

# Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Artium* in Psychology at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

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To my best friend and Lord, Jesus Christ.

## Declaration by Student

I, Mrs Nicola Richardson, declare herewith that the dissertation entitled:

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which I herewith submit to the North-West University: Potchefstroom Campus, is my own work and that all references used or quoted were indicated and acknowledged.

This dissertation is presented in article format in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Manual for Postgraduate Studies, 2008 of the North-West University. The technical editing was done according to the guidelines and requirements set out in Chapter Two of the Manual.

The article will be submitted to the journal entitled Perspectives in Education. (The guidelines for the submission to the journal are attached in Appendix 6).



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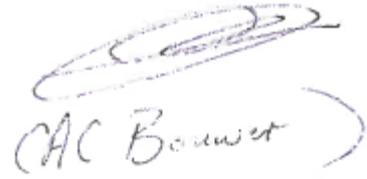
## Declaration by Supervisors

Hereby, we declare that this dissertation in article format was prepared under our supervision and we confirm that it meets all academic criteria for the process of award of academic degree.

  
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## Summary

Resistant behaviour is a serious reality in South African primary schools. South Africa's teachers strive to be agents of positive change amidst the multiple challenges they and their learners encounter, yet they admittedly experience daily frustration at addressing resistant behaviour. Considering the harsh external realities which many learners encounter, resistant behaviour cannot be expected to disappear at the introduction of specific techniques. The research consequently aimed to examine and describe Grade 5 teachers' perceptions of resistance with the objective of improving teacher-learner relationships. A phenomenological paradigm structured this qualitative study to determine how grade 5 teachers perceive resistance through their direct experiences.

The research involved focus group discussions and interviews. Fourteen teachers participated, representing three private and three public schools in Gauteng. Selection criteria included: a recognised teaching qualification, teaching experience of minimum two years, currently teaching Grade 5 learners, a commitment to teach demonstrated through course attendance and enhancement of the school's curriculum, and the ability to speak English. During each focus group discussion, one introductory question was asked: *"Please share your perceptions of resistant behaviour shown by children in your Grade 5 classes"*. Additional funnelling and probing questions were utilized. Prior to data gathering, one participant per school was requested to volunteer to participate in an individual interview, in addition to the focus group discussion. During the interview, two introductory questions were asked: *"How did you experience the focus group discussion pertaining to teacher perceptions of the resistant behaviour displayed by children in Grade 5?"* and *"What is your view of the conclusion/s reached during the discussion?"* These questions were followed by funnelling questions.

Content analysis was used with Interpretative phenomenological analysis to understand meanings ascribed to coded texts. Emerging findings were depicted visually to identify data patterns as part of thematic analysis until themes crystallised. Amongst findings understood from a causal, contextual and developmental perspective, unique findings emerged revealing that a relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour and the school ethos, that resistance can reveal creativity and divergent thinking processes, and that considering resistant behaviour from a future-minded perspective can enable teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying skills needed by society, if developed as strengths. The findings support international research with one marked exception: that the examples provided in the literature affect the resistant learner personally, whereas the examples provided by the participants affect the other learners, teachers and the school itself.

The findings contribute meaningfully to the debate regarding how to manage school resistance. The researcher recommends further studies be carried out to determine if the findings are reflective of most Grade 5 teachers. If so, it is advised that the findings be shared so that teachers become aware of alternate ways to interpret resistance and possibly to enhance their professional development by reformulating their current thought processes around resistance. The researcher recommends that the relationship between school ethos and resistant behaviour be explored to assist teachers in contextualising their management of resistance.

Keywords: teacher, perception, middle childhood, resistant behaviour, resistance

## Opsomming

Weerstandige gedrag is 'n ernstige realiteit in Suid-Afrikaanse primêre skole. Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysers streef daarna om agente van positiewe verandering te wees te midde van die veelvuldige uitdagings wat hulle en hulle leerders teëkom. Tog word hulle daaglik gefrustreer deur leerders se weerstandige gedrag. Indien die harde eksterne realiteite waaraan soveel leerders blootgestel word in ag geneem word, is dit onwaarskynlik dat weerstandige gedrag sal verdwyn met die toepassing/invoer van spesifieke tegnieke. Gevolglik het die navorsing gepoog om onderwysers se persepsies van weerstandige gedrag van graad 5 leerders oop te dek en riglyne vir onderwysers daar te stel vir die hantering van weerstand met die oog daarop om onderwyser-leerder verhoudings te verbeter.

Kwalitatiewe, fenomenologiese navorsing is uitgevoer, met gebruikmaking van fokusgroep besprekings en onderhoude. Veertien onderwysers verteenwoordigend van 3 privaat- en 3 publieke skole in Gauteng, het deelgeneem. Seleksiekriteria het die volgende ingesluit: 'n erkende onderwyskwalifikasie, 'n minimum van 2 jaar ervaring in die onderwys, onderrig tans graad 5 leerders, 'n verbintenis tot die onderwys soos aangedui deur die bywoning van kursusse en die bevordering van die skool se curriculum, en die vermoë om Engels te praat. Een inleidende vraag is gedurende elke fokusgroep bespreking gestel: *“Deel asseblief u persepsies oor weerstandigheid soos getoon in die gedrag van leerders in u graad 5 klasse.”* Aanvullende verskerpende en ondersoekende vrae is aangewend. Voor data insameling is een deelnemer per skool gevra om vrywillig deel te neem aan 'n individuele onderhoud addisioneel tot die fokusgroep bespreking. Twee inleidende vrae is gestel: *“Hoe het u die fokusgroep bespreking ervaar wat gehandel het oor die persepsies van onderwysers betreffende weerstandige gedrag wat deur kinders in graad 5 getoon word?”* en *“Wat is u siening oor die gevolgtrekking/s wat tydens die bespreking gemaak is?”*. Hierdie vrae is met verskerpende vrae opgevolg.

Inhoudsanalise tesame met Interpretierende fenomenologiese analise is gebruik om die betekenis wat aan gekodeerde tekste toegeskryf is, te verstaan. Ontplooiende bevindinge is visueel uitgebeeld om datapatrone as deel van tematiese analise te identifiseer, totdat temas in 'n fenomenologiese geheel gekristalliseer het. Te midde van bevindinge soos begryp vanuit 'n oorsaaklike, kontekstuele en ontwikkelingsperspektief, het unieke bevindinge na vore gekom wat die volgende laat blyk het: daar bestaan 'n verband tussen onderwysers se persepsie van weerstandige gedrag en die skool-etos, weerstandigheid kan kreatiwiteit en divergente denke openbaar, en die beskouing van weerstandige gedrag vanuit 'n toekomspektief kan onderwysers in staat stel om weerstandige gedrag as 'n aanduiding van die onderliggende

vaardighede wat deur die samelewing benodig word, te sien indien dit as sterk punte ontwikkel word.

Die bevindinge ondersteun internasionale navorsing met een opvallende verskil: die voorbeelde verskaf in die literatuur beïnvloed die weerstandige leerder persoonlik, terwyl die voorbeelde verskaf deur die deelnemers 'n impak het op die ander leerders, onderwysers en die skool self.

Die bevindinge lewer 'n betekenisvolle bydrae tot die debat rondom die hantering van weerstandige gedrag. Die navorser stel voor dat verdere studies uitgevoer word ten einde vas te stel of die bevindinge weerspieëlend is van die meeste graad 5 onderwysers. Indien dit wel die geval is, word aanbeveel dat die bevindinge bekend gemaak word sodat onderwysers bewus kan word van alternatiewe maniere om weerstand te interpreteer en om moontlik hulle professionele ontwikkeling te bevorder deur die herformulering van hulle huidige beskouings betreffende weerstand. Die navorser beveel aan dat die verband tussen skool-etos en weerstandige gedrag ondersoek word ten einde onderwysers te help om hulle hantering van weerstand te kontekstualiseer.

Sleutelwoorde: onderwyser, persepsie, middel kinderjare, weerstandige gedrag, weerstand.

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## **Section A – Problem formulation, methodological considerations and integrated literature study**

### ***Part 1: Problem formulation and rationale for the study***

#### **1.1 Introduction and problem statement**

Research with regard to the management of resistant behaviour has been, and continues to be, carried out in the international context, with the aim of finding positive ways to manage resistance (Goodwin & Miller, 2012:83; Maag, 2000:131). In the UK, the findings of Male (2003:163) revealed that primary school teachers typically use diffusion techniques, such as distraction, instead of prevention techniques to deal with challenging behaviour, but that these teachers are often left “feeling frustrated, angry, upset and/or at a loss”. Similar research done in the USA by Froggett (2007), but within an adult graduate educational context, endeavoured to understand the instructors’ perceptions and interpretations of the underlying dynamics of resistant behaviour and episodes of resistant behaviour. Froggett’s (2007) results revealed that the participants were unable to predict the onset of resistance nor could they identify the causes thereof to develop their own coping strategies. Different emotional reactions were also expressed, often described as “strong and lasting” (Froggett, 2007:ii).

Real teaching talent, as discussed by Boldt (2006:295-296), “...is the ability to ally with the student, to patiently acknowledge and ‘hold’ the child’s anxieties, rages, and fears” and “...to create a ‘learning alliance’”. With reference to the findings of Froggett (2007:ii) above, however, this ability seems to be a dynamic strived for by teachers but rarely, if at all, attained. To create a learning alliance, teachers need to manage their learners’ resistant behaviour as well as their learners’ varying emotional and somatic responses that accompany resistance such as anger outbursts and anxiety reactions amongst others (Boldt, 2006:276). Other international studies have indicated that resistant behaviour, whether active or passive by nature, can be a self-protective, coping strategy that children adopt because of their inadequate self-regulatory or stress handling capabilities (Geldard & Geldard, 2008:122, 126; Maag, 2000:136; Skvorak, 2013:4). Boldt (2006:273, 297) states that resistant behaviour is sometimes an attempt by children to mediate their anxiety, in which instance Boldt (2006:279) proposes working *with* resistant behaviour as opposed to working *against* it. Since teachers are known to encounter resistant behaviour within their classrooms on a daily basis (Skvorak, 2013:4), there is little wonder that the teaching profession has generally been described as “...a difficult and complex, multifaceted and multi-layered art and science” (Bloch, 2009:104).

Researchers have sought to understand the impact of resistant behaviour within the learning context for more than one hundred years (Boldt, 2006:278). Nevertheless, dealing with resistant

behaviour in the classroom, both locally and abroad, remains an on-going daily challenge for teachers (Skvorak, 2013:4). Adding to this challenge within South Africa, it has been said that the “unstable nature of teaching in South Africa will continually challenge educators and cause stress” (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:705).

One of the problems experienced in South African education is that of poor working conditions. According to Nesane (2008:30, 32), a report by SADTU in 2003 stated that “dissatisfied teachers leave the profession because of poor student discipline, poor salaries and fringe benefits” and further added the factors of classroom overcrowding, a lack of resources, corruption and violence against teachers as well as the impact of HIV/AIDs. Bloch (2009:124) too paints a grim picture of education in South Africa and mentions some of the harsh realities that some of our teachers are encountering. Some teachers are interacting with learners who do not receive educational support at home, with some learners having to cope with the reality of death caused by AIDS and the resulting increase of domestic responsibilities on their shoulders, not to mention peer pressure as typical of this age group. Teachers also encounter situations in which they need to address sexual violence and sexual relations within their classrooms.

As a result, South African teachers may hold perceptions of resistant behaviour that are uniquely coloured against the diverse backdrop of their learners’ personal challenges. An additional challenge is contained in the multicultural context of the South African classroom, which Craft (2011:95) describes in the following way:

“South Africa comprises a breath-taking diversity of more or less recently imported cultures, almost a complete range of racial groups, eleven official languages and very high discrepancies between rich and poor”.

Through the interactions of learners and teachers from these diverse cultures in the classroom, the process of acculturation unfolds, a process which Berry (2005:698) defines as

“...the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members”.

Within the multicultural South African classroom, Jansen (2011:7) refers to an erroneous cultural notion that teachers not only teach but take care of the whole child, which certainly differs from other culturally led perceptions of the role of a teacher. Markus and Nurius (1984:150) explain that some behaviour results from the learner and other behaviour from the learner’s cultural context or external restraints. Walton (2011:775) encourages teachers to be aware of resistance that results from a mismatch between their own known cultural beliefs and values, and those of the school or the learner. Sitler (2008:119-120) also encourages the development of “...a pedagogy of awareness...” which,

“...can help a teacher to reframe perceptions and, consequently, help disengaged or difficult students reinvest in their learning”

in order to support their learners. An understanding of how South Africa’s teachers perceive resistant behaviour amidst these varying cultural expectations and ideas as well as in light of their learners’ aforementioned personal challenges, will consequently be beneficial in terms of providing guidance and support to teachers who also have the role of being agents of positive change within such a diverse, multicultural learning context.

Many different theoretical understandings and approaches have arisen in the attempt to understand resistant behaviour. According to social learning theorists, resistant behaviour is attributed to the consequences of learned past experiences, as reinforcement and as a way of reacting to challenges (Birchler & Spinks, 2013:7; Illeris, 2003:404; Maag, 2000:136). The psychoanalytic perspective proposes that self-perceptions or the perceptions of others can both cause and mould resistant behaviour (Boldt, 2006:283). Boldt (2006:279, 290-291, 294) explains how resistant behaviour is then regarded as symptomatic of an underlying problem which is linked to the perception of a lack of love or loss of love either by a significant other or by oneself and that resistance therefore serves to protect or defend oneself from feelings of shame. Psychodynamic theorists therefore propose the building of interpersonal relationships to enable or empower the person to make a choice to change their behaviour rather than trying other ways to stop it or fix it. From a developmental perspective, notably the theories of Erikson and Piaget (Austrian, 2008:142-143; Cincotta, 2008:103-107; Lerner *et al.* 2003:241-242; Zuckerman 2007:74-75, 79-80), middle childhood, 8-12 years of age, is a phase characterised by the formation of self-esteem as children move toward seeing themselves as unique and separate beings, yet with a need to belong (McHale *et al.* 2003:241-242; McHale *et al.* 2001:116). In accordance with Erikson’s theory pertaining to industry versus inferiority, which is of particular importance to learners in middle childhood, the failure to acquire a personal sense of accomplishment, based on personal strengths, could mean that a child’s inferiority manifests in the form of resistant behaviour. From a positive psychological approach, the orientation is to understand how resistant behaviour can add value to the relationships in which it is encountered by considering “...the ways that people feel joy, show altruism, and create healthy families and institutions...” (Gable & Haidt, 2005:105).

The researcher was not able to find any documented research either nationally or internationally on teachers’ perceptions of resistant behaviour displayed within the intermediate schooling phase (Grade 4 – Grade 7). Recent research into middle childhood behavioural variations has been recognised as an understudied area (Dubois-Comtois *et al.* 2013:1319).

Accordingly, in view of the presenting need to understand resistant behaviour within South African primary schools, and with the many years of past research on resistant behaviour as a

backdrop, this research endeavoured to contribute to the knowledge base and on-going debate concerning resistant behaviour in middle childhood education. This research was therefore conducted amongst teachers of 10 and 11 year old learners in Grade 5, to gain insight into how South African teachers perceive resistant behaviour during the middle childhood developmental phase and to allow for the inclusion of developmental theory as a backdrop to understanding how the teachers account for their learners developmental needs. To reiterate, Sitler (2008:119-120) encourages teacher awareness pertaining to their learners to enhance and cultivate the teacher-learner relationship and to assist in the development of guiding principles and support for teachers, when confronted with resistant behaviours in middle childhood. The question that formed the underlying basis of the research was: *How do teachers perceive resistant behaviour displayed by learners in middle childhood?*

## **1.2 Aims and objectives of the research**

### *1.2.1 General aim*

The aim of the study was to examine and describe teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of learners in the middle childhood developmental phase.

### *1.2.2 Objectives*

By examining and describing teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour in the middle childhood developmental phase, the findings could be used to improve teacher-learner relationships and to devise guiding principles for teachers when experiencing resistant behaviours demonstrated by Grade 5 learners in middle childhood.

### *1.2.3 Research Procedure*

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Gauteng Educational Department as well as their educational districts near the researcher's residence. With the contextual backing of the literature study already undertaken, the researcher approached the schools requesting their involvement. Initially the data collection process as outlined in the protocol was not accepted as it required the participants to travel on two separate occasions and demanded too much of their time. The method of data collection was modified to include smaller focus groups to be held at each of the schools, and individual interviews. Once permission had been granted at each school's senior management level the principal was requested to use the expert sampling criterion provided to suggest suitable participants (Creswell, 2012:155; Palys, 2008:3; Patton, 2002:104) in order to ensure that the participants were qualified to provide meaningful accounts of their first-hand experiences of resistant behaviour as displayed by their Grade 5 learners. After receiving the suggested participants' informed consent, the data collection commenced at times most convenient to them, which would not interfere with teaching time.

Sessions were video recorded at the participants' permission to allow for transcription and analysis thereafter.

To enhance crystallisation of the data, the researcher combined content analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis. The data identified as pertinent to the focus of the research were tabulated on an Excel Spreadsheet to allow for the three methods of analysis to occur concurrently. The emerging patterns were integrated and conceptualised into themes. The researcher then proceeded with section C, the discussion of the research process and findings, prior to identifying a focus for the article (section B). *Perspectives in Education (PiE)* was selected as the journal of choice. Article requirements such as the word restriction of 5000 words meant that not all the results could be documented in the article; only pertinent themes were thus addressed. Aside from the author requirements provided by *PiE*, the researcher further reviewed other articles published by *PiE* to ascertain their article content and formatting preferences.

### **1.3 Method of investigation**

#### *1.3.1 Paradigm*

This was a qualitative, phenomenological study. Qualitative research emphasises the use of words as a means to deepen an understanding of the meaning attributed to social phenomena by the research participants. Such findings are therefore unique to the sample of participants in the research and cannot be assumed to be representative of the greater population (Whittaker, 2009:6). Qualitative research thus allows for the exploration of an individual's perspective, emphasising individuality (Howitt, 2010:7). Phenomenology has been defined as "... the understanding that our experience is never of the world as it is, but of the world as filtered through our senses and our understanding of the world" (Philippson, 2009:6). Within the context of qualitative research, Creswell (2007:57) explains a phenomenological research paradigm to be one which "...describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon". Through inductive reasoning (Heit & Rotello, 2010:805), this allows for the exploration of multiple individual perceptions expressed through words as opposed to numerical information (Whittaker, 2009:9), in order to grasp the "universal essence" of a phenomenon as it applies to all the participants (Creswell, 2007:58). This required the researcher to remain neutral so as to understand resistant behaviour only as it is perceived by Grade 5 teachers.

Husserl's phenomenological theory states that human consciousness and one's understanding of what reality is and is not, results from engaging with and being receptive to "the world, to others, and even to ourselves" (Giorgi, 2004:75-76) and, as Philippson (2009:72) emphasises,

how each person forms part of a contextual field of relationships. The phenomenological approach facilitated the exploration of emerging patterns from each participant's individual contributions, thereby creating "clusters of meaning" (Creswell, 2007:61) to assist in gaining a phenomenological understanding of how Grade 5 teachers perceive resistant behaviour.

Understanding the perceptions of resistant behaviour of South African Grade 5 teachers requires understanding *how they* perceive resistant behaviour, *what they* perceive as resistant, factoring in multi-cultural and socio-economic influences, and *how their* perceptions give cognisance to middle childhood development.

### 1.3.2 *The design*

A phenomenological enquiry was selected as the research design to facilitate the collection of qualitative data. Phenomenological research explores how personally lived experiences or the life world (Husserl, 1970) are "transformed into consciousness" (Merriam, 2009:24) and thereby assists in understanding the participants' interpretations of their personal engagement or lived experience (Cross, 2008: 5; Wirkkula, 2007:123,124). The APA Dictionary of Psychology (VandenBos, 2007:683) defines 'person perception' as "the processes by which people think about, appraise, and evaluate other people", adding "An important aspect of person perception is the attribution of motives for action." According to Patton (2002:104), phenomenological research serves to focus on lived experience, and since retroreflection occurs after a direct experience, it is necessary to hear the participant's recollections of their lived experience, which in turn assist in exploring the participants' perceptions thereof. This allows for a deeper understanding of their understandings of their lived experiences. The life world, which is pre-reflective, comprises the world of objects around us as we perceive them and our experience of our self, body and relationships (Husserl 1936/1970).

### 1.3.3 *Participants*

The research was conducted in an educational setting with teachers as participants. The participating schools consisted of three private and three public schools, thereby opening different contexts within which to explore teacher perceptions of resistant behaviour in middle childhood. Except for one school that is located in a poorer community, the schools are situated in middle to upper-income communities. All of the schools have a mixed race learner population. The schools selected are located within two educational districts of close proximity to the researcher's residence. This was arranged to reduce the researcher's transportation costs. The final number of participants totalled 14 Grade 5 teachers. The selection of the participants was a discretionary one made by the school principals such that the provided research participant criteria, detailed in the following paragraph, were met.

The participant selection criteria were: a recognised teaching diploma or degree; teaching for at least two years; currently teaching Grade 5 learners in middle childhood (the intermediate schooling phase); a commitment to teach through regular course attendance, research and enhancement of the said school's curriculum; willingness to participate in the research voluntarily and the ability to speak English. Table 1 contains a summary of the participant criteria:

**Table 1. Background information on participants**

School*/Part.	Gender	Recognised teaching Qualification	Teaching experience	Teaching experience in Grade 5	Home language
SPr1P1	Female	HDip.Ed and BA.Ed	>10 years	10 years	English
SPr1P2	Female	BA.Ed	>5 years	5 years	English
<u>SPr1P3</u>	Female	HDip.Ed	>3 years	3 years	English
<u>SPr2P1</u>	Male	Psychology Honours and Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	3 years	3 years	English
<u>SPr2P2</u>	Female	B.Ed Intermediate & Senior Phase	2 years	9 months	English
<u>SPr2P3</u>	Female	BPrim.Ed	26 years	26 years	Afrikaans
<u>SPr3P1</u>	Female	Dip.JPrimEd	17 years	15 years	English
<u>SPu1P1</u>	Female	B.Ed Drama & Drama Licentiate	>2 years	2 years	English
<u>SPu1P2</u>	Female	Honours Educational Management	22 years	22 years	Afrikaans
<u>SPu1P3</u>	Female	BA.Psychology & PGCE	2 years	2 years	English
<u>SPu2P1</u>	Female	B.PrimEd	>5.5 years	5.5 years	English
<u>SPu3P1</u>	Female	HDip.Ed & ACE	5 years	5 years	African
<u>SPu3P2</u>	Female	HDip.Ed	6 years	6 years	African
<u>SPu3P3</u>	Male	Zimbabwean (4year) Teaching Diploma	15 years	15 years	African

\* SPr – private school, SPu – public school

The final sample of participants totalled 14 Grade 5 teachers of whom 2 were male teachers. All of the teachers met the participant criteria pertaining to the qualifications and experience. Only

one participant had obtained his teaching qualification outside of South Africa's tertiary educational context. The majority of teachers who participated have teaching degrees. The participants were from differing cultural contexts, representative of the multi-cultural and diverse South African educational context. In each school, one teacher had many years of teaching experience particular to Grade 5. This was not stipulated as part of the criteria, yet in hindsight is a fortuitous finding as it increased diversity of the data generated - each school's data include perceptions based on a wealth of *experiential* knowledge. This experience in teaching Grade 5 learners, or indeed the lack thereof, together represents a diversity of phenomenological viewpoints.

#### 1.3.4 *Data Gathering*

During data gathering the researcher endeavoured, in the first place, to understand the participants' lived experiences of Grade 5 resistant behaviour, and then secondly to understand their perceptions with regard to Grade 5 learners' resistant behaviour. The initial process of hearing the participants' accounts of their actual experiences of resistant behaviour thus facilitated a deeper understanding of their shared perceptions thereof.

"Two methods of gathering data were used, namely, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions. In the two instances in which only one participant was willing to participate in the research, the researcher conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews to explore the participant's own lived experience and their resulting perceptions of resistance by their Grade 5 learners (Howitt, 2010:156-158 & Whittaker, 2009:43). In the situations where the schools offered more than one participant, focus group discussions were conducted. The focus group discussions allowed the participants to voice their views as a group through the sharing of their related experiences, initially by discussing their lived experiences and thereafter by reflecting on how they understand resistant behaviour in Grade 5 (Flick, 2014:250 & Whittaker, 2009:47). In order to continue exploring resistance on a deeper individual level than that which can generally be facilitated within a group situation, an accompanying but separate one-on-one individual interview was conducted with a volunteer participant who had participated in the focus group discussion."

As evident in Table 1 above, the resulting focus groups each comprised 3 participants, which varies with the focus group "norm" of approximately 6-12 participants (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009:3; Whittaker, 2009:49). The original research proposal initially sought to accommodate a focus group consisting of ten Grade 5 teachers who met the inclusion criteria. However, after much difficulty to source participants, the researcher needed to adapt the study to use these smaller focus groups which coincidentally comprised 3 participants per group. Research undertaken by Toner (2009) used focus groups comprising only two participants. An

investigation into the literature revealed that the terms 'focus group' and 'discussion group' are sometimes used interchangeably and synonymously (Gibbs, 2012:185, Barbour, 2007:2 & Flick, 2014:246). After much deliberation, the researcher elected to keep to the term 'focus group' as initially proposed. In one school, the interview preceded the focus group discussion due to the school circumstances but this did not negatively influence the group dynamics of the focus group discussion. The data collected across all six schools were deemed to reflect honest accounts of the teachers' perceptions. Data trustworthiness and, therefore, the comparability and the application thereof, were secured."

Within the focus group discussion, one overarching question was asked by way of introducing the discussion: *Please share your perceptions of resistant behaviour shown by children in your Grade 5 classes.* Two funnelling questions were used to encourage discussion, namely: "*What do you think of when I say, 'resistant behaviour'?*" and "*How do you feel about resistant behaviour in your Grade 5 classes?*"

After the focus group discussion, one participant remained behind to participate in an individual interview. Prior to data gathering, the participants had been requested to decide amongst themselves who would be willing to participate in an individual interview in addition to the focus group. Factors such as work commitments and extra-mural commitments were considered in this regard. Two introductory questions were posed to the interviewee in order to link the focus group discussion to the individual interview context, namely: "*How did you experience the previous discussion pertaining to teacher perceptions of the resistant behaviour displayed by children in Grade 5?*" and "*What is your view of the conclusion/s reached during the focus group discussion?*" Following these two introductory questions, the following three funnelling questions were asked: "*In what way does resistant behaviour affect you personally?*", "*How do you personally relate to learners who typically show resistant behaviour?*" and "*Please describe a specific incident which you perceived as resistant behaviour by your Grade 5 learners.*" (Appendix 1 includes a summary of all the questions that were asked, including prompting questions.)

By way of conclusion, the following questions were asked: "*Which of your responses to resistant behaviour have you found to be most helpful?*"; "*Which of your responses would you like other teachers to become aware of?*" and "*Which of your responses would you like other teachers to try in their classrooms?*"

### 1.3.5 Data Analysis

The researcher initially sought to become acquainted with the data before examining them in detail. Detailed immersion in the data required that the researcher revisit the data, where

needed, to gain a contextual understanding of the terminology used. The researcher then assigned codes to the data by making use of content analysis to ascertain the frequency with which certain words were used and to detect emotionally loaded words or statements (Whittaker, 2009:80). Content analysis was therefore used to analyse the data on an explicit level. The researcher then applied interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith *et al.*, 2009:1) in order to analyse and understand the participants' meanings assigned to these coded texts on an implicit level. This required the researcher to record and bracket her own ideas or assumptions, and to listen empathically, to understand what the research participants were experiencing on a daily basis and to hear how these encounters had formed their perceptions surrounding resistance. Each analysis became increasingly interpretive, and so, to maintain validity and objectivity, the researcher consistently referred to the contextual information supplied by the participants (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 36, 37) as part of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006:79).

Thematic analysis consisted of the six phases as outlined by Whittaker (2009:92-97). These phases include becoming familiar with the data – in this research this included the lived experiences of resistant behaviour that the participants had experienced themselves and then hearing their shared perceptions surrounding resistance. Codes were then assigned to capture those statements made by the participants that the researcher deemed important to the research focus. These codes were then grouped into themes which were subsequently refined, merged and integrated thus revealing the dominant emerging themes. These were named and are detailed in Section C. Due to the word limitation of the selected article, only key themes in alignment with the focus of the article have been addressed in Section B. The researcher then visually depicted the emerging IPA findings (an example is provided in Appendix 2) in order to identify emerging data patterns and themes as part of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). A process of data immersion and distancing (in order to see the bigger picture) ensued, until such time as the themes blended or crystallised (Ellingson, 2009:74-75; Janesick 2000:391) into a phenomenological whole thus capturing the overall essence of how Grade 5 teachers perceive resistant behaviour in the middle childhood developmental phase.

#### **1.4 Ethical Aspects**

Ethical considerations were held to be of utmost importance throughout the research process as well as thereafter to oversee both the information generated and to protect all participants (Allan, 2008:55, 286-295; Whittaker, 2009:17). The researcher aimed to build rapport with the participants to open up communication lines within a safe and friendly environment. All participants were encouraged to share their lived experiences of resistant behaviour and their resulting perceptions of resistance in Grade 5 (Lamb, 2012:215, 217). All parties were assured of confidentiality and anonymity on the researcher's part. Additionally, the participants were

requested to respect that which was shared within the group as confidential and not to share any content discussed outside of the focus group. The focus group discussions and interviews were video recorded and thereafter transcribed verbatim by the researcher to achieve data accuracy (Whittaker, 2009:44, 58). When the participants referred to one another or to their learners by name, the researcher replaced these references with an “X” when transcribing in order to ensure confidentiality.

The following ethical process guided the research process: Prior to commencing research, permission to conduct the study was firstly obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education and its respective districts (as per Appendix 3), and the NWU Committee of Ethics, NWU-00060-12-A1, (as per Appendix 4). An introductory email was sent to the principals of the schools listed in the Gauteng Education Department application form, requesting their permission to conduct this research. This email sought to introduce the nature and purpose of the research and to request that he or she identify suitable participants. Written permission was then obtained from six school principals as well as from the teachers (as per Appendix 5). Assurance was given to all parties that no individual or school would be identified. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. The researcher was continuously aware of the imperative of remaining neutral, objective and non-judgmental during the entire research process. The researcher undertakes to make the findings of the research available to the participants. In terms of data storage, all data used for this study have been stored safely on a USB card and will be available for five years on the researcher’s computer following conclusion of the research. Prior to the researcher conducting the focus group discussions and interviews, the participants were asked to suggest dates and times within a two week period, so that all participants’ commitments were accommodated and such that they each had sufficient notice. The researcher then travelled to each school at the allotted times, and video recorded each session to allow for transcription and visual analysis of the data thereafter.

## ***Part 2: Integrated literature study***

### **2.1 Resistant behaviour**

#### *2.1.1 Defining the concept*

Many suggestions have been made in an attempt to capture what resistant behaviour really implies. Giroux (2001:104) takes a critical stance, stating that no attempt has been made to formulate an understanding of resistance, and adds that resistant behaviour is therefore classed descriptively, and encompasses behaviour that is oppositional as well as more subtle.

Reda (2007:35) likens resistant behaviour to magnetism, as an unseen yet essential force required to ensure balance in relationships and to prevent chaos. This perspective reflects systems theory, which contextualises resistance and regards it as an agent which maintains homeostasis (Birchler & Spinks, 2013:8-9). Generally speaking, resistant behaviour is understood to be either deliberate or unintentional (Walton, 2011:770), and either negative or positive depending on the perspective adopted. Some regard resistant behaviour as a protective or positive coping tool and adaptive by nature (Birchler & Spinks, 2013:8-9; Geldard & Geldard, 2008:120; Maag, 2000:136; Reda, 2007:35; Skvorak, 2013:4) whilst to others, resistant behaviour is misunderstood and "...considered inappropriate..." (Maag, 2000:136). Still another viewpoint is that resistant behaviour is seen as a natural and oppositional reaction to something children do not understand or want (Illeris, 2003:404), serving as a response to their own lived experiences and to authority structures which dominate and constrain them. (Giroux, 2001:108).

Skvorak (2013:3, 4) explains resistant behaviour as defensive and self-protective. By way of example, Skvorak (2013:4) refers to controlling behaviours, whether expressed passively or aggressively, as resistant behaviour which is used to gain a sense of power. Such classroom behaviours would include choosing not to learn as a means of self-assertion.

### *2.1.2 Understanding resistance within schools*

Past research has sought to understand resistant behaviour specific to the learning context. Brookfield (2009:1-2) attributes classroom resistance to a poor self-image as a learner, a fear of the unknown, a mismatch between teaching and learning styles, not understanding the relevance of the information being taught, misunderstanding content and not liking the teacher. This results in behaviours such as, "not following directions, talking out of turn, pulling someone's hair...", "...dropping pencils at a designated time...", "...conveniently 'forgetting' assignments..." (Reda, 2007:33-34); hiding incomplete work and avoiding new activities (Boldt, 2006:273); and as "...emotional outbursts, denial of responsibility, absenteeism, teacher criticism, personal frustration, insensitivity, and defensiveness" (Walton, 2011:770).

These classroom behaviours are then further analysed according to their nature and motive, as active or passive, destructive or purposeful. Froggett (2007:10) categorises resistant behaviours across a spectrum from passive resistant behaviour to active resistance, namely "...hostile withdrawal; hostile diversion; and hostile attack". Hostile withdrawal categorises resistant behaviour such as a refusal to participate or learn – such resistance can be more passive. Hostile diversion involves actions that include other learners such as whispering in class, passing notes around, or purposively changing the focus of the class topic. Lastly, hostile attack includes active, challenging behaviour which is aimed directly at the teachers' "...authority or

credibility, challenges the instructor's directions or rejects the instructor's message..." (Froggett, 2007:10).

Varying viewpoints have been expressed in an attempt to understand resistant behaviour. Maag (2000:136) regards resistant behaviour as *inherently protective behaviour*, observing that people by nature are purpose driven, be it to self-protect or to further another cause. Comparably, Dickar (2008:17) refers to two research projects which depict resistance as a *positive, self-protective and deliberate act* "...against the psychic damage caused by assimilation into the culture of the school". Aside from giving consideration to the nature of and motive behind resistant behaviour, another standpoint offered by Reda (2007:41) is that the presence of resistant behaviour within the classroom could in itself be symptomatic of a teacher-learner relationship that needs adjusting to restore a healthy balance.

Within the classroom context, resistant behaviour to learning is often difficult to separate from a learner's use of defence mechanisms. Illeris (2003:404) makes a thought provoking distinction when he attempts to clarify this divide, explaining that a defence mechanism differs from resistance in terms of *time*. Defence mechanisms *precede* a learning situation and block the learning process, whereas resistant behaviour arises *within* a learning context and promotes learning as the learner tests the new information before accepting it verbatim, otherwise referred to as "transcendent learning". Illeris (2003:404) admits that transcendent learning can be difficult for teachers to manage, yet argues that it should be encouraged as it develops skills to act independently, to think creatively and to take personal responsibility. Giroux (2001:107) advocates that teachers

"...need to be more precise about what resistance actually is and what it is not. Furthermore there is a need to be more specific about how the concept can be used in the service of developing a critical pedagogy".

### 2.1.3 *Teacher perceptions of resistant behaviour*

The word "perception" takes on multiple meanings depending on the subject area in which it is used. Within the parameters of psychological research, the APA Dictionary of Psychology (VandenBos, 2007:683) defines perception as,

"...the process or result of becoming aware of objects, relationships, and events by means of the senses, which includes such activities as recognizing, observing, and discriminating. These activities enable organisms to organize and interpret the stimuli received into meaningful knowledge".

Skvorak (2013:5) explains how experiences and social interactions determine how people derive meaning and continually shape their perceptions and judgements. McGuire (1999) (cited in Thagard, 2006:63) explains how "thought systems" are created wherein one thought

influences another. In accordance with this, teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour could be said to create a thought system concerning the topic of resistant behaviour or even of the resistant learner, wherein the norms, values and functionality of the resistance and its management are perceived and understood experientially.

Research conducted by Reda (2007:31-32) revealed a "me-versus-them" mentality held by teachers concerning learners:

"...the stories we tell are remarkably similar: our struggles with students who do not complete assignments or do not "participate" as we think they should; students who push back, withdraw, make trouble; students who seem determined not to learn".

Furthermore, Reda's findings revealed the following teacher interpretations: Students are disengaged, apathetic, do not care about class (their writing, their learning), and they do not want to learn, are limit-testing and hate the class (writing, their teacher) (Reda, 2007:34). In response to her findings, Reda (2007:40) offers an interesting perspective on how she approaches resistance when she states how in her view both students and teachers both resist one another, and it is not that the learner alone displays resistance. Such thinking supports the explanation provided by Maag (2000:135) that thought paradigms can constrain and restrict adults from effectively managing resistance as it results in them applying "preconceived notions about what they 'should' do or say to a child".

In the research of Cornelius-White (2007:134), it was found that teachers who engaged with their learners in a positive way by showing their support, their understanding and enhancing their learners' thinking and creativity, experienced less resistant behaviour amongst their learners. Research undertaken by Hoffman (2008:235) revealed similar findings which emphasised the need for positive engagement with the learners through expressed support, being approachable, and showing care beyond the teaching of the curriculum. Skvorak agrees (2013:ix,1,2), stating that when teachers focus on the teacher-learner relationship through encouragement and valuing them as individuals, meeting their developmental needs, they maximize the learner's learning potential and, at the same time, manage their classroom more successfully.

To summarise, the above perceptions represent different understandings of resistant behaviour. Some teachers perceive resistant behaviour with a more individualistic mind-set, in that they attempt to address resistant behaviour in their classrooms by assuming personal responsibility to resolve or stop it. This indicates a "me-versus-them" mind-set, when considering resistance. A different perception to this is the second one that attributes resistance to both the teacher and learner. Here, the teacher is seen as resisting the learner's resistance, perhaps outside of awareness and as a result of the teacher's preconceived notions surrounding classroom

behaviour. The third and last viewpoint discussed above is that a positive teacher-learner relationship, created when teachers value and support their learners, reduces resistant behaviour in the classroom.

#### *2.1.4 Developmental theory and resistant behaviour*

Within the context of middle childhood specifically, children learn to see themselves as good at some activities while poorer in others, rather than as seeing themselves as all bad or all good as they do in their earlier years (Leary & Tangney, 2003:54; Nevis, 2000:264). Zuckerman (2007:75) supports this view, explaining that children in middle childhood undergo a process of individuation during which they aim to separate their goals from those of others. McHale *et al.* (2003:241) refer to empirical evidence which supports the existence of important, discrete developmental tasks within middle childhood, and suggest that these findings differ from the common view that middle childhood serves largely to consolidate the rapid developmental changes that precede this phase with those which follow during adolescence.

During middle childhood, children's psycho-social experiences begin to define who they are as separate beings according to their talents and strengths. Markus and Nurius (1984:151-152) clarify this by explaining that during middle childhood, children become sensitized to the opinions or perceptions of others, and they learn how to separate the "me" from the "not me", and "...to hold and integrate multiple and not always congruent views of the self". The potential, therefore, exists for children to resist tasks that will draw attention to their identified weaknesses or to situations that impact on their need to belong. This resistant behaviour can either be perceived as self-protective and therefore positive, or as defiant and therefore as negative.

With respect to teacher perceptions of middle childhood, Zuckerman (2007:84) refers to past research and states

"It is no coincidence that teachers working with this age group often feel that they are tamers or servitors of wild animals. 'Control' and 'discipline' become key words in describing the relations between teachers and students—much harsher control and discipline than those imposed on preceding and following age groups."

Skvorak (2013:9) offers an interesting perspective, stating that learners who resist authority "have not learned that they may have qualities such as independent thinking, conviction, and/or leadership that have the potential to become personality strengths instead of weaknesses", and reframing their resistant behaviour into positive strengths "can lead them to self-motivated change".

## 2.2 Cognitive developmental theory pertaining to ten and eleven year olds

### 2.2.1 *Cognitive development and the development of a sense of self*

Developmental theorists have adopted varying approaches to the middle childhood years, the most influential of which in the Western world has been that of Jean Piaget (Zuckerman, 2007:75). Jean Piaget's cognitive research into the middle childhood years reveals that children aged eleven and twelve begin to think reflexively – that is, they develop the ability to reflect and examine their lives, to rethink their worlds in terms of their own wants and needs. This, according to Piaget, marks the beginning of their identity development as they create cognitive formulations of who they are as separate to their family of origin; and as they begin to create their own sense of self, referred to by Erikson as the "I", whilst also discovering what their strengths are as valued by their community (McHale *et al.*, 2003:241; Zuckerman, 2007:75-76, 80).

Zuckerman (2007:73) states that ten and eleven year olds are "no longer quite younger school students but not yet quite adolescents". Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002:3-4) discuss past research which revealed that eleven year olds become increasingly aware of who they are based on their own internal awareness of their traits and attitudes, making subjective judgements about themselves. They simultaneously give less focus to their external world than they did in the preceding years – what they own and activities they can do which served as a more positive and non-realistic self-assessment. This occurs as a consequence of their increasing ability to think abstractly. Children begin to understand that they have both real and ideal selves which they were not aware of before, and how they can act differently in different contexts. They crave peer group acceptance and cliques begin to form as they strive to achieve a positive peer group identity. Groups teach them about conformity, deviant behaviour, inclusion and exclusion. These experiences have implications for their subjective views of themselves. Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002:7) state, "...this period is characterized by increased self-consciousness, introspection, inner conflict, stress, uncertainty, and disorientation" and add that, "Whether these needs are fulfilled or frustrated depends in large part on experiences in the classroom and in the school setting" (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002:10-11).

Zuckerman (2007:75) explains that this can evoke a sense of "... cognitive-affective conflict..." which can manifest behaviourally through resistant behaviour. In addition to the above, ten and eleven year old learners experience changes in the dynamics of their relationships. Their relationships change from being asymmetrical as in the adult-child relationship, to "symmetrical relations of partnership" (Zuckerman, 2007:84). The ten and eleven year old learner begins to understand the use of metaphors and how to apply mnemonic strategies (and to be aware thereof) (Zuckerman, 2007:77). Their increasing cognitive ability to think reflexively as posited

by Piaget, allows them to compare their own self-perceptions with opinions of who they are as expressed by others (Zuckerman, 2007:80). McHale *et al.* (2003:242) mention other cognitive developments identified by Piaget during these middle childhood years, namely metacognitive growth, the ability to use abstract representations and logical reasoning in their problem solving. In this respect, Zuckerman (2007:81) refers to research which revealed that ten and eleven year olds attain the ability to differentiate themselves from others according to psychological constructs, and as a result refers to their “skills, memories, habits, likings, and character traits”. Erikson’s research found that ten and eleven year olds explore who they are through communication in order to discover themselves (Zuckerman, 2007:80). Zuckerman (2007:80) further explains that characteristics of this newly forming self-representation are observable on academic, social and personal levels of behaviour and this in turn predicts behaviour over the next four to six years.

### *2.2.2 Cognitive development and emotional maturation in middle childhood*

As part of their increasing independence from their family of origin, children in middle childhood increasingly look to their peers for approval and deeper emotional friendships. This interaction influences how they self-reflect in relation to their peers. Zuckerman (2007:80) explains that this impacts on their self-image in terms of how they perceive “...their own virtual abilities, bravery, attractiveness, strength of will, and independence”. In addition, learners acquire increased empathic understanding on a social level, which allows for them to objectify their shared experience so as to discuss it and acquire greater insight into the other person’s character and feelings (Zuckerman, 2007:77). Zuckerman (2007:78) refers to research which demonstrated that ten year olds increasingly develop the ability to experience ambivalent feelings simultaneously and to recognise this inner-conflict in others too. They also begin to apply moral judgements according to the passage of time – before and after an event.

### **Conclusion: Section A**

The findings of this study are shared in Section B in article format in compliance with the authors’ instructions as specified by the selected journal, *Perspectives in Education*. Section C serves to unite sections A and B with a critical discussion of the research findings and includes the research limitations and recommendations for future research. A list of the sources used in Sections A and C follows Section C and is formatted according to the requirements of North-West University (NWU) – outlined in the NWU Reference Guide 2012. NWU makes use of the NWU Harvard referencing style. The formatting of the reference list of Section B adheres to the specifications of the journal (*Perspectives in Education*).

**Section B –The article**

**Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase**

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This article adheres to the requirements of the selected journal: *Perspectives in Education (PiE)* to which the researcher is subscribed. Full author instructions are reflected in Appendix 6. In accordance with the journal requirements, the length of the article is within the stipulated 12-16 double spaced pages (or maximum of 5 000 words) including references, notes, and tables. This includes the required English abstract typed on a separate page and not exceeding 200 words, as well as the 5 key terms that follow thereafter which characterise the article.

Referencing has been addressed in accordance with the Harvard referencing method yet with adaptations as depicted in Appendix 6. The list of sources at the end of this article (Section B) will therefore differ from the list of sources at the end of Section C which is a summarised list pertaining to Section A and C. In-text referencing in the article is reflected by the author(s)' name(s) and the year of publication in brackets (Harvard method), separated by a comma: e.g. (Brown, 2001). Quotations are followed by page references in the text: e.g. (Brown, 2001:69). The manuscript has been edited by a professional language editor and copy of the editor's letter will be made available to the Editorial Office of *PIE*.

In accordance with *PiE*, the subsections are illustrated by means of the different heading levels instead of numbering: Level 1: **Lower case and bold** (14pt); Level 2: Lower case (12pt); Level 3: *Italic*; Level 4: Underlined. Finally, Table 1 is positioned at the end of the article as requested with an appropriate heading, reference to which occurs in the text.

The article's findings not only complement previous research findings (locally and abroad), but present unique findings deemed to make a significant contribution to the ongoing educational debate around resistant behaviour in schools; specifically meeting the need to address resistant behaviour in the South African intermediate school phase. It is anticipated that the article will stimulate debate within the South African educational context and arouse a wide readership interest and not just specialists in the area. Ethical Number: NWU-00060-12-A1 was assigned to the research study by North-West University.

## **Abstract**

*The paper reports teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour within the intermediate phase of South African primary schools, to address the presenting need to understand and manage resistant behaviour within the classroom. This qualitative phenomenological research was conducted by using a combination of focus group discussions and interviews. Fourteen teachers participated, representing three private and three public schools within the Gauteng province, all of mixed race learner populations. Amongst other results understood from a causal, contextual and developmental perspective, unique findings emerged revealing firstly that a relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of resistance (as developed out of their lived experiences of resistant behaviour) and school ethos, secondly, that resistance can reveal creativity and divergent thinking processes, and thirdly, that considering resistant behaviour from a big-picture or future-minded perspective can enable teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying learner skills that are needed by society, if developed as strengths. The findings contribute meaningfully to the on-going debate regarding how to manage resistance with the aim of finding positive ways to manage resistance; and to lend support towards the development of guiding principles in order to help address the presenting need of understanding resistant behaviour within South African primary schools.*

**Keywords:** teacher, perception, middle childhood, resistant behaviour, resistance

## **Introduction**

The teaching profession has been described as "...a difficult and complex, multifaceted and multi-layered art and science" (Bloch, 2009:104) and teachers are known to encounter resistant behaviour on a daily basis (Skvorak, 2013). Dealing with resistant behaviour in the classroom remains an ongoing challenge both locally and abroad, despite more than a century's research (Boldt, 2006) which has included studies regarding efforts to find positive ways to manage resistance (Goodwin & Miller, 2012 & Maag, 2000).

The research aimed to examine teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour in Grade 5 within the frame of the teachers' lived experiences. The findings contribute to the ongoing debate and existing knowledge base concerning frequently culture-based resistant behaviour in South African schools, specifically with regard to how to manage resistance and improve teacher-learner relationships, and in devising guiding principles to assist South African teachers as agents of positive change.

## **Painting a picture of the South African educational context**

According to Schulze and Steyn (2007:705), "the unstable nature of teaching in South Africa will continually challenge educators and cause stress". Craft (2012:95) describes the South African context as comprising "a breath-taking diversity of more or less recently imported cultures, almost a complete range of racial groups, eleven official languages and very high discrepancies between rich and poor". Bloch (2009:124) too paints a grim picture of education in South Africa and mentions some of the harsh realities that some of our teachers are encountering. Some teachers are interacting with learners, who do not receive educational support at home, with some learners having to cope with the reality of death caused by AIDS and the resulting increase of domestic responsibilities on their shoulders, not to mention peer pressure as typical of this age group. Teachers also encounter situations in which they need to address sexual violence and sexual relations within their classrooms. Given the South African educational context, learners' resistant behaviour must surely tap every drop of the teacher's skills and wisdom, making the teacher's perceptions of learners' behaviours pivotal to classroom management.

## **Resistant behaviour as understood by teachers**

Past research reveals diverse conceptual understandings of resistant behaviour amongst teachers, some perceiving resistant behaviour from an individualistic outlook, in that they assume responsibility to address learner resistance, indicating a "me-versus-them" mind-set (Reda, 2007:31-32). Another perception attributes resistance to both teacher and learner where the teacher is seen as resisting the learner's resistance, perhaps outside of conscious awareness but stemming from preconceived notions surrounding acceptable classroom behaviour (Maag, 2000; Reda, 2007). A third viewpoint is that resistant behaviour can be

lessened by encouraging positive teacher-learner relationships based on teacher support (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hoffman, 2008). Due to limited space, further research-based information on resistant behaviour has been integrated within the discussion of the findings below.

The researcher held a professionally vested interest concerning how teachers perceive resistance displayed by Grade 5 learners, learners who are not quite children anymore but also not yet adolescents, since no previous literature could be found. Grade 5 teachers were approached to participate with a view to potentially improving teacher-learner relationships and to devise guiding principles for teachers when experiencing resistant behaviours by their learners.

## **The research process**

### **Research paradigm, design and participant selection**

This study used a qualitative, phenomenological paradigm with phenomenology defined as a study of how participants perceive their lived experiences (Philippson, 2009). Lived experience is pre-reflective, and comprises the physical world as individuals perceive it according to their experience of self, body and relationships (Husserl, 1936/1970). The researcher firstly sought to hear the participants' recollections of their lived experiences. Phenomenological research explores how lived experience is "transformed into consciousness" (Merriam, 2009:24). The phenomenological design facilitated a deeper understanding of *how* teachers perceive resistant behaviour, *what they* perceive as resistance factoring in multi-cultural and socio-economic influences, and *how their* perceptions give cognisance to middle childhood development (Creswell, 2007). To avoid data contamination, the researcher remained neutral, to allow for the trustworthy emergence of the participants' perceptions of resistant behaviour and to facilitate exploration of the emerging data patterns, thereby creating "clusters of meaning" (Creswell, 2007:61).

The participants were 14 Grade 5 teachers (12 female, 2 male), from three private and three public schools mostly situated in middle- to upper-income communities in two educational districts, with mixed race learner population, thereby opening different contexts within which to explore teacher perceptions of resistant behaviour in middle childhood. Through the lens of purposive sampling, expert sampling was used (Creswell, 2012:155; Palys, 2008:3; Patton, 2002:104) in order to ensure that the participants were qualified to provide meaningful accounts of their first-hand experiences with resistant behaviour as displayed by their Grade 5 learners. Selection criteria included: a recognised teaching qualification; teaching experience of at least two years; currently teaching Grade 5 learners; a commitment to teach demonstrated through regular course attendance and enhancement of the school's curriculum; and ability to speak English. Table 1 contains a summary of the participants' details.

Place Table 1 approximately here.

The majority of participants had degrees in education, representative of the multi-cultural and diverse South African educational context. In each school, one participant had between 15 and 26 years' experience teaching Grade 5, with the others having three years and less. This was not a stipulated criterion, yet in hindsight was fortuitous as it increased diversity in the data generated. This wealth of *experiential* knowledge in teaching Grade 5 learners, and indeed also the lack thereof, together represented a diversity of phenomenological viewpoints.

### **Ethical considerations**

In addition to ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the university, informed permission for the research was obtained in writing from the Gauteng Education Department and its respective districts, the participating schools and teachers. All parties were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and requested to maintain confidentiality outside of the group. The researcher aimed to build rapport with the participants to open up communication lines within a safe and friendly environment, yet endeavoured not to influence the generation of the data. With the participants' consent, focus groups and interviews were video-recorded and thereafter transcribed verbatim to achieve data accuracy (Whittaker, 2009).

### **Description of the data-gathering process**

Two methods of data gathering were used, namely a focus group discussion at four of the schools followed by an individual interview with one of the focus group members. Two schools permitted only an individual interview. Data collected across all schools were deemed to reflect honest accounts of the participants' perceptions, and therefore trustworthiness, comparability and applicability were secured.

During each focus group discussion, one overarching question was asked by way of introduction: *"Please share your perceptions of resistant behaviour shown by children in your Grade 5 classes."* Two funnelling questions were used to encourage discussion pertaining to their perceptions of their lived experiences, namely: *"What do you think of when I say, 'resistant behaviour'?"* and *"How do you feel about resistant behaviour in your Grade 5 classes?"*

Prior to data gathering, one participant per school was requested to volunteer to participate in an individual interview in addition to the focus group discussion. To link the focus group discussion to the individual interview context, the interviewees were asked two introductory questions: *"How did you experience the focus group discussion pertaining to teacher perceptions of the resistant behaviour displayed by children in Grade 5?"* and *"What is your view of the conclusion/s reached during the discussion?"* Three funnelling questions were asked: *"In what way does resistant behaviour affect you personally?"*, *"How do you personally relate to learners who typically show resistant behaviour?"* and *"Please describe a specific*

*incident which you perceived as resistant behaviour by your Grade 5 learner(s)*". By way of conclusion, the following questions were asked: *"Which of your responses to resistant behaviour have you found to be most helpful?"*, *"Which of your responses would you like for other teachers to become aware of?"* and *"Which of your responses would you like for other teachers to try in their classrooms?"*

## **Data analysis**

Codes were assigned to the data by making use of content analysis, to ascertain the frequency of words and statements (Whittaker, 2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis, IPA, (Smith, Larkin & Flowers, 2009) was utilised to analyse and understand meanings ascribed to coded texts. Emerging IPA findings were then depicted visually to identify emerging data patterns and themes as part of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) until themes crystallised (Ellingson, 2009; Janesick, 2000) into a phenomenological whole, thus capturing the essence of how participating Grade 5 teachers perceived resistant behaviour in the middle childhood developmental phase.

## **Discussion of findings**

In addition to describing resistant behaviour conceptually, the research findings revealed that participant perceptions were informed from a causal, contextual and developmental perspective. Most participants shared intolerant negative sentiments around their definition of what resistant behaviour is, apart from a few participants who perceived resistance as sometimes indicating creativity and/or independent thinking. These conceptual findings are presented below as the first theme. On deeper analysis of the data, three more themes emerged which categorised how the participants sought to understand resistance: in Theme 2, the participants' causal reasons for resistant behaviour are addressed, in Theme 3 their comparisons between the home and school context are discussed, and lastly, their approach to resistance from a developmental perspective is presented under Theme 4. Some participants offered unique perceptions around resistance and these are presented below within these relevant themes.

### ***Theme 1: Participants' conceptual understanding of resistance***

Most participants explained resistance as active or passive behaviours; active resistant behaviour as more typical of public schools, and passive resistance as more typical of the private schooling context. Generally, across public and private schools, resistant behaviour was perceived negatively. Some participants, however, revealed that in specific contexts they do see resistance differently, from a more tolerant perspective. Both perceptions are herewith discussed.

Resistant behaviour was regarded by most as non-compliant, different to what is considered the norm. SPr1P2<sup>1</sup> explained classroom resistant behaviour as unfit for society and understood resistance as indicative of a child losing interest in learning. Davis and Steyn (2012:31), however, disagree with this perspective, saying: *Often resistance and learning are viewed as mutually exclusive, but while this is a possibility, it is not inevitable. Even when students are not receptive in class, it does not mean they are not learning....*

Some examples resonate with previous research findings: “not following directions, talking out of turn, pulling someone’s hair...”, “...dropping pencils at a designated time...”, “...conveniently ‘forgetting’ assignments...” (Reda, 2007:33-34), hiding incomplete work and avoiding new activities (Boldt, 2006); and as listed by Walton (2011:770) as “...emotional outbursts, denial of responsibility, absenteeism, teacher criticism, personal frustration, insensitivity, and defensiveness” (Walton, 2011:770).

Numerous other examples not found in the literature included: playing with stationery, flicking one another with rulers, playing with pencil boxes, pulling faces, making jokes, writing on school bags, refusing to write class tests, asking questions to distract the teacher from the task at hand, pretending to look for textbooks, disrespecting the teacher, storming out of class while being disciplined, speaking in a home language the teacher cannot understand, refusing to form a relationship with the teacher or even their peers, wandering from desks, distracting peers, not showing enthusiasm toward tasks or class rules, challenging subject content and refusing to participate, being destructive and aggressive by cutting school furniture. Some resistance took the form of more passive behaviours, such as a sudden headache or needing to give a message to another teacher, or complete disinterest and withdrawal from classroom activities. All these examples provide glimpses into the types of resistant behaviour with which South African Grade 5 teachers are faced. These examples suggest externally directed behaviour sourced from a disengaged, non-committal attitude to learning as well as disrespect to authority and school property. The general examples, as conveyed in the literature, have negative consequences in terms of individual learning and are generally understood as resistant behaviours. The examples as communicated by the participants, however, affect the other learners, teachers and the school itself.

The alternate orientation to resistant behaviour revealed that although these participants still see resistant behaviours as negatively charged, some regard resistance as sometimes indicating creativity and/or independent thinking which could be developed to the benefit of the learner. This particular view indicated a relationship between school ethos and perceptions of resistant behaviour, whereby the overall philosophy of the school provided a lens through which the participants interpreted resistance. A review of the school context revealed how, for example, SPr1P3 drew on the religious ethos of her school stating,

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<sup>1</sup> SPr1P2 refers to *Private School 1 Participant 2*

*...we just heard a thing this morning, we're created in God's image, and He's creative, so each child is creative. So positive resistance might very well be...we've taught them this is how you do an addition sum, but they have been able to make up their own little methodology and still get to the same answer. It is still resistant, it is different.*

School ethos is a relational and dynamic construct created contextually, materially, as well as socially by all the members of a school on a day-to-day basis (Bragg, 2011; Karlsson & Mbokazi, 2005). It takes varying forms along a continuum from that of a more traditional ethos which “seeks to esteem order and hierarchy” to “a more liberal or progressive educational ethos” which prioritises “democratic and egalitarian values” (Bragg, 2011:22). A few participants explained that they attempt to use positive ways to manage resistance due to their own phenomenology and/or school ethos.

Each participant's own value system, educational and societal background formed their preconceived notions of acceptable classroom behaviour, and it became apparent that these expectations framed some perspectives on resistant behaviour. As expressed by SPu2P12:

*I feel that if you are in the classroom you need to behave in an appropriate way; have respect for your teachers and your peers ... when we were at school and were told “keep quiet, listen”, we used to get such a fright, you used to sit quietly and you would do your work.*

Some participants perceived active resistant behaviours as the most dominant form of resistance displayed in public schools, whereas passive resistant behaviour was considered most dominant in private schools. SPr1P2 furthermore perceived resistance in public schools as worse to manage than in her private school context:

*We've got an easy bunch of children so I do not know how the teachers in the government schools cope.*

In terms of parental support, the perception was that generally parents of government school learners are more supportive of teachers' attempts to address resistance than parents from private schools. Some participants noted that since parents need to invest more financially towards the schooling of their children in private schools, they think parents feel they may demand more from the teachers, and hence resistance is experienced even from the parents. Guidelines were requested which could help teachers deal with resistance.

## ***Theme 2: A causal perspective of resistant behaviour***

All participants attributed learner resistance to various causes, distinguishing these as originating directly or indirectly from 1) the learner (psychological, emotional, social, cognitive developmental and physiological aspects); 2) teachers' needs; 3) school ethos; and 4) the nature of the schooling system.

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*2 SPu2P1 refers to Public School 2 Participant 1; SPr1P2 refers to Private School 1 Participant 2*

Psychological/emotional/social causes included: difficulties in adapting to change, cultural introjections, fear of failure, and peer judgement or embarrassment, poor self-efficacy and a disregard for authority. SPu1P1 understood resistance as suggestive of an underlying fear that is learning-area related. These factors, participants suspected, were masked by resistant behaviour which serves as an avoidance mechanism. This confirms research conducted internationally which revealed that resistant behaviour can be an attempt to mediate anxiety (Boldt, 2006), to cope (Birchler & Spinks, 2013) and as a natural defence mechanism (Illeris, 2003) to self-protect or to further a cause (Maag, 2000). Children have also been found to use resistant behaviour as a self-protective strategy due to their inadequate self-regulatory or stress handling capabilities (Geldard & Geldard, 2008; Maag, 2000; Skvorak, 2013).

On a physical level, SPu3P1 singled out hunger as another cause underlying resistant behaviour:

*They will not listen if they do not have anything to eat.*

SPr1P3 suggested Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as a possible trigger of resistance and recommended medical intervention. Other participants viewed the need for peer approval as a developmental driving force during middle childhood, adding that emotional maturity amongst Grade 5 learners varies and, if out of sync, may be a cause of resistance.

SPu2P1 observed that some learners deliberately use their home language to converse with each other to exclude the teacher who then cannot understand, as a unifying act on a social level in opposition to the teacher. This speaks of the lack of a teacher-learner bond, lending weight to Reda's (2007) suggestion that resistant behaviour within the classroom reveals a teacher-learner relationship that needs adjusting to restore a healthy balance.

SPr1P3 shared that sometimes resistance is a sign of creative thinking or independent problem solving which should be encouraged rather than dismissed as wrong merely because it does not conform to taught methodology.

The nature of the schooling system was perceived as a cause of some resistance. If the system is structured within well defined, inflexible parameters, teachers are bound to adhere to meeting curriculum dictates – however, this can evoke resistant behaviour as learners who do not fit the prescription are expected to conform and to develop those talents conducive to academic performance perhaps to the suppression of talents that come more naturally to them. SPu1P1 stated,

*They have to adhere to a very specific routine and a very specific structure.*

This endorses the findings of past research, that some resistance is a natural and oppositional reaction to something children do not understand or want (Illeris, 2003), serving as a response to their own lived experiences and to authority structures which dominate and constrain them. (Giroux, 2001:108).

### ***Theme 3: A contextual perspective of resistant behaviour***

The participants' understanding of resistant behaviour was contextually dependent. They understood economic and familial realities at home to play a major role in their learners' display of resistance.

Participants attributed resistance to discrepancies between home and school, explaining that at home children are allowed too much freedom to do what they want to when they want to, and that this conflicts with the school structure and curriculum which necessitate that the learners achieve the curriculum objectives *when* required of them. Some participants felt parents are lenient and allow their children to have a large say in matters at home whereas at school, learners are not allowed this privilege. At one school, it was noted that children are more resistant at school because corporal punishment has been abolished, but that at home they are physically disciplined resulting in compliance and less resistance.

Some participants shared that the onset of resistant behaviour at school can usually be attributed to home-based triggers symptomatic of relational problems. SPu3P3 commented:

*Sometimes children come from families where they are selling beer, parents are fighting...*

Discrepancies between home and school, home context and relational issues have been identified as causal factors in school failure as indicated by Breidlid (2003:100):

*When the children come to school hungry, when there is nobody at home who can help them with their homework, when school and home have completely different cultural codes, when there are no expectations from the home environment as far as the child's performance is concerned, failure at school is a very likely possibility.*

Some participants are of the opinion that due to relational problems at home emotional support may be lacking, but, if provided by the teacher, resistance becomes less.

Some participants seemed to have some insight into the differing demands of school versus the adult working world. Within the school context, conformity is the norm, and creativity, independent and self-regulating behaviour (valued in the working world) might be regarded as disrespectful. This confirms Carrim's (2011:80) statement that:

*Differences among children affect their schooling and life opportunities.*

Where learners are from diverse cultural backgrounds, each culture presents its "...own system of values, beliefs, norms and attitudes" and "...unique verbal and non-verbal patterns of communication" which influence the way the learners "...think, feel and behave" (Lemmer, Meier & Van Wyk, 2012:21). Walton (2011) encourages teachers to be aware of resistance that results from a mismatch between their own known cultural beliefs and values and those of the school or the learner. The research findings suggest that resistant behaviour was perceived to result when the teachers' goals, values and expectations, what they believe to be of importance towards the future and holistic development of the learner, are not aligned with the learners' or parents' understandings on the same matter. Some participants discussed their shared value of

dealing with resistance in line with the learners' future career success, adding that this is not always understood by parents who are only concerned about current school performance. SP1P1 stated:

*We often look at it from more of a bigger picture whereas parents are not seeing it sometimes as we are from a bigger picture.*

Similarly, with respect to being future-minded, SP1P2 shared:

*...but if you think about it, in the real world that is a very good skill you want them to carry over into the real world ... if they are opinionated it is actually phenomenal for the real workplace but it is also not useful in a classroom because it can be considered cheeky.*

This insight into future-mindedness or the bigger picture seemed to enable participants to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying learner skills that are needed by society, thus presenting a third unique finding.

#### ***Theme 4: A developmental perspective of resistant behaviour***

Participants attributed some resistant behaviour to learners' developmental needs. Some participants described the Grade 5 learners as childlike. SP1P1 said:

*They are very silly at a Grade 5 level, you know!*

Grade 5 learners seem to experience conflict between being "big" whilst still wanting to play instead of working. *They are still little, but they think they are big. That is the other thing!* (SP1P1)

Similarly, research undertaken by Skvorak (2013:9) states that learners who resist authority *...have not learned that they may have qualities such as independent thinking, conviction, and/or leadership that have the potential to become personality strengths instead of weaknesses* and that reframing their resistant behaviour into positive strengths *...can lead them to self-motivated change.*

This supports Erikson's developmental stage theory of industry vs. inferiority which presents the need for children aged five to twelve to develop a sense of personal competency (Capps, 2012), as well as research by McHale, Dariotis and Kauh (2003) which indicates that middle childhood presents its own important developmental tasks.

#### **Summary**

In this article, a deeper level of awareness is raised of teacher perceptions on resistant behaviour in Grade 5. The participants were afforded the opportunity to share their lived experiences and to subsequently discuss their resulting perceptions of resistance. Their emerging perceptions based on their daily realities and these were framed within three perspectives: causal, contextual and developmental understandings. Three unique findings emerged, namely, the relationship between school ethos and resistance; the perception that resistance is tolerated when it facilitates divergent, creative thinking; and thirdly, that a big-

picture or future-minded perspective enables teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying skills needed by society, if developed as strengths.

## **Conclusion**

Resistant behaviour is a serious and contentious reality in South African primary schools. South Africa's teachers strive to be agents of positive change amidst the multiple challenges they and their learners encounter, yet they admittedly experience frustration at having to address resistance on a daily basis when their primary purpose is to teach. Furthermore, considering the harsh external realities which so many learners encounter, resistant behaviour cannot be expected to disappear at the introduction of specific techniques. The three unique findings presented in this research should contribute significantly to the current debate surrounding resistant behaviour in South African schools and, particularly, to empowering teachers to translate resistance into meaningful behaviour which adds value to the learning experience, namely: the relationship between school ethos and resistance; the perception that resistance is tolerated when it facilitates divergent, creative thinking; and thirdly, that a big-picture or future-minded perspective enables teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying skills needed by society, if developed as strengths. Further research is recommended across South African Schools.

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Table 1. Background information on participants

School*/ Participant	Gender	Recognised teaching qualification	Total teaching experience	Teaching experience in Grade 5	Home language
SPr1P1	Female	HDip.Ed and BA.Ed	>10 years	10 years	English
SPr1P2	Female	BA.Ed	>5 years	5 years	English
SPr1P3	Female	HDip.Ed	>3 years	3 years	English
SPr2P1	Male	Psychology Honours and Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	3 years	3 years	English
SPr2P2	Female	B.Ed Intermediate & Senior Phase	2 years	9 months	English
SPr2P3	Female	B.Prim.Ed	26 years	26 years	Afrikaans
SPr3P1	Female	Dip.JPrimEd.	17 years	15 years	English
SPu1P1	Female	B.Ed Drama & Drama Licentiate	>2 years	2 years	English
SPu1P2	Female	Honours Educational Management	22 years	22 years	Afrikaans
SPu1P3	Female	BA.Psychology & PGCE	2 years	2 years	English
SPu2P1	Female	B.PrimEd	>5.5 years	5.5 years	English
SPu3P1	Female	HDip.Ed & ACE	5 years	5 years	African
SPu3P2	Female	HDip.Ed	6 years	6 years	African
SPu3P3	Male	Zimbabwean (4year) Teaching Diploma	15 years	15 years	African

\* SPr – private school, SPu – public school

## **Section C – Summary, evaluation, conclusion and recommendations**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The first chapter, Section A, provided an orientation to the research and a conceptual understanding of resistant behaviour within the middle childhood developmental phase. The second chapter, Section B, focused on the findings of the research and a focused discussion thereof in article format. This chapter has a threefold purpose: in the first instance, to provide a summary of what the research problem was, as well as the research question, aims and procedures; secondly, to reflect on the findings by means of a discussion and evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the research; thirdly to make recommendations regarding research which could further contribute to the existing body of academic literature on the topic of resistant behaviour, and lastly, to recommend practical suggestions that could assist Grade 5 teachers to manage resistant behaviour within the intermediate school phase.

### **3.2 Summary**

The research sought to contribute to the debate about resistant behaviour in schools. Of particular interest to the researcher was the lack of local research around the topic of resistant behaviour in South African primary schools. No research could be found pertaining to resistance in South African primary schools. To address this research need, the researcher conducted an extensive literature search on the differences in perspectives on resistant behaviour in the international research context. Consequently, the title: *Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase* was chosen with the research aim to examine and describe how Grade 5 teachers perceive resistant behaviour displayed by their learners. Data gathering involved focus group discussions and individual interviews. The video recorded sessions were transcribed and analysed using Content Analysis (Whittaker, 2009:80), Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, *et al*, 2009:1) and Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). Some findings were noted to support previous research and three findings emerged as unique, which will hopefully contribute to the current debate and knowledge base regarding resistant behaviour.

To summarise, the findings revealed how Grade 5 participants conceptualised resistant behaviour: most participants associated the concept of resistance with negative behaviours, regarded as disruptive to learning. This was the majority outlook. It was, however, challenged by two teachers who agreed that resistant behaviour is negatively charged but can also suggest creativity and/or independent thinking which could be developed to the benefit of the learner, if not just rejected as deviant or inappropriate behaviour. The findings provide glimpses into the types of resistant behaviour with which South African Grade 5 teachers are faced and suggest

externally directed behaviour sourced from a disengaged, non-committal attitude to learning as well as disrespect to authority and school property. The researcher ponders if this attitude is symbolic of a lack of societal cohesion resulting from the diverse causative factors mentioned in the research, such as the huge disparities in learner socio-economic backgrounds, perhaps with the multicultural dynamic and the emotional needs of the learners not being adequately addressed. The examples of resistant behaviour provided in the literature affect the resistant learner on a personal level. The examples provided by the participants, however, mostly affect the other learners, teachers and the school itself.

Most participants considered resistant behaviour to be active or passive in nature – active resistance as typical of public schools, and passive resistance as typical of the private schooling context. By way of example: This shared perception evokes the sense that factors particular to each type of school influence *how* resistance presents itself in the classroom. The participants expressed active resistance as “more aggressive”, “blatantly rebellious acts and distracting behaviours”, or as “cries for attention”; and described passive resistance as “a lack of interest in learning” which “borders on depression”, “*a sullen complete disinterest or withdrawal*”, “*under the radar and not complying*”. Furthermore, some participants from private schools revealed that they expect to receive less parental support than they would receive if they were teaching in a public school. Private school participants attributed this to the possibility that because parents of private schools spend more on their children’s education, the parents feel they have the right to intervene and object in matters they deem important. As a result, learners imitate their parents’ resistance at school. During an individual interview, one participant from a public school made an association between resistant behaviour and large class sizes, characteristic of public schools, stating that she was of the opinion that large class sizes feed resistance as more learners become involved in unacceptable classroom behaviour which then disempowers the teacher by reducing the teacher’s control over the class.

One of the unique findings revealed that a relationship exists between resistant behaviour and school ethos. In this finding, school ethos allowed the participant to relook at the context with a more tolerant and open attitude to extract positive learner behaviour out of what could normally be judged as negative behaviour to be dealt with and eliminated. Furthermore, resistance was conceptualised differently when interpreted from a “big-picture” or future-minded perspective which allows for hidden talents of the learner to emerge which, if developed positively, could be to the learner’s advantage. The researcher identifies a common thread to these unique findings – one that re-evaluates a stereotypical mind-set around resistant behaviour in order to extract positive attributes which can better serve the learner and his or her peers in a classroom context.

The participants' understandings of resistant behaviour were reflective of causal, contextual, and developmental perspectives which support previous research. Additionally, three unique findings emerged, revealing firstly, that a relationship exists between resistant behaviour and school ethos, secondly, that learners' questioning or challenging comments are not always perceived as negative resistance, and lastly, that, as stated in the article, "future-mindedness" or the "bigger picture" seems to enable teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying learner skills that are needed by society" and which could therefore be developed to the learner's advantage, if viewed differently.

The participants shared their diverse ways of managing resistant behaviour, all relating their own school's behavioural code of conduct and disciplinary procedures as their primary means of dealing with resistance. Some participants emphasised that teachers must be consistent and professional when dealing with resistant behaviour, in order to prevent biased management of the resistance and added that difficulties such as their own personal circumstances, stressors, moods, the learners' moods, the time of day and events of the prior week, and their personalities (implying their individual tolerance levels), are all factors that need to be coped with whilst trying to be objective in the management of resistance. Teachers must consider whether or not personal stressors are compounding their perception of the gravity of the resistant behaviour or not.

The quality of the teacher-learner relationship was raised as key in the reduction of resistant behaviour. One participant emphasised the need to establish a relationship with the learner at the beginning of the year so as to really connect with the learner at his or her developmental maturity level. Watching the learner's behaviour over the year then provides a yardstick to interpret the severity of future resistance. Some participants showed resistant learners attention to hopefully discourage further resistance, whereas other participants expressed that they ignore resistant behaviour. Teacher participation in activities outside the classroom was deemed important in developing the teacher-learner relationship by enabling the teacher to get to know the learner in order that they may discern when behaviour is atypical of the learner.

One participant shared the importance of acknowledging the learner's emotion or subject dislike in a non-confrontational and one-on-one way, to encourage a discussion and thereby to address the resistant behaviour. This participant also reassures the learner by drawing awareness to his/her strengths, abilities and talents to dissipate learning related fears or barriers to learning. Another suggestion made was to empower the learner to make choices through negotiation so the learner does not feel forced to comply. This was perceived as an enjoyable challenge and not an added burden to address in the classroom. Teacher passion and goals were raised as influential in the management of resistance, whether it be to solely

impart knowledge or to impart knowledge whilst also “*change a child’s soul*”. Giving a learner a sense of safety by offering a positive learning experience was seen as a way to reduce resistance by encouraging learners to accept their weaknesses and to develop an awareness of their talents. An awareness of the learner’s home situation or contributing factors that elicit resistance helps teachers to better manage resistance. Some participants noted that they reposition seating arrangements to lessen resistance and that this results in an improvement in behaviour. At one school, the participants attributed learner resistance to the teachers not taking responsibility to prepare for the lessons or not providing learning resources such as stationery. Another suggestion was to involve non-participating learners, particularly quieter learners, in class discussions. Teachers thus sometimes deal with resistance according to the learner’s disposition.

One participant admitted that at their school they threaten to send the learner out of the classroom as a way of forcing the child to stop resisting. It was additionally stated that developing trust in the teacher-learner relationship is of critical importance and that trust is dependent on teachers acting consistently in terms of how they address resistance. Another way that was suggested to reduce resistance is through learner encouragement and appealing to the positive in human nature which deepens the teacher-learner relationship. By not openly going against the resistance, as is often the learner’s expectation, teachers are, in a sense, working with the learner’s resistance to diffuse resistance in a positive manner.

The abolishment of corporal punishment was regarded by some participants as reducing the teacher’s power over resistance in the classroom. Friday afternoon and break-time detentions replace corporal punishment but are perceived as largely ineffective in dealing with resistance; the participants requested the re-introduction of corporal punishment in a more controlled manner whereby witnesses are present to prevent physical abuse by punishing too excessively.

During a focus group discussion, the participants shared that they dedicate time to their learners who display resistant behaviour to determine the source thereof, and to encourage the learner to share their problems. Additionally, these participants emphasised their approach of teaching *how* to solve problems independently by giving the learners practical advice to self-manage similar future situations. Some emphasised instilling societal values of what is considered right or wrong, and the importance of acting as a role model to reflect expected behaviours. Some first remove the learner from the classroom to address the problem privately before the learner continues to the next period as a means of containing resistant behaviour. Learner portfolios, which are passed on from grade to grade for the teacher’s perusal, serve to assist in how to best relate to a specific learner in order to lessen resistance. They resort to the de-merit system of the school after their attempts to diminish the learner’s resistance have failed. Resistance is

thus handled by these participants in accordance with his/her own preferred methods of managing resistant behaviour or according to the school's outlined disciplinary processes.

One participant stated that teachers need to reflect on a situation before punishing by determining if the learner is deliberately being cheeky, or if the learner's behaviour is an indirect consequence of trying to critically assess what they are learning – a skill or strength which the teacher should nurture with the motivation of moulding them into contributing future members of society. In this case, the participant encourages the learner to come after the lesson or during break-time to debate the issue, instead of during class as this generally disrupts the flow of the lesson and distracts the other learners. Some participants agreed that teachers need to provide their learners with emotional support every day by being available, being an approachable mentor and acknowledging what they are good at. Some made a distinction between learners who resist because of their developmental need to stamp out their own identity or learners who are rebellious to authority. Only once this distinction is made was it suggested that appropriately matched means of dealing with the resistance can be implemented. Teacher-teacher support was added as important in helping one another deal with resistance as a team rather than individually.

In two schools, the participants agreed that they turn to the Head of the Guidance Department to address resistant behaviour and to offer emotional support to the learners. One participant mentioned that she makes use of her school's code of conduct which ranks the severity of the offence according to three levels. Parents are notified by Short Message Service and a letter. A positive approach is also used to diminish resistance by showing the learners that the teachers recognise their compliant behaviour through a reward-based system where the class is rewarded as a whole. This participant aims to deal with her frustrations surrounding resistance on the day it presents itself and to start from a clean slate the following day.

Another participant noted the importance of persevering with learners by allowing them some space to realise that their teacher is on their side. Another participant emphasised the importance of a teacher's word choice when addressing resistance. The participant provided the following example: "Do not forget to do your homework" is more likely to result in the learner failing to do the homework than if the teacher states it in this suggested, positive, manner instead: "Please remember to do your homework". The verb of the sentence then determines the learner's response. A positive verb empowers the learners to respond positively by choice. Other participants, however, noted that effectively dealing with resistant behaviour is nothing more than a trial and error attempt on the part of the teacher.

### 3.3 Reflection on the research

#### 3.3.1 Discussion

Participants were found to have varying perceptions of resistant behaviour. Some noted that resistance is seen as positive when learners assert themselves against peer pressure and when they choose to comply with their teachers' instructions. The majority of participants agreed that resistant behaviour has negative implications on learning time, that it distracts other learners, and that they as teachers experience resistant behaviour as a daily frustration. Despite these negative connotations, their perceptions revealed that teachers try to support resistant learners by considering possible influences from the learner's external home and school environments, as well as considering personal causative factors specific to the resistant learner.

*External and contextual factors* included discrepancies in the home versus school environment of the learner as well as the influence of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. A lack of emotional support at home (particularly in divorced families) was shared as a factor which frequently elicits resistant behaviour at school as the learner craves attention. Furthermore, learners who are not well fed due to poor socio-economic conditions come to school hungry, which inhibits learning and elicits resistance. Other background or causal perceptions included communication barriers within a multicultural learning context, rigid school routines and differences between schools which demand that learners adjust accordingly when they are transferred from one school to another. Teacher personality and tolerance levels were suggested as potentially exacerbating reasons for resistance and in this respect, a passion for teaching was raised as a prerequisite to effectively address resistance. Parental interference, lack of parental support and parents' own resistance brought on by a lack of understanding of the teacher's agenda were stated to compound learner resistance.

*Personal factors* related to learner resistance were noted to include an array of factors such as: the developmental need of the Grade 5 learner to individuate and to be accepted by their peers; home-based relational and emotional issues; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; psychological reasons, including anxiety, where resistance serves as coping or defence mechanisms used by the learner to function in their environment; negative attitudes to learning; and the learner's individual learning style. Furthermore, some participants shared that they understand resistance as a conscious choice made by the learner, whilst others sometimes considered resistant behaviour to be an unconscious reaction to external stimuli.

Against the multiplicity of causative factors revealed, it seems virtually impossible to eliminate resistant behaviour from the schooling context. In light of the findings, it is instead suggested by the researcher that teachers consider the recommendations of this research study and expend

less energy on trying to rid their classrooms of resistance, and instead welcome it as part of the greater learning process with the potential to enhance the Grade 5 learners' holistic development.

The diverse perceptions of resistant behaviour presented an interesting mix of ideas. The unique perspectives are discussed below under the strengths of the research.

### **3.3.2. *Strengths of the research***

A phenomenological enquiry was selected as the most suitable and beneficial research design to facilitate the collection of qualitative data relevant to the research question. For the focus group discussions as well as the individual, semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions were carefully formulated prior to data gathering to assist in gaining a phenomenological understanding of how Grade 5 teachers' lived experiences of resistant behaviour develop their perceptions of resistance in middle childhood. The researcher used probing comments and questions within a relaxed context to encourage the participants to generate the data needed. The researcher was constantly mindful to withhold biased assumptions or ideas from her professional background, which could lead the participants and thereby contaminate the data. In order to enhance trustworthiness, the data gathering events were all video recorded to allow the researcher to revisit the research context as needed, and to transcribe the participants' comments verbatim to increase data accuracy. The researcher sought to portray an accurate reflection of the participants' understanding of resistant behaviour to contribute to the current debate surrounding resistance in South African schools.

The researcher was initially unsuccessful at finding participants based on the data collection process outlined in the protocol. It was originally stipulated that the participants would be requested to meet on two separate occasions at a central point to participate in mixed-school focus group discussions. As it later showed, participants were not willing to travel to meet as a group. The researcher then suggested that separate focus group discussions be instead held at each participating school and an in-depth interview be held with one of these participants thereafter. This change was well received by the schools and eventually contributed to a clearer emergence of the variance in the perceptions of the participants from the different schools.

Three unique findings emerged which will hopefully contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding resistant behaviour in middle childhood. In the first instance, it was found that a relationship seems to exist between teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour and school ethos whereby the school's ethos provides a lens through which teachers interpret the behaviour as resistant or not. This in turn highlights the potential contribution of a positive

school ethos to assist teachers in identifying the resistant learner's underlying strengths which could be developed in line with what the school values. Secondly, not all resistance is perceived as negative behaviour if it reveals that learners seem to be questioning and assimilating what they are learning, or if they seem to be thinking divergently and creatively. Two participants shared that active engagement in learning is to be encouraged, and teachers need to manage the behaviour delicately whilst developing the learner's thinking processes. Thirdly, it was found that considering resistant behaviour from a "big-picture" or future-minded perspective enables teachers to see resistant behaviour as indicative of underlying learner skills that are needed by society if developed as strengths.

The researcher consciously monitored the focal point of all the focus group discussions as well as the direction of the interview to generate a discussion about the concept of resistant behaviour so as to avoid merely collecting data surrounding the participants' shared experiences of resistant behaviour.

All the other findings in the study, as mentioned in the above under the summary, were found to support past research. These findings do, however, remain beneficial as sharing them could offer intermediate phase teachers support by enhancing teacher awareness of how other Grade 5 teachers understand and manage resistant behaviour, and hopefully assist teachers in interpreting resistant behaviour in previously unthought-of, new ways.

### **3.3.3. *Limitations of the research***

The results of the study, being qualitative, cannot be generalised beyond its borders and may not be assumed to be indicative of all South African teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour as displayed in middle childhood. The sample size of participants was small but comprised qualified teachers with a wide range of Grade 5 teaching experience of between 9 months to 26 years which generated rich data. The data were thus trustworthy to reflect the realities of some of South Africa's schools which can contribute significantly to the research debate and encourage further research.

Not all data from focus groups could be captured from the video recording as participants spoke simultaneously and at times it was difficult to hear what everybody said. The researcher could have interjected and asked the participants to repeat their statements one by one. In addition, it was difficult for the researcher to transcribe a few comments made in one focus group discussion in particular. This specific group consisted of participants who had home languages that were not English and their accents, combined with background noises which reduced the audio recording quality, made it challenging to transcribe parts of the session. Although this was of minor occurrence, and only occurred at a specific school, it needs to be mentioned as a

limitation as it may have prevented a finding from emerging during the data analysis. Qualitative research cannot be replicated and thus the loss of any data points could compromise the potential validity of the research.

Within the contextual analysis of the finding regarding resistant behaviour being indicative of creativity, the researcher regretted not having clarified the participant's meaning or intent behind using the word "creativity" to express her perception thereof. To counter this limitation, the researcher revisited the data contextually to derive meaning specific to the discussion at the time.

A further limitation was perhaps the very neutral approach followed by the researcher during data collection, consciously setting aside her own assumptions, including the findings or presenting themes as suggested by previous groups. In hindsight, it may have been beneficial to have asked the next group what their perceptions were concerning interesting or unique findings shared during previous groups.

### **3.4 Recommendations**

A dynamic relationship exists between the teacher and Grade 5 learner, one that is continually in flux. It is largely dependent on the teacher's investment or input, but can be severely influenced by the learner's apparently resistant behaviour. To diminish resistant behaviour, teachers are encouraged to focus on the quality of the teacher-learner relationship. The following recommendations are made to Grade 5 South African teachers (and are tabulated under Appendix 7):

#### ***3.4.1 Contributions to the existing body of academic literature on the topic of resistant behaviour***

The following recommendations suggest further research that should be done to generate more knowledge concerning resistant behaviour. These recommendations are based on unique findings that were found to contribute positively to the existing body of academic literature on the topic of resistant behaviour. It is proposed that future research focus on resistant behaviour on a larger scale than was possible in this study, either according to educational district or provincially.

Participants highlighted the following Grade 5 developmental needs which they as teachers try to address: to help Grade 5 learners find out what their talents and strengths are, to acknowledge Grade 5 learners as independent individuals, to help Grade 5 learners deal with their peer relationships and peer pressure, and to protect them as they are particularly

susceptible to peer comments which could be of negative consequence to their self-esteem. Further research needs to remain cognisant of these developmental needs when addressing resistant behaviour amongst 10 and 11 year old learners.

It was found that addressing resistant behaviour from a positive stance will allow for a positively charged teacher-learner relationship and it could have a positive influence on the learner's holistic development. Further research should explore what positive techniques teachers currently use when dealing directly with resistance in their classrooms.

A relationship between resistant behaviour and the ethos of the primary school was established in this research. Addressing school ethos in future research studies may add further benefit to assisting teachers in dealing with resistance.

### ***3.4.2 Practical recommendations***

The following practical recommendations are made to assist grade 5 teachers in managing resistant behaviour in their classrooms.

Teachers need to be made aware of their colleagues' different perceptions of resistant behaviour to alert them to find possible new ways of managing resistant behaviour, for example: some teachers see resistance as positive when it involves the learner self-asserting in a peer-pressured situation. Teacher awareness of how other teachers manage active and passive resistance is also encouraged. The unique perceptions found in this study could be shared with a view to encouraging teachers to reformulate their current thought systems surrounding resistance.

Of particular relevance to teachers, would be to challenge all teachers to consider that questioning or challenging statements on the part of the learner could be indicative of active learning rather than negative resistance against the teacher. Such divergent or creative thinking needs to be encouraged.

Teachers need to be made aware of the multiple causes of resistance to alert them to possible causes behind the resistance. Teachers are encouraged to become aware of the background of their learners so as to meet the learner where he or she is at. The learner can then be addressed holistically in terms of reducing their resistance.

Teachers need to be encouraged to manage resistant behaviour from a "big-picture" or future-minded perspective which has been found by some of the participants to assist teachers in identifying underlying learner skills that are needed by society, if developed as strengths.

Finally, it is recommended that school management could remind their teachers of what the school values and strives for so as to manage resistance according to these principles.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

South Africa's teachers are committed to serving as agents of positive change amidst the multiple challenges they and their learners encounter, yet they admittedly experience frustration at having to address resistance on a daily basis when their primary purpose is to teach. Furthermore, considering the harsh external realities which so many learners encounter, resistant behaviour *cannot* be expected to disappear at the introduction of a few specific techniques. The variety of participant perceptions presented in this research, particularly the three unique perspectives that emerged, are expected to contribute significantly to the current debate surrounding resistant behaviour in South African schools, and particularly to empowering teachers to translate resistance into meaningful behaviour which adds value to the learning experience and to their career fulfilment as teachers.

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## ***Appendix 1 - Questions asked to participants***

*Focus group and interview content included the following questions:*

- Within the focus group, one overarching question was asked by way of introducing the discussion: Please share your perceptions of resistant behaviour shown by children in your Grade 5 classes.

Two funnelling questions were used to encourage discussion:

- What do you think of when I say resistant behaviour?
- How do you feel about resistant behaviour in your Grade 5 classes?

Probing questions included:

- What is resistant in this behaviour?
- What/who is the learner resisting?
- Why, would you say, is the learner resisting?
- How do resistant behaviours affect the classroom dynamics and learning?
- What is the impact of resistant behaviour on the teacher-learner and learner-teacher relationship?
- What, do you think by way of support, should the teacher do when a learner displays resistant behaviour?

*After the focus groups, individual Interview questions were asked to one of the focus group participants in order to link the focus group discussion to the individual interview context:*

- How did you experience the previous discussion pertaining to teacher perceptions of resistant behaviour as displayed by children in the middle childhood developmental phase?
- What is your view of the conclusion/s reached during the focus group?

Following these two introductory questions, the following questions were asked:

- In what way does resistant behaviour affect you personally?
- How do you personally relate to learners who typically show resistant behaviour?
- Please describe a specific incident which you perceived as resistant behaviour by your Grade 5 learners?

By way of conclusion, the following questions were asked:

- Which of your responses to resistant behaviour have you found to be most helpful?
- Which of your responses would you like other teachers to become aware of?
- Which of your responses would you like other teachers to try in their classrooms?

## Appendix 2 – A visual depiction of thematic analysis

Example of a visual depiction as used during thematic analysis (dated: 6 June 2013):

The researcher visually depicted the emerging causal findings in order to identify the participants' emerging data patterns and themes as part of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). Their emerging perceptions were based on their daily realities and were framed within three perspectives: causal, contextual and developmental understandings.

This example provides a visual depiction of the participant's perceptions deemed by them to be of a causal nature. Using thematic analysis, these were then grouped according to the learner's school, home and peer contexts. Differing teacher perceptions were also noticed.



### **Appendix 3 – Permission from the Gauteng Department of Education**

Permission received from the Gauteng Department of Education Research and the two respective educational districts:



#### **GAUTENG PROVINCE**

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:  
Reference no. D2013/290

### **GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

Date:	13 February 2013
Validity of Research Approval:	13 February 2013 to 27 September 2013
Name of Researcher:	Richardson N.T.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 1396
	Ruimsig
	1732
Telephone Number:	011 958 2491 / 084 580 5557
Fax Number:	086 558 8140
Email address:	richardson.nicola@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase
Number and type of schools:	TWELVE Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng West

#### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

*H. M. M. M.*

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**To:** Ms. Nicola Taryn Richardson  
**From:** Dennis Macuacua  
District Director: JW  
**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> February 2013  
**Subject:** Approval in Respect to Conduct Research

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Dear Ms. Richardson

The District Director has granted you approval to conduct research in the Johannesburg West District subject to the following:

1. Your research will not impact on contact time in the schools in any way.
2. The principal has the right to make necessary arrangements for the research.
3. No cost will accrue to the department for your research, i.e. no photo copies.

Yours in Tirisano

  
D N Macuacua  
District Director: JW

Date: 20/02/2013



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**TO:** NT RICHARDSON  
PO BOX 1396  
RUIMSIG  
1732

**FROM:** DR P SKOSANA  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

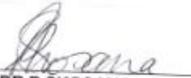
**DATE:** 21 FEBRUARY 2012

**SUBJECT:** PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH: TWELVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Please be advised that permission is hereby granted for you to do research as per your Research Topic "Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase" at Primary School and Primary School.

Yours faithfully

  
DR P SKOSANA  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR  
DATE: 21/02/2013

## **Appendix 4 - Permission from the NWU Committee of Ethics**

Approval Permission from the NWU Committee of Ethics:



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900  
Faks: (018) 299-4910  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT**

**Ethics Committee**  
Tel +27 18 299 4850  
Fax +27 18 293 5329  
Email [Ethics@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics@nwu.ac.za)  
2012/08/31

This is to certify that the next project was approved by the NWU Ethics Committee:

<p>Project title <i>DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: A TRANS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH.</i></p> <p>Project leader: Dr. H Grobler &amp; Prof V Roos</p> <p>Ethics number: <b>NWU-00060-12-A1</b></p> <p><small>Status: S - Submission; R - Re-Submission; P - Provisional Authorisation; A - Authorisation</small></p> <p><b>Expiry date: 2017/08/30</b></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

The formal Ethics approval certificate will be sent to you as soon as possible.

## ***Appendix 5 – Permission from the school principals and teachers***

Written permission was obtained from six school principals as well as from the teachers:

### **Principal Consent Form**

#### Researcher contact details:

*Nicola Richardson*

*Tel: +27 84 5805557*

*Email: [richardson.nicola@gmail.com](mailto:richardson.nicola@gmail.com)*

*Student at North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.*

*Student Number: 23830395*

*Study Leader: Dr. Susanne Jacobs +27 82 783 7474*

*Co-supervisor: Prof. Cecilia Bouver +27 82 375 6716*

I have read and understood the information provided by the researcher concerning the phenomenological study entitled: Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase.

I have received proof of consent obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education as well as the school's governing body. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to appoint a teacher, if willing to participate, who meets the requested inclusion criteria as follows:

The teacher has a recognised teaching diploma or degree,

The teacher has been teaching for at least two years,

The teacher is currently teaching Grade 5,

The teacher demonstrates a commitment to teach through regular course attendance, research and enhancement of this school's curriculum,

The teacher is willing to participate,

The teacher is able to speak English.

I give the selected teacher my permission to participate in this research. I give my permission for research to only be conducted on the school premises if requested and in private quarters, specifically during the afternoons or on Saturday mornings (so as not to interrupt the school day). Research times and dates need to be provided ahead of commencement and arranged to be most convenient to the teachers involved. I further understand that confidentiality and

anonymity of the school and participant will be upheld, and that both the participant teacher and I will receive feedback on the research results after this research has been completed and evaluated.

I agree for the school to participate in this project, realizing that my teacher may withdraw at any time, without prejudice. A copy of the information sheet for this project has been provided to me to keep.

**Name of School** .....  
**Name of Principal** .....  
**Signature** .....  
**Date** .....

**School Governing Body Consent (at the school's discretion)**

Researcher contact details:

Nicola Richardson

Tel: +27 84 5805557

Email: [richardson.nicola@gmail.com](mailto:richardson.nicola@gmail.com)

Student at North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.

Student Number: 23830395

Study Leader: Dr. Susanne Jacobs +27 82 783 7474

Co-supervisor: Prof. Cecilia Boucher +27 82 375 6716

We, the Governing Body of (school's name) ....., have read and understood the information provided by the researcher concerning the phenomenological study entitled: Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase.

We have received proof of consent obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education as well as the school's principal. All our questions have been answered to our satisfaction. We give our permission to the principal to appoint a teacher who meets the following requested inclusion criteria:

- The teacher has a recognised teaching diploma or degree,
- The teacher has been teaching for at least two years,
- The teacher is currently teaching Grade 5,
- The teacher demonstrates a commitment to teach through regular course attendance, research and enhancement of this school's curriculum,
- The teacher must be willing to participate,
- The teacher is able to speak English.

We understand that confidentiality and anonymity of the school and participants will be upheld, and that we will receive feedback on the research results after this research has been completed and evaluated.

We agree for the school to participate in this project, realizing that the participating teacher may withdraw at any time, without prejudice. A copy of the information sheet for this project has been provided to the governing body to keep.

Name of School:.....

Name and Surname of the Chairperson of the School Governing

Body:.....

Chairperson's

Signature:.....

Date .....

### **Participant Consent**

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

RESEARCH TITLE: Teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour of children in the middle childhood developmental phase

Your consent is kindly requested to participate in a research study to be conducted by *Nicola Richardson* from the Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies at North-West University. The results of this study will be in part-fulfilment of an article for the completion of a Master's degree in Psychology.

#### 1. Purpose of the study

The aim of this phenomenological study is to examine and describe teachers' perceptions of resistant behaviour in middle childhood, as displayed by Grade 5 learners in schools within the Westrand district of Gauteng, South Africa. These findings could then be used to provide guidance and support to middle childhood teachers as agents of positive change. The researcher will approach 10 - 12 English-medium urban schools.

#### 2. Potential risks and/or discomforts

The three phases of the research will be structured in a manner which is not derogatory and does not make the participant feel compromised or threatened. Participants reserve the right not to answer a question as participation is completely voluntary. Participants may also withdraw from this study at any time if they choose to do so.

#### 3. Potential benefits to participants and/or society

The benefit of understanding how Grade 5 teachers perceive resistant behaviour in the middle childhood developmental phase is to enhance the teacher-learner relationship and to assist in the development of guiding principles and support for these teachers.

#### 4. Remuneration for participation

No participant will be remunerated for participating in this study, nor will any fees be charged by the researcher.

#### 5. Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the participant will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participant's permission or as required by law. Anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained at all times. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using a number-code for the participant for the duration of the study as well as in any publication that may flow from the research. This will ensure that the participant cannot be identified. The data will be stored electronically on the researcher's computer.

#### 6. Participation and withdrawal

The participant can choose whether or not to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. The participant may also decline to answer any particular question at his/her own discretion, and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the participant from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### 7. Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact -

Student: Nicola Richardson +27 84 580 5557

Study Leader: Dr. Susanne Jacobs: +27 82 783 7474

Co-supervisor: Prof. Cecilia Boucher: +27 82 375 6716

#### 8. Rights of research participants

The participants may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. Participants are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of their participation in this research study. Should participants have any questions regarding their rights as a research subject, Prof. R. Bloem, head of the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies at North-West University can be contacted.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

The information above was described to \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME OF PARTICIPANT) by Nicola Richardson in English and I am in command of this language. I

was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent to participate in this study and acknowledge that I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Participant).

The abovementioned participant was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ***Appendix 6 – Journal instructions to authors***

Journal: **Perspectives in Education (PiE)**

### Contact Details

Address : 13 Winkie Direko Building

Faculty of Education

University of the Free State

P.O. Box 339

Bloemfontein 9300

South Africa

Editorial Office : Tel: +27 (0)51 401 2160

Fax: +27 (0)51 401 2368

E-mail: PiE@ufs.ac.za

Management Office : Tel: +27(0)51 401 9922

Fax: +27(0)51 401 2010

E-mail: BarclayA@ufs.ac.za

<http://www.perspectives-in-education.com/pages.aSPx?PID=10>

PiE invites submissions in the following categories:

Research articles. Contributors are encouraged to submit typewritten manuscripts of no more than 12–16 double spaced pages (5 000 words) including references, notes, and tables.

The following are considered when evaluating the suitability of a manuscript for publication in this section of PiE:

The manuscript offers new, original insights or interpretation and not merely a restatement of existing ideas and views.

The manuscript makes a significant contribution to the field and extends the borders of educational debate.

The manuscript is likely to arouse readers' interest and stimulate debate.

The manuscript reflects sound scholarship and research design with appropriate, correctly interpreted references to other authors and works.

The content of the manuscript is accessible to the broad readership of the education community, and not just specialists in the area addressed.

The latter part of the journal, which is generally not subject to the peer review process, allows for the submission of, inter alia, the following:

Reviews and review articles. PiE invites succinct, critical, evaluative reviews of professional books, texts, and other instructional resources including computer-software and video/audio-taped material. Reviews should provide a descriptive and evaluative summary and a brief discussion of the significance of the work in the context of current theory and practice. In addition to the Perspectives in Education, Volume 26(4), December 2008 conventional book review format, reviewers are encouraged to use alternative methods of representation, such as critically engaging the author in a dialogue on a published book. These manuscripts should comprise no more than 1 000 words.

Brief reports and summaries. PiE invites short reports on any aspect of theory and practice in academia. We encourage manuscripts that either showcase preliminary findings of research in progress or focus on larger studies. Reports and summaries (of no more than 1 000 words) should be presented in a manner that will make the research accessible to our diverse readership.

Articles are considered for publication provided that:

The work is original.

The copyright is transferred to PiE and the author has secured all permissions for the reproduction of original or derived material from a copyright source.

The work has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere (in selected cases, this condition may be waived).

The author has secured the permission of all named co-authors, who have agreed on the order of the names for publication.

The Research on which the article is based has been ethically cleared by an approved ethics board (a copy of the ethical clearance certificate should be made available to the editorial office).

The article has been language checked by a certified language specialist (a copy of the letter from such a language editor should also be made available to the editorial office).

The author(s) subscribe(s) to PiE.

The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes in any manuscript accepted for publication to enhance clarity or conformity with journal style.

The review process takes between 3 to 5 months to complete. Authors will be informed of the editor's decision on receipt of all of the reviewers' reports. (Please note that it usually requires more time to review manuscripts submitted in the November – January period.)

## General submission guidelines

Submit the manuscript using the online portal (linked to the website):

Name(s) of the author(s), title(s), and affiliation(s) should not be disclosed in the text. Identifiable information, such as author details can be emailed directly to: [pie@ufs.ac.za](mailto:pie@ufs.ac.za)

The user needs to sign up using a valid email address in order to submit the article and receive feedback.

An English abstract of not more than 200 words should be typed on a separate page, followed by up to 10 keywords that characterise the article.

When submitting this article online, the abstract should also be entered in the text box provided.

Division of the text must be clear and logical into unnumbered sections. Subsections should be clearly indicated by using the following fonts to indicate the different heading levels:

Level 1: Lower case and bold (14pt)

Level 2: Lower case (12pt)

Level 3: Italic

Level 4: Underlined

Tables and figures must be placed at the end of the article with their approximate positions in the text indicated. All photographs/figures must be clearly printed originals — no fill or grey shading may be used. Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and be accompanied by a brief heading for tables or caption for figures. Each table/figure must be referred to in the text.

Do not use footnotes. Use endnotes only (not more than five endnotes per article).

Submissions should be done online by clicking on [HERE](#) to sign up or log in to the portal.

## Procedure for manuscripts accepted for publication

Page fees of R400 per 1000 words submitted. Authors will be invoiced on acceptance of the article.

A brief biographical statement (6 lines) must be supplied about the author(s).

## References

References are cited in the text by the author(s) name(s) and the year of publication in brackets (Harvard method), separated by a comma: e.g. (Brown, 2001). Page references in the text should follow a comma after the date, e.g. (Brown, 2001:69).

If several articles by the same author and from the same year are cited, the letters a, b, c, etc. should be added after the year of publication e.g. (Brown, 2001a).

In works by three or more authors the surnames of all authors should be given in the first reference to such a work. In subsequent references to this work only the name of the first author is given, followed by the abbreviation et al.: e.g. (Ziv et al., 2005).

For personal communications (oral or written) identify the person and indicate in brackets that it is a personal communication, e.g. (M Smith, pers. comm.).

#### List of References

Only sources cited in the text are listed, in alphabetical order. These should be presented as indicated in the following examples. Special attention should be paid to the required punctuation.

#### Journal articles:

Johnson DW & Johnson RT 2002. Gifted students illustrate co-operative learning. *Educational Leadership*, 50: 60-61.

#### Books:

Van Zyl R & Thomas PP 2004. *Recent advances in classroom research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

#### Chapters in books:

Dukzec S 2008. Gender issues. In D Hicks & J Brown (eds), *Education for peace*. London: Routledge.

#### Unpublished theses or dissertations:

Squelch J 2001. *Teacher training for multicultural education in a multicultural society*. Med dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

#### Anonymous newspaper references:

Citizen 2006. *Education for all*, 22 March.

#### Personal communications:

Not retrievable and not listed.

#### Electronic references:

#### No author:

Violence and discipline problems in U.S. schools: 1999-2002. Retrieved from <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs98/violence/98030001.html> on 3 June 2006.

#### Published under author's name:

Burbach H 2000. *Violence and the public schools*. Retrieved on 4 March 2001 from <http://www.people.Virginia.EDU/~rkb3b/Hal/SchoolViolence.html>

## Appendix 7- Thematic analysis extracts

### (i) Pertinent extracts from thematic analysis:

Thematic Categories	Data (verbatim)	Practical Recommendations
Various perceptions of resistant behaviour	<p><i>"...resistant behaviour ummm it is ummm the behaviour that is usually displayed by the learners but it can be negative or positive ...by positive resistance I mean those learners who will be always good and all the time in class, that doesn't give you a problem. You feel good about them and they do work in class"</i> SPu3P1</p> <p><i>"where children are sort of standing up to peer pressure, so they're resisting to peer pressure but that's in a more positive way"</i> SPr2P1</p> <p><i>"We're created in God's image, and He's creative, so each child is creative. So positive resistance might very well be um ... we've taught them this is how you do an addition sum, but they've been able to make up their own little methodology and still get to the same answer. It is still resistant, its different"</i> SPr1P3</p> <p><i>"...It is resisting because it is not just accepting what's being told, but they're learning, they're questioning, I think that's a positive resistance"</i> SPr1P3</p> <p><i>"I do not think it can be positive because, I feel in a classroom situation you should have respect for your teacher..."</i> SPu2P</p> <p><i>"It is not positive but its recognising why it is that's important...sometimes they do not mean to resist. They do [resist] because they, they do not know any other way"</i> SPr3P1</p> <p><i>"...actually disturbs the whole class, and then you'll find the friends start commenting and everybody has something to say, so it actually starts affecting the entire class"</i> SPu2P1</p>	It is suggested that teachers try to approach resistant behaviour from different angles by applying the different perceptions shared by their colleagues.
Resistance points to quality of teacher learner relationship	<p><i>"...isn't maybe wanting to develop a relationship with you"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"I try bond with them or connect with them"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"...it either comes from uhh, an innate passion to change a child's soul or it doesn't".</i> SPu1P1</p>	A dynamic relationship exists between the teacher and Grade 5 learner, one that is continually in flux and largely dependent on the teacher's investment or input. Teachers

Thematic Categories	Data (verbatim)	Practical Recommendations
	<p><i>"it is very personality dependent"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"...you've got to gear them to be competent contributing members of society"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"if they trust the teacher they then they always comply"</i> SPu3P3</p> <p><i>"...sometimes you also try to improve relationships with the child - PT - soccer - so when you are there you try to improve - relationships - maybe the child will change"</i> SPu3P3</p> <p><i>"...and the quieter child, you can't give too much attention cause too much attention can make things worse as well"</i> SPr2P1</p> <p><i>"...see where they're at and then try to find out the best way to reach them...and to help them through it ..."</i> SPr2P1</p>	<p>are encouraged to focus on the quality of the teacher-learner bond to lessen resistant behaviour.</p>
<p>Manifestation of resistant behaviour</p>	<p><i>"manifest in one of two ways: complete lack of interest or almost bordering on depression, a sullen complete disinterest or withdrawal, and could manifest in more aggressive behaviours, distracting behaviours, cries for attention"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"Well it isn't always like the child who's obstinate or is verbally um saying "I do not want to do something" it is the child that is the passive, and we have a few of them in Grade 5 currently, who just choose just to do it differently, um or choose not to follow the instruction out fully".</i> SPr1P1</p> <p><i>"...it wouldn't be um like blatantly rebellious... it would be more sort of under the radar and not complying"</i>SPr1P2</p>	<p>Teacher awareness is encouraged concerning how other teachers manage active and passive resistance.</p>
<p>Resistance by Grade 5 learners can be indicative of multiple causes, be they psychological needs or physical needs.</p>	<p><i>"the child's lost interest in learning"</i> SPu1P1</p> <p><i>"They won't listen if they do not have anything to eat"</i> SPu3P1</p> <p><i>"a couple of kids they do have trouble at home"</i> SPr2P2&amp;P3</p> <p><i>"the cause of the resistance is different, I mean because we are a more affluent school we see a lot of divorced parents and things like that"</i> SPr2P1</p> <p><i>"they do not get that support at home so they are more resistant to work as well"</i> SPr2P1</p> <p><i>"certain approaches do not work for all children and there's all sorts of, there's obviously a reason for it so it is important to meet each child where</i></p>	<p>It is recommended that teacher awareness surrounding the causes of resistance be enhanced to assist teachers in identifying reasons for resistance.</p>

Thematic Categories	Data (verbatim)	Practical Recommendations
	<p><i>they're at that's being resistant" Pr2P1</i></p> <p><i>"depends on the emotional um background of the child" SPr2P3</i></p> <p><i>"have come from schools with problems, because they've been moved for a reason"</i></p>	
Learner in context	<p><i>"no idea what he's experiencing at home" SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes children are coming from different families, some maybe they are coming from families why they are selling beer or the parenting relationship is not proper – parents are fighting, so the teacher has to find out the background of the child so they can deal with the child, maybe send the child for counselling" SPU3P3</i></p> <p><i>"...have come from schools with problems, because they've been moved for a reason" SPr2P3</i></p>	Teachers are encouraged to become aware of the background of their learners so as to meet the learner where he or she is at. The learner is then addressed holistically in terms of resistant behaviour.
The cognitive and emotional developmental needs of Grade 5 learners	<p><i>"because it is a fear, that I'm going to embarrass myself or I know I'm not going to perform well in this task, so it is an avoidance mechanism in many ways" SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"also perhaps resistant behaviour with his peers, not being able to form connections, not being able to relate on their level" SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"...he couldn't fit into the classroom, he couldn't relate in the classroom ... he was a little man" SPU1P2</i></p> <p><i>"I know I'm not going to perform well in this task" SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"...not all of us are good at..." SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"Your goal with that kind of child is to say "do not be afraid of the learning process, you know do not be intimidated by what you perceive as your weaknesses, believe in yourself start to have a little bit of passion you know about your own potential" SPU1P1</i></p> <p><i>"some it is just peer pressure" SPU3P1</i></p> <p><i>"at that level is just like a plain book, there's nothing written on it, they are so innocent" SPU3P1</i></p> <p><i>"cos some of them do not get it at home, and I think that's why they needs that from the teacher just that acknowledge me as a child, acknowledge me as who I am, whatever, they need, they need it</i></p>	Raising teacher awareness of the developmental needs of the middle childhood learner in Grade 5 with the intention of addressing the needs could assist in reducing resistant behaviour. The highlighted developmental needs revealed by the participants were that of talent and strength awareness, peer relationships including peer pressure, their need to be acknowledged as an individual, and their susceptibility to introjecting values dictated in their environment or by their teachers.

Thematic Categories	Data (verbatim)	Practical Recommendations
	<p>is good for them" SPu1P1</p> <p>"I think 11 and 10, it is like such a crucial time for them, they also trying to stamp out who they are and there some kids who love structure and love to be part of the norm, that's their biggest goal, you know it is just to be part of what's happening, and the others they just want to fight it and I think that's probably what we come against sometimes" SPr1P1</p> <p>"...just want to fit in..." SPr1P1</p> <p>"...but do not you think a lot of those are, I feel that they almost just wanna still be kids, they do not want to grow up yet... it is like there's this playful side to them... they do not really want to do all this work... this research and homework, they just wanna play" SPr1P2</p> <p>"I think of defiance... cause they do get that way at this age... they do get into a space where they need to, almost prove their power, they're fighting for their power, they need to be seen and heard and done, some kids a little more subtly" SPr3P1</p>	
Bigger picture or future orientated perspective	<p>"We often look at it from more of a bigger picture whereas parents aren't seeing it sometimes as we are from a bigger picture... SPr1P1</p> <p>"Um ... more towards life, like life skills and things they need to learn in the workplace some day or just in society. So the kind of behaviour that we are seeing in class is not fit for society and you can't go into the workplace like that" SPr1P2</p> <p>"...you are going to sit down and do it properly, the way it should be done, because, experiments need to be run this way, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8 to Matric. Is it is you know it is the bigger picture that we were talking about earlier. So we're teaching you skills now but it is to apply those later" SPr1P3</p> <p>"...gearing them for varsity... and the others... you can't they're not there, you've got to gear them to be competent contributing members of society, not for you have to be good at my subject" SPu1P1</p>	It is recommended that teachers try to adopt a bigger picture or future orientated perspective when dealing with resistance which implies that although the behaviour is considered resistant in a structured schooling context it may still be beneficial for them in their future.

**(ii) The following serves as a copy of one analysed interview:**

Reference	Teacher perspective using In vivo coding	Content Analysis: terms repeated for emphasis, documentary analysis	IPA Researcher perspective of teacher perspective	Emerging Theme related to resistance	My thoughts
Transcript 6 Interview	the child's lost interest in learning		participant uses possible causes of resistance to explain concept of resistance	attitude to learning	teachers feel resistant behaviour driven by negative attitude to learning
Public School	isn't wanting to participate	isn't wanting to	manifestations of resistance - either active or passive	attitude to learning	
	isn't wanting to absorb anything	isn't wanting to	resistance is a sign of a loss of interest in learning	attitude to learning	
	isn't maybe wanting to develop a relationship with you	relationship		resistance points to quality of teacher learner relationship	teachers feel some learners resist forming a relationship with their teachers
	resistant behaviour with his peers		resistant behaviour with peers - resistant behaviour seen as negative behaviour	peer relationships	development and resistance
	not being able to form connections	not being able to - relationships	difficulties in interpersonal relationships	interpersonal relationships	development and resistance
	not being able to relate on their level	not being able to - relate	difficulties in relating with peers	peer relationships	development and resistance
	manifest in one of two ways			manifestation of resistance	resistance is experienced through extreme behaviours
	complete lack of interest or almost bordering on depression,		extreme lack of interest depression	passive resistance	
	a sullen complete disinterest or withdrawal		Withdrawal	behavioural extremes	
	could manifest in more aggressive behaviours,		aggressive, distracting,	active resistance	active resistance
distracting behaviours,					
cries for attention		cry for attention	cause: resistance shows a need for attention	resistant learners need attention	

Reference	Teacher perspective using In vivo coding	Content Analysis: terms repeated for emphasis, documentary analysis	IPA Researcher perspective of teacher perspective	Emerging Theme related to resistance	My thoughts
	<p>resistance to a very strict um discipline</p> <p>as soon as there's a structure</p> <p>they have to adhere to a very specific routine</p> <p>they have to adhere to a very specific structure</p> <p>frustration comes in where they do not feel like doing an activity in that particular time frame</p> <p>begin to be silly</p> <p>they're very silly at a grade 5 level you know</p> <p>flicking one another with their rulers</p> <p>pulling faces</p> <p>attract your attention with humour</p> <p>distract you from your task by asking absolutely irrelevant questions to get you off on a tangent</p>	<p>they have to adhere</p> <p>they have to adhere</p> <p>silly</p> <p>silly</p> <p>rulers</p> <p>faces</p> <p>humour</p> <p>off on a tangent - metaphoric</p>	<p>resist strict discipline</p> <p>acknowledgement of learner's feelings of frustration in response to limitations</p> <p>teacher realises its time - conditional</p> <p>teacher provides examples of resistant behaviour to qualify the reference to Gr 5 learners being silly</p> <p>teacher gives examples of resistant behaviours</p> <p>learners deliberately try to distract the teacher from the lesson focus</p>	<p>resisting discipline</p> <p>resisting structure</p> <p>resistance to conform / obedience</p> <p>resist routine</p> <p>cause: learners frustration</p> <p>cause: resisting school dictates / demands</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p>	<p>resistant learners do not fit societal mould, perhaps creative or innovative thinkers that feel limited by structure</p> <p>a need for creativity</p> <p>resistance to feeling boxed</p> <p>resistant learners may need more variety</p> <p>resistance possibly due to acting against own feelings - forced to learn when they do not feel like it - learners feel forced to do something they do not want to do - resisting schooling demands</p> <p>use of objects to break contact - diversion of attention, distracting peers</p> <p>use of facial expressions</p> <p>use of humour</p> <p>asking off topic questions to distract - conscious resist lesson focus</p>

Reference	Teacher perspective using In vivo coding	Content Analysis: terms repeated for emphasis, documentary analysis	IPA Researcher perspective of teacher perspective	Emerging Theme related to resistance	My thoughts
	<p>so they do not have to</p> <p>a matter of um you know discipline when it is a subject they maybe do not enjoy</p> <p>fear within</p> <p>this is going to be difficult</p> <p>a subconscious thing that they're not even aware of</p> <p>an automatic um, kind of panic mode</p> <p>what can I do to distract</p> <p>what can I do to resist</p> <p>suddenly I've got a headache</p> <p>suddenly I need the toilet seven times</p> <p>suddenly I need ...</p> <p>suddenly they remember</p> <p>fear within</p> <p>It is a fear I'm going to embarrass myself</p> <p>I know I'm not going to perform well in this task</p>	<p>Do not have to</p> <p>fear</p> <p>going to be</p> <p>panic</p> <p>do to distract</p> <p>do to resist</p> <p>suddenly - emotive word</p> <p>suddenly</p> <p>suddenly</p> <p>suddenly</p> <p>fear</p> <p>know</p>	<p>resist to escape learning</p> <p>learners resist subjects they do not enjoy</p> <p>a matter of discipline</p> <p>teacher perceives fear as the reason for resistance</p> <p>teacher perceives poor self-efficacy as fear</p> <p>teacher considers influence of subconscious mind</p> <p>teacher feels child's response is automatic, panic</p> <p>teacher feels resistance is an avoidance tactic to distract, to resist</p> <p>learners make up excuses to get distance</p> <p>learners try find plausible reasons to be excused</p> <p>fear based</p> <p>Teacher acknowledging fear of embarrassment</p> <p>Teacher considering developmental aspect - formation of self as independent</p>	<p>resist to escape learning</p> <p>resist when lack interest in subject</p> <p>cause: resistance a discipline matter</p> <p>cause - resistance is fear driven</p> <p>cause- when learners have poor expectation to cope with learning</p> <p>subconscious</p> <p>cause: panic, stress</p> <p>cause: anxiety</p> <p>cause: the need to avoid, to self-protect</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>cause: fear based</p> <p>cause: fear of embarrassment</p> <p>cause: core-beliefs</p>	<p>emotions the glue to learning</p> <p>negative emotion - resist learning</p> <p>fear driven behaviour</p> <p>learner expectations manifested through resistance</p> <p>unconscious resistance</p> <p>resistance as a defense mechanism - unconscious, anxiety</p> <p>avoidance tactic to break contact</p> <p>break in contact</p> <p>avoidance tactic to break contact</p> <p>different types of fears - developmental?</p> <p>developmental fear?- peer opinion</p> <p>what is known about the self as an independent entity</p>

Reference	Teacher perspective using In vivo coding	Content Analysis: terms repeated for emphasis, documentary analysis	IPA Researcher perspective of teacher perspective	Emerging Theme related to resistance	My thoughts
	<p>It is an avoidance mechanism in many ways</p> <p>It is just a handful who are diagnosed accurately ADHD or whatever the case may be</p> <p>try to form a relationship</p> <p>teaching for so many years</p> <p>so early in the year I form a relationship with them</p> <p>I try bond with them or connect with them</p> <p>on levels, you know, they can relate to</p> <p>It is kind of like this conspiracy</p> <p>secret</p> <p>and automatically they've got this kind of excitement!</p> <p>pep talk on an emotion</p> <p>acknowledge the fear</p>	<p>avoidance mechanism - psychotherapeutic term</p> <p>bond, connect - emotive, descriptive</p> <p>conspiracy - emotive reference</p>	<p>teacher seems to acknowledge self-protective aspect - coping strategy</p> <p>teachers consider medical cause</p> <p>teacher sees the child as capable of accepting / rejecting relationship</p> <p>teacher respects experience - experience counts</p> <p>teacher conscious of time needed to form relationship with learner</p> <p>teacher considers quality of relationship</p> <p>teacher meets the learner at their level of maturity</p> <p>teacher explains how she develops excitement</p> <p>teacher acknowledges the learners emotion / subject dislike</p> <p>teacher identifies with the learner by acknowledging emotion</p>	<p>break in contact</p> <p>resistance as an avoidance mechanism to cope. Cause of resistance: medical</p> <p>Dealing with resistance</p> <p>teaching experience and handling resistance</p> <p>Dealing with resistance &amp; need for time</p> <p>teacher learner relationship</p> <p>cause: level of maturity</p> <p>cause: type of emotion</p> <p>giving attention</p> <p>giving attention</p> <p>resistance as an avoidance mechanism to cope</p> <p>Dealing with resistance: acknowledge fear</p>	<p>self-protective avoidant</p> <p>teacher cautious of labels, also acknowledging that sometimes cause is of psychological origin requiring medical intervention</p> <p>need for time</p> <p>the teacher plays the active role to reach the learner</p> <p>use of positive emotion within a relational context to motivate</p> <p>type of emotion determines if respond with resistance or not</p> <p>acknowledge emotions</p>



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	<p>I enjoy the challenge</p> <p>I enjoy the child that I can see over the year</p> <p>how he absolutely changes</p> <p>not just somebody shouting</p> <p>I thrive on that I really do I thrive on this challenge</p> <p>seeing how this child changes</p> <p>improves</p> <p>be consciously aware of its not the child's fault it is me</p> <p>I've got netball practise after school you know I've got to hand in this administrative doc,</p> <p>not even going to engage with that child</p> <p>a negative level</p> <p>just consciously aware of my own</p> <p>it either comes from uhh an innate passion to change a child's soul or it doesn't.</p>	<p>challenge</p> <p>changes</p> <p>challenge</p> <p>changes</p> <p>consciously</p> <p>consciously</p> <p>passion</p>	<p>empowering child to make a choice instead of feeling forced to do the task</p> <p>teacher feels resistance is challenging</p> <p>teacher watches for growth</p> <p>teacher sees change as measurement of reduced resistance</p> <p>teacher feels resistance is challenging</p> <p>teacher feels self-awareness is critical and</p> <p>teachers own stressors to consider when relating to resistance</p> <p>so is discernment</p> <p>positive and negative levels of engagement</p> <p>teachers awareness of self</p> <p>teacher feels she has passion when dealing with resistant behaviour</p>	<p>empower learner through choice making</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>resistant behaviour example</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>Teacher self-awareness of own needs</p> <p>Teacher stress</p> <p>Teacher self-awareness of own needs</p> <p>Teacher learner relationship</p> <p>Teacher self-awareness of own needs</p> <p>Teacher learner relationship</p>	<p>teachers feel differently about resistance, this participant addresses resistance positively, as a challenge - unique finding</p> <p>resistance measured by response</p> <p>resistance is challenging</p> <p>resistance reduces over time</p> <p>Conscious process</p> <p>levels of engagement</p> <p>Conscious process</p> <p>Teaching and mentoring</p>

Reference	Teacher perspective using In vivo coding	Content Analysis: terms repeated for emphasis, documentary analysis	IPA Researcher perspective of teacher perspective	Emerging Theme related to resistance	My thoughts
	<p>its very personality dependent</p> <p>have an end goal in mind</p> <p>no idea what he's experiencing at home</p> <p>I'm responsible for his success or failure in life to a degree</p> <p>I'm responsible for breeding a love of learning</p> <p>I'm responsible for making him feel comfortable in this environment</p> <p>for one hour of the day I can make him feel safe</p> <p>one positive experience</p>	<p>Personality</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Safe</p> <p>Positive</p>	<p>her goal is more than to impart knowledge but to change a child's soul determines how teachers will handle resistance</p> <p>teacher aware of child's fields when addressing resistance teacher's ideas of her responsibilities when working with resistant behaviour teacher's ideas of her responsibilities when working with resistant behaviour teacher's ideas of her responsibilities when working with resistant behaviour</p> <p>teacher feels children need to feel safe to remove need to resist</p> <p>teacher feels if her classroom offers a positive experience it will reduce resistance</p>	<p>Teacher learner relationship and goals</p> <p>Teacher learner relationship and goals</p> <p>Teacher style / passion</p> <p>Teacher learner relationship personalities, goals external environment of learner - home</p> <p>Teacher's responsibilities</p> <p>Teacher's responsibilities</p> <p>Teacher's responsibilities</p> <p>Teacher's responsibilities</p> <p>Teacher's responsibilities</p>	<p>Passion needed to reach a child effectively Goal to teach and goal to change soul</p> <p>personality of teacher plays a role child in context</p> <p>success or failure in life to a degree</p> <p>breeding a love of learning</p> <p>making learner feel comfortable</p> <p>making learner feel safe (survival need)</p> <p>to give even if just one positive experience</p>
	<p>one thing that just changed a paradigm</p> <p>Do not be afraid of the learning process, you know do not be intimidated by what you perceive as your weaknesses, believe in yourself, start to have a little bit of passion you know about your own potential</p> <p>gearing them for varsity</p> <p>you've got to gear them to be competent contributing members of society</p>	<p>Paradigm</p> <p>Gearing</p> <p>gear</p>	<p>teacher likes to change way children think about their abilities</p> <p>teacher emphasising need to change self-perceptions, to accept weaknesses, - developmental</p> <p>teacher's responsibility to gear children towards futures</p>	<p>developmental need - self-awareness and confidence</p> <p>Teacher's style / passion</p> <p>Big picture and resistance in the moment</p> <p>Teacher learner relationship and goals</p>	<p>learners thought paradigms can be changed</p> <p>developmental need - self-awareness of talents and perceptions</p> <p>development to face future challenges</p>

**(iii) Thematic quotations in support of the identified article themes:**

Theme Addressed in Article	Subject	Supportive Participant Quotations
Theme 1	Active/Passive Resistance	<i>SPr1P13: "... it is not always ... the child who's obstinate ... it is the child that is the passive, ..., who ... chooses just to do it differently, ... or chooses not to follow the instruction out fully". SPr1P3 answered "... more passive". SPr1P3 then qualified their view saying, "the resistant child is not necessarily your overly verbal, extrovert child, it has this passive-aggressive feel to it."</i>
Theme 1	Resistant behaviour as unfit for society	SPr1P2....unfit for society, stating "So the kind of behaviour that we are seeing in class is not fit for society and you can't go into the workplace like that". SPr1P2 further understands resistance as indicative of a child losing interest in learning, "they do not really want to do all this work... this research and homework, they just want to play".
Theme 1	SA examples of resistant behaviours affect the other learners, teachers, and the school itself	<p>The examples as communicated by the participants, affect the other learners, teachers and the school itself as revealed from the following data: SPr1P3 noted, "...because they're not ... following an instruction, which potentially could be dangerous depending on what the subject is. In NS (Natural Science), if you're doing an experiment and they're not following the instructions that could be potentially dangerous..."; SPr1P1: I think the reality is those children sap a lot of our energy, they take a lot of time, and those are the children who you put the most in and you get the least out of"; SPr1P2: "...especially the resisting of authority" and "...then you're not giving as much attention as you could have been to the other learners of your class". SPr2P3:"... he will then take it out on an object on the table or the person next to him..." adding, "..., they resist what the rest of the group would like them to do". SPr3P1: "they do get into a space where they need to, almost prove their power, they're fighting for their power, they need to be seen and heard and done, some kids a little more subtly ..."</p> <p>SPu1P1: 4"the child's lost interest in learning, is not wanting to participate, is not wanting to absorb anything, is not maybe wanting to develop a relationship with you..."</p> <p>SPu2P1: in opposition to the teacher, stating: "... they talk in their home languages so that the teacher cannot understand. This leaves the teacher feeling frustrated and unable to control the class"</p> <p>SPu1P2: "It also impacts on your teaching time and on the other children who do wanna get along with the lesson it impacts on their the value</p>

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3 SPr1P1 refers to Private School 1 Participant 1

4 SPu1P1:refers to Public School 1 Participant 1

		<p>of their educational experience...”</p> <p>SPu2P1: “...and they just ignore you and they carry on doing what you’ve asked them not to do, for example, continuously talking or continuously distracting other learners in the class which is often a big problem, or not paying attention, things like that”- you’ve got to constantly please ask them, please listen, please behave...”</p> <p>SPu2P1: “...they’re resisting me they’re not listening, they just decide they not paying attention, they couldn’t be bothered...”, “...You find that children the bigger the classes are definitely you have more children who do resist and do not listen to discipline, who do not listen to the teacher or whatever so the bigger your classes it is definitely a big problem and I think it is, they are resisting me they aren’t listening to me”</p> <p>SPu2P1: “...it actually disturbs the whole class, and then you’ll find the friends start commenting and everybody has something to say, so it actually starts affecting the entire class...”</p> <p>SPu2P1:” ... no respect towards the teachers which is a big problem.”</p> <p>SPu3P1”it will be the teacher”... <i>(in response to the researcher asking who or what they are resisting)</i></p> <p>SPu3P3: “It is negative. Because sometimes the teacher will get frustrated, especially when he’s challenged by the learner in front of the other learners, and then as a result most of the learners will also change their behaviour so you see like, the teacher has no power, doesn’t do anything now. They end up changing their behaviour. And it has an impact in their learning. Because, the morale of the teacher will be low so he cannot perform to your expectations”</p> <p>Regarding the impact on teachers SP2P2 noted: “it is also quite important, although <i>it is extremely difficult</i> to walk in every lesson <i>not</i> expecting something”</p> <p>SP2P2: “a lot of other kids get roped into it and it ends up becoming this whole mass disruptive situation”</p>
Theme 2	Participant’s statements concerning the causes of resistance	<p>SP2P3 noted, “...at a private school the parents feel that because their contributions are so much bigger, they have a bigger say and the children witness it, and so that attitude is then carried through in the school.”</p> <p>SP1P3: “yes which I think is a lot of the problem, the parents resist so they learn, it is almost learnt behaviour in a lot of ways...so because my mom and dad aren’t doing this I’m also not going to do this”</p> <p>SP1P2: “and especially the resisting of authority”</p> <p>SP1P1 and SP1P3: “yes”</p>

		<p>SPu3P3: “find ... why is he behaving like this. Sometimes children ... come from families where they are selling beer or the parenting relationship is not proper – the parents are fighting – so the teacher has to find out the background of the child so they can deal with the child, maybe send the child for counselling.”</p> <p>SPu2P1: “parents going through a divorce...huge emotional issues at home...maybe they've lost a parent or even if their parents are fighting, very unhappy home situation, then obviously they are going to come to school and ... we have experienced it, where they do have behavioural problems. I would always say about 90% of the ... resistant behaviour that we have, the behavioural problems, are children that just do not feel like listening, are just not really interested in school work, just plain naughty personally, ... but you do get the odd few that we've had to obviously support and phone the parents and deal with the situations with behavioural problems”</p> <p>SPr2P3: “...and because we're a new school with so many new children we find that many of them have come from schools with problems, because they've been moved for a reason”</p> <p>SPu3P3: “so the teacher has to find out the background of the child so they can deal with the child” princess focus group</p> <p>SPu2P3: “...depends on the emotional um background of the child”</p> <p>SPu2P1: “...continuously distracting other learners in the class which is often a big problem”</p> <p>SPr2P1: “...very resistant to change...”</p> <p>SPr2P2: cause “...also depends on um, <i>how</i> the resistance is shown”...“and how destructive the resistance is ...” ... “a lot of other kids get roped into it and it ends up becoming this whole mass disruptive situation”</p> <p>SPr1P3 suggested Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as a possible trigger of resistance, “...he may need to be tested, he may need to go on some sort of meds..., similarly SPu1P1 noted, “it is just a handful who are diagnosed accurately ADHD or whatever the case may be...”</p> <p>SPr1P3: “... we just heard a thing this morning, we are created in God’s image, and He is creative, so each child is creative. So positive resistant might very well be ... where they’re showing their own individual creativity ... or maybe more specifically in a maths lesson, we’ve taught them “this is how you do an addition sum” but they have been able to make up their own little methodology and still get to the same answer. It is still resistant, it is different... it is resisting because it is not just accepting what’s being told, but they are learning, they are questioning, I think that is a positive resistance ... that is quite encouraging, because at least you know that they are thinking”</p> <p>SPr1P3 stated: “...each child is creative. So positive resistant might very well be... where they’re showing their own individual creativity... It is</p>
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		still resistant, it is different" ..."
Theme 2	Psychological, emotional and social causes	<p>SPu1P1: "I think because it is a fear, that I'm going to embarrass myself or I know I'm not going to perform well in this task, so it is an avoidance mechanism in many ways...I acknowledge the fear, I say 'I know you're not good at it I'm not going to be angry with you', I try to dissipate the fear ..."</p> <p>SPr2P1: "I personally have a passion for children with trauma, I have a psychology background"</p>