a teacher says and does-and student behaviour. Through qualitative methods, this study attempted to reveal information about this connection through participant observation and qualitative research interviews.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESTATED

As set forth in Chapter Four, the main research questions for the present investigation comprised four in number:

- Research question #1: *What is the nature of teachers' responses (interventions) toward student antisocial and violent behaviour in the classroom? What is the relationship between teacher interventions and prosocial student behaviour?*

- Research question #2: *What level of skill do teachers show in their interventions? Do successful teachers utilise a social-constructivist or a functionalist-behaviourist model in the classroom?*

- Research question #3: *What reasons do teachers provide for their successes and failures with regard to student antisocial and violent behaviour? Do teachers see themselves as efficacious, capable of making a difference in students' behaviour?*

- Research question #4: *What levels of co-operation and communication exist within the school (with principals and other staff members) and outside the school (with parents and community)? What support do teachers receive from their supervisors and their communities? What support do they need?*

6.4 RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION (PHASE II)

Phase II (participant observation) data was initially analysed using content analysis, involving the discovery of unifying ideas, and the creation of codes (Berg 2001: 238). Once the participant observations were transcribed (raw data), they were read and categorised according to Lofland and Lofland's (1995:123) eight propositional areas, namely, type, frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes, consequences, and human agency. These propositional areas served to create a framework for data analysis in qualitative research called *social science framing* (Lofland & Lofland 1995:182). This framing allowed the data to emerge, and not be forced to fit into predetermined categories, while allowing the main and recurrent themes to be identified. These main and recurring themes were the first set of codes. Codes from the propositional areas were then examined in light of each of the four research questions (above in section 6.3). This process resulted in the focused code categories and is represented by the following formula:

Raw data → Propositional areas → Coded data;
Coded data + Research questions → Focused code categories

It is important to point out that, at the beginning of data analysis was a free identification of emergent issues that were embedded in the pages of transcribed observations and interviews. These issues became codes as they began to cluster together, and were not originally related to or guided by the four research questions. They were allowed to proceed from the transcripts in a naturalistic fashion, not predetermined by fixed hypotheses or predictions. This process allowed a richness of analysis not possible with a purely quantitative approach. Finally, each of the four research questions were once again considered, in light of the data that had emerged.

6.4.1 Results of the content analysis of data, observations

The focused code categories that emerged from the process were six in number. These were: the *frequency, type, quality, and success* of teacher interventions, the classroom's *theoretical/practical* orientation, and the presence or absence of *violent behaviour*. (At first, the *nature of incidents* of student antisocial behaviour were also tallied, but this had to be abandoned given the wide variety of antisocial behaviour observed, as well as the frequency of these antisocial behaviours.) Including sex (female or male), a total of seven coded categories were established. Within these seven focused code categories, a total of 19 discrete variables were seen to exist: These were: sex (male or female); frequency of teachers' interventions (high, moderate, low); type of teacher intervention (desists, guides, both); quality of teachers' interventions (caring, neutral, uncaring); level of skill/success (successful, mixed, unsuccessful); teacher's main theoretical/practical orientation (behaviourist/functionalist, social-constructivist/complexity, other/*laissez-faire*); and presence of violent behaviour (no instances noted, one or more instances noted). Since it cannot be assumed what the teachers' inner motives or philosophies were, the term *theoretical/practical orientation* was adopted, reflecting the fact that the (unobservable) theoretical orientation is assumed from the (observable) practice.

Almost all teachers in Phase II were White, with one Hispanic teacher, and most appeared to be middle-class or upper-middle class. Seventy-six teachers (75%) were female; twenty-five teachers (25%) were male. Observations took place between September, 2000 and February, 2001 in the United States, in public elementary, middle, and high school classrooms in the states of New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Each teacher observed gave his or her consent to be observed prior to each observation. Since the researcher is also a faculty member in the Vermont State College system and received partial financial support for the costs of this research, approval of the study was requested, and approval was granted, by the College's three-member Institutional Review Board in 2000.

Each observation was assigned an identification number from 1 to 101, and each observation coded using letters and/or letters and numerals to anonymously refer to each teacher (Mr A, Ms BB, Ms A3, etc). A Participant Observation Master Data Sheet was created, containing the coded data in each of the nineteen discrete categories (See Appendix A). The focused codes included the following:

6.4.1.1 Frequency of teacher intervention

Content analysis revealed that there was a fairly wide variation in the number of interventions made by teachers. Interventions were instances where the teacher interacted with the students, either through desists (negative statements telling students to stop doing something, typically, individual or group misbehaviour), or through guides (positive statements telling students what they should be doing, typically, giving directions or guidance to individuals or groups). Forty-six teachers (46%) made five or fewer interventions during the hour-long observation (the Low group), twenty-five (25%) made between six and nine interventions (the Medium group), and thirty teachers (30%) made ten or more interventions (High group).

6.4.1.2 *Type of teacher interventions*

Desists were the most common type of teacher intervention observed. Desists are, by definition, commands to stop doing something ("Stop talking to your neighbour!"), while guides, by definition, are commands to do something, rather than to stop doing something ("Please work on your report"). Teachers were categorised by the number of desists and guides they made during the observation. Forty-three teachers (43%) relied mainly on desists; twenty-two (22%) relied mainly on guides, and the remaining 36 teachers (36%) relied on both fairly equally.

6.4.1.3 *Quality of teacher interventions*

The quality of each teacher's predominant approach in making interventions was also noted. There were teachers who seemed unusually accepting, warm, supportive, and enthusiastic in their interactions with students. Eleven teachers (11%) were categorised as *caring* in the quality of their interventions. By far the largest group were teachers who were *neutral* in their dealings: they were neither especially caring or uncaring, but were business-like. There were 83 teachers (83%) whose interventions fell in this group. Seven teachers were characterized as *uncaring*, providing harsh, sarcastic, and/or punitive responses – or providing no response – to students. This uncaring group was comprised of 7 teachers (7%).

6.4.1.4 *Level of skill/success*

By the end of each hour-long observation, it became clear that there were very different outcomes for students in different classes. Although a *good day in school* is comprised of many different factors, and is likely to be experienced differentially from person-to-person, the observer could, however, get a holistic sense after an hour's observation as to whether or not the time spent by students was a time of achievement – generally profitable and beneficial to students – or was *unproductive*, a partial or utter waste of time. Teachers showed different levels of skill/success in

this area, and each observation was read and re-read, then judged to have been successful or unsuccessful. Forty-seven classes observed were judged as successful (47%), twenty (20%) were unsuccessful, and thirty-four (34%) were mixed, or difficult to classify, or having roughly equal parts that were successful or unsuccessful.

6.4.1.5 *Teacher's theoretical/practical orientation*

Just as there was an overall sense that the time had been well-spent or poorly-spent, there was also a fairly obvious representation of each teacher's main theoretical/practical orientation that emerged from each observation. Most classes revealed a theoretical/practical orientation that was reflective of a *functionalist*, or behaviourist model. In these instances, classes were traditional, teacher-led, and product-focused, with relatively little student social interaction. Typically, in these classrooms, students were expected to work independently, quietly, and without consulting others. Reinforcers and punishers (behavioural consequences) were used to a great extent in these functionalist classes. (Indeed, most interventions in this type classroom were desists, typically involving the teacher demanding that the student stop talking to a neighbour or neighbours.) Fifty-two classrooms (52%) were coded as functionalist/behaviourist.

In contrast to the behaviourist model, twenty-seven classrooms (27%) were coded as reflective of the *social-constructivist model*. In these classrooms, instruction was more student-centred, with more social interaction, focusing less on product than on process. There was a great deal of discourse and discussion, and student activity, in these classrooms, as well as a higher level of social interaction student-to-student. Students typically had projects and/or long-term assignments to work on.

As the observations proceeded, a third type of classroom model appeared. It consisted of a classroom that had no obvious, clearly-defined, or strong theoretical/practical orientation. The term *laissez-faire* came to mind when observing these classes. Nineteen classes (19%) were coded as *laissez-faire*.

Judging by the behaviour observed, students in laissez-faire classes had little idea of limits or expectations, teachers made relatively few interventions (in twelve out of the nineteen laissez-faire coded classes, the number of interventions were low). But more ominous was the finding that the majority of classrooms considered to be unsuccessful (65%) were also classrooms in this laissez-faire category. Although violent behaviour was seen in fewer than 10% of all classes observed, *violent behaviour was more likely to be seen in laissez-faire classrooms*, compared to either the functionalist-behaviourist or social-constructivist classrooms.

6.4.1.6 Observed antisocial and violent behaviour

As stated above, there were so many incidents of antisocial behaviour that the noting of specific incidents of antisocial behaviour had to be abandoned during the observations. In about one-fourth to one-third of all classrooms observed, the frequency of antisocial behaviours was substantial; in some cases there were thirty to fifty incidents in one hour. These antisocial behaviours included rudeness, vulgar words, belching, interrupting other students and/or adults, scribbling on another student's papers, excluding peers from joining an activity, taking and hiding another student's pen, making inappropriate noises, and a variety of other uncivil behaviours. While these behaviours were not *violent* behaviours, antisocial behaviours such as these noted did proliferate in classes that ultimately saw one or more violent incidents.

It is further noted that there appeared to be no clear relationship between antisocial behaviour by students and teacher proximity, although student antisocial behaviours were less common when the teacher was within very close proxemic range. When a teacher physically approached a misbehaving student, that student's behaviour became somewhat moderated, but with respect to the effects of teacher proximity on entire classes of students, factors other than the physical distance seemed to have a stronger effect on student behaviour. These factors included the frequency, type, and quality of teacher interventions.

With specific reference to violent student behaviour, there were one or more instances of in-classroom violence seen in nine classrooms (9%), and there was no incident of student violence observed in 92 classroom observations (92%). *Violent behaviour* referred to incidents of physical violence; it was exclusively student-to-student (not one incident of student-to-teacher or teacher-to-student), and typically, violence involved the hitting of another student with the hand or clenched fist by a student. Of the nine instances where student violence was noted, in seven cases only one instance of violence was observed. However, in the remaining two observations, one hour-long observation contained three instances of observed violence, and in the most extreme case observed, one hour-long observation contained four instances of violent behaviour.

6.5 RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS (PHASE III)

The second source of data was provided by in-depth interviews (Phase III). There were two stages to this Phase: a preliminary stage, followed by the main stage. The preliminary stage consisted of interviews with five teachers; through site selection, this group was drawn from a population of teachers who were almost exclusively White, middle-class, teaching in mostly-rural schools in the north-eastern United States. The main stage consisted of interviews with nine African-American (Black) teachers, drawn through site selection from areas and schools where violence was common.

6.5.1 Results of analysis of data from in-depth interviews, preliminary stage

The five teachers interviewed in the preliminary stage of Phase III were full-time, regular classroom teachers assigned to teach in the elementary and middle-level schools (grades one through six). All were White; four were women, one teacher was male. They all taught in Vermont public schools, and were each experienced teachers with teaching experience ranging from five to twenty-seven years. The following categories were the coded results areas from the observations which were

explored in these early in-depth interviews, and were the results of the four research questions.

6.5.1.1 Teachers' theoretical/practical orientation

Teachers interviewed in the preliminary stage of Phase III revealed a largely functionalist-behaviourist orientation, emphasising rules and consequences for misbehaviour in the classroom.

One teacher said:

We always start off the year with class meetings and determine classroom rules. So they (students) decide the rules that they are going to go with and then we talk about consequences if they don't meet those rules. So they have a kind of guideline of kind of what to go with.

The same teacher developed a system of tangible rewards for good behaviour—a ticket system—that she felt was helpful, even though she acknowledged that she *hated it* because the system is put into play when behaviour deteriorates, and she felt that she must publicly recognise when students are behaving well.

She added:

I developed a ticket system ... that I have done with the kids forever. ... it is a little bribery ... but it's just my acknowledgement of those kids ... who go above and beyond, and letting me know that you were sitting patiently while I was talking to somebody ... I don't think we acknowledge those who are doing the right thing enough.

6.5.1.2 *Attributions for success and failure*

Teachers interviewed took personal responsibility for their successes and failures, attributing both to their personal efforts and abilities. As an example, one teacher said that:

The teacher's role in student behaviour is probably one of the most important components of students' behaviour. I think the teacher sets the tone in the classroom ... establishes ground rules early on, that the students know what they are.

Another teacher echoed this idea, adding that he achieved success by not only trying to prevent antisocial behaviour and violence through his setting limits, but by *anticipating* when the misbehaviour might be occurring:

I think that there are students in particular that have some behaviours that are disruptive to the classroom. That in order for me to be successful with that student I have to intercede and almost predict settings where I know that behaviour might be happening. I need to set an extremely firm boundary as to what is acceptable and what isn't and then stick to it. And not change ... if I don't set a strict boundary and stay with it right away, it's going to really hurt that child's ability to accomplish anything down the road.

6.5.1.3 *Quality of teacher-student relationship*

Each teacher attributed his or her success to the quality of the teacher-student relationship. Although each teacher interviewed was primarily of a functionalist-behaviourist-orientation, none was so extremely so that he or she dismissed the importance of a relationship between teacher and student.

As stated by one teacher:

I personally believe (the reasons for my success) is in my relationship with the students individually. My ability to show I love them ... the "love-with-firm-boundaries" is what it's all about.

This interview finding paralleled the observation finding that most successful classroom teachers were either behaviourist/functionalist or complexity/social-constructivist in their theoretical/practical orientation. Two of the five teachers interviewed were teaching in schools that utilised the Responsive Classroom, a program that emphasises a school-wide focus on social-cognitive interventions, which several researchers have cited as an effective response to violent and antisocial behaviour (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaudry & Samples, 1996; Wiist, Jackson & Jackson 1996). This program is behaviourist in philosophy, as it relies on consequences and rewards as shapers of student behaviour.

6.5.1.4 Importance of the home and community

Despite the fact that each teacher expressed confidence in his or her ability to affect student behaviour, one teacher was hesitant to define her degree of responsibility toward students in her classroom, preferring to point to the students' home and family issues. She said that her *hands were tied*, offering as an example the revelation that her efforts to secure special education services for a difficult child had not been successful, due to forces beyond her control:

We did all the legal things, (but) there was refusal on the part of the family, and from there it goes along with their child: If they're not going to help, then what can we do at that point?

The other four teachers acknowledged the value of support from students' families, but gave more weight to the value of the teacher's efforts, than they did to the negative effect of a student's non-supportive home and family.

6.5.1.5 *Level of support*

All of the teachers interviewed experienced co-operation from the administration and staff within the school. Indicators of that co-operation were the establishment of school-wide behaviour management programs (like the above-mentioned Responsive Classroom), as well as the presence of support staff including guidance personnel, the school's principal as an ally, and parents who volunteered within the school.

What support was missing was a sense among teachers of a shared, unifying philosophy: One teacher missed *having a middle-school-level philosophy*, while two other teachers wished for more support from parents, specifically, from parents who would be more interested in their child's work and behaviour in school. One teacher could not think of any way in which she wished for more support, feeling that she was in a highly supportive situation (she was indeed in an overly supportive situation, being in a school in a wealthy community where so many parents are well-educated, highly active, and make extensive demands on the school and its teachers to adjust the curriculum to suit what they see as being their own child's needs).

The observations revealed how essential was the teacher's creation of a positive context in the classroom, *irrespective of the level of support* from within the school (principal, support staff) or without (parents, community members). This is not to say that support was unimportant, but its existence or absence was not clearly observable. More obvious were the effects seen when teachers set clear behavioural limits, and/or teachers who proactively guided students to be engaged in interesting activities. In sum, the proactive teacher becomes empowered with support; the teacher who is not proactive cannot become so through strong support. That

support must first be internalised within the teacher before he or she enters the classroom.

6.5.2 Analysis of data from in-depth interviews, main stage

This stage of Phase III of the investigation was seen as the culmination of the present research, since so much preliminary investigation had taken place, and because these in-depth interviews were not only deeper than the preliminary stage, but they involved African-American (Black) educators in schools where violence was a relatively common occurrence. Thus, the analysis of the data from this area, as well as the literature control, will be most extensive, and will form the basis for guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour (see Chapter 7).

Of the nine teachers interviewed in this later stage, one teacher was working the past year as a school social worker in the Pensacola, Florida school system. The other educators were teachers teaching in predominantly Black schools, typically located in the inner-city. The schools were located in Brooklyn, New York; New York City; Washington, DC; Union City, New Jersey; Alexandria, Virginia, rural Texas, and Pensacola, Florida. All educators were born in the USA, except for one Kenyan teacher who had moved to New York City three years ago. Seven participants were women, two were male. Their teaching experience ranged from 3 to 32 years. These educators were part of a group of 70 educators attending an international summer educational residency program in Basseterre, capital of the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis, in the West Indies.

It is important to point out that analysis of data from these in-depth Phase III interviews were performed independent of earlier findings in Phases II and III. Since the interview sample was of African-American educators working in schools that were generally quite violent places, *the researcher dismissed any assumptions that their experiences with school violence were similar to – or dissimilar to – the previous groups observed and interviewed in earlier phases.*

A set of written transcripts was made from the nine tape-recorded interviews, and the qualitative analysis proceeded according to Tesch's approach (see section 5.6.1) (De Vos et al. 1998:343). This process produced four main categories that influenced the existence and degree of violent student behaviour: the teacher's qualities, the classroom context, the school context, and the role of parents. Within the four main categories, a total of nine subcategories were identified as having a significant relationship in preventing and responding to violent and antisocial behaviour. Teacher qualities included: personal teaching efficacy, and personal caring relationship to students. The classroom context encompassed academic activity orientation, classroom as a community, classroom ownership, as well as classroom rules and expectations. Deep administrative support, and attitude/role of police in school toward students were subcategories of the school context. Level of involvement and support by parents, on the other hand, were subcategories of the role of the parents. Although no hierarchical order is inherent in the following presentation, those categories listed first (the teacher, and the classroom context) were more influential as preventives of student violence than the latter two categories (the school context and parents and community).

6.5.2.1 *The teacher's qualities*

The analysis revealed that the teacher himself or herself plays a most prominent role in student discipline, and his or her qualities heavily influence whether or not violent behaviour will be exhibited in the classroom. Two manifestations of a teacher's qualities were specifically related to the prevention of violence, or the minimisation of likelihood that students would act in a violent or antisocial manner. These two subcategories identified were: *personal teaching efficacy*, and a *personal caring relationship* with students.

- Personal teaching efficacy

Personal teaching efficacy is the belief that teachers can have an important positive effect on students (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:436). Teachers successful in preventing violence and responding to violence showed a belief they held that their efforts *could* and *would* be successful. One New York City teacher said he welcomed the challenge of difficult students:

The principal puts the (violent) student in my room. Because I appear to have the ability to deal with the most difficult students in the school. Yes, I am a male, but it my vision for students that is different ... I love difficult students; my satisfaction is that if you can move a child from A to B, not only in mathematics and reading and science, but in behaviour, then you are successful. For if you cannot change social behaviour, it is more difficult to change academic behaviour.

Another showed a belief that the teacher could bring about positive behaviour:

Some teachers think that the difficult student does not want to learn. I do not believe this. I believe that all students want to learn. The problem is how to understand my students. Are you willing to change? If not, you will not be successful. I try to see the student and his behaviour. As opposed to being traumatised by the student's behaviour, I do not focus on the negative side ... some teachers spend much time analysing negative behaviour. I don't. I focus on what is positive, and encourage that.

A teacher in Virginia said:

I stay on top of my kids. Any problems I see I try to jump right on them. We talk about it. I contact parents and have them come in to

talk with me ... (our) schools have problems with violence; a couple of kids have brought in knives, but no violence in my classroom.

In the present investigation, personal teaching efficacy permeated every other category and subcategory. The following pattern emerged: A teacher who was high in personal teaching efficacy also initiated contact with parents, and tried to build positive relationships with the school principal and administration. A second pattern was as follows: Teaching efficacy is also connected to the way that teachers set up their classrooms, and delivered instruction to the students. Teachers interviewed who were successful in addressing violence also tended to have certain *personal* qualities that carried into their *professional* lives as teachers: They were self-confident as teachers, and self-reliant, although they did avail themselves of support outside the classroom when it was available and/or appropriate to do so. Teachers who were successful in preventing violence were self-reliant in that they were confident of their ability to teach and to bring about change in their students. One clearly stated:

Teaching is a calling, a career that is different from any other field. You are a leader, a shaper of minds, and values. A youngster is special. The teacher must be willing to change. If not, then you have to leave the field. Because it's about change. Students come in with many different values. So I have to change the student, but must change myself before I can change my students.

One teacher was very clear about the importance of self-reliance:

We have a lot of problems in our school. My principal says, "Don't send a child to the office unless it is really serious." So I handle things in my own classroom.

Another teacher in an inner-city school said:

I don't use conflict resolution to undermine the rules. But I think that once you begin to expel students, you are weak. I am not saying you should die in your room, but should devise a plan to deal with your problems – as long as you don't violate the law – to deal with your problems in your room. Let's say you are hired as a manager for a system or business. And (if) every time a problem arises, you have to go outside to find a solution, you won't have a business for very long.

■ **Personal caring relationship to students**

An important pattern that was identified is the following: Teachers successful in dealing with school violence sought to know their students as individuals; to have a professional yet personal relationship. This was shown through the conversations with students they had, that dealt with what was important in the students' lives. They were very aware that students today had different needs. One teacher said:

The first hour of school every day, Monday through Friday, we talk about love, we talk about life. The kids are not getting much socialisation at home. As a teacher, we talk about everything; we talk about sex, we talk about love, we talk about God, we talk about nature ... we talk about a television show that really bothered them; we talk about the news. "Why did that happen?" "Why couldn't the adults stop it better?" We talk about why the police didn't come to my house last night because Mama did call, so now this person is in jail, or worse. What about those people who stole from my parents?

Another said:

Children today come to class with issues that were not there when we were in school. And there are not those people in their support group; in their families, who they can talk to. They need to believe

that you the teacher will be their resource, but also will be there when they need you. See you as their advocate.

After the interview, one teacher said that the key element between teacher and student was *about the relationship, not the rules*. He emphasised how important trust, love and respect were, even when the student misbehaves:

A sense of trust, especially at the beginning of the school year. And the students must believe the teacher loves and respects them. Even if the student fails, even if a student acts disrespectfully, we have to tell him he is still loved, and there is another day.

Another teacher went beyond the expected norm in creating and maintaining a positive relationship with a student who attempted to insult him, modelling his behaviour as a teaching device for other students:

I was teaching conflict resolution to my class. I was teaching them how to nullify a negative statement. They were very excited about it. I told them of how I was walking by the junior high school, and this young girl looked at me and said: "You so ugly!" And I responded, "Thank you." She said, "Why did you say 'thank you'?" I said, "Because you look at a person ugly as a negative, but I thought you looked at me so long before you concluded that I was 'ugly'." And by using a negative statement I could become positive, and that moves them (the students).

Mrs X showed caring by the way she acted outside of school, seeing her student in a potentially dangerous situation. Mrs X saw her student *Marika* standing outside of school, talking to a man in a car:

Marika was beautiful; she was fourteen but looked much older. I'm like a mother hen, and tried to protect the child. A prostitution ring was starting. Marika was talking by the car, and fortunately, she respected me. She didn't say "Shut up teacher" when I said, "Can you come to Mrs X (myself)? I want you to do this errand for me," whispering to the child "and I don't want you talking to these people. This isn't right, honey."

The teacher was confronted by the principal, because Marika's parents came to school to complain, saying it was not the teacher's business. The parents wanted the child to be making extra money that way. The teacher continued:

The principal said he was arranging counselling for the parents. Later on, they were appreciative, but the problems continued (with other students). So now we keep the students inside during lunch, just to reduce their exposure to bad influences.

In the present investigation, successful teachers clearly fit the definition of high impact teachers, and this was particularly true of African-American teachers, who often worked under circumstances that placed a high premium on their personal teaching efficacy. Since supports for teachers in inner-city schools are not as common or reliable as in White, middle-class American public schools, successful African-American teachers had to draw on their personal strengths and qualities to find success with students. These teachers dealt each day with a culture of violence that included hostility, threats, intimidation, fighting, drugs, theft, and prostitution rings. Few of these existed in the world of the first group of teachers interviewed, who worked in mostly middle-class schools where violence was uncommon.

6.5.2.2 *The classroom context*

A pattern emerged where the context of the classroom as created and managed by the teacher had a powerful effect on preventing and minimising the effects of student violence. Four subcategories were identified: academic activity orientation, classroom as a community, classroom ownership, and classroom rules and expectations.

- **Academic activity orientation**

Classrooms where violence was rare were classrooms where students were engaged in their work. One teacher was asked by the interviewer, *If I walked into your classroom, what would it look like?* She replied:

Groups. We work in groups a lot. So that they can learn from each other ... They must ask a neighbour the question if they have a problem before they come to me.

Teachers identified the importance of working in groups, even when it was in a non-academic area. One teacher mentioned the *Second Home* program, where children receive group counselling in school:

... we have counsellors for the parents. We as teachers are at the lower rung; we are pre-counsellors. Many students have parents in jail, so these type programs are important for the children. It's called the "Second Home," and they help out drug-related situations. It's paid for by the city, which gets millions from the state, because we have such a need.

- Classroom as a community

Teachers who were successful in preventing violence described their classrooms as places where there was a sense of shared social experiences. These teachers' classrooms were not places that encouraged confrontation, and teachers did not foster oppositional behaviour by pitting students against each other. Most clearly, their classrooms were not laissez-faire (disengaged). Given the high impact teaching of the successful teachers, students were not left to their own devices.

In particular, successful teacher efforts against violent behaviour included the teacher's actively working to take advantage of the classroom as a tool for student socialisation. This was seen in each of the teachers interviewed, to different degrees.

One said:

I change the (students') desks around every month, so it helps them get along and help each other.

Another said:

This is like we are re-civilising them; recreating a new civilisation. We – teachers, administrators, police – must say "we are here for you."

Several teachers claimed that teachers must go *beyond the call*, that even when a student misbehaves, teachers and schools must not push the student out of the community:

If you don't make this community bond, there will definitely be more school violence ... Even children when arrested, I say, "Yes, you stole. You did wrong, but we want to help you stop doing that."

The theme of expecting respect in the classroom was a powerful theme among teachers interviewed:

If you're fair, respect them (students) and allow them to have their say. I start each day by saying "Good morning," "Good afternoon." The students say to me, "You're the only teacher who speaks this way; who expects us to respect each other." The teacher establishes boundaries. In order to get respect you have to give it ... and know what the expectations are.

Another strong theme was conveying a sense of safety to students who live in violent communities. These teachers served as a sort of *buffer* between the child and the culture of violence:

If teachers are afraid, if kids are being dragged out of school in handcuffs, what can we do? Take the school back. Take the school back ... serve notice to the students. They are our clients. If it means locking the doors, making sure no one walks the halls alone, clean up graffiti, have team teachers. Have two adults – four eyes are always better than two – Say to the kids, "As long as you are here you are safe. Drug dealers cannot deal with you, they can't touch you. As long as you are doing what you are supposed to be doing, the police can't touch you. This is a safe haven.

Another teacher working in rural Texas said:

My classroom, to the best of my ability, I try to make it safe for everyone. I'm a firm believer that if the brain perceives threat, then you're not going to learn. By the end of the term, my classroom is a community of learners. Threats ... aggressive behaviour ... and

derogatory remarks are not allowed. It is acceptable to disagree, but not acceptable to be disrespectful to anyone else.

An important pattern indicated that every successful teacher in the present investigation placed a great emphasis on creating and maintaining a safe classroom, where students respected each other, and were respected by the teacher. Again, this was a difficult task for the African-American teachers, because they were working in schools where violence was common. This sample of teachers could not take for granted that their students would bring into the classroom middle-class behaviours that would work well in a classroom, although successful teachers did assume that children held within themselves the *desire* for safety, and being valued and accepted, and held students to high expectations.

■ Classroom ownership

This category seemed to have no middle ground. Teachers who were effective in preventing violence had clear ownership of and responsibility for the classroom-- that was the pattern. Classrooms where students were violent were classrooms where ownership was unclear, or was clearly in the hands of students and/or gang members.

Children will test teachers. Reputation is very important. There are some teachers who have a reputation of letting anything go. There are some teachers who set the ground rules. I set the ground rules on day one. I tell the students: "We're playing a game. And the name of the game is 'I Win'." ... I have a reputation of being tough, but fair.

At the conclusion of one interview, a teacher summarised matters by saying:

I don't know if I am a very good candidate to discuss school violence, because I tend to nip it in the bud.

On the other hand, teachers who are not strong classroom leaders can get caught up in – become a part of – the culture of violence, and they struggle when that violence – or threat of violence – reduces him or her to being a victim, a hostage, or both:

There is a lot of gang-related fighting. Students who are Hispanic come from different nations, like the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico. The students look to the gang leaders, instead of to the teacher. Authority is taken from the teacher, especially when we have to call in the police.

Another educator spoke of being a victim of violence, and was also held hostage to rival gangs in her classroom:

I had two different gangs in my class when I was teaching high school. I had asked a student "How come you didn't do your homework?" and the student got smart with me. A rival gang member stood up to him, and he threatened to kill the student. So I had to actually divide my classroom: One gang over here, and the other gang over there. They did come to class because they knew I cared; I did teach them how to read. But my protection came from the rival gangs, not from the administration.

Some had to literally and figuratively *shut their doors* to the bedlam outside their classroom, drawing a line that demarcated their classroom from the rest of the world. This quality of classroom ownership is related to personal teaching efficacy, and in classrooms where ownership was clearly by the teacher, violent and antisocial behaviour was not likely to flourish. On the other hand, in classrooms owned by student gangs, the threat of violence always lurked just beneath the surface. The teacher is disempowered in such circumstances, and is placed in a *no-win* situation. Seeking help from the school administration (or worse, from the

police) can result in the teacher's life being threatened by the students, while giving in to the ownership of the classroom by gangs that place the teacher under their control, destroying his or her authority as a teacher.

■ Classroom rules and expectations

An important pattern that was observed concerns the role of classroom rules and expectations. Violent behaviour was prevented by ensuring that rules and expectations were clearly conveyed to students, and furthermore, by ensuring that students had *internalised* the expectations and rules. This was achieved through in-class, active discussion of the rules and expectations. In addition, the expectations were modelled by the teacher, and students were expected to show, through their behaviour, that these rules and expectations had been internalised. One teacher said:

I don't allow students to fail, and have high expectations. I don't accept late work. You're expected to have your work each day; you're expected to have your notebook for this class.

Another teacher said:

Teach teachers to have routines, to solve problems. Tell students there are rules to follow, and if you follow them consistently, you will get answers, you will get results. The rules you set up in the community I call the classroom ... follow the same rules, but not rules for rigidity, but (for) positive behavioural expectations.

The teachers in the present investigation who were successful in situations of school violence taught students rules, but went beyond the teaching by also expecting the internalisation of those rules – they sought for students to actually understand and

behave according to the rules, creating a social contract between teacher and student.

6.5.2.3 *The school context*

■ **Deep administrative support**

Two patterns could be identified regarding support from administration. Teachers received support from the school administration, but support was of two different types: functional, general level support, and deeper, personal level support. Both types were valuable in preventing violence, but in different ways. General level support included the support available to teachers that is widely available in American schools, including schools in the inner-city. This support includes brush-up courses, workshops on curriculum, informational meetings, and various school-wide programs (usually conflict resolution, violence prevention, and drug prevention programs).

Deeper, personal level support was support that was received personally: *When I need the principal's support, will it be there? Will the principal support my decisions, and my authority as a teacher? Can I rely on immediate support if there is a violent incident? Do I have other personnel (school counsellor, school psychologist) upon whom I can rely if violent behaviour is threatened?* Personal level support was the more valuable type of support in preventing and responding to violent behaviour.

There is violence in the school district I now am in. In the neighbourhood, too. About two years ago we had many students in the fourth grade get into physical fights ... they started to physically abuse each other on the playground, after school, before school, on the school bus ... So they (the school administration) started with peer conflict resolution, one block of students at a time. We taught them how to handle conflict, how to handle aggression, and the

guidance counsellors opened their doors for students who wanted to come in to talk with them ... these programs seemed to help.

Another teacher found general level support from her administration to be present, but did not see it extend to any deeper, personal level:

If you want to go to a workshop, or bring in a presenter, they are supportive. Provide training, which I found useful. But as far as follow-through when there needs to be discipline, it's not very supportive of the teachers. Once ... the behaviour demands a disciplinary intervention strategy, it's not always there with the administration. They don't follow through. Nothing happens after it's reported to them ... I don't think students *must* have punishment ... but there *must* be consequences, (even if it is only for the student) to talk to the principal and have a discussion of what happened.

One teacher takes an active position in seeking deep support from the principal. She invites the principal of her large urban high school to visit her classroom regularly, in order to speak to the students, and respond to their questions:

Once a month, I have the principal in to "sit on the hot seat," and talk about some of the things that annoy them (students) ... I come back to communication: These are the best ways to prevent violent things from happening. I may disagree with you, but you will be heard.

Another teacher sees gang activity as fostering school violence.

I think of gang activity, because it's been in the news. We've (teachers) received quite a bit of training on gang awareness. You can't do the hand-signs that gang members exchange with each

other. If they act like a "wanna-be" gang member, (we) treat it like it's a real gang member.

- **Attitude/role of police in school toward students**

In all of the schools in which interview participants worked, there were police and/or security guards, typically, municipal police from the city police force. The presence of police, by itself, did not ensure that a school would experience less violence. The pattern that appeared was related to *how the police were regarded* by the students and teachers. In some schools, police were viewed with hostility and fear, while in other schools, police were seen as friendly and supportive. In a third case, police were seen to be harmless and innocuous. One teacher spoke of the ineffective role of police in her school with regard to the prevention of violence:

Then a policy was put into place where an officer was assigned to the school. It didn't stop anything; it didn't make a difference. The students already made up their minds what they were going to do; they knew exactly how to plan things ... the police would hang out in the (school's) office. Talking to the secretaries. You were basically on your own.

On the other hand, police can provide support for the teacher. In her school just outside New York City, a high school teacher speaks of her school's security as being both available and responsive:

Students are not allowed to have book bags in school because a weapon could be placed in it. If there's someone in the school who doesn't look familiar ... we have telephones in our classrooms ... I call the office and tell them I need Security, and someone will be there in a matter of seconds. There is a Security (officer) for each house (school division); for house A, B, C and D.

Another educator had a similar sense of security based on her expectation of an immediate and reliable response:

We have a committee, called "Red Button." If you push the red button in the classroom, there are these people who have been trained in (student) restraint who will come in and they have to restrain the student. To break them up. We teachers have been told to not step in between students who are fighting – our principal stepped right in the middle of a fight and a girl broke his nose –

If this committee cannot calm the child down, the child is arrested by police. She continued:

We are to dial 911 (emergency telephone number in the USA) and the children will be arrested ... (Recently) this boy was running down the hallway, hitting people. He was completely out of control

On the other hand, one teacher characterised the police in her school as being well-trained and paternal, and thus more effective in the prevention of violence:

There's an after school program, a club, a summer program, and they all hold activities that prevent drug abuse. It is successful, and it uses the police. The police lieutenants are like fathers to some of our students. They can't just go into the schools to arrest. They receive training, or they would be beaten up, shot, or killed.

The present investigation identified, through the eyes of teachers, the different ways in-school police are regarded by students. Some are perceived to be threatening, others are harmless, innocuous and often invisible, while in some cases, police are regarded as friendly, and supportive of students. In the present study, teachers did feel supported by the fact that police were in the school, but only when the police

were accessible, and did not create an adversarial relationship with students that made life more difficult for the teacher.

6.5.2.4 Parental involvement and support

- Level of involvement and support by parents

Even the most successful of teachers felt frustrated by how difficult it was for a teacher to try to counter the effects of violence in the home, and the lack of support children receive from their parents. One educator said:

If I could change anything, I would like to see more parents involved with their children. More parents being supportive, being there with their children. Some parents don't even show up in court when their children have been in juvenile detention. (Why is this? Are they embarrassed?) *No, they just don't care; they just don't want to be bothered.*

Another added:

There's a lot that needs to be said about the home. Family structure. Parents need to be more involved. Parents need to be aware of what's going on with their children. I have a lot of parents who (when I call) aren't home, and they don't know if their child is hanging out at 11 o'clock at night, or who their friends are ... I can come home from a movie now and see one of my students outside at 11 o'clock at night, on the streets ... a fourth grade boy.

This subcategory was particularly valuable in preventing violence when there was a connection to the parents, and it was *teacher-initiated*; when teachers had

purposely sought some personal contact with and/or personal knowledge of the parents and/or home situation.

This is a powerful preventive, when initiated by the teacher:

Many parents have two and three jobs. If we can get the parents to say to their child, "If I have to leave my job to come to school, because of you," this would help us by supporting what we do. A little bit of pressure from the parents on the students would help. When some students get difficult, I have some home telephone numbers. I say, "I will call your mother." The student says, "No, no, don't call my mother." It helps if I talk to the mother.

Another teacher actively kept in touch with the students' homes, for example, by sending home assignments that were missed due to absence:

Now if a student is absent, I send it (missed work) by mail home to the student. I do, so there's no margin of error. If you have it, you do it.

The community in which the students lived was a concern for teachers, as it was seen to influence the level of violence brought into school:

Outside the school, we need community. Compassionate, and as loving as they can be ... It is really tough out there, and we have given young people every material thing, but we have to give them plain old love and attention. We are losing it. We are becoming the machines our Industrial Revolution created.

Like teachers throughout the world, teachers in the present investigation longed for greater parental involvement in their students' lives, particularly in the area of socialisation. However, when teachers in the present study *initiated* contact with

parents (by getting their telephone numbers, or meeting them personally), the level of parental involvement increased, and the student became aware of this connection, to his or her benefit.

6.6 SUMMARY

In light of each of the four research questions (Chapter 4), the following responses can be made:

- **Research question #1:** Teachers are well aware of antisocial and violent behaviour in their schools, and their classrooms. A high number of teachers (almost 20% of all teachers observed) who were not teaching in violent schools displayed a *laissez-faire* classroom orientation, as they were uninvolved in the dynamics and context of the classroom. Antisocial behaviour was widespread, ranging from rudeness and uncivil behaviour to harsh words and verbal bullying. Teachers responded differently to antisocial behaviour and to violent behaviour. Antisocial behaviour by students produced efforts by teachers to have the student desist; to get students to stop doing something.

In schools where violence was common, teachers were more *preventive* in their interventions, probably out of necessity. Effective teachers in these situations were invariably *high impact*, heading off potential violence by maintaining a high profile in the classroom. In all classrooms and in all phases of the study, successful teachers emphasised the positive; they emphasised *what students should do*. Overall, the majority of interventions were neither caring or uncaring, but neutral, and business-like. Particularly in violent schools, teachers who routinely made caring interventions had successful, non-violent classrooms. *Caring interventions by teachers prevented student violence, and caring interventions helped moderate violent behaviour when it occurred.*

- **Research question #2:** Teachers were successful in addressing antisocial and violent behaviour through either a functionalist/behaviourist orientation, or a social-constructivist orientation. The latter model seemed particularly effective, in that it emphasises student-centred instruction, and relies less on external rewards and punishments. In the social-constructivist model, knowledge is constructed within the learner, primarily through social interactions and experiences. When students are engaged in this manner, their attention does not easily shift to other areas, including to those off-task areas that may lead to antisocial behaviour and violence. (One teacher added, after the interviews, that "It is hard to be disruptive if you are engrossed in what you are doing".) Although the social-constructivist theoretical orientation was preferable to the behavioural orientation (in terms of preventing antisocial behaviour and violence), either orientation was highly preferable to the laissez-faire orientation.

In the African-American sample, teachers were faced with greater potential or actual violence. They needed to take time to create a sense of trust, and interact with the students to help build that sense of trust. The teacher-student relationship was strong in those classrooms.

All classrooms where students were productively occupied and where students had a clear sense of what was expected of them were unlikely to experience violent behaviour. The converse was also true: Irrespective of race, gender, or other demographic factor, classrooms led by teachers who were indifferent, uninvolved, and laissez-faire held the greatest potential for antisocial or violent behaviour.

- **Research question #3:** Teachers held themselves responsible for student behaviour; the most successful teachers interviewed felt they were capable of making a difference in student behaviour, irrespective of home environment and level of support received from inside and outside the school. In

particular, all *high impact* teachers saw themselves as capable of making a difference in student behaviour. These *high impact* teachers were particularly essential in schools characterised by violence. African-American *high impact* teachers created prosocial classroom climates, and made a strong impact, under adverse conditions. However, all teachers knew their influence was limited, part of a larger socialisation that involves the home, family, peers, and community. While support was acknowledged to be important, the precise results of support on the *high impact* teacher was unclear. Teachers interviewed and observed did not have noticeable networks of buddy teachers or mentors. In the over-one hundred hours of observations, for example, only in a handful of instances were teachers observed interacting with other teachers, principals, or guidance counsellors. Many teachers did have the services of teaching assistants (*aides*), but these were usually persons with little or no experience, and were usually assigned to shadow one designated child. In some cases, these adult *aides* were more of a burden for the regular teacher than an asset.

Some teachers (particularly those who taught special education classes) were burdened by oppressive amounts of administrative paperwork, and additional duties unrelated to teaching students. As stated earlier, perhaps due to the difficult conditions under which they work, personal teaching efficacy seemed particularly essential for African-American teachers in preventing student violence. This problem seemed more acute among special education teachers working in schools where violent behaviour was common.

Teachers who are successful dealing with and preventing student violence are aware that their personal efforts are largely responsible for that success (personal teaching efficacy). This factor was particularly strong among high impact African-American teachers. There are heroic teachers who are successful under the most difficult of conditions imaginable.

- **Research question #4:** Teachers interviewed and observed generally felt they had adequate levels of co-operation and communication within their schools. They receive functional support from supervisors and the community, yet would profit from deep support from principals, and greater availability of support staff like counsellors, and school psychologists. In addition, teachers sought greater support from students' families and homes.

However, teachers in schools where violence was common did not receive co-operation or support from school administrators, particularly the school principal. (High impact African-American teachers did not appear to seek this support, preferring to handle matters on their own.) This lack of support seemed to have a dramatic effect on *low impact* African-American teachers, who looked to the administration when faced with difficult and violent behaviour.

Teachers faced with a greater threat from student violence required a greater degree of deep support from the administration, particularly from the principal. This was true when violent students needed to be removed from the classroom and receive consequences for their violent behaviour. This follow-through did not exist in many cases. Other successful African-American teachers (high impact teachers) avoided this administrative shortcoming by seeking to solve their problems within the classroom, relying only minimally on school administrators. How much more successful these high impact African-American teachers would have been *with support* is unclear, and deserves further investigation.

The following overall pattern emerged: A classroom was successful, and had a low likelihood of violence when the teacher was *high impact*; *specifically, when the teacher planned the classroom as a community, when the teacher set up instruction so that students were productively occupied, and when the teacher received personal support from the administration.*

In the present investigation, another pattern that emerged was that antisocial and violent behaviour can be prevented – and when it occurs, its effects moderated – in the presence of:

- A high impact teacher who believes that he or she can make a difference in students behaviour and achievement (personal teaching efficacy), and one who has developed a caring personal relationship toward his or her students.
- A classroom context that has an academic activity orientation, a teacher-created and maintained sense of community, classroom ownership by the teacher, and clearly conveyed rules and expectations that have been internalised by the students.
- A school context that provides deeper level support for teachers and other educational staff from the administration, and a supportive, rather than threatening and/or adversarial, role taken by police within the schools toward teachers and students.
- A high level of involvement and support by parents, especially when the teacher has initiated and maintains that teacher-parent-school connection.

In sum, it is not inevitable that medication and harsh criminal reactions are the best ways, or even effectual ways to prevent or ameliorate youth violent behaviour. It is not clear that such measures are superior to educational measures. In fact, the present investigation points to the opposite conclusion: *Educational measures may be the best ways to prevent student violence*. In the next chapter, conclusions from the empirical investigation as well as the literature will be made. From these conclusions, the investigator will present guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour. Recommendations for future research will be made. Finally, some limitations of the research will be highlighted.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANTI- SOCIAL AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The culture of violence is one of the great challenges faced by all societies. There is no simple solution for the culture of violence, since violence is embedded in families, peer groups, neighbourhoods and communities, and is part of each culture's media, language, and history. Although this chapter focuses on what schools can do to prevent and reduce violent and antisocial behaviour, a more comprehensive response must involve the family, peer group, neighbourhood, community and nation.

Although the problem of violence is multifaceted, and its solution will require a broad and comprehensive effort, schools are the best of places to begin the effort, in order to make inroads into the problem of violent behaviour among children and adolescents. The American Psychological Association's Commission on Violence and Youth (1993) concluded that the school must play a central role and become a leading force in efforts to prevent antisocial behaviour and violence. The Commission (1993:7) emphasised that school-based measures be taken to *help schools provide a safe environment and effective programs to prevent violence*. Schools have several advantages in achieving these goals: They are community-

based, thus they can have more of an impact than either individuals or remote government offices. Schools work with children, who are future adults. In many nations, public schools are controlled by the public, typically a local or national board of directors, and this group can propose and enact changes in many aspects of the school process. Most of all, schools are inhabited by people, many of whom have the best interests of children and adolescents in their focus.

Schools can be effective institutions, even for students who are predisposed to violent behaviour. Researchers found that the level of bonding to the school among delinquent and violent young adolescent boys is a significant factor in the reduction of violent behaviour they displayed (O'Donnell, Hawkins & Abbott 1995). The closer connection between the student and the school, the less a student was disposed to violent behaviour. Given this bonding as an enticing but unclear dimension, and given previous investigations by the present researcher that identified the teacher and school personnel as means to address antisocial and violent behaviour, the present investigation sought to closely examine the role of teachers and schools in the prevention of violent and antisocial behaviour.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the present investigation revealed patterns which indicated that four groups of people were integral in preventing antisocial and violent behaviour. These groups were: the teacher's qualities; the classroom context; the school context; and the involvement of parents and the community. Each of these played a central role in the prevention and moderation of anti-social and violent behaviour. The following patterns emerged:

7.2.1 The teacher's qualities

Successful teachers who worked in situations where violence is common, develop and maintain a strong, positive, and supportive relationship with the children in their

classrooms. These teachers did not rely on traditional sources of power, nor on harsh interventions, corporal punishment, or attempts to physically overpower their students. They were leaders within the classroom, showing personal teaching efficacy, and initiating and maintaining personal caring relationships with students. One key aspect of this leadership was personal teaching efficacy.

7.2.1.1 *Personal teaching efficacy*

Woolfolk (2001:389) has done much research on the sense of efficacy in teaching. Her studies have revealed that a *teacher's belief that he or she can reach even difficult students to help them learn* is one of the very few personal characteristics of teachers that are correlated with student achievement. She points out that "another important conclusion from our research is that efficacy grows from real success with students, not just from the moral support or cheerleading of professors and colleagues". This was born out in the present study, where successful African-American teachers had real success with students, in schools where violence was common.

Kagan (1992) studied high efficacy and low efficacy teachers, and found that high efficacy teachers accept students and the students' ideas; they rely on praise rather than criticism; use their time effectively, and – most relevant to the question of violent and antisocial behaviour – high efficacy teachers persevere with low achievers, spending more time with them, not giving up on them. Since low achieving students are more likely to show antisocial and violent behaviour, the teacher who sticks with a low achieving student is beneficial to the student's focus.

The present investigation found that, particularly in the African-American sample of teachers, teachers who were successful in preventing violent and antisocial behaviour in their classrooms fit the definition of high efficacy teachers. Mr J did not give up on his students, saying

Some teachers think that the difficult student does not want to learn. I do not believe this. I believe that all students want to learn. The problem is how to understand my students. Are you willing to change? If not, you will not be successful. I try to see the student and his behaviour. As opposed to being traumatised by the student's behaviour, I do not focus on the negative side ... some teachers spend much time analysing negative behaviour. I don't. I focus on what is positive, and encourage that.

Nor did Ms S give up on her difficult class:

I stay on top of my kids. Any problems I see I try to jump right on them. We talk about it. I contact parents and have them come in to talk with me ... schools have problems with violence; a couple of kids have brought in knives, but no violence in my classroom.

7.2.1.2 *Personal caring relationship to students*

The second teacher quality that prevented violent behaviour was a personal caring relationship with students. When there is a prevailing sense among students that teachers care about them, students respond positively. Conversely, a lack of caring fosters overt and covert forms of violence within schools (Thayer-Bacon 1999). Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999) noticed a striking connection between caring behaviour by teachers and violent behaviour in California high schools they examined, with *no violent behaviour* among students when in the presence of a *caring* teacher. Caring is also part of a larger picture of successful teaching. A series of studies of teacher behaviour identified *high impact* and *low impact* to describe different outcomes in teachers who worked with students at risk of failure. Kramer-Schlosser (1992) found that high-impact teachers talked often with their students, they were interested in the students' family lives, and shared information from their own lives with the students. Their *high impact* was rooted in their caring,

in their holding of high expectations for their students, and by using a variety of teaching strategies to reach students. Low-impact teachers were less interactive, and quite authoritarian, distancing themselves from students. They saw helping students to succeed as being unnecessary, placing the responsibility for learning solely on the student.

In a recent study on the relationship between student aggression and caring behaviour by teachers, Myles and Simpson (1998:265) found that caring teacher-student relationships "facilitate effective use of prevention and intervention methods. These trust oriented relationships also facilitate student learning and application of alternatives to aggressive and violent behaviour." The researchers concluded that "educators should consistently and clearly demonstrate positive human attitudes and values toward students. In addition, educators should consistently model appropriate ways of dealing with frustration and anger." In a study conducted by Rutter *et al.* (1982), when students perceived a caring atmosphere, they responded with improved and more regular attendance, improved behaviour, and higher academic achievement. Certainly, children need academic instruction to grow intellectually, and to be able to secure employment in the future. However, the socialisation needs of students and society require that students experience caring relationships in school, especially those students who are at risk for antisocial and violent behaviour. Research indicates that this may not be the case, since these at-risk students (who are typically poor, Black, inner city) get less praise and positive regard than wealthier, White, middle class, high-achieving students (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:472).

Thus, caring interventions are particularly indispensable for the academic and social growth of African-American and minority students who are involved in the culture of violent behaviour. A two-year study undertaken in Ohio found that gang members respected teachers who expected high academic performance from them, and who treated the students in a caring way (Huff 1989). Perez (2000:102) studied the role of caring in teaching culturally diverse students, finding that

"Teacher caring is also important because student perceptions of whether the teacher cares for them have a significant effect on their academic performance and behaviour." Vasquez (1988) points out that African-American students do not easily separate *the person from the teacher*. In other words, they are unlikely to say things like: "Mr. Smith is a real bummer, isn't he? But he's a great English teacher." Thus, *culturally diverse students need a relationship with their teachers that is mutually caring and respectful if they are to learn*. They must not only like their teachers, but must believe that the teacher cares for them. Dillon (1989) examined teacher caring and student behaviour among mostly Black students, finding that one teacher, a Mr Appleby, motivated them to participate, and helped them because they believed that he cared about them personally.

The value of a teacher's personal caring relationship to students holds true in other cultures as well. A major study in rural Alaska involved almost three hundred teachers, school administrators, and community members. It sought to identify qualities in effective cross-cultural teachers for the Eskimo and Indian children in the isolated Arctic communities. All three groups studied in the investigation (teachers, administrators, and community members) identified *rapprochement/concern/empathy* most often as best evidence of teacher effectiveness, surpassing variables such as *dedication*, and *community involvement* (Kleinfeld 1983:1). Researchers from the University of Texas (Ovando 1999) examined eight exemplary schools located in Texas near the Mexican border. More than 90% of the students were Mexican; almost 80% of the students were poor, and most were children of migrant workers. The researchers noted that the majority of teachers employed in these high-performing schools shared a Hispanic heritage with the students. Researchers saw a bond between teachers and children that was quite close and caring. Looking more closely at the teacher-student relationship, the researchers found that the *teachers treated their students as if they were their own biological children in social, emotional, physical, and academic matters*. Similar findings were seen in a study involving exemplary teachers in England, Ireland and the United States, where exemplary teachers worked to get to know students as individuals, using multiple

sources of information, such as dialogues and questions, knowing students informally, knowing about students from colleagues, and knowing the students' cultures (Collinson, Killeavy & Stephenson 1998).

Successful African-American teachers echoed these findings. Mrs A said:

Children today come to class with issues that were not there when we were in school. And there are not those people in their support group; in their families, who they can talk to. They need to believe that you the teacher will be their resource, but also will be there when they need you. See you as their advocate.

After the interview, Mr S said that discipline was *about the relationship, not the rules*. He had said how important trust, love and respect were, even when the student misbehaves:

A sense of trust, especially at the beginning of the school year. And the students must believe the teacher loves and respects them. Even if the student fails, even if a student acts disrespectfully, we have to tell him he is still loved, and there is another day.

Woolfolk (2001:463) related an anecdote about a teacher who might serve as an archetype of both essential qualities (personal teaching efficacy, and personal caring relationship). Woolfolk asked an educator in an urban New Jersey high school to identify which teachers are most effective with the most difficult students: "He said there are two kinds, teachers who can't be intimidated or fooled and expect their students to learn, and teachers who really care about the students." When Woolfolk asked, "Which kind are you?" He answered, "Both!"

7.2.2 The classroom context

Results from the present investigation concur with previous research in that the context of the classroom, as created and managed by the teacher, has a powerful effect on preventing violence and minimising its effects. Peers are important agents of socialisation, but, particularly in groups of racially and ethnically diverse children, students cannot simply be put together in a classroom and be expected to have a positive effect upon each other (Schmuck & Schmuck 1992). Researchers have found that the creation and maintenance of a positive classroom context must be a deliberate act on the teacher's part; the teacher must purposefully build a warm and constructive classroom context (Shechtman 1997). With respect to the present investigation, the classroom context encompassed four related areas that have a positive effect on violent and antisocial behaviour: an academic activity orientation, making the classroom a community, classroom ownership, and conveying clear expectations/rules.

7.2.2.1 Academic activity orientation

Academic activity is related to violent and antisocial behaviour. On one hand, there is a strong relationship between the amount of time students spend engaged (on-task) and their level of school achievement (Fisher *et al.* 1980; Doyle 1983). The other side of academic success – academic failure – is where the linkage occurs with antisocial and violent behaviour. Students who experience failure in academics are at a higher risk for juvenile delinquency and crime, including violence (Maguin & Loeber 1995). Studies have also shown that "Schools that instil a commitment to learning and academic achievement in all students promote academic success, and they are likely to reduce the risk for violent behaviour as well" (Hawkins, Farrington & Catalano 1998:190).

There is a connection between academic activity and violent student behaviour. In a study where he analysed narrative records from junior high school class

observations, Doyle (1984) found that teachers who worked with difficult children, and who were successful in managing their behaviour, set up an activity system early in the school year, and guarded the system, protecting it from disruption. For example, in classrooms with higher incidences of antisocial and violent student behaviour, Doyle found that successful teachers focused student attention on the curriculum, and talked about the work at hand, instead of the misbehaviour. (As did Mr J in the present investigation, who focused on the positive work of his students, not the negative.) At the other extreme, Doyle noted that less-successful classroom teachers focused their attention, and the class's attention, on misbehaviour, drawing all students off-task, resulting in a cessation of academic work for all. Such an activity orientation among successful teachers allowed those teachers, within two months into the school year, to spend more time with individual students and less time managing the group.

Campbell's research (1974:665) also revealed a marked difference in behaviours between classes with different activity levels, and this was particularly so in the behaviour of low-ability students, where students behaved well or poorly depending on the level of expectation and activity by different teachers. He colourfully noted that "These problem youngsters were like a pack of hungry half-starved wolves with the math and English teachers, and like docile lambs with their science teacher." Campbell found that both the nature of the expectations within the classroom, as well as the activity and performance level are equally important. In another study (Silverstein 1979) found that inappropriate behaviour, including violent behaviour such as fighting, occurred most often during independent seatwork and silent reading activities, while during activities that involved small groups of students, or whole-class lectures, researchers found that misbehaviour was mild, including non-involvement and mild misbehaviours. Similarly, Kounin (1970) found that serious misbehaviour occurred four times more often during quiet seatwork than during times of recitations and whole-group activity. When students are doing quiet seatwork or silent reading, they are likely to be not focused, and not actively involved with learning.

These findings also lend support to the social-constructivist theoretical model for classrooms. As mentioned earlier, in the present investigation, classrooms that utilised the social-constructivist model showed no incidents of violent behaviour. Working on task in co-operative groups has been shown to be even more productive than working independently. Robert Slavin (1990:115) found that co-operative learning directly contributes to a positive classroom environment. He wrote that *most co-operative learning classrooms are well behaved, because students are motivated to learn and are actively engaged in learning activities.*

Social constructivism, which utilises co-operative groups, is a relatively new view of learning that holds that learners construct their own understandings, new learning depends on current understanding, learning is facilitated by social interaction, and that meaningful learning occurs within authentic learning tasks (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:292). This model is widely accepted (Lambert & McCombs 1998; Phye 1997), although the behavioural model, which views learning as a function of consequences (reinforcement and punishment) is probably the most common teaching model world-wide. In the present investigation, teachers who used the social-constructivist model were successful in preventing both antisocial behaviour and violence, which was in contrast to the poor outcomes seen in laissez-faire classrooms.

Mrs S said that her class used the social-constructivist model:

Groups. We work in groups a lot. So that they can learn from each other They must ask a neighbour the question if they have a problem before they come to me.

7.2.2.2 Classroom as a community

Sergiovanni (1994:127-128) emphasised that schools must create elementary and secondary classrooms that *resemble small family groups*. He explained that the key

to stopping violence is to restore a *community of mind* among students. Without it, young persons substitute for this loss in violent, antisocial ways, including gang membership. Researchers concur that the classroom must be designed by the teacher to bring forth positive, prosocial interactions, and this usually happens when the teacher encourages classroom discussion and discourse (Schmuck & Schmuck 1992).

Unfortunately, too many schools are not communities, but aversive environments. Research has shown that these harsh and punitive environments produce antisocial and violent behaviour, bringing out aggression, as well as vandalism, and a need to escape (Azrin *et al.* 1965; Berkowitz 1983). It is true that teachers traditionally rely on punitive measures. Although harsh measures exist in different educational settings, studies reveal they are much more likely to occur in teachers' interactions with males, with students from minority groups, and with low-income students (McFadden, Marsh, Price & Hwang 1992; Shaw & Braden 1990). Teachers employed in poverty areas, low-income schools, and schools where there are low percentages of White students tend to over-rely on punishment, and the suspension and removal of students (Moore & Cooper 1984). This finding highlights the value of the successful African-American teachers in the present investigation, who work under difficult circumstances, yet did not give in to punitive measures, in a setting that is otherwise imbued with aggression. Teachers in the present investigation emphasised the sense of community in their classrooms. Mrs A said :

This is like we are re-civilising them; recreating a new civilisation.
We – teachers, administrators, police – must say "we are here for you."

Community was so important that, even when a child's misbehaviour was severe, they were not to be excluded from the community by the teacher:

If you don't make this community bond, there will definitely be more school violence Even children when arrested, I say, "Yes, you stole. You did wrong, but we want to help you stop doing that."

7.2.2.3 Classroom ownership by the teacher

Classroom ownership is a relatively unresearched area. Elliott *et al.* (1998:143) concur, stating that "Surprisingly, there has been relatively little empirical research done on this topic". This is likely the case because ownership of classrooms (and schools) has traditionally been unquestioned, with ownership resting squarely with the teacher (and administration). Astor, Meyer and Behre (1999) highlighted the issue of owned and unowned spaces and times in schools, pointing to areas in the school that were seen to be unowned (hallways, cafeterias, outside grounds), and thus were places more likely to be places of student violence. The present investigation is the first study to connect ownership of the classroom by the teacher to the prevention of antisocial behaviour and violence in students. More research is needed in this area, especially where the line is drawn between a teacher being seen as being firm and clear, and a teacher who is seen as a tyrant. In the present study, Ms R made it clear she owned her classroom:

Children will test teachers. Reputation is very important. There are some teachers who have a reputation of letting anything go. There are some teachers who set the ground rules. I set the ground rules on day one. I tell the students: "We're playing a game. And the name of the game is 'I Win'." I have a reputation of being tough, but fair.

Another African-American teacher was so effective with misbehaving students that his principal purposely placed children who had been expelled from other classrooms in his room. Since Mr J had clear classroom ownership, the introduction of a potentially violent student did not jeopardise the other students in his classroom.

Mr J handled students with love, but very firmly. He joked at the end of his interview:

I don't know if I am a very good candidate to discuss school violence, because I tend to nip it in the bud.

The problem of student violence gets more complicated when it is connected to gangs, rather than individual students. Only relatively recently has the phenomenon of powerful gangs been seen as a force not only within neighbourhoods, but now within schools and within classrooms. Apart from the present investigation, there has been little research into the issue or circumstances surrounding gangs within the classroom. As schools move toward more democratic and less authoritarian models, it becomes more challenging to retain control of schools, and classrooms, yet without relying on force. African-American teachers in the present investigation, however, clearly understood the question of classroom ownership, coming face-to-face with the power struggle gangs can produce. Some teachers were successful holding onto ownership in the face of gangs, while Mrs P was not. This African-American teacher had to change the set-up of her classroom because of gangs. Mrs P said:

I had two different gangs in my class when I was teaching high school. I had asked a student "How come you didn't do your homework?" and the student got smart with me. A rival gang member stood up to him, and he threatened to kill the student. So I had to actually divide my classroom: One gang over here, and the other gang over there. They did come to class because they knew I cared; I did teach them how to read. But my protection came from the rival gangs, not from the administration.

In addition to research on the effects of gangs within the classroom, there needs to be research on the more general question of transfer of what prosocial behaviours

are learned in the classroom, to their application outside the classroom and school; to the neighbourhood, and to the home. While the successful African-American teachers in the present investigation were successful preventing violence in their classrooms, the investigator can only surmise and hope that the non-violent prosocial student behaviours endured outside the classroom. It certainly is an important area for future research.

7.2.2.4 Classroom rules and expectations

The importance of conveying clear expectations to students, usually through rules, is a well documented and customary practice of schools and teachers, and research shows that this practice is valuable in creating an orderly environment (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:484). *Clear rules can reduce behaviour problems that interfere with learning* (Purkey & Smith 1983:445).

The clarity with which effective teachers convey rules and expectations is particularly helpful and valuable for low-ability students, and students from minority cultures who are at greater risk for antisocial and violent behaviour. These students may have difficulty in understanding the classroom system and the hidden curriculum of unvoiced social expectations, especially in schools where middle-class majority values dominate. Minority students have difficulty discerning subtle changes in the classroom context that would signal other children to behave appropriately (Eder, 1982). Doyle (1986:413) points out that, *if a student's pre-school or extra-school experiences do not foster understandings and behaviour congruent with classroom demands, it is difficult for him or her to follow rules and procedures, gain access to instruction, or display competence.*

The above-mentioned situation is helped by teachers who can be as explicit as possible about classroom rules, and expectations for behaviour (Cartledge & Milburn 1978; Shultz & Florio 1979), and by teachers who set up classroom procedures to be congruent with communication patterns in minority cultures.

Mayer (1995) recommends that classroom rules be jointly established by the teacher and students, then integrated into the school's rules, posted in the classroom, and reviewed by the teacher and students periodically. In the present investigation, there was a clear patterns that all successful teachers of any race and gender were explicit with their rules and expectations for behaviour. Classrooms where violence was observed tended to be laissez-faire classrooms, characterised by a low impact teacher almost disconnected from the students.

Ms R was clearly not a laissez-faire teacher. She said:

I don't allow students to fail, and have high expectations. I don't accept late work. You're expected to have your work each day; you're expected to have your notebook for this class.

Another teacher said:

Teach teachers to have routines, to solve problems. Tell students there are rules to follow, and if you follow them consistently, you will get answers, you will get results. The rules you set up in the community I call the classroom ... follow the same rules, but not rules for rigidity, but (for) positive behavioural expectations.

While the body of research literature does not draw clear lines of either causation or correlation between low teacher involvement (laissez-faire) and student violent behaviour, a good quantity of anecdotal evidence does exist, often appearing in newspapers and other media. For instance, the Burlington (Vermont) Free Press reported that in a large Vermont high school, a student was recently arrested for viciously beating a classmate (*Teen assault* 2001:3), a beating administered in retaliation for strong and unremitting teasing he had been receiving from students in his high school. The arrested student testified that he told his teacher about it, but

the teacher did nothing to prevent or stop the teasing. The student added that "I had so much built-up anger, and the teachers weren't doing anything about it."

7.2.3 The school context

7.2.3.1 *Deep support from school administration*

The present investigation identified administrative support as a substantial factor in the prevention of violent and antisocial behaviour. Many studies have concurred, highlighting the importance of support of teachers by the administration. Mayer (1995:467-478) found that support of teaching staff shows an inverse correlation with student misbehaviour: the more support given to the teaching staff, the less misbehaviour that was seen in students. Conversely, the incidence of antisocial behaviour increases when administrative support is lacking or is weak, or inconsistent, and when there is an absence of administrative follow-through. Lack of administrative support has been shown to have many harmful effects on teacher morale, including teacher absenteeism (Manlove & Elliott 1979). Mayer (1995:471) adds that inconsistent behaviour on the part of the school administration *appears to result in inconsistent follow-through by staff, often resulting in more behaviour problems by students.*

This is a relevant issue in largely African-American schools, and it may also be an especially relevant issue in some South African schools. In South Africa's historically Black schools, teacher evaluation by supervisors was not helpful to improvement of teaching or instruction, since it was highly judgmental rather than supportive (Ngcongco 1996). In the same investigation, Ngcongco found that there was not much heed paid to teacher's concerns and hopes, as well as a lack of training available for school administrators and supervisors. In a study of the role of Black high school principals in South Africa, Gumbi (1995) found there were many bureaucratic expectations that guided the principal's behaviour. Principals in Gumbi's investigation tended to work in violent school environments, disrupted by

teacher and student strikes, to the point at which they were unable to provide leadership. Gumbi advocated the restoration of dignity to the role of the school principal, declaring the role to be pivotal in the new education transformation under South Africa's democratic government. It is likely that violent school environments, whether in South Africa, the USA, or elsewhere, draw the school's administration into the culture of violence, and render them less effective. This is another area in need of further investigation.

Some teachers in the present investigation did not receive deep administrative support, and there the following patterns emerged: Several ignored the administration all together, seeking to handle all problems within their classroom, or by relying on fellow teachers. Others were affected by that lack of support, and felt that problems of student violent behaviour should be handled at a higher level than their classroom. Mrs C, a teacher from Texas, said:

But as far as follow-through when there needs to be discipline, it's (the principal's office) not very supportive of the teachers. Once ... the behaviour demands a disciplinary intervention strategy, it's not always there with the administration. They don't follow through. Nothing happens after it's reported to them ... I don't think students *must* have punishment ... but there *must* be consequences, (even if it is only for the student) to talk to the principal and have a discussion of what happened.

However, another teacher took an active stance in seeking deep support from the principal, by inviting the principal of her large urban high school to visit her classroom regularly, in order to meet with the students, and respond to their questions:

Once a month, I have the principal in to "sit on the hot seat," and talk about some of the things that annoy them (students) ... I come back

to communication: These are the best ways to prevent violent things from happening. I may disagree with you, but you will be heard.

7.2.3.2 *Influence of police, grandmothers and school size*

Similar to the question of classroom ownership, which is largely unresearched due to its relative recency as a school violence issue, the role of police within the schools is similarly a relatively new issue. Unarmed security guards, however, have been used in some American schools for many years, typically in schools responding to acts of theft and vandalism. In such cases, schools would hire private security guards and install other forms of security and detection devices, usually in the hopes that these measures would serve as a deterrent. Early research showed that these measures seemed to have the paradoxical effect of *increasing* vandalism and violent behaviour (Greenberg 1974). The recently noted rise in serious violence within schools (like the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School) has caused many American school districts to assign armed municipal police to school buildings. However, some recent research indicates that visible signs of school security (like police and metal detectors within the school) may make students feel *less* safe (Skiba & Peterson 1999). Irrespective of cause, a recent series of surveys found that the number of American public school students who said they always feel safe at school dropped from 44% in 1998 to 37% in 1999 (Glassner 1999).

Although school size was not an identified result of the present investigation (although some teachers noted how difficult it was teaching large classes), there is a growing consensus in the body of recent research that size of a school is a factor in the amount of violence exhibited by students. Raywid and Oshiyama (2000:445) wrote: "There is overwhelming evidence that violence is much less likely to occur in small schools than in large ones." One major finding in the recent US Department of Education (1998:26) report entitled *Violence and Discipline in the US Public Schools* was that larger schools – those with enrolments of 1,000 students or more – were 8 times more likely than smaller schools to report at least one serious violent crime,

even when figures are adjusted to a per-student basis. The direction of the Family Life Development Centre of Cornell University was recently quoted (Gladden 1998:116) as saying that if he could do one thing to stop juvenile violence, *it would be to ensure that teenagers are not in high schools with more than 400 to 500 students.*

California researcher Pedro Noguera (1995:206) described a different, novel approach to modifying a school's context: He studied an inner-city junior high school in a mostly-Black city in California that hired a local grandmother (instead of a police officer or security guard) to monitor students in school. She was stationed by the entrance/exit door of the school. Noguera said that "Instead of using physical intimidation to carry out her duties, this woman greets children with hugs." When the hugs prove to be insufficient to maintain prosocial behaviour, *she admonishes them to behave themselves, saying she expects better from them.* This local grandmother placed in a school conveys to students many things, including a sense of safety, trust, and even warmth and acceptance. The in-depth interviews with African-American teachers who were successful in working with violence showed similar characteristics to Noguera's grandmother. Even the police in their schools, when perceived in positive ways (as *fatherly*, for instance), can promote a relationship and atmosphere that does not easily allow in violence.

In the present investigation, when police within the schools were seen as being ineffective, they were perceived as *menacing*, or they were harmless and ineffective, spending time chatting in or near the principal's office. One teacher spoke of the ineffective role of police in her school:

Then a policy was put into place where an officer was assigned to the school. It didn't stop anything; it didn't make a difference. The students already made up their minds what they were going to do; they knew exactly how to plan things ... the police would hang out in

the (school's) office. Talking to the secretaries. You (the teacher) were basically on your own.

One teacher spoke of her school's police as being helpful, available, and responsive:

If there's someone in the school who doesn't look familiar ... we have telephones in our classrooms ... I call the office and tell them I need Security, and someone will be there in a matter of seconds. There is a Security (officer) for each house (school division); for house A, B, C and D.

7.2.4 Parent involvement and support

There is an abundance of research that says that parents' interest in their child's education plays a crucial part in the child's learning, and has an effect upon the child's behaviour, particularly with regard to violent and antisocial behaviour. Researchers Myles and Simpson (1998:266) found that: "Parents and families play an important role in supporting children and youth with problems of aggression and violence. In fact, parent and family support systems are often the bridge to long-term solutions to problems of aggression and violence." In addition to their effect upon violent behaviour, these support systems influence the self-concept of children and adolescents.

In a study of factors affecting the self-concepts of South African adolescents, researchers Marjoribanks and Mboya (1998) found that parents' support for learning, and attributions of responsibility *had significant and sizeable associations with general non-academic self-concept scores*. When South African parents were interested in their child's education, the child's self-concept benefited, even outside his/her school-related self-concept.

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering this parental support for learning. After a comprehensive review of factors affecting student achievement and learning, researchers Wang *et al.* (1993:278-279) concluded that "teachers must also develop strategies to increase parent involvement in their children's academic life. This means teachers should go beyond traditional once-a-year parent/teacher conferences and work with parents to see that learning is valued in the home." In the present investigation, every teacher interviewed indicated the importance of parents as the children's first teachers. Yet, the present investigation found that African-American teachers who were successful not only acknowledged the importance of parent involvement, *but they reached out for parents, through conferences, telephone calls, even writing letters through the postal service to maintain communication with parents, and to let parents know how their children were progressing in school.* Research suggests that the telephone can be a particularly effective tool these days when home visits may be unsafe, and when parents have busy schedules. In the present investigation, successful African-American teachers called parents by telephone – which strongly communicated caring – and it also allowed teachers to be clearly understood in describing a student's needs, opening the door for enhanced parental support (Eggen & Kauchak 2001:491,493). Teachers did not complain to parents about their children, nor did they ask parents to punish children for school misbehaviour. Although the threat that a parent could – and would – be contacted served to help students behave well, in some instances.

Ms SW said:

Many parents have two and three jobs. If we can get the parents to say to their child, "If I have to leave my job to come to school, because of you," this would help us by supporting what we do. A little bit of pressure from the parents on the students would help. When some students get difficult, I have some home telephone numbers. I say, "I

will call your mother." The student says, "No, no, don't call my mother." It helps if I talk to the mother.

African-American children are at an increased risk for academic and social failure when they live in homes headed by a single parent (Luster & McAdoo 1994), and perform more poorly in school, and are more predisposed toward problem behaviours in school when compared to their peers living in two-parent homes. This makes the support from teachers even more valuable for this vulnerable group of children.

This seeking of close involvement with parents benefits the teacher's self-efficacy, as well. Epstein (1990) found that teachers who sought to involve parents were more positive about teaching, and more favourably inclined toward their school. Teachers also acquired a more positive regard for parents when this connection was made, with teachers rating parents quite high in helpfulness. When teachers communicate with parents, they hold higher expectations for parents, and feel positively about parental follow-through when that follow-through was needed.

7.3 PREVENTION OF ANTISOCIAL AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

The present investigation, synthesised with research on the prevention of antisocial behaviour and violence, yielded recommendations expressed as guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour in children and adolescents. Underlying the guidelines are a series of assumptions, derived from the interviews, observations, and research literature:

7.3.1 Assumptions about the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour

- All human beings have needs to be safe, loved, accepted, and to grow toward self-realisation (Maslow's hierarchy of human needs).]

- Healthy human interpersonal relationships are defined by respect, mutuality, belonging, personal mastery, independence, and dignity.
- There is no quick or easy solution available to fix the problem of antisocial and violent behaviour.
- Relationships, more than written rules, impact on the prevention of violent behaviour.
- All adults (parents, teachers, administrators) who work with children at risk of antisocial or violent behaviour, must be supported by other adults and by families, schools, organisations, and governments toward meeting this challenge.
- Ignoring violent behaviour allows it to persist.
- Punishment of antisocial or violent behaviour is neither a solution, nor a deterrent to future violent behaviour.
- At every level of society, the *prevention* of antisocial and violent behaviour must take priority over the *punishment* of antisocial or violent behaviour.
- Meeting violence with violence worsens and perpetuates the problem.
- A student's relationship with his or her teachers is made more fruitful through ongoing positive relationships (of both student and teacher) with school administrators, counsellors, school psychologists, school social workers, nurses, police/security officers, and other teachers.

- Strategies to address the culture of violence must take place simultaneously at the *macro* level of government and corporation; at the *meso* level of schools and institutions, and at the *micro* level of the individual.

7.3.2 Guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour

The following are guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour. There are nine guidelines, with specific recommendations for each guideline:

7.3.2.1 Promote high impact teaching

- Identify qualities and skills of high impact teachers, such as: ways of talking with students, showing interest in students' lives, and holding expectations for student success.
- Recognise high impact teachers.
- Reward high impact teachers who work successfully with the most difficult of students.
- Pre-service teachers who intend to teach students at-risk for violence should complete their practice teaching under the instruction of high impact teachers.
- Identify ways to increase all teachers' self-efficacy, the personal belief that one can reach even difficult students to help them learn.
- Assign teachers challenged by student antisocial or violent behaviour, to work closely with high impact teachers, through observation and/or team-teaching.

7.3.2.2 Foster caring teacher-student relationships

- Operationally define *caring*, making it part of the job description of teachers, and include it in the evaluations of teachers' performance.
- Recognise (identify and acknowledge) teachers who care strongly for students.
- Educate future (and present) teachers in ways to show caring *in the students' cultural language*, and to be able to show their caring in the *language and culture* familiar to the students they will be teaching.
- Teachers must model to students appropriate ways of dealing with frustration and anger.
- School staff must not use corporal punishment, or other violent measures, against students.

7.3.2.3 Emphasise academic activity

- Teachers must explicitly convey to students their high expectations for behaviour, and high expectations for academic work.
- Classroom instruction must include co-operative learning strategies, such as Jigsaw (Slavin 1995), where each student as part of a group has a different part of the material to be learned, and by becoming an expert on that part, can then teach each other.
- Encourage teachers to use social-constructivist instructional learning models, which place emphasis on the learner's active engagement in his/her own learning.

- Empower students within the safety of the classroom to make choices, and have their ideas be regarded as valued contributions.

7.3.2.4 *Make classrooms communities*

- Teachers must create classrooms that resemble small family-like groups, encouraging classroom discussion and discourse.
- All school staff, including classroom teachers, must avoid harsh, punitive measures which are ineffective as deterrents, particularly to students used to a culture of violence.
- Educate pre-service teachers in ways to create a community in the classroom.
- Adopt a classroom ethic of inclusion: All students belong here.
- Emphasise co-operation over competition.

7.3.2.5 *Support teacher ownership of the classroom*

- Develop a system in each school supporting and sustaining teachers to be in charge of their classroom.
- Work with the administration and local police to minimise gang influence in schools and classrooms, instituting measures such as assigning two teachers per classroom in difficult circumstances.
- Reduce the number of students in each class and in each school.

7.3.2.6 *Seek clarity with rules/expectations*

- Clearly convey behavioural and academic expectations to students, and discuss these fully on the very first days of school.
- Set up a classroom system that will ensure that the expectations and rules are practised, and internalised.
- Set up classroom procedures that will be congruent with students' cultural communication patterns.
- Teachers must not only describe but also model the behaviour desired, instead of describing what students should not do.
- Ensure that rules and expectations do not remain abstract, but become internalised, by having students demonstrate prosocial behaviours.

7.3.2.7 *Provide administrative support by principal and support staff*

- Schools must provide administrative support that is felt personally by the teacher, especially in times of stress and challenge by antisocial and violent student behaviour.
- Administrators must follow through on incidents of violence, or serious antisocial behaviour.
- All schools must have a support team available, consisting of principal and/or assistant principal, counsellor, school psychologist, nurse, and other teachers, and in the more violent of schools, police and security guards.

- The principal must know the name of each student in his or her school, and be actively involved with students on a daily basis.
- Convey clear understandings as to each person's role, and each person's responsibilities for student behaviour.

7.3.2.8 *Train in-school police in violence prevention and human relations*

- Clearly define the job description/role of police in school to be *supportive* of the education staff, in addition to the traditional police job of apprehending wrongdoers .
- If in-school security are present, they must be accessible and responsive to staff and students, and particularly, responsive to teachers.
- Train in-school police in human relations, particularly in child and adolescent development.

7.3.2.9 *Actively promote parent involvement*

- Teachers must initiate contact with parents, especially parents of students at risk for antisocial and violent behaviour.
- Teachers must spend time talking with all parents, and know all parents by their names.
- Teachers must avoid impersonal methods of communicating with parents, such as through e-mail and written notes, which are less powerful than personal or telephone contact.

7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study was limited to observations and in-depth interviews of teachers in the United States. This limitation does not support generalisation of the findings to groups of teachers in other parts of the world, nor does it lend itself to the forming of generalisations about other groups of teachers in the United States itself.

The study did not look directly at groups that, in addition to teachers, would be integral to the study of antisocial and violent behaviour in children. The most obvious groups that were not included in the present investigation were the students themselves. The present study did not seek to ascertain students' thoughts or feelings on the matter of antisocial and violent behaviour. Other groups not examined were parents, non-parents in the school community, other educators, administrators, religious and political leaders, and police/school safety officers. The present study described the behaviour of persons in these groups solely through the eyes of the investigator, and the teachers observed and interviewed. Antisocial and violent behaviour is a complex phenomenon, the result of many factors. It follows that efforts to prevent antisocial and violent behaviour must take into account a variety of factors. The guidelines produced by the present investigation must be seen as guidelines applicable to schools, and they are not necessarily applicable in other educational or non-educational settings.

7.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research should examine the issues of antisocial and violent behaviour from several other important vantage points than that of the teacher; most notably, from the students' vantage point. How students feel and think about antisocial behaviour (their own and others') would be a critically important element in establishing a comprehensive plan to address these issues. In addition, examination of the issues of antisocial and violent behaviour from the vantage points of other groups would be of value. Such vantage points include those of parents, administrators, and others who work with young persons, and/or those who make decisions that affect

school policies. These different constituencies would have much to offer toward enrichment of the guidelines generated by the present investigation. Future research should also examine the presence, behaviour, and attitudes of--and toward--police in schools, particularly since police and security guards in schools may be a more permanent feature of schools of the future.

Research involving teachers and educators in nations outside the western hemisphere would also be a valuable area of future investigation, as well as an examination of these issues in educational systems in developing nations. School administrators would be a key group to examine, particularly since the quality and availability of in-school support is of great importance in the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour. A multi-level investigation that simultaneously drew upon sources of primary socialisation (parents) and secondary socialisation (schools, peers) would also be of great worth.

Finally, future research directions must examine violence at its highest level, the macro-level violent behaviour that affects all human societies. Violence at its highest level is not interpersonal; it is not *one-to-one* but is directed at *groups* of people: races, nationalities, and religious and ethnic groups. This violence includes terrorist violence, as well as responses to terrorist violence, and the violence of war. An appropriate question would ask: *What role can educators and educational systems play in the prevention of this macro-level violence?* The guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour presented in the present investigation must be built upon, challenged, and/or verified by future research. They should be examined from the macro-level: *Which guidelines for the prevention of antisocial and violent behaviour would be effective at higher levels than the school? Which guidelines would be effective at the national and inter-national levels, translated into public policy and law?*

7.6 SUMMARY

In conclusion, it is clear that, within the culture of violent behaviour in contemporary societies, and within the limits of educational institutions, teachers and schools can

and do mitigate violent and antisocial behaviour. Next in importance only to the primary socialisation and violence prevention potentially provided by parents and home, public schools are the best resources nations have to make inroads into the problems of antisocial and violent behaviour.

Instead of relying on medical and punitive, reactive measures, the public schools must teach toward a restoration of a sense of human dignity, exemplified by prosocial human behaviour. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999:29-30) speaks of *restorative justice*, which seeks not retribution or punishment, *but the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, and a seeking to rehabilitate both the victims and the perpetrator*. It is that same sense of restoration rather than retribution that all schools throughout the world – schools of both the rich and the poor – must address. Educators must provide the leadership for that restoration to occur, within the classroom and within each society. Toward that end, they must be empowered to be able to do so.

In conclusion, in the present time, when home and family have been weakened, and the challenges of violence seem formidable, the socialisation and restoration provided by school and peers takes on great importance and urgency, whether one speaks of an industrialised super-power, an emerging/developing nation, or a subsistence third-world society. Professor and social critic Neil Postman (1999:334) emphasises what schools can and cannot do:

I do not say, of course, that schools can solve the problems of poverty, alienation and family disintegration, but schools can respond to them. And they can do this because there are people in them, because these people are concerned with more than algebra lessons or modern Japanese history, and because these people can identify not only one's level of competence in math but one's level of rage and confusion and depression.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION MASTER DATA SHEET

ID	Code	Sex	# of Interv.	Prim. Type:	Qual. of Int:	Skill: S-M-U	Theor Orient:	# of violent
1	A	F	H	G	C	S	C	0
2	B	F	L	B	N	M	B	0
3	C	M	L	G	N	S	C	0
4	D	F	H	D	N	S	B	0
5	E	F	H	B	C	S	C	0
6	F	M	M	G	N	S	C	0
7	G	F	H	D	N	U	B	0
8	H	F	H	B	N	M	B	0
9	I	F	H	D	N	S	B	0
10	J	F	M	D	N	U	B	0
11	K	F	L	D	N	U	O	1
12	L	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
13	M	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
14	N	F	M	G	C	S	C	0
15	O	F	H	B	N	M	B	0
16	P	F	M	D	N	U	O	4
17	Q	F	M	B	N	M	O	1
18	R	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
19	S	F	H	D	N	U	O	1
20	T	F	H	B	N	S	C	0
21	U	M	M	B	C	S	C	0
22	V	F	L	B	N	S	C	0
23	W	M	L	D	N	U	O	0
24	X	F	L	B	N	U	O	0
25	Y	M	L	B	C	S	C	0
26	AA	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
27	BB	F	H	D	N	M	B	0
28	CC	M	L	B	N	M	O	0
29	DD	F	L	B	N	M	B	0
30	EE	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
31	FF	M	L	B	U	M	O	0
32	GG	F	L	D	U	U	O	0

33	HH	M	M	D	U	M	B	1
34	II	F	L	B	U	M	O	0
35	JJ	F	H	D	N	M	B	0
36	KK	M	M	D	N	M	B	0
37	LL	F	H	G	N	M	B	0
38	MM	M	M	D	N	M	B	0
39	NN	M	H	D	N	U	O	0
40	OO	F	H	G	N	M	B	0
41	PP	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
42	QQ	F	M	G	N	S	C	0
43	RR	F	H	D	N	S	B	0
44	SS	F	H	D	U	U	O	0
45	TT	F	H	D	N	M	O	0
46	UU	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
47	VV	F	M	G	C	S	C	0
48	WW	F	L	D	N	U	O	1
49	XX	F	H	D	N	U	B	0
50	YY	F	L	G	N	S	B	0
51	A3	F	M	G	N	S	B	0
52	B3	F	H	B	U	M	B	0
53	C3	F	H	D	N	M	B	0
54	D3	F	H	B	N	S	C	0
55	E3	F	H	B	N	M	B	0
56	F3	M	L	D	N	U	B	0
57	G3	F	H	D	N	U	B	0
58	H3	M	H	G	N	S	C	0
59	I3	F	H	D	N	U	O	0
60	J3	F	M	D	N	S	B	0
61	K3	F	M	G	N	S	C	0
62	L3	F	L	D	N	S	B	0
63	M3	M	L	D	N	U	O	3
64	N3	F	L	B	N	S	C	0
65	O3	F	L	G	C	S	C	0
66	P3	F	L	G	C	S	C	0
67	Q3	M	L	B	N	S	B	0
68	R3	F	H	D	N	M	B	0

69	S3	F	L	G	N	S	C	0
70	T3	M	L	B	N	S	C	0
71	U3	F	L	B	N	S	C	0
72	V3	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
73	W3	F	L	G	N	S	B	0
74	X3	M	M	D	N	M	B	0
75	Y3	M	L	G	N	S	B	0
76	A4	F	H	D	N	S	B	0
77	B4	F	L	G	C	S	C	0
78	C4	M	H	D	N	M	B	0
79	D4	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
80	E4	F	H	D	N	U	B	1
81	F4	M	L	B	N	S	B	0
82	G4	F	M	D	N	M	B	1
83	H4	F	L	B	C	S	C	0
84	I4	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
85	J4	F	L	B	N	S	C	0
86	K4	F	L	G	N	S	C	0
87	L4	F	L	G	N	M	C	0
88	M4	M	L	B	N	S	B	0
89	N4	M	M	D	N	M	B	0
90	O4	F	L	G	N	S	C	0
91	P4	M	L	B	N	U	O	0
92	Q4	F	M	G	N	S	B	0
93	R4	F	L	B	C	S	C	0
94	S4	M	L	D	U	U	B	0
95	T4	M	L	B	N	M	O	0
96	U4	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
97	V4	F	L	B	N	S	B	0
98	W4	F	L	B	N	U	O	0
99	X4	F	H	D	N	M	B	0
100	Y4	F	M	D	N	M	B	0
101	Z4	F	M	D	N	M	B	0

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS MASTER DATA SHEET: SUMMARY

Sums	Sex	# of	Prim.	Qual.	Skill:	Theor	# of
by:		interv.	type:	of Int:	S-M-U	Orient:	violent
Sex:Female	76						
Sex:Male	25						
Interventions:Hi		30					
Interventions:Medium		25					
Interventions:Low		46					
Type of interventions:desists			43				
Type of interventions:guides			22				
Type of interventions:both			36				
Quality of intervention:caring				11			
Quality of intervention:neutral				83			
Quality of intervention:uncaring				7			
Teacher's skill:successful					47		
Teacher's skill:mixed					34		
Teacher's skill:unsuccessful					20		
Theoretical orientation: functionalist-behavioural						55	
Theoretical orientation:social-constructivist						27	
Theoretical orientation:"Laissez-faire"						19	
# of violent incidents observed:None							92
# of violent incidents observed:One or more							9