AN INVESTIGATION OF THE STATUS AND PRACTICE OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS IN TWO PROVINCES

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PRACTICE OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN
SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS
IN TWO PROVINCES

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KEY WORDS

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ABSTRACT

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The study aimed to investigate the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. Life Orientation is a quintessential new learning area, introduced as part of curriculum transformation in South Africa, and is intended to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for successful living and learning. Preliminary observations suggested that Life Orientation has not been optimally implemented in schools, and the low status legacy of Life Orientation's constituents added further impetus to the rationale for the study.

The research was conducted in two provinces in South Africa, Limpopo and the Western Cape. Triangulation, with quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, was used. This included structured interviews with 134 educators at 94 schools, questionnaires administered to 1 284 Senior Phase learners, unstructured interviews with educators, and observations. The key research questions pursued were: What is Life Orientation? What significance is attributed to Life Orientation? Who teaches Life Orientation? How much time is allocated to Life Orientation? How is the practice of Life Orientation exemplified? What teaching methodologies do Life Orientation educators use? What are Life Orientation educators' problems and successes? Additional research questions, emanating from the research findings of the study, hinged on determining the impact of Life Orientation educators' values on their teaching and identifying rhetoric-practice interface incongruities.

The findings reveal that the status and practice of Life Orientation are not yet optimal. Life Orientation, as a fledgling learning area within a restorative educational transitional phase, still requires clear definition, interpretation and comprehension. The constituents of this learning area are fragmented as they are not yet integrated holistically within Life Orientation. Life Orientation is not allocated the prescribed time on many school

timetables and its time-slots are usurped for other learning areas. A comprehensive core of specially trained Life Orientation educators is not available and the allocation of educators to this learning area is somewhat arbitrary. Life Orientation teaching methodologies disclose an overuse of transmission teaching, with minimal use of group and experiential methods. Large classes, the newness of assessment and a scarcity of suitable learning support materials further add to the problems of Life Orientation educators.

Evidence of successes in this learning area offset the problems. The findings convey that Life Orientation educators and learners recognise the worth and need for this learning area. Learners' preferred topics, such as self-concept enhancement, HIV and AIDS, careers and human rights, indicate that Life Orientation is relevant to their needs, as these issues, among others, are addressed in depth in the curriculum.

The findings further indicate that educators' values may affect their teaching, specifically due to Life Orientation's value-laden content of HIV and AIDS and sexuality education, religion and issues dealing with constitutional principles such as diversity, human rights and gender equity. The necessity to base their Life Orientation teaching on the Constitution of South Africa has not yet been grasped by all Life Orientation educators.
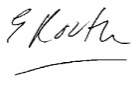
Urgent attention is required by the Department of Education, educators and other government departments and organisations dealing with Life Orientation related matters, to implement the many recommendations made in this study. Inter-sectoral and collaborative efforts are needed to help Life Orientation to occupy its rightful place in schools, together with the sustained training and support of Life Orientation educators, with an emphasis on experiential and participatory methodologies. The status of Life Orientation needs to be strengthened. This includes adequate time allocation, equitable funding and Life Orientation advocacy strategies to ensure that this learning area achieves its outcomes. Proactive measures will prevent Life Orientation from enduring the same marginalisation that characterised its constituents in the previous education system.

Edna Rooth   May 2005.

DECLARATION

I declare that *An investigation of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools in two provinces* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Edna Rooth   May 2005.

Signed: ……

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory and work of Laila Ganie, who was Senior Lecturer in Guidance and Counselling at the University of the Western Cape, prior to her death.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to introduce and explicate the aim of the study. The background to the study is discussed and core concepts pertaining to the relevant literature are highlighted. Curriculum transformation in South Africa provides a theoretical framework within which the interconnected constituents of Life Orientation are introduced. The rationale of the study is configured from an overview of the needs of learners and the challenges they encounter, the conception of the Life Orientation learning area and the context of curriculum transformation. The focal research problems that form the nucleus of the investigation are presented. The research framework is delineated and an outline of the study is given.

The introduction in South Africa of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (C2005) [Department of Education, 1997a] and the ensuing Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) [Department of Education, 2002a] heralded the development and introduction of a new learning area called Life Orientation. Life Orientation offers possibilities for equipping learners in South Africa with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to face the challenges they encounter as informed, confident and responsible young people [Department of Education, 2002b]. Sinclair's [2003, 5] question, referring to 21st Century challenges that learners face, is pertinent to the study:

> can the next generation of young people be given the skills and values to support non-violent resolution of the conflicts that confront them at personal or national level, linked to respect for human rights, commitment to civic participation and a responsible attitude towards not only their own health but also that of others? Can education help build these skills and values and thereby contribute to a more peaceful world…? Can education help young people to respect their bodies and each other, and avoid sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse?

It is in the context of this question that Life Orientation's significance and value is indicated. Hence the rationale for this study lies in both the contexts of learners' needs and the Life Orientation learning area.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The needs and challenges that youth face offer both problems and possibilities for successful living and learning in the 21st Century. Many of these needs and challenges can be addressed through the Life Orientation learning area. As Life Orientation is part of curriculum transformation in South African education, aspects of curriculum innovation relevant to this learning area are discussed. The needs of South African learners, the challenges they encounter, the curriculum transformation context and the potential of Life Orientation to respond to these issues, combine to shape the milieu of the study's rationale.

1.2.1 Learners' needs and challenges

The World Health Report [World Health Organization, 2002] cites leading contributors to global disease as underweight mothers and children, unsafe sex, high blood pressure, and tobacco and alcohol use. The US Department of Health and Human Services [2000a] identify six groupings of behaviours that are responsible for more than 70% of illness, disability and death among adolescents and young adults: injuries, both intentional and unintentional; tobacco use; alcohol and illicit drug use; sexual behaviours that cause unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); dietary patterns that cause disease; and inadequate physical activity. These categories should be the primary focus of school health education [US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a].

International studies indicate the universality of youth needs, summarised by Gysbers and Henderson [2000] as a swiftly changing career and job sector, violence evidenced in home, school and community, familial disintegration and divorce, teenage suicide, substance abuse, sexual experimentation and other risk behaviours. The demands of modern life, poor parenting, changing family structures, dysfunctional relationships, new understandings of learners' needs, decline of religion and rapid sociocultural change are some of the reasons why life skills are necessary for primary prevention

[World Health Organization, 1999]. Adolescence is a time of risk taking and experimentation, with leading causes of morbidity and mortality behaviourally mediated [Ka He, Kramer, Houser, Chomitz and Hacker, 2004]. Increased rates of drug and alcohol experimentation, sexual activity, delinquency, suicide attempts, anti-social activities, physical aggression and fighting further characterise adolescence [Kuther and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2000].

Learners' needs are similarly identified in South African research in guidance [Euvrard, 1994; Ntshangase, 1995]. Van der Riet and Knoetze's [2004] study of help-seeking patterns in learners in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal identify interpersonal problems, academic problems, relationships and sexuality, health problems and financial issues as being core. Mashimbye [2000] indicates the following needs pertinent to learners in Limpopo Province: problems with parents regarding sexuality education, absence of parents from home, parental alcoholism, passive entertainment, unemployment, peer group pressure, substance abuse, teenage suicide and teenage pregnancy.

Reddy, Panday, Swart, Jinabhai, Amosun, James, Monyeki, Stevens, Morejele, Kambaran, Omardien and Van den Borne [2003], in a comprehensive national research project on youth risk behaviour in South Africa, identified health needs and investigated core facets such as intentional and unintentional injury for instance violence, traffic safety and suicide-related actions; substance abuse such as tobacco, alcohol and drug usage; sexual behaviour; nutrition and dietary behaviour; physical activity; and hygiene. Added to these risks are the Children's Institute's [2003] findings that the most significant challenges facing children in South Africa are poverty, child abuse and violence, HIV and AIDS and a lack of access to services, as well as the fragmentation of the family unit, the loss of caregivers and unsafe environments.

Critical health issues that affect South African learners and their education, namely malaria, bilharzia (schistosomiasis) and HIV and AIDS, are prevalent [Bot, Wilson and Dove, 2001]. The eastern parts of Limpopo are malarious regions (the malaria case fatality in Limpopo increased to above 1% in 2002), with a high level of delay in seeking treatment by the malaria-affected communities [Moonasar, Johnson, Maloba, Kruger, le Grange, Mthembu and Van den Ende, 2004]. Limpopo also has outbreaks of

bilharzia, which leads to fatigue [*BuaNews*, 2003]. Tuberculosis (TB) poses a serious threat to the health of South Africans and the TB epidemic is made worse by HIV [Bamford, Loveday and Verkuijl, 2004]. Tuberculosis in the Western Cape Province is rife; in 2002, Cape Town had a total of 20 950 tuberculosis cases [City Council, 2003].

The vulnerability of youth to HIV infection is noted [DiClemente, 1996; Gachuhi, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Kalichman, 1998; UNAIDS, 2002; United Nations, 2003b]. The HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa demands urgent attention, with HIV and AIDS statistics a great cause for concern. Findings indicate that at least 4.6 million people in South Africa (over 11.5% of our population) are estimated to be living with HIV and AIDS [Cullinan, 2004; *Cape Times*, 5 April, 2004]. HIV and AIDS has led to an increase in child and young adult mortality and a decline in life expectancy [Bradshaw and Nannan, 2004]. A comprehensive research study of 11 904 representative young South Africans indicate that one in every ten young South Africans will be infected by HIV and AIDS [Pettifor, Rees, Steffenson, Hlongwa-Madikizela, MacPhail, Vermaak and Kleinschmidt, 2004.] The high HIV prevalence levels of youth living in urban informal (17.6%) and rural formal (13.4%) areas are cause for concern [Bradshaw, Pettifor, MacPhail and Dorrington, 2004].

Some learners are infected with HIV and affected by AIDS, as parents, educators and other significant adults in their lives die. By 2002, 336 300 children under 18 years of age were orphans as a result of HIV and AIDS [Cullinan, 2004]. Problems with accessing social grants and support are reported [Barolsky, 2003]. The longer-term effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic include deepening poverty among the already poor, disruption and premature termination of schooling of learners, particularly females, escalating early childhood malnutrition and an increased strain on extended family networks [Steinberg, Johnson, Schierhout and Ndegwa, 2002]. Prevention is not the only issue in HIV and AIDS education as learners also need skills to cope with living with HIV and AIDS and caring for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Sexual risk behaviour poses a considerable threat to the well-being of learners. Learners who are sexually active are at risk of unwanted pregnancies, HIV and STIs. Individuals tend to overrate their capabilities to overcome health risk [Whitehead and Russell, 2004]. Joffe [2002] posits that individuals are both orientated to health-enhancing forces

and at the same time to a more destructive instinct towards health-damaging forces. Kalichman [1998] refers to tendencies to take risks that appear to serve as catalysts for sexual risk behaviours, such as sensation seeking, which is a correlate of sexual risk for HIV infection. Substantial epidemiological data indicates the prevalence of adolescent high-risk behaviours that increase the probability of HIV infection [DiClemente, 1996]. Johnson, Carey, Marsh, Levin and Scott-Sheldon [2003] posit that adolescents often do not recognise their own vulnerability to health threats, including HIV, and that sexual exploration and some risk taking are developmentally normative.

Apart from the dire health effects of substance abuse, drug use is associated indirectly with HIV transmission through risky sexual behaviour [Morojele, Brook and Moshia, 2004]. There is also a high correlation between drug use and crime [Leggett, 2002]. Reddy *et al.* [2003] indicate that learners are at risk of negative health and legal consequences as a result of illicit drug usage. The increase in adolescent patients at drug treatment centres is alarming [Stein, 1999] as well as the increasingly younger age at which learners start taking drugs [Jardine, 2003]. The processes of development that adolescents undergo are impeded if they take drugs regularly as they do not learn the skills they need to cope with life [Jardine, 2003]. Substance abuse is prevalent at schools across the board, with learners as young as eleven using hard drugs [Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, 2001]. Dagga (cannabis) use of grade 8 learners in Cape Town shows an increase [Flisher, Parry, Evans, Lombard and Muller, 1998]. In the Western Cape, an escalating drug problem in the form of crystal methamphetamine (tik) use among learners is a grave cause of concern [*Cape Times*, 4 April, 2005; SA News, 3 August, 2004; Western Cape Education Department, 2004b]. Learners who use this highly addictive drug have their normal emotional and physical development interrupted by years [*Cape Argus*, 27 October, 2004]. Learners' current frequent smoking incidence is highest in the Western Cape [Swart, Reddy, Panday, Philip, Naidoo and Ngobeni, 2004]. School curricula still need to address this serious issue of tobacco use adequately [Swart *et al.*, 2004].

The Western Cape has the highest incidence of alcohol use by learners with regard to age of alcohol initiation and binge drinking, and Limpopo has the lowest [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. Alcohol is also an addictive drug and there is an increasing likelihood of younger people abusing alcohol as suppliers target younger consumers [South African

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 2004]. Alcohol consumption is associated with damage to the adolescent brain, and alcohol dependent adolescents exhibit impaired memory, altered perception of spatial relationships and verbal skill deficiencies [US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002].

Madu and Matla [2003] investigated the prevalence of suicidal behaviours in secondary school adolescents in Limpopo, finding that 37% of learners had thoughts of taking their own lives. In a national study, Reddy *et al.* [2003] indicate that 19% of learners considered attempting suicide, 15.8% made plans to commit suicide and 17% attempted suicide. The data suggests that some learners suffer from mental health problems and severe stress.

South African society is marked by violence [Children's Institute, 2003; Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather, Richter, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2001 and 2004]. Violence is a problem affecting the well-being of learners in KwaZulu-Natal [Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt, 2004]. The Western Cape has the highest percentage of learners who carry weapons, while Limpopo has the highest prevalence of learners who feel unsafe going to and from school [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. The ravages of apartheid continue to manifest in many ways, particularly in expressions of violence and conflict [HSRC Review, 2003]. Youth in South Africa are exposed to high and traumatic levels of violence [Bower, 2003]. Violent crimes undermine the functioning of schools, which often are battlefields for gang wars, and with learners the targets of rape, sexual harassment and bullying [Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2000]. Crime and violence are endemic to both primary and secondary schools in the Cape Metropole, with theft and possession of weapons major problems, as well as the prevalence of physical violence, vandalism, bullying, intimidation, gangsterism and assault [Eliasov and Frank, 2000].

More than 72 000 crimes against children were reported in 2000, with common and aggravated assault and rape the most prevalent [Children's Institute, 2003]. Many young South African females are forced to have sex and are thus increasingly at risk of HIV and AIDS [Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation, 2003]. Among the 10% of South African youth who are HIV positive, 77% are female [Pettifor *et al.,* 2004]. South Africa has the highest number of reported rape cases of

Interpol countries (119.5 per 100 000 people) [Hirschowitz, Worku and Orkin, 2000]. Sexual violence is a problem of epidemic proportion [Human Rights Watch, 2004; Mathews, Abrahams, Martin, Vetten, Van der Merwe and Jewkes, 2004; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996]. Rape and sexual abuse in schools is alarming [Eliasov and Frank 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2001]. Reddy *et al.* [2003] state that the highest provincial prevalence of coercive sex and intimate partner violence is in Limpopo. Similarly, sexual abuse and exploitation in the Western Cape are rife; for example, more than 70% of learners in an impoverished Western Cape area have been exposed to sexual exploitation [*Cape Times*, 24 March, 2004].

Road accidents in developing countries are a major cause of concern, with especially children being affected [CBS News, 28 August, 2002]. The World Health Organization estimates that by 2020, road accident injuries could represent the third leading cause of disability worldwide [World Health Assembly, 2004]. Traffic accidents are among the main killers of South African children, with two children between the ages of four and 15 being killed every day [*Cape Argus*, 6 April, 2004]. Pedestrian deaths are ranked as the top external cause of death for children between five and 14 years [Reddy *et al.*, 2003].

Closely aligned to health promotion is the issue of physical activity. Sedentary lifestyles are associated with all-cause mortality and morbidity and represent one of the most prevalent behavioural health risks [Wilson and Rogers, 2004]. Insufficient physical activity is indicated by 37.5% of learners [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. Nationally only 54.3% of learners have physical education on their school timetables [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. The Western Cape and Gauteng have the lowest provincial percentages of learners who engage in vigorous physical activity during physical education classes, and the Western Cape has the highest percentage of learners who do not know the reason for their inactivity [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. More learners in the Western Cape and Gauteng watch TV or play video or computer games for more than three hours per day than learners in other provinces [Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. Van Deventer [1999 and 2004] and Wentzel [2001] highlight the problem of insufficient attention paid to physical education in South African schools.

Lobner [1997] emphasises the urgent need for education about the world of work. Labour Force Survey [2003] indicates that 30.5% of the South African population between the ages of 15 and 65 are unemployed, while other studies place the figure at closer to 40% [Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2004]. Youth unemployment rates are high: Limpopo has the lowest labour absorption rate for youth (16.3%) and the Western Cape the highest (51.7%) [Statistics South Africa, 2001a]. Nationally, a higher percentage of females (52.8%) compared to males (44%) are not economically active in the 20–24 age category [Statistics South Africa, 2001a]. Consequences such as poor quality of life, financial and psychological deprivation and increased risk behaviour could result from youth unemployment [Du Toit, 2003].

Given the unemployment rate, poverty in South Africa is widespread [Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2004; Woolard, 2002]. The poverty index shows that 33% of South African households live below the poverty line [Statistics South Africa, 2001a]. Limpopo and the Eastern Cape are the provinces with the highest poverty rates while Gauteng and the Western Cape have the lowest rates of poverty [Woolard, 2002]. Poverty has many health and safety ramifications, such as HIV and AIDS [South African Regional Poverty Network, 2002] and leads to risk exposure, for example fire injury [*Cape Argus*, 14 April, 2004]. South Africa's burn fatality rate is four times higher than in the industrialised world, with young children up to the age of 14 most at risk. Over 80% of fatal burn injuries occur in informal settlements [University of South Africa, 2003].

Poverty means that basic needs such as nutrition cannot be met. The importance of nutrition to intellectual and education power is well established [Jukes, McGuire, Method and Sternberg, 2002]. Good nutrition is critical for preventing diseases [Davidson, 2002; World Bank, 2003a]. However, nutrition is problematic in South Africa [Rose, Bourne and Bradshaw, 2002]. In Limpopo learners display higher levels of under-nutrition than in the Western Cape, where higher levels of obesity and overweight occur [Reddy *et al.*, 2003].

Although faced with the above risks and challenges, many South African learners are optimistic about their futures, feel in control of their lives, know what they want from life, have goals for the future and believe they have many opportunities [Bradshaw *et*

al., 2004]. It is within the ambit of Life Orientation to strengthen the protective factors that can equip learners with the skills to make informed and responsible decisions, reduce their risk behaviour [DiClemente, 1996; Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Kuther and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2000] and build on their inherent youth assets and resilience [Vesely, Wyatt, Oman, Aspy, Kegler, Rodine, Marshall and Mcleroy, 2004].

From the above it is thus evident that South African learners face the complex challenge of living in an increasingly demanding and rapidly changing world, where they have to make informed decisions, particularly about their health and well-being, lifestyles, relationships and careers. Protection from abuses, knowledge and application of their human rights and the practical application of democratic principles in our emergent democracy are additional issues learners have to deal with. Learners have a range of needs; Life Orientation has the potential to respond to many of these needs from a preventative, promotive and an ameliorative perspective.

1.2.2 The Life Orientation learning area

Curriculum transformation in South Africa led to the development of an innovative new learning area called Life Orientation. Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities and equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society [Department of Education, 2002b]. The holistic social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners is the concern of Life Orientation, with a focus on self-in-society. Health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement, and orientation to the world of work are specific focus areas of Life Orientation in the General Education Training (GET) Band [Department of Education, 2002b]. In Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Life Orientation was combined with Arts and Culture in the Intermediate Phase [Department of Education, 1997a]. However, the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a] indicates that Life Orientation may be taught as a learning area by itself or combined with another learning area in the Intermediate Phase. This decision is to be left to the discretion of the school.

In C2005, the specific outcomes for Life Orientation show the potential for Life Orientation to be an empowering learning area, as learners would be enabled to:

1. Understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings
2. Use skills and display attitudes and values that improve relationships in family, group and community
3. Respect the rights of people to hold personal beliefs and values
4. Demonstrate value and respect for human rights as reflected in Ubuntu and other similar philosophies
5. Practice acquired life and decision-making skills
6. Assess career and other opportunities and set goals that will enable them to make the best use of their potential and talents
7. Demonstrate the values and attitudes necessary for a healthy and balanced lifestyle
8. Evaluate and participate in activities that demonstrate effective human movement and development
   [Department of Education, 1997b, 3].

These relevant specific outcomes are condensed into learning outcomes and categorised into focus areas in the RNCS. The learning outcomes of Life Orientation further strengthen this learning area and are formulated as follows:

Learning Outcome 1, Health Promotion: The learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.
Learning Outcome 2, Social Development: The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.
Learning Outcome 3, Personal Development: The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.
Learning Outcome 4, Physical Development and Movement: The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities that promote movement and physical development.
Learning Outcome 5, Orientation to the World of Work: The learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices.
[Department of Education, 2002b, 7].

Assessment standards for each learning outcome advance and direct the content of the outcomes and serve as a guide for educators [Department of Education, 2002a]. Life Orientation is assessable [Department of Education, 2002b], in contrast to the non-examinable nature of the previous constituents of Life Orientation, such as guidance and physical education [Alexander, 1998; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Ntshangase, 1995; Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2004; Wentzel, 2001].

Life Orientation is intrinsically responsive to urgent concerns such as the health, environmental and safety issues to which learners are exposed, the HIV and AIDS pandemic and youth risk behaviour [Ngwena, 2003]. The nation-building, healing, restitution and appreciation of diversity that South Africa requires, the incorporation of democratic principles in our first-time democracy, as well as rampant poverty and unemployment, need directed intervention. Skills development and optimising career pathing choices are fundamental to the successful future of South Africa. The aims and focus areas of Life Orientation are congruent with the amelioration and promotion of core aspects of these issues. The *Call to Action* by the Minister of Education at the time, Professor Kader Asmal [Department of Education, 1999] and the *Implementation Plan for Tirisano* (working together) [Department of Education, 2000c], target the educational and health needs of learners with particular reference to HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, gender and sexuality. These are all cardinal issues dealt with in the Life Orientation learning area, underscoring the significance of this learning area to the broader vision of education in South Africa.

Overview of the components of Life Orientation

The constituents of Life Orientation form the basis of this learning area. They include, although in transformed configurations, what was previously known as guidance, vocational instruction, life skills education, health education, physical education, aspects of environmental education, religious instruction (now religion education) and citizenship education. These components are discussed in depth in chapter three.

Guidance

Guidance, guidance and counselling and career or vocational guidance were subjects in some South African schools prior to curriculum transformation. These aspects have been absorbed in altered configurations into Life Orientation. In the past South Africa's separate education departments offered varied interpretations and offerings of guidance [Burns, 1986a; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Dube, 1994; Euvrard, 1994; Ganie, 1997; Makhoba, 1999; Marais, 1998; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1992; Ntshangase, 1995; Wilson, 1995].

Career education was core to guidance. In the new curriculum Life Orientation learning outcome 5 deals with the world of work and careers. This is an important aspect of the Life Orientation curriculum to ensure future economic viability. A socio-psychological approach to career education is particularly relevant to the newly democratic South Africa [Naicker, 1994], with the critical role of social skills being cardinal [Anderson and Betz, 2001]. The psychosocial construct of employability affects the trajectory of the individual's career path and is a multidimensional aggregate of career identity, personal adaptability and social and human capital [Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, 2004]. Anderson and Betz [2001] indicate that social self-efficacy expectations are related to career indecision and career decidedness. Career indecision is a complex multidimensional construct represented by different forms of indecision [Gordon and Meyer, 2002].

Guidance was primarily concerned with the personal development of learners, and in some curricula included life skills education. Life skills education is the most comprehensive component of guidance to be retained.

Life skills education

The United Nations has been influential in promoting life skills education globally [World Health Organization, 1993 and 1999]. The common denominator in most definitions of life skills is the focus on *skills needed to cope.* The World Health Organization [1993] sees life skills as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that equip people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of daily life. Life skills refer to the skills necessary for successful living and learning, enabling people to participate fully in community development and holistic environmental living [Rooth, 2000]. Life skills development promotes psychosocial competence [Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 1997], and assists youth to deal effectively with demands and challenges and to respond to the difficulties encountered in everyday life [Gachuhi, 1999].

Life skills education is broadly denoted as promoting the practice and reinforcement of psychological skills that contribute to personal and social development and the prevention of health and social problems, as well as the protection of human rights [World Health Organization, 1999]. A comparison with the focus areas of Life Orientation indicates that Life Orientation, with its emphasis on health and personal and

social development, is consistent with the global vision of life skills education. Life Orientation learning outcome 3 focuses on life skills education in particular.

With the necessary life skills to make informed and responsible decisions, learners will be better equipped to deal with the challenges they face in a transforming, personally demanding and developing country. Youth risk behaviour can best be countered by life skills education, which learning outcome 3 specifically aims to do. Given the prevalence of violence as discussed above, emotional literacy, conflict resolution skills, stress management and interpersonal relationship skills are core to this outcome. Mangrulkar, Whitman and Posner [2001] cite results of programme evaluations indicating that life skills education can delay the onset of drug usage, prevent high-risk sexual behaviour, teach anger management, improve academic performance and promote beneficial social adjustment. Botvin's [2000] influential work on substance abuse clearly indicates that substance abuse cannot be dealt with alone, but needs to be addressed as part of a programme that includes life skills such as goal setting, self-esteem enhancement, decision making, problem solving, resisting peer pressure, refusal skills and stress management.

The link between life skills education and health education and health promotion is apparent. Health education is taught either as a derivative of life skills education, as life skills education or in conjunction with life skills education [World Health Organization, 2003]. The concept of life skills has often been used in relation to health skills associated with adolescent risk behaviour [Botvin, 2000; Sinclair, 2003].

Health promotion
The World Health Organization [1998a] indicates that all schools should enable learners to learn critical health and life skills to enable them to make healthy choices and to adopt lifelong healthy behaviour. Life skills education either contains health education or health education subsumes life skills development [Department of Education, 1995b; Department of Health, 2000]. Either way, health education is a central constituent of Life Orientation, with healthy lifestyle development, health prevention and promotion and well-being emerging as core to Life Orientation [Department of Education, 1997b; Department of Education, 2002b]. Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being [World Health

Organization, 2003] and health education is the promotion of health literacy [Nutbeam, 2000], from a preventative and promotive approach [World Health Organization, 1998a]. Life Orientation learning outcome 1 focuses specifically on health education, supported by learning outcomes 2 (social development), 3 (personal development) and 4 (physical development) [Department of Education, 2002b].

The necessity of long-term maintenance of health behaviours is well established [Hoelscher, Feldman, Johnson, Lytle, Osganian, Parcel, Kelder, Stone and Nader, 2004]. With Life Orientation offered from grade R to grade 12 [Department of Education, 2002a; Department of Education, 2003b], a long-term investment in learners' well-being is apparent. Life Orientation's focus is on preventative approaches to help learners avoid problems instead of waiting until problems occur. Protective factors such as personal and social competence, feeling in control of one's life, optimism and willingness to seek support, reduce risk behaviour [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, 2004].Youth assets that may protect against certain risk behaviours [Vesely *et al.*, 2004] and protective factors associated with positive health behaviours and practices [Ka He *et al.*, 2004] are strengthened in Life Orientation.

International research [World Health Organization, 2003] indicates that skills-based health education reduces the chances of learners engaging in delinquent behaviour, delays the onset of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, reduces high-risk sexual activity that can result in pregnancy, STI or HIV infections, prevents peer rejection, teaches anger control, promotes positive social adjustment, improves health-related behaviours and self-efficacy and improves academic performance. Life Orientation's learning outcome 1, with its focus on health education, can contribute to health promotion and learners' well-being. Nutrition, environmental health, water safety, traffic safety, health rights, substance abuse, sexual abuse and gender issues, HIV and AIDS and prevention of local diseases, as well as healthy lifestyle development, are addressed through the assessment standards in this outcome with the support of learning outcomes 2, 3 and 4.

Importantly, Magome, Louw, Motlhoioa and Jack [1998] indicate that Life Orientation is the learning area to accommodate the Department of Health's life skills and HIV and AIDS education programmes. Life Orientation is uniquely constituted to help deal with

this pandemic. Although all learning areas are tasked with addressing aspects of HIV and AIDS [Department of Education, 2002a], Life Orientation functions as the central learning area responsible for HIV and AIDS education. According to Johnson *et al.* [2003] intensive behavioural interventions reduce sexual HIV risk, especially because they increase skill acquisition, sexual communications and condom use and decrease the onset of sexual intercourse or the number of sexual partners. Life Orientation is in essence a form of behavioural intervention.

There is ample evidence that significant health-related problems affect learners in South African society as discussed in section 1.2.1. Life Orientation's urgent responsibility is health promotion. As part of healthy lifestyle development, physical education supports health education.

Physical development and movement

The aim of physical education is to encourage learners to live active and healthy lifestyles [Alexander, 1998]. All learners should be provided with a thorough knowledge of the benefits of healthy living. Sound human movement practices can contribute to the prevention of health-related problems and can improve the quality of life of learners [Department of Education, 1997b]. Movement is a fundamental and creative aspect of each learner, and is both functional and expressive [Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development, 1999]. By increasing their participation in moderate to vigorous activity, physical education has a significant positive effect on the health-related fitness of learners [Kahn, Ramsey, Brownson, Heath, Howze, Powell, Stone, Rajab, Corso and the Task Force on Community Preventative Services, 2002; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a].

Physical education has undergone a range of transformations over the years. Its current format is as a constituent of Life Orientation [Alexander, 1998; Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2002; Wentzel, 2001]. Life Orientation learning outcome 4 specifically aims to assist learners with their physical development [Department of Education, 2002b].

The close relationship between health education and physical education is well established [Biddle and Wang, 2003; Wilson and Rogers, 2004]. The physical health benefits of regular physical activity are extensively documented [Spence and Lee,

2003; Stone, McKenzie, Welk and Booth, 1998; World Health Organization, 1995].
Many health problems in later life can be circumvented by adopting healthy lifestyle
habits in adolescence [Brunton, Harden, Rees, Kavanagh, Oliver and Oakley, 2003].

Widespread studies indicate the deep-rooted need for physical education for learners
[Kahn *et al.*, 2002; Lasheras, Aznar, Merino and Lopez, 2001; Malherbe, Steel and
Theron, 2003; Sallis, 2000; Van Deventer, 2004]. McKenzie, Nader, Strikmiller, Yang,
Stone, Perry, Taylor, Epping, Feldman, Luepker and Kelder [1996] indicate that
research has shown that physical activity may benefit adolescents by increasing their
aerobic fitness, bone mass, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and by reducing
obesity and hypertension. Physically active youth may have higher HDL cholesterol and
lower triglyceride levels than sedentary youths [Wu, Ronis, Pender and Jwo, 2002].

School-based physical education programmes have the potential to increase physical
activity [Jamner, Spruijt-Metz, Bassin and Cooper, 2004; Sallis, 2000]. Frequent
participation in physical activity during adolescence reduces the probability of physical
inactivity in adulthood [Tammelin, Nayha, Laitinen, Rintamaki and Jarvelin, 2003].
Physical education makes an important educational contribution to learners' personal
development, as it provides opportunities for enjoyment, learning new motor skills, co-
operating with others, and for learning about a healthy lifestyle [Hassandra, Goudas and
Chroni, 2003]. The strongest health benefit of physical activity for youth could be
enhanced psychological health [Sallis, 2000]. Individuals with a higher perceived
physical self-efficacy have higher self-esteem, see themselves as physically competent
and partake in more varied sport [Ryckman, Robbins, Thornton and Cantrell, 1982].

Aspects of physical education include recreation, games and play [Department of
Education, 2002b]. The link with environmental education is readily made through
outdoors recreation, where learners can be exposed to the restorative and healing
benefits of the natural environment.

Environmental education
The ease with which environmental concerns can be integrated with and infused into
other learning areas is illustrated by the promotion of environmental education as a
cross-curricular matter [Semmelink, 1997]. Skills needed for environmental

sustainability correspond in many cases to general life skills [Rooth, 2000]. The South African Commission on Environmental Education [1996] recommends that the environment be seen as socially constructed, and that environmental education is an active process aimed at empowering learners to find solutions as well as participate in environmental governance. Environmental health and safety is a major cause for concern and needs to be addressed, with unsafe environments cited as one of the major challenges facing children in South Africa [Children's Institute, 2003]. Learning outcome 1 (health promotion) in particular deals with matters pertaining to environmental health.

Environmental education can strengthen a sustainability ethic in learners [Wagiet, 2001]. Environmental education as an integrated part of each learning area is recommended [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001]. Accordingly, environmental health and safety issues are included in Life Orientation and are specifically included in Life Orientation learning outcome 1 [Department of Education, 2002b]. The focus on the restorative aspects of the natural environment is promoted in learning outcome 4 (physical development), through activities such as orienteering [Department of Education, 2002b].

Osbaldiston and Sheldon [2003] and Pelletier, Tuson, Green-Demers, Noels and Beaton [1998] posit that self-determined motivation can promote sustained environmental behaviour change. Self efficacy, high levels of self-esteem and goal achievement are important constructs in environmentally literate behaviour and are evidenced in Life Orientation learning outcome 3 (personal development).

Learners need to develop an understanding of the way issues related to environmental health affect their personal health as well as community well-being. With the exposure to greater harm by communities beset with poverty, environmental justice is required to address issues such as inequalities in air and water quality leading to, for instance, higher asthma rates [National Council for Science and the Environment, 1991]. A cause for concern is the rising asthma prevalence in South Africa, concomitant to increased exposure to allergens and pollutants, with poverty associated with more severe asthma and higher morbidity rates [Western Cape Provincial Government, 2004].

Environmental justice and social justice are core to environmental education and Life Orientation. Environmental justice is defined as redressing the circumstances whereby people with fewer choices, such as the poor and disadvantaged, frequently suffer most from pollution, jobs hazardous to health, unequal access to resources and resource depletion [Department of Education, 2003b]. Social justice is expressed as redressing the instances where people with fewer choices repeatedly suffer most from discrimination, lack of human rights and access to services and infrastructure [Department of Education, 2003b]. Through Life Orientation learning outcomes 1 (health promotion) and 2 (social development), supported by outcome 3 (personal development), these issues are addressed, and are closely interrelated with citizenship education and human rights education.

Citizenship and human rights education

Similar to environmental education, human rights education is another transversal to be taught in all learning areas. "The purpose of Human Rights is to develop learners as agents of change" [Ministerial Project Committee, 2001, 5] and to contribute to and actively participate in society [Department of Education, 2002b]. Human rights education focuses primarily on the nature of change together with the need to participate in the process of social transformation [Volmink, 1997]. Furthermore, human rights education deals with values such as dignity, equality, respect and acceptance of diversity, and promotes learners' knowledge of rights and responsibilities and citizenship, from both a national as well as a global perspective. Life Orientation is optimally constituted to play a cardinal role in human rights education. Keet [2001a] points out that the outcomes of Life Orientation reflect the principality and significance of human rights as well as anticipate the infusion of human rights and values into Life Orientation learning programmes and classroom activities.

Life Orientation is seen as the "conceptual home" for human rights education [Carrim, 2001, 18]. Life Orientation learning outcome 2 focuses on social development and is ideally suited to encourage human rights acquisition and adherence to the South African constitutional principles. This outcome promotes civic participation, gender equity, non-discriminatory and democratic behaviour, and opposition to stereotyping, discrimination, bias, prejudice and racism. It also promotes an understanding of diverse religions and belief systems and addresses values education. In outcome 3 on personal

development, Life Orientation also deals with rights and responsibilities in relationships and gender equity, in an attempt to address these serious social problems. Issue s of self-protection, procedures of reporting abuses and strategies to obtain medical assistance are included in outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Citizenship education and civic education are closely aligned to human rights education. The literature is expansive on c itizenship and civic education [Carrim and Govender, 2001; Cogan and Morris, 2001; Flowers, 2002; Kerr, Cleaver, Ireland and Blenkinsop, 2003; Tibbitts, 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz, 2001]. Civic education in a democracy is viewed as preparation for sustaining and enhancing democratic self-government; this means citizenship participation based on informed and critical reflection [Center for Civic Education, 1994]. England's Crick Report [Crick, 1998] emphasises that effective citizenship consists of social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy, with the outcomes of effective citizenship education leading to active and responsible participation. Congruent with democratic principles, the freedom of belief and of religion is a core principle of democracy.

Religion education

The National Policy on Religion Education [Department of Education, 2003a] identifies Life Orientation as the learning area suited to promote religious literacy from a civic perspective. Religion education differs markedly from previous formats of religious instruction [Chidester, 2002a]. Values education, tolerance, morality and respect for religions are core to this component. Tolerance for and understanding of different beliefs, values and religions are integral to religion education within the new South African curriculum. The focus will not be on one religion to the detriment of any other religions [Department of Education, 2003a].

Religion education is integrated in Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2001b]. Life Orientation learning outcome 2 includes aspects of religion education and unequivocally promotes acceptance and respect of diversity, and knowledge about a range of religions and belief systems. Religion education has a civic, rather than a religious function [Department of Education, 2003a].

The challenges of curriculum transformation are integral to the challenges Life Orientation encounters. As such, what happens in the broader context of South African curriculum transformation affects the implementation of Life Orientation.

1.2.3 Curriculum transformation

As a result of political changes leading to the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa, a new education system was put in place, namely an outcomes based approach, and Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced. C2005 is the first major curriculum reform since 1994 in South Africa and is considered to be the uniting vision for transforming apartheid education in South Africa [Department of Education, 1997a]. C2005 is outcomes based, with an integrated knowledge system across the eight new learning areas and is learner centred.

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) refers to the system of education where the focus is on learners achieving outcomes with learning, teaching and assessment all framed in terms of what learners are able to do [Spady, 1994]. In OBE, comprehensive statements are made about what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners should acquire as a result of their learning. These statements are outcomes as they indicate what the result or outcome of learning should be [Department of Education, 1997a].

C2005 is organised around eight learning areas, namely Life Orientation, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture and Economic and Management Sciences. These learning areas have replaced the traditional school subjects. Each learning area has outcomes that assist in making the critical and developmental outcomes achievable [Department of Education, 1997a].

The findings of the Review Report, which was compiled to improve the implementation of C2005 [Department of Education, 2000a], indicated the need for a streamlined and strengthened curriculum. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) resulted from this revision process [Department of Education, 2002a]. The central differences between C2005 and the RNCS were that the latter was condensed, more practical and contained less jargon than C2005.

The principles of the RNCS are grounded in the South African Constitution and include social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity, which are cross-cutting or transversal issues that all learning areas deal with [Department of Education, 2002a]. However, Life Orientation in particular is viewed as cardinal to the advancement of these principles.

The challenges of curriculum transformation [Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan, 2001], specifically with regard to OBE and C2005 in South Africa are extensively discussed in the literature [Chisholm, 2003b; Chisholm, 2004; Fleisch, 2002; Harber, 2001; Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Jansen, 1999a; Jansen, 2001c; Jansen and Christie, 1999; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. Most of these challenges are generic and are applicable to the Life Orientation learning area. However, Life Orientation has its idiosyncratic challenges particular to its configuration, vision and outcomes.

The complexities of Life Orientation implementation

Preliminary indications are that Life Orientation is struggling to achieve its potential, specifically pertaining to learners', educators' and school principals' perceptions of this learning area and its constituents [Kelly, Parker and Oyosi, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Rooth, 2001; Toddun, 2000; Wentzel, 2001]. The close association Life Orientation has with the past so-called 'non-examinable' subjects, such as guidance and physical education [Alexander, 1998; Dube, 1994; Makhoba, 1999; Mbokazi, 1999; Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2004; Wentzel, 2001], may be a lingering connection that detracts from the status and implementation of this new learning area. Student-teachers report that Life Orientation is often seen as a 'free period' [Rooth, 2001], similar to previous perceptions of guidance [Mashimbye, 2000] and physical education [Wentzel, 2001], prior to curriculum transformation.

The issue of religion and sexuality education in Life Orientation has received negative publicity and much resistance from religious fundamentalists in South Africa [Chisholm, 2004], leading to confusion about this learning area. Many educators and parents are yet to accept that religion education has a civic purpose in Life Orientation, rather than a spiritual function. Misconceptions about the content and role of HIV and AIDS and sexuality education added further negative publicity to Life Orientation [Chisholm, 2004]. Numerous letters to the media and public comments on the RNCS

[Gospel Defence League, 2002; Life Orientation Working Group, 2001] indicate the level of misunderstandings and resistance to particularly religion, HIV and AIDS and sexuality education.

As Life Orientation is a new learning area, educators are challenged to change their preconceptions about Life Orientation, revisit their values and attitudes, and adjust and innovate their teaching practices. For example, a guidance educator may now be called upon to teach *all* aspects of Life Orientation, which include content not related to guidance. In the same way, a physical education educator may be required to teach other aspects of Life Orientation that are outside the realm of familiarity. The opposition of physical education educators to the integration with Life Orientation [Van Deventer, 2002; Wentzel, 2001] may be characteristic of a general resistance to curriculum transformation where subject specialties are concerned. Student-teachers report that some educators are accustomed to being guidance counsellors and prefer to deal with learners on a one-to-one basis, while others have implemented life skills programmes that they feel are successful, and do not see the need for change [Rooth, 2001]. Makhoba [1999] notes the low status of Life Orientation educators in Kathelong, and the research findings in Gauteng of Toddun [2000] on Life Orientation facilitation indicate the need for educator training.

Life Orientation, notwithstanding its capacity to make a beneficial contribution to the education of learners, appears to be beset by problems and complexities. This may be normative as part of the transitional period that characterises curriculum change. However, the initial indications of difficulties in implementing this learning area may be of a more serious and permanent nature. It would be a devastating loss of an educationally sound opportunity if Life Orientation *could not* fulfil its potential to make a vital contribution to learners' successful living, learning and well-being.

The significance of the study lies in ascertaining what is happening in schools regarding Life Orientation. Determining this will enable the development of recommendations to ameliorate some of the problems inherent in Life Orientation and the devising of structures to support educators and schools in the implementation of this cardinal learning area.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. This will enable the development of recommendations to promote optimal Life Orientation implementation.

In this study, the *status* of Life Orientation refers to its attributed significance and ascribed value, the educators assigned to teach Life Orientation, the time allocated and utilised for this learning area and the way it is perceived and assigned meaning. The *practice* of Life Orientation refers to how it is implemented in schools and what transpires in the classroom. Included in the practice of Life Orientation are teaching methodologies used, issues of assessment, problems and successes educators experienced with Life Orientation, and learning support material availability. Both the status and the practice of Life Orientation interface and overlap and are reciprocally interrelated.

The overall research question is: What is the emergent picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation? The principal research questions are:

- What is Life Orientation? What are the definition, scope and understanding of Life Orientation?
- What significance is attributed to Life Orientation?
- Who teaches Life Orientation?
- How much time is allocated to Life Orientation?
- How is the practice of Life Orientation exemplified? What teaching methodologies do Life Orientation educators use? What are educators' problems and successes?

Additional research questions, emanating from the research findings of the study, are:

- What is the impact of Life Orientation educators' values on their teaching?
- What are the rhetoric-practice interface incongruities?

The scope of the study is the learning area of Life Orientation in the General Education and Training Band (GET) in the new South African curriculum. The focus is on the Intermediate Phase (grades 4, 5 and 6) and the Senior Phase (grades 7, 8 and 9). The

Foundation Phase is not included in this study as Life Orientation in this phase is subsumed under a broad learning programme entitled 'life skills', which includes all learning areas *other* than Numeracy and Literacy [Western Cape Education Department, 2003]. Life Orientation in the Further Education and Training Band (FET) is also not investigated as this new curriculum will only be implemented from 2006 onwards. The broad curriculum context of this study is the Life Orientation learning area within the framework of OBE and C2005 as well as the RNCS.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The research methodology implemented in this study was characterised by four phases, namely research design, the pilot of research instruments, the implementation of the research and finally data capture and analysis.

Triangulation, which refers to the use of different data collection methods in one study, was used [Cohen and Manion, 1985; Gray, 2004; Krathwohl, 1998]. Quantitative [Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Hammersley, 2002; Krathwohl, 1998] and qualitative [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Miller and Salkind, 2002] data collection methods were employed. Structured and unstructured interviews, individual and group (focus groups) interviews, questionnaires and observations contributed to the data compilation [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998].

The research was conducted in the period 2002–2004 in two provinces, namely Limpopo (45 schools) and the Western Cape (49 schools). Comprehensive structured interviews were held with 134 educators in 94 schools. Structured interviews were conducted with 280 Intermediate Phase learners. A total of 1 284 Senior Phase learners completed questionnaires. Twenty-six unstructured interviews were held with Life Orientation educators and departmental officials in Limpopo and the Western Cape. Observations of student-teachers in the Western Cape and of researchers in Limpopo were used to add further information to the emergent portrait of Life Orientation.

The data was captured, categorised, analysed, compared and presented in the format of illustrative figures. Table 1.1 on page 25 gives an overview of the methodology framework. Details of the research methodology are given in chapter four.

Table 1.1 Summary of the methods used for the study

Method	Time frame	Rationale for use	Researchers	Respondents/ Participants	Area
Structured interviews (in-depth)	2002, 2003	Answer core research questions	Student-teachers	74 Senior Phase & Intermediate Phase educators (49 schools).	Western Cape
	2003		Researcher and research assistant	60 Senior Phase & Intermediate Phase educators (45 schools).	Limpopo
Structured interviews (brief)	2002, 2003	Ascertain learners' experiences of Life Orientation	Student-teachers	161 Intermediate Phase learners	Western Cape
	2003		Researcher and research assistant	119 Intermediate Phase learners	Limpopo
Questionnaires	2002, 2003	Investigate learners' attribution of significance to Life Orientation	Student-teachers	617 Senior Phase learners	Western Cape
	2003		Researcher and research assistant	667 Senior Phase learners	Limpopo
Unstructured interviews	2002, 2003	Explore Life Orientation issues	Researcher	Department of Education officials in 4 meetings	Western Cape
	2003		Researcher and research assistant	Department of Education officials and Life skills/HIV and AIDS co-ordinators in 3 focus groups	Limpopo
	2003	Explore issues centring on values	Researcher and research assistant	Educators in 3 focus groups	Limpopo
	2004		Student-teachers	Educators in 17 focus groups and individual interviews.	Western Cape
Observations	2002, 2003, 2004	Add information about the practice of Life Orientation and rhetoric-practice interface	Student-teachers Researcher Research assistant	Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators and schools	Limpopo and Western Cape
Reflections	2002– 2004		Student-teachers	165 Student-teachers	Western Cape
Field notes	2003	Add information about the status and practice of Life Orientation	Researcher and research assistant	45 schools visited	Limpopo
Minutes of meetings and participant-observation notes.	2002, 2003, 2004		Researcher	8 Life Orientation learning area committee meetings	Western Cape

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS IN THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE is an introductory chapter that clarifies the motivation for the study. An overview of the needs of learners, the Life Orientation learning area, curriculum transformation and the challenges particular to Life Orientation, is given as a rationale for the study. This chapter delineates the aims of the study and provides an outline of the methodology and research framework.

CHAPTER TWO constitutes a literature review to provide a theoretical framework for the investigation of the status and practice of Life Orientation, in the context of the most significant changes in the South African education system since 1994. In addition, a discussion of the interface between policy and practice and the impact of educational change processes on educators as focal role players follows. This appraisal of curriculum transformation forms the backdrop against which the inception and implementation of the Life Orientation learning area is discussed in ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER THREE reviews the literature concerning the constituents of Life Orientation, from a local as well as an international perspective. Given that each of the components of Life Orientation is integral to the Life Orientation learning area, separate reference is made to each curriculum constituent to engender a comprehensive representation and perspective of Life Orientation. However, this is done within the scope of a conceptual framework that views the constituents of Life Orientation as interrelated and interdependent.

CHAPTER FOUR details the research methodology adopted for the study. This chapter describes the research approach used, gives an overview of the research design and outlines the data collection and analysis methods. The constraints and limitations of the research are discussed. A discussion on ethics in research concludes this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE presents the findings of the study. Extensive use is made of figures to illustrate the findings. Qualitative findings are presented in summarised format. Descriptive extracts from student-teachers' and researchers' observations are given to add further context to the findings.

CHAPTER SIX entails an in-depth discussion of the findings. Selected student-teachers' observations and research field notes are extracted in this chapter to further explicate the core research issues. The discussion of the findings leads to the drawing of an emergent picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation.

CHAPTER SEVEN concludes the study with recommendations for the successful and optimal implementation and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. Suggestions for further research are made, the limitations of the study are highlighted and the study is concluded.

1.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The rationale for the study lies in the needs and challenges learners encounter and the potential of Life Orientation to respond to these needs. The introduction of the Life Orientation learning area as part of curriculum transformation in South Africa gives context to the rationale.

A newly developed learning area, Life Orientation, is one of eight learning areas in C2005 and the RNCS in South Africa. Components of previous subjects in some schools such as guidance, physical education, vocational education, life skills, religious (now religion) education, citizenship education, environmental education and health education, all contribute to the content of this learning area.

The urgent need for the Life Orientation learning area in schools is apparent with the HIV and AIDS pandemic and a range of other serious health and safety factors impinging on learners' well-being. Being young in the 21st Century, in a developing country with its opportunities and challenges, requires being equipped with the necessary life skills to live successfully and meaningfully.

Preliminary indications are that Life Orientation is not optimally implemented in schools in South Africa. Hence an investigation to ascertain the status and practice of Life Orientation is deemed essential in order to provide guidelines for its increased functionality.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW 1:
CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a theoretical framework for the investigation of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. This chapter reviews the most significant changes in the South African education system since 1994, and discusses the interface between policy and practice and the impact of educational change processes on educators as focal role players. This appraisal will form the backdrop against which the inception and implementation of the Life Orientation learning area will be discussed in ensuing chapters.

2.2 THE ANTECEDENTS OF CURRICULUM REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

> *All over the world the people's struggles fo r human and national liberation have become a driving force of progress for humanity, laying a firm foundation for democracy and development in South Africa. For the struggle to seize back the right and initiative to make one's own history is both an act and a process of learning* [Mboya, 1993, 38].

One of the primary tasks of the first legitimate and democratic government in South Africa since 1994 was to reconstitute the education system. This was indubitably mandatory as the education system was one of the manifold adverse legacies of apartheid. The South African education system was rooted in authoritarian, rigid Christian national education, with rote learning and streaming at its core, manifested by an unequal distribution of resources, racially-biased content-driven curricula and racially delineated, separate education departments. This impacted negatively on the quality of teaching and learning and on the lives of South Africans.

As a matter of urgency, the many departments needed to merge into one and a new curriculum for all, analogous to a post-apartheid, democratic and free South Africa, had

to be developed. The transformation in the first period after democracy, from 1994 - 1997, was primarily manifested by the development of policies to create the framework for change. Taylor, Diphofa, Waghmarae, Vinjevold and Sedibe [1999] identify three areas of focus for the strong effort to reform South Africa's schooling: reorganising the separate departments of education into one national and nine provincial departments, ensuring high levels of representation in all levels of the education system and establishing a policy framework to feature progressive school reform. The major challenges were to dismantle apartheid structures to create a unified education system, to create a more equitable system of finance, and to develop a policy framework that would give concrete expression to the values that underpin South Africa's new Democracy [Department of Education, 2001a].

The African National Congresses' (ANC) implementation plan for education and training [African National Congress, 1994b] provided a well-planned and visionary guideline, which was to be of paramount importance in developing changes in the South African education system. Stakeholder participation, transparency and inclusive development were novel modes of operation in this country. From its inception, the new education system was participatory and consultations were widely held. The policy framework and implementation guidelines were seen to be a broad platform on which to build [African National Congress, 1994b] and a way of assisting the government with the reconstruction and development of emancipatory education. Of note was that modernisation was seen to be core to educational reform.

> …South Africa is embarking on a major project of modernisation, in a predominantly post-modern world. Apartheid has fragmented that which could have been whole, and it has repressed the modernising tendencies of industrial development. Our task is therefore to construct a curriculum which will serve (and even accelerate) the modern project, while simultaneously developing the capacity for a decentralised process of development [African National Congress, 1994b, 137].

The apartheid legacy of fundamental pedagogics, based on premises of authoritarian doctrine, led to the propagation of liberation ideology and learner centredness [Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. The negative effects of the previous regime's doctrine of fundamental pedagogics on educators' thinking and practice is well documented

[African National Congress, 1994a; Chisholm 1993; Hartshorne 1992; National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Thus the replacement of fundamental pedagogics was a core task in the restructuring of teacher education [Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. The choice of OBE (see section 2.3) was made partly because it offered a complete severance from the appalling doctrines of fundamental pedagogics.

Harber [2001] notes the contradictions in educational policy as the ANC's history is that of the struggle for equity, social justice and democracy, yet neo-liberal economics are a definite influence on educational reforms. Hill [2003] finds the restructuring of schooling and education systems across the world to be part of the ideological and policy offensive of neo-liberal capital. Human capital theory derives from the conception of a modern, rationalised and formal school system that supersedes traditional modes of education and training. According to this theory, formal education provides both social and technical competence, is socially efficient and technically utilitarian, and its effects are cumulative, generation upon generation [Hartley, 2003]. While curriculum reform in South Africa does not overtly propagate human capital theory, its influences are implicit.

Vally [2000] highlights the very real and important issue of poverty alleviation to ensure effective education reform. Vally [2000] states that, even though the criticalness of general education reform, change and innovation in schooling is evident, the precondition for ultimate success in such endeavours is to change the socio-economic status of learners. The physical, emotional and social damage inflicted on impoverished children is abundantly documented, with the vast majority of South African learners living in poverty. King [1998] sees South Africa entering its post-apartheid era as one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Motala, Vally and Modiba [2003] assert that the AIDS epidemic may undermine all the developmental gains South Africa hoped to achieve through improved education. Any discussion of educational reforms and policy in South Africa needs to recognise the potential impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic [Harber, 2001].

South African education has faced major reforms that are innovative, essential and necessary to transform an apartheid education system that was rooted in authoritarian,

inequitable and racially divisive curricula and mechanisms. The onus has been on the new dispensation to lead the way, through education, towards a fully democratic, progressive, equitable and just society. Educational reform has been driven by the will to overcome the devastation of apartheid by providing a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice, as well as a system of lifelong learning, to enable us to respond to the economic and social challenges of the 21st Century [Department of Education, 2001a]. Policies and mechanisms aimed at redressing the apartheid legacy of a racially and ethnically fragmented, dysfunctional and unequal education system have been introduced since 1994. Post-apartheid legislation on education puts the quality of education securely on the programme for educational change and transformation [Motala, 2003a]. A radical departure from apartheid education, through curriculum reform in the guise of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), shaped as Curriculum 2005 (C2005), was introduced [Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani, 2002].

2.3 OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION

> *A good curriculum both transmits dominant values, and simultaneously challenges these through critical reflective practice. While these may be held in balance during periods of stability, in our context of transformation the continuity factor has to be diminished in favour of innovation* [African National Congress, 1994b, 137].

The shift in South Africa towards OBE ensured the visible and rapid transformation of the previously iniquitous education system. OBE required a considerable change in teaching and learning styles, as it was a new pedagogy, necessitating a paradigm shift and a new approach from educators and learners, with radical changes to content and methodology. Educators could not implement OBE successfully by simply making minor adjustments to their current practice.

2.3.1 The elements of Outcomes Based Education

OBE entails focusing and organising everything according to what is essential for all learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning [Spady, 1994]. It encourages educators to use outcomes to guide their educational decision making by

requiring them to clarify and make explicit the desirable outcomes of learning [Killen, 2000]. OBE's focus is on the learners achieving outcomes by being able to apply their knowledge. Learning, teaching and assessment are all framed in terms of what a learner is able *to do*. In OBE the starting point for learning is

> …the intended results of learning in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, in contrast to the prescription of content to be learnt [Spady, 1994, 10].

OBE regards the process of learning to be as vital as the content; hence, it emphasises both by stipulating the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the process [Department of Education, 2002a]. Content and contexts create a conduit for achieving the OBE objectives, rather than existing as a means in themselves.

Innovative approaches to assessment are required, including baseline, formative, summative and continuous assessment. Baseline assessment refers to the initial assessment used to find out what learners already know. Formative assessment assesses learners' progress during the learning process to provide feedback that strengthens learning. Summative assessment is usually conducted at the end of a term or year. Continuous assessment integrates assessment into teaching and gives learners ongoing feedback on their progress [Department of Education, 2002b].

Spady [1994] sees, as core to OBE, developing an unambiguous set of learning outcomes, on which all the systems' components can be focused, and establishing conditions and opportunities within the system to enable and encourage all learners to achieve the crucial outcomes. The outcomes for learning areas that have been developed for the South African curricula embody this vision. Spady [1994, 2] explains that outcomes are "clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences". Of importance is Spady's [1994] point that outcomes are what learners are able to do as a result of what they know and have learnt. The intended outcomes are explicitly stated, thus guiding the teaching and learning process. Initially, in South Africa the two categories of outcomes were critical cross-field outcomes and specific outcomes [Department of Education, 1997a]. The specific

outcomes were later renamed and reconstituted, in a streamlined version, as learning outcomes. [Department of Education, 2002a]

The critical outcomes are generic and cross-curricular, and are ratified by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The critical and developmental outcomes form the nucleus of the curriculum. They are based on the South African Constitution and are contained in the South African Qualifications Act (1995) [Republic of South Africa, 1995b]. These outcomes highlight issues of redress and democracy, founded on the philosophy of developing a nation of caring and competent citizens who participate meaningfully in society and achieve their potential. The critical outcomes that guide the ensuing learning area outcomes, envisage learners who will be able to:

1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
2. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community
3. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively
4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes
6. Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation [Department of Education, 2002a].

The developmental outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

1. Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
2. Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
3. Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
4. Explore education and career opportunities
5. Develop entrepreneurial opportunities [Department of Education, 2002a].

Learning outcomes and assessment standards originate from the critical and developmental outcomes [Department of Education, 2002a]. Each learning area statement consists of learning outcomes and assessment standards, which guide the teaching and learning of the specific learning area. All learning outcomes are statements that define the intended outcome or result of the teaching and learning process; they describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners are expected to acquire by the end of the learning process. Learning outcomes are not prescriptive about content or method [Department of Education, 2002a].

Assessment standards identify the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to achieve the learning outcomes for the learning area. They set the criteria that will provide the evidence for what the learner knows and is able to do at the end of each grade. They describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes, as well as the ways of demonstrating their progress. They are so arranged as to show progression, both within a grade and across the grades for a specific learning area. They are also not prescriptive of method [Department of Education, 2002a].

2.3.2 Reactions to Outcomes Based Education

Outcomes Based Education was introduced through C2005, and reactions to the two are often intertwined. However, for the purposes of this research, C2005 and OBE are seen as distinct. C2005 is viewed as a curriculum whereas OBE is a method and philosophy of teaching and learning on which C2005 is based.

There have been, from some sectors of the educational community, vituperative attacks on OBE. Fleisch [2002, 117] cites critics who denounce OBE by saying it "routinises learning, deskills the teaching profession and subjects both the educators and learners to sophisticated forms of sur veillance through measures of performance." Fleisch [2002] refers to critics who appear to think that the aim of OBE is to prepare learners mainly for flexible workplace demands.

Although most of the vociferous and often sensationally presented criticisms of OBE by Jansen [1999a] cannot be taken as normative, they are reflected here as they are frequently touted by OBE dissidents and the South African press. Jansen's [1999a] main grievances about OBE are that:

- it does not take into account the realities of South African classrooms because education policy is being driven mainly by political imperatives, to the exclusion of practical considerations
- it is filled with excessive jargon
- it is too closely associated with assisting economic growth, while there is little international evidence that there is a close link between education and prosperity
- pedagogical changes inherent in OBE are far too drastic for South African classrooms

- specifying outcomes in advance within a democratic school system is inappropriate, as there is a contradiction between the creative use of knowledge in the context of pre-existing outcomes
- educators have not been involved in the curriculum change process and hence OBE has been foisted on them
- it enables policy makers to avoid values and the learning outcomes could be interpreted differently in different contexts
- it increases the administrative work of educators
- it trivialises curriculum content
- if OBE were to succeed, other innovations would have to be part of the process
- assessment techniques haven't changed radically, despite the introduction of OBE, and traditional examinations will continue to be used.

Some of the criticisms are also reflected in other writings. Sieborger [1998] is of the opinion that the process by which outcomes are arrived at should be just as important as the outcomes themselves. Sieborger [1998] is critical of the rush with which the new curriculum has been developed, the time pressures and overly optimistic planning. Meerkotter [1998, 57] sees OBE and C2005 as "… retrogressive and in a certain sense even more technicist and mechanistic than the previous curricula.".

Harber [2001] notes that complaints about OBE hinge on a lack of consultation and insufficient time to prepare and retrain for the hasty implementation schedule. Kallaway [1997, 1] indicates that

> In South Africa educational politics has increasingly been reduced to a matter of policy implementation. In the name of change and redress, and because of the need for politicians to produce demonstrable innovations in a short space of time, a range of policies, often hastily borrowed from foreign contexts without adequate research into their success and effects, have been bundled together with insufficient consultation or research.

Jansen and Christie [1999] and Taylor and Vinjevold [1999] argue that OBE is and will continue to be very difficult to deliver by poorly resourced schools and under-qualified educators. Young [2001] suggests that if it were the case that the specification of outcomes could not assure quality, then the only alternative would be to see the curriculum as a set of guidelines, rather than outcomes. Educators then should accordingly be given more responsibility for interpreting guidelines. Young [2001] finds that the critical outcomes designed to emphasise the importance of breadth of learning remain generic and lack adequate content specificity to assure the learning that they aimed to emphasise.

However, there are many OBE protagonists who see the potential in such an educational system. Vally and Spreen [2003] indicate that the general perception is that OBE provides new ways of achieving equity and redress. Fleisch [2002, 117–118] proposes an antithesis to the "monolithic arguments of Outcomes Based Education" by describing a study in Canada of OBE that countered critics' arguments. The study found that educators' intellectual and creative energies were unleashed and learners were engaged in ways that were the "antithesis of routinisation, deskilling and surveillance." OBE appears to succeed in the ideological domain, with educators embracing its main intentions, but the actual implementation practices do not necessarily reflect this idealism [Harber 2001; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999].

A radically new education system that symbolised a complete break with the past and that had the potential to ensure a better education for all, was needed after 1994. C2005 (discussed in the next section) was the vehicle through which OBE was introduced to South African education.

2.4 CURRICULUM 2005

> *By far the most important reason for the vexed*
> *nature of school reform is its complexity.*
> [Taylor *et al.*, 1999, 14].

In 1998, the first new major curriculum reform was introduced as C2005, for grade R to grade 9, in the General Education and Training band (GET) and implemented in the Foundation Phase and Grade 7 [Department of Education, 1997a]. The founding principles of C2005 were drawn from the new South African Constitution [Republic of South Africa, 1996a], with its emphasis on human rights, equity, redress, inclusivity, social and environmental justice and access.

2.4.1 Principles, structure and aims of Curriculum 2005

C2005 was guided by principles of outcomes-based and learner-centred education and the critical and developmental outcomes established by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) [Republic of South Africa, 1995b]. It marked the departure from fundamental pedagogics to progressive pedagogy [Cross *et al.*, 2002]. C2005 defined specific outcomes and standards of achievement in eight learning areas [Department of

Education, 1997a]. Although unwieldy and impractical, characterised by the overuse of terminology and lengthy and wordy outcomes, it formed the basis from which revised curricula could proceed. As such, C2005 was a remarkable achievement and made an immediate break with the past education system.

> Curriculum 2005 is arguably one of the most progressive of such polices in the world …The critical and specific outcomes, together, represented major shifts in what was to be learned in schools, emphasising competencies rather than particular knowledge. The specific outcomes delineated learning areas more broadly than in traditional 'subjects', building links from subject knowledge to social, economic and personal dimensions of learning and the multicultural character of South African society [Department of Education, 2001a, 17].

C2005 was structured according to twelve overarching critical and developmental outcomes and 66 specific outcomes, divided into eight new learning areas. It incorporated range statements, assessment criteria and performance indicators. Learning was categorised into integrated phase organisers for four phases of school education - foundation, intermediate, senior and further [Department of Education, 1997b].

C2005 attempted to align school work with workplace, social and political goals. It emphasised experiential and cooperative learning; pursued the value of diversity in the areas of race, gender and culture; and aimed to develop citizens who are imaginative and critical problem-solvers [Department of Education, 1997a].

C2005 was complex and used obtuse, newfangled terminology. For example, the term "range statement" was introduced, which meant the "scope, depth and level of complexity and parameters of the learners' achievement", while "performance indicators" gave detailed information concerning the learning progress of each learner [Department of Education, 1997b, 16]. The terminology issue was used by C2005 detractors as a weapon to contest its implementation.

2.4.2 Reactions to Curriculum 2005

Reactions to C2005 include a combination of condemnation and acceptance. Some academics in the field of education are particularly critical [Jansen, 1999a; Kallaway, 1997; Meerkotter, 1998; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999], while others ignore C2005 as if it is a non-event. Chisholm [2003a, 9] indicates that:

> …key university-based intellectuals were both for and
> against outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005
> but on the whole the balance of opinion amongst
> university-based intellectuals was critical of Curriculum
> 2005.

The *Report of the President's Education Initiative* [Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]
emphasises the criticism that OBE and C2005 were not working in classrooms in South
African schools, and recommends research into issues of dissemination, epistemology,
learning outcomes, pedagogy and resources. Major concerns summarised here are those
of practicality and fiscal restraints, content and context, training needs and the state of
schools.

Practicality and fiscal restraints

The dilemma of the policy and practice interface (see section 2.7) has been highlighted
by numerous critics. Taylor *et al.* [1999, 15-16] question the practicality of C2005:

> …the new curriculum for schools is based on the principle of
> providing equal opportunities for all children to develop the
> knowledge best suited to building a prosperous society. But
> there are important practical questions which query whether
> Curriculum 2005, as presently constructed, will provide the best
> vehicle for achieving these aims in the majority of South
> African schools.

Meerkotter [1998] does not think that C2005 meets the needs of the marginalised and
poor in South Africa. For Vally [2000], earlier official documents on C2005 are blunt in
touting the curriculum as a panacea for South Africa's economic burdens. Fleisch
[2002, 144] cites mounting criticism against C2005 as being predominantly that of "too
little capacity, too little money and too much jargon." Taylor [1999, 128] postulates that
"only the most dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled educators" were likely to achieve
SAQA's learning goals using C2005. For Meerkotter [1998, 63]

> The most pernicious effect of the implementation of Curriculum
> 2005 is likely to be that the previously white schools will
> implement it in a more effective way than other schools because
> of better infrastructures and stronger parental support.

Meerkotter [1998] indicates that the new curriculum could not improve what was
happening in South African schools as South Africa did not have the financial and other
resources for teacher training to enable C2005 to be put in place, and the majority could
find the new curriculum to be an extra burden. Words of caution were put forward, with

a plea for realism and pragmatism in school reform by focusing attention not only on what schools in society stand for, but also on what they can realistically do and achieve, given their legacies and the particular circumstances in which they operate [Cross *et al.*, 2002].

Content and contexts

Part of the rationale of C2005 is that it will allow educators opportunities for contextual interpretation, given South Africa's diverse school environments [Harber, 2001]. However, the new freedom of interpretation had the unintended consequence of leaving educators feeling bereft of ideas about what to teach. Harber [2001] cites research indicating that educators, particularly in under-resourced schools, were not able to decipher the broad outcomes of C2005 into apposite learning programmes or to develop their own assessment strategies.

Concerns about conceptual development, balance and content are widely expressed. Taylor [1999, 128] predicts that in:

> …foregrounding the everyday at the expense of conceptual knowledge, and in expressing the latter in the most general terms at the expense of a deep study of key concepts, Curriculum 2005 seems designed to promote superficiality at the expense of systematic and grounded conceptual development.

Perceptions of C2005 include the description "undisciplined" as it is unsystematic and does not promote conceptual knowledge, but focuses instead on the "endless variety of unruly personal experience"; this is coupled with the bewildering complexity of the scheme for applying the curriculum in the classroom [Taylor 1999, 128]. For Meerkotter [1998, 62–63]:

> A more progressive approach would be to educate teachers to become better in the didactic analysis of content, rather than to dismiss the 'old' curricula as content-driven.

Training needs

Meaningful training in C2005 was problematic [Chisholm, Motala and Vally 2003; Department of Education 2000a; Fleisch 2002; Harber 2001; Jansen, 1999a; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. Provinces offered brief workshops where facilitators appeared to be

confused about the new approach themselves, and hence did little to empower educators to go back to their classrooms and make OBE work [*The Teacher*, 20 November, 2000].

The research study of a grade 7 pilot in the Western Cape corroborates the need for more information as educators wanted to know what they were supposed to teach and felt they needed more clear-cut directions about content [Rooth and Schlebusch, 2000]. Motala [2003a, 401] indicates that training provided was insufficient, and that there was a "massive need for teachers to develop the confidence and skills to apply new methods in their classrooms as opposed to in one-off training sessions". Motala [2003a] questions the notion that innovative reform merely requires that educators be given workshops, and suggests that curriculum innovation in the long term would need effective and creative pre-service education and training.

2.4.3 The way forward for curriculum change

Notwithstanding the trepidation about curriculum change, and general outcry by various individuals and groups, C2005, as a first new initiative, had many meritorious aspects. Harber [2001] points out that, despite the concerns raised, most educators still felt enthusiastic about the vision of C2005. Rooth and Schlebusch [2000] found that the majority of the respondents in a preliminary study in the Western Cape overwhelmingly affirmed the new curriculum.

Educators and learners indicated that they could not go back to the old system after having experienced OBE and C2005, even though they highlighted problem areas, such as assessment, additional training and terminology complexities that needed urgent attention [Rooth and Schlebusch, 2000]. Taylor [1999] called for a systematic research programme to investigate improving the implementation of C2005, with particular reference to teacher training, the systemic and institutional context of teaching and learning at school level, the provision, deployment and use of classroom resources, and changes to C2005. Taylor's [1999] recommendations further include the investigation of issues such as dissemination, epistemology, learning outcomes, pedagogy, resources and institutional conditions.

That all had not gone perfectly in the planning and implementation of C2005 [Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999] was implicitly recognised by the then Minister of Education

[Harber, 2001]. Given the criticisms, and difficulty in implementation, the Minister of Education initiated a full review of C2005 [Department of Education, 2000a].

2.5 THE REVIEW REPORT

A review committee was established to investigate C2005. Its recommendations led to the development of a new, streamlined and strengthened version of C2005, the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a].

The core findings of the *Review Report* were that there was overwhelming support for the principles of OBE and C2005, but implementation was hampered by:

- a curriculum structure and design that was distorted, lacked alignment with assessment policy, and lacked clarity
- a policy that was complex, used confusing language, and overused jargon
- a crowded curriculum
- deficient orientation, training and development of educators and shortages of personnel and resources
- policy overload and inadequate transfer of learning into classrooms
- insufficient recognition of curriculum as the main business of education departments
- unmanageable time-frames for implementation [Department of Education, 2000a].

In order to address these issues, the review committee proposed the introduction of a revised curriculum structure. This needed to be supported by changes in teacher orientation and training, learning support materials and the organisation, resourcing and staffing of curriculum structures and functions in national and provincial education departments.

Although the core recommendations of the *Review Report* [Department of Education, 2000a] were sound and accepted by the Department of Education, its recommendations for Life Orientation were not based on sufficient knowledge of the Life Orientation learning area, nor on any discernible consultation with Life Orientation experts or thorough research, and fortunately were not approved. The review committee had recommended that the design features of technology, entrepreneurship and the use and interpretation of financial documents needed in everyday life should be included in the

Life Orientation learning area [Department of Education 2000a]. It was thus recommended that Economic Management Sciences and aspects of Technology should be absorbed into Life Orientation. If these learning areas were incorporated into the frugal 8% of time recommended for Life Orientation, the core of this learning area would have disintegrated. The review committee's conception of Life Orientation as a convenient receptacle for aspects of the curriculum that could not readily be placed in the so-called more academic learning areas is apparent, with the recommendation that basic banking and accounting procedures, design and entrepreneurship be included in Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2000a].

The *Review Report* [Department of Education, 2000a] reveals the review committee's superficial notion of Life Orientation as an eclectic collection of non-academic facets. It appears that the review committee was not conversant with life skills knowledge and did not view Life Orientation from a psycho-social stance, but more from a utilitarian viewpoint. The review committee made no mention of life skills apart from brief references to the Foundation Phase, and did not seem aware of the role life skills could play in Life Orientation in particular, and, more generally, in achieving the critical and developmental outcomes.

The *Review Report* acknowledges the lack of educator training accompanying C2005, and indicates that no educators are trained in Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2000a]. This may hold further implications for Life Orientation's implementation.

Reactions to the *Review Report* were mixed. Chisholm [2003a, 5] mentions that the teacher unions and many departmental bureaucrats ("footsoldiers of C2005, the people who had themselves created, identified with and implemented it") were hostile to the changes, seeing them as an overturning of the legacy of the first post-apartheid Minister of Education, as well as a return to the past.

The recommendations of the *Review Report* were approved by a Cabinet decision that accepted many of its proposals. Aspects that were rejected included a proposed reduction of the vocational elements in the curriculum, the integration of Science and

Technology into one learning area, and Economic and Management Sciences and Life Orientation into another learning area.

Most of the recommendations of the *Review Report* were taken seriously by the Department of Education, even though they were seen as symbolic [Chisholm, 2003b]. This led to the development of a streamlined and strengthened curriculum: the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS).

2.6 THE REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

According to Asmal and James [2002], C2005's content and substance were specified more precisely in order make reform more practical. The Minister of Education at the time [Asmal, 2001] gave the developers of the RNCS the brief of delimiting new terminology, streamlining, strengthening and shortening C2005, reducing assessment standards and outcomes, and ensuring progression both between and within outcomes. The broad vision of C2005, however, was retained [Department of Education, 2001a].

The new curriculum policies were ratified in 2002 [Republic of South Africa, 2002a] and are referred to as the RNCS. Each of the eight learning areas produced a document detailing its learning outcomes and assessment standards. The RNCS cuts design features from eight to three, namely critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards. Curriculum and assessment are aligned and attention is paid to progression within and across grades. More realistic time frames are given for implementation and provision is made for broader training of educators. Kraak and Young [2001, 5] cite the move away from the "simplistic ideas implicit in C2005 as a good example of a constructive dialogue between researchers and policy makers".

Similar to C2005, the RNCS is based on the South African Constitution. The *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* [Department of Education, 2001b] identifies ten fundamental values in the Constitution, which the RNCS developers were to continuously use as a reference point:

- Democracy
- Social justice and equity
- Equality
- Non-racism and non-sexism

- Ubuntu
- An open society
- Accountability
- Respect
- The rule of law
- Reconciliation.

The RNCS builds on the values expressed in C2005 with social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity being prominent. A high level of skills and knowledge for all, clarity and accessibility, and progression and integration are benchmarks of the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a].

A learning area is a field of knowledge, skills and values and has unique features as well as connections to other fields of knowledge [Department of Education, 2002a]. The following learning areas are in the RNCS:

- Life Orientation
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Technology
- Arts and Culture

According to Chisholm [2003a], the politics of the curriculum development process centred on the influence and role of particular players. Even though there was heterogeneity of actors and interests, there was not a direct relationship between voice and outcome. For Chisholm [2003a] the loudest voices were those of fundamentalist Christians, but they were definitely not the most significant influences on the curriculum development process; rather, the dominant players were the ANC, teacher unions and university-based intellectuals. Chisholm [2003a, 12] points out that the ANC introduced "a modernising, liberal humanist, pragmatic approach to reform"; the teacher unions reasserted the importance of OBE as a foundational philosophy and established the need for a workable and implementable curriculum, which had to be a secular, liberal humanist, rights-based curriculum that recognises the diversity of South Africans; and the radical intellectuals provided the theoretical and empirical climate for reform of the curriculum.

Public reactions to the Life Orientation learning area in the RNCS centred mostly on concerns about religion and sexuality education. Misconceptions about both these aspects fuelled extensive public debate in the media and were used by those in opposition to curriculum change to try to prevent these changes [Life Orientation Working Group, 2001]. Chisholm [2003b, 285] describes the RNCS:

> ...for better or worse, (the RNCS) represents democratic South Africa's first national curriculum for schools. It is a product of history and the myriad struggles at multiple levels that have shaped South African education and curriculum. Its implementation will likewise not be a smooth translation into practice; the search for such a translation is a futile exercise. But it is likely that schoolbooks will be printed and teacher education revamped in terms of images of its intentions. Interpretations of the curriculum, its representation, will also continue to be struggled over.

The policy framework for education in South Africa was strongly in place and it was doubtful whether schools and educators would accept any major new policy initiatives for the next while [Harber 2001, 86]. Educators in the next few years needed to focus on implementation, rather than on endless discourses of the merits or demerits of OBE, C2005 and its revisions. The curricula were in position, but how were they implemented? The policy-practice interface will be discussed in the next section.

2.7 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

> *How is change complex? Take any educational policy or problem and start listing all the forces that could figure in the solution and that would need to be influenced to make for productive change. Then take the idea that unplanned factors are inevitable...* [Fullan, 1993, 19].

Life Orientation practice has to be viewed within a heuristic framework to enhance comprehension of generic issues pertinent to curriculum change and transition. The plethora of studies on the interface between curriculum policy and practice and curriculum change and innovation are scrutinised with particular emphasis on aspects that may have implications for Life Orientation implementation.

2.7.1 Curriculum change

The complexity of curriculum change and implementation is well documented [Blenkin, Edwards and Kelly, 1992; Carter and O'Neil, 1995; Chisholm *et al*, 2003; Fleisch, 2002; Fullan, 1993 and 2001; Gross, Giacquinta and Bernstein, 1971; Harber, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves and Evans, 1997; Harris, Lawn and Prescott, 1978; Holt 1979; Jansen and Christie, 1999; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999].

Fullan [2001, 7] emphasises the complexity of curriculum reform by noting the many levels of change: "Reform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities and so on." Change is a process in a continuum on the policy-practice interface. For Lowham [1995] change cannot be evidenced by the date when a policy was voted in, but rather has to be conceived of as a process in which people actually put policy into practice. Policy and practice are not two distinct phenomena, but rather extensions of each other.

Schofield [1995] points out that change literature has been applied to educational contexts either by management and organisation development specialists, who apply change theory developed by management and business to school environments, or by educators applying change theory to school contexts. Schofield [1995] summarises change theory and the school change literature as follows:

- Change is an uncertain, contradictory and never-ending process that cannot be planned or imposed
- Change can be encouraged, directed or retarded by the combination of different conditions
- To facilitate school cultural change, it is necessary to develop trust and openness among educators, learners, management and departmental representatives
- Effective in-service training is a part of whole school change programmes, but whole school change programmes should include school infrastructural, youth, and governance structures' development
- School change is enhanced when educators are allowed to develop their own professional development programmes.

The phenomenology of change, in it complexity and multitudinous strata, has to take into account the importance of educational change as a socio-political process. In South Africa, Life Orientation is specifically associated with the socio-political process, as part of generic OBE and C2005 implementation, and as being the learning area

primarily responsible for citizenship, human rights, HIV and AIDS education, environmental and social justice and diversity. Hence, Life Orientation implementation needs to be seen in the light of Fullan's [2001, 8] stance:

> …we need to comprehend the dynamics of educational change as a socio-political process involving all kinds of individual, classroom, school, local, regional, and national factors at work in interactive ways. The problem of meaning is one of how those involved in change can come to understand what it is that should change, and how it can be best accomplished, while realising that the what and how constantly interact and reshape each other.

In a nutshell, the key issues and challenges relating to educational change processes include educators' acceptance of change concomitant to their willingness to let go of the old system that is being replaced, their comprehension of what has to be changed and the skills needed to proceed with the required changes.

2.7.2 The role of educators in change implementation

An increasing body of research indicates the importance and key roles of educators in educational change [Hargreaves, 1994]. It is also accepted that the success of curriculum innovation is contingent on the professional development of educators [Blenkin *et al.*, 1992]. Grundy [1987] also highlights this point and refers to the sense in which curriculum development takes place at the level of classroom practice, notwithstanding what may have been designed elsewhere. Educators as agents of change are thus central:

> …the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement… Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get [Hargreaves, 1994, ix].

Referring to curriculum transformation in South Africa, Motala [2003a] points out that educators have been left behind in curriculum innovation, regardless of the fact that effective implementation depends on them. There appears to be tension between the knowledge that educators are vital in the change process, and making this knowledge evident. Asmal and James [2002] see the main variable in quality education as the ability and commitment of educators, yet invariably educators were not part of the

change process from its inception: "Teachers, and probably most teacher educators, simply found themselves in a new curriculum world" [Harley and Wedekind, 2004, 199].

Added to the key role of educators in change implementation are the experiences of learners, which also form an integral part of this study. Cornbleth [1990, 24] explains that the "curriculum is not a tangible product but the actual, day-to-day interactions of students, educators, knowledge and milieu." Although educators are cardinal to change implementation, learners' experiences and attributions of significance and modes of reacting to the curriculum, cannot be ignored. Change as a multifaceted process is an inherent part of curriculum transformation. Schofield [1995, 165] found that different schools progress at different rates through school change processes, with each school and each area reacting differently to the "threats of change", and change at school transpiring as a "chaotic and circuitous process". How this "chaos" has affected educators' emotional states, needs investigation.

From the preceding writings, the assumption can be made that Life Orientation as a curriculum innovation depends to a large extent on educators for its successful implementation. As educators are key role players, the impact of change on their affective or emotional lives needs consideration.

2.7.3 The affective dimensions of change

Change is a process that may be uncomfortable. Educators as mediators of innovation have feelings, values and attitudes that may affect change implementation. The way educators experience and attribute significance to change is an important and integral aspect of overall curriculum transformation. For Fullan [2001] the root of change is how individuals come to grips with it. The emotional constituents of change as integral to comprehending the affective dimensions of change therefore need to be identified.

Change as commensurate with feelings of alienation, isolation, anxiety and uncertainty appears common. Schon [as quoted in Fullan, 2001, 31] explains that change involves "passing through the zones of uncertainty…the situation of being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than you can handle". The international literature

further suggests that the process of change can be experienced as difficult, with feelings of being overwhelmed, unable to cope, a sense of loss, anxiety, struggle, uncertainty and ambivalence on a personal level [Fullan 2001; Marris 1975]. Furthermore, Gross, Giacquinta and Bernstein [1971] found that when confronted with abstract goals, coupled with the onus of putting these goals into practice, the result was confusion, frustration, anxiety and abandonment of the effort. Hargreaves and Evans [1997] indicate that for many educators, reforms have created a sense of loss and bereavement, as purposes that they value highly are set aside by the demands of curriculum change.

How do educators respond to change? Studies indicate that educator burn-out and stress are evident. Dworkin [1997] found that educator burn-out could be traced to school reform implementation, the reason being that changes in the conditions of teaching, caused by school reform, intensify job stress. For Dworkin [1997, 461], "…stressful situations, including those created by the implementation of school reform, exacerbate burnout."

Dworkin [1997] cites studies that view burn-out as a loss of idealism and enthusiasm for work, with the characteristics of exhaustion, depersonalisation, depression, low morale and withdrawal. Burn-out is seen as a stress response. Accelerated change and increased innovation may lead to educators experiencing stress, anxiety and burn-out as casualties of the burdens of overload [Hargreaves, 1994].

However, of great significance is that in South Africa, curriculum reform since 1994 has evoked fewer negative emotions than the international literature cited above would suggest [Department of Education, 2000a; Fleisch, 2002; Harley and Wedekind, 2004]. The reasons for this are manifold, the most important being the positive shift from apartheid-style education to a new, democratic and learner-centred style. Of note is that black educators have been more enthusiastic about the change than white educators [Fleisch, 2002; Harley and Wedekind, 2004]. The *Review Report* [Department of Education, 2000a, 70] notes that "Teachers have a positive attitude to the intent and purposes of Curriculum 2005 and are taking very seriously the challenges of implementation."

Fleisch [2002] remarks that educators in Gauteng were forewarned about psychological barriers to change, such as anxiety, fear of losing power and anger over expertise being made irrelevant, and were thus prepared for change. Grade 1 educators, parents and school managers expressed positive feelings about C2005 [Fleisch, 2002]. Chisholm's [2003a] observation that the ANC introduced a modernising, liberal humanist, pragmatic approach to reform, is important as it elucidates to some extent why educators' attitudes in South Africa were generally positive towards curriculum change.

2.7.4 Further challenges of curriculum transformation

Curriculum reform dilemmas are not unusual. Equity, redress, financial and resource constraints mean that education is a slow and difficult process in South Africa [Harber 2001]. Cross *et al.* [2002, 172] summarise curriculum reform predicaments as "structural and policy tensions":

> These tensions include: the vision *vis-à-vis* the country's realities; symbolism *vis-à-vis* mass expectations; the curriculum framework *vis-à-vis* applicability, conditions of implementation and actual practice in schools; expected outcomes *vis-à-vis* the capacity of teachers to translate them into reality; and budget concerns *vis-à-vis* commitment to values such as equity, redress and massification…

Some of the issues pertinent to the tensions of curriculum reforms are briefly mentioned below.

Unclear aims and instructions

There is consensus that diffuse goals and unclear directives inhibit curriculum implementation. Fullan [2001, 37] indicates that studies have found that "abstract goals, combined with a mandate" for educators to put them into practice, result in confusion, frustration, anxiety, and abandonment of the attempt. Educators' lack of clarity about the innovation, their lack of skills and knowledge, unavailability of instructional materials, incompatibility of organisational arrangements and lack of motivation further restrict curriculum implementation [Gross *et al*, 1971].

Innovation overload

Hargreaves [1994, 118] speaks of educators' work as becoming increasingly intensified, "with educators expected to respond to greater pressures and comply with multiple innovations under conditions that are at best stable and at worst deteriorating." Fullan [2001] suggests that innovation overload detracts from successful change implementation. Curriculum reform is not a one-dimensional, elementary phenomenon; but a complex process, requiring educators to work out new ways of undertaking their roles as educators and to manage this change and simultaneously teach their regular classes [Deer, 1996]. For Hargreaves [1994, 9]

> The postmodern world is fast, compressed, complex and
> uncertain. Already, it is presenting immense problems and
> challenges for our modernistic school systems and the teachers
> who work within them. The compression of time and space is
> creating accelerated change, innovation overload and
> intensification in teachers' work.

Hoyle and Bell [1972] discuss innovation fatigue and the frustration experienced by educators - about shortage of resources, time constraints and the difficulty of establishing the collaborative working relationships with colleagues, often required by innovations - as barriers to successful innovation. For Hoyle and Bell [1972], educators are not necessarily antipathetic to curriculum innovation but experience frustration at the number and diversity of innovations.

Poor infrastructure

Fullan [2001] posits that the foremost reason for change failure to occur, and to not be sustained when it does, is that the infrastructure is weak, unhelpful, or working at cross purposes. Fullan [2001] further argues that change will always fail until ways of developing infrastructures and processes that engage educators in developing new understandings are found.

Other barriers to curriculum change in South Africa

Superficial change may indicate a false sense of change implementation [Fullan, 2001], with the way in which change is introduced being problematic. It is often coupled with a lack of opportunity for educators to engage in deeper questioning and sustained learning, which may result in meaningful reform eluding the typical educator, who may implement superficial, episodic reform that makes matters worse. This phenomenon

was noted in South Africa, as the continuities with the old curriculum were marked [Harley and Wedekind, 2004]. South African researchers' observations are indicative of contradictions between educators' verbal support of the learner-centred pedagogy of C2005 and their actual practices [Harber, 2001, Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999; Vally, 2000]. The practices generally observed were:

- Lessons were dominated by educators' talk and low-level questions
- Lessons were mostly characterised by a lack of structure and the absence of activities that promote higher-order skills such as investigation, understanding relationships and curiosity
- Real world examples were used but at a very superficial level
- Minimal group work or other interaction happened between learners
- Learners did little reading or writing and when it occurred, it was often of a very rudimentary nature.

Kraak and Young [2001] note the importance of an ongoing dialogue between vision and theory, and policy and practice. The difference between planned reform and the actual nature of educational change on the ground is emphasised by Harber [2001] and Harley and Wedekind [2004]. Hoyle and Bell [1972] remind us that it is necessary to know whether educational change represents a fundamental shift in practice or whether, in spite of appearance of practices having changed, educators have done so only in a superficial manner, with things remaining very much as they were.

Specific local issues need to be examined in addition to widespread challenges and barriers to curriculum change. Harber [2001, 86] identifies these barriers to implementing reform policies as helping to account for the wide gap between policy and practice in South African education:

- the deep-rooted and persistent nature of old values and behaviours based on inequality such as racism and sexism
- the violence that permeates South African society and its schools
- the persistence of violent forms of punishment
- the patchy and inconsistent nature of professionalism among South African educators
- low morale among educators
- teacher identities and priorities at odds with the direction of educational reform
- the over complex, centralised and rushed nature of some of the reforms themselves
- the variation in competence and efficiency between provinces in terms of their capability of delivering genuine change

- the growing threat to educational stability posed by the AIDS crisis
- the complex linguistic heritage
- the extreme resource disparities between schools
- insufficient in-service teacher education and doubts about the nature and quality of initial teacher education.

It is important to note that rationalisation (the reduction of the number of educators at schools) happened concurrently with the introduction of C2005 in the Western Cape. This was unfortunate, as educators who perceived rationalisation negatively, could have regarded all educational reforms with suspicion. Gasant [1998, 49] refers to the "undercurrent of uncertainty, suspicion, disapproval, resistance and a measure of nescience and alienation" as part of the negative reaction to rationalisation.

Rationalisation could have added to the stress experienced by educators, as it brought with it insecurities, fears of job loss and change. The so-called 'non-academic' subjects at schools were most vulnerable to losing educators to rationalisation, with physical education, guidance, religious instruction, art and music educators the first in line to lose their posts.

2.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Keeping in mind that transition in education is a slow process, the achievements in education so far have been relatively promising. However, as Chisholm [2003b] cautions, there is still a lot to do, as resources are still unequally spread, the quality of education is compromised by the intractable legacies of the past, and learning achievements are poor.

Transition and change in South African education are both exciting and daunting. The lack of financial power, impact of the global economy, lack of infrastructure and state of the schools pose many challenges to the long overdue, but desperately needed break with the apartheid regime's education system. The "attempt to reform education systems in a democratic direction in order to educate young people with the values and skills they will need as democratic citizens" [Harber 2001, 85], has the potential to lead South Africa into a future marked by peace, educational excellence and prosperity. It is

through optimal implementation of the changes that strength can be added to the ideal that for Africa, its time had come [Mbeki, 1998].

In this chapter a theoretical framework for the investigation of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools was given. The most significant changes in the South African education system since 1994 were reviewed. The impact of curriculum change on educators, as well the tension between policy and practice, was discussed. As Life Orientation cannot be seen in isolation from general curriculum transformation in South Africa, this overview serves as the milieu in which the inception and implementation of the Life Orientation learning area will be dealt with in ensuing chapters. The next chapter will focus on an overview of the Life Orientation learning area.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW 2:

THE LIFE ORIENTATION LEARNING AREA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

> *The Learning Area's vision of individual growth is part of an effort to create a democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life* [Department of Education, 2002b, 4].

The purpose of this chapter is to review the local and international literature on the constituents of Life Orientation. Given that each component of Life Orientation is integral to this learning area, separate reference is made to each curriculum field for a comprehensive representation and perspective of Life Orientation. However, this is done within the scope of a conceptual framework that views the learning fields as interrelated and interdependent. Each component has a different focus within the greater whole of Life Orientation. The learning fields combine to form more than their separate parts, namely the gestalt that manifests as the Life Orientation learning area.

The rationale for focusing on the constituents of Life Orientation rather than on Life Orientation per se, is that Life Orientation is a new learning area in South Africa. This means that research and academic discourse on Life Orientation is minimal. Similarly, even though Life Orientation is represented in equivalent subjects internationally, they are not identical to Life Orientation and cannot be summarily equated to Life Orientation. The components of Life Orientation, however, are relatively well researched, both locally and internationally. Hence, an investigation of the constituents of Life Orientation may add to the knowledge of this singular learning area. A meta-analysis of each of the following constituents of Life Orientation is given in this chapter:

- Guidance and counselling
- Life skills and health education
- Physical education
- Environmental education
- Human rights and citizenship education
- Religion education

The overview of the constituents of Life Orientation is structured around the definition, scope and evolution of each constituent, as well as research findings pertinent to the study where applicable. Furthermore, each constituent's affiliation with the Life Orientation learning area is clarified. Differing emphases for each constituent are given under these broad categories as a function of relevance to Life Orientation and the study.

As an introductory orientation, a synopsis of the Life Orientation learning area is given. This serves as a conceptual framework within which the constituents are reviewed.

3.2 THE LIFE ORIENTATION LEARNING AREA

> *The Life Orientation learning area aims to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential* [Department of Education, 2002b, 4].

The introduction of Life Orientation contributes to signifying a new era in South African education. OBE, C2005 and the RNCS are ultimately defined and measured through the learning areas that embody the changes brought about by a democratic South Africa. Life Orientation is one of the visionary learning areas exemplifying the break with the past and epitomising the vision of education in South Africa for the future.

The needs of learners as discussed in chapter 1, the unique situation of South Africa as a new democracy and the social problems resulting from years of suppression and exploitation under the previous government (such as poverty, lack of infrastructure and basic needs, as well as urgent health problems), coupled with the necessity of competing in the global market and equipping learners with the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for successful living and learning, contributed to the creation of this learning area. "The features of contemporary South Africa, and the nature of the personal challenges learners encounter in this society, guide the choice of the content" of Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b, 5].

3.2.1 Definition and scope of Life Orientation

Life Orientation is one of eight learning areas in C2005 and the RNCS. Life Orientation prepares learners for life and its opportunities and equips learners for significant and successful living in a rapidly transforming society [Department of Education, 2002b]. The holistic social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners is the concern of Life Orientation, with a focus on self-in-society.

The scope of Life Orientation hence includes health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement and orientation to the world of work, which are specific focus areas of Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b]. Life Orientation equips learners to make informed decisions about personal, community and environmental health promotion, while it encourages learners to form beneficial social relationships. Learners are enabled to know and exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities. Life Orientation further enables learners to develop their personal potential to respond to challenges as well as to contribute to the community. Physical development is promoted as a core aspect of learners' healthy growth. Finally, learners develop the ability to make informed decisions about further study and career pathing, while they develop a constructive orientation to study and work [Department of Education, 2002b].

As it is within the ambit of Life Orientation to develop learners as members of the community, there is an emphasis on self-in-society. Life Orientation addresses the need for learners to be integral to "the shaping of a new society" [Department of Education, 2002b, 5].This they can achieve as they find the means to oppose racism and accept diversity, while they access their civil, political, health, environmental, social and economic rights.

The South African Constitution [Republic of South Africa, 1996a] provides the principles on which the Life Orientation curriculum is grounded. Cross-cutting or transversal aspects that are included in all learning areas are health promotion, social and environmental justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity and diversity, including cultural, ethnic and religious aspects of diversity and gender equity [Department of Education, 2002a and 2002b]. Environmental issues that affect the health and well-being of communities, as well as environmental degradation and socio-

economic development, are addressed in Life Orientation. Human rights are embedded in all Life Orientation learning outcomes but are specifically focused on in social development, as are religious diversity and belief systems. The values inherent in the transversal issues [Department of Education, 2001b] are also the values imbued in Life Orientation. Accordingly, the concept of values plays a cardinal role in Life Orientation.

3.2.2 Values and Life Orientation

> *Outwardly, we are a people of many colours, races, cultures, languages and ancient origins. Yet we are tied to one another by a million visible and invisible threads. We share a common destiny from which none of us can escape because together we are human, we are South African, we are African* [Mbeki, as quoted in Asmal and James, 2002, 3].

Life Orientation is concerned with developing this common humanity, this ontology of being African, in learners. Words such as 'morality', 'values', 'beliefs' and 'attitudes' appear frequently in the vocabulary of Life Orientation as part of its psychosocial and epistemological domain. Values are continuously referred to in health promotion, life skills education, physical education, citizenship education, environmental education, religion education and generally in Life Orientation, be it from a health perspective, civic stance or a life skills approach [Department of Education, 2002b; Department of Education, 2002e]. Life Orientation is hence a value-laden learning area. The Life Orientation curriculum expressly revolves around learners achieving outcomes, which are identified and assessed through the acquisition and demonstration of knowledge, skills, *attitudes* and *values* [Department of Education, 2002b]. All beings have values; Asmal [2002, 4] indicates that "the good of our society rests on out ability to integrate all of these values into our definition of 'South Africanness'".

It is primarily, but not exclusively, through human rights, citizenship and religion education (see sections 3.7 and 3.8) within Life Orientation, that this *integration of values* can be enhanced and find a place for discussion, expression and reflection.

> Human rights have the potential to be a shared value system that could enable peoples to bridge socio-cultural gaps and address the disintegration of their cultures resulting from the forces of globalization [Tibbitts, 2003, 2].

Jurin and Fortner [2002] see peoples' beliefs as continuously challenged by new information that needs to be processed for decision-making and problem-solving. For Rhodes and Roux [2004, 25], a value is "more than a belief; it constitutes a worthiness of a norm or a principle" entrenched in individuals, groups, religions or belief systems. Values are integrated in all eight learning areas, thus implying that educators would have to "facilitate different value and belief systems into all learning areas across the curriculum, but especially …in Life Orientation" [Rhodes and Roux, 2004, 26].

The promotion of values is seen to be essential for both personal development, as well as to guarantee the creation of a national South African identity based on values different from those that marked apartheid education [Department of Education, 2002a]. In order to "*live* our Constitution", "we have to distil out of them a set of values that are… comprehensible and meaningful" [Asmal, 2002, 4]. This is one of the core duties of the Life Orientation teacher: to make the values in the Constitution *liveable* for learners so that they are imbued with Constitutional values. Ngwena [2003, 201] indicates that "if successfully implemented, Life Orientation should enhance the practice of positive values, attitudes, behaviour and skills both by the learner and in the community".

Veugelers [2000, 40] notes that the values educators "find important for their students are expressed in the content of their instruction" and the way they teach. The values educators adhere to, as well as the values they teach, both covertly and overtly, affect Life Orientation dissemination as a whole. In particular, Life Orientation educators see themselves as having to teach values and morals, due to the content of the course. Green [2004, 109] identifies international research that suggests that educators view the school as a "moral environment" and that an aspect of their function as educators is to give "moral education".

Porteus [2002] points out the dangers of the prescriptive approach to values as being a parochial sense of nationalism, undermining learner-centeredness and critical thinking skills, lapsing into authoritarian teaching styles and hindering the development of a democratic society of informed, participative and critical citizens. Consciousness of a prescriptive stance to values is particularly appropriate to Life Orientation, as the legacy

of guidance was one of value imposition that had educators preaching to and imposing values on learners (see section 3.3).

In KwaZulu-Natal, in their practice educators assume roles that are predominantly in accord with their personal values systems, local cultures and contexts [Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay, 2000]. Harley *et al.*'s [2000] research delivers pertinent results that indicate that educators' own values systems and the contexts in which they work, affect their roles as set out in the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training and Development [Department of Education, 1997c]. "Educators' personal values systems are often at odds with policy" [Harley *et al.*, 2000, 294]. In addition, Harley *et al.* [2000] make the important observation that educators feel trapped between policy values and the values of the community, regardless of their personal epistemologies.

Educators and their values is only one facet of values education. Learners and the values they hold and develop bring a further dimension to the value discourse. Levinson [2004] points to the potential discrepancy between educators' and learners' values.

For Kuther and Higgins-D'Alessandro [2000] it is of vital importance to explore links between moral reasoning and engagement in risk behaviour, to determine whether higher levels of reasoning and hence moral education interventions, can be associated with protection against risk behaviour. The needs of learners (see chapter 1) indicate the importance of a strong values-based education to equip learners for meaningful and safe living in the 21st Century.

> As we straddle one century characterised by colonialism and
> another century characterised by a new form of 'globalisation',
> there is a unique set of challenges related to value formation in
> young people [Porteus, 2002, 222].

The interplay among values based on the South African Constitution, personal values and the values evident in Life Orientation, holds both promise and challenge for this learning area.

> …the entire educational or formational system of indigenous
> Africa is inspired by this single paradigm: human and cosmic
> harmony hinges upon human moral living because all facets of
> the universe are interconnected and interdependent [Mosha,
> 2000, 10].

From the definition and scope of Life Orientation it is apparent that this is a broad, value-rich learning area tasked with the responsibility of promoting the physical, personal, emotional, social, environmental and economic well-being of learners. The contexts and influences that shape this learning area are core to an understanding of how Life Orientation manifests as a learning area in the curriculum.

3.2.3 The antecedent influences significant to Life Orientation

As will be seen in sections 3.3 to 3.8, Life Orientation evolved from a range of learning fields. Events and deliberations that contributed to the evolution of this learning area were The Committee of Heads of Education Departments [1991] proposed curriculum for guidance, the findings and recommendations of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) [1992], the onset of democracy in 1994, as discussed in the previous chapter and the *Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance* [Department of Education, 1995b]. The role of the World Health Organization in shaping health approaches in education has been of cardinal importance. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion [World Health Organization, 1986], the recommendations of the World Health Organization Expert Committee [World Health Organization, 1995] and the Jakarta Declaration [World Health Organization, 1997] are core to the direction taken by health initiatives in education in South Africa. The link between health and education is strong; the World Health Organization [1998a] indicates that school health programmes, while reducing health problems, can at the same time increase the efficiency of the education system and promote public health, education, social and economic development. Locally, in South Africa the Department of Health's [2000] guidelines for the development of health promoting schools and the life skills and HIV and AIDS education programmes developed by the Department of Health and Department of Education [Magome *et al.*, 1998] were crucial to the progression of Life Orientation.

The cardinal input of the Human Rights Commission [Keet, Masuku, Meyers, Farisani, Carrim and Govender, 2001] was core to the development of Life Orientation. Moreover, substantial and influential contributions made by the National Policy on Religion Education [Department of Education, 2003a] and the National Environmental Education Project [Department of Education, 2001e] shaped Life Orientation. The recommendations of Van Deventer [1999] and the Department of Education [2000e] on

physical education were also of import. Of note, too, were generic issues of inclusivity [Department of Education 2001c]. Life Orientation was thus conceptualised against the above-mentioned backdrop within the context of OBE, which contributed fundamentally to the formulation of the learning area. Hence the initial C2005 Life Orientation curriculum [Department of Education, 1997b], ultimately followed by the Life Orientation curriculum as developed in the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002b], was created.

Constitutionally inspired critical and developmental outcomes underlie all learning area outcomes and ensuing assessment standards [Department of Education, 2002b]. Life Orientation is ideally placed to ensure that learners can achieve these outcomes. Life Orientation, in effect, aids all learning areas in achieving their outcomes: it enables learners to promote their and others' health, develop their potential, equip themselves with life skills, and be informed decision makers who are goal directed and willingly interact in the community for the benefit of all. Life Orientation's particular foci help achieve these outcomes. Due to the central role of health in Life Orientation, the influence of health promotion on this learning area is briefly traced.

Health promotion

> *Health is directly linked to educational achievement,*
> *quality of life and economic productivity* [World Health
> Organization, 1998b, 1].

The World Health Organization [2003] defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, with health seen as not simply the absence of disease. In South Africa the Department of Health [2000, 6] describes the aim of healing in Africa to centre on "magic or spiritual aspects, conditions which have been empirically determined and psychological phenomena." Illness is, therefore, seen as an imbalance of any of the above. It is important to note that "all aspects of life impact on one's health and well-being, including *physical, mental, social, environmental, economic and spiritual aspects*" [Department of Health, 2000, 6–7].

> If we apply a positive, salutogenic perspective to mental,
> emotional and social health, we shift the focus from
> mental illness and emotional and social problems alone to
> include positive well-being [Weare, 2000, 17].

This means that within the context of the school, education for mental, emotional and social health becomes not just about preventing depression and unhappiness, bullying, violence and conflict, but it also is about encouraging learners to achieve their goals, have empathy and feel joyful, energetic and full of life [Weare, 2000]. The emphasis is more on health than on illness; and health means more than merely physical health, and well-being is at the vanguard of health approaches.

The Ottawa Charter [World Health Organization, 1986] defines health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over, and improve their health. Health creation and the prevention of health problems are core to the Ottawa Charter and reflect a move from a curative model of health service delivery to a more holistic, preventative and promotive approach. The Ottawa Charter views health as a positive concept, with the emphasis on social and personal resources and physical capabilities. It focuses on the creation of

- Healthy public policy
- Supportive environments
- Community action
- Personal skills
- A reorientation of health services [World Health Organization, 1986].

Of note is the role of the Ottawa Charter on directing the World Health Organization Global School Health Initiative on the creation of health and health prevention by calling for people to "care for themselves and others, make decisions and have control over their life circumstances and create conditions that are conducive to health" [World Health Organization, 1998b, 1].

The Jakarta Declaration [World Health Organization, 1997] emphasises the creation of sustainable health promotion programmes and indicates that comprehensive approaches to health development that incorporate integrated, instead of linear means, are the most successful. The World Health Organization defines a health promoting school "as a school constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working" [World Health Organization, 1998b, 2]. Included in the characteristics of a health promoting school are aspects pertinent to Life Orientation, such as: *The provision of a healthy environment, school health education and school and community outreach projects* (Life Orientation learning outcome 2 on social development), *nutrition and food safety programmes* (learning outcome 1 on health promotion), *opportunities for*

physical education and recreation (learning outcome 4 on physical development and movement), *programmes for counselling, social support and mental health promotion* (learning outcome 3 on personal development), *together with the implementation of policies and practices that are respectful of learners' self-esteem, provide manifold opportunities for success and acknowledge good efforts, intentions and personal achievements* (learning outcome 3 on personal development) [World Health Organization, 1998a; Department of Education, 2002b].

Key values that underlie the health promoting school concept include positive health, empowerment, democracy, equity and partnerships with communities [World Health Organization, 1997]. This corresponds closely to the principles of the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a] and the ethos of the Life Orientation learning area [Department of Education, 2002b].

A health promoting school provides school health education, which enhances learners' understanding of the factors that influence their health, enables them to make healthy choices and adopt healthy behaviours as a lifelong process. In addition, health education includes critical health and life skills, a focus on promoting health and well-being and the prevention of health problems [World Health Organization, 1999]. Schools are ideally suited for the implementation of comprehensive strategies to promote health [Department of Health, 2000; Felner, Favazza, Shim, Brand, Gu and Noonan, 2001].

> Health and quality of life rely on many community systems and factors, not simply on a well-functioning health and medical care system. Making changes within existing systems, such as the school system, can effectively and efficiently improve the health of a large segment of the community [US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a, 7.3].

The prioritising of health education in curricula has the potential to have a meaningful impact on health promotion programmes in schools [Hoelscher *et al.*, 2004]. Schools can provide a focal point for endeavours to reduce health risk behaviour and improve the health status of learners [US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a]. The World Health Organization [1999] indicates that schools reach learners at influential phases in their lives when lifelong behaviours are formed. Hence, it makes sense to include health education in school curricula, in conjunction with working towards all schools becoming health-promoting schools.

Whole school development refers to building effective schools, within which the health promoting school perspective is situated. This ensures that all the elements of school life are considered.

> …the whole school is more than all of its aspects or pieces – more than the sum of staff, students, parents, buildings and the broader community. It is the *way* in which these different aspects of school life interweave and interact, the way in which they are bound together, the way in which they become coherent in relation to one another [Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997, 5].

Lazarus, Davidoff and Daniels [2000] indicate that although life skills education is important, it is only one aspect of the health promoting schools' perspective. They regard the placing of life skills education within the broader framework to be beneficial in the sense that it ensures that comprehensive strategies are adopted in response to the various health and well-being challenges.

Whitehead and Russell [2004] recommend that, for effective behavioural change in health practice, health information should not be presented as a moral good, because simply presenting information founded on disease risk, harmfulness or lethality could result in adverse resistance to the message. Crossley [2002] posits that it is possible that a focus on harmfulness could serve as a motivation to participate in and reinforce harmful risk behaviour, hence achieving the opposite of what was intended. Life Orientation aims to orientate learners towards health-enhancing forces rather than health-damaging forces. The health prevention and promotional functions of Life Orientation are specifically geared towards helping learners avoid preventable diseases and other risks to their health.

Health promotion within the ambit of Life Orientation, including health risk minimisation, lends itself favourably to the incorporation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is one of the principles included in the RNCS, and as such needs to be integrated in Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2001b; Department of Education, 2002a].

Indigenous knowledge and health promotion

> *What the indigenous world offers to the modern world centers
> around the understanding of the concepts of healing, ritual, and
> community* [Some, 1999, 21].

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in South Africa refer to the body of knowledge entrenched in indigenous peoples' philosophical thinking and social practices that have developed over many years and continue to evolve [Department of Education, 2003b]. According to Hoppers [2002, 83] indigenous knowledge systems emphasise the interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena - biological, physical, psychological, social and cultural - with "indigenous cosmology" centring on the co-evolution of spiritual, natural and human worlds. The balance between physical, emotional, spiritual and social facets of human life lead to well-being. This is understood in indigenous knowledge systems, and forms a solid base from which Life Orientation can proceed.

Faced with "the impediments of entrenched medical dominance and inhibitory professional paradigms" [El Ansari, Phillips and Zwi, 2002, 151], indigenous knowledge systems encounter multi-faceted barriers. Mosha [2000] criticises colonial education in Africa for its view that morality and education are two distinct entities. The ignoring of indigenous knowledge, morality and values may have affected psychosocial education adversely. Ntshangase [1995, 7] attributes the lack of guidance implementation in schools in part to the "lack of sensitivity by school guidance providers with regard to alternative views of mental health and healing, for instance, traditional healing and African cultural values".

To facilitate the promotion of indigenous knowledge, the RNCS underscores the principle of indigenous knowledge as part of each learning area [Department of Education, 2002a]. The Life Orientation curriculum can contribute by including indigenous knowledge in all its foci, with particular emphasis on health promotion as it encompasses all other focus areas. Lazarus [2004, 67] asserts that

> We also need to examine the value base of the Life Orientation
> learning area within which our life skills and health education
> programmes are located. To what extent is this curriculum
> reflecting and perpetuating all worldviews in our communities?

Regarding health promotion, there is a vast body of indigenous health knowledge in South Africa, which could be drawn on to advance well-being and health. Since 1994, there has been a new interest in traditional healing and medicines. The Department of Health, the Medical Research Council and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research have been working together to promote research in traditional healing. The Medical Research Council formed the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Health Unit to address health research priorities that were neglected in the past, such as traditional health systems and practices and a National Reference Centre for African Traditional Medicines has been established [BuaNews, 8 April, 2004]. The National Research Fund [2003] area of focus is a strong indication of the value attached to indigenous knowledge.

Lazarus [2004, 68] indicates that in South Africa we have, through the Department of Health's policy documents, accepted that "spiritual dynamics play a role in the breakdown and promotion of health and well-being". It is the task of Life Orientation to promote this holistic view of health and well-being. Health education within Life Orientation thus links closely with learning outcome 2, which deals with social development, religion and citizenship education, world-views and belief systems. Tsey [1997] recommends that traditional African notions of illness causation and preventative health need to be understood to promote health benefits.

Rituals and rites are of great importance to many communities and need the respect and understanding that they warrant [Some, 1995, 1996 and 1999]. For Mosha [2000, 21] rituals provide unique chances and the potential for "interior transformation" and learning. In South Africa, many indigenous rituals have an important role to play in the health and well-being of learners. For example, Maluleke [2001] recommends that the Limpopo Department of Health and Welfare should promote the cooperation between *vukhomba* (puberty rites among Vatsonga) elders and departmental health services, to ensure that the cultural rite can be used to promote women's health. Further recommendations are that puberty rites should be used for teaching and for the prevention of diseases such as HIV and AIDS [Maluleke, 2001].

In physical education, there are many indigenous games that could add to the recreational health and fitness of learners [Burnett and Hollander, 2004; South African

Sports Commission, 2003]. Alexander [1998] suggests a future approach to physical education should include the decolonisation of programmes, and the promotion of movement forms from African culture.

Environmental education is another area of Life Orientation that has a vast body of indigenous knowledge to incorporate in its teachings. For Vargas [2000] sustainable development affirms the value of traditional or indigenous knowledge to complement modern knowledge. Vargas [2000] suggests that educating for a sustainable future requires inclusion of an interdisciplinary approach, teacher training, curricula-based social and environmental justice, political participation and respect for local and indigenous cultures. The notion of respect and integration of knowledge systems in environmental sustainability is essential with the realisation that indigenous knowledge has a huge role to play in achieving sustainable development [Vargas, 2000].

Indigenous knowledge systems include knowledge systems of philosophy and religion [Hoppers, 2002]. Provision has also been made to promote indigenous belief systems within the religion education component of Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b]. South Africa has important traditional religions that have been marginalised by the previous education system [Mndende, 1994]; Life Orientation can ameliorate this injustice.

From this overview of Life Orientation it is apparent that the definition and scope of this learning area is designed to respond to learners' needs and the demands they encounter in a developing, dynamic, challenging and changing 21st Century world. The values inherent in Life Orientation teaching and learning, framed in the context of the principles of the South African Constitution, add to the depth and richness of this learning area. Influences pertinent to Life Orientation include health promotion and indigenous knowledge systems, and the world views they bring.

Although Life Orientation is a new learning area, it faces challenges from the onset because educators associate it with previously non-examinable and disenfranchised subjects. Makhoba [1999] indicates that Life Orientation is not taken seriously and questions have been raised about why Life Orientation requires a specific teacher.

the status of the Life Orientation educator is also unappreciated. Other educators believe that … any educator can teach it. They believe that it does not require special training… They do not understand what is so important about the subject that it can have a special educator. As a result they expect the Life Orientation educator to perform all the odd-jobs in the school [Makhoba, 1999, 2].

It is within this awareness that the literature is reviewed to ascertain an in-depth understanding of how past perceptions of the learning fields of Life Orientation may have contributed to continuing perceptions, which may affect the efficacy of this learning area's implementation. The elucidation of the constituents of Life Orientation in sections 3.3 to 3.8 further illustrates the historicity they bring to Life Orientation. In addition, the ensuing sections give content and context to this learning area and highlight the preventive, promotive and ameliorative functions of Life Orientation.

3.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

> *…for the Life Orientation learning area to be effective and efficiently offered, the problems that School Guidance has encountered in the past will have to be considered and attended to* [Mbokazi, 1999, 1].

Guidance, vocational guidance and guidance and counselling were used interchangeably for the concept of school guidance in South Africa. A cauldron of descriptors, meanings and diverse practices exemplified guidance. The separate education departments with their distinct syllabi, differing implementation dates and the influence of ancillary and support services, together with the obfuscation of the term 'guidance', led to a range of practices, understandings and levels of delivery [Dube, 1994; Euvrard, 1994; Ganie, 1997; Makhoba, 1999; Marais, 1998; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; Ntshangase, 1995; Wilson, 1995]. In line with global trends, guidance in South Africa was marginalised as a non-examination subject and had low status at schools, even though there was a universal urgent need for this subject [Chuenyane, 1990; Gysbers and Henderson, 2000; Marais, 1998; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999].

3.3.1 Definition and scope of guidance

Guidance was variously defined depending on the approach used, political context and agenda envisioned. Helping, assisting and guiding were usually part of the understanding of what guidance encompassed: "guidance is a process of helping an individual to understand himself and his world" [Shertzer and Stone, 1971, 40]. Teacher-counsellor, guidance teacher, guidance counsellor, school counsellor and teacher-psychologist were variously used to define the person responsible for providing school guidance services [Ntshangase, 1995]. "A universally accepted definition of guidance is extremely hard to come by" [Chuenyane, 1990, 6].

'Guidance' and 'counselling' were intermittently used as interchangeable terms; however, they were periodically defined and implemented separately. Counselling was a technique used within guidance, particularly in personal and career guidance. In South Africa guidance was seen as a curriculum activity while counselling was viewed as a separate service [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Counselling was understood as a curative concept where the school counsellor would offer specific help to learners who experienced problems. The school counsellor ranged from the guidance teacher and the principal to a psychologist provided by auxiliary services [Euvrard, 1994].

Guidance, vocational guidance or career guidance were inextricably related. Career education was integral to guidance and in many instances its main focus. However, career or vocational guidance was given more prominence than other forms of guidance [Wilson, 1995]. Mbokazi [1999] stipulates that principals regarded guidance as existing to provide information about careers, and to deal mainly with career choice and career guidance. Vocational guidance was an often mentioned title of school guidance. In the Western Cape career guidance was virtually the only guidance high school learners received [Wilson, 1995]. The Western Cape Education Department [2004d, 15] posit that the central aim of guidance is to help learners to gain insight into their personal potential and opportunities for self-actualisation, and that "dealing with these aspects will enable the learner to make meaningful decisions with regard to subjects, courses of study and careers".

Currently, in the USA the term 'guidance' refers to programmes directed towards learners' personal, social, vocational and affective development; the premises underlying guidance are guidance as developmental and comprehensive programmes that feature in team approaches [Gysbers and Henderson, 2000].

3.3.2 Evolution of guidance

> …guidance should be developed out of the needs and realities of South African society. It needs to locate itself in the current crisis, and take its place…in addressing the issues of the day, contributing to the processes of personal and political transformation [Sayed, Ahmed, Ganie and Lazarus, 1989, 7].

The antecedents of guidance were vested in career issues. In the USA, vocational and career concerns were the rationale for introducing guidance [Gysbers and Henderson, 2000]. Similarly, guidance was originally introduced in South Africa due to a concern about socio-economic conditions (for Whites only). The Carnegie Commission saw the need for guidance and counselling in the early 1930s [Ezekowitz, 1981]. This vocational aspect and focus of guidance was still prominent as late as the Seventies. Although the National Education Policy Act, Act (39) of 1967 (for Whites) determined that learners should receive adequate guidance on their abilities, interests and aptitudes, this was open to interpretation - the focus was primarily on vocational guidance and moulding learners into citizens to correspond to the South African regime's value and norm system. That career guidance would be given with due regard to the needs of the country, was evident according to the National Education Policy Act, Act (39) of 1967. School guidance was conceived to orientate pupils to accord meaningful sense to a choice of education and vocation and to labour actualisation, and was aimed at orienting pupils to exert themselves to make educational and vocational choices [Human Sciences Research Council, 1978].

The National Education Policy Act, Act (39) of 1967 was not applicable to separate Black education, the omission emphasising the previous regime's divisive and marginalising methods [Ganie, 1997]. It was only from 1981 that guidance was included in all the different South African education departments [Human Sciences Research Council, 1981]. The guidance curricula of the different education departments in South Africa reflected the dual vocation-guidance approach, and had the following

main areas: vocational/careers guidance, educational guidance, social guidance, personal guidance and family guidance, in some cases [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992].

Guidance in South African schools was afflicted by unequal and divisive curricula, exploited largely as a tool for social control and the perpetuation of the apartheid regime's policies [Burns, 1986a; Chuenyane, 1990; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Ganie, 1997; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; National Education Policy Investigation, 1992; Ntshangase, 1995; Rooth 1997; Wilson, 1995]. An analysis of the various curricula illustrates that the overt agenda of the apartheid regime was to ensure that the White learner was prepared for professions while the Black learner was prepared for subjugation and labour [Burns, 1986a; Dovey, 1980; Ganie, 1997; Naicker, 1994]. Hanyane [1982] made the urgent call for guidance to be concerned with the development of the whole person, and not merely as outlined by the Human Sciences Research Council [1981].

Guidance was further stigmatised in the sense that, in addition to being a tool of oppression, it was a non-examinable subject, with little credibility in an education system that focused primarily on the overtly academic [Mbokazi, 1999; Ntshangase, 1995]. The school guidance service was grounded in psychometric assessment:

> Information about the pupil is systematically and specifically compiled, evaluated and organised in a purposeful and scientific manner… [Department of Education and Culture, 1991, 3].

The term *guidance* is controversial as it suggests direction, authoritarianism and paternalism, the opposite of what practitioners claim to do [Shertzer and Stone, 1971]. In South Africa, guidance was particularly directive [Burns, 1986a; Naicker, 1994]. Obeying rules was given prominence in the guidance curricula, to the detriment of other topics [Burns, 1986a]. Furthermore, the past education system, within the Christian National Education doctrine and apartheid dogma, saw the function of guidance in the school as moulding the child into the intended norm image [Human Sciences Research Council, 1978]. Dovey and Mason [1984] alerted that school guidance inherently supported and perpetuated the interests of the apartheid government through its fundamentally normative function. With the National Education Policy Act (39) of 1967 imposing that, as part of its guidance curriculum, Whites should be encouraged to aspire

to guard their identity, the way guidance was used to perpetrate the regime's values system is apparent.

There was minimal attention to self-development in guidance. Although the aims of guidance in the context of the school included reference to the self-concept, it was for the purpose of "self evaluation" [Human Sciences Research Council, 1978, 10] rather than self-empowerment. Learners were to be made capable of evaluating their own potentialities such as "scholastic ability, aptitude, intellectual potential, language proficiency and interest" and use this information to assess vocational choices [Human Sciences Research Council, 1978, 10].

Guidance was loaded with values and doctrines. Learners were continuously directed:

> pupils must be guided to account for their obedience to the
> norms and values as embodied in a philosophy of life. They
> must do this by morally evaluating themselves [Human Sciences
> Research Council, 1978, 10].

The influence of Christian National Education was also marked in guidance [Roberts, 1993]. The aim of guidance as a derivative of the overt role of Christian National Education in guidance was exemplified by the view of guidance as enabling "the pupil to develop his God-given mandate in life…" [Department of Education and Culture, 1991, 2].

Voices against the abuse of guidance by the regime were increasingly heard [Burns, 1986a; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Ganie, 1997]. The focus of Sayed *et al*, [1989, 7] on Peoples Education and school guidance highlighted the aims of guidance as needing to be "the facilitation of a process of liberation and empowerment", with issues of personal power and collective power being of cardinal import. Roberts [1993, 105–106], referring to guidance, called for

> a culture of continuous critique to be established in South Africa
> which will ensure that a pernicious education ideology such as
> CNE does not gain dominance ever again.

This is of particular relevance to Life Orientation, which could so readily contain the vestiges of the past guidance's value-laden curricula. As guidance was the vehicle for some of the nefarious policies and practices of the pre-democratic South African

regime, the inclusion of guidance in Life Orientation needs to be circumspect, informed, critical and well considered.

Internationally, school guidance has also faced challenges and transformations. There was concern about the way guidance teachers focused primarily on crises and problems. In the 1970s, the concept of "guidance for development" surfaced to reorient guidance from an ancillary, crisis-oriented position to a comprehensive programme in the USA [Gysbers and Henderson, 2000, 18]. In the USA and in Canada, comprehensive guidance programmes were put in place in the 1980s [Gysbers and Henderson, 2000]. In Hong Kong, a country also burdened with a strong colonial history, a whole -school approach to guidance was introduced as an education policy in 1990 [Hui, 2002, 65]. This meant that all teachers needed to identify learners with problems and offer assistance, with guidance "formally endorsed as the responsibility of all teachers" and the emphasis on the prevention of problem behaviour. This is an issue that is important when one looks at the question of who teaches Life Orientation and at the notion, perhaps misconstrued, that all or any teachers can teach Life Orientation as it is the whole school's responsibility.

Significant recommendations were made about how guidance could be reformulated and implemented in South Africa [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Taking into consideration the problems of guidance as being "…marginalization, fragmentation, inequality, and a lack of clear focus" [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992, 3], it was recommended that future policy attempted to ensure quality preventative support services for all school children [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Ganie [1997, 4] emphasises that guidance and counselling

> …should be located in a central position in the restructuring of the general curriculum. It should be given equal status and be conceptualised as a central program in the overall educational system. To prevent further marginalisation, low status and credibility of the service, it is imperative that the teaching principles are similar to those of other subjects.

Recommendations made by National Education Policy Investigation [1992] included the cardinal shift from guidance being problem orientated towards being preventative, with the focus on strengths, competencies and development. Preventative approaches have long-term benefits for the individual, as well as for society at large [Ganie, 1997].

Process-orientated and preventative guidance was increasingly mentioned. Calls for a guidance and counselling model based on a preventative approach [Lazarus and Donald, 1994] did not exclude the curative facets. In South Africa, concurrent with the broader view that guidance should be developmental as well as preventative and remedial, there was an increasing focus on guidance as a whole-school responsibility, demanding the involvement of all teachers rather than merely specialists [Ganie, 1997].

The progressive evolution of guidance in South Africa post-1994 saw a more holistic and promotive, developmental and preventative slant. Human rights and democracy were mentioned, facilitation and other empowering classroom methodologies were developed, and issues were seen in the context of community concerns [Western Cape Education Department, 1995]. The *Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance* [Department of Education, 1995b] indicated that guidance should equip learners with life skills to promote self-actualization, emotional stability and social sensitivity, and render the learner competent to make successful career choices, to build a stable family and to live with respect and tolerance for self and others. Hence locally, guidance definitions were transforming, with Brownell, Craig, De Haas, Harris and Ntshangase [1996] now seeing guidance as a helping process aimed at the promotion of effective living and an exploration of the different ways to tackle difficulties. Career or vocational guidance was an integral aspect of most guidance programmes.

Career guidance

Internationally, career guidance was shaped by the career theories of Holland [1985] and Super [1957]. Locally, the influence of psychology on career guidance was apparent. For example, a mechanistic psychometric assessment measured aptitude and intelligence and inventoried interests, in order to match learners to jobs [Naicker, 1994].

In South Africa, the social control and divisive tactics of apartheid education were particularly evident in career guidance, with streaming, grade diversification, psychometric testing, categorisation and limited choices for the majority of learners predominating [Burns, 1986a; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Ganie, 1997; Naicker, 1994]. For Burns [1986a, 10], career guidance in South African schools was unequivocally organised as a social control mechanism in a "technicist approach to manpower

planning, and to maintaining apartheid." The legacy of authoritarianism in South Africa's past is particularly overt in career guidance, as exemplified by the dictum that:

> … vocational choice and meaningful work is not possible
> without the acknowledgement of the authority of God and that
> of parents, teachers, instructors and employers [Transvaal
> Education Department, 1978, as quoted by Burns, 1986a, 12].

In the past, career guidance promoted the needs of employers as being paramount, while the needs of workers were ignored [Naicker, 1994]. Career guidance in most South African schools was primarily a directing and controlling process, typified by socialisation and social control, rather than by the strengthening of personal and individual qualities [Burns, 1986a].

Internationally, career guidance was also used as an instrument for manipulation by some governments. Gleeson [1986] alerted to the inherent dangers in vocational education being used as a tool by government. In the United Kingdom (UK), government training policy was seen to not merely represent a response to youth unemployment, but was also designed to alter existing relations in the workplace to favour employers. Hence, training for personal effectiveness was seen to have a close relationship with private enterprise and to represent "an important ideological mechanism through which labour is made ready and available for work" [Gleeson, 1986, 383].

Psychometric testing was core to career guidance in South Africa [Marais, 1999]. The National Education Policy Investigation [1992] highlighted the adverse effects of psychometric testing in schools. Career guidance dealt more with fitting the learner into the world of work, than with a more democratic practice of self-knowledge development, human rights promotion and the development of negotiating skills. It was primarily concerned with technical processes such as testing, diagnosing, and emphasising the importance of educational qualifications for success. Learners were only infrequently helped to discover who they were and what they potentially could become [Burns, 1986b; Naicker, 1994].

Naicker [1994] underlines the centrality of sociological factors in career choices of South African learners, while criticising the developmental and trait-and-factor theorists

for mostly omitting the contextual factors of career choice. Importantly, Naicker [1994, 27] calls for:

> effecting changes in some prevailing practices, and adopting different paradigmatic perspectives when viewing career counselling for a new South African society. In the movement away from rigid social control, mechanistic and behaviouristic tendencies towards emancipatory practices, both psychological as well as sociological perspectives will have to be taken into account.

Education policy in the past recognised the importance of school guidance, particularly regarding careers, but it remained marginalised [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Stead and Watson [1998, 293] underscore the concern:

> about the low status of vocational guidance in the formal education system, which has resulted in the hijacking of guidance periods by examination subjects and the absence or underinvestment of funds in developing guidance services.

To counter the lack of career guidance in the majority of schools, external organisations played an important role in career guidance in South Africa. For example, the Career Research Information Centre in Cape Town, the Education Information Centre in Gauteng and the Soweto Careers Centre provided essential services [Chuenyane, 1990].

Naicker [1994] believes a socio-psychological approach to career counselling is particularly relevant to the newly democratic South Africa. Hence career counselling, which underscores self-concept enhancement, decision making, communication skills and other coping strategies, is seen to help learners to ably participate in decision-making processes, as well as equip them to resist external pressures.

Ntshangase [1995,19] posits that learners can now, due to democracy, choose whatever career they wish to follow and whatever role they wish to play in society, as opposed to the limited choices pre-democracy:

> They are now in a position to have responsibilities in society which demand high self-esteem, leadership skills and responsibility. School guidance, therefore, has a role to play in preparing pupils for these new demands.

Research findings in guidance in South African schools have important implications for Life Orientation. The next section deals with an overview of selected research findings.

3.3.3 Guidance research in South African schools

> *Given the needs of adolescents for guidance and their*
> *importance in the future of the country, it is short-sighted,*
> *to put it mildly, not to give school guidance the pivotal*
> *role it should have* [Mashimbye, 2000, 57].

The research into guidance overviewed in this section was conducted in a number of provinces, including Limpopo, Eastern and Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, in both primary and secondary urban and rural schools. Results of research conducted in guidance in South African schools from 1994 onwards show the low status of guidance, neglect and lack of guidance implementation, diffusion of terms and uncertainty of guidance educators' job descriptions. Problems experienced with guidance in schools were manifold. Apart from the remnants of social control issues mentioned earlier, guidance was marginalised and underrated. The legacy of the past meant that the majority of the schools were under-resourced when it came to facilities, resources and guidance educators. The separate education departments, with their differing guidance implementations, found it difficult to implement a coherent form of guidance once they were amalgamated into one department. Furthermore, retrenchments led to guidance educators being the first to leave, as their expertise was in a non-examinable subject. These are some of the factors why guidance was not taught in the majority of schools [Dube, 1994; Ganie, 1997; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Ntshangase, 1995; Wilson, 1995].

Terminology in guidance

'Life Orientation' and 'guidance' have generally been used interchangeably [Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999], while nomenclature for the Life Orientation or guidance educator has varied widely. Ntshangase, [1995, 9] refers to the range of titles that are used interchangeably for guidance educators, such as "teacher-counsellor, guidance counsellor, school counsellor, teacher-psychologist and guidance teacher". Wilson [1995, 10] corroborates these findings, adding "vocational guidance teacher" to the list. 'Guidance teacher' has been used in the majority of the schools, with the titles reflecting different approaches, namely education or service, which were primarily a

result of the different education departments in South Africa [Ntshangase, 1995; Wilson, 1995].

Time allocation and incidence of guidance teaching

Minimal time on the timetable was evident [Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Wilson 1995]. For example, grade 7 was allocated one 35-minute period per week per class for guidance [Wilson, 1995]. Makhoba [1999] found that in some schools guidance was given very little time and in others no time at all. Mashimbye [2000, 99] found that "there are no periods for guidance in the school timetable at many schools. Where it is accommodated, it is considered as a free period."

Mbokazi [1999, 13] cites research that indicates that the guidance teacher is:

> barely visible as such because he or she has no time-tabled
> guidance and counselling periods. The subject is not taught
> formally at all and the teacher is little more than custodian of the
> books and pamphlets on guidance and occupations which arrive
> from time to time.

Dube [1994] indicates that as guidance was not a subject in which learners wrote examinations for promotion purposes, but a supplementary service, it was accordingly allotted fewer time slots than examinable subjects. Guidance was seen as marginalised with its time slot in the timetable used for other subjects [Ntshangase, 1995]. Makhoba [1999] found that educators felt that precious time was used to offer guidance, and yet the learners were not examined on it. They felt that time spent on guidance could be better used for other important examination subjects, and used to help improve the schools and complete the syllabus. Corroborating this phenomenon, Mbokazi [1999, 12] points out that teachers required maximum time for their subjects to get the learners to pass exams:

> Another attitude that is sometimes expressed by the teaching
> staff is that guidance is just a waste of time in the face of
> mounting pressure to complete the syllabus and the number of
> days per year per term. As a result School Guidance ends up
> given less priority than the other examination subjects.

Even though time may have been allocated, it was invariably not used for the purpose of guidance. Mbokazi [1999] found guidance periods were used for examination subjects by teachers, revision, and test-writing as well as for self-study or free periods for

learners. Wilson [1995] indicates that learners had free periods in what was supposed to be guidance periods. Ntshangase [1995, 97] posits that:

> the mere inclusion of school guidance in schools and the mere presence of a guidance teacher does not necessarily guarantee the usefulness of the services.

Makhoba [1999, 36] pointedly encapsulates the prevalence of guidance existing in name only on the timetable of most schools:

> I was interested by the response that guidance periods were allocated in the time table but it was not taught.

Marais [1998, 148] recommends the optimal use of allocated guidance periods due to the perception "that these periods are not always used for Guidance purposes." A picture emerges of guidance as either being allocated minimal time or not being taught in its allocated time. Issues regarding assessment impact on guidance teaching and time allocation.

Assessment of guidance

From the researchers' studies, it is evident that examination subjects got significant precedence over non-examination subjects. Although Life Orientation is assessable in C2005 and the RNCS, in line with all learning areas, the low number of credits may affect how much it is seen as an assessable learning area. Hence, the non-examinable nature of guidance in the past may still have implications for how assessment in Life Orientation will unfold.

That the non-examinable aspect of guidance contributed largely to its nondescript status, is frequently mentioned. Mbokazi [1999, 2] states that

> Another problem is that in all secondary schools in the Republic of South Africa school guidance is a non examination subject. A teacher responsible for guidance has, therefore, been perceived negatively because she/he is not evaluated through his/her learners' performance in the examination.

As guidance was a non-examination subject, principals may be compelled to adopt a certain attitude towards it and are likely to see it as a luxury [Mbokazi, 1999]. Dube [1994, 122] indicates that most educators said guidance should be made an examination subject to give it "respect" and "status". Makhoba [1999, 41] found that educators felt that as subject educators, they were concerned with the "intellectual development of the

learners" and their teachings were "content-centred", compared to that of guidance, which was "learner-centred" and hence somehow seen as of lesser status.

Principals' attitudes towards guidance

Mbokazi [1999] asserts that principals' perceptions and attitudes may have contributed to the neglect of guidance. Although most principals expressed positive attitudes, they still did not cater for guidance.

> …principals tended to be correct in terms of responding to the question asked so as to impress the researcher. Therefore, they could be having a number of negative views toward the provision of guidance in their schools which they may have not pointed out to the researcher [Mbokazi, 1999, 47].

Makhoba [1999] also highlights the role played by principals in the establishment of guidance programmes in schools. Mashimbye [2000] concurs that many principals were not convinced of the need for guidance and counselling. Principals often took responsibility for school guidance with the aim of using the period for their management duties, even though there may have been a trained guidance teacher at the school. Guidance teachers were only seen as "crisis counsellors, who are called when the school has to cope with a serious problem" [Mashimbye, 2000, 96].

Who teaches guidance?

Guidance periods were often allocated to educators who appeared to have "fewer teaching periods" [Mashimbye 2000, 89; Dube, 1994, 11; Mbokazi, 1999, 13]. Principals, who are usually responsible for timetabling, admit as much, as this principal indicates:

> School guidance is usually allocated to irresponsible teachers to supplement their teaching periods [Mashimbye , 2000, 101].

It is often the case that non-examination subjects are assigned without consideration of the educators' expertise or qualifications [Ntshangase, 1995, 9]. Dube [1994] found that of 39 schools, only one educator was qualified to teach guidance. Of eight schools allocated a post for Head of Department for guidance, only one school used this educator 100% of the time for guidance services. The other schools used the guidance educators for not more than 40% of the time for guidance, and one school used their guidance educator 100% of the time for subjects other than guidance.

> This robs the pupils of the benefits that should flow from
> guidance services and also points to how guidance is perceived
> at schools [Dube, 1994, 12].

Educators are often not only ill-qualified to teach guidance, but also uninterested [Dube, 1994, 11], resulting in the guidance period being treated as a free period by educators and learners [Makhoba, 1999].

Another reason that guidance educators in most schools were unable to perform their duties optimally was because they were expected to offer other subjects besides guidance [Makhoba, 1999]. Mbokazi [1999] cites research that shows an overwhelming 94% of educators indicated that they were teaching not only guidance but also other subjects. In ex-DET schools, 29% of guidance teachers were language teachers, 26% were human science subject teachers, 25% were science and maths teachers and 21% taught economics and management sciences [Mbokazi, 1999].

Some teachers, however, felt that guidance did not need special qualifications. However, Makhoba [1999, 41] rightly points out that "if educators have to be specially trained to teach any particular subject, so should they be specially trained to teach guidance".

Besides teaching other subjects, guidance educators were also often burdened with a host of other duties. These could range from other academic subject teaching, extramural duties such as sport and drama, one-on-one counselling, record keeping and extensive testing, and accessing and ordering career information [Euvrard, 1994], as well as managerial and administrative duties [Ntshangase, 1995].

An important issue is highlighted by Dube [1994, 12]:

> The increase in the number of pupils seeking advice about
> courses and careers during their post school years, only shows
> the lack of effective guidance services at secondary schools.
> Teachers often complain about extra work if they have to give
> guidance to pupils. They often say that they cannot be all things
> to all pupils such as being parents, social workers, counsellors,
> nurses and teachers.

Educators interviewed by Makhoba [1999, 33] believe that they "need a school based psychologist and social worker who can deal directly with the learners", as all the

solutions are not always forthcoming from guidance educators because "they have a lot of work to do because they have other subjects to teach".

Status and practice of guidance

Research indicates that guidance in South Africa had minimal status and was generally not taught in the majority of the schools. Mashimbye [2000, 87] highlights the frustration of guidance teachers with the unacceptable status of school guidance in their schools: "it is really ignored as if it does not exist," according to a Limpopo province teacher commenting on guidance. Mashimbye [2000] sees their frustrations as understandable, given the potential of guidance.

Wilson [1995] indicates that school guidance remained a marginalised service in the majority of the schools in South Africa, due to economic, political and rationalisation issues. Concurring with this Mbokazi [1999] found that generally guidance was not taught properly because it was a non-examination subject and economic factors did not enable schools to appoint full-time guidance teachers. In some instances, schools regarded career guidance as the only guidance worth offering [Mbokazi, 1999]. Ntshangase [1995] indicates that school guidance was not seen as part of mainstream education and as a result was non-existent in some schools. The non-examinable nature of guidance was linked to its low status and minimal implementation.

Makhoba [1999] found some teachers were reluctant to teach guidance, resulting in the subject's neglect.

> Many principals, teachers, policy makers and learners have a
> negative attitude towards guidance. Despite the important
> contribution school guidance and counselling can make to the
> social, academic and personality development of South African
> children, it does not feature as an important aspect of the
> curriculum [Mashimbye, 2000, 27].

Dube's [1994] research hypothesis is that secondary school educators regarded the teaching of guidance as unimportant. Dube's data, however, reveals that the majority of them considered it to be valuable. Nevertheless, guidance was still ignored and not given the status and treatment it deserved. (The policy-practice interface discussed in chapter two refers.)

> The unacceptable practice of neglecting the effective teaching of guidance can … not be linked to teachers' views about the importance of guidance [Dube, 1994, 118].

Dube [1994] also established that most educators believed that their colleagues undermined the teaching of guidance. Colleagues' jealousy, accusations of favouritism and misunderstanding of the work of the guidance teacher were evident.

> In the very few schools where there is a specialist guidance teacher he/she is seen to be having a soft option, sitting in a little room, resources centre or office, talking to individual pupils and parents or even more enviably, getting out of school to visit tertiary institutions and employers while the other teachers have to cope with big, noisy classes [Mbokazi, 1999, 14].

Makhoba [1999, 1] observes that "some educators in Katlehong secondary schools regard Guidance and Counselling as a 'waste of time'." The fact that guidance was non-examinable and had fewer time-slots "could be misinterpreted by teachers and pupils to mean that guidance is unimportant" [Dube, 1994, 10]. Euvrard [1994] found that guidance in the Eastern Cape did not answer to learners needs and that the guidance curriculum at the time was inadequate. Guidance as not being relevant to learners needs could have further added to perceptions of guidance as unimportant.

> …school guidance teachers do not take this task seriously, are not interested in the subject, and often use the allocated time to complete their work in other subjects [Mashimbye, 2000, 89].

The perceptions of parents and school governing bodies also impacted on the status and practice of guidance. Mashimbye [2000] found that in some instances school governing bodies considered part of the guidance content, for example sexuality education, to be in conflict with their culture, and hence rejected guidance completely.

Mbokazi [1999] reports that there were problems hindering the effective use of guidance in schools. For example, large classes made it difficult to use the methods of guidance such as group work. Large classes are also cited by Mashimbye [2000], Makhoba [1999] and Wilson [1995] as factors impinging on guidance teaching.

The marginalisation, low status and neglect of guidance is apparent from the preceding review. The term *guidance* had an image created by the past regime's manipulation and abuse of guidance, and as such was a loaded term. The movement away from the term

guidance was timeous and progressive, as it showed a break from the previous education system's negative aspects.

3.3.4 Guidance within Life Orientation

> *As opposed to the past when school guidance was used as a tool for social control, Life Orientation will attempt to focus on accountability, transparency, affordability, sustainability, relevance and integration* [Mbokazi, 1999, 15].

Given the historical context of guidance in South Africa, the way it is incorporated into Life Orientation holds important ramifications for this learning area. The low status of guidance, the association with the apartheid regime's nefarious education policies and the disparate understandings and implementations of guidance could have a negative impact on Life Orientation.

Life skills, health and career education are the core aspects of guidance that have been absorbed into Life Orientation, with personal and career development dealt with in depth. Career education cannot be seen as a separate or ancillary aspect of Life Orientation, as it is developmental and includes psychosocial life skills development. Career education is now firmly ensconced within Life Orientation. It is not an auxiliary service, neither the sole focus of Life Orientation. Rather, career education is one of the foci in Life Orientation. Life Orientation includes career guidance in learning outcome 5, which focuses on an orientation to the world of work in the Senior Phase [Department of Education, 2002b]. There is no specific career education offered in the Intermediate Phase. However, the psychosocial life skills focus in the intermediate phase will enhance future career education.

The importance of linking learning outcome 5 (which deals with the world of work) with specifically learning outcome 3 (which deals with personal development) in Life Orientation, is evident. Self-knowledge, self-concept and self-esteem are integral to career choice. The skills to set goals, make decisions and pursue goals are core life skills that are required for, among others, career pathing choices.

> Career education must meet both long and short term goals, aiding young people to choose how to earn a living now in as personally satisfying way as possible, taking account of current

labour demands and also equipping young people with life skills to cope with the changing patterns in life, work and leisure throughout adulthood [Burns, 1986a, 7].

Life Orientation learning outcome 5 is also linked to learning outcome 2, which deals with social development. Human rights, the needs of the community and life skills are vital aspects that need to be part of any career education initiative. Finally, learning outcome 5 links with learning outcome 4 which deals with physical development and movement. There are innumerable career choices in recreation and sport.

Apart form career education, the most significant parts of guidance to manifest in Life Orientation are life skills and health education, which are discussed in the next section.

3.4 LIFE SKILLS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

> *Skills-based health education is an approach to creating or maintaining healthy lifestyles and conditions through the development of knowledge, attitudes, and especially skills, using a variety of learning experiences, with emphasis on participatory methods* [World Health Organization, 2003, 8].

Depending on the vantage point from which issues are viewed, life skills either encompasses health education or health education assumes life skills development [Department of Education, 1995b; Department of Health, 2000]. The Department of Health [2000] indicates that life skills education needs to be located within a comprehensive health-promoting school approach. Furthermore,

> The primary aim of lifeskills education is to provide knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to empower learners to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday situations and to promote and protect their own health and well-being [Department of Health, 2000, 8].

Hence, the link between life skills education and health promotion is apparent. Health education is taught either as a derivative of life skills education, as life skills education or in conjunction with life skills education [United Nations, 2003a; World Health Organization, 2003]. In addition to the proliferation of life skills and HIV and AIDS education programmes [Magome *et al.*, 1998; UNICEF, 2004], health education initiatives are increasingly becoming prominent due to socio-environmental and

poverty-induced diseases and the burgeoning of lifestyle diseases [World Health Organization, 1998a, 1999 and 2003; United Nations, 2003b; Kahn *et al*, 2002].

Further merging of life skills and health education in South Africa was promoted when the Department of Health in South Africa initiated the implementation of a comprehensive life skills and HIV and AIDS education programme in all schools as part of its response to the escalating HIV and AIDS epidemic. The programme aimed to increase knowledge and develop skills to help learners protect themselves from HIV and AIDS, to promote change in learners' behaviour to reduce risk for HIV and AIDS, and to safeguard their reproductive health. The Departments of Health and Education collaborated in this key strategy [Magome *et al*, 1998].

The World Health Organization [2003] notes that life skills education can be used interchangeably with skills-based health education, with the only difference in approach being the content covered. Both approaches address reality-based life applications of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and both employ interactive teaching and learning methods. A review of international curricula for health education shows marked similarities with life skills curricula, with differences occurring mainly in the foci. Health curricula largely cover a broad range of content areas such as emotional and mental health, nutrition, substance abuse, reproductive and sexual health, injuries, human rights and gender equity. Generally, health curricula cross cut other subjects and include skills development. Psychosocial and interpersonal skills are central; thus communication, decision making, problem solving, coping and self-management, and the avoidance of health compromising behaviours are emphasised. Life skills are generally associated with health choices [World Health Organization 2003; National Curriculum Council, 1990; Department of Education, 2002b].

The World Health Organization [2003] and Botvin [2000] give examples of how life skills can be made specific to relevant health issues. For example, a health topic of substance abuse can be addressed through the following life skills: communication and interpersonal skills, advocacy, negotiation and refusal skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills, and skills to cope and manage the self such as stress management skills. As health education therefore cannot be taught without concomitant life skills education, the relationship is one of reciprocity.

3.4.1 Definition and scope of life skills and health education

> *Life skills are a set of psycho-social competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and manage their lives in a healthy and productive way* [United Nations, 2003b, 14].

Initially *life skills* was a term associated with ancillary health professions such as occupational therapy [Larson, 1984]. The concept of life skills has also often been used in relation to health skills associated with adolescent risk behaviour [Botvin, 2000; Sinclair, 2003].

Evolving definitions and understandings of life skills characterise this growing, dynamic field. Similarities in conceptualisations of life skills are generally that life skills are psychosocial coping skills that equip or assist in some way. The common denominator in most definitions of life skills is a focus on *skills* and *abilities* needed to *cope*. Hence, life skills are problem-solving skills for coping with the predictable problems of development [Larson, 1984]; self-help skills [Hopson and Scally, 1981]; abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life [World Health Organization, 1993]; and the skills necessary for successful living and learning [Rooth, 1995]. Life skills' development promotes psychosocial competence [Donald *et al.,* 1997] and assists youth to deal effectively with demands and challenges and to respond to the difficulties encountered in everyday life [Gachuhi, 1999]. Life skills are integral to well-being, as they are:

> personally responsible sequences of choices in specific psychological skills areas conducive to mental wellness. People require a repertoire of life skills according to their developmental tasks and specific problems of living [Nelson-Jones, 1992, 13].

Generic to most definitions is that life skills promote personal and social well-being, and equip humans to cope with the challenges that life brings. Life skills assist learners to become socially and psychologically competent, as well as to function confidently and competently themselves, with other people and with the community [Gachuhi, 1999]. Sinclair [2003] sees life skills broadly as incorporating personal skills and

commitments required to live up to universal values, personally and as local and global citizens. The conceptualisation of Life Orientation as focusing on "self-in-society" [Department of Education, 2002b, 4] gives credence to life skills as proficiencies that reach beyond the realm of personal development.

Definitions of life skills may give an indication of the *competencies* associated with life skills acquisition. Egan [1984] refers to life skills as the competencies necessary for effective living: self-management, interpersonal communication and effective participation in communities and organisations. Adkins [1984, 44] posits that

> Life skills aim at helping people clarify feelings and values, make decisions and choices, resolve conflicts, gain self-understanding, explore environmental opportunities and constraints, communicate effectively with others, and take responsibility for their actions.

Notions of personal, emotional and social competencies are central [United Nations, 2003a]. The World Health Organization [1999, 1] identifies the following five basic areas of life skills competencies as being relevant across cultures:

- Decision making and problem solving
- Creative thinking and critical thinking
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Self-awareness and empathy
- Coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Botvin [2000] consistently teaches the following skills in his well-researched and successful life skills training programmes in the United States of America (USA): assertiveness, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving to boost protective factors in learners such as self-confidence, self-esteem, autonomy and self-control. In South Africa, the African National Congress Education Policy Framework [1994a] groups the following core life skills areas: health education, sexuality education, work and career education, study, economic education, citizenship education, environmental education and personal and interpersonal development.

Partly due to confusion about terminology and to diffusion of ideas as to what constitutes Life Orientation, life skills and guidance, the terms were used interchangeably in South African education in the educational transition period from 1994 onwards [Herr, 2003; Khulisa, 2000; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000]. This

was also evidenced by higher education institutions' teacher training courses, which offered courses on guidance or life skills for teachers who were being trained to be Life Orientation educators [University of Cape Town; University of Venda; University of the Western Cape ; Yearbooks , 2004].

Differing understandings of life skills education are apparent. "The definition of what constitutes a life skills programme is clearly diverse" [Macintyre *et al*, 2000, 18]. Life skills education and guidance are often equated, but life skills education is a much broader and inclusive concept, and may include guidance [Donald *et al.*, 1997]. Life skills education is the process of allowing learners the opportunities to develop and practice the necessary life skills [Rooth, 1997]. In effect, life skills education is about converting psychological principles and knowledge into teachable skills.

Preventative, promotive and developmental aspects of the general curriculum is the focus of life skills education [Ganie, 1997], with provision for curative needs in the form of counselling. Practitioners argue that life skills education includes the skills for peace, conflict resolution and human rights [Sinclair, 2003]. Life skills training in the USA is often theme specific, e.g. substance abuse [Botvin, 2000]. The focus is on abuse, but incorporates a range of pertinent life skills that are necessary to deal with the theme. Other programmes may focus on conflict resolution or reproductive health.

Similarly, life skills education and health education are often equated.

> Education for health for young people has been referred to as
> health education, skills-based health education, and a life skills
> approach [World Health Organization, 2003, 30].

If life skills are psychosocial skills and competencies enhancing well-being, then they are also health skills, as health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being [World Health Organization, 2003]. Schools should enable learners at all levels "to learn critical health and life skills" [World Health Organization, 1998b, 7]. In effect then, health education cannot be taught as a separate and standalone entity, without concomitant life skills education.

Health promotion and the health promoting schools concept have been applied as a central perspective to varied issues in schools across the world [Weare, 2000].

Similarities in the identification of core components of health curricula are evident. In England, the National Curriculum Council [1990] indicates that health education is a cross-curricular theme, but realise that:

> A coherent health education programme is required if pupils are to be encouraged to establish healthy patterns of behaviour, to acquire the ability to make healthy choices and to contribute to the development of a healthy population [National Curriculum Council, 1990, 1].

Health education is the promotion of health literacy [Nutbeam, 2000]. Informed health practices lead to individuals having the option of healthier lifestyles. Individuals cannot make informed choices if they are not knowledgeable about the health consequences of their actions [Kemm, 2003]. The cumulative health benefits of individuals "who practice health behaviour" [Schlebusch, 1990, 44] are apparent.

Of note is the use of the term *other skills,* which are not life skills per se, but are complementary to life skills that deal with health [World Health Organization, 2003]. Other skills are cited as the practical health skills or techniques used in first aid, in hygiene such as hand washing, or sexual health such as the correct use of condoms [World Health Organization, 2003]. The term 'advocacy' is added as a key skill, because it is important in personal as well as collective efforts to support behaviours and conditions that are conducive to health [World Health Organization, 2003].

Theoretical frameworks that underpin life skills and health education

Life skills and health initiatives and programmes make use of a range of underlying theoretical constructs [Kelly *et al.*, 2001]. Underlying both the concepts of life skills education and health education, as well as their practice, is a strong theoretical base drawn mainly from psychology and the health sciences. Selected theoretical frameworks underpinning life skills and health education are briefly noted in order to elucidate these concepts in the context of their theoretical foundations.

> Theories about the way human beings, and specifically, children and adolescents grow, learn and behave provide the foundation of a life skills approach. These theories are not mutually exclusive and all contribute to the development of a life skills approach [Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001, 12].

Theories underpinning health promotion and prevention underlie health education within Life Orientation. Notable is the work of Markham and Aveyard [2003] in the UK on a new theory of health-promoting schools based on human functioning, school organisation and pedagogic practice. Markham and Aveyard [2003] apply an analysis of Nussbaum's Aristotelian interpretation of human functioning to Bernstein's theory of cultural transmission to provide a frame for understanding schools as health-promoting organisations.

Important facets of life skills and health education such as goal setting, self-reflection, self-efficacy and self-management are all derived from social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory has been extensively applied in the area of preventative health and coping skills [Creswell and Newman, 1993; Sinclair, 2003] and has a substantial impact on the development of life skills education programmes [Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001]. Bandura [1977] was the main proponent and developer of social cognitive theory, which is core to life skills development. Social cognitive theory includes different forms of learning, such as the development of behaviour patterns, cognitive and judgement competencies, and the generation of rules for regulating behaviours. According to this theory, children learn how to behave through observation and social interaction, in addition to verbal instruction [Bandura, 1977]. Rodriguez and Mead [1997] posit that behaviour is learned symbolically before it is performed, and behaviour only changes after cognitive structures have changed.

Fishbein's theory of reasoned action [Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975] indicate that beliefs are core to learning about health. A combination of the health belief model, social cognitive theory [Bandura, 1977], diffusion of innovation theory and the use of an events of instruction framework are all useful to promote health behaviour change [Kinzie, 2004]. Social cognitive theory assists in situating behaviour in realistic social practice, such as the development of social proficiency and resilient self-efficacy.

A derivative of social cognitive theory is the concept of self-efficacy [Bandura, 1977].

> The efficacy belief system is the foundation of human agency. Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Whatever other factors serve as motivators,

they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to effect change by one's actions [Bandura, 2004, 622].

Cognitive, motivational, emotional and choice processes are the efficacy beliefs that regulate human functioning [Bandura, 1977]. Bandura [2004] recaps four main ways to develop self-efficacy: mastery experie nces, social modelling, social persuasion and individuals' physical and emotional states to judge their capabilities. Self-efficacy is vital in the learning and maintaining of behaviours and in resisting social pressure to behave differently [Bandura, 1977]. Many problems learners face can be circumvented by an ability to resist peer pressure. Botvin's [2000] programmes on substance abuse invariably include skills in resisting peer pressure.

Self-efficacy means having an internal locus of control. The research of Rotter [1966] and Bandura [1995] indicates the importance of locus of control for learning. A consistent finding in research is that individual beliefs in external or internal control affect their perceptions of performance outcomes [Von Bergen, 1995]. The development of an internal locus of control is congruent with the development of a general sense of control over extraneous factors [Donald *et al.*, 1997].

Self-concept and locus of control are important aspects of self-efficacy. Self-concept formation is closely associated with notions of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Self-concept refers to the beliefs, attitudes and feelings individuals have about themselves. Mboya [1994] refers to the multi-dimensionality of the self-concept. In the many facets of dynamic self-concept configuration, a core remains that is inherently stable amidst the fluctuations of self. The decisive work of Wylie [1979] emphasises that the notion of self-concept includes overall self-regard. This is a generic term to cover global constructs such as self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-favourability and self-ideal discrepancies, which could be determined by the combination of cognitions and evaluations of many attributes of self.

Botvin [2000] makes extensive use of cognitive problem-solving skill dissemination in life skills interventions. Mangrulkar *et al.* [2001] view problem solving, as applied to social or interpersonal situations from an early age, as a critical aspect of life skills education. As a competence-building model of primary prevention, cognitive problem

solving attests that by teaching young learners interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills, negative inhibited and impulsive behaviours can be prevented and reduced. Sinclair [2003] identifies a six-step approach for solving problems as typical of many life skills education-related programmes. Higher-level cognitive skills are often presented in the life skills literature in relation to making decisions and solving problems about health issues [Sinclair, 2003].

Resilience and risk theory clarifies why some individuals respond better to adversarial challenges than others [Mangrulkar et al., 2001]. If learners have internal protective factors such as self-esteem and internal locus of control, they can resist the unhealthy behaviours that may result from stressors or risks. Bernard [1991] cites traits that identify resilient learners as social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose. Mangrulkar et al. [2001] view resilience and risk theory as core to life skills education in that life skills programmes do not merely address behaviours directly, but build the competencies that can mediate the required behaviours. In addition, there is not a one-to-one relationship between risk factors and behavioural outcomes. Life skills programmes that teach social and emotional skills have a beneficial effect on multiple behaviours.

> The cognitive and affective domains must both be taken into account in the design and imple mentation of education for peace, human rights, citizenship and personal life skills programmes [Sinclair, 2003, 25].

Gardner [1993] identifies eight human intelligences that take into account the range of human cognitive capacities. In developing skills for solving problems, people use their intelligences in different ways. Goleman [1997] posits that knowing how to manage one's emotions is at least as important for success as intellect. Weare and Gray [2003] distinguish between the various concepts of intelligences and recommend a delineated nomenclature for clarity.

Mangrulkar et al. [2001] recognise the importance of theories about intelligences for life skills education, by indicating that teachers need to teach a broader range of skills than merely the traditional verbal and mathematical skills. In addition, a range of teaching methods is necessary to ensure that learners' different learning styles are accommodated. Accordingly, "participatory and active learning methods that stimulate

the use of musical, spatial, naturalist and other intelligences" are needed [Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001, 17].

Stress management as a derivative of emotional literacy is a vital life skill, which is intrinsically connected to other pertinent psychosocial and health skills [O'Leary, 1990]. Evolving systems to manage stress management are eclectic and multi-pronged [Brown and Ralph, 1994; Melamed, 1995; Powell and Enright, 1990; Thompson, Murphy and Stradling, 1994]. The relationship between locus of control and stress is well documented [Bandura, 1995]. The degree of coping and control available determines the stressfulness of an event and the physical reactions to it [Lovallo, 1997]. Depression and learned helplessness may result from stress [Kendall, 1987] and cause externality of locus of control. Life skills and health education can increase learners' repertoires of skills to cope with demands that induce stress, and in so doing promote their health.

This brief synopsis of some of the theories underlying life skills and health education, just touches on core aspects. It is not within the scope of the study to give a more detailed overview. However, the theoretical underpinnings of life skills and health education are cardinal to both the understanding as well as the teaching of these issues.

3.4.2 Evolution of life skills and health education

> *The development of life skills education is a dynamic and evolving process* [World Health Organization, 1999, 6].

In the Eighties in the USA and UK, social and life skills curricula emerged to occupy core positions in education [Gleeson, 1986; Gysbers and Henderson, 2000; Hopson and Scally, 1981]. The roles and influence of the World Health Organization [1993 and 2000] and United Nations [2003a] were particularly important in promoting and establishing life skills as an integral construct in South African education. There has been a gradual move in South Africa towards including life skills education as an aspect of guidance, and in some instances as a replacement for guidance [Department of Education, 1995b]. In South Africa, an upsurge in the use of the term *life skills* and the implementation of life skills programmes occurred in the late Nineties, primarily as a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Life skills became a widely known term through

the introduction of diverse life skills and HIV and AIDS prevention programmes [Magome *et al.*, 1998].

Life skills in South Africa was also gaining in momentum in other areas of education, such as community organisations. Youth offenders were sentenced to attend life skills courses [NICRO, 1993] and young sports stars were sanctioned to undergo life skills training when they offended [United Cricket Board, 2001]. 'Sport skills for life skills' [University of the Western Cape, 2004b] is an example of a development programme aimed to give learners opportunities to build careers in sport. Various religious organisations increasingly offer life skills training as part of their crusades for youth [Life skills NGO networking list, 2003]. A growing number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) offer a broad range of life skills training courses [Peninsula Technikon and CRIC, 1996], ranging from conflict resolution, environmental education, communication skills and crisis counselling to career education and job search skills. Psychosocial life skills courses were developed and facilitated by the Lifeskills Project [1988–2001]. The Department of Labour rate life skills as core for employability and developed unit standards for life skills [Republic of South Africa, 2002b]. Life skills as a concept and an educational facet had become firmly entrenched in South Africa by the onset of the 21st Century.

Similarly, health promotion and health education gained increasing exposure and popularity in South Africa. The Ottawa Charter [World Health Organization, 1986] and the Jakarta Declaration [World Health Organization, 1997], coupled with local health initiatives such as the creation of a health promoting schools framework [Department of Health, 2000], added to general health advocacy and awareness. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion [World Health Organization, 1986] reflects a move from a curative model of health service delivery to a more holistic, preventative and promotive approach and focuses on the creation of healthy public policy, supportive environments, community action, personal skills and a reorientation of health services. It is specifically in the ambit of developing personal skills that life skills education and health education within the Life Orientation learning area play a cardinal role.

Internationally, similarities in the identification of core components of health curricula are evident. In England, the National Curriculum Council [1990] indicates that although health education is a cross-curricular theme,

> a coherent health education programme is required if pupils are to be encouraged to establish healthy patterns of behaviour, to acquire the ability to make healthy choices and to contribute to the development of a healthy population [National Curriculum Council, 1990, 1].

In Australia, the combined area of personal development, health and physical education is one of eight key learning areas [New South Wales Board of Studies, 1991]. Similarly, in New Zealand, health education is combined with physical education and personal development [New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999]. Life skills and health education are further combined in for example, Zimbabwe, Thailand, Columbia, USA and Mexico [World Health Organization, 1999].

Locally life skills and health education are best actualised through a health promotion framework, within the Life Orientation learning area. Learning outcomes that address both life skills and health needs and assessment standards have been specifically developed to promote the acquisition of holistic health-promoting life skills to enable learners to effectively respond to needs and challenges.

With the infusion of life skills in health education, research of the numerous life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes is pertinent to Life Orientation. It is through the Life Orientation learning area that these programmes are offered.

3.4.3 Life skills and health education research

> *Life skills strengthen young people's confidence and ability to deal with peer pressure, negotiating for abstinence or safer sex, managing conflict, and developing responsible relationships. Equipping young people with both knowledge and life skills is recognised as one of the most effective approaches to HIV prevention* [United Nations, 2003b, 20].

Due to the paucity of research on Life Orientation in South Africa, reference is made to research on life skills combined with HIV and AIDS education programmes. Life skills education, as discussed earlier, is an integral part of Life Orientation and, as such, research conducted on life skills and HIV and AIDS interventions will add to the corpus

of knowledge concerning Life Orientation. These life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes are offered under the Life Orientation umbrella and in this way reflect aspects of Life Orientation in South African schools.

Extensive research on the HIV and AIDS pandemic evidences the urgency of the matter and the need to include life skills education as part of any HIV and AIDS education initiatives [Coetzee and Kok, 2001; Gachuhi, 1999; Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Macintyre, Magnani, Alons, Kaufman, Brown, Rutenberg and May, 2000; Magnani, Macintyre, Karim, Brown, and Hutchinson, 2003; Magome *et al.*, 1998; Peltzer and Promtussananon, 2003; Sinclair, 2003; Tiendrebeogo, Meijer and Engleberg, 2003; UNAIDS, 1999; United Nations, 2003a and 2003b; USAID, 2002; Visser, Schoeman and Perold, 2004; World Health Organization, 1999 and 2003]. Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Southern Africa, is the region with the highest incidence of HIV infected people [Jackson, 2002]. Youth are specifically susceptible to HIV and AIDS (see Chapter 1). Youth risk behaviour, such as risky sexual behaviour and substance abuse, and lack of education and health services, add to their vulnerability. Apart from being prone to infection, they may also have to care for family members living with AIDS. The social and economic context adds to the risk factors [UNAIDS, 2002].

Life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes in schools

The research findings of the life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes in South African schools are indicative of the difficulty in implementing life skills HIV and AIDS programmes [Coetzee and Kok, 2001; Gachuhi, 1999; Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Macintyre *et al.*, 2000, Magnani *et al.* 2003; Magome *et al.*, 1998; Visser *et al.*, 2004] and are similar to the research findings on guidance outlined in section 3.3.3

> …there appears to have been a very halting approach to institutionalised lifeskills education within schools. A lifeskills and HIV/AIDS teachers training project conducted in 1997/8 with over 6 000 teachers in five provinces, has had relatively little impact on delivery of lifeskills education in the classroom [Kelly *et al.*, 2001, 45].

The teaching of life skills was generally viewed as important, yet only a minority of schools offered core life skills topics as a regular part of the curriculum. The incorporation of life skills within the curriculum was strongly associated with whether

schools had access to financial and material resources [Macintyre *et al.*, 2000]. Coetzee and Kok [2001] found that, despite training in a district in North-West province, implementation of life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes was not happening at schools.

Kelly *et al.* [2001, 46] illustrate similar scenarios, citing research conducted in 1999 and 2001 in South Africa that shows that education on HIV and AIDS was provided

> erratically and that in these contexts lifeskills education is skeletal at best — even in places where there has been extensive training of teachers to teach in this area. It appears that there have been significant difficulties involved in implementing lifeskills education in schools.

Macintyre *et al.* [2000] found that, in general, principals in KwaZulu-Natal felt it was important to teach life skills. Although there was a marked increase in principals indicating that life skills education was offered at their schools since 1999 [Brown *et al.*, 2003], there were still many schools that did not offer life skills.

Time allocation

Macintyre *et al.* [2000] found only 55% of the schools in KwaZulu-Natal had life skills as a compulsory component and, according to the principals, most learners received an average of 48 hours per year of life skills teaching. However, definitions as to what constituted life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes were diffuse and varied immensely. Life skills could be taught as a regular standalone subject, integrated into other subjects, such as biology, religion, and civics, or taught at special events in the form of presentations. Only 20% of the schools taught life skills as a specific class or subject.

Visser *et al.* [2004] found that none of the schools studied in the Tswane urban metropolitan area was allocated additional time for the life skills and HIV and AIDS programme during the two-year monitoring period, but that some schools removed guidance periods - which could have been used for the intervention - from the timetable, in favour of examinable subjects. Some schools did not have time allocated to guidance/Life Orientation on their timetables; thus time for the life skills and HIV and AIDS intervention had to be negotiated [Magome *et al.,* 1998].

Congruent with the above findings is a comprehensive research report on the implementation of life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes, conducted nationally in South Africa [Khulisa, 2000], which indicates the following:

- Guidance or life skills or Life Orientation was only indicated on the timetable in 59% of the schools. (Confusion about the title is apparent, with guidance, life skills and Life Orientation used interchangeably to mean the same thing).
- The time allocated was an average of 45–60 minutes to each class per week. However, weekly sessions were reported only in 36% of the schools, with the remaining schools providing sessions on a twice-per-week, twice-monthly, monthly or other schedule. Data from learners confirmed that guidance/life skills was generally taught once per week in the 59% of the schools that offered it.
- Of note is that the data indicates that timetable schedules were not always strictly adhered to. Only 36% of teachers reported teaching their last life skills and HIV and AIDS sessions within the last 5 days, and 40% of the teachers indicated that they taught life skills for less than 2 hours per month. This suggests that, despite the fact that life skills is on the timetable or a scheduled part of the school week, compliance with this schedule is irregular. This is similar to the findings for guidance in section 3.33.

Concurring with similar observations, Coetzee and Kok [2001] recommend that Life Orientation is compulsory on school timetables. They also recommend that life skills and HIV and AIDS education take place within the Life Orientation period.

Educators responsible for life skills and HIV and AIDS education programmes

There appeared to be ambiguous choices as to who would teach life skills and HIV and AIDS [Khulisa, 2000; Macintyre *et al.*, 2000]. Once again, congruent with the findings for guidance, when life skills/guidance was not taught at a school, most learners stated that it was because there were no guidance teachers, or the guidance session was used for something else [Khulisa, 2000]. Macintyre *et al.* [2000] found that the percentage of teachers trained to teach life skills was not related to the teaching of life skills, as many teachers were trained to teach life skills in schools, but did not teach life skills. Thus, attending a life skills training course did not necessarily mean that those teachers would be allocated life skills periods. Khulisa [2000] further found that guidance/life skills was taught by educators from a wide range of subject areas.

Methods used for life skills and health education

Gachuhi [1999] indicates the importance of placing STI and HIV and AIDS education within the context of a general programme on personal development, health and living skills. That information alone is not sufficient to have a meaningful effect on behaviour

has been well established [Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Tiendrebeogo *et al.*, 2003; World Health Organization, 2000; United Nations, 2003b; Whitehead and Russell, 2004]. Johnson *et al.*'s [2003] recent HIV prevention theories emphasise behavioural skills as the most proximal determinant of risk behaviour.

Kinzie [2004] makes the important point that it is necessary to focus on ways to support existing health behaviours; for example, learners who do not smoke when they enter their adolescent years, need support to continue exhibiting tobacco-free behaviour. Kinzie [2004] found that, generally, health education initiatives focused on the negative health effects of smoking and only in a few instances emphasised the benefits of not smoking. This is important to consider for Life Orientation as a more positive approach can be beneficial. The current research on smoking prevention and cessation through the use of the Harm Minimisation model and Botvin's Life Skills Training curriculum in this regard will be useful to follow [Swart *et al.,* 2004].

The challenges associated with implementing life skills programmes is evidenced from the research results. It appears that the problems lie with the practicalities of implementation, as well as with the sensitive nature of sexuality education, and the difficulties of HIV and AIDS education.

3.4.4 Life skills and health education within Life Orientation

Life skills education is cardinal to Life Orientation and is infused and implied in all its outcomes [Department of Education, 2002b]. Life Orientation learning outcome 1, dealing with health promotion, includes a life skills education approach. Themes such as nutrition, violence, accident prevention, substance abuse, communicable disease prevention, environmental health, health rights and well-being are apparent in the Life Orientation curriculum. Clear links, especially with learning outcome 3, which focuses on personal development and life skills, are evident. Health education in Life Orientation, being developmental, promotive and preventive, is inherently concerned with attempts to focus on wellness [Schlebusch, 1990] rather than merely on disease.

Dietary behaviours can, in conjunction with physical inactivity levels, result in non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity [Hoelscher *et al.*, 2004; Reddy *et al.*, 2003]. Mukudi [2003] indicates that nutritional

well-being is the result of a range of factors. One important aspect is education *about* nutrition. Even though Life Orientation as a learning area cannot by itself provide for and ensure that all impoverished and malnourished learners get food, it can equip learners with the skills to identify, prepare and choose cheap and healthy options where choices are available.

Learning outcome 2, with its focus on social development, assumes a life skills education approach when dealing with human rights issues, diversity, inclusivity, communication and relationships, including gender issues. Sinclair [2003], in particular, emphasises the integration of life skills within human rights education.

Learning outcome 3, which deals with personal development, picks up on many of the issues of well-being and incorporates health education. Identifiable life skills competencies that feature prominently in the Life Orientation curriculum [Department of Education, 2002b] in South Africa, specifically learning outcome 3 dealing with personal development, and in effect, health education are:

- Problem-solving skills, including decision making and goal setting
- Relationship skills, gender issues and human rights in relationships
- Self-efficacy, self-knowledge and self-concept enhancement skills. Self-concept formation is dealt with consistently and with a progressive difficulty index, throughout all grades
- Conflict resolution skills, including assertiveness, mediation and negotiation and aspects of peace education
- Emotional literacy skills, including stress management and self-management skills.

Life Orientation, through learning outcome 3, gives learners opportunities to learn how to manage their emotions. Assessment standards in all grades dealing with emotional literacy are included in the Life Orientation curriculum. Learning outcome 3 includes life skills dealing with conflict resolution, violence, emotional literacy and self-management.

The prevalence of substance abuse is a serious health risk [Reddy *et al.*, 2003; Swart *et al.*, 2004]. Botvin's [2000] seminal work on substance abuse clearly indicates that substance abuse cannot be dealt with in isolation, but needs to be addressed as part of a programme that includes life skills such as goal setting, self-esteem enhancement, decision making, problem solving, resisting peer pressure, refusal skills and stress

management. Once again learning outcomes 1 and 3 are closely linked as both life skills and health education merge.

Learning outcome 4, with its focus on physical development, inherently utilises a life skills and health approach. Specifically, aspects of body image, motivation, locus of control and communication, team work and lifestyle decisions are core. The close relationship between health education and physical education is well established [Biddle and Wang, 2003; Wilson and Rogers, 2004]. With the health risks of sedentary lifestyles becoming increasingly serious (see section 3.5), physical education is core to health and the development of well-being [Kahn *et al.*, 2002].

Learning outcome 5, in focusing on career education, deals explicitly with life skills education as the competencies required for successful career pathing, include a range of life skills competencies. For Burns [1986a, 7] career education needs to equip learners with "life skills to cope with the changing patterns in life, work and leisure throughout adulthood". De Villiers and Lemmer [2003] see life skills education as strengthening key competencies that enable people to lead successful career and personal lives.

Self-efficacy is an important concept in career education. Anderson and Betz [2001] cite studies indicating that social self-efficacy expectations are related to career indecision and career decidedness, and social self-efficacy is related to flexibility, motivation and preference, in that higher social self-efficacy is associated with beliefs that promote the career development process. Career indecision is a complex multidimensional construct represented by different forms of indecision [Gordon and Meyer, 2002]. Anderson and Betz's [2001, 114] research strengthens notions about the critical authority of "social skills, comfort and confidence in the career development and decisional process".

The close link between physical activity, physical education and life skills and health education is explored further in the next section on physical education.

3.5 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is an educational process which promotes holistic human development of social, cognitive, affective, normative aspects through the medium of selected activities to realise this outcome [Alexander, 1998, 58].

Physical education in South Africa was one of the non-examinable subjects in the past before curriculum transformation, in the same category as guidance. It was not taught at many schools and, with retrenchments, many physical education teachers were lost to schools [Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2004; Wentzel, 2001].

Physical education forms part of Life Orientation and physical development and movement is a focus area [Department of Education, 2002b]. However, physical education as it was known before curriculum transformation, differs from the physical education incorporated in Life Orientation. Van Deventer [2004, 115] perceives the publication of the RNCS to indicate that "PE as a school subject 'disappeared' from the national curriculum. The only resemblance to PE is found in the foci of Life Orientation".

Physical education deals primarily with the body. Physical education emphasises the development, mastery and refinement of physical and motor skills. In addition, the efficient use of the human body and the development of healthy attitudes towards caring for the body, are developed [Western Cape Education Department, 2004a].
The need for physical education, as discussed in chapter one, is evident and urgent. Kahn *et al.* [2002] strongly recommend working through physical education classes to promote physical activity and fitness in learners. The health benefits of regular physical activity are well documented, with physical inactivity acknowledged as a serious health burden [Spence and Lee, 2003; Stone *et al.,* 1998; Wilson and Rogers, 2004]. Regular physical activity is associated with improved physical health [Kahn *et al.,* 2002; Lasheras *et al.*, 2001; Sallis, 2000] as well as mental health [Biddle and Wang, 2003; Malherbe *et al.*, 2003]. Adolescents in particular benefit from physical activity [McKenzie *et al.*, 1996; Wu *et al.*, 2002]. Promoting physical activity in learners is of particular importance as it could encourage lifelong physical activity habits [Brunton *et al.*, 2003; Tammelin *et al.*, 2003].

School-based programmes are successful in improving physical education and increasing physical activity and physical fitness [Jamner *et a.,* 2004; Kahn *et al.*, 2002; Sallis, 2000]. Some studies indicate that physical education ensures a minimum amount of physical activity, with the quantity and specifically the *quality* of school physical education, having a significant positive effect on the health-related fitness of learners by increasing their participation in moderate to vigorous activity [US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000b]. Given the need for and holistic health benefits of physical activity, the expectation is for extensive physical education at schools to be incorporated. However, this is not the case. McKenzie *et al.* [1996, 423] point out that:

> Schools are a logical environment for promoting public health through physical activity, but children's time there is spent primarily in sedentary pursuits.

It is in this context of marginalisation that that physical education has been absorbed into Life Orientation.

3.5.1 Definition and scope of physical education

Learning outcome 4 in the RNCS states that learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities to promote movement and physical development. The integral role of physical and motor development to the holistic development of learners and the important contribution to learners' social, emotional and personal development is highlighted. Furthermore, physical development focuses on perceptual-motor development, games and sport, recreation and play, and physical growth and development [Department of Education, 2002b].

> The aim of physical education is to guide learners by means of physical activities and relevant health knowledge to develop a positive attitude towards maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle [Western Cape Education Department, 2004a, 8].

In physical education's latest reformulation as part of Life Orientation, it has an enhanced opportunity to achieve its new outcomes as part of a larger, unique learning area. Physical education speaks about the holistic development of learners in its mission; by being part of Life Orientation, this can potentially be achieved [Alexander, 1998].

> Physical Education is not only concerned with the physical outcomes that accrue from participation in activities but also

with the development of knowledge and attitudes conducive to lifelong learning and recreational participation [Alexander, 1998, 58].

Physical education needs to be seen as a multifaceted subject area that can potentially develop and enhance more than just physical or motor abilities. A militaristic physical training approach should be discouraged and the distinction between competitive sport and physical education recognised [Alexander, 1998]. However, the inclusion of sport in the definition of physical education is inconsistent at present, and the debate about the role of sport in the curriculum is ongoing [Department of Education, 2001b]. Alexander [1998] and Van Deventer [2002] rightly indicate the importance of distinguishing between sport and physical education. Van Deventer [2002, 102] clarifies that "PE (physical education) and school sport are not the same. PE is part of the *formal education curriculum,* while school sport is seen as an *optional extra-curricular* activity". Van Deventer [2002] cites studies that posit that sport is viewed as the extended curriculum, as it relies on the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners develop in physical education.

From these definitions and emerging manifestations of erstwhile physical education, there appears to be a move towards a more holistic approach to promoting health. The evolution of physical education is briefly sketched in the next section.

3.5.2 Evolution of physical education

Physical education was minimally evident in disadvantaged schools and was a marginalised subject [Alexander, 1998; Wentzel, 2001]. Similar to guidance, it was a non-examinable subject that was viewed as non-academic and presented in varying forms, or not at all, in the different education departments in South Africa before democracy.

In South Africa, physical education has evolved as the previous focus was mainly on gymnastics and competitive sport, and gender discrimination was prevalent [Alexander, 1998]. Physical education has come a long way from the sexist aims of physical education as prescribed by the Department of National Education in 1988:

The aim for girls is to contribute to the education of the pupil through the medium of movement to maintain a healthy lifestyle

and to function effectively within society. For boys the aim is to provide the necessary teaching that will afford the individual or group the opportunity to participate in physical activities which contribute to the development of the whole man [Department of National Education, 1988, as quoted in Alexander, 1998, 1–2]

These very broad aims mostly translated into regimented drills, use of gymnastic equipment in advantaged schools and competitive activities [Alexander, 1998]. Shifts in physical education were being conceptualised by teachers after democracy. Alexander [1998, 56] points out that educators advocated for a holistic approach to physical education, with suggestions including "aspects of health, recreation and promoting the development of motor, affective, and interactive skills through physical movement".

With the advent of C2005, the definitions of physical education have evolved to be more inclusive, holistic and open. Sitzer [2001] sees the primary aim of physical education as helping learners achieve success and fulfilment in movement activities, while for Alexander [1998, 4],

the objective of physical education through movement and health is to consolidate its focus within a broad area of Life Orientation where its aspiration is to inspire pupils and society to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Firm links with health promotion are now made in physical education, as

sound health and human movement practices can contribute to the prevention of health related problems and can improve the quality of life of learners [Department of Education, 1997b, 6].

Instead of the term 'physical education', reference is now made to physical development and movement, which is seen as "integral to the holistic development of learners" [Department of Education, 2002b, 6]. This includes a strong orientation towards health promotion. Of note is this consummate statement, which captures the core aim of an evolved physical education as it is conceptualised in Life Orientation:

Physical educators should be recognised as health workers who have an important role to play in preventative and promotive health care [Alexander, 1998, 65].

To further health promotion Reddy *et al.* [2003, 77] make the valid point that "the overarching goal of physical education programmes should be preparing the learners to

adopt active lifestyles and discouraging excessive sedentary habits". As a focus area of Life Orientation, this vision can become reality.

However, many physical education educators themselves remain convinced that physical education should be a compulsory separate learning area, and not be part of Life Orientation:

> …with its independence at present being usurped, physical
> education is at the mercy of school programme planners
> who seem to have forgotten about or are unmindful of, its
> compulsory status [Wentzel, 2001, 10].

The hesitancy of physical education educators to become part of the whole of Life Orientation may have far-reaching implications for this learning area, as well as for the teaching of physical education.

The interrelationship between health promotion and physical education is evident in international curricula as well. In New Zealand, health and physical education are taught under one umbrella [New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999]. Physical education includes physical activity, sport studies and outdoor education, and contributes to essential skills such as physical skills, self-management and competitive and communication skills [New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999]. Physical education is geared towards developing healthy attitudes to physical activity:

> Physical activity encourages students to enjoy movement, to
> learn about the movement culture, and to develop positive
> attitudes towards regular participation in physical activities
> [New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, 42].

In Australia, personal development, health and physical education form one of the eight key learning areas and are concerned with the development of the whole person and the improvement of quality of life for all [New South Wales Australia Board of Studies, 1991]. Active lifestyle is a content strand in Australian curricula, dealing with "how factors such as work, exercise, nutrition, physical fitness, relaxation, rest and recreation interrelate and influence an individual's health status" [New South Wales Australia Board of Studies, 1991, 19].

3.5.3 Physical education research

> *It is believed that schools can help to counter the alarming trend of physical inactivity among learners through quality physical education programmes including recreation and sports. However, data suggests that physical education is being marginalised in schools, particularly in higher grades* [Reddy *et al.*, 2003, 77].

The marginalisation of physical education is apparent in South Africa. Van Deventer [2002 and 2004] cites studies indicating that schools are in a favourable position to educate learners about healthy lifestyles, but the downscaling of physical education and extracurricular sport is a reality, due to lack of qualified physical education teachers, limited funds, insufficient time allocated to physical education and rationalisation of teachers. Van Deventer [2004] warns that the inadequate time allotted for physical education has a negative impact on learners' coronary risk profiles.

The educators responsible for physical education

The lack of specially trained physical education educators is evident. Van Deventer [2002] cites studies that indicate that in South African schools, 95% of the teachers are not trained to teach physical education. Furthermore, Van Deventer [2002] points out that new teacher-learner ratios led to many physical education teachers becoming redundant, thus having the effect that physical education either disappeared at secondary school level or was severely limited.

Van Deventer [2004, 116] refers to further studies that indicate that the :

> …current state of affairs is that PE specialists are no longer being appointed at schools. This means that generalist teachers, who have neither knowledge nor understanding of PE, might be required to teach Life Orientation…

The issue of who should teach physical development and movement remains unclear for many Life Orientation educators. Wentzel [2001] discovered that educators still have the perception that physical education should be taught only by specialists, possibly due to the lack of educators' confidence to teach physical education. These attitudes "of non-specialist teachers also impact negatively on the offering of physical education at schools" [Wentzel, 2001, 97].

International studies indicate the important role of qualified physical education educators. Digelidis, Papaioannou, Laparidis and Christodoulidis [2003] found that physical educators could create a positive motivational climate that facilitated learners' task orientation and attitudes towards exercise. Digelidis *et al.* [2003] point out that there is a gap between current knowledge in sport psychology and educators' levels of knowledge, and their abilities to create a task-involving climate at schools. If this is the case, it will be more so if untrained educators are assigned to physical education aspects within Life Orientation.

Time allocation for physical education

> *Physical education time was used to "catch up" in, or afford more time to, other subjects. For example, at some schools physical education was abandoned for academic pursuits in the fourth term in preparation for upcoming examinations* [Wentzel, 2001, 2].

Wentzel [2001, 3] indicates that the lack of time allocated to Life Orientation may lead to "a prioritisation left to the discretion of the individual teacher or school and in this process certain subjects may be neglected". Wentzel's [2001, 96] research in the Western Cape found that:

> The offering of physical education is influenced by its inclusion under Life Orientation in Curriculum 2005. This has disadvantaged physical education in terms of status (loss of independence) and time allocation. The time presently awarded to physical education is insufficient for effective teaching.

International research indicates similar time constraint issues for physical education. Because of pressure to pass standardised tests, the time allocated to physical education is reduced [Jago and Baranowski, 2004]. Strand and Scantling [1994] cite the perceived need to increase time for academic subjects, the perception of physical education classes as break-times and the indication that physical education was not meeting learners' needs, as leading to criticism of physical education. McKenzie *et al.* [1996] indicate that studies show that physical education classes in the US occur infrequently and that learners are relatively inactive in these classes.

> Increasing the frequency and duration of physical education is difficult because all subject matter areas compete for a limited amount of time during the school

day. Thus, it is imperative that the time allocated for PE in schools is used efficiently and that it includes a curriculum that promotes ample amounts of physical activity [McKenzie *et al.,* 1996, 423].

It is important to keep in mind that recommended physical activity is 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on 5 or more days per week, or 20 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity on 3 or more days a week [Kahn et all, 2002]. Given the minimal allocation of time to Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002a], it will not be possible for physical education to engage learners in even the minimum required levels of physical activity per week.

Methodology of physical education

The international literature points to the importance of activity-based and fun activities that learners enjoy while they feel safe and encouraged. McKenzie *et al.* [1996] posit that physical education has the potential to influence physical activity by providing activity during class and by making it enjoyable and desired. Jamner *et al.* [2004] indicate that interventions that increase the amount of time learners spend in moderate or vigorous activity while in physical education class appears to be more effective than those that focus on information provision and skills related to decision making. In a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of interventions to increase physical activity in the US, Kahn *et al.* [2002] found that classroom-based health education, which focused on information provision, provided insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of classroom-based health education because of inconsistencies among studies. However, contrary to the importance of physical activity versus information-giving lessons during physical education time slots, in South Africa, Reddy *et al.* [2003] found a number of physical education classes doing life skills or non-active work.

Enjoyment is related to the maintenance of physical activity [Motl, Dishman, Saunders, Dowda, Felton and Pate, 2001]. Ntoumanis [2002] concludes that it is logical to assume that physical activity programmes in schools will have a more positive impact on learners when they are motivated to participate in physical education and when they experience positive cognitive and affective outcomes as a result of their participation. Motl *et al.*, [2001] found that the observed correlations among enjoyment, physical activity and sport involvement lends support to the importance of enjoyment for

purposes of intrinsic motivation. With Life Orientation clearly aiming for learners to participate in physical activities on a lifelong basis, the concept of enjoyment needs to be considered and incorporated in physical activities in school. Corresponding to international studies, Alexander [1998] posits that physical education needs to be enjoyable and fun and allow learners to easily participate.

Of note are the positive effects of martial arts training as part of physical education. Lakes and Hoyt [2004] cite studies attributing outcomes such as increased physical confidence, improved self-perceptions of physical ability and enhanced body image to martial arts training. The indications are that a wide repertoire of activities will benefit learners and need to be included in physical development within Life Orientation. Ntoumanis [2002] cites studies indicating that long-term benefits can be accrued when learners are introduced to different physical activities and are given opportunities to choose from these activities. Learners' motivation can be enhanced by developing physical education curricula that cater for choice and diversity.

Physical education, self-efficacy and personal development

Dishman, Motl, Saunders, Felton, Ward, Dowda, and Pate [2004] found the primary correlate of moderate and vigorous physical activity among children and adolescents to be self-efficacy, with increased self-efficacy directly resulting in increased physical activity in adolescent girls. Ryckman *et al.*, [1982] found that individuals with a higher perceived physical self-efficacy have higher self-esteem, are less self-conscious and anxious, have an internal locus of control, are more sensation seeking, show a tendency to engage in adventurous physical activities and partake in more varied sport.

Locally, Malherbe *et al.*'s [2003] research indicates that physical self-efficacy is a significant predictor of exercise adherence. Their results partly confirm Bandura's [1977] self-efficacy theory and emphasise the importance of assessing different dimensions of self-efficacy in adherence research. Intrinsically motivated behaviour is associated with psychological well-being, interest, enjoyment, fun and persistence [Ryan and Deci, 2000]. Malherbe *et al.* [2003] make the valid point that self-efficacy should be studied as a tool to improve healthy behaviour, with the focus on the influence of self-efficacy on motivation, rather than on skill. It appears that learners' self-efficacy is an important component of ensured participation in physical activity on

a long-term basis. This has major ramifications for the way physical education is taught as part of Life Orientation. Due attention needs to be paid to the psychological aspects of physical education and infused in programme design and execution.

The status and practice of physical education in South Africa

The picture that emerges of physical education in South Africa is similar to that of guidance - a marginalised subject, previously non-examinable, not offered by all schools and not taken seriously [Alexander, 1998; Reddy *et al*, 2003; Van Deventer, 1999, 2002 and 2004; Wentzel, 2001]. The non-examinable status of physical education makes it less of a priority when it comes to the provision of qualified teachers and resources, with learners not taking it seriously [Van Deventer, 2004].This is not dissimilar to international trends. According to Van Deventer [2002, 102], physical education is the "missing commodity in the school curriculum of many countries", apropos the findings of the World Audit on physical education.

The move to make physical education part of the Life Orientation learning area in South Africa is seen to "reduce the status" of physical education as a school subject [Van Deventer, 2002, 104]. Physical education as a focus area of Life Orientation is compulsory in all schools, but because of its low priority, no implementation and monitoring strategies are in position to guarantee its teaching [Van Deventer, 2004].

According to Van Deventer [2002, 104]

> The present state and status of PE can be ascribed to the disparities of the past, as well as transformation within education. Rationalisation compelled school governing bodies (SGBs) to eliminate non-examination subjects…

Due to physical education's low status, experts have put forward proposals for its enhancement. Reddy *et al.* [2003] advocate for meaningful content in physical education, adequate time provision for the daily physical activity that learners require and the need for instruction that is related to achieving and maintaining physical fitness. Van Deventer [2002, 101] strongly recommends that the South African government needs to be "convinced that physical well-being should be accorded the same national importance as literacy and numeracy".

3.5.4 Physical education within Life Orientation

Physical education in the RNCS is a focus area designated as physical development and movement [Department of Education, 2002b]. The emphasis is on perceptual-motor development, physical growth and development, games and sport, as well as on recreational activities [Department of Education, 2002b].

Physical development is viewed as core to the holistic development of learners and, as such, augments their social and personal development. "Play, movement, games and sport contribute to developing positive attitudes and values" [Department of Education, 2002b, 6]. Hence, physical education is integral to Life Orientation as a learning area, as its contribution is vital in the achievement of all Life Orientation's outcomes.

Some physical education experts object to the inclusion of physical education in Life Orientation [Kloppers, 2004; Wentzel, 2001]. They fear that not enough time is being allotted to physical education components and that it is being marginalised due to the lack of specialised educators. Proposals for having physical education as a separate subject were submitted to the Education Department [Department of Education, 2000e].

> In the case of Life Orientation, there are too many subjects
> to be covered… All these subjects draw on the scarce time
> resources of the Life Orientation area [Wentzel, 2001, 96].

However, due to the close links physical education has with health promotion, it is viable for it to be part of Life Orientation. Life Orientation both strengthens physical education by its inclusion and is strengthened by the incorporation of physical education.

From a health promotion stance, physical education is appropriately placed within Life Orientation. The importance of motivating learners to become lifelong participants in active lifestyles cannot be underestimated. The health benefits of regular physical activity as discussed previously, are enormous. Learners' well-being is enhanced by physical education, particularly from within Life Orientation.

Physical education can readily be integrated in all Life Orientation outcomes. Learning outcome 1, dealing with health promotion, is clearly a direct link with physical

development and movement. Learning outcome 2, dealing with social development, further incorporates physical education in the form of nation building, beneficial community and social interactions, and human rights in sport. South African sport has a history of discrimination on the basis of race and gender which could be alleviated through an understanding of and application of constitutional principles [Singh, 2002].

Learning outcome 3, which focuses on personal development integrates well with physical development, specifically with emotional literacy and life skills that deal with body image and general self-concept enhancement, relationships, leadership and organisational skills. Hassandra *et al*. [2003] suggest that physical education could have an important educational contribution to make to learners' personal development, as it provides opportunities for enjoyment, learning new motor skills and for co-operating with others, as well as giving the potential for learning about a healthy lifestyle.

Learning outcome 5 on career education incorporates knowledge of the wide range of careers dealing with the sport industry, physical development and recreation. Especially with potentially economy-boosting events such as the Soccer World Cup in 2010 in South Africa, career knowledge of opportunities in the world of sport, recreation and the fitness industry is vital.

Physical education is a vital aspect of the school curriculum and is appropriately seated within the Life Orientation learning area. Outdoors recreation, an important aspect of physical education, is closely linked with the environment and environmental education.

3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

> *Environmental education processes have the potential to*
> *enhance a responsible ethic of sustainability in our learners, by*
> *developing the values and skills that steer our relationships with*
> *each other and with the Earth* [Wagiet, 2001, 73].

Since 1994, environmental education in South Africa has risen on the agenda of educationists. It has been transformed from a narrow, mainly fact-driven, conservation and ecology-based subject into a contemporary and environmental justice-driven issue, now firmly established as a transversal or cross-cutting concern for all learning areas.

The need for environmental education in South Africa is apparent, given the history of environmental injustice to which the majority of South Africans were subjected under apartheid.

Increasingly, environmental issues are seen to be broader than merely the natural environment; they are not just about protecting plants and animals, as they directly affect human well-being. The "shift from environmental concerns as elitist green interests, to socio-ecological issues which affect economic development and all people, especially the less powerful" [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001, 3] in South Africa has come about in tandem with democracy.

Environment includes economic, ecological and social issues [Urquhart and Atkinson, 2002] as well as interactions between social, economic, political and biophysical dimensions [Le Grange, 2003]. The conjunctions between science and culture; between natural heritage and cultural heritage; between socio-economic development and environmental protection, are emphasised by Matsuura [2004].

3.6.1 Definition and scope of environmental education

Environment itself is a broad, inclusive term:

> The environment is the whole context of life itself, the
> combination of natural and human systems - the urban and rural
> landscapes and everything that happens within them
> [Department of Education, 2001b, 74].

Hence, environmental education encompasses more than nature study or environmental studies; it equips learners to address environmental issues as accountable and responsible citizens. Learners require values, knowledge and skills, which are best developed through active learning, critical thinking and involvement in real environmental issues, as exemplified by OBE [Department of Education, 2003d].

Environmental justice and environmental sustainability are core to environmental education. Environmental justice is defined as redressing the situation whereby people with fewer choices, such as the poor and disadvantaged, often suffer most from pollution, work hazardous to health, resource depletion (for example , the loss of fishing

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stock), as well as unequal access to basic resources such as water and energy [Department of Education, 2003b]. Environmental sustainability is defined as the development and meeting of peoples' needs in ways that do not harm and damage or deplete environmental resources such as clean air, water, healthy soil and ecosystems. It is on the sustainable development of these resources that quality of life ultimately rests. We need to ensure that we continue to develop and meet human needs for future generations still to come [Department of Education, 2003b].

Environmental education and environmental justice are transversal issues that have to be addressed by and as an integral part of all learning areas, but "not as an 'add-on' of extra curriculum load, but as a sensitising and strengthening focus within each Learning Area, adding relevance and (re)orientation" [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001, 2]. This means that each learning area needs to make its unique contribution to building an environmentally literate and responsible population [Department of Education, 2003d].

3.6.2 Evolution of environmental education

Pre-1994, environment and conservation issues in South Africa were biased towards the minority.

> South Africa has a history of socially unjust conservation laws and the protection of the land for the benefit of the few, often to the detriment of others. The majority were disadvantaged in their access to natural resources, while also disproportionately affected by environmental degradation such as soil erosion and water pollution, and unhealthy work and living areas [Department of Education, 2001b, 73].

However, since 1994, policies and laws have been put in place to rectify this abuse. The ANC's *Ready to Govern* document [African National Congress, 1992] puts previously neglected environmental issues firmly on the political agenda. The White Paper on Education and Training [Department of Education, 1995a] clearly stipulates the need for environmental education processes. South Africa's Constitution [Republic of South Africa, 1996a] correlates environmental injustices with human rights and social responsibilities, indicating a national commitment to environmental action by recognising all citizens' rights to an environment that is not detrimental to their health or well-being - Section 24, (Act 108), of the Bill of Rights [Republic of South Africa,

1996a]. The Constitution makes it clear that all South Africa's citizens have the right to not only a healthy and well-conserved environment, but also to benefit from natural resources for economic and social development.

The influence of international agreements, charters and conferences has also been pertinent in shaping a new approach to the environment and to environmental education in South Africa. Agenda 21 [United Nations Rio Earth Summit, 1992] is a global plan of action for sustainable development to stop environmental degradation and to promote equitable development. Its environmental education principles (article 36.1) are based on the Declaration and Recommendations of the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education 1 [UNESCO and UNEP, 1977]. Agenda 21 has led to the development of Local Agenda 21, which is an internationally derived participatory planning process, underpinned by the principles of sustainable development [Urquhart and Atkinson, 2002].

The Earth Charter [United Nations Millennium Declaration, 2000] consists of commonly agreed principles for sustainable development to guide and judge actions of individuals, businesses and governments:

> We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all
> our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a
> planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose
> resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs [United
> Nations Millennium Declaration, 2000, 6].

South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, raising awareness about local and international environmental issues. Agreements made at the Summit could have far-reaching benefits for the environment [United Nations, 2002].

The successful implementation of agreements, standards, policies, or regulations, depends on environmentally literate South Africans. It is the role of education to ensure that they are environmentally literate. Moreover, as Madiba [2004] emphasises, without environmental education, citizens will not be able to go to court to contest the abuse of their environmental rights. The Commission on Environmental Education [1996] stipulates that environmental education is not just about transferring information, but

should be seen as socially constructed, with environmental education an active process aimed at empowering learners to find solutions, as well as to participate in environmental governance.

The Ministry of Education launched a National Environmental Education Project (NEEP) for the General Education and Training Band (GET) [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001]. This is seen to be part of the Department of Education's commitment to attending to South Africa's environmental needs, specifically through environmental education that is integrated into all eight learning areas in the GET. The project emphasises that the "environmental concerns which education needs to address are fundamental and far-reaching. Responding with trivial curriculum activities will not be adequate" [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001, 4].

The ontology of environmental education is an ever-changing and intriguing issue. Environmental education is a complex area of human understanding and a polysemous term [Le Grange, 2002]. Changing conceptions of environmental education have led to it becoming increasingly value based and an act of social transformation, according to studies cited by Le Grange [2002]. For Le Grange [2002], education for the environment revolves around education for the various forms of sustainable development. According to Fien [1993] the aims of education for the environment include moral and political awareness advancement, the knowledge, skills and commitment to analyse matters and to participate in informed and democratic ways in environmental decision making and problem solving.

Le Grange [2002, 86] speaks of an emerging "*language of probability* in South African environmental education," which serves as the foundation on which a critical consciousness about, in and for the environment among all learners can be built. Although Le Grange [2002] primarily considers the natural sciences, he sees C2005 as providing space, and OBE as providing opportunities for promoting and implementing environmental education in schools.

The White Paper on Education and Training [Department of Education, 1995a, 18] indicates the need for environmental education processes that involve "an inter-

disciplinary, integrated and active approach to learning", while the South African Qualifications Authority [Republic of South Africa, 1995b] gives recognition to the concept of environment as a critical cross-field concern. By making environmental education, and specifically *environmental justice* and a *healthy environment,* cross-cutting principles of all curricula, sustainable development and environmental justice have been promoted as obtainable realities for the future. The inter-relationship of environmental issues, human health, well-being and quality of life with the policies and laws that have been developed to address these concerns, has shaped the way environmental education has been developed [Department of Education, 2003d].

3.6.3 Environmental education research

The studies of Osbaldiston and Sheldon [2003] and Pelletier *et al.* [1998] on internalised motivation that predicates goal performance and environmentally new and responsible behaviour, hold great import for Life Orientation. They found that self-determined motivation can promote sustained environmental behaviour change. Self-efficacy, high levels of self-esteem and goal achievement are important constructs in environmentally literate behaviour and are evidenced in Life Orientation learning outcome 3, dealing with personal development, where these competencies are expressed as assessment standards to be attained by learners.

The healing and restorative properties of the natural environment, as well as the benefits of outdoors recreation, are well documented [Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis and Garling, 2003; Herzog and Bosley, 1992; Herzog, Maguire and Nebel, 2003; Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999; Kaplan, 1995; Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Fiorito, Miles and Zelson, 1991]. Life Orientation needs to encourage learners to spend quality time in outdoors recreational activities.

The reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment is well researched [Axelrod and Lehman, 1993; Bandura, 1995; Heller and Monahan, 1977; Kaplan and Kaplan, 1982; Lash, Szerszynski and Wynne, 1996; Maguire, 1996; Melamed, 1995; Redclift and Benton, 1994; Taylor and Repetti, 1997]. As Leff [1978, 284] asserts, "We are organic outgrowths of our physical and social environments, not detached and independent entities". Life Orientation's physical, personal and social development foci

in the broader context of health promotion promote beneficial relationships between learners and their environments.

3.6.4 Environmental education within Life Orientation

Environmental education gives a specific context and meaning to learning outcomes. It strengthens learning towards critical outcomes, such as developing problem-solving skills, which cannot take place in a vacuum, but can take place in the context of an environmental problem [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001]. Unless activities dealing with environmental issues are perceptibly linked to curriculum outcomes, they are unlikely to develop the scope and depth of knowledge and skills required of the "environmentally literate and active citizen" [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001, 10]. Because Life Orientation learning outcomes are seen in the context of environmental issues, learners derive additional personal and social value from these relevant aspects [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001].

The psychological dimensions of environmental education are important, and this is where Life Orientation, in particular, has the potential to play an important role. Although all learning areas deal with aspects of environment, it is primarily Life Orientation that has the capacity to focus on intrinsic motivation and the affective aspects of learners' behaviour. Many people do not view sustainable living as a psychological problem, but the world's environmental predicament is caused largely by human actions accompanied by thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and values. Neoanalytic, behavioural, social, and cognitive psychological approaches may have the necessary insights to promote environmentally relevant behaviour [Winter, 2000]. Oskamp [2000] notes the urgent changes to human lifestyles and cultural practices needed to prevent ecological catastrophe, with psychologists in the forefront of assisting people to adopt sustainable patterns of living. For Howard [2000] changes in awareness, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour could encourage changes in political and economic systems, which in turn may promote lifestyle changes that could mitigate against ecological problems. Even within the issue of beliefs, there are factors to consider such as

symbolic beliefs that do not lead to more than token environmentally responsible behaviour [Jurin and Fortner, 2002].

The important role that psychology can play in promoting responsible human–environment interactions is further underscored by Stern [2000]. McKenzie-Mohr [2000] emphasises that, to their detriment, most environmental programmes intending to promote sustainable behaviour have been characterised by information-intensive operations that make little use of psychological knowledge. Life Orientation learning outcome 3, dealing with personal development, is particularly core to environmental education.

Learners' understandings of the environmental context of personal and social development, together with life skills, is central to the development of a secure sense of self-in-society. For instance, informed decision making, critical and creative thinking and healthy relationship building are essential to develop the competencies needed for sustainable living practices [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001]. Moreover, Life Orientation's focus on self-in-society can be vital in ensuring learners have the capacity to address global problems from a local perspective. As Urquhart and Atkinson [2002, 11] state:

> Global warming, loss of biodiversity and growing socio-
> economic inequalities are global problems that have local
> impacts, and local causes.

Issues of health promotion are prominent in both Life Orientation and environmental education. Life Orientation aims to empower learners to live meaningful lives within an environment that is conducive towards their well-being and their personal and community health. Learning outcome 1 overtly addresses environmental issues by focusing on health promotion and stipulating that learners will be able to make informed decisions about personal, community and environmental health [Department of Education, 1997b and 2002a].

It is imperative for Life Orientation to ensure that learners develop an understanding of how issues related to environmental health, such as water, air, food, radiation, chemicals, pollution and aesthetics, affect personal health and community well-being. Likewise, learners need to be aware that their lifestyle choices, such as substance abuse,

excessive consumption and risky sexual behaviour, affect the environment and health of the community [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001].

Environment and social justice are concepts that are closely linked to human rights and citizenship education, which are dealt with in the next section.

3.7 HUMAN RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

> *South Africa, as an emerging democracy modelled on*
> *respect for human rights, requires employing all the*
> *means at its disposal to promote and protect human rights*
> *as the cornerstone of governance and citizen interactions.*
> *It therefore makes sense to employ the national curriculum*
> *in the interest of reaching these goals* [Keet, 2001a, 133].

Because South Africa is a new democracy, it is imperative that human rights education forms an integral part of education. The core values, attitudes and practices of a truly democratic society necessitate human rights promotion. Learners, as well as educators, need extensive opportunities to develop skills congruent with a democratic society. Curriculum 2005 is transparent in its strong indication that human rights would be an underlying principle of the curriculum and a transversal issue to be dealt with by all learning areas.

The democratising of education in South Africa, as discussed in chapter 2, holds vast ramifications for both teachers and learners. Issues such as values and competencies come strongly to the fore, and need to be an integral part of human rights education. Harber [2001] states that for the required reforms needed in government policy to be achieved, a particularly different kind of teacher from that promoted by the apartheid government is essential.

> Not only does this mean competent and professional teachers
> but also teachers ideologically committed to democratic values
> and skilled in democratic forms of teaching and learning
> [Harber, 2001, 83].

3.7.1 Definition and scope of human rights and citizenship education

According to the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (Article 19) [United Nations, 1996], the right to a human rights education is a basic human right in

itself. This is evident in the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a] and National Curriculum Statement (NCS) [Department of Education, 2003a], where human rights is one of the strong underlying principles. Volmink [1997] sees democratic and human rights principles as representing a cornerstone of educational transformation in South Africa, thus needing cross-curricula articulation in all learning areas. Human rights and democratic principles are keystones of educational transformation, as reflected in major education policy and legislative documents, such as the White Paper on Education and Training 1 [Department of Education 1995a], National Education Policy Act [Department of Education, 1996c], South African Schools Act [Department of Education, 1996b], C2005 [Department of Education, 1997a] and the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002a].

In South Africa the task of the human rights working group advising the developers of the RNCS was to clarify human rights concepts and values in learning areas. In addition the working group had to propose ways to infuse these concepts and values into learning area statements and make suggestions about ways of ensuring that human rights education was a cross-curricular issue [Keet *et al.*, 2001].

The literature abounds with definitions and understandings of human rights education, civic and citizenship education and democracy education as associated terms [Cogan and Morris, 2001; Flowers, 2002; Keet *et al.*, 2001; Kerr, 2003; Levinson, 2004; Menezes, 2003; Naval, Print and Iriarte, 2003; Pitts, 2002; Rauner, 1999; Schoeman, 2003; Tibbitts, 2002 and 2003; Waghid, 2004]. Often the terms are fused and used loosely to effect similar meanings. For example, Carrim and Govender [2001, 33] see human rights and inclusivity education as including "democracy education, citizenship education, peace education, environmental education and anti-discrimination education".

The United Nations Decade (1994–2004) for Human Rights Education brought a proliferation of definitions to the fore. The UN defines human rights education as

> a comprehensive, life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies [Tibbitts, 2003, 1].

According to Tibbitts [2003], the United Nations perspective is that human rights education is not an end in itself but rather a way of transformation and a mechanism to deal with abuses; it is an empowering process that enables people to take control of their lives by identifying violations and learning how to use existing means to counter abuse of rights. For Flowers [2002], human rights education is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills and values of human rights. Human rights education involves the learners' valuing and understanding the principles of human rights.

Keet [2001b] indicates that human rights refer to more than a framework that guides interactions between state and citizen and citizen and citizen; it also refers to access, equity and redress, together with issues of respect and human dignity. Human rights education consistently includes concepts of citizenship education or civics.

> The curriculum can play a vital role in creating awareness of the
> relationship between human rights, a healthy environment,
> social justice and inclusivity. In some countries this is done
> through subjects such as civics [Department of Education,
> 2002a, 10].

Kerr [2003, 3] sees definitions of citizenship as "very much a product of the spirit and concerns of the age." For example, the definitions of citizenship of the Conservative and Labour governments in England differed markedly, with the Conservative government urging citizens to actively take up their civic responsibilities, rather than leave them to the government. In contrast, the Labour government focuses more on civic morality, urging individuals to act as caring people who are aware of the needs and views of others and motivated to contribute to the wider society [Kerr, 2003]. Americans were exhorted to realise that civic education is essential to sustain their constitutional democracy [Center for Civic Education, 1994]. Quigley and Bahmueller [1991] found that many educators throughout the world focused their civic education programmes on the development of civic knowledge, civic skills and civic virtues.

Carrim [2001] sees human rights as being foundationally inclusive, anti-discriminatory, linked to citizenship, peace, a conducive and healthy environment and entailing working in democratic ways within democratic contexts. These characteristics are unpacked in the Life Orientation curriculum into manageable parts for learners throughout their Life Orientation education [Department of Education, 2002b and 2003b].

3.7.2 Evolution of human rights and citizenship education

Due to the advocacy work done by the United Nations, together with 1994–2004 being the Decade for Human Rights Education, human rights in education has received a great deal of attention and is included, albeit in differing formats, in many countries across the globe. Increasingly, global citizenship may become a reality if nations persevere with universal human rights education.

In Japan "civic education is valued as a means of building a democratic society" [Otsu, 2001, 29]. Citizenship and civic education are nurtured throughout the curriculum and in a range of school activities [Otsu, 2001]. The goals of civics, as part of social studies, are:

> to deepen students' understanding of their nation and its history, to cultivate a foundation of knowledge necessary for them to achieve a broad perspective as citizens, and to develop basic civic qualities essential to the shapers of a democratic and peaceful nation and society [Otsu, 2001, 32].

This is similar in some aspects to Social Sciences in South Africa, with its learning area statement purporting to contribute to:

> the development of informed, critical and responsible citizens who are able to participate constructively in a culturally diverse and changing society. It also equips learners to contribute to the development of a just and democratic society [Department of Education, 2002a, 23].

In Taiwan, the "changing political situation has influenced civic education, which has shifted from value transmission to civic knowledge construction" [Liu, 2001, 45]. Liu [2001, 60] recognises that civic education, as it manifests in knowledge transmission or seeking "eternal verities", needs to shift to developing abilities to participate in democracy, be concerned about social problems, be reflective in decision making, solve problems and deal with controversy. This is precisely what South Africa has already included in the RNCS. Thailand's key civic education goals are to develop students' good citizenship and encourage them to live responsibly, peacefully and in harmony with society [Pitiyanuwat and Sujiva, 2001].

Australia's civic education policy, *Discovering Democracy*, aims to prepare the youth of Australia to become active citizens through an understanding of Australia's democratic system of government, as well as by keeping to the values required to participate actively in civil life [Print, 2001]. Civics in America, as in Australia, is dominated by the study of democracy, the constitution, democratic values and citizens' rights [Morris and Cogan, 2001].

In New Zealand citizenship education is based in social studies, which aims to enable learners to participate in a changing society as informed, confident and responsible citizens. A strand within social studies, social organisation, enables learners to understand people's organisation in groups and the rights, roles, and responsibilities of people as they interact within groups [New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1997].

Mexico puts great emphasis on "the development of democratic citizenship skills and habits" [Levinson, 2004, 269]. Similar to South Africa's experience of democratic transition, Mexico looked to the school to engender democracy in learners. Civic education has been re-introduced as "Civic and Ethical Formation" [Levinson, 2004, 269]. The so-called *ethical* considerations are very similar to aspects of Life Orientation's health and personal focus areas, with the *traditional* civic content akin to the social development outcome.

With the publication of the Crick Report in England [Crick, 1998], citizenship education became compulsory in 2002 for learners from 11–16 years of age. Citizenship education is part of a non-statutory framework that has included personal, social and health education for learners aged 5–11, since 2000 [Kerr, 2003]. The Crick Report sets out a clear policy for citizenship education and focuses on the following "new dimensions of citizenship" [Kerr, 2003, 2]: rights and responsibilities, access, belonging and other identities.

3.7.3. Human rights and citizenship education research

Life Orientation educators have to take cognisance of research findings to prevent the same problems from manifesting in Life Orientation. Specifically, research findings pertinent to learning outcome 2 dealing with social development and citizenship

education can guide educators towards optimal implementation of this learning outcome.

Findings from a study on citizenship education across countries, including Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the USA, are pertinent [Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo, 1999]:

- Resistance from the older generation, including teachers who continue beliefs and practices of authoritarian political cultures or sub-cultures
- Slowness of institutional change in schools, not only when content is changed, but also when new pedagogical methods are introduced
- Resistance to democratic teaching styles and the empowerment of students. Low status of civic education compared with other disciplines such as mathematics, science, reading, language arts, and history
- Associating civic education with past indoctrination programmes
- Inadequate training of teachers.

Simon and Merrill [1998] cite research in the US noting the role of schools in teaching formal and informal civic values, as well as the move from "citizen-skills and mechanics of government approaches" towards "the teaching of moral education and the values needed to ensure a healthy community and common life" [Simon and Merrill, 1998, 31]. Of note is that civics programmes in schools did not have a major impact on political attitudes or behaviour, the reason being that political socialisation was a long-term and gradual process, rather than one that can be "affected by a single high school course" [Simon and Merrill, 1998, 31].

In Taiwan, Liu [2001] found that teachers believed citizenship could be developed by persuasion, socialisation and indoctrination, with little encouragement of participatory citizenship and the spatial dimension of citizenship. Life Orientation proposes the opposite, with learners encouraged to participate in democratic structures.

Policy-practice interface incongruities with regard to citizenship education is highlighted by Morris and Cogan [2001], who found in international research that there

is a significant gap between curriculum intentions and implementation in schools. The policy-practice interface includes impracticality of lofty ideals, lack of time, excessive demands on teachers, teachers who do not subscribe to democratic values and the incongruence between order and freedom.

Human rights and gender

Human Rights Watch reports [2001 and 2004] indicate that gender-based violence against women in South African schools is widespread. Greenstein and Mabogoane [2003, 130] voice their concern about South Africa's "patriarchal culture, sexism and male chauvinism, instances of sexual harassment and violence." Reddy *et al.* [2003] point to the gender violence to which learners are subjected.

Of import is the research by Harley *et al.* [2000] about the interface between policy and practice. Teachers' personal value systems would significantly affect teacher effectiveness in a specific role, such as the policy requirement that teachers promote gender equity. As an example of the wide gap between what teachers knew they were obliged to do, and what they actually did, an elected union official, knowledgeable about the rights of learners, said:

> As a man, I believe I am and will always be superior to a
> woman. Our culture is consistent with this view [Harley *et al.*,
> 2000, 295].

Harley *et al.* [2000, 295] found that teachers' personal values interacted with those of the schools' communities as well, and in complex ways ; this is aptly expressed by a teacher:

> How do you promote gender equality when the community in
> which the school is located, and the homes from which the
> learners come, not only practise gender inequality, but insist that
> the school and therefore the teachers must propagate the same?
> Do I, as a teacher, do what my employer tells me or what the
> community where I live and work demands?

Dreyer, Kim and Schaay [2001]; Dreyer [2002]; and Schaay [2002] found that only six out of 33 teachers applied to the classroom setting what they had learnt in a Western Cape gender-based training programme. Although flaws in the training programme were identified, the lack of application by teachers was nevertheless worrying.

This thread is picked up in the research of Dei [2004], who contends that if inclusive schooling is to be taken seriously in the Ghanaian contexts, then educators and students have to examine and respond to ways that ethnicity, gender and other forms of social difference implicate the wider educational experience of youth. Dei [2004] finds that gender is a crucial aspect of social difference that seriously implicates the process and experience of schooling.

3.7.4 Human rights and citizenship education within Life Orientation

> *Life Orientation offers the conceptual home, as it were, for the inclusion of a compulsory course on human rights* [Carrim, 2001, 18].

In South Africa, the Human Rights and Inclusivity Working Group proposed that the Life Orientation learning area should make provision for a focus on human rights and inclusivity, in addition to the cross-curricula infusion of human rights [Keet *et al.*, 2001]. Accordingly human rights is, in addition to being a transversal principle, given content, context and much credence in the Life Orientation learning area. Focuses on human rights are found in Life Orientation, specifically in learning outcome 2, which deals with social development, while learning outcome 1 (health promotion), learning outcome 3 (personal development), learning outcome 4 (physical development) and learning outcome 5 (career education) add further support and weight.

Carrim [2001] suggests that the component on democracy, human rights and inclusive education provide learners with basic political literacy, peace education, environmental education, democracy education and anti-discrimination and inclusive education. Although all learning areas are to address these issues, Life Orientation is seen to be the "conceptual home" and is to provide "a space for a systematic, albeit basic, coverage of human rights and inclusivity issues" Carrim [2001, 18].

Human rights instruments such as the South African Constitution [Republic of South Africa, 1996a], United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child [United Nations, 1996], the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children [Organisation of African Unity, 1999], Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) [1979], the Children's Charter of South Africa [1992], and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948], are core in the Life Orientation curriculum. Life

Orientation should "succeed in complementing the transformation of society in the interests of promoting the human rights culture inscribed in the Constitution" [Ngwena, 2003, 201].

From the various definitions and applications of human rights education, citizenship and civic education, it is apparent that elements of these approaches are included in the Life Orientation outcomes and assessment standards. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are encouraged are core to the promotion of human rights in a democracy.

The close association of values and religion with human rights education and citizenship education will be explored further in the next section. Religion forms part of Life Orientation learning outcome 2 (social development) and is an aspect of citizenship education.

3.8 RELIGION EDUCATION

> *Conservative religious voices were loudest in their condemnation of the draft National Curriculum Statement. But they were not ultimately the 'dominant' voices influencing the curriculum. The curriculum was shaped by a multiplicity of new, diffuse social forces, voices and educational philosophies, much less visible and loud than evangelical Christians, but far more powerful in the new South Africa* [Chisholm, 2002, 55].

In accordance with changes in the curriculum (see chapter 2), changes were also made to *religious education* to ensure that *religion education* took its place. Life Orientation was deemed to be a suitable domicile for the inclusion of religion education, as part of general citizenship education [Department of Education, 2000a; Department of Education, 2002b].

The National Policy on Religion Education [Department of Education, 2003a] indicates that religion education is the responsibility of the school, and its aim is to achieve religious literacy. This includes education about the religions of the world, with particular attention to the religions of South Africa, as well as world views.

3.8.1 Definition and scope of religion education

> *Religion can motivate and inspire with vision and hope in a situation of unprecedented insecurity, violence and the almost complete collapse of values systems that have in the past undergirded societies.* [Kruger, 1998, 37]

The distinction between religion and religious education is clear: religious education with its spiritual aims and instruction in a specific belief or faith, would be the responsibility of the family and faith community; religion education would have specific education aims, such as the study of religion, in all its many forms, without promoting any religion, and would be the responsibility of the school [Department of Education, 2001b; Department of Education, 2003a].

> Religion Education… has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, Religion Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religions society. Individuals will realise that they are part of the broader community, and will learn to see their own identities in harmony with those of others [Department of Education, 2002b, 5–6].

Kruger [1998, 39] explains that multireligious education entails "giving access to and learning about more than one religion - in one framework of understanding". Kruger [1998] recommends that multireligious education should be offered to all learners in all grades. The National Policy on Religion Education [Department of Education, 2003a] differentiates clearly between, on the one hand, a single-faith approach to religious education providing religious instruction in one religion, and a multiple single-faith approach giving parallel programmes in religious instruction for a pre-determined group of religions, and, on the other hand, a multi-tradition approach to the study of religion education, which does not promote any particular religion.

Nolan [in Chidester, 2002a] rightly argues that the school is not responsible for fostering the religious development of learners, but for giving learners the knowledge *about* religion, morality and values, as well as the diversity of religions. Chidester [2002a, 99] stipulates that:

the role of religion in the schools must be consistent with constitutional provisions for freedom of religious and other beliefs, and freedom from religious and other discrimination.

It is vital that educators consider the South African Constitution as core to all teaching in religion, and adhere strictly to its principles.

The term 'religion' in this Life Orientation Learning Area Statement is used to include belief systems and worldviews. Religion Education in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for grades R-9 (Schools) rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religions bodies and parental homes on the other [Department of Education, 2002b, 5–6].

Religion education in South Africa is similar to religion education in Mexico. Due to the struggle against the power of the Catholic Church, the Mexican constitution specifies that public education should be secular, and not used to promulgate the beliefs of specific religions [Levinson, 2004].

3.8.2 Evolution of religion education

The apartheid regime's religious instruction was a vehicle for Christian National Education, which was a "narrow set of religious interests" purporting to produce specific religious results by assuming a "Christian, Bible-based nature" [Chidester, 2002a, 92]. Chidester [2002a, 93] explains eloquently how religious education was driven by:

a confessionalism which required learners to embrace prescribed religious convictions, and a triumphalism that explicitly denigrated adherents of other religions.

In the past, South Africa's Christian National Education dogma ensured that religious education was part of the school curriculum and featured Christian religions only. This led to many schools, education and parents not being willing to "accommodate the religious needs of learners from different cultures or religious backgrounds" [Roux, 1999, 1]. There was no respect or space given to other religions, belief systems or traditions, apart from mainstream Christian religions. Mndende [1994] points out that, based on the assumption that Christianity is the only legitimate religion, the apartheid state suppressed African indigenous religion, especially in schools.

As early as 1992, the National Education Policy Investigation suggested that the previous system of religious education be abolished as a matter of urgency. The National Education Policy Investigation [1992] recommended that a programme of multi-religion education be introduced that would teach learners about religion, not a particular religion. For the National Education Policy Investigation [1992], learning about religion and religions could lead to the benefits of increased tolerance and an understanding of diversity. In accordance with the Constitution of South Africa [Republic of South Africa, 1996a], freedom of religion, belief and opinion is guaranteed under the Bill of Rights.

Because religion was such a hotly contested, emotive and divisive aspect of education, the education department consulted broadly with role players and thoroughly investigated religion in education [Chidester, 2002a, Department of Education, 2001b; Chisholm, 2002]. This led to the National Policy on Religion Education [Department of Education, 2003a], which was unambiguous in its outline of the role and function of religion education. In brief, the relationship between religion and education is explained as:

- In all aspects of the relationship between religion and education, the practice must flow directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.
- Public institutions have a responsibility to teach about religion and religions in ways that reflect a profound appreciation of the spiritual, non-material aspects of life, but which are different from the religious education, religious instruction, or religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community [Department of Education, 2003a, 5].

This vision of religion education is congruent with the multifaith approach promoted by Kgatla [1998, 19], which is a well-defined, "unified, and academically consistent approach". Kgatla [1998, 19] emphasises that multifaith religion education does not serve specific religious goals, but assists learners to comprehend and appreciate the "colourful religious heritage" of South Africa. Roux [1998b, 1] concurs, stating that a "new perspective on religious education" is essential to answer to the challenges of a multicultural society and to answer to learners' needs.

Traditional leaders expressed concern that the spiritual aspects of learners were being ignored by the new curriculum [Department of Education, 2002e]. Notwithstanding the loud opposition to religion education and to so-called "interfaith religion", "secular humanism" and exposing learners to "pagan" faiths and cultural practices, by American-influenced fundamental Christian networks, home-based schooling organisations and conservative elements [Chisholm, 2002, 54], the RNCS, together with its new vision of religion education, became policy.

A strong message was sent out to schools:

> School governing bodies and principals need to be empowered
> with ways of transforming assemblies from being occasions for
> imposing religious uniformity to being forums where diversity is
> celebrated, along with the values of our Constitution
> [Department of Education, 2001b, 45].

Hence, religion education replaced the religious instruction of the apartheid era, and a new beginning of religion education was initiated.

3.8.3 Religion education within Life Orientation

> *'Religion education' - and consciousness about the role and*
> *effect of religion - will be integrated into the General Education*
> *and Training Band, specifically in Life Orientation and Social*
> *Studies* [Department of Education, 2001b, 44].

As the Learning Area statement for Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b] indicates that learners need to respect the rights of others and appreciate cultural diversity and different belief systems, it is ideally suited to promote religion education. Life Orientation is seen as the obvious learning area to deal with religion education, not only from the perspective of knowledge about religions, but also from that of values.

> The Life Orientation learning area, through programmes like
> Life Skills, Religion Education and Social Responsibility, is
> well positioned to impact on the ethical and moral dimensions of
> pupil development [Department of Education, 2003a, 10].

Chidester [1996, 155] posits that "Rather than bounded cultural systems, religions are intrareligious and interreligious networks of cultural relations." As such, religion

education can best be incorporated in Life Orientation learning outcome 2, which deals with social development and citizenship education.

Guidelines for how Life Orientation can enhance religious literacy suggest that learners could learn about the differences and similarities - in symbols, diet, clothing, sacred spaces and ways of worship - of an array of belief systems. Learners can further deal with and learn about values, festivals, rituals, and customs of different belief systems. The Senior Phase could incorporate the way "spiritual philosophies are linked to community and social values and practices" [Department of Education, 2003a, 18].

Of note is that religion education is only a "small component of one out of eight learning areas that are studied in the General Education and Training band" [Department of Education, 2003a, 19]. Religion in Life Orientation constitutes one assessment standard per grade within learning outcome 2, which addresses issues of religion education directly. Accordingly, to equate religion education with Life Orientation is inaccurate, as it is not even a focus area, but merely one assessment standard per year within the social development focus area.

3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Life Orientation is a new learning area in South Africa that was created as part of C2005 and the RNCS. The need for Life Orientation is apparent. South Africa is a new democracy, in a developing world, recovering from the inequities of the past, while competing in the global market. Learners' psychosocial and health needs, as well as several socio-economic challenges, can be addressed through the Life Orientation learning area.

Life Orientation, which can be located within a health promoting school framework, is a learning area rich in learning fields. Previous South African school subjects such as guidance and career education, life skills, health education, environmental education, physical education, citizenship education and religious instruction, now in evolved formats, constitute Life Orientation. The foci now pertinent to Life Orientation are health promotion, personal and social development, physical development and

movement, as well as orientation to the world of work. These foci are expressed as learning outcomes.

The definitions of the various foci characterise the evolution and development of Life Orientation focus areas, both from an international as well as a local perspective. The holistic development of learners is paramount and an integrated approach to the foci of Life Orientation is required.

The principles of the RNCS such as values, indigenous knowledge, human rights, diversity, gender and environmental and social justice are integral to Life Orientation teaching and learning. Constitutional principles are readily identifiable in Life Orientation and are imbued in all its foci. Learning outcome 2, dealing with social development, is particularly geared towards citizenship education and religion education.

The role of the World Health Organization in health promotion in Life Orientation is core. Health promotion and well-being are advanced through life skills and health education, including environmental health approaches. Physical education, shaped as physical development and movement, further adds to the holistic health of learners. Learning outcome 1 on health promotion, learning outcome 3 on personal development and learning outcome 4 on physical development and movement, particularly address issues of holistic health promotion.

Career education in the Senior Phase links closely with the other learning outcomes and is grounded in self-knowledge, knowledge about careers and career-search and decision-making skills. Poverty alleviation and socio-economic advancement are cardinal to addressing the challenges learners encounter. Life Orientation, through this focus area, expressed as learning outcome 5 (the world of work), can contribute to the economy of South Africa.

Life Orientation is a value-laden learning area, particularly with reference to religion education, sexuality and HIV and AIDS education and gender. Constitutional principles underlie and frame the Life Orientation learning area, which serve as guidelines for educators. Although human rights is a cross-cutting or transversal component included

in all eight learning areas, human rights education positions Life Orientation as its conceptual home and is imbued in all aspects of Life Orientation teaching and learning. Another transversal component, environmental education, is also given much scope and is fully integrated in Life Orientation. Religion education is approached from a civic, rather than religious stance and is included as a small component of Life Orientation to ensure learners are exposed to different belief systems, including traditional African beliefs and religions, to promote respect and tolerance of diversity. Sexuality education is approached from a life skills framework and is a component of health promotion.

Theoretical underpinnings cardinal to this learning area include social cognitive theory, resilience and risk theory and emotional literacy. Self-efficacy, self-concept, emotional intelligence and cognitive problem solving are core to health promotion and life skills development, and to Life Orientation as a learning area.

The methods for Life Orientation are not merely information giving, but practical, active and participatory methods that are experiential. Skills' practice is core to the development of the competencies associated with Life Orientation's outcomes and assessment standards.

Research findings in the literature highlight the marginalised nature of the previous constituents of Life Orientation. Some of the constituents of Life Orientation were independent subjects in some schools in the previous education system. Especially physical education educators are still opposed to the integration of physical education in Life Orientation. Lack of specialised and trained educators, lack of time to teach these constituents, the low status apparent and the view that they are "non-academic" are some of the challenges that the legacy of the past carry into the future of Life Orientation.

Life Orientation encountered contestations and problems from its inception. However, Life Orientation can overcome these challenges. The radical transformation of previous subjects such as guidance and physical education into this holistic, vibrant and quintessential learning area, warrant the improved status and practice of Life Orientation.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this chapter is to detail the research methodology adopted for the study. This chapter describes the research approach used, gives an overview of the research design, outlines the data collection and analysis methods and discusses the constraints and limitations of the research. Ethics in research is also discussed.

The pilot investigation in 2001 as well as the literature survey, pointed to the likelihood of Life Orientation encountering status and implementation challenges within the broader context of curriculum transformation in South Africa. Research aims and objectives were developed to guide this investigation into the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. These aims guided the structuring of research tools, triangulated as structured and unstructured interviews and questionnaires, and augmented by student-teachers' and researchers' observations.

Northern Limpopo and the Western Cape, at geographic extremities in South Africa, were selected as the two provinces for the research. The data was obtained over a period of three years by multiple researchers. The analysis and interpretation of the data led to the formulation of recommendations for future Life Orientation teaching and learning in schools, to ensure optimal implementation of this quintessential learning area.

The aim of this research was to ascertain the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. The overall research question was: What is the emergent picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation? The principal research questions were:

- What is Life Orientation? What are the definition, scope and understandings of Life Orientation?
- What significance is attributed to Life Orientation?
- Who teaches Life Orientation?
- How much time is allocated to Life Orientation?

- How is the practice of Life Orientation exemplified? What teaching methodologies do Life Orientation educators use? What are their problems and successes?

Additional research questions, emanating from the research findings of the study, were:

- What is the impact of Life Orientation educators' values on their teaching?
- What are the rhetoric-practice interface incongruities?

In this study, the *status* of Life Orientation refers to the significance attributed to Life Orientation, the value ascribed to Life Orientation, the time allocated and utilised for Life Orientation and the way Life Orientation is perceived and assigned meaning. The *practice* of Life Orientation refers to how Life Orientation is implemented in schools and what transpires in the classroom. Included in the practice of Life Orientation are teaching methodologies used, issues of assessment, problems and successes educators experienced with Life Orientation, and learning support material availability. Both the status and the practice of Life Orientation interface and are interrelated.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

> *We need to reflect carefully on the ways in which our*
> *methods of research can redefine the phenomena we seek*
> *to research and to which we hope to be faithful*
> [Holdaway, 2000, 158].

The study was exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, and not experimental [Babbie and Mouton, 2001]. The theoretical assumptions implicit in this research are discussed in this section. The research was triangulated with qualitative and quantitative research instruments, and numerous researchers participated in data collection.

4.2.1 Qualitative research

> *The core requisites for qualitative analysis seem to be a*
> *little creativity, systematic doggedness, some good*
> *conceptual sensibilities, and cognitive flexibility—the*
> *capacity to rapidly undo your way of construing or*
> *transforming the data to try another, more promising tack*
> [Huberman and Miles, 2002, 394].

The influence of positivism, hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, and phenomenology is inherent in qualitative research [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998]. Miller and Salkind [2002] add grounded theory, narrative research and ethnography as important traditions of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research is best defined as "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, 3]. Babbie and Mouton [2001, 270] indicate that qualitative research is differentiated from quantitative research according to these core characteristics:

- Research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors
- A focus on process rather than outcome
- The actor's perspective (the 'insider' or 'emic' view) is emphasised
- The primary aim is in-depth ('thick') descriptions and understanding of actions and events
- The main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context (ideographic motive) rather than attempting to generalize to some theoretical postulation
- The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories
- The qualitative researcher is seen as the 'main instrument' in the research process.

The research study was characterised by the above features in the following way:

Natural setting: The research was conducted in schools, in classrooms and in educator training institutions, namely universities.

Focus on process: Events as they occurred were studied; hence, Life Orientation as taught and experienced by educators and learners at the time the study evolved, was the focus.

Actor's perspective: An attempt was made to view Life Orientation as experienced from the participants' (respondents') viewpoints to try to understand their actions and decisions from their own positions.

In-depth descriptions and understanding: The actions of participants in the research were described in detail, with attempts to understand the actions in terms of the participants' own beliefs, historicity and contextuality.

Ideographic motive: An attempt was made to understand events, actions and processes in their context. Hence, the broad context was taken into account.

Qualitative researcher as main instrument and objectivity: As the most important instruments in the study, the researchers were required to be unbiased in their observations, descriptions, reflections and interpretations.

Qualitative methods were used in this study to enhance the quantitative research because they are useful for ascertaining issues that are not readily quantifiable, such as unstructured interviews and proceedings in focus groups, student-teachers' observations and reflections, which were based on open-ended questions, and educators' definitions of Life Orientation. Qualitative research was used particularly to ascertain educators' understandings and definitions of Life Orientation and their values pertaining to Life Orientation constructs, and to provide additional information about their teaching methodologies and attitudes towards Life Orientation.

A proliferation of literature debating the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research exists [Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Burton, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Krathwohl, 1998; Hammersley, 2002; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Miller and Salkind, 2002; Scott and Usher, 1996]. The strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research pertinent to this study are mentioned below.

Qualitative research provides an understanding and description of the participants' personal experiences of phenomena - the emic or insider's viewpoint. The data is based on the educators' personal assignations of meaning to Life Orientation. The data tells a story, which is useful for in-depth analysis and for describing the complexities of curriculum implementation and curriculum transformation phenomena such as experienced with C2005. The data can give detailed descriptions of phenomena that are situated and embedded in local contexts such as the classroom and the school. Contextual and setting factors can be taken into account. For example, in a quantitative study educators may indicate that they have two 35-minute periods a week for Life Orientation; but student-teachers' observations could add that these periods were often not used for Life Orientation, which adds an important dimension to the knowledge base. Qualitative research can determine how participants interpret constructs, such as the meaning and definition of Life Orientation, through the use of open-ended questions. Qualitative data, as captured in the words and categories of participants,

enhance the exploration of phenomena central to education, such as educators' values and attitudes.

Weaknesses include the collection of a vast body of data, which makes data capture, categorisation and analysis time consuming and difficult. Vital observations can readily get lost in the mass of information, which is awkward to categorise and delineate into manageable sections. Furthermore, the results are easily influenced by the researchers' personal biases and agendas. The knowledge produced may be unique to the participants in the research, as it is difficult to make predictions based solely on qualitative data.

While qualitative research relies on observation and written description, quantitative research uses statistical methods to show relationships between variables [McEwan and McEwan, 2003]. To counter the weaknesses of qualitative research and to ensure the measurement of findings, quantitative research was core to the study.

4.2.2 Quantitative research

> *…quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Inquiry is purported to be within a value-free framework* [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, 8].

In contrast to the qualitative research described previously, quantitative research is best defined as the measurement of the properties of phenomena, which is the assignment of numbers to the perceived qualities of phenomena [Babbie and Mouton, 2001, Krathwohl, 1998].

The division between qualitative research and quantitative research occurs at the level of methods, not at the stage of epistemology or theoretical perspective, where distinctions between objectivist and positivist research, and constructionist or subjectivist research are manifest [Crotty, 1998]. Although these methods are perceived to be distinct, there is an increasing move to demonstrate that qualitative and quantitative research do not necessarily fit in separate research paradigms; hence, they can be judiciously used within the same research [Scott, 1996].

The strengths of quantitative research lie in its perceived status as being more reliable and having greater validity than qualitative research [Hammersley, 2002]. Hammersley [2002] indicates that quantitative research appears to be prioritised by officials in England; if researchers are to make an impact on policymaking and practice then their research needs to be taken seriously. Quantitative research is useful in the conceptualisation, measurement and analysis of findings [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998]. In this study educators' responses to predetermined categories and classifications were counted and basic statistical measures used. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPPS) was used. This quantitative approach does lend a measure of reliability and validity to the research. Quantifiable data can be measured numerically, meaning that it is more precise [Gray, 2004]. However, this needs to be juxtaposed with its inherent weakness, the possibility of losing a great deal of information. What could be discounted is the account *behind* the account, as quantitative measures do not allow the whole picture to emerge.

The bulk of the study consisted of quantitative research in the format of structured interviews and questionnaires, using educators and learners as respondents, to ascertain information about the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools.

4.2.3 Triangulation

> *Objective social indicators are based on counting*
> *the occurrences of a given social phenomena, and*
> *subjective social indicators are based on reports*
> *from individuals about their feelings, perceptions*
> *and responses. Neither type, used alone, has*
> *managed to give us an accurate 'window' on reality,*
> *and they are best developed and used in conjunction*
> [Carley, 1981, 174].

Triangulation refers to the use of different data collection methods in one study, such as the combination of qualitative and qualitative research [Cohen and Manion, 1985; Gray, 2004; Krathwohl, 1998]. This assists with determining whether the data is indicating what it appears to be indicating. Through the use of a variety of methods such as questionnaires, observations and interviews, or more than one researcher, researchers can be additionally sure of their conclusions [Scott and Usher, 1996]. As the results will be affected by the method used, a mixed-method mode is useful to promote validity and

reliability of results. Triangulation is deemed to be one of the best ways to strengthen validity and reliability [Babbie and Mouton, 2001]. The combination of data types is synergistic [Huberman and Miles, 2002]. A combination of methods and investigators in the same study can contribute to the richness of the data and insights and partially surmount the deficiencies that arise from using only one investigator or method [Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Cohen and Manion, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Huberman and Miles, 2002]. Hence, in this study, an evolving tapestry of qualitative data, interwoven with insights and observations, added a deeper dimension to the core quantitative data, and was simultaneously tempered by the quantitative data, which set limitations and boundaries.

Structured and unstructured interviews, questionnaires, as well as observations, involving a number of researchers, formed the crux of the research approach in this study. Two researchers (including the author) conducted investigations using both qualitative and quantitative measures in Limpopo. Similar measures were used by a total of 74 student-teachers who conducted structured interviews and administered questionnaires in the Western Cape. Furthermore, 17 small groups (2–3 in a group) of student-teachers ran unstructured interviews with educators, some in the format of focus groups, in the Western Cape. All student-teachers provided observations, including extensive reflective writings, on their observations. This approach led to the sourcing of a vast and rich database.

While using more than one method to examine the same research question can enable researchers to strengthen the validity of their findings, Fielding and Fielding [1986] caution that using multiple methods does not necessarily ensure validity as the use of multiple methods may increase the possibility of error. Diverse methods could conflict, coexist, or work in harmony with each other [Meltzoff, 1999]. However, in this study, the diverse methods were used to attempt to augment one another.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, an overview of the methodology, including a summation of the research phases and processes, a synopsis of the sample, and an explication of the procedure are provided.
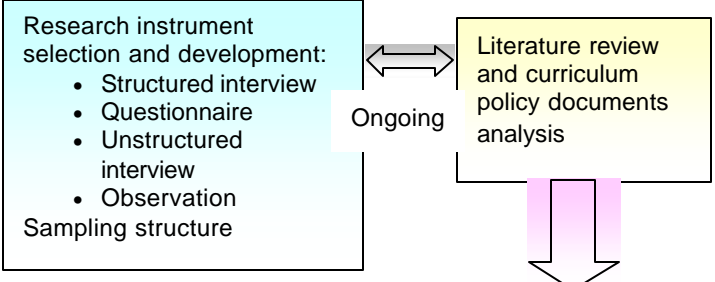
4.3.1 Outline of methodology

> *By methods, we mean that range of approaches used in*
> *educational research to gather data which are to be used*
> *as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation*
> *and prediction* [Cohen and Manion, 1985, 42].

Methodology refers to the strategies, plans of action, processes or designs foundational to the choice and implementation of specific methods, as well as the linking of the selection and implementation to the desired outcomes [Crotty, 1998]. Methodology is the corpus of knowledge that describes and analyses methods, including their strengths and weaknesses [Miller and Salkind, 2002].

Table 4.1 depicts a summation of the research phases and processes. Four distinct phases occurred, namely the design of the research, pilot of the research instruments, conducting of the research and data capture and analysis.

Table 4.1 Research phases and processes

Research phases	Research processes
Design of the research	Research instrument selection and development: • Structured interview • Questionnaire • Unstructured interview • Observation Sampling structure ←Ongoing→ Literature review and curriculum policy documents analysis
Piloting research instruments	2001: Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators and Senior Phase learners participate in pilot structured interviews and questionnaires. Student-teachers' observations, reflections and comments on the research tools are analysed. Consequent analysis, refinement, adjustment and consolidation of research tools.
Conducting research: data collection; formulation and operationalisation of research instruments	Time period: 2002–2004 2002 and 2003: student-teachers in Western Cape administer questionnaires and conduct structured interviews, submit reflections and observations 2003: researcher and research assistant administer questionnaires and conduct structured and unstructured interviews (including focus groups) in Limpopo. 2004: student-teachers conduct unstructured interviews with educators in Western Cape
Data capture and analysis	Processing, presentation and analysis of data.

A pilot investigation in 2001 was a precursor to this study. Draft structured interviews and questionnaires were administered by 14 student-teachers. Eight educators at eight schools and 110 Senior Phase learners were part of this study. Extensive observations and reflections were made by student-teachers on their Life Orientation teaching practice experiences, as well as on the draft interviews and questionnaires. This made the analysis, refinement, adjustment and consolidation of the research tools possible. Table 4.2 reflects the methodology used to meet each of the research aims in the study.

Table 4.2 Research aims and corresponding methodologies

AIM	METHODOLOGY
To critically review curriculum change in South Africa as a backdrop for investigating Life Orientation	A literature review of curriculum transformation in the South African Education system since 1994, OBE, C2005 and the RNCS.
To explore the components of Life Orientation and conduct an in-depth analysis of Life Orientation.	A literature review of Life Orientation and its constituents: • guidance • life skills • health education • physical education • citizenship education • religion education • environmental education
To investigate aspects emanating from the research, such as values and the rhetoric-practice interface	A literature review of values and research pertaining to the rhetoric-practice interface
To ascertain the status and practice of Life Orientation is in South African schools. To find answers to these research questions:	Investigate research methods and tools: • structured interviews • questionnaires • unstructured interviews • observations
What is Life Orientation? How is Life Orientation defined and understood?	Structured interviews and questionnaires
What significance is attributed to Life Orientation? What value is placed on Life Orientation?	Structured interviews, questionnaires and observations
Who teaches Life Orientation?	Structured interviews and questionnaires
What teaching methodologies do educators use?	Structured interviews Structured interviews and observations
To what extent do educators' values affect their teaching of Life Orientation?	Unstructured interviews and observations
What is the rhetoric-practice incongruity?	Structured and unstructured interviews and observations

4.3.2 Synopsis of sample

The research was conducted in two provinces, Limpopo (45 schools) and the Western Cape (49 schools). Both primary (Intermediate Phase) and high (Senior Phase) schools formed part of the sample. Foundation Phase learners and their educators were not part of the study because the Life Orientation curriculum in this phase was incorporated in a learning programme named life skills, which included other learning areas and was not in itself a measure of Life Orientation as a learning area. Learners in grades 10–12 and their educators were not included in this study, as Life Orientation had not yet been implemented for those grades at the time of the study.

Figure 4.1 Map of South Africa showing the areas of investigation.

The far-northern rural regions of Limpopo (purple) and the urban regions around Cape Town in the Western Cape (green) formed the area of investigation.
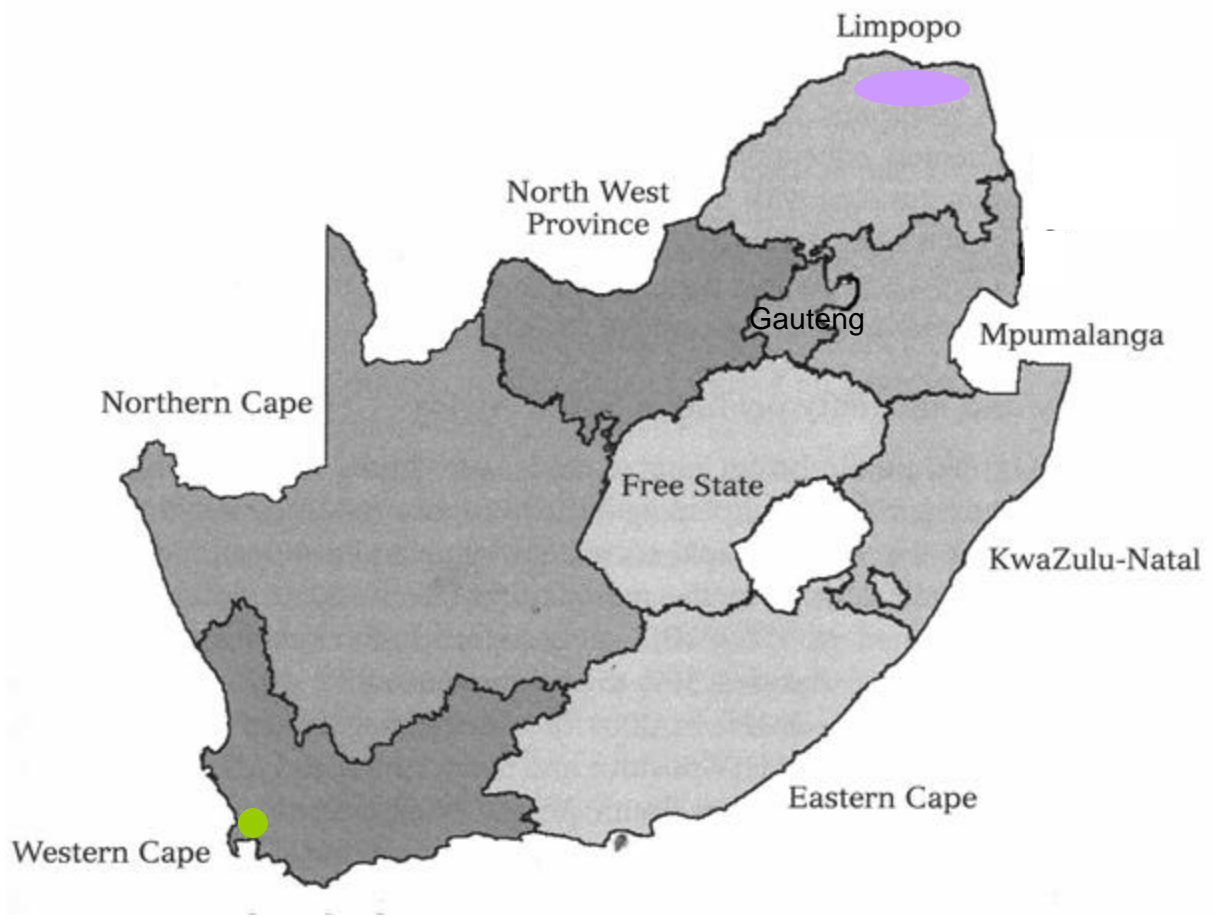
Student-teachers from the universities of the Western Cape and Cape Town conducted research in the Western Cape, under the supervision of the author. Student-teachers were enrolled for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at both the universities of the Western Cape and Cape Town. All student-teachers had a first degree. In the Western Cape, urban schools were selected by default as those were schools to which student-teachers were assigned for the duration of their teaching practice (TP) sessions. The TP sessions ranged from 6–9 weeks in duration, when student-teachers would spend the full school day at their allocated school. The schools in the Western Cape were representative of the ex-Department of Education and Training, ex-Model C, ex- House of Representatives, as well as private schools. The schools were invariably reasonably to well resourced. Most of the schools were fully operational, had electricity, running water, classrooms, furniture and chalkboards. The schools in the Western Cape were in the following areas:

Athlone	Elsies River	Plumstead
Belville	Guguletu	Rocklands
Bergvliet	Hout Bay	Rondebosch
Cape Town	Khayelitsha	Sea Point
Claremont	Kuils River	Salt River
Constantia	Mitchells Plain	Wynberg
Crossroads	Newlands	

Not all schools had Life Orientation educators. In the case where there was no Life Orientation educator, student-teachers interviewed the person who was responsible for Life Orientation or the closest semblance to Life Orientation. This was either guidance, counselling, religion education, HIV and AIDS education or physical education in some instances. In these instances the educator responsible was usually the school principal, a guidance educator or counsellor or a physical education educator.

In three of the schools where there was no Life Orientation or semblance of Life Orientation or similar topics taught. No interviews were conducted in these schools and the schools did not form part of the sample.

A total of six student-teachers' data were rejected due to late submission as it would have entailed the student-teacher revisiting the school in a different role and no observations would have accompanied the data. Eight of the student-teachers' data were also rejected because their interview forms were more than 30% incomplete. From this cull, a total of 74 student-teachers' data were used from structured interviews with educators, observations and questionnaires administered to learners in the Western Cape.

In Northern Limpopo, rural schools were randomly selected on the basis of their geographical location. An attempt was made to reach the more inaccessible schools and schools in the outlying regions. A few schools in central areas such as Thohoyandou were visited, as well as schools in Makhado. Of the 49 schools visited, only four were not included in the study: two schools because they did not offer Life Orientation or a similar topic yet, one school due to the principal being too busy to give permission and one because the researchers were refused access. Schools in these districts and circuits were visited:

Dzindi	Sibasa
Dzondo	Soutpansberg (East, North and West)
Luvuvhu	
Malamulele (East and North-East)	Thohoyandou
Mutshindudi	Tshiane
Nzehelele (East, North-East, West)	Vuwani

The schools were up to 120 km from Makhado, the nearest town. Many of the schools were accessible via gravel roads, pathways or informal road strips. Some of the schools were accessible on tar roads. Many of the schools lacked basic facilities such as electricity and running water. There was a shortage of built structures and some classes were held outside.

A classroom in Limpopo made from bits of corrugated iron

Inside this classroom

Classrooms in Limpopo constructed from planks

Outdoor classrooms are used in some schools in Limpopo due to lack of built structures

Classrooms in Limpopo providing minimal protection from the elements.

A dilapidated classroom in Limpopo

Table 4.3 summarises the sample numbers for structured interviews and questionnaires in both Limpopo and the Western Cape.

Table 4.3 Summary of sample respondents/participants for structured interviews and questionnaires.

Province	Group	Western Cape	Limpopo	Totals
Intermediate Phase	Educators	40	25	65
	Learners	161	119	280
	Schools	21	23	44
Senior Phase	Educators	34	35	69
	Learners	617	667	1 284
	Schools	28	22	50
All Phases	Educators	74	60	134
	Learners	778	786	1 564
	Schools	49	45	94

Categorisation of schools

As discussed in chapter 2, South Africa has one unified education department. Accordingly it was not the intention of this study to focus on different types of schools. However, to elucidate the sample and to show the representation of a broad spectrum of schools in the sample, a brief categorisation of schools according to the previous regime's classification system is given.

Table 4.4 Distribution of schools visited according to apartheid categories

PROVINCE	EX-DET	EX-HOUSE OF REPS	EX-MODEL C	EX-HOUSE OF DELEGATES	FARM	PRIVATE
Limpopo	31	1	3	1	4	5
Western Cape	9	13	20	0	0	7

In the Western Cape the schools predominantly had Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English speaking educators and learners. In Limpopo the schools had predominantly Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans speaking educators and learners.

4.3.3 Procedure

The research sequence depicted in Figure 4.2 illustrates the flow of the research. After the pilot in 2001, refined and adapted structured interview questions and questionnaires were developed (Appendix A, B and C). Structured interviews were conducted and questionnaires administered by student-teachers in the Western Cape in 2002 and 2003. The researcher and research assistant conducted structured interviews and administered questionnaires in Limpopo in 2003.

Student-teachers worked in small groups to conduct individual and small group unstructured interviews with educators, focusing particularly on values, in the Western Cape in 2004. The researcher and research assistant held unstructured interviews with small groups of Department of Education officials in Limpopo who had dealings with Life Orientation and Life Orientation related matters, including life skills/HIV and AIDS co-ordinators. Further unstructured interviews were held with groups of educators in Limpopo, where questions about values were dealt with.

The researcher held unstructured interviews with individuals and small groups of Department of Education officials during the period 2002–2004 in the Western Cape. The researcher also attended quarterly Life Orientation learning area committee meetings run by the Western Cape Education Department, during this period.

Student-teachers recorded their observations, particularly the discrepancies between what educators indicated in their interviews and what happened in the class. In addition, they were given guided reflection worksheets to complete at the end of their TP during TP review sessions (Appendix D). They debated and discussed in small groups issues about the status and practice of Life Orientation as they experienced them during their TP sessions. The information obtained from the student-teachers was transcribed and a representative sample extract was used to add information and contribute to the emergent picture of Life Orientation teaching and learning.

The observation method was also utilised in Limpopo. Observations by the researcher and research assistant were collated and transcribed to add context and information to the data obtained in Limpopo.

Figure 42 Research sequence

1

PILOT: 2001
- Preliminary short questionnaires administered to 110 Senior Phase learners in Western Cape
- Interviews held with 8 educators in Western Cape
- Observations of 14 student-teachers analysed

2

2002
- Refined structured interview questions
- Refined questionnaires
- Student-teachers conducted 57 structured interviews with educators
- Student-teachers interviewed 111 Intermediate Phase learners
- Student-teachers administered 516 questionnaires to Senior Phase learners
- 2 unstructured interviews Department of Education officials
- 3 Life Orientation learning area committee meetings

2001–2002
Researcher as participant-observer in Life Orientation working group for RNCS development

2003
- Student-teachers conducted 17 structured interviews with educators (different schools from 2002)
- Student-teachers interviewed 50 Intermediate Phase learners
- Student-teachers administered 101 questionnaires to Senior Phase learners
- 2 researchers conducted 60 structured interviews in Limpopo with educators
- 2 researchers administered questionnaires to 667 Senior Phase learners in Limpopo
- 2 researchers interviewed 119 Intermediate Phase learners in Limpopo
- 2 researchers ran 6 focus groups in Limpopo with educators and Department of Education officials
- Researcher attended 3 Life Orientation learning area meetings in Western Cape & held 2 unstructured interviews with departmental officials

2001–2004
Student-teachers' observations & reflections

4

2004
- Student-teacher groups ran focus groups/unstructured interviews at 17 schools in Western Cape
- 2 Life Orientation learning area meetings in Western Cape

155

4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In this section an overview of data collection methods is given. Structured and unstructured interviews, questionnaires, observations, student-teacher reflections and field notes are briefly described. The data collection methods for the study were selected in accordance with the aims of the study. Table 1.1 (chapter 1, page 25) gives a summation of methods used in the context of the research aims.

4.4.1 Structured and unstructured interviews

> *The interview encounter has the explicit purpose of one person obtaining information from another during a structured conversation based on a prearranged set of questions* [Babbie and Mouton, 2001, 249].

The structured interview was selected as the core method of investigation because it was viewed as a useful and practical tool to collect information that could be quantified. There was one open-ended question about the educators' and schools' definition and understandings of Life Orientation, for which a qualitative measure of data capture and analysis were used. The rest of the structured interview was in the format of a questionnaire administered by interviewers.

The interview as "a personal contact between and interviewer and a respondent" [Miller and Salkind, 2002, 309] was used for obtaining information about the status and practice of Life Orientation from educators and Intermediate Phase learners. Structured interviews are used to collect data for quantitative analysis. Predetermined and standardised questions, which are the same for all respondents, are used [Gray, 2004].

Cohen and Manion [1985] view the structured interview as an interview in which the content and procedures are prearranged in advance. Denzin and Lincoln [1998] add that the pre-established questions have a limited set of response categories, with minimal scope for variation in response, barring the use of open-ended questions. Gray [2004] emphasises the high cost of structured interviews in terms of interviewer time, travel and money, but sees the high response rate as a positive aspect. Structured interviews also allow for eliciting more information and asking for clarification from both the interviewer and interviewee [Gray, 2004]. Extensive travel and time were spent in

Limpopo, but the information gained offset these obstacles. An important weakness of the structured interview is that, because it is face to face,

> There is also the problem that respondents are more likely to over-report socially desirable behaviour than when answering through postal interviews [Gray, 2004, 111].

Observations by student-teachers and researchers underscored the propensity of educators to want to please and give what they thought were the 'correct' responses.

A major advantage of the personal interview is that the interviewer can obtain additional information about the interviewees' personal characteristics and environment, which could be useful when interpreting and evaluating findings [Miller and Salkind, 2002]. This was particularly evident when interviewing educators, as the way they taught, the textbooks they used and tasks they assigned to learners were readily observable in many instances.

Unstructured interviews are exploratory, and impromptu conversations occur [Krathwohl, 1998]. A focus group is a group interview used to ascertain how a group that is representative of a target population reacts to something presented to them [Krathwohl, 1998]. Unstructured interviews with individual educators and with small focus groups also proved to be a useful data collection method. Unstructured interviews and focus groups were particularly useful for investigating issues of educators' values.

> An advantage of focus groups is that they allow for a variety of views to emerge, while group dynamics can often allow for the stimulation of new perspectives [Gray, 111, 2004].

In both Limpopo and the Western Cape, educators debated issues of values such as gender, sexuality education and religion education.

4.4.2 Questionnaire

> *Questionnaires are research tools through which people are asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order* [Gray, 2004, 187].

Questionnaires were used to collect data from Senior Phase learners on their experiences of Life Orientation. This measure was used because it is an appropriate

quantitative tool to collect data from a large sample. Questionnaires guaranteed the anonymity of the learners, were relatively quick to complete and conveyed a great deal of information about Life Orientation. Data analysis of closed questions is straightforward, readily coded, ensures anonymity and there is no interviewer bias [Gray, 2004]. Weaknesses include the levels of literacy required by questionnaires, the possibility that many respondents prefer verbal communication, and the possibility that respondents may give inaccurate or misleading answers, without the researcher being able to detect this [Gray, 2004]. Standardised questions do not necessarily always elicit standardised, rational responses [Gray, 2004].

Closed-ended questions were used to get learners to select an answer from a list provided. These type of questions are popular because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are readily processed [Babbie and Mouton, 2001]. In addition to the closed-ended questions, learners were asked to add topics and were given the option of adding anything else they wanted to say about Life Orientation at the end of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were not wholly self-administered as it was necessary, in many cases, to explain the questions to the learners in a step-by-step way.

4.4.3 Observations

> *…observers are judged by whether they are sensitive*
> *enough to capture the critical aspects of what is*
> *occurring, how well they can make sense of these aspects,*
> *and how accurately the explanations they induce fit the*
> *data* [Krathwohl, 1998, 249].

Observation as a research method is a well-known way of collecting data [Denzin and Lincoln, 1998]. Observations, including field notes and reflective writings, although not used as primary data collection methods in the study, were used to add context to the quantitative data. Observation is a complex combination of sensation and perception, with the interpretation of meaning being both a strength and a potential weakness [Gray, 2004]. Cohen and Manion [1985] cite two types of observation, namely participant observation and non-participant observation. In this study, a combination of these two modes was used, as student-teachers were both part of the process of teaching Life Orientation and also observed educators teaching Life Orientation. Hence, their observations were often a combination of experienced reality and observed reality.

Observations in the study were not recorded in the lengthy detail as described by Cohen and Manion [1985]. Rather, student-teachers' observations were brief and in summative format. Observations were unstructured and guided only insofar as the student-teachers were asked to report on discrepancies between educators' structured interview responses and their teaching of Life Orientation in the classroom. Student-teachers were also advised to record issues that could add information to their knowledge of Life Orientation. They were not given checklists to complete, as it was thought that an open-ended approach may elicit more pertinent information that may not have been obvious at the time. Observation units [Babbie and Mouton, 2001] included Life Orientation educators, their learners, the Life Orientation classroom, as well as the school as a whole, with particular reference to issues relevant to Life Orientation.

A weakness of observation is that people who are aware of being observed, may act differently from how they usually act, leaning towards a more socially accepted mode of behaviour or in accordance with the observer's expectations, or by reacting in some way [Krathwohl, 1998]. However, in the study student-teachers spent an extended period of time in classrooms, and educators may have become less aware of them. Krathwohl, [1998] indicates that with prolonged contact, reaction to the observer may diminish. The researcher and research assistant attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible in their observations so as to minimise educators' reacting.

A further advantage of observation is that it allows the researcher to document both behaviour as it occurs and events as they take place [Blalock and Blalock, 1982]. It was of particular use for student-teachers to note how Life Orientation timetabling, for example, would be usurped by other learning areas deemed more important. This was only possible through observation.

Denzin and Lincoln [1998] refer to reflection as interpretative and explanatory statements. As an outcome of lived experience in the TP classroom and a culmination of observations, student-teachers were able to reflect in depth on the nature of Life Orientation in practice. Guided reflection questions were given to student-teachers on completion of each TP session.

> Field notes become an important field text in personal
> experience methods when we acknowledge the
> relationships we have as researchers with our participants.
> The nature of these relationships shape the construction of
> the records [Clandinin and Connelly, 1998, 168].

Field notes are particula rly useful for recording impressions and contexts that deepen understandings of Life Orientation. Clandinin and Connelly [1998, 169] point out that field texts are "constructed representations of experience". As such, they bring their own dynamic and value. Student-teachers may have seen themselves, to some extent, as actors in the events they were describing. In Limpopo, field notes served as a useful additional context. Field notes included notes about educators' informal discussions after the structured interviews were completed, observations based on tours of the schools, looking at textbooks, what was written on the chalkboard in Life Orientation classes, the availability of Life Orientation educators, and so on.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

An analysis of data w as undertaken to ascertain what the status and practice of Life Orientation was in schools in Limpopo and the Western Cape. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis measures were utilised.

4.5.1 Quantitative methods of data analysis and capture

The research aims and questions guided the analysis. To ascertain the status and practice of Life Orientation in schools, the percentage of educators and learners who responded to the various questions, was calculated. This gave an indication of how many respondents in the study gave a particular reply to each research question.

All data from questionnaires and structured interviews were recorded directly into Microsoft Excel. The following values were tabulated, as depicted in Table 4. 5.

Table 4.5 Data recorded

A **Intermediate Phase: Educators** Province School number Educator number Responses to questions 1 to 8, except 7.	B **Intermediate Phase: Learners** Province School Number Learner Number Responses to question 7
C **Senior Phase: Educators** Province School Number Educator Number Responses to questions 1 to 7	D **Senior Phase: Learners** Province School Number Learner Number Class size Responses to questions 1 to 14

Both univariate and bivariate analyses were used. Frequency and valid percent were calculated [Babbie and Mouton, 2001]. Results were depicted in charts. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used.

4.5.2 Qualitative methods of data analysis and capture

> *Descriptions can lay the basis for analysis, but we need to*
> *go beyond description: we want to interpret, to understand*
> *and to explain* [Gray, 2004, 327].

The research aims framed the qualitative data analysis, and provided the foci that were highlighted. Unstructured interviews, observations, field notes and student-teachers' reflective writings were analysed. Categories were devised according to recurring themes, and data were transcribed and collated in these categories. Content analysis was used as the method to categorise and summarise the vast data pool that was obtained.

Representative comments were extracted to further illustrate the quantitative findings. For example, student-teachers may have noted a discrepancy between what the educator *said* in the structured interview ("Life Orientation is the most important learning area") and what they themselves *observed* ("Educator does not use allocated period to teach Life Orientation"). This observation would be recorded under the broad heading 'Rhetoric -practice interface' and the sub-heading 'Life Orientation is the most

important learning area'. Another example is: a student-teacher's reflection that "there was no opportunity because no time was given to this learning area" would be categorised under the heading 'Frustrations of teaching Life Orientation in teaching practice'. These types of representative comments could be used to support and add information to the quantitative data, building up a *picture* of what was happening in Life Orientation.

4.6 CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research study had constraints and limitations, which need to be taken into account when viewing the findings. Interpretative measures, parameters, interpretation of responses, sampling and sample size, are discussed as possible limitations and constraints.

Sampling could have been an issue as the study was limited to only two provinces, namely Limpopo and the Western Cape. The research was further limited to rural (far northern) Limpopo and urban Western Cape (Cape Town and surrounds). This delimits the extrapolations that can be made for broader South Africa. However, the strengths of focusing on only two provinces enabled the research to be carried out in greater depth than a larger study would have allowed for. With deep-rural and established urban areas included, as well as a spread of different types of schools, a fairly representative sample was obtained.

Although not part of the research design and planning, a small sample of educators and learners in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape completed questionnaires and responded to structured interviews, and a small sample of educators in KwaZulu-Natal participated in unstructured interviews. Indications were that the data obtained were very similar in nature to the present findings. However, due to the small sample, these findings were not calibrated in this study. Accordingly, is it only with reservations that extrapolations can be made to South Africa as a whole.

The same researchers were not used for Limpopo and the Western Cape. Student-teachers conducted structured interviews and administered questionnaires in the Western Cape, while the researcher and a research assistant conducted all the research

in Limpopo, where no student-teachers were involved. Although the purpose of the study was not to compare the two provinces, a few comparisons were made to highlight pertinent issues where differences were marked.

Student-teachers' and researchers' objectivity may have been in question in some instances where their passion for Life Orientation may have impinged on their observations and reflections. Not all student-teachers may have been as rigorous in their research methodology as required. Some student-teachers' competencies as researchers may have been still evolving. Accordingly, some of the findings may have been biased. This bias was addressed by comparing observations and results from the same schools and educators, obtained by different student-teachers over the years (only the first structured interview for each school was used for the study, not ensuing interviews). The findings were similar and no particular differences were indicated. The large number of student-teachers involved in the study also contributed to lessening bias and obtaining a realistic picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation in Western Cape schools.

The questionnaires administered to learners needed extensive explanations and translations in some instances. It may have been possible that not all learners understood the questions and options. Language difficulties as well as conceptual difficulties were barriers to full completion of the questionnaire in some cases. However, the large sample ensured that the few questionnaires that may have been misunderstood had no impact on the results. The researchers and student-teachers explained the questions in detail and, where required, translated words into Venda, Tsonga or Sotho. In some schools in Limpopo, educators translated the questionnaires into Venda for the learners in their classes to ensure that the learners understood.

Errors such as respondents giving a socially desirable response to please the interviewer or hiding something from the interviewer [Fontana and Frey, 1998] could have occurred. Educators wanting to give a good impression of their work, possibly wanting to depict a positive attitude towards Life Orientation, as well as purporting to support curriculum transformation, could have impaired the truth. Educators may have held back when discussing the impact on their values as most educators were aware of what was expected from them and thus could be prone to giving the 'correct' response.

Learners may have wanted to please too. This was particularly evident in the Intermediate Phase, where learners were overwhelming in their positive comments. Measure should have been developed to get Intermediate Phase learners to complete elementary anonymous questionnaires.

Adler and Adler [1998] cite questions about validity and reliability, observer and context bias, observer effect, and the absence of member checks as some of the problems of observation as a method of gathering data. Field notes may be inadequate to capture the researched experience and need to be used in collaboration with other data. Denzin and Lincoln [1998] refer to all field tests as constructed representations of experience. In this study, extensive use was made of observations to add context to the interviews and place them in perspective. The limitations of observations need to be kept in mind.

Student-teachers were asked to record their impressions of their interviews. These student-teachers' comments highlight the limitations of structured interviews:

> *I learned that educators know how they are supposed to feel about the subject but that this does not always translate down into the classroom.*
>
> *I also feel the educator felt a bit intimidated by the questionnaire because he seemed to be very cautious about answering questions.*
>
> *If the educator I interviewed viewed Life Orientation as essential, then why did he give it the lowest ranking?*
>
> *The possibility exists that educators may answer as they are expected to and not truthfully because of the intimidating environment of a student doing a research interview.*
>
> *The educator was very cagey and defensive, and seemed to give all the "correct" answers, which did not play out in the way he taught.*
>
> *When I interviewed educators, they gave the appropriate responses, but I found their actions contradictory. Educators know what is expected of them, but are simply not equipped to teach this learning area efficiently.*

It may have been uncomfortable for educators to be interviewed by student-teachers as they are expected to be role models for the students during TP, and as such may be inclined to give the 'correct' responses.

In some instances, educators wanted to impress, and were shy and ill at ease. A few educators asked the interviewers what the 'correct' options were and wanted us to choose for them. Further interviews and long-term observations would ideally be necessary to ascertain a reality-based picture of Life Orientation in practice.

4.7 ETHICS IN RESEARCH

> *We ought to do good. This principle (beneficence)*
> *involves the obligation to take positive steps to help*
> *others. It provides an important justification and*
> *goal for researchers* [Kent, 2000, 63].

Ethical considerations were core to this study. In this section research ethics are discussed, with particular reference to ethical principles, protection, anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation, beneficence as well as analysing and reporting.

4.7.1 Introduction to ethical principles

Theories in ethical philosophy that are foundational to ethics are deontological theory advocated by Kant; the theory that morals should be based on obligations to others, and consequential theory advocated by Mill; and the proposition that humans ought to produce the greatest possible balance of value over disvalue, hence suffering should be minimised and well-being maximised [Kent, 2000]. Simons and Usher [2000] make the important point that ethics has traditionally been viewed as an array of general principles applied to all circumstances; yet ethical principles mediate within differing research methodologies and would, accordingly, take on differing significance in relation to those practices.

Ethical principles cited by Kent [2000] are autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. Guides to ethical action in the form of rules include veracity, privacy, confidentiality and fidelity [Kent, 2000].

4.7.2 Protection

Non-maleficence [Kent, 2000] is a crucial ethical principle. "No harm to participants" [Babbie and Mouton, 2001, 522] is core to all research, as participants and respondents have to be protected from harm.

Protection is closely aligned to anonymity and confidentially. It is of particular importance that educators, schools and learners, as well as Department of Education officials, who participated in this study are not identified.

Similarly, Life Orientation learning area committee meetings' observations would be limited to the official minutes that were made public. Observations and informal discussion during the researcher's participation in the development of the Life Orientation curriculum for the RNCS, will be referred to with circumspection, and serve mainly as part of the backdrop against which the study was formulated.

The feelings of research respondents were respected and protected. To ensure that participants did not feel threatened or humiliated, a direct question about educators' tertiary qualifications was not asked. It was thought that educators could object to student-teachers' invasion of their privacy pertaining to personal qualifications. South Africa is still emerging from a regime that did not make equal access to learning possible, and many excellent educators are without degrees and so-called professionally normative qualifications. Educators were asked how long they had been teaching Life Orientation and why, and they would often offer their qualifications as the reason, but it was not a direct question. If needed, this data could be obtained from the Department of Education. However, both Limpopo and Western Cape Education Departments still have to initiate research into the qualifications of Life Orientation educators, which is scheduled to be done in the future as funds become available.

4.7.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

> *As personal experience researchers, we owe our care, our responsibility, to the research participants and how our research texts shape our lives* [Clandinin and Connelly, 1998, 169].

Participants were informed that their names and the schools' names would not be made public at any stage of the research. This confidentially was strictly adhered to with care and respect for the privacy of the participants. Each school, educator and learner was assigned a number. Learners' names were not recorded. Educators' names were recorded in the event of follow-up research taking place in future, but will not be released or publicised.

The aim of this research was not to compare and contrast schools, types of schools and areas and educators. Accordingly, provinces are mentioned only if there is a significant difference that adds value to the study. Similarly, the type of school is only referred to where it is significant for the study.

4.7.4 Voluntary participation

Babbie and Mouton [2001, 521] refer to the "social intrusion" by which social research is often characterised. An attempt was made to render the research study minimally intrusive, by posing questions in sensitive ways and accommodating educators' and schools' busy schedules.

No educators were forced to participate or assign classes where questionnaires could be administered. In one school an educator appeared to feel threatened, and refused access to his class because he said "the learners are going to write wrong things on the questionnaires about me; they are a difficult class". This matter was not pursued and his wishes were respected. Similarly, a few principals refused access to their educators and learners; once again, their wishes were respected. A few learners refused to complete questionnaires; they were not forced in any way or made to feel vulnerable. Some Department of Education officials did not attend meetings set up for unstructured interviews; once again their right to not participate was respected.

4.7.5 Beneficence

Beneficence, the principle of "the obligation to take positive steps to help others" [Kent, 2000, 63] is deemed very important. The research study did not aim to intervene at any stage. However, when requested to do so, the researcher felt morally obliged to accede. For example, in Limpopo educators asked:

Have you only come to ask questions? It was nice talking
to you and you really made us think about Life Orientation
…but is there nothing more for us? Resources?
Information? We are so desperate for more information…

The researcher made the promise to return in three months time to run a few workshops. This promise was kept and workshops were held in Nzhelele, Thohoyandou and Sinthemula and Life Orientation resources distributed.

Once the research has been completed, a series of workshops will be offered in both Limpopo and the Western Cape to Life Orientation educators and Department of Education officials. The findings and recommendations of the study will be shared and action plans put into place to address some of the recommendations, in joint ventures with the educators. This is planned for the second half of 2005 and early 2006.

In the Western Cape educators benefited from student-teachers having the latest materials and resources, innovative teaching and assessment methodologies, as well as Department of Education documentation, which they shared with educators. Some student-teachers indicated that educators enjoyed being interviewed, as they found it good to talk about Life Orientation and issues within this learning area that cause them anxiety. Student-teachers indicated that some interviews continued over an extended period, as educators added a great deal of information after the formal structured interview was completed. This need to talk was evident and may have benefited educators. Some of the questions stimulated debate and made educators think about Life Orientation in a different way. In Limpopo, most interviews took between 45 minutes and 60 minutes to complete. Often, the educators would continue for another hour. The need to talk about Life Orientation was apparent.

4.7.6 Analysing and reporting

Care was taken to identify the limits of the findings and the methodological constraints inherent in the research study. Findings were reported fully and not misrepresented. The methodology and techniques of analysis were disclosed.

4.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The methods and techniques used in this study were defined by the research aims. Triangulation was the preferred method of data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to develop, implement and analyse the measures to ascertain an emergent representation of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools.

Questionnaires, structured interviews and individual and group unstructured interviews were used to collect the data, while descriptive statistics were used to arrive at the interpretation of the data.

The pilot study was used to both develop the research tools as well as to formulate the research proposal and to design and develop the research instruments. Ninety-four schools in Limpopo and the Western Cape were then used for sampling and selection of the educators and learners who formed part of this study. Data collection and processing were based on the sample population's responses to the structured interview for Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators; the results of the brief structured interview with Intermediate Phase learners; the results of the questionnaires; and the focus groups and student-teachers' observations and reflections.

Limitations and constraints of the study were identified, which aids the interpretation of the findings. Ethical principles were adhered to. Beneficence entailed the researcher running workshops in Limpopo and disseminating Life Orientation learning support materials and will entail a further series of workshops in the Western Cape and Limpopo once the research has been completed.

Chapter 5 outlines the findings of the research. The findings were obtained by using the methods described in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. The quantitative findings are grouped in five broad categories within which aspects of the qualitative findings are integrated. The qualitative findings are integrated where applicable, with reference to student-teachers' and researchers' observations. The results of the unstructured interviews are summarised in the section on educators' values and attitudes. The quantitative findings obtained from the structured interviews and questionnaires are mainly portrayed in the format of figures. Where necessary, the questionnaire allowed participants to choose more than one option, hence in these instances the sum of the percentages exceeds 100. Summations of findings not depicted in these figures are included in text format. The combined Limpopo and Western Cape results are presented as distinct groupings of Intermediate Phase educator, Senior Phase educator, Intermediate Phase learner and Senior Phase learner responses. Where there are marked differences between the provinces, however, the findings are compared.

The research results depicted in this chapter pinpoint the research aim. The aim of the study was to ascertain the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. The *status* of Life Orientation refers to its attributed significance and ascribed value, the time allocated and utilised for it and the way it is perceived and assigned meaning. The *practice* of Life Orientation refers to how it is implemented in schools and what transpires in the classroom. Included in the practice of Life Orientation are teaching methodologies used, assessment issues, problems and successes educators experienced with Life Orientation, and learning support material availability. The issues of status and practice are interrelated. For example, time allocation is both a status variable as well as a facet of the practice of Life Orientation.

The findings of the following research foci and research questions are presented in this chapter:

Life Orientation defined, interpreted and described
- What terminology, nomenclature or descriptors are used when referring to Life Orientation?

- What are educators' definitions and understandings of Life Orientation?
- How do educators interpret the constituents of Life Orientation and what do they perceive its foci to be?

The significance attributed to Life Orientation

- What is the value assigned to Life Orientation?
- How is Life Orientation ranked in terms of learning areas?
- What are learners' preferred Life Orientation themes and topics?

Life Orientation time allocation and usage

- What is the time allocation for Life Orientation?
- What is educators' time usage for Life Orientation?
- How do learners feel about Life Orientation time allocation?

The educators responsible for teaching Life Orientation

- Who is responsible for Life Orientation?
- What is a Life Orientation learning area specialist?
- What are educators' rationales for teaching Life Orientation?
- Who are prototypical Life Orientation educators?

The practice of Life Orientation in the classroom

- What teaching methodologies do educators utilise?
- What are the problems experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation?
- What are the successes experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation?

Life Orientation educators' attitudes and values

- What are educators' attitudes towards curriculum transformation?
- To what extent do educators' values affect their Life Orientation teaching?

5.2 LIFE ORIENTATION DEFINED, INTERPRETED AND DESCRIBED

Schools and educators do not necessarily refer to Life Orientation as *Life Orientation*, nor do educators share the same understandings and interpretations of Life Orientation. In addition, the constituents of Life Orientation may be variously viewed. Accordingly, these aspects required investigation in order to ascertain what the perceptions and

understandings of Life Orientation are. *What is Life Orientation?* is an important question that underscores educators' comprehension of Life Orientation.

5.2.1 The terminology, nomenclature or descriptors used to refer to Life Orientation

Figure 5.1 shows that only 28% of the Intermediate Phase educators indicated that at their schools, they referred to Life Orientation as *Life Orientation*. Instead, a range of other descriptors were used: *life skills* was used by the highest percentage (71%) of Intermediate Phase educators, while 48% used *health education* and 48% *religion education*. Religion education was further described as *religious education* and *Bible education* in some instances under *other. Civics* received the lowest percentage (6%). Intermediate Phase educators therefore used more than one descriptor for Life Orientation.

Figure 5.1 Intermediate Phase educators: Life Orientation descriptors

n=65
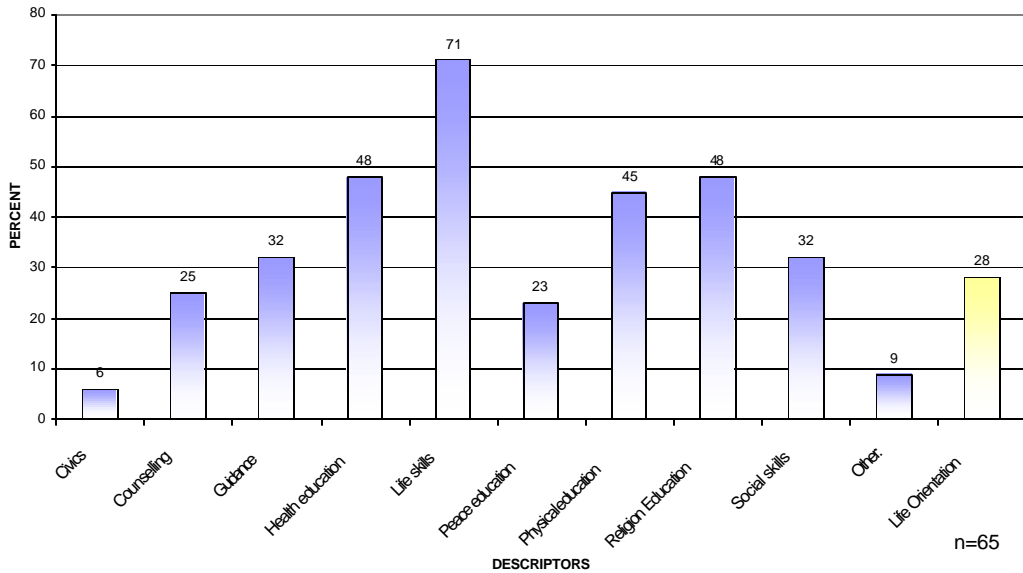
Figure 5.2 illustrates that 17% of Senior Phase educators indicated that they refer to Life Orientation solely as *Life Orientation.* Of the Senior Phase educators who indicated that Life Orientation was referred to by descriptors other than *Life Orientation*, a relatively high percentage (49%) used *life skills* and 43% *guidance*. *Physical education* was used by 29% of the educators, and *counselling* by 26%. As in the Intermediate Phase, educators tended to use more than one descriptor for Life Orientation. However, Senior Phase educators tended to use both life skills and Life Orientation less often than Intermediate Phase educators, while *guidance* was used more by Senior Phase than Intermediate Phase educators.

Figure 5.2 Senior Phase educators: Life Orientation descriptors

n=69
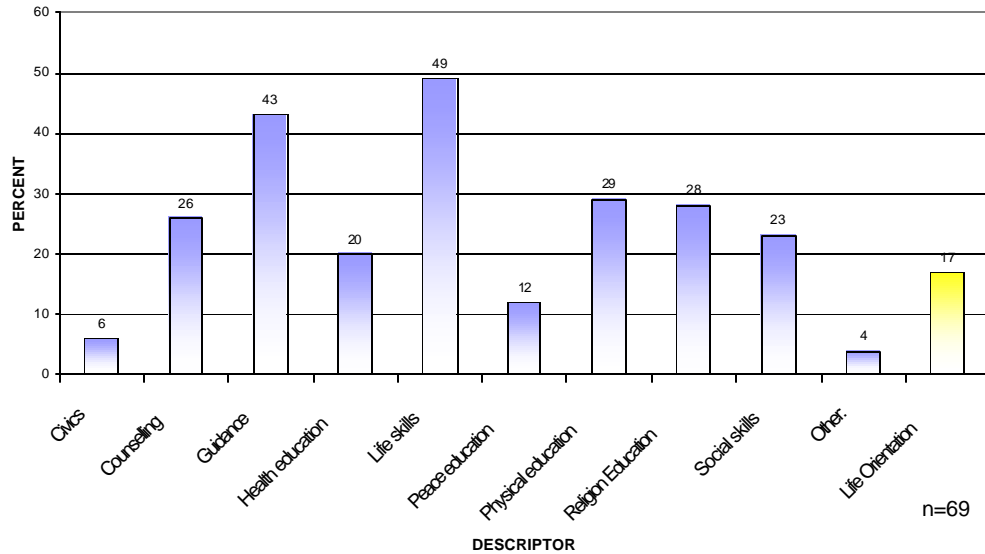
Figure 5.3 shows that 67% of the Senior Phase learners indicated that *Life Orientation* was the term used for the learning area Life Orientation at their schools, while 11% used *guidance* and 18% *life skills*. The other components of Life Orientation were minimally used in lieu of Life Orientation. This differs from the Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators' descriptors in that Senior Phase learners indicated that *Life Orientation* was predominantly used for Life Orientation at their schools.

Figure 5.3 Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation descriptors

n=1277
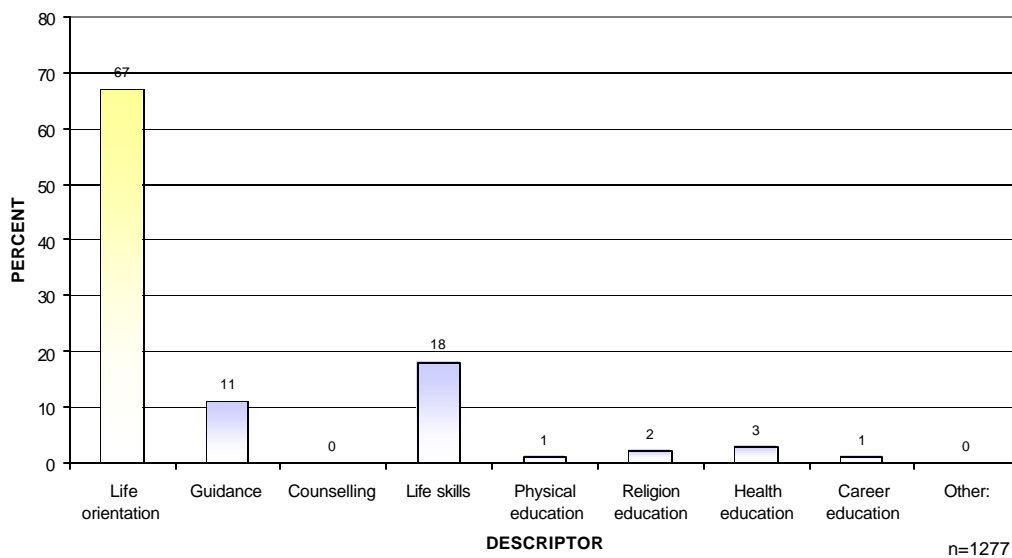
Figure 5.4 compares Senior Phase learners' descriptors for Life Orientation in Limpopo and the Western Cape. Of the Senior Phase learners in Limpopo, 74% said their schools

used *Life Orientation*, while 60% of the Western Cape learners indicated *Life Orientation* was the predominant descriptor used. *Guidance* was used by many more learners (20%) in the Western Cape than in Limpopo (4%). The use of *life skills* was similar in the Western Cape (20%) and Limpopo (17%). The other categories were similar in their low usage incidence.

Figure 5.4 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation descriptors
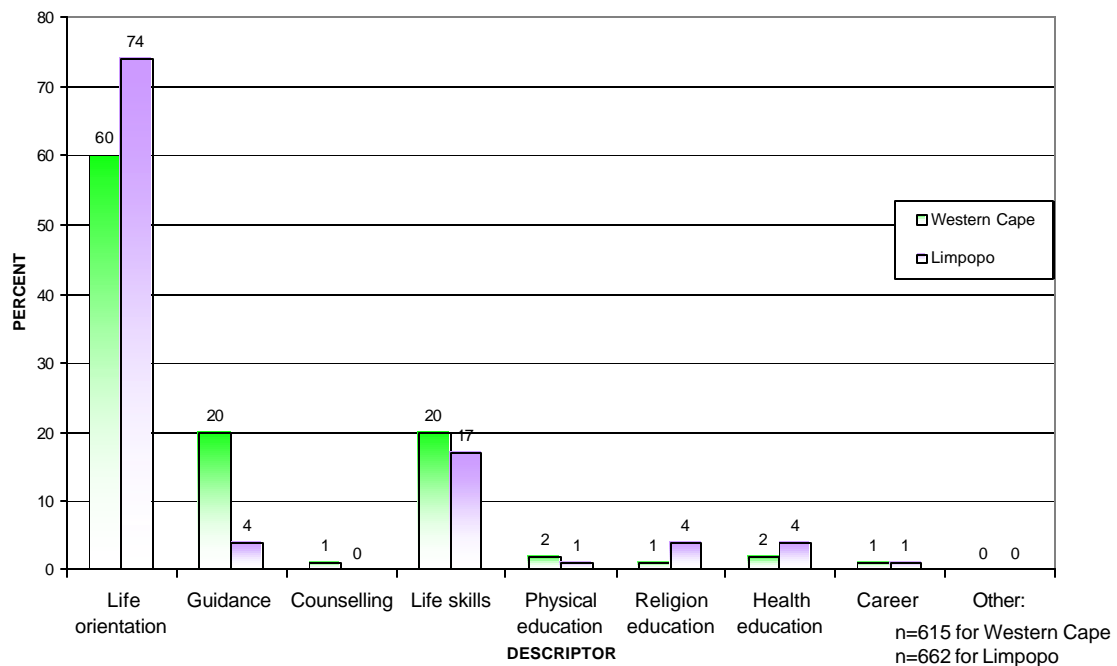
5.2.2 Definitions and understandings of Life Orientation

Educators' definitions of Life Orientation and the descriptors they used for Life Orientation are clear indications of their own and their schools' perceptions of this learning area. In most instances, in both provinces, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators and schools focused on an aspect or a few aspects of Life Orientation and were not able to give a definition encompassing, or depicting an understanding of, the entire learning area.

Inherent in the varied definitions of both Senior Phase and Intermediate Phase educators were references to health, HIV and AIDS and self-development. It appeared that most educators were able to define aspects of Life Orientation. Most educators did not use the Department of Education's [1997, 2002] definitions of Life Orientation, but indicated

some understanding of the learning area. *HIV and AIDS, life skills*, *personal development, morals*, *values* and *health* issues were predominant.

There were some differences between the provinces: in Limpopo more educators than in the Western Cape saw *health* and *HIV and AIDS* as comprising Life Orientation. In the Western Cape there were varied definitions, with *life skills* predominating in the Intermediate Phase. In some Western Cape schools, Life Orientation was defined very broadly to include all non-academic matters, and even assembly and sports.

Life Orientation was variously viewed as a learning area, a derivative of life skills, a combination of subjects, a replacement for guidance, HIV and AIDS education, an alternative form of physical education, a philosophy, a non-academic, practical subject and a combination of all the above. Educators assigned different meanings to Life Orientation and had concomitant varied approaches to the learning area.

In many instances, understandings differed from grade to grade and educator to educator within the *same* school. Student-teachers based at the same schools generally indicated that they had difficulty in generating a common understanding of Life Orientation from educators, and had different experiences of Life Orientation at the same schools.

Fragmentation of the constituents of Life Orientation was evident in that some schools offered physical education as a separate subject on the timetable, with no links made with health education or other aspects of Life Orientation. In some instances, student-teachers commented that it was not clear whether physical education was seen as part of Life Orientation or as an independent subject. In some schools physical education disappeared and was no longer offered, having been absorbed in Life Orientation to the extent that it was discontinued, whereas in a few other schools physical education dominated Life Orientation.

Intermediate Phase schools and educators in the Western Cape gave varied definitions of Life Orientation within the same schools, but common threads were apparent, as these extracts illustrate:

School A

> *Life Orientation is designed around peace education. It's aimed at trying to improve learners' relationship skills and ability to cope and be successful in general living* (Educator 1).
> *Teaching of life skills so you can cope with the real world* (Educator 2).

School D

> *Life Orientation is a guidance lesson, one where basic life skills are taught and growing up issues are raised, e.g. HIV and AIDS and puberty* (Educator 1).

> *Life Orientation is part of the curriculum in certain grades, as important issues the learners need to be exposed too, are included* (Educator 2).

In Limpopo, Intermediate Phase educators generally saw Life Orientation as a learning area in its own right. Issues of health, culture, problem-solving, life skills and guidance were described by some educators as being the core of Life Orientation. *HIV and AIDS* was a predominant facet mentioned by educators. Example definitions include:

> *It's the learning area which teaches health education, religion education and guidance.*

> *It guides and teaches about life and different diseases.*

> *Health of learners, how to keep body clean, diseases, HIV and AIDS, learn to look after own body as it is precious.*

> *Skills to cope with life in general, growing up, culture, deals with the problems of life.*

> *Life Orientation plays an essential role; it prepares learners for the rest of their lives.*

Similar to the Intermediate Phase, Senior Phase educators showed varied understandings and practices of Life Orientation in both Limpopo and the Western Cape. However, Life Orientation was seen as a learning area in its own right in Limpopo, whereas in some Senior Phase schools in the Western Cape, Life Orientation was seen as either guidance or life skills or/and physical education, or these constituents were offered as separate subjects.

Extracts of student-teachers' observations of Senior Phase educators and schools' definitions in the Western Cape included:

> *The school seemed to confuse Life Orientation and guidance. The guidance educator taught part of the Life Orientation curriculum but class educators also helped to teach part of the Life Orientation*

> *curriculum. The guidance educator is also responsible for counselling.*
>
> *The Life Orientation learning area is divided into religious education and life skills.*
>
> *Life Orientation contains life skills, guidance and physical education. The head of lifeskills is also the guidance counsellor. It is called life skills.*
>
> *Life Orientation is a combination of the facets of C2005. Although equal status is given to all the sections, this is not always achievable. Guidance, physical education and study skills are separated within Life Orientation as independent subjects.*
>
> *The school focuses on three aspects in their Life Orientation: conflict management, guidance and physical education — sport science. These are separate subjects on the timetable.*
>
> *Both Life Orientation and guidance are used interchangeably.*
>
> *Life Orientation is a subject …, but merely as part of their curriculum to show that they are up to date in changes in education. The educators view it as a fun space, and only really important for HIV/AIDS and a bit of career info.*

Similar to the Intermediate Phase educators in the Western Cape, Senior Phase educators in the Western Cape gave different definitions of Life Orientation, with HIV and AIDS featuring prominently. Example definitions included:

> *Life Orientation is viewed as physical education.*
>
> *Life Orientation is education and input about HIV and AIDS, sex education and drugs.*
>
> *Life Orientation is a subject where learners are supposed to be taught manners and orderliness.*
>
> *HIV and AIDS is the most important aspect and is the core of Life Orientation.*
>
> *Life Orientation is sexuality education and HIV and AIDS education.*

Senior Phase educators in Limpopo generally saw Life Orientation as a learning area in its own right. However, some Senior Phase educators said that they still thought of Life Orientation as *guidance* or *life skills,* and proceeded to define guidance or life skills. Senior Phase educators in Limpopo offered varied descriptors and definitions, with common themes being *health, HIV and AIDS* education and *relationships.* The definition or

understanding of Life Orientation as *guidance, with occasional input on HIV and AIDS* was repeatedly used. Example definitions of Life Orientation include d:

> *Process of equipping learners with life skills, enables them to perceive themselves as a total human being with responsibilities. It guides and directs them to follow the right way, abstain from all criminal activities.*

> *It's viewed from a biblical point of view, and included in RE* (Religion Education).
> *Looking at our lives, surroundings, issues around death HIV and AIDS, learners are not mature and need to be guided.*

Like Senior Phase educators in the Western Cape, Senior Phase educators at the same schools in Limpopo also offered differing definitions of Life Orientation:

> School K

> *It's guidance* (Educator 1).
> *A learning area which will restore the culture of the nation.* (Educator 2).

> School M

> *Guidance, with occasional input on HIV and AIDS.* (Educator 1).
> *Helping learners to understand changes, safe sex, not getting into sex before marriage, health, eating, exercise.* (Educator 2).

> School P

> *New learning area, still trying to be acquainted with what is expected of us.* (Educator 1).
> *Guidance, occasional input on HIV and AIDS.* (Educator 2).

5.2.3 The perceived constituents of Life Orientation

The constituents and foci perceived to comprise Life Orientation identified by Senior Phase educators indicate their general understandings of Life Orientation. Figure 5.5 depicts that 94% of Senior Phase educators indicated that Life Orientation included *HIV and AIDS education*, 93% *sexuality education* and 93% *life skills.* A relatively high 88% indicated *health education* and 87% *careers*, while 80% of Senior Phase educators indicated that *physical education* and *religion education* were included. *Environmental education* received the lowest (65%) indication that it was included in Life Orientation. Of note was that only 4% indicated a focus area in the category for *other*, with *citizenship education* mentioned in those instances.

Figure 5.5 Senior Phase educators: Life Orientation focus areas
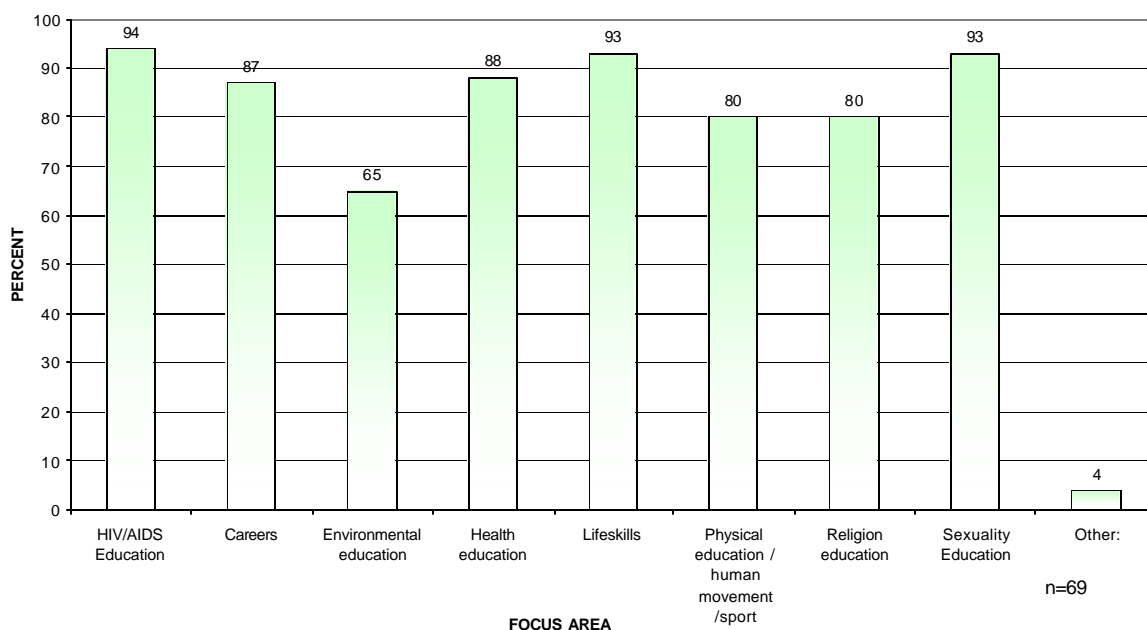
5.2.4 Summary of Life Orientation definitions, descriptions and interpretations

Life Orientation educators and learners used a range of descriptors for Life Orientation, with *life skills* and *guidance* predominating. More Senior Phase educators used the term guidance than in the Intermediate Phase, whereas more Intermediate Phase educators used the descriptor *life skills* than Senior Phase educators. Senior Phase learners in Limpopo tended to use *Life Orientation* more than learners in the Western Cape. Western Cape learners used *guidance* more than learners in Limpopo. Learners in both provinces tended to use *Life Orientation* more than their educators, with Limpopo learners using *Life Orientation* more than Western Cape learners.

Definitions and understandings of Life Orientation were varied and depicted a fragmented and disjointed view of Life Orientation, although aspects of Life Orientation were understood. Educators at the same schools often had differing understandings of Life Orientation. HIV and AIDS, health education and "guiding" learners were prominent in educators' definitions. The separate time-tabling of aspects of Life Orientation, such as physical education, study skills, or peace education, is further evidence of the fragmentation of this learning area.

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HIV and AIDS received the highest indication that it was included in Life Orientation by Senior Phase educators, while environmental education received the lowest indication. Only 4% of Senior Phase educators indicated that they included anything more than was listed. This was invariably civics.

5.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTED TO LIFE ORIENTATION

The significance attributed to Life Orientation refers to the value assigned to Life Orientation and how it is rated in the context of all eight learning areas.

5.3.1 The value assigned to Life Orientation

Figure 5.6 shows that a high percentage (75%) of the Intermediate Phase educators regarded Life Orientation as having a *valuable contribution* to make, with 33% indicating that Life Orientation was the *most important learning* area. Some of the educators who indicated Life Orientation had a valuable contribution to make also indicated that Life Orientation was the most important learning area. Of the Intermediate Phase educators, 8% said that Life Orientation was *valuable* but that *other learning areas should be prioritised.* A low 3% said they *did not understand* what the learning area was about. No educators indicated that Life Orientation was *a waste of time* or *meaningless* or was *not academic* enough and *did not belong* in a school.

Figure 5.6 Intermediate Phase educators: the significance of Life Orientation

n=63

180
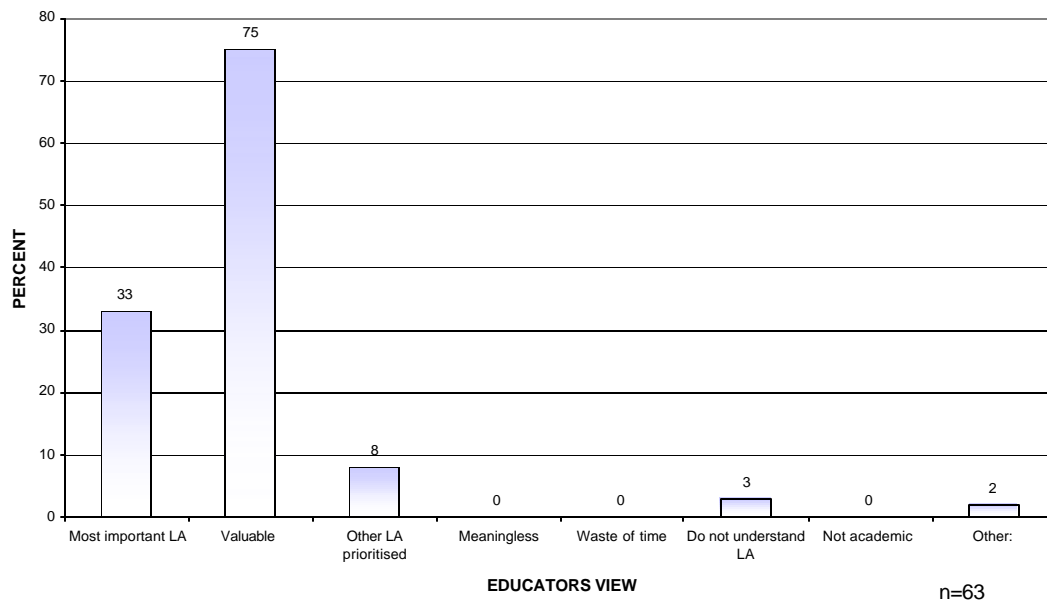
Regarding a question on the significance of Life Orientation, where educators had to choose between Life Orientation as *essential*, of *average importance* or *unnecessary*, the majority opted for the *essential* category. Intermediate Phase educators' opinions on the significance of Life Orientation indicated that the majority (89%) felt that Life Orientation was *essential*, with only 11% indicating it was of *average importance*. No educators thought Life Orientation was *unnecessary*. A high percentage (90%) of Senior Phase Life Orientation educators interviewed indicated that they saw Life Orientation as *essential*, with only 9% viewing it as of *average importance* and a minimal 1% as *unnecessary*.

Figure 5.7 depicts that 67% of Senior Phase educators indicated that they saw Life Orientation as having a *valuable contribution to make*, and a minimal 2% as a *waste of time*. Forty-four percent of the Life Orientation educators felt that Life Orientation was the *most important* learning area, while 9% felt that it was of *value, but that other learning areas should be prioritised*. Only 3% indicated they *did not understand* what Life Orientation was about.

Figure 5.7 Senior Phase educators: the significance of Life Orientation
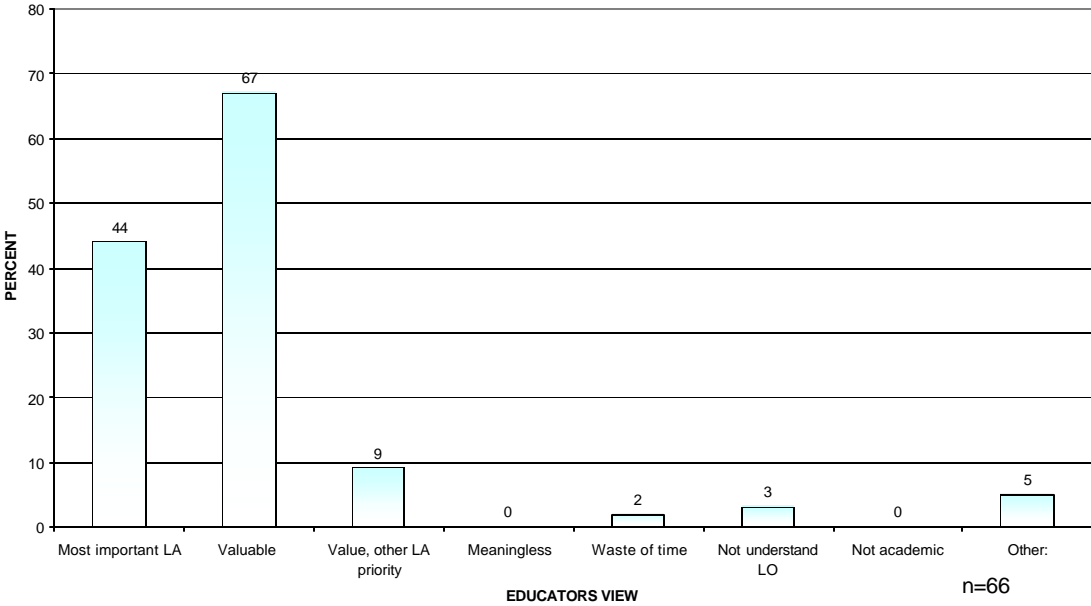
Figure 5.8 indicates that Intermediate Phase learners were overwhelmingly positive towards Life Orientation, with 98% of the learners responding positively. Some learners had both negative as well as positive responses, indicated in the 23% of negative comments. Of the Intermediate Phase learners, 48% felt there was not enough time allocated to Life Orientation while only 4% said there was too much time.

Figure 5.8 Intermediate Phase learners: the significance of Life Orientation
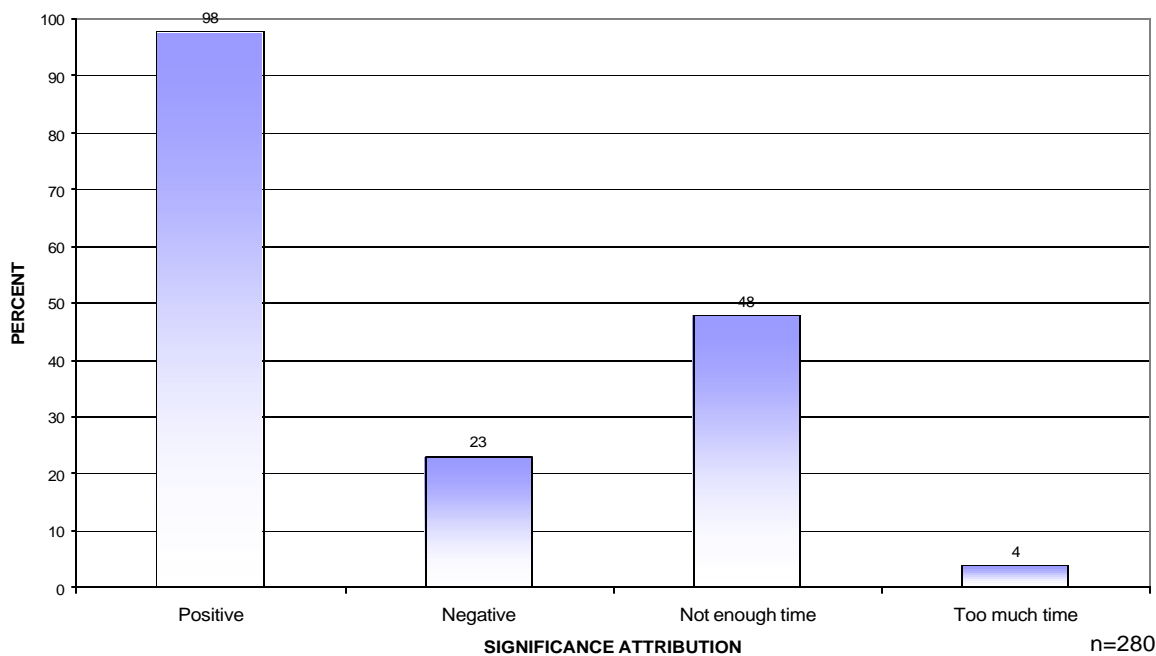
Regarding the significance Senior Phase learners attributed to Life Orientation, Figure 5.9 illustrates that 37% said Life Orientation was *important*, 27% *love it*, 22% saw it as *interesting*, 21% experienced Life Orientation as *enjoyable,* and a lower 16% found it *useful*. Life Orientation was seen as *too much work* by 8% of the learners, while a low 4% found it *boring*.

Figure 5.9 Senior Phase learners: the significance of Life Orientation
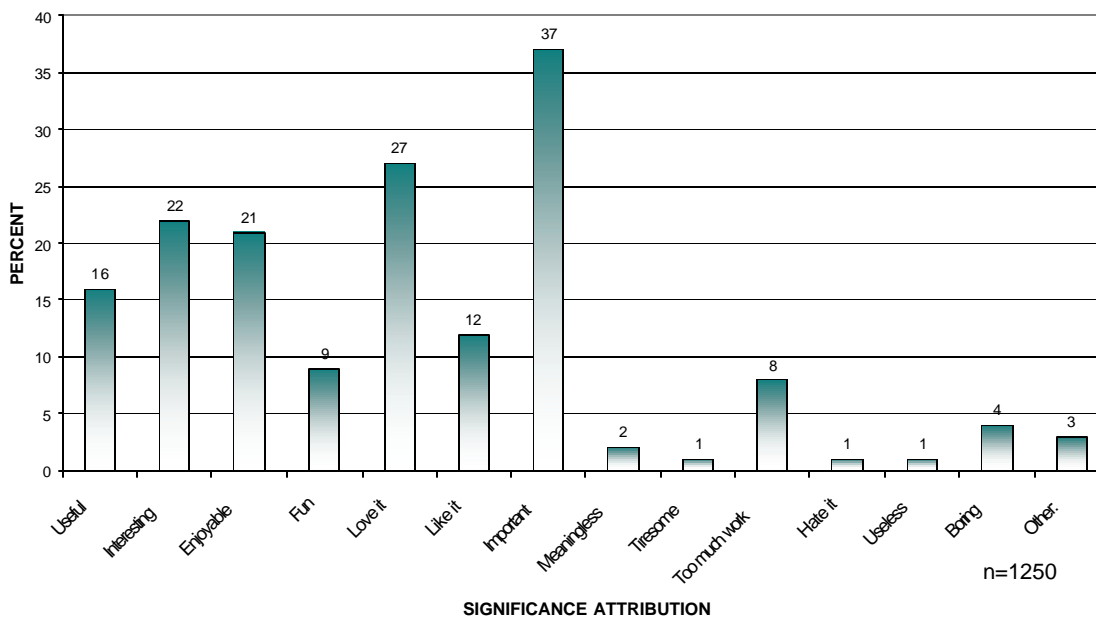
5.3.2 Life Orientation learning area ranking

Figure 5.10 shows the ranking of learning areas' status and importance by Intermediate Phase educators. Mathematics was ranked as the most important learning area, with Languages second and Natural Sciences third. Life Orientation, History and Social Sciences where ranked fourth, Technology and Economic and Management Sciences fifth and Arts and Culture last.

Figure 5.10 Intermediate Phase educators: ranking of learning areas
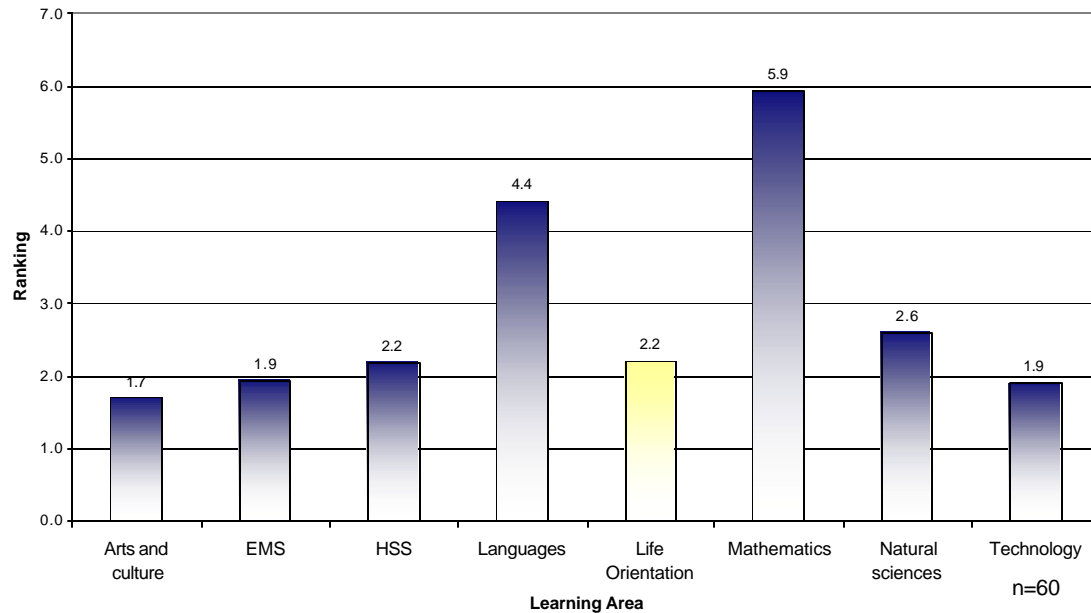
Senior Phase educators' ranking, as seen in Figure 5.11, shows that Mathematics was ranked the highest and the most important learning area, with Languages second and Natural Sciences third. Life Orientation and Economics and Management Sciences received the same ranking as the fourth most important learning area. History and Social Sciences received the fifth place and Technology the sixth. Similar to the Intermediate Phase, Arts and Culture received the lowest rating. Some of the educators interviewed refused to rank the learning areas, as they said they were all of equal importance.

Reasons given for particular rankings included timetabling, choice of educators responsible for learning area, budget allocation, appointments and promotion possibilities, resources available, general status of learning area educators, discussions in the staff room and at staff meetings, School Governing Bodies' attitudes, and perceptions by the public, media and higher education institutions.

Figure 5.11 Senior Phase educators: ranking of learning areas

n=57
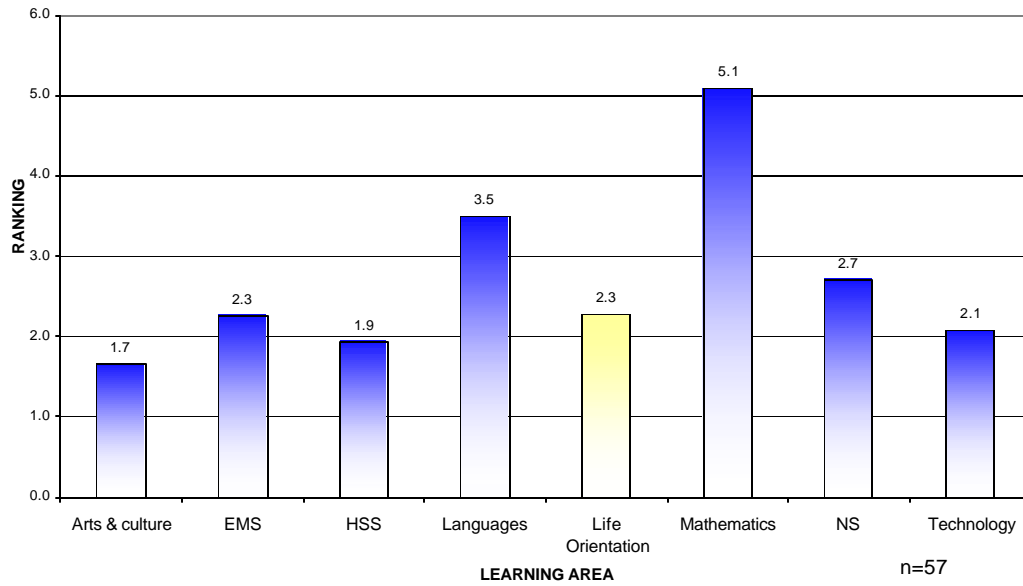
Figure 5.12 clearly illustrates that a relatively high percentage of Senior Phase learners (40%) ranked Mathematics as the *most important* learning area. (This corresponds with educators' rankings.) The *most important* learning area was Life Orientation for 17% and Languages and Natural Sciences for 12%. A lower 6% chose Technology, Arts and Culture, 5% Economics and Management Science, while a minimal 2% opted for History and Social Sciences.

Figure 5.12 Senior Phase learners: importance of learning areas

n=1153

184
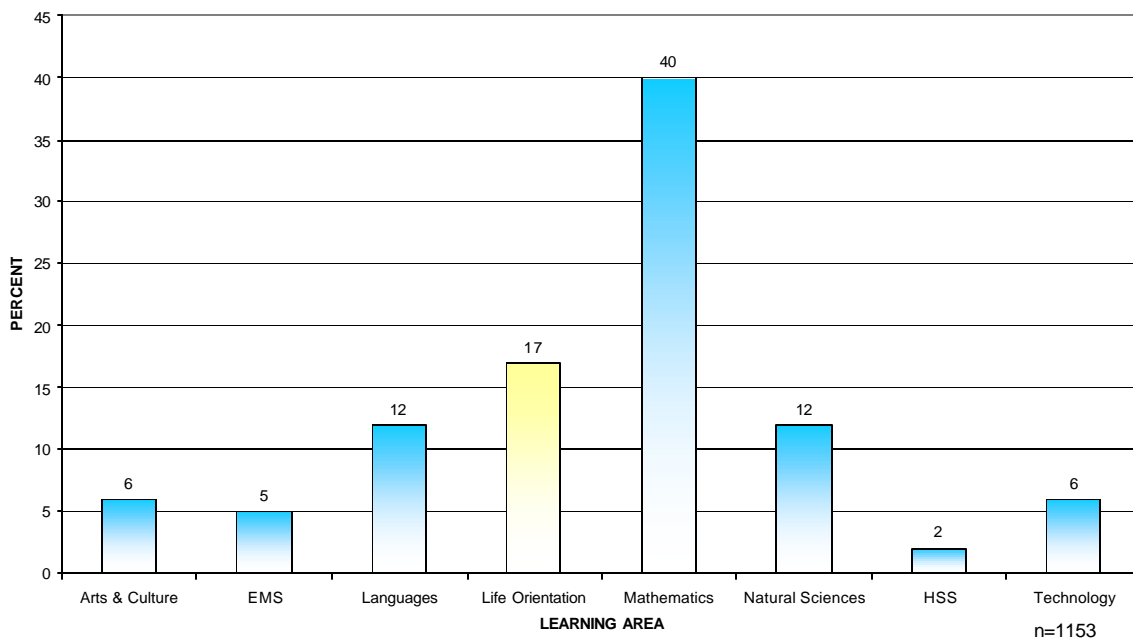
Figure 5.13 shows that there were differences between provinces for Natural Sciences, which received a higher rating in Limpopo (18%) than in the Western Cape (6%). Mathematics was rated by 35% of learners in Limpopo and by 45% in the Western Cape as the *most important* learning area.

Figure 5.13 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase learners: importance of learning areas
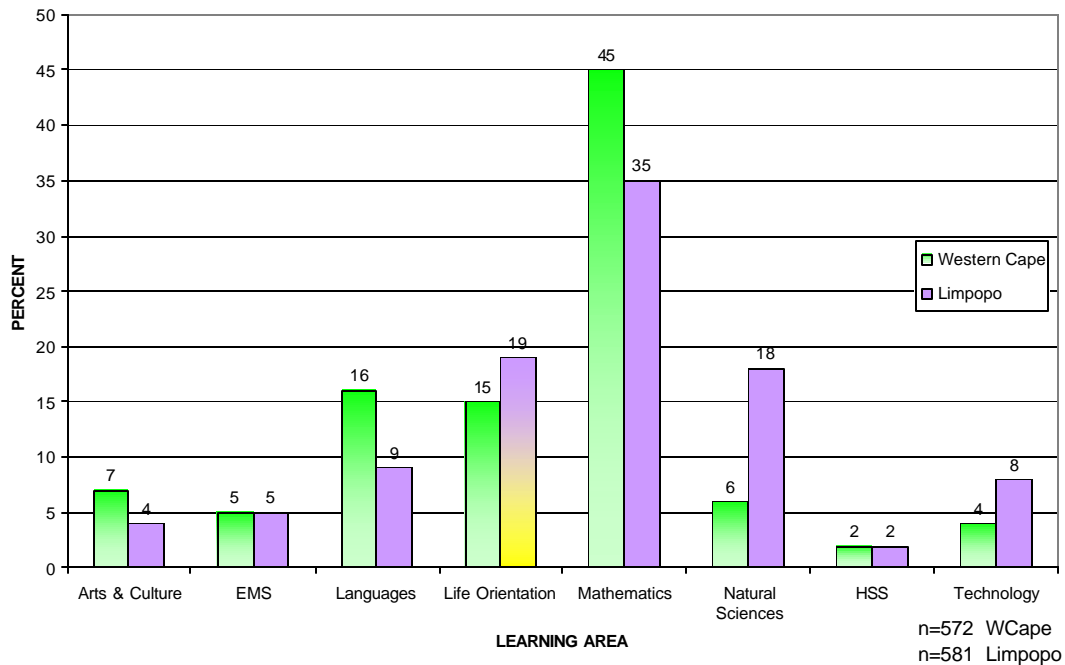
5.3.3 Learners' preferred Life Orientation themes and topics

In order to ascertain the significance assigned to focus areas within Life Orientation, Senior Phase learners were asked to select themes according to the importance they ascribed to them. Figure 5.14 shows that 26% of the learners found *career education the most important*, while 19% opted for *life skills* and *health education* and 15% for *human rights*. Only 7% chose *sexuality education* and *relationships*, and a lower 5% *physical education* and *environmental education*. *Religion education* received the lowest rating of 4%.

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Figure 5.14 Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation theme importance
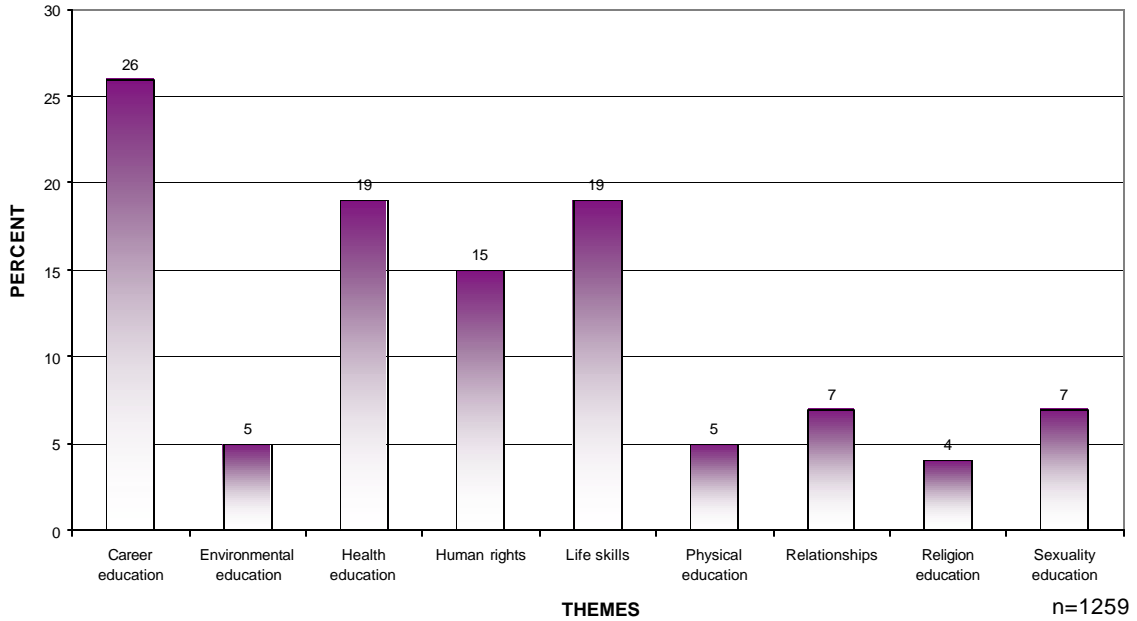
Figure 5.15 indicates that differences in provinces were marked. *Career education* had a high 34% in the Western Cape in contrast to the lower 18% in Limpopo, while *health education* had 25% of the Senior Phase learners in Limpopo indicating it was the most important theme, in contrast to the 12% in Western Cape. *Life skills* received similar percentages in both provinces, as did *human rights*. The other categories with small percentages were very similar in both provinces.

Figure 5.15 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation theme importance
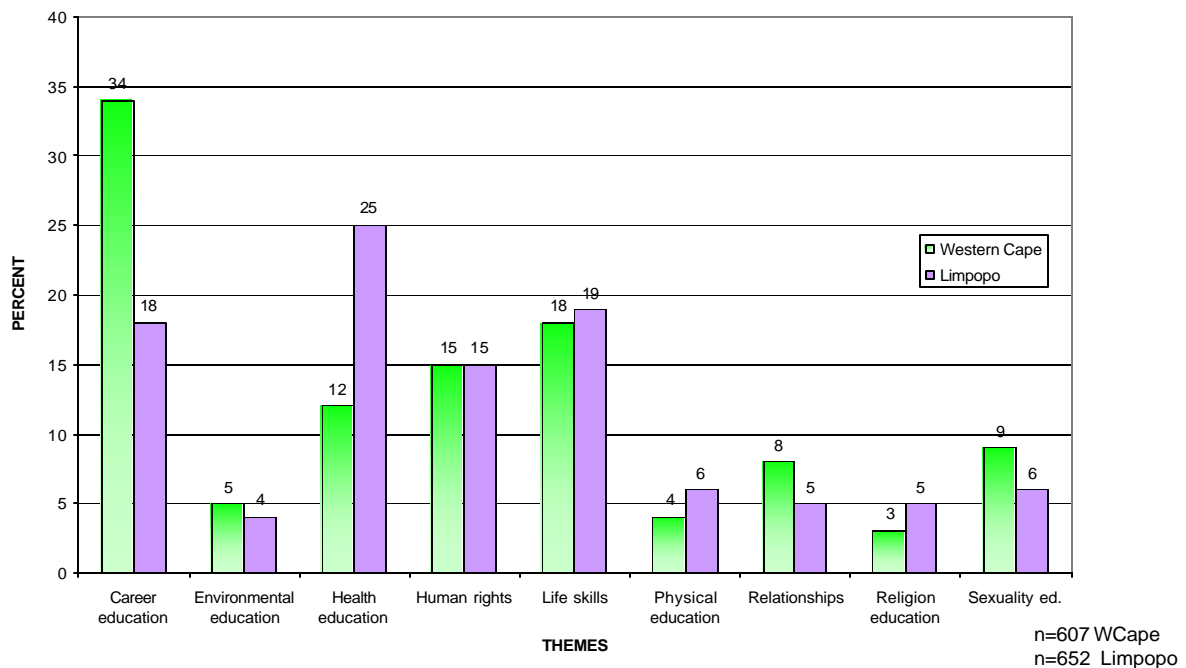
Figure 5.16 illustrates specific topics within Life Orientation, considered useful by Senior Phase learners. Of the learners 46% indicated *believing in myself*, while 40% chose *HIV and AIDS*. *Choosing a career* and *human rights* were selected by 21% and *healthy lifestyle* by 19%. Life skills were favoured by fewer respondents: *communication* (16%), *decision making* (15%), *goal setting* (14%), *coping with problems* and *making friends* (12%). *Alcohol abuse, drug abuse* and *stop smoking* got 12% and 10% of the Senior Phase learners' vote as useful topics. *Feeling confident* and sexuality education were settled on by 11%, *learning about other religions* by 6% and *environmental education* by 5%. C*onflict management* received a low 4%, and *time management* and *coping with feelings* 5%. *Getting a date, opposing racism* and *stress management* received only 4% each. *Physical fitness* and *coping with depression* were rated lowest, with only 3% of Senior Phase learners rating them as useful topics.

It appeared that most topics were covered in the questionnaire, as learners had few comments to make under *other topics*, apart from reiterating the importance of topics already selected.

Figure 5.16 Senior Phase learners: choice of useful Life Orientation topics

187
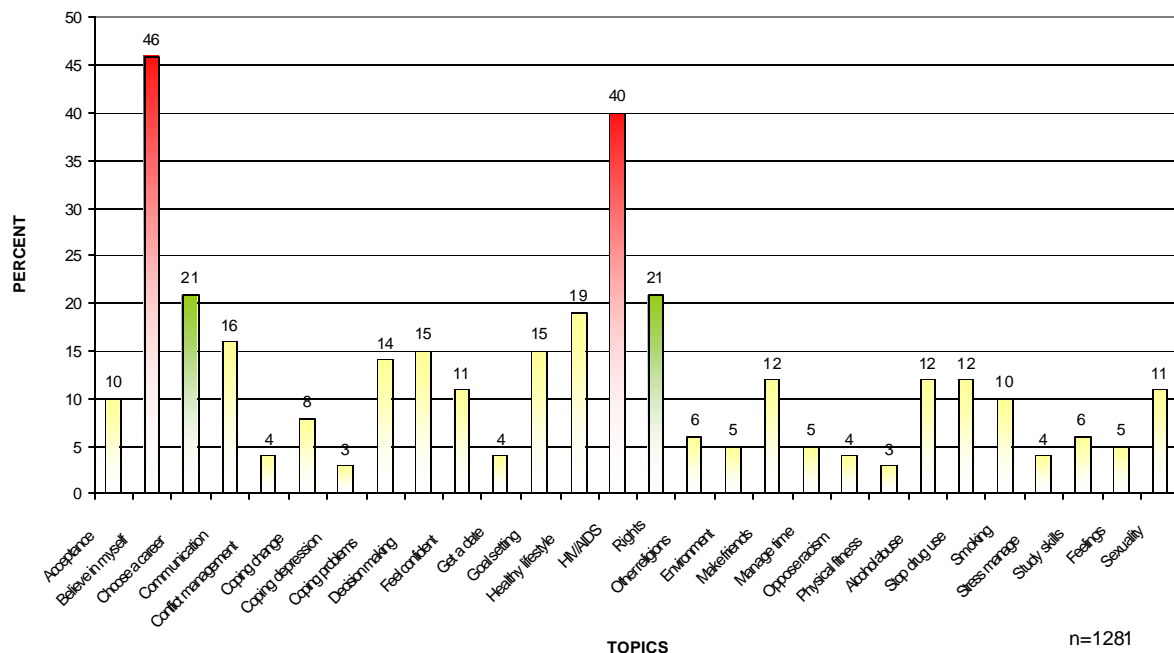
Figure 5.17 shows a marked difference between learners' responses in the two provinces: in Limpopo, only 15% saw *choosing a career* as a useful topic, while 28% in the Western Cape opted for *careers. HIV and AIDS* was a useful to 44% of Senior Phase learners in Limpopo and 36% in the Western Cape. *Stop drinking alcohol* received 17% in Limpopo, higher than the 7% of the Western Cape.

Figure 5.17 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase learners: choice of useful Life Orientation topics

n=616 for Western Cape
n=665 for Limpopo
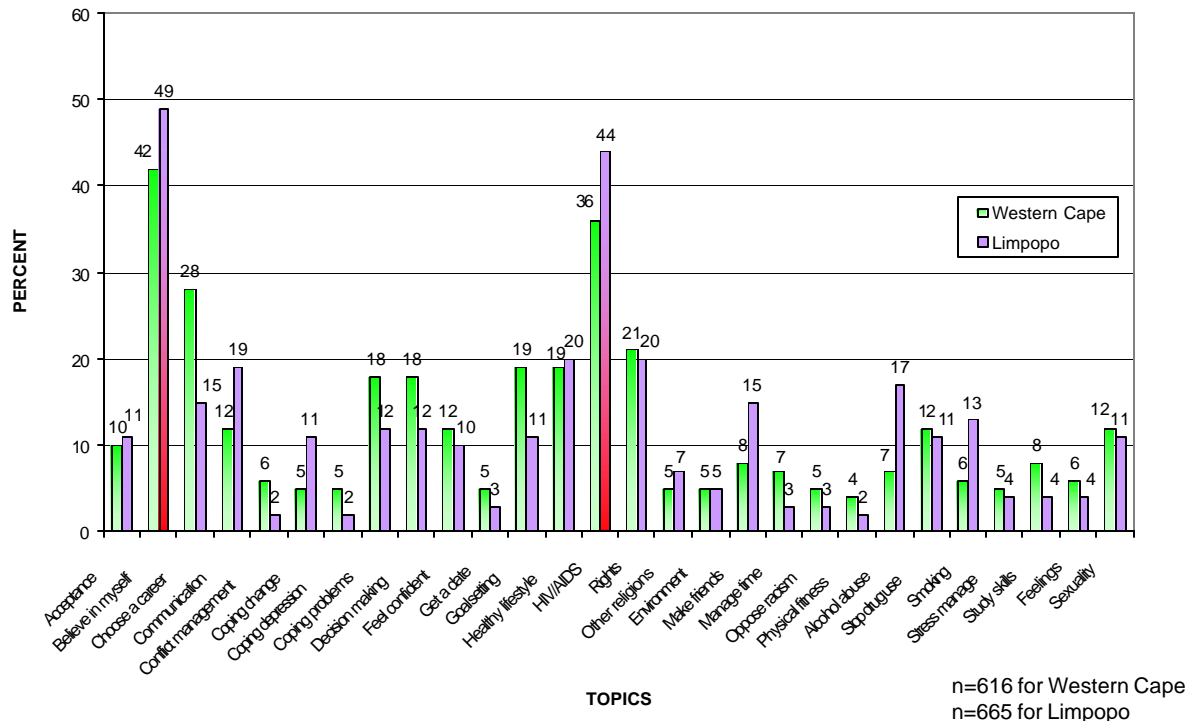
5.3.4 Summary of the significance attributed to Life Orientation

Both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators and learners appear to value Life Orientation as an important learning area. Life Orientation is not ranked as the most important learning area, but also not as the least important. The themes and topics chosen by Senior Phase learners are also those that are prioritised in Life Orientation, a clear indication of the relevance of the learning area.

5.4 LIFE ORIENTATION TIME ALLOCATION AND USAGE

Timetabling could be seen as an indication of the practice of a learning area. The less the learning area is offered and the allotted time utilised, the less the learning area may be implemented. Timetabling can also been seen as a variant of the status of the learning area, as the more time is allocated, the higher the status of the learning area would be.

5.4.1 The time allocation for Life Orientation

Figure 5.18 illustrates that for all three grades, the *once a week* option occurred most often (35% for grade 4, 35% for grade 5 and 25 % for grade 6).

Figure 5.18 Intermediate Phase educators: frequency of Life Orientation teaching
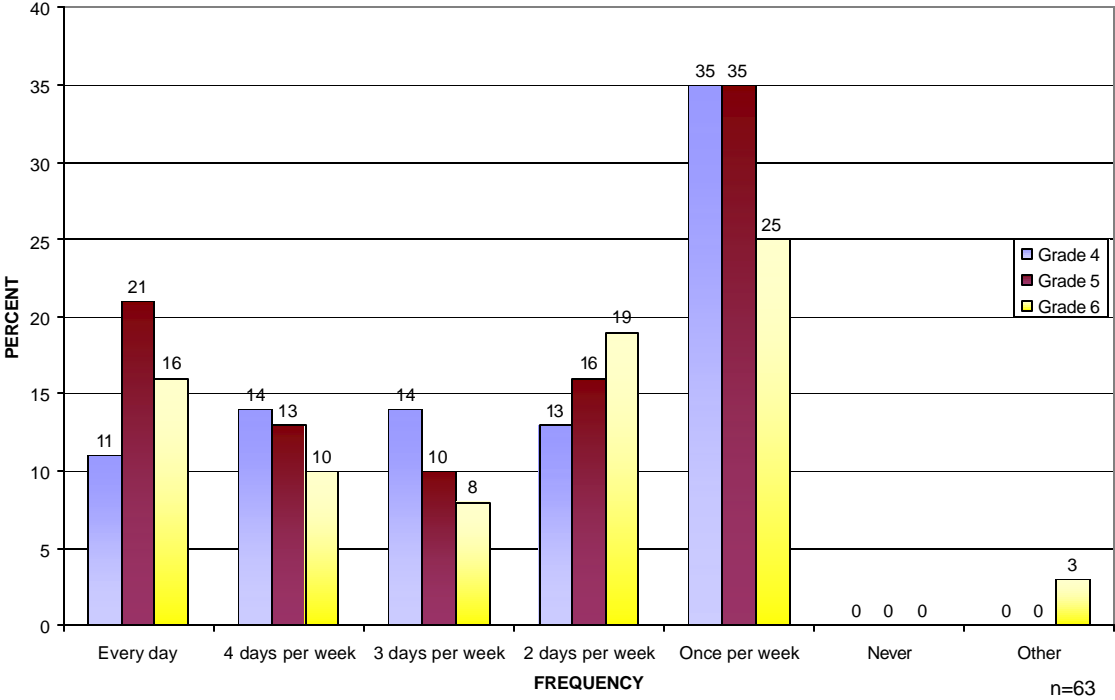
Figure 5.19 indicates that an allocation of 30 minutes per week for Life Orientation received the highest frequency, with this time allocation given to 13 educators in grade 4, 15 educators in grade 5 and 12 educators in grade 6.

Figure 5.19 Intermediate Phase educators: time allocation for Life Orientation
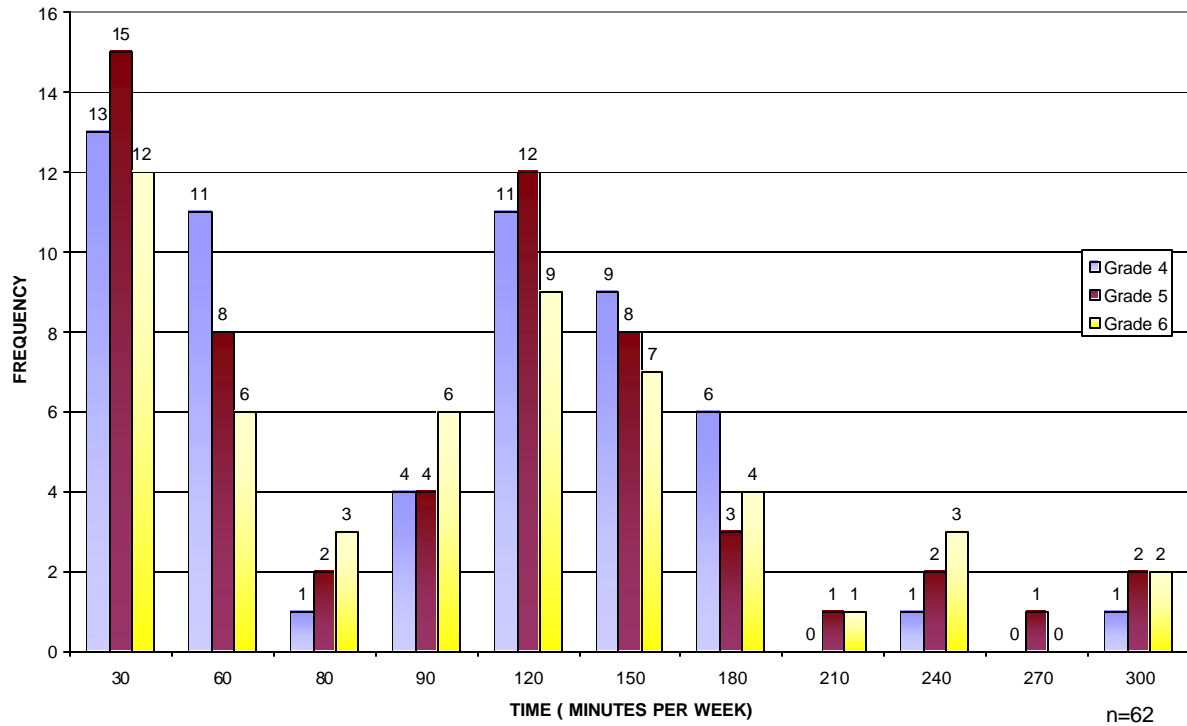
In Figure 5.20 it is apparent that a relatively high 66% of the Intermediate Phase educators felt that there was *sufficient time* allocated to Life Orientation, while 30% felt there was *not enough time*. Furthermore, 20% felt there was *not enough time to prepare* for Life Orientation lessons and 15 % indicated there was *enough time to prepare*.

Figure 5.20 Intermediate Phase educators: perceptions of Life Orientation time allocation
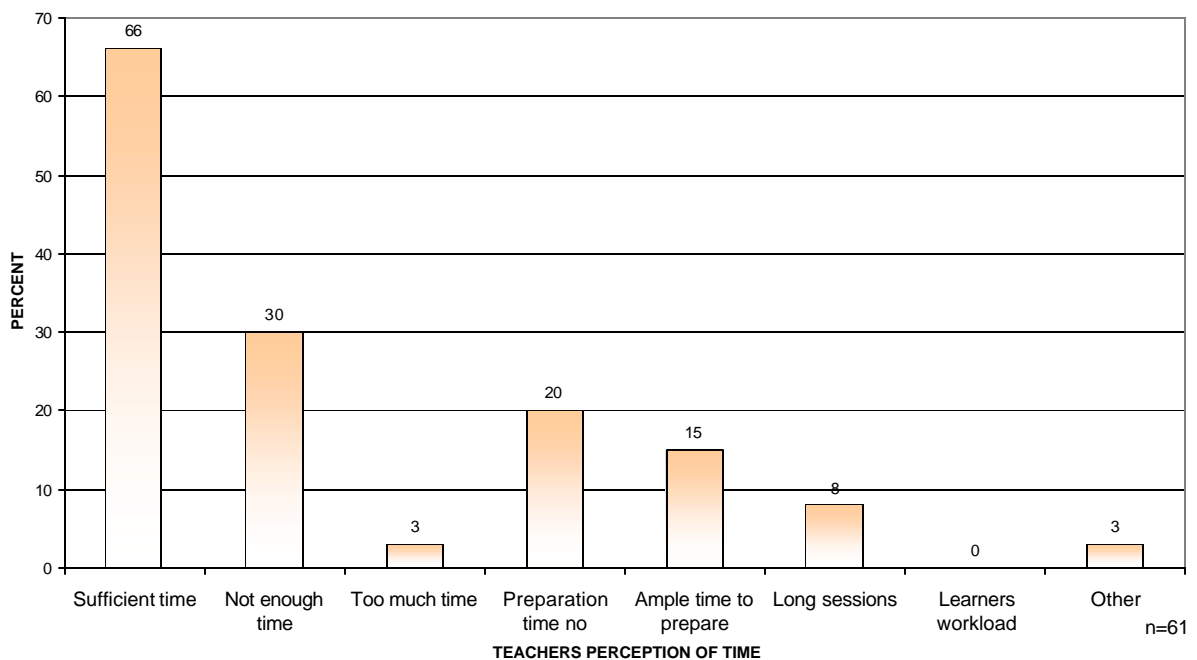
Figure 5.21 illustrates that a high 81% of the Intermediate Phase educators used *all* the allocated time for Life Orientation, while 19% used *only some* of the allocated time.

Figure 5.21 Intermediate Phase educators: Life Orientation time usage
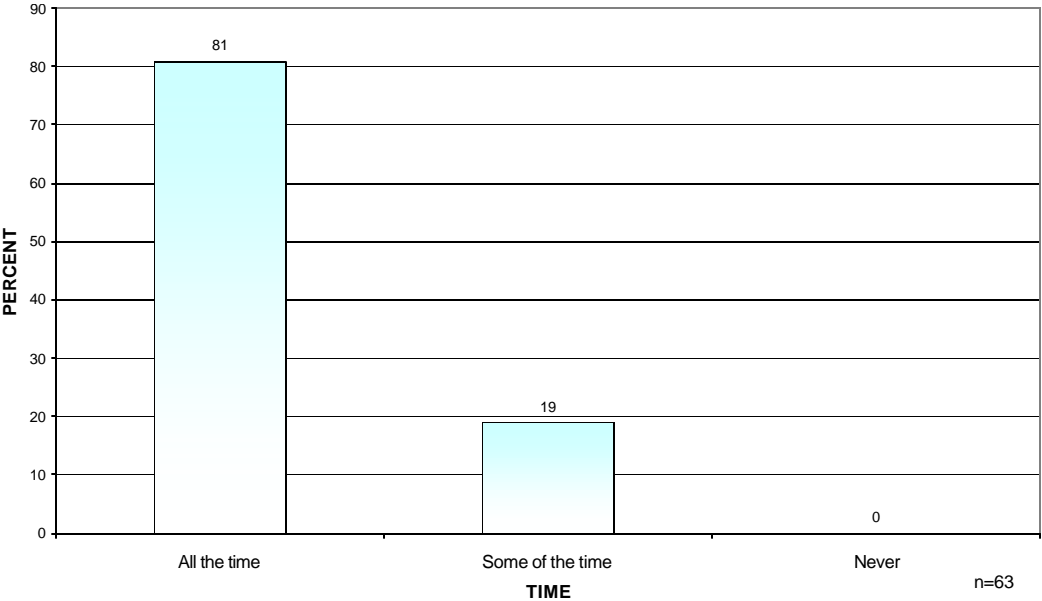
Figure 5.22 depicts that Life Orientation was taught *twice a week* (40%) in grade 7. *Other* got a high response of 47% for grade 8 and 45% for grade 9. Under *other* Senior Phase educators referred to the *cycle system* where Life Orientation would be taught once every seven to 10 days, and in a few instances three times a week. Some educators indicated confusion existed as to what was seen as *Life Orientation.* In some schools religion education and physical education were offered as separate subjects on the timetable, and educators indicated they were not sure whether to add those to the time allocated to Life Orientation.

Figure 5.22 Senior Phase educators: frequency of Life Orientation teaching
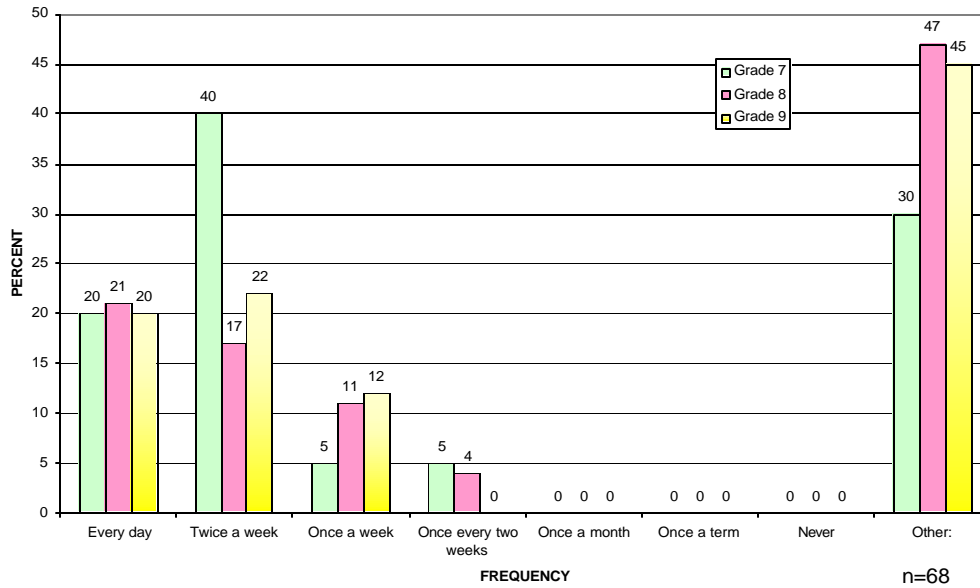
Figure 5.23 illustrates that 61% of Senior Phase educators felt that there was *sufficient time* allocated to Life Orientation, but 36% believed there was *not enough time*. There was *enough time to prepare* for Life Orientation lessons for 25%, while 13% *did not have enough time to prepare*. It was maintained by 10% that Life Orientation requires *longer sessions* than the timetable could accommodate, though 6% felt it would *not be fair* to add to the learners' work-load by allocating more time to Life Orientation.

Figure 5.23 Senior Phase educators: perceptions of Life Orientation time allocation

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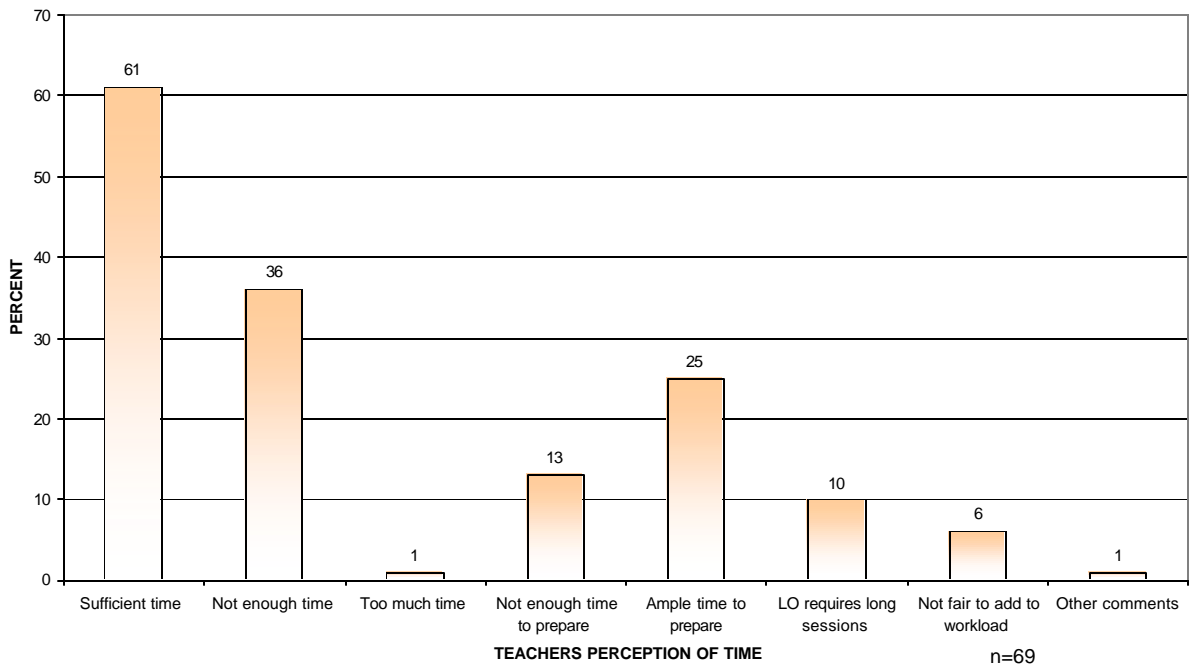
5.4.2 Life Orientation educators' time utilisation

Figure 5.24 shows that 79% of Senior Phase educators indicated they *used all the allocated time* on the timetable for Life Orientation. This differs markedly from student-teachers' observations, which indicated that the Life Orientation period was often used as either a *free period*, or to *catch up* on Mathematics or language work. Some 21% of the Senior Phase educators indicated that they *only used some of the time* allocation for Life Orientation.

Figure 5.24 Senior Phase educators: usage of Life Orientation time allocation
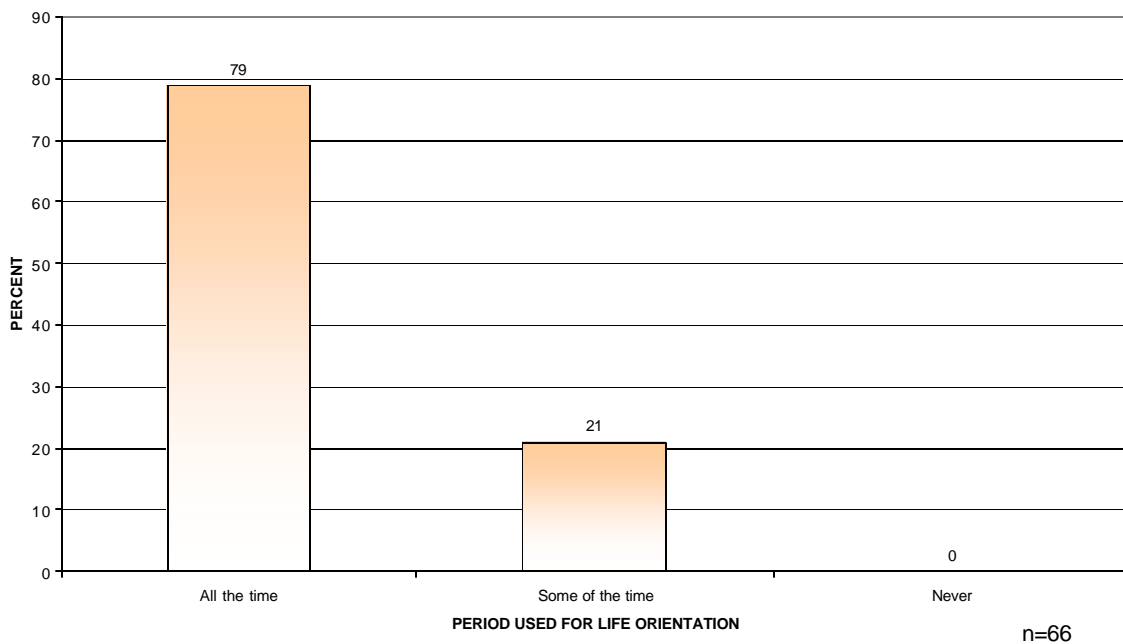
Student-teachers pointed out the reality of time restraints:

> *Time restraints hinder the comprehensive covering of the whole of Life Orientation — more than conflicting values. However, this leaves educators with lots of choices — what to leave out.*

> *Life Orientation is one of the most important subjects in the school curriculum, and yet it is the first to go out the window when there are time constraints.*

> *Time restrictions are a major problem — choices need to be made what to leave out, obviously that which you find personally difficult and in conflict with your values.*

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5.4.3 Learners' perceptions of Life Orientation time allocation

Figure 5.25 shows that 39% of the Senior Phase learners indicated that they attended Life Orientation classes *every day*, 24% *twice* a week, 14% *once* a week and 8% *every two weeks*. *Other*, referring to the *cycle system* where learners would receive Life Orientation once every *seven to ten* days, and *three* times a week, was mentioned by 12 %.

Figure 5.25 Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation class attendance
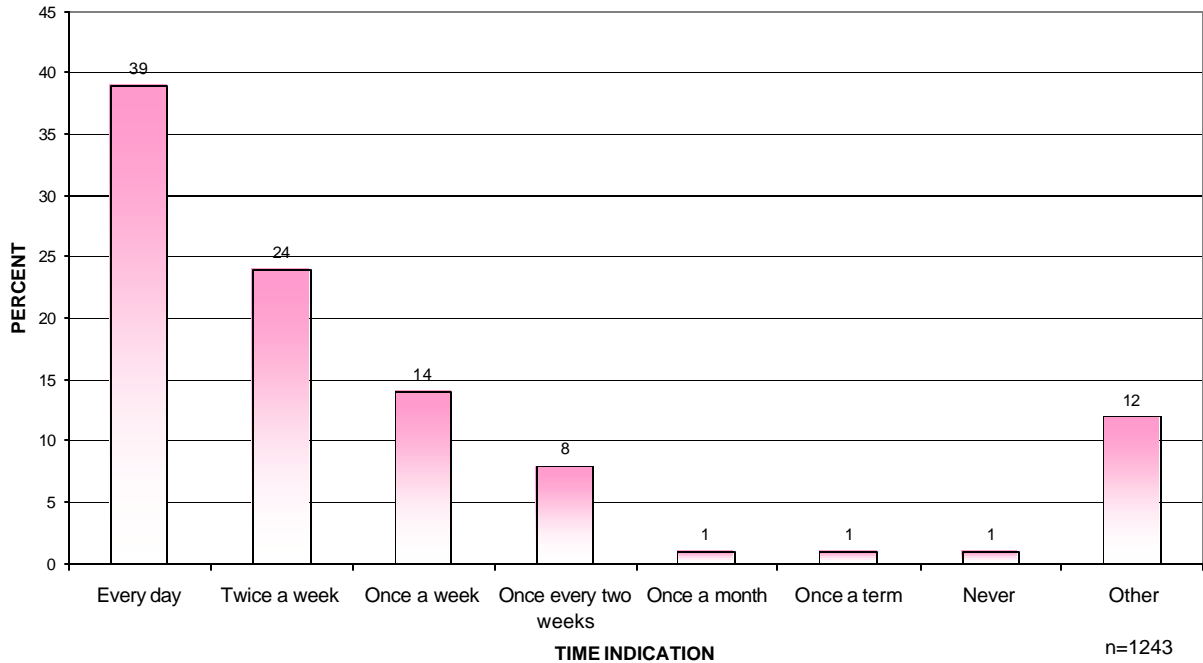
A higher percentage of learners in Limpopo (54%) than in the Western Cape (23%) indicated that they had Life Orientation *every day*, as can be seen in Figure 5.26. The indication of *twice a week* was similar for both provinces, but the Western Cape's high 22% of *once a week* contrasts with Limpopo's low 7%. Learners' perceptions of time allocation for Life Orientation differed from educators' indications.

Figure 5.26 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase learners: Life Orientation class attendance

n=605 for Western Cape
n=638 for Limpopo
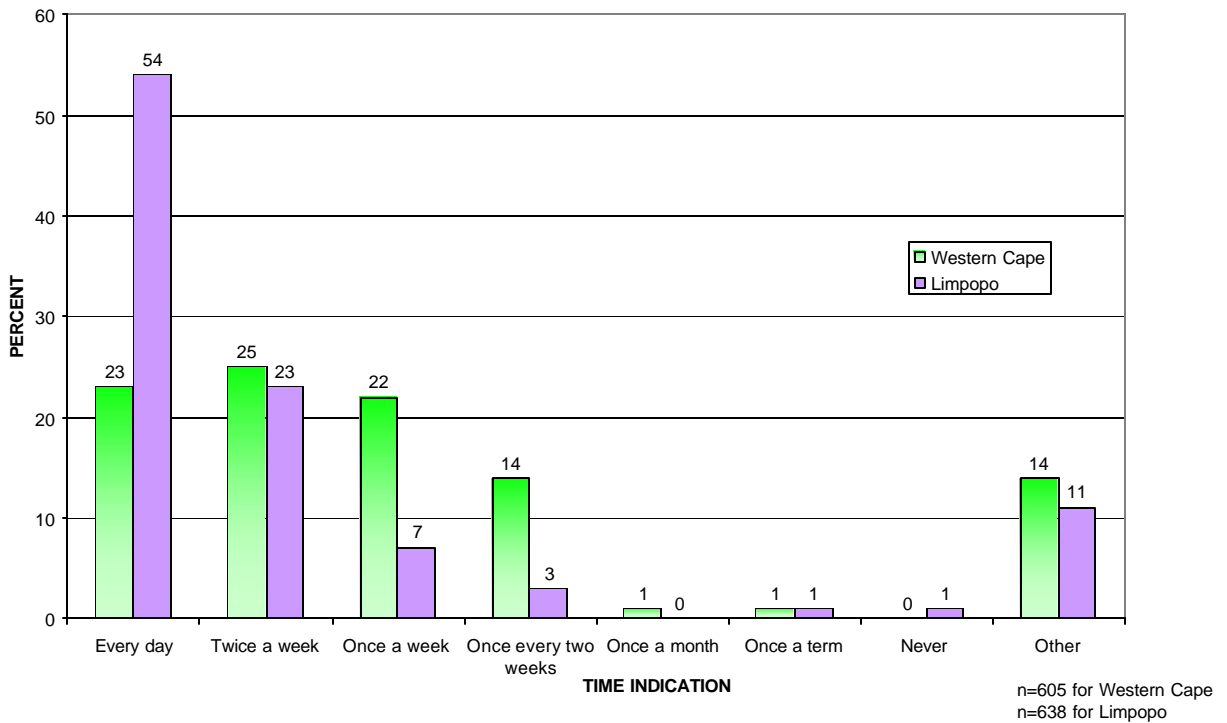
Figure 5.27 shows that 40% of the learners indicated that the *time was just right* for the duration of the Life Orientation class, while 28% said the *more time was needed*. Only 3% indicated that *less* time was needed. There was a discrepancy between percentages for *more time needed* and *time is too short,* as well as for *classes too long* and *less time needed.*

Figure 5.27 Senior Phase learners: views of Life Orientation class duration

n=1235
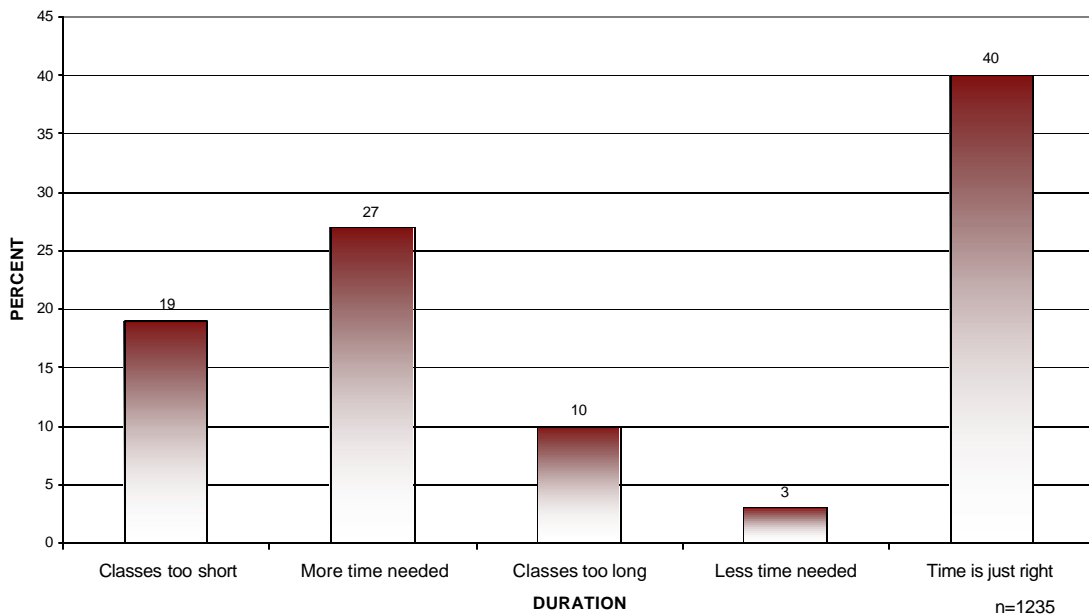
5.4.4 Summary of Life Orientation time allocation and usage

Time allocations for Life Orientation were varied. Some schools offered Life Orientation every day, some once a week or once every seven to ten days. Educators appeared unsure of Life Orientation time allocations; this could be as a result of being unsure of what Life Orientation entails. Some schools added assembly to the time allocation for Life Orientation, others included afternoon sports. Often, Life Orientation was timetabled as the first two periods on a Monday morning or the last two periods on a Friday afternoon. Learners' perceptions of Life Orientation time allocations differed from educators' indications. Within the confines of this research, it was not possible to obtain a clear picture of reality-based time allocations for Life Orientation. Limpopo appeared to include Life Orientation on their timetable more than the Western Cape.

Most educators felt they had enough time for Life Orientation and indicated they used all the allotted time for teaching Life Orientation. This was contradicted by student-teachers who observed that many educators did not use the allotted time for Life Orientation.

Some learners felt that more time was need for Life Orientation, while others thought the time allocation was just right.

5.5 THE EDUCATORS ASSIGNED TO TEACH LIFE ORIENTATION

5.5.1 Educators assigned to teach Life Orientation

A range of educators was responsible for Life Orientation.

A specialist educator was defined as a educator who taught mostly Life Orientation and had been specifically trained for Life Orientation. A high percentage (75%) of the Intermediate Phase educators indicated that there was not a specialised educator for Life Orientation and 25% indicated there was a specialised educator. Fifty-four percent of the Senior Phase educators indicated that there was not a specialist educator for Life Orientation, while 45% of the educators said there was a specialist Senior Phase educator who taught mostly Life Orientation and had been specifically trained to do so.
Note that various broad meanings were assigned to *specialist*. For example, being *qualified* to teach Life Orientation had varied meanings, ranging from attending a three-day HIV and AIDS course, or a two-hour departmental workshop, to being either an ex-*guidance*, ex-*religious instruction* or ex-*physical education* educator.

Figure 5.28 shows that 53% of the educators maintained that *all teachers* taught Life Orientation at their schools, while 33% said that the *Life Orientation teacher* was responsible, with *principals* responsible in 11% of the instances.

Figure 5.28 Intermediate Phase educators: who teaches Life Orientation
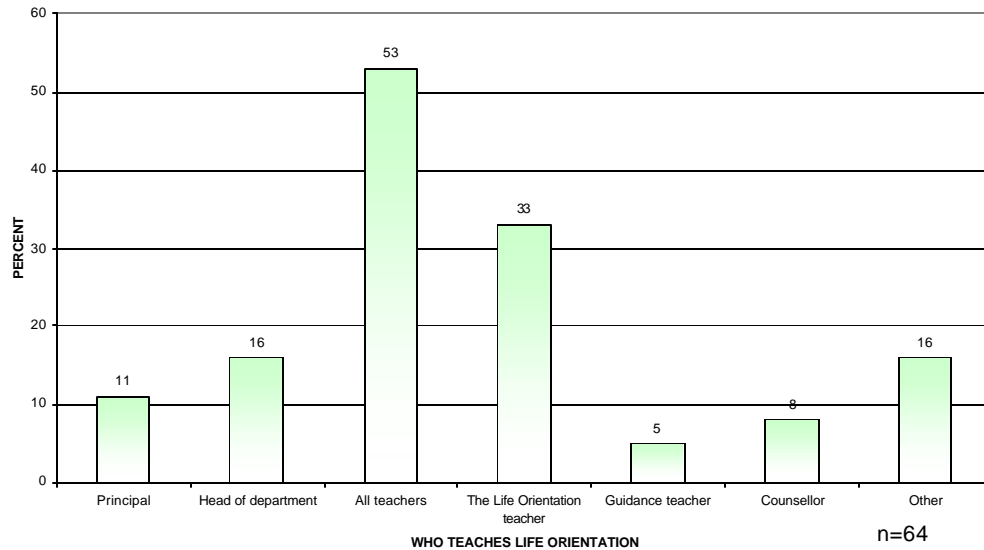
As represented in Figure 5.29, the *Life Orientation teacher* was cited by 51% of Senior Phase educators to be responsible for teaching this learning area, the *guidance teacher* by 28%, while 21% indicated that *all educators* were responsible for Life Orientation.

Figure 5.29 Senior Phase educators: who teaches Life Orientation

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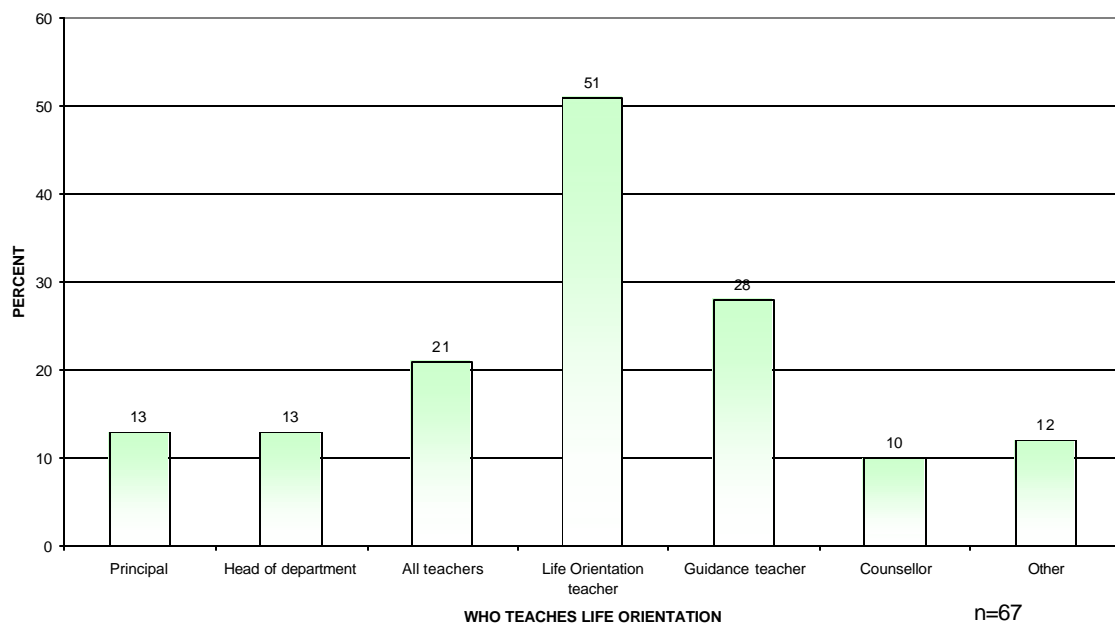
5.5.2 Educators' rationales for teaching Life Orientation

Figure 5.30 shows the reasons why the Life Orientation educators were responsible for this learning area. More than half (51%) of Senior Phase educators indicated that they were *interested* in teaching Life Orientation and 45% said they were *qualified* to do so. *Qualified* had the same broad connotations as *specialist* mentioned above. Some 28% stated that they taught Life Orientation because they were passionate about it. *Other* was given as a reason by 10%, which generally meant *being selected by the principal.* Of the respondents, 12% were responsible for teaching Life Orientation because there was *no one else* available , while a low 6% had *free periods* to fill.

Figure 5.30 Senior Phase educators: reasons for being responsible for Life Orientation

n=69
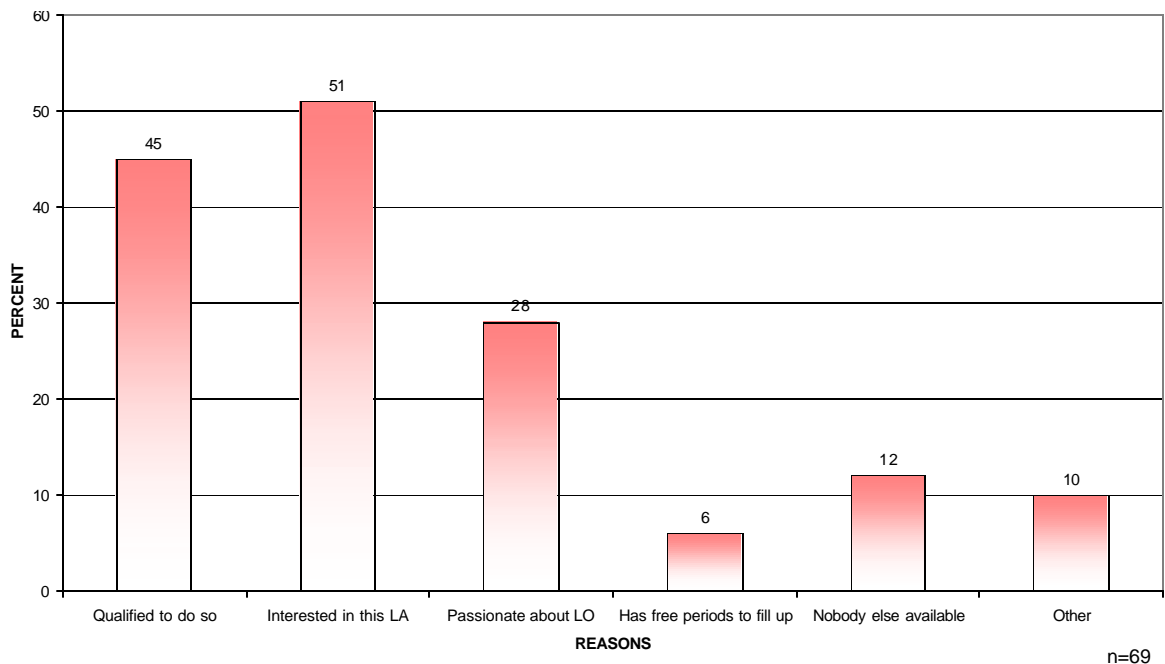
5.5.3 Who are prototypical educators for Life Orientation?

Intermediate Phase educators' views on *who should teach Life Orientation* are illustrated in Figure 5.31. A high percentage (78%) indicated that *all educators* should teach Life Orientation, and a low 21% the *Life Orientation educator* only, with 41% thinking that *parents* should be responsible.

Figure 5.31 Intermediate Phase educators: who should teach Life Orientation

n=63
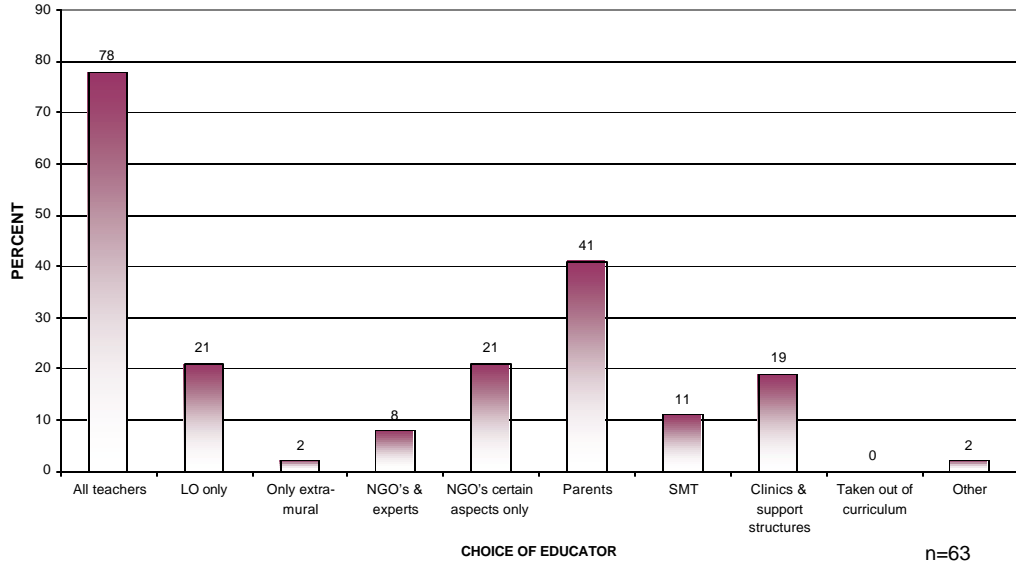
Figure 5.32 shows that 57% of the Senior Phase educators indicated that *all educators* should teach Life Orientation, and 38% preferred the *Life Orientation educator* only. Some saw the responsibility for teaching Life Orientation as belonging outside the school: 20% wanted *parents* to be responsible, 17% *clinics* and 15% *NGOs* for specific issues.

Figure 5.32 Senior Phase educators: who should teach Life Orientation

n=69
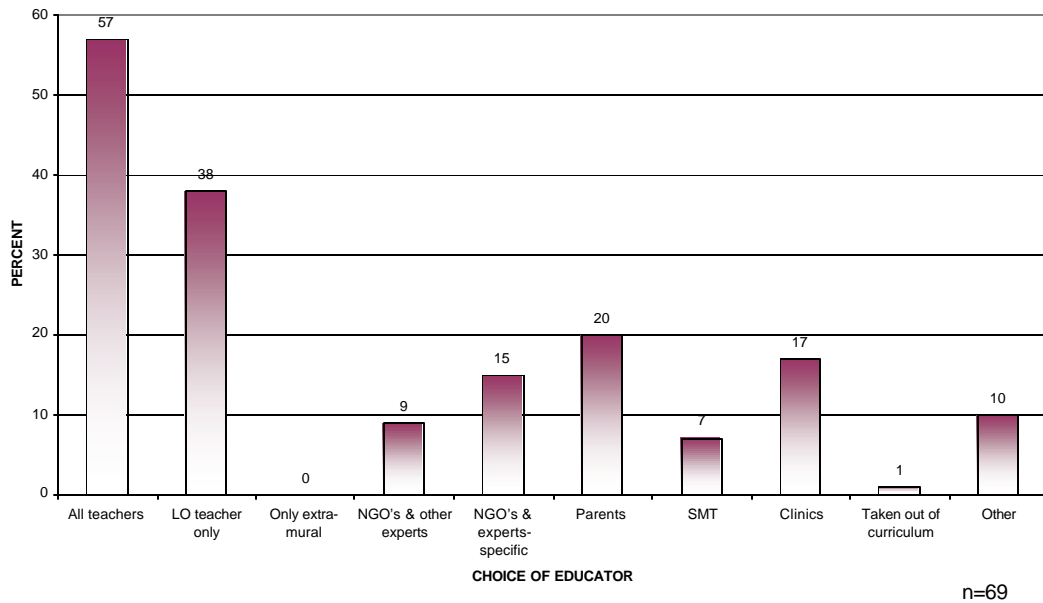
As can be seen in Figure 5.33, 51% of the Senior Phase learners preferred to be taught Life Orientation by their *present educator*, 22% by *any educator* at the school and only 7% by

the *school principal.* A *counsellor* also received a low 9% and a *parent* and *educator not at the school* 8%.

Figure 5.33 Senior Phase learners: who should teach Life Orientation
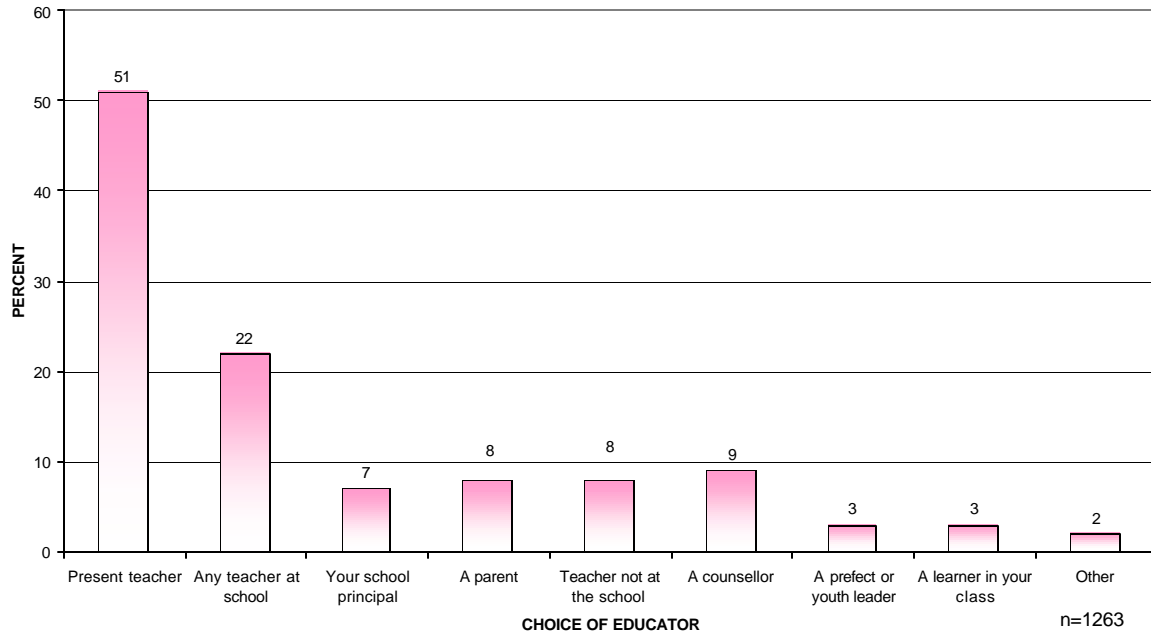
5.5.4 Summary of the educators assigned to teach Life Orientation

Life Orientation was not generally assigned to specifically trained Life Orientation educators. Half of the educators indicated that there was not a specialist Life Orientation educator and that all educators taught Life Orientation at the school, for both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase.

Educators assigned broad meanings to *specialist* and being *qualified* to teach Life Orientation, ranging from a three-day HIV and AIDS course or a two-hour workshop on Life Orientation, to being an ex-guidance or physical or religion education educator.

Around 30% of the educators taught Life Orientation because they were told to, had free periods or because there was no one else available; the rest indicated that they taught Life Orientation because they were interested or qualified to do so.

Seventy-eight percent of Intermediate Phase educators felt that all educators should teach Life Orientation and 57% of Senior Phase educators said all educators should teach it. Half the learners indicated that their present educators should teach Life Orientation, with only 7% saying the school principals should teach it.

5.6 THE PRACTICE OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The practice of Life Orientation refers to how Life Orientation is implemented in schools. Concomitant to the practice of Life Orientation are teaching methods used and problems and successes experienced, including issues of assessment and the availability of learning support material.

5.6.1 Life Orientation teaching methodology

Figure 5.34 shows that a high 94% of the Intermediate Phase educators used the methods of *discussions* and 83% *group work* for Life Orientation. *Talk and chalk* was used by 35% and 29% were *textbook* orientated.

Figure 5.34 Intermediate Phase educators: Life Orientation methodology
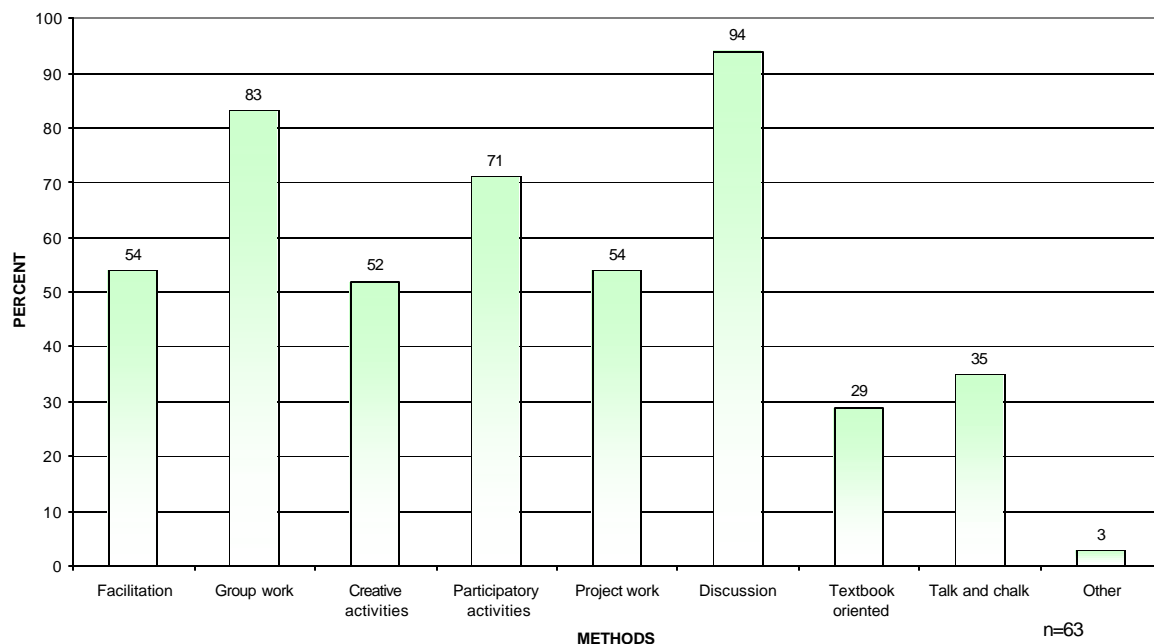
Figure 5.35 illustrates that core differences between provinces: in Limpopo 52% of the Intermediate Phase educators indicated that they were *textbook* orientated, whilst only 13% in the Western Cape indicated this.

Observations in the Western Cape by student-teachers signify, however, that Intermediate Phase educators were more inclined to be *textbook* orientated in Western Cape and to make use of *talk and chalk* methods, than they admitted when interviewed. In the Western Cape, only 21% indicated they used *talk and chalk* methods, while 61% claimed to use *creative activities*. In contrast, 56% of Limpopo educators used *talk and chalk* and 40% *creative activities*.

Figure 5.35 Limpopo and Western Cape Intermediate Phase educators: Life Orientation methodology
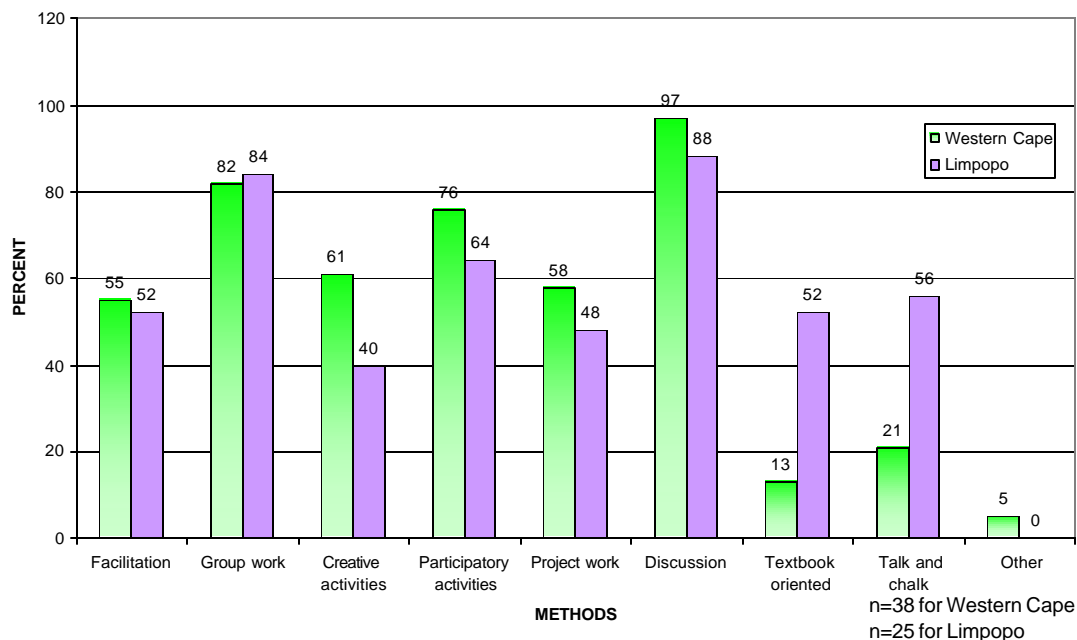
Figure 5.36 illustrates that *group work* and *discussion* were cited as most often used, with both *talk and chalk* and *facilitation* being used the least by Senior Phase educators.

Figure 5.36 Senior Phase educators: Life Orientation methodology
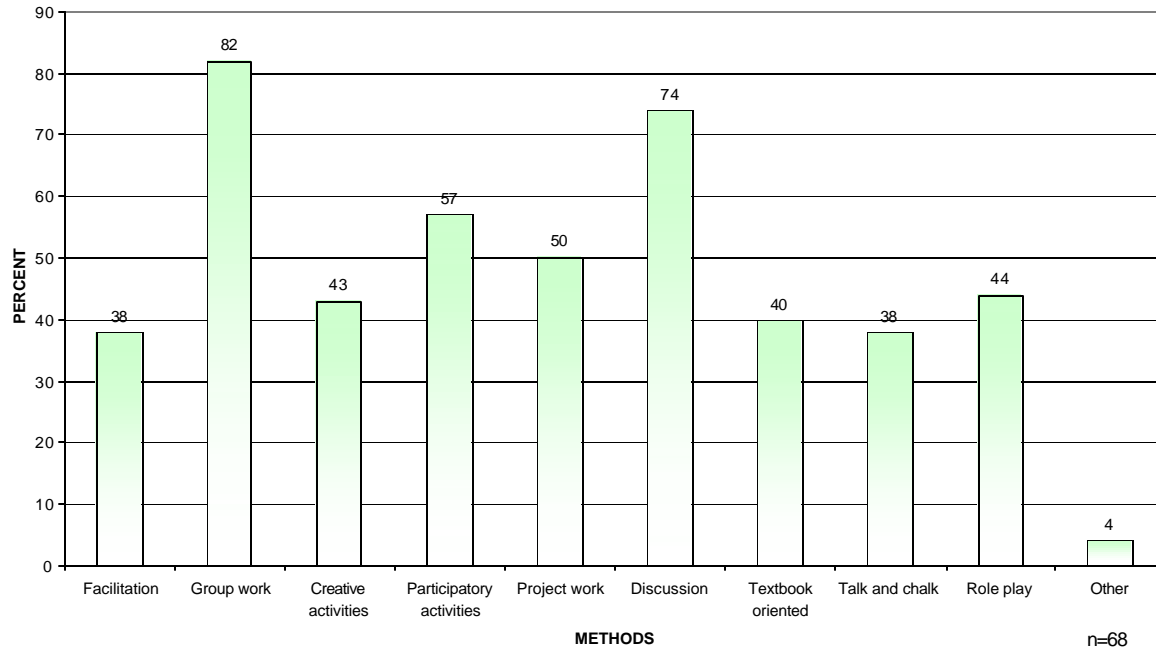
Integration of Life Orientation into other learning areas was difficult to ascertain in both provinces as no comprehensive responses could be determined. Insufficient data was collected to provide a meaningful picture of integration. This was the question most often not responded to in the structured interviews. In some instances educators either said they integrated Life Orientation in all learning areas, but could not give examples, or indicated that they did not know what was meant by integration. Student-teachers observed that in some instances Life Orientation-rela ted issues were mentioned in the final three minutes of a period, and that this may have been seen as 'integration'. Some educators felt that when they used group work, they were integrating Life Orientation. Student-teachers noted that some educators felt that "every lesson is a Life Orientation lesson as we are educating the young and guiding them".

The combination of Arts and Culture with Life Orientation in the Intermediate Phase intensified educators' confusion. Student -teachers reported that some educators had the view that Life Orientation was the learning area where "learners made things" due to its close association with Arts and Culture. Some Intermediate Phase educators indicated they had difficulty integrating Life Orientation with Arts and Culture. Many educators indicated that it was easiest to integrate Life Orientation in languages and proceeded to do so. Some educators could see no links between Life Orientation and the other learning areas. An

example is an Intermediate Phase Western Cape language educator "who only taught her class languages, as she felt that this was most important and Life Orientation could be dealt with in the Senior Phase."

5.6.2 The problems associated with teaching Life Orientation

Problems and successes experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation give an indication of the practice of Life Orientation in the reality of the classroom situation.

Figure 5.37 depicts that a relatively high 46% of Intermediate Phase educators indicated *assessment difficulties,* and 44% had problems with a *lack of learning support material,* while 28% of the educators indicated a *lack of equipment.* Almost a third (30%) of the educators felt that there was *a lack of time*, which corresponds to the 30% indication of *not enough time* in Figure 5.21. *Large classes* were cited by 23% of the educators as being a problem.

Figure 5.37 Intermediate Phase educators: problems in Life Orientation
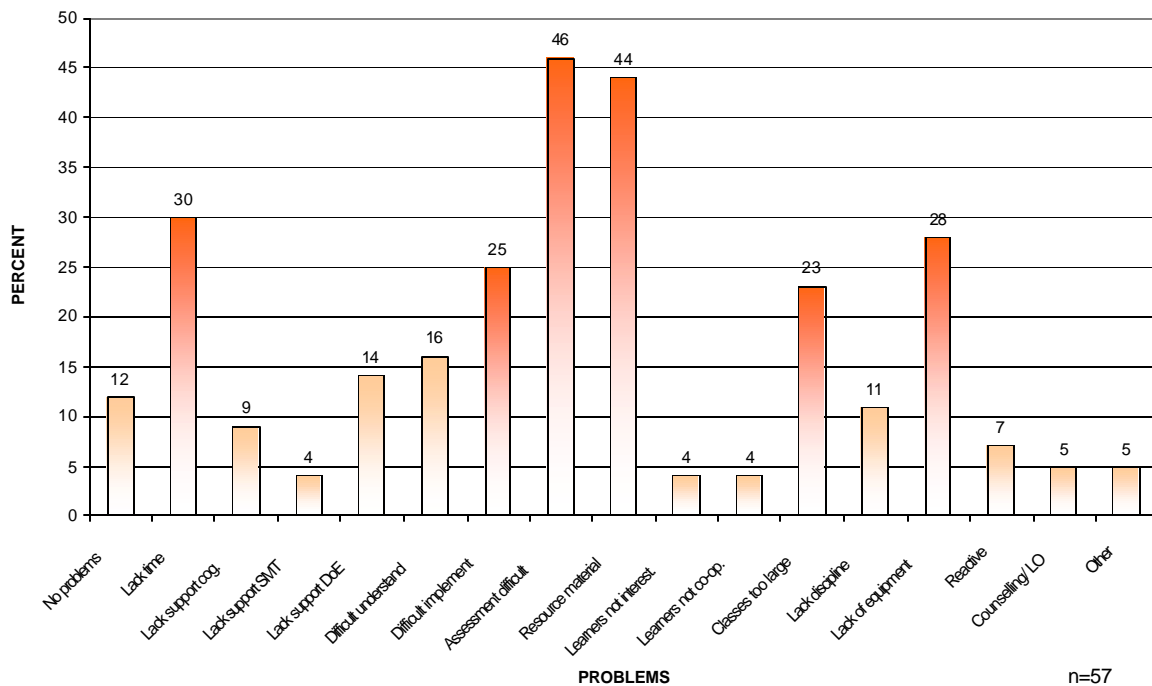
Figure 5.38 illustrates the marked differences in the availability of learning support material and equipment in the two provinces. In Limpopo, 73% of Intermediate Phase educators experienced a *lack of learning support material*, versus only 26% in the Western Cape. Similarly, in Limpopo 59% *lacked equipment* in contrast to 9% in the Western Cape.

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Assessment difficulties were more prominent in Western Cape (51%) than in Limpopo (36%). *Large classes* were more of a problem in Limpopo (41%) than in Western Cape (11%).

Figure 5.38 Limpopo and Western Cape Intermediate Phase educators: problems in Life Orientation

n=35 for Western Cape
n=22 for Limpopo
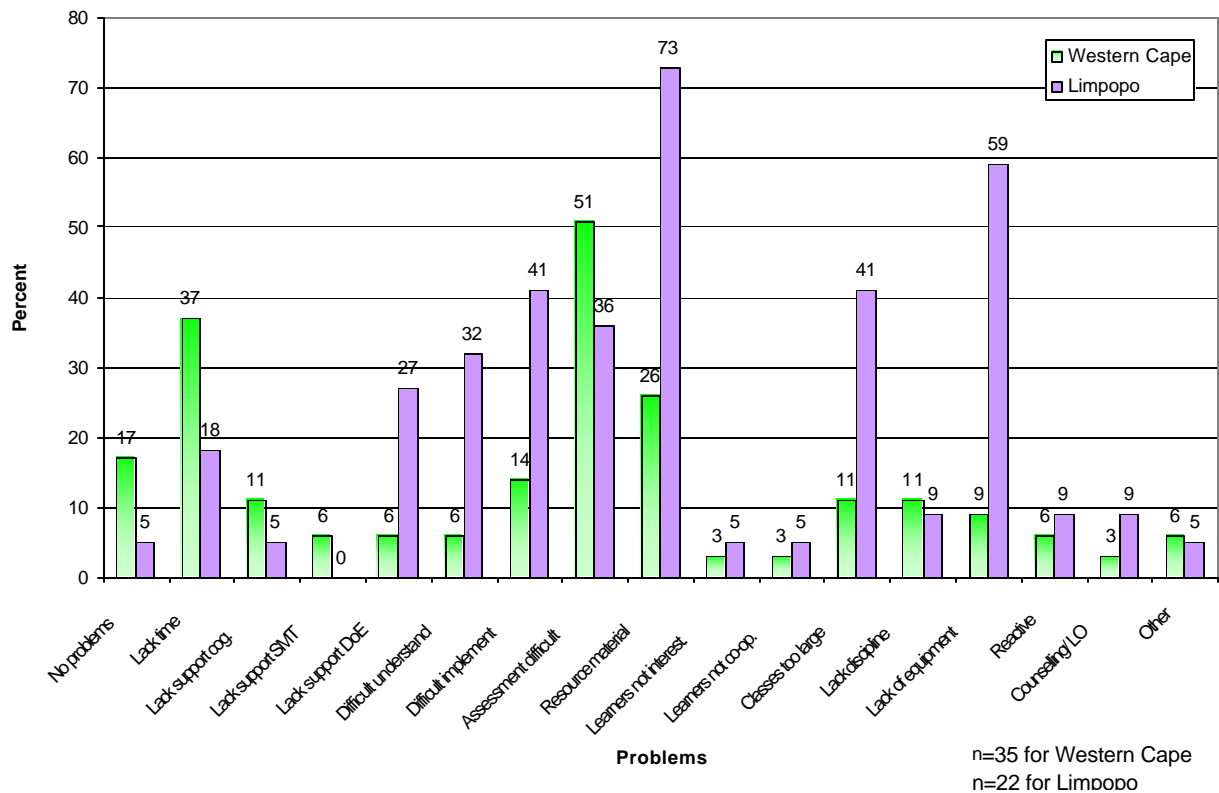
Figure 5.39 shows that 62% of Senior Phase educators indicated that *classes were too large* and 55% said that there was a *lack of learning support materials*. Furthermore, 38% experienced *assessment* difficulties and 35% cited a *lack of support from the Department of Education* as a problem. A *lack of discipline* was cited by 25% of the Senior Phase educators, which differs markedly from the 11% Intermediate Phase educators who mentioned discipline. Life Orientation was found to be *difficult to implement* by 30%, and 19% said the *confusion between guidance and Life Orientation* was a problem.

Figure 5.39 Senior Phase educators: problems in Life Orientation
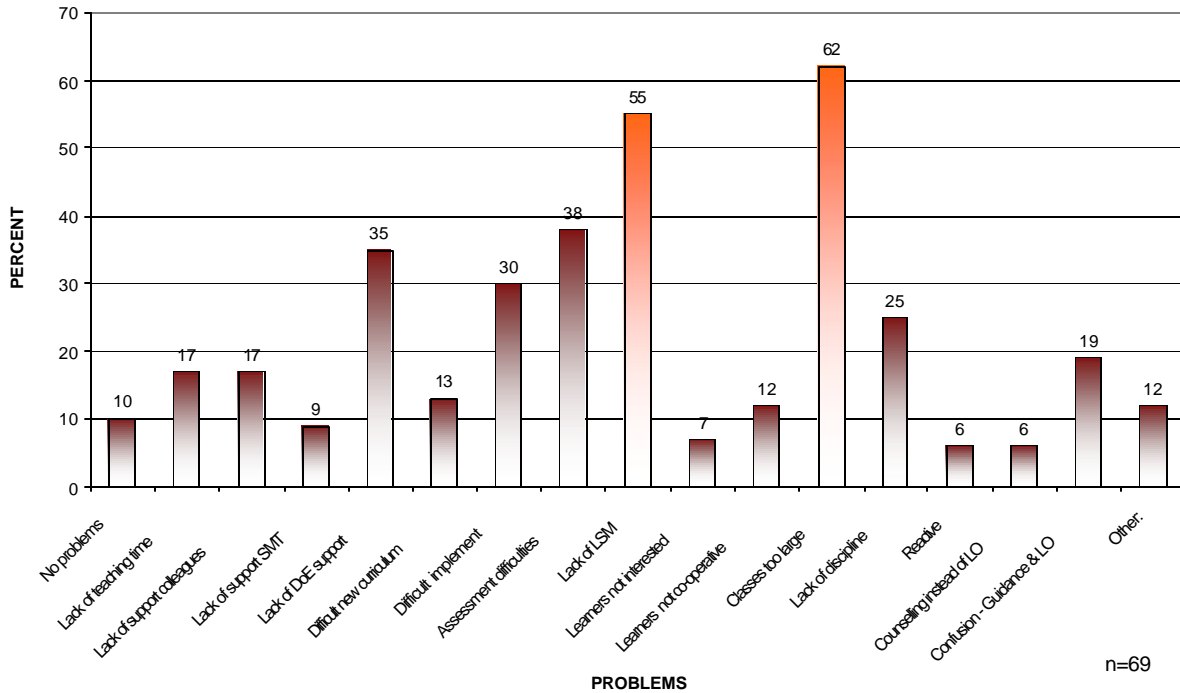
Figure 5.40 indicates that the main differences between provinces were found in the lack of *learning support materials*, with Limpopo at 63% and Western Cape at 47%. *Assessment* difficulties were encountered by more Western Cape educators (50%) than those in Limpopo (26%). *Lack of support from the Department of Education* was more of a problem in Limpopo (43%) than in the Western Cape (26%). A *lack of support from colleagues* was felt more in the Western Cape (24%) than in Limpopo (11%). Life Orientation was found to be *difficult to implement* by 41% in the Western Cape, but by only 20% in Limpopo. A further difference was that in the Western Cape, 38% of the educators cited lack of *discipline* as a problem, whereas only 11% found it to be a problem in Limpopo. Student-teachers in the Western Cape experienced discipline problems in their Life Orientation classes to a great extent and indicated that learners refused to do tasks and assignments for Life Orientation. There was *confusion between guidance and Life Orientation* for 24% of Senior Phase educators in the Western Cape, in contrast to the 14% in Limpopo.

Figure 5.40 Limpopo and Western Cape Senior Phase educators: problems in Life Orientation

n=34 for Western Cape
n=35 for Limpopo
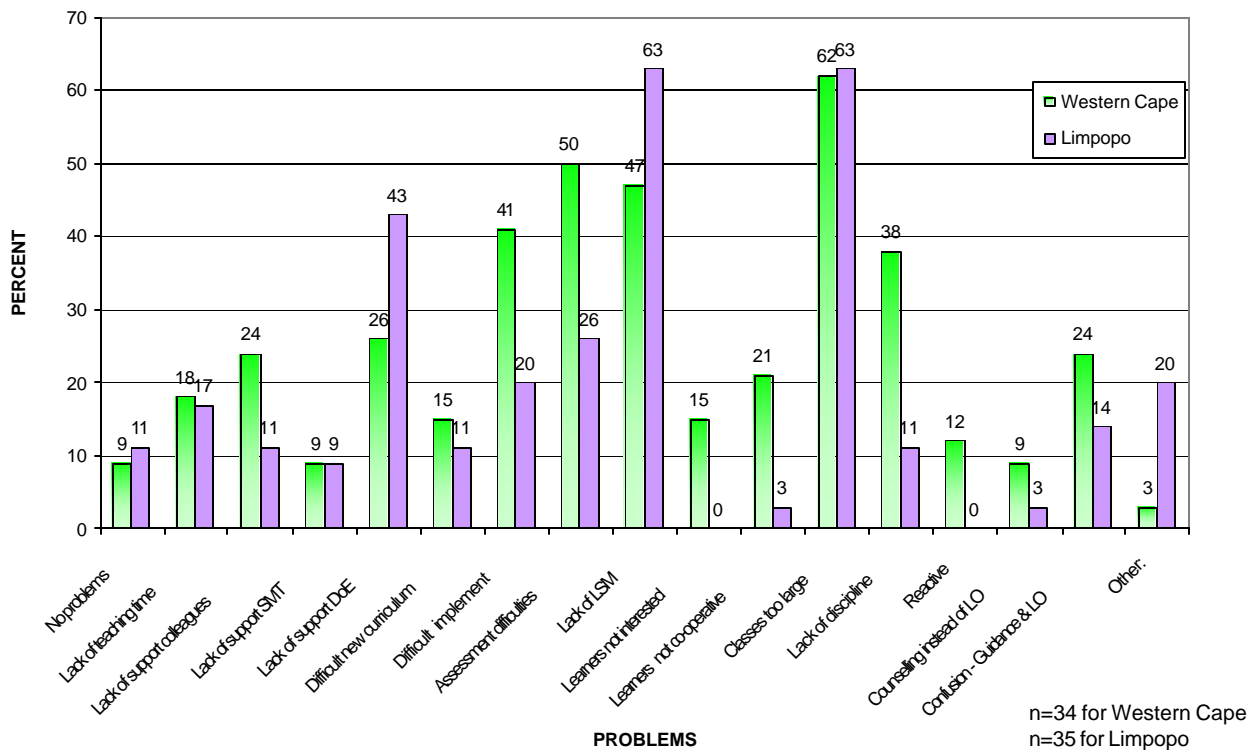
In answer to question 5 of the structured interview concerning learning support materials, a high 86% of the Senior Phase educators indicated they *had resource books*. However, only 39% were *satisfied* with their resource books.

Responses to question 10 of the learners' questionnaire revealed that 46% of the learners indicated that they had *textbooks*, while 54% said that they had *no textbooks*. Of the learners with textbooks, 81% were *satisfied* with their books, and a low 19% were *not satisfied*.

Answers to question 13 of the Senior Phase learners' questionnaire indicated that 63% of the learners thought that Life Orientation should be *assessed*, and 37% held the view that it should *not be assessed*.

Table 5.1 Class sizes for Senior Phase learners in Limpopo and the Western Cape

Western Province		Limpopo	
School Number	Class size	School Number	Class Size
1	31	1	49
2	25	2	48
3	33	3	65
4	35	4	40
5	32	5	48
6	31	6	31
7	48	7	9
8	42	8	46
9	53	9	54
10	48	10	44
11	40	11	45
12	78	12	31
13	32	13	40
14	24	14	47
15	50	15	80
16	32	16	60
17	38	17	85
18	49	18	65
19	30	19	52
20	45	20	46
21	22	21	67
22	40	22	14
23	43		
24	34		
25	44		
26	39		
27	55		
28	24		

Table 5.1 shows the overly large class sizes in particularly Limpopo. The small class sizes of 9 and 14 learners per class are in private schools. The large classes in the Western Cape are in previously disadvantaged areas.

5.6.3 The successes experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation

In Figure 5.41, Intermediate Phase educators' successes are depicted. Learners' *interest* in Life Orientation obtained the highest (87%) response by Intermediate Phase educators, with learners' *responded well* also receiving a high 83%. It was felt by 75% of the educators that learners became *more confident* and 76% felt that learners became *more respectful* towards a range of cultures, beliefs and social groups. The *HIV and AIDS* emphasis in Life Orientation was necessary and useful to 68%.

Figure 5.41 Intermediate Phase educators: successes in Life Orientation
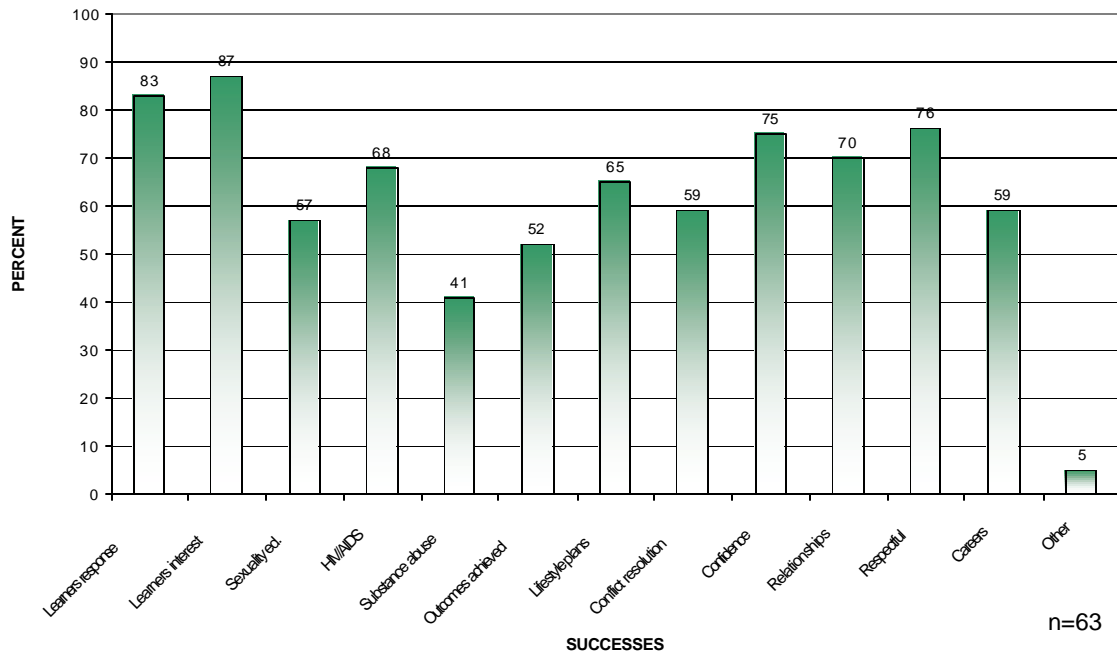
Figure 5.42 illustrates that the focus on *HIV and AIDS* got the highest rating as a success, with 76% of the Senior Phase educators finding the emphasis in Life Orientation on *HIV and AIDS necessary and useful.* According to 63% of the Senior Phase educators, their *learners responded well* in Life Orientation classes, while 72% said learners were *interested* in Life Orientation and 66% indicated that *sexuality education* helped the learners.

Figure 5.42 Senior Phase educators: successes in Life Orientation
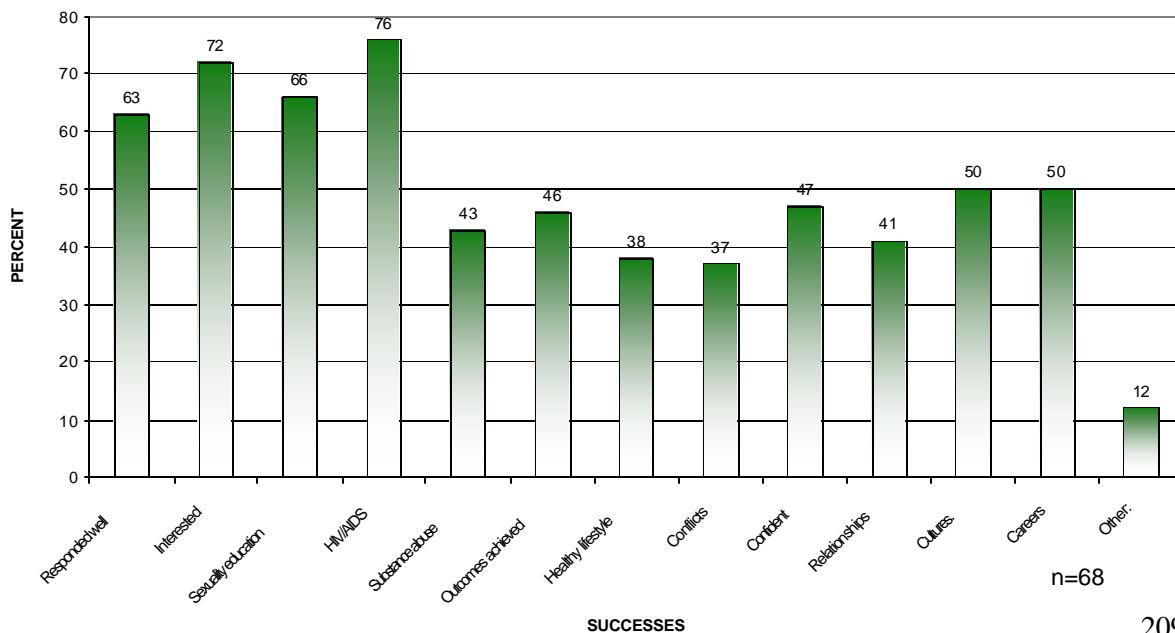
5.6.4 Summary of the practice of Life Orientation in the classroom

Teaching methodologies used by most educators consisted primarily of transmission teaching or talk and chalk methods. Student-teachers observed that educators in the Western Cape indicated during the structured interviews that they used group work, facilitation and experiential methods, but in the reality of the classroom this did not happen. Researchers observed in Limpopo that educators indicated they used group work, but learners often merely sat in groups while educators talked. Minimal use was made of creative and participatory activities in Life Orientation.

Problems experienced by educators in the Western Cape revolved around assessment difficulties, as well as a lack of time. The problems in Limpopo were different, being mainly large class sizes, lack of learning support material, and a lack of equipment. Lack of discipline was more of a problem in the Western Cape than in Limpopo.

Successes were learners' interest in Life Orientation, their good response in class, learners becoming more confident and the HIV and AIDS emphasis.

5.7 LIFE ORIENTATION EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Unstructured interview and focus group findings and student-teachers and researchers' observations are summarised in this section.

5.7.1 Educators' attitudes towards curriculum transformation

As Life Orientation is a new learning area within a curriculum in transition, generic attitudes towards OBE and C2005 could affect the way Life Orientation is viewed. Figure 5.43 indicates that Intermediate Phase educators were generally positive towards curriculum changes, with 51% holding that OBE and C2005 was an *exciting innovation*, and 34% believing that it *worked well*. Only 3% said it was *nonsense* and 5% responded that the changes *could not be implemented*. A relatively large 29% responded with *other*. This was generally a proviso that C2005 and OBE *could work well* if certain conditions were met, such as *smaller classes*, *more resources* and *extensive educator training*.

Figure 5.43 Intermediate Phase educators: views on curriculum transformation

n=59
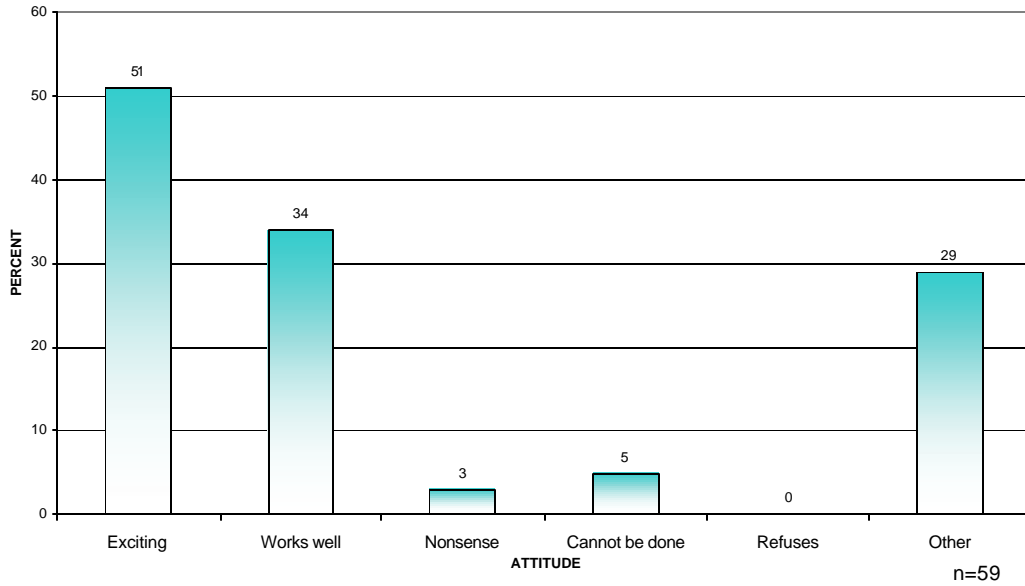
Figure 5.44 shows that, similar to Intermediate Phase educators, 51% of the Senior Phase educators viewed OBE and C2005 as *an exciting innovation*, with only 10% indicating that *it would never work*. *Other* was selected by 28%, which generally meant that, given *better resources*, *smaller classes*, and *more training*, the curriculum innovations could work.

Figure 5.44 Senior Phase educators: views on curriculum transformation

n=67
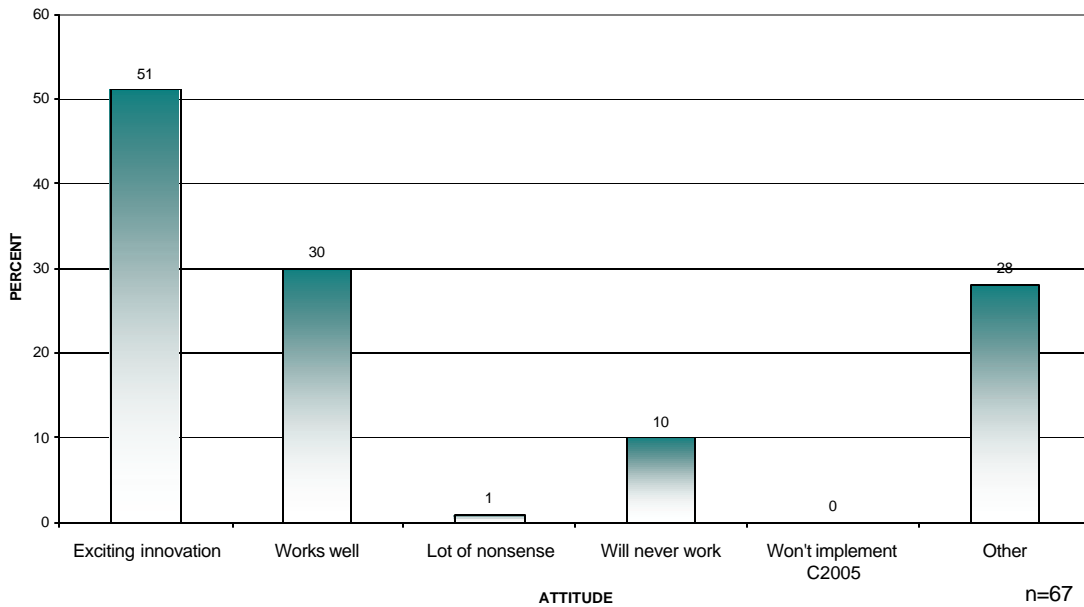
5.7.2 Life Orientation and values

An attempt was made to ascertain whether and how educators' values affect their Life Orientation teaching methodology. In unstructured interviews and focus groups in Limpopo and the Western Cape, values were discussed and student-teachers were tasked with observing the interplay of values and educators' classroom practices. The reason for including values, a reason that was not included in the original research methodology, was that from the initial research, it became apparent that Life Orientation was a value-driven learning area and that educators' values may affect their Life Orientation approaches, teaching and attitudes towards this learning area.

The results are delineated in categories that highlight the core Life Orientation foci and ensuing values to which they may pertain. Sexuality, gender, HIV and AIDS, religion, human rights and citizenship education are the core categories identified as contentious regarding educators' values.

> *Many of the educators we addressed did not think they avoided any*
> *of the issues in the curriculum. However, from what we witnessed*
> *at the school and in the classroom, this was simply not true.*

> *There are certain areas that some educators prefer not to teach on*
> *account of not being comfortable teaching the subject matter due to*
> *embarrassment or limited knowledge of the subject.*

It appears from this study that educators felt they could choose what and what not to teach, according to their school communities' values. The following comments by educators are indicative of how values are core to the way Life Orientation is taught:

> *I think my own values and moral position come through as I teach.*

> *We have structured our planning in such a way that we feel*
> *comfortable with the content and therefore it is in line with our*
> *own values/moral position.*

> *There are some aspects of the curriculum that I spend time on and*
> *others that we look at in passing.*

> *I don't avoid aspects of the curriculum, I just emphasise what is*
> *important for our community. The learning outcomes are noble, it*
> *is the underlying philosophy which I struggle with.*

> *For now the curriculum is broad enough to allow for*
> *interpretation.*

> *On the surface the curriculum is teaching children to be good,*
> *strong, healthy children. I do not have a problem with teaching*

this. But when one looks at having to teach no absolutes, or no ultimate truth or belief system while one believes in absolutes, when you hold to one yourself, this can be a challenge.

Student-teachers' observations on values included:

> *Educator xx admits to struggling to cope with the teaching of modern socio-illness and modern teenage issues.*

> *The educator had to constantly assess her own values.*

> *We need to teach what is contextually relevant to learners — this view is supported in RNCS. However, this does not happen at xx school.*

Sexuality, gender and HIV and AIDS education

Some educators felt that as an educator one is bound to teach the curriculum as is, no matter what one's values. Others felt that one's values come first, as one could not teach anything that was not in line with one's beliefs.

The close association that HIV and AIDS education has with sexuality education causes some educators concern. Taboos in the community, the influence of parents who do not want their young children exposed to sexuality education and the educators' own sensitivities about sexuality, prevalent gender inequality and the myths about HIV and AIDS appear to have an impact on educators' values regarding these core issues.

Educators' comments included:

> *Life Orientation sometimes forces educators to teach things they do not agree with, e.g. sexuality education. Traditionally it is a taboo for elderly people to discuss matters of sex with children/young people. So it will be better for professional people like nurses, social workers and psychologists to handle such matters.*

> *I wouldn't choose to teach sex ed or HIV and AIDS; but I have had to do so in the past and it wasn't so bad. I think if I had to do it a few more times I'd be ok with it, but if it's left up to me I'd rather give it a miss.*

> *HIV and AIDS is contentious — in how much depth do we deal with it?*

> *The entire RNCS is 'too much a good dose of reality' for the learners at xx.*

They are throwing such big things at little people — HIV, budgeting…that's why I throw in dragons and fairies sometimes still.

Learners are not allowed to be children any longer and are losing their innocence. They are being confronted with things that educators were only confronted with as adults. Learners should be given the opportunity to be 'innocent' children and not be confronted with some of the Life Orientation issues until much older.

Student-teachers' observations included:

In grade 6, they have not yet focused on HIV and AIDS… the educator is uncertain whether or not to discuss sexual intercourse at this stage, not sure of how much detail to go into. The young learners do not understand the implications of what they learn.

The educator has overcome her aversion to the topic (HIV and AIDS) by using her learners' needs as motivation to teach it.

The school has an "it happens out there, not here" attitude to HIV and AIDS.

Educators expressed extreme opinions about sexuality education, including:

It is not my place to discuss these matters with learners. There are dangers inherent in this topic which may have repercussions.

To teach a young child about the details of sex especially those from a protected community like ours is irresponsible.

At primary school level not every parent wants their child to know everything there is to know about sex… I will deal with questions with caution.

It is the parents' problem/responsibility and I am not going to teach it.

A student-teacher observed that

The three areas that were not dealt with were sexuality education, HIV and AIDS and relationships. This may have stemmed from the general Christian hesitancy to tackle this head on for fear of promoting some kind of immoral lifestyle.

Gender issues were also contentious:

This thing about women as equals to men, it is disturbing us. Why do we need to teach this in the classroom? This is against how we think. We will have a generation of very cheeky girls who will not be well-mannered.

> *We agree with the Constitution but it is not practical to implement when it comes to women, religion and sexual preferences.*

> *Learners (especially girls), will not know respect if we do everything as we are told by this OBE.*

A life skills and HIV and AIDS trainer mentioned that some educators initially opposed discussing matters of sexuality with learners, but that most educators eventually, as an outcome of the training, changed their attitude and were willing to deal with these aspects of the curriculum.

Human rights, citizenship and religion education

Often neglected and misunderstood, human rights appeared to be marginally taught. All educators did not yet seem to have fully accepted or integrated South African Constitutional values into their own value systems. Religion was a contentious issue and led to heated debates in focus groups.

Student-teachers' observations included:

> *The educator thinks human rights and citizenship education belongs more in HSS* (History and Social Sciences)

> *The educator felt that sections on redressing the past should be removed from Life Orientation curriculum. The current learners never played a part in the Apartheid regime, they should not be exposed to it with such gusto.*

> *Trying to explain human rights to young learners at xx was complicated and that they didn't understand that doing chores at home is not what is meant by 'child labour'. This was an issue for learners from lower income homes, not their school.*

> *He avoids issues around government and the Constitution, as this should be covered in the history lesson.*

> *The grade 7 educator teaches everything in Life Orientation except citizenship as she regards this as least important. She believes that this part of Life Orientation should be taught in high school.*

> *Racism could be a problem: many educators who are expected to teach Life Orientation were part of the apartheid system. Some are indoctrinated and racist, some were so oppressed that they will not teach their learners to love all races.*

A student-teacher expressed this view:

> *…having reflected on my own personal values as they relate to Life Orientation, I am acutely aware that for personal reasons I do not agree with the strong focus on Nationalism emphasised in the assessment standards. Every time I am faced with these standards I feel my stomach turn. I have wondered throughout our Life Orientation lectures at xx whether I would try to fulfil these assessment standards in the classroom. I can very well believe that I might be extremely grateful to be pressed for time and not be able to address this particular assessment standard with my learners every year.*

Educators' comments on religion included:

> *There was disagreement in our group. Should we call somebody to teach religion? Should we do it ourselves?*

> *One educator can teach about all religions, but the focus should be on Christianity*

> *All religions must get equal time, not only Christianity.*

Religion was a contentious issue from the onset, with many schools vociferous in their oppositions to religion education instead of religious education which focused solely on Christianity. Student-teachers' observations highlight this tension:

> *In this government school, they share the Life Skills half-hour lesson time per week with Bible Education as they are a Christian school. It is taught by an external theologian who has taught life skills before. The programme of having youth leaders in the schools was implemented and initiated by the local church. This same programme is being integrated into two other primary schools in the area — not private schools. Life skills is thus integrated with 'Bible Ed'.*

> *I observed a class discussion on religion, which started off very broadly, but as time went on, the focus narrowed on to the educator's own belief. It was pointed out, however, that there are many different religions, and that no religion is better than another. I also observed that xx often quoted from the Bible in order to get certain points across to learners.*

> *When they do teach life skills, the grade 6 educators place much emphasis on religion. This can become difficult as the school follows the Christian faith. It is possible that the Muslims will be subjected to Christian education while their own beliefs will not get much attention. This is evident in the reading of the Bible in the assembly and the reciting of the 'our Father'. However, the principal has informed the educators that religious instruction will*

now include stories from the Christian and Muslim faiths as from June.

Religion was one area that we felt was very one sided. There was a definite focus on Christian values and the Christian belief system. Prayers and hymns were included as part of assembly every Friday and there was a staff prayer meeting every Tuesday during break time. Even the school song included words about Jesus and the Bible.

Other religions were not given much, if any, scope at the school.

Religion education had a religious, rather than civic, function at the school.

The way that different belief systems were addressed implied that there was only one religion worthy of practising. 2 minutes for Muslim and 2 minutes for Jewish religions, 40 minutes for Christian religions.

Life Orientation remains a static theoretical subject instead of an area allowing for the exploration and growth of learners' awareness of the world around them and their relationship to this world. Life Orientation often presents only one viewpoint, offering only a conservative Christian belief structure to help understand the world and relate to it.

There are some Christian educators who decidedly feel threatened by Islam and would not be happy at all about even teaching Islam in a historical way.

The grade 6 educators admitted that they did not feel comfortable teaching Life Orientation. They regard all the issues in the Life Orientation learning area as being equally important after religion but are not confident enough to teach it.

Further comments on religion education by educators include:

I would like to teach more about Christianity.

I have Christian values and morals which directly affects my morals. However, one is open-minded and respectful of all children in the class.

I think each school should be able to decide from what religious viewpoint we teach.

To teach children that all religions are right is to leave them with little direction.

It's contentious- how much to deal with when it comes to religious diversity...

5.7.3 Summary of Life Orientation educators' attitudes and values

Life Orientation is inextricably linked with values. This study suggests that some educators' own values and attitudes prevent them from teaching the whole curriculum or teaching it according to required norms. It appears that constitutional values still need to be clarified for some Life Orientation educators.

Around 50% of both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators had positive attitudes towards curriculum transformation, OBE and C2005. In both phases, 28–29% indicated they were provisionally positive, if better resources, smaller classes and more training could be provided.

Values around gender, sexuality and HIV and AIDS education, human rights and citizenship and religion education were most often cited as at issue in both provinces. Rhetoric-practice incongruities were evident in that student-teachers indicated that educators would state that their values did not impinge on their teaching of Life Orientation, but in the Life Orientation class this did not play out in reality; most educators left out aspects of Life Orientation with which they felt uncomfortable or which were in opposition to their values.

5.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Life Orientation educators did not present standardised understandings and definitions of Life Orientation, nor the same descriptors. Life Orientation was not necessarily referred to as *Life Orientation*. *Guidance* and *life skills* were still used by some educators. Senior Phase Learners tended to use the term *Life Orientation* more than their educators. *Life Orientation* was used more as a term in Limpopo than in the Western Cape by both educators and Senior Phase learners. Educators tended to focus on aspects of Life Orientation such as HIV and AIDS, health, values and morals, guidance and life skills. Most educators did not define the learning area as a whole, but tended to look at aspects only. Within the same schools, different educators had vastly differing understandings of Life Orientation. Life Orientation appeared to be fragmented and not wholly understood.

HIV and AIDS, health education and 'guiding' learners were prominent in educators' definitions of Life Orientation. Timetabling indicated fragmented aspects of Life Orientation, that were tabled separately, for example as physical education, study skills,

and peace education or life skills. HIV and AIDS received the highest indication of inclusion in Life Orientation by Senior Phase educators, while environmental education received the lowest indication. Only 4% of Senior Phase educators stated that they included anything other than was enumerated and this was invariably civics.

Both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators and learners appear to value Life Orientation as an important learning area. Life Orientation is not ranked as the most important learning area, but also not as the least important. Senior Phase learners' choices of themes and topics coincide with those prioritised in Life Orientation, pointing to the relevancy of the learning area.

Time allocations for Life Orientation were varied. Some schools offered Life Orientation every day, some once a week or once every seven to ten days. Educators appeared unsure of Life Orientation time allocations; this could be as a result of being unsure of what Life Orientation entails. Some schools added assembly into the time allocation for Life Orientation, others included afternoon sports. Often, Life Orientation was timetabled as the first two periods on a Monday morning or the last two periods on a Friday afternoon. Learners' perceptions of Life Orientation time allocations differed from educators indications. Within the confines of this research, it was not possible to obtain a clear picture of reality-based time allocations for Life Orientation. Limpopo schools appeared to include Life Orientation on their timetable more often than the Western Cape schools.

Most educators felt they had enough time for Life Orientation and indicated they used all the allotted time for teaching it. This was contradicted by student-teachers who observed that many educators did not use the allotted time for Life Orientation. Some learners felt that more time was needed for Life Orientation, while others thought the time allocation was just right.

Life Orientation was not generally assigned to specifically trained Life Orientation educators. Half of the educators indicated that there was not a specialist Life Orientation teacher and that all educators taught Life Orientation at the school, for both Intermediate and Senior phases.

Educators assigned broad meanings to being qualified to teach Life Orientation. Around 30% of the educators taught Life Orientation because they were told to, had free periods or

because there was no one else available; the rest indicated that they taught Life Orientation because they were interested or qualified to do so. Most Intermediate Phase educators felt that all educators should teach Life Orientation and 57% of Senior Phase educators said all educators should teach Life Orientation.

Transmission teaching or talk and chalk methods were used by many educators. Student-teachers observed that educators indicated they used group work, facilitation and experiential methods during the structured interviews, but in the reality of the classroom this did not happen.

It was not possible to obtain a clear picture of integration of Life Orientation, both within the learning area itself and with other learning areas. Educators were unsure of the meaning of integration or had such a broad range of understandings of integration, that this could not be determined.

Educators in the Western Cape experienced difficulties with assessment. In contrast, the problems encountered in Limpopo were mainly large class sizes, lack of learning support material and a lack of equipment.

Educators did experience some success in Life Orientation. Successes were perceived to be learners' interest in Life Orientation, their good response in class, a rise in learners' confidence, and the HIV and AIDS emphasis.

Life Orientation is inextricably linked with values. It seems that some educators' own values and attitudes prevent them from teaching the whole curriculum or teaching it according to required norms. It appears that constitutional values still need to be clarified to some Life Orientation educators. Around 50% of both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators had positive attitudes towards curriculum transformation, OBE and C2005, with 28% indicating they were provisionally positive, if better resources, smaller classes and more training could be provided. Values around gender, sexuality education and HIV and AIDS, human rights and citizenship and religion education were most often cited as issues in both provinces.

Student-teachers indicated that educators would indicate that their values did not impinge on their teaching of Life Orientation, but in the Life Orientation class this did not

necessarily occur. Many educators left out aspects of Life Orientation that they felt were incongruent with their values, and emphasised aspects that were in accordance with their values.

Rhetoric-practice incongruities were evident. Student-teachers and researchers observed that educators' responses in interviews and focus groups did not always play out in the reality of the classroom.

In conclusion, Life Orientation is still a new learning area with which most educators have yet to come to terms with. Educators are still grappling to define and understand Life Orientation. Life Orientation is fragmented and not uniformly offered as one learning area. Sufficient links with especially physical education are not yet apparent. Life Orientation is not predominantly taught by educators who are specifically trained for this learning area. In some schools, all or any educators teach Life Orientation. Teaching methodologies are mainly of the transmission teaching type. Insufficient time is allocated to Life Orientation in most school time-tables. However, most educators and learners value this learning area and see the need and use for it. This value attribution is not always manifest in the reality of the classroom. Educators' values and attitudes impact how and what is taught in Life Orientation, and they do not all necessarily adhere to South African constitutional principles. In sum, the study has revealed that Life Orientation is not yet optimally implemented in South African schools.

The next chapter discusses these findings in depth. This leads to a further understanding of the emergent picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings of the study aimed at ascertaining the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools are discussed. Links are made with the literature, in particular wit h reference to research conducted in guidance and life skills in South Africa, as well as generic research on OBE and Curriculum 2005 implementation and curriculum transformation. International studies on curriculum change and implementation are referred to as well in an attempt to understand the impact of curriculum transformation on curriculum implementation. Extracts from student-teachers' observations and the researchers' field notes further explicate the core research issues discussed. The implications of the findings for the implementation of Life Orientation are highlighted.

The principal research foci and questions, around which this chapter is organised, are Life Orientation defined, interpreted and described, the significance attributed to Life Orientation, Life Orientation time allocation and usage, the educators assigned to Life Orientation, the practice of Life Orientation in the classroom and Life Orientation educators' attitudes and values. Issues emanating from the research such as the rhetoric-practice interface and the interrelatedness between the different aspects of the research findings, within the broader context of education in schools in South Africa, complete the discussion.

6.2 LIFE ORIENTATION DEFINED, INTERPRETED AND DESCRIBED

The framework of curriculum transformation, within which Life Orientation is contextualised and given meaning, will influence its eventual implementation. The way Life Orientation is defined, depicted, assigned meaning, and described, is an expression of how this learning area is understood. The results indicate that all educators do not have the same conceptualisations of Life Orientation, nor do they all subscribe to the

definitions portrayed in Department of Education Life Orientation curricula [Department of Education, 1997b; Department of Education, 2002b].

The findings in chapter 5 suggest that educators' *terminology*, *definitions* and *conceptions* of Life Orientation are disjointed, interchangeable, diffuse, ambiguous and fragmented, with often merely one aspect of Life Orientation, rather than the whole learning area, perceived as focal. Educators did not necessarily refer to Life Orientation as *Life Orientation*. For example, a Senior Phase educator's conceptualisation of Life Orientation as "religious education and life skills" serves to illustrate a limited and disjointed perception. Toddun's [2000] findings similarly indicate that educators have not yet fully understood what constitutes Life Orientation in South Africa.

In contrast, learners predominantly said *Life Orientation* was the terminology used at schools. Therefore learners appeared less confused about what Life Orientation was called at their schools. Many learners did not have the previous constituents of Life Orientation on their timetables before Life Orientation was introduced, so could perhaps more readily accept the nomenclature of a new learning area.

The phenomenon of term-exchange for *life skills* and *Life Orientation* can be ascribed to a number of factors, of which one is the prominence of the term *life skills*. Life skills has become a well-known term, both internationally and locally. The programmes of the World Health Organisation [1993; 1999] and UNICEF [2002] greatly aided in promoting life skills in South African education. The contribution of the *Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance* [Department of Education, 1995b] brought life skills education to the forefront as well. The strong impact of the Departments of Health and Education's life skills and HIV and AIDS programmes [Magome *et al.*, 1998] also contributed to educators becoming familiar with the term *life skills*. Numerous organisations offer life skills education programmes in South Africa [UNICEF, 2004], which further popularises the term.

As educators were familiar with the term life skills *before* Life Orientation was introduced, they may have *continued* to use the term, given the closeness and overlap in content of life skills and Life Orientation. The proximity of terminology for *life skills* and *Life Orientation* is apparent, as the word *life* precedes both terms. This could

possibly be an additional reason for educators using the terms interchangeably or loosely.

Life Skills is used as a title for a learning programme in the Foundation Phase, which covers a broad spectrum of fields. The programme includes almost everything that is not incorporated in numeracy and literacy [Western Cape Education Department, 2003]! It is a complex and confusing conglomeration of learning areas, which does not necessarily promote the establishment of *Life Orientation* as a learning area. Educators and schools may become used to the term *life skills* instead of *Life Orientation* in the Foundation Phase, and therefore continue with this terminology in the Intermediate Phase.

Life skills is a limited designation as opposed to *Life Orientation.* Hence, to continue using the term is counterproductive as it limits the scope of Life Orientation, which is a broad-based descriptor. If "life skills are a set of psycho-social competencies" [United Nations, 2003b, 14], they are *skills*, as opposed to Life Orientation, which is a *learning area* that "equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society" [Department of Education, 2002b, 4].

Guidance as a descriptor for Life Orientation was used slightly less by Intermediate Phase educators than by Senior Phase educators, and the least by Senior Phase learners. Previously, guidance in the Western Cape in primary school was also less common than in high schools [Wilson, 1995], thus possibly explaining why *guidance* was used more by Senior Phase educators than Intermediate Phase educators. Differences in provinces were marked, with far fewer Senior Phase learners in Limpopo than the Western Cape indicating that *guidance* was the descriptor for Life Orientation at their schools. Similarly, in the Western Cape more educators indicated that a *problem* for them was the confusion between guidance and Life Orientation than in Limpopo. Reasons for both the use of the term *guidance,* as well as the discrepancies in provinces, could be rooted in the prevalence of g*uidance* as a school subject prior to curriculum change. Guidance as a subject was minimally evident in schools in Limpopo [Mashimbye, 2000] but had been evident for longer in the Western Cape [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992]. Another possibility is that Limpopo educators show a greater political will to accept transformation in education because Limpopo primarily supports

the African National Congress while the Western Cape was, for most of the duration of the research, a more New National Party (now defunct) and Democratic Party - supporting province [South Africa Biz Guide, 2004]. Hence, educators and schools in Limpopo may have been more willing to embrace change, use new terminology and implement changes, than some of the educators and schools evidenced in the Western Cape. Accordingly, there would be less compulsion to use the descriptor *guidance* in Limpopo, than in the Western Cape.

Of note is that, in some instances in the Senior Phase, specifically in the Western Cape, Life Orientation is referred to as *physical education*. In other instances, *physical education* is indicated as a separate subject on school timetables, with no palpable links to Life Orientation. It is unclear whether educators and learners see physical education as part of Life Orientation in these schools. This separation of physical education from Life Orientation could be a manifestation of the opposition towards physical education becoming part of Life Orientation [Kloppers, 2004; Van Deventer, 2002, 2004; Wentzel, 2001; Wentzel, 2001]. However, if clear links with Life Orientation are not made, learners will continue to see physical education as separate from their general well-being and merely a loose-standing facet of their education. The marked difference between learners' and Senior Phase educators' mention of *physical education* as a descriptor may be that Senior Phase learners did not see *physical education as part of Life Orientation*, as it was offered separately in some instances, or not at all.

Schools are not the only institutions slow to change their descriptors. Some higher education institutions are yet to change from *guidance* and *life skills* to Life Orientation, for example, the universities of Cape Town, Venda and the Western Cape's yearbooks of 2004. It would, therefore, be difficult for a student-teacher, who is trained in guidance or physical education, to immediately adopt the new terminology. The influence of higher education institutions on educators' use of terminology may be marked.

The research literature also portrays this confusion about terminology. Researchers in South Africa themselves tend to use the overarching descriptor *Life Orientation* sparingly and interchangeably, reverting to either *life skills*, *guidance* or *physical*

education in lieu of *Life Orientation* [Khulisa, 2000; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999]. It is inevitable that this trend will be followed by educators.

If educators c ontinue to use the term *life skills* or *guidance* or *physical education* or *Bible Education* instead of *Life Orientation* , it may be an indication that they are teaching only selected aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum that pertain to their chosen denominators, rather than the curriculum as a whole. Observations by some student-teachers that "the Life Orientation teacher was too busy with counselling and administrative issues relating to career guidance, to teach Life Orientation" further underscores this possibility.

Also, innovation overload [Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan, 2001] and innovation fatigue [Hoyle and Bell, 1972] could predispose educators to hold on to what they know. Hence educators may feel more comfortable using a familiar term in lieu of the new term *Life Orientation.*

The personal and varied interpretations educators gave for the *meaning* of Life Orientation are noteworthy. In some instances, educators asked for "an example" before they could define Life Orientation, and invariably used part or the whole of the given example in their responses. In both provinces, *Life skills, HIV and AIDS, health* as well as *values* and *morals* were often mentioned in educators' definitions of Life Orientation, with verbs such as *guide*, *assist*, *develop* and *help* used. *HIV and AIDS* and *health* were particularly prominent in educators' definitions in Limpopo. This could be due to the intensive training in HIV and AIDS and health and exposure to workshops, learning support materials and support for HIV and AIDS and health [Tlakula, 2003]. The national emphasis on HIV and AIDS [Magome *et al*, 1998; Kelly *et al*., 2001; Jackson, 2002] meant that some educators thought Life Orientation *equalled* HIV and AIDS education. Student-teachers observed that in some schools Life Orientation educators spent six months dealing with only HIV and AIDS.

A significant observation was that when educators were asked to name the focus areas of Life Orientation, they could generally only name *HIV and AIDS* and *life skills*. However, when the list was read out, they indicated that they included most of these foci, although there was an immediate affirmative response to both *HIV and AIDS* and

life skills. The fact that *citizenship education* was not on the list and was mentioned only marginally, could indicate that educators were not familiar with all the focus areas, which are health, social development (citizenship education), personal development, physical development and movement, and career education. Possibly a different result would have been obtained if educators were not given any options from which to choose. The displayed uncertainty about the constituents of Life Orientation could be partly due to the C2005 overload of assessment standards [Department of Education, 1997b; Department of Education, 2000a] and with educators not being conversant with the RNCS, which has a condensed and streamlined version of Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b]. Some educators indicated that they had not received any curricula and were using dated textbooks as their only guides.

It is conceivable that the loose and interchangeable use of terminology for Life Orientation is merely a manifestation of carelessness in educators' language that has no profound meaning. However, the implications of educators *not* referring to Life Orientation as *Life Orientation* could be the existence of deeper underlying issues, which could have serious ramifications for the successful implementation of this learning area. Likely reasons why educators do not use the correct descriptor include:

- A normal reaction to curriculum change, which, given time, will be corrected.
- A rejection of this learning area
- A denial of curriculum change processes
- Educators are so rooted in the teaching of past subjects that they still cling to their previous subjects' denominations, which are now incorporated in Life Orientation
- Educators are confused as to what constitutes Life Orientation
- This learning area is fragmented
- There is a lack of coherence and consistency in terminology

Possibly, it could be a combination of some of the above suggested rationales, depending on the ethos of the school and educators involved. What does appear plausible is that, as Life Orientation is a new learning area [Department of Education, 1997b] introduced within a period of rapid educational transition [Department of Education, 2000a; Department of Education, 2002a], this apparent confusion about Life Orientation terminology is a normal part of the change process. Furthermore, because

Life Orientation constitutes facets of the descriptors used, such as *physical education, life skills, guidance, health education, religion education* and *citizenship education*, confusion in terminology could perhaps be expected. Perhaps, for educators who specialised in one aspect of Life Orientation, the learning area essentially remains what they are used to. So a guidance educator may see Life Orientation in the guise of *guidance -* and might feel more comfortable referring to *guidance* than to Life Orientation.

This tendency to use prior terminology is not conducive to Life Orientation implementation in the long term, as the continued use of previous 'subjects' of the apartheid education system, such as *guidance, bible studies* and *physical education,* may provoke the negative aspects of the past that were associated with them [Alexander, 1998; Burns, 1986a; Chidester, 2002a; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Ganie, 1997; Hanyane, 1982; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; National Education Policy Investigation, 1992; Ntshangase, 1995; Rooth, 1997; Sitzer, 2001; Wilson, 1995]. Words also capture our worldviews; educators who do not use new terminology may hold worldviews that counter curriculum innovation. The status of the learning area may be adversely affected, as the fragmented impressions and residual use of prior subjects detract from the learning area as a whole.

Terminology is at the initial change interface. How educators respond to and accept new terminology, may be an indication of their predilection to accept deeper changes. It is in this sense, then, that the negligent use of terminology may be cause for concern. The ambiguity permeating Life Orientation, the range of descriptors used, and the variety of meanings ascribed, may have serious repercussions for the successful implementation of this learning area. The question: *what is Life Orientation?* has to be clearly and unambiguously answered before this learning area will become a prominent fixture at schools.

6.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTED TO LIFE ORIENTATION

The significance attributed to Life Orientation refers to the value assigned to Life Orientation and how it is ranked in relation to the other seven learning areas. Educators' and learners' perceptions of the importance and worth of Life Orientation are integral to

the status and practice of this learning area. The results in the study indicate that both educators and learners attribute considerable significance to Life Orientation.

The overwhelming majority of both Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase educators said that Life Orientation was *essential* (see chapter 5.3). However, this high percentage needs to be tempered with the knowledge that it was Life Orientation educators who responded, the majority of whom were highly unlikely to say they were teaching a *non-essential* learning area! The educators' awareness of the needs of learners, the risks learners encounter [Reddy *et al.*, 2003] and specifically their awareness of the high risk of youth contracting HIV and AIDS in South Africa [Jackson, 2002; Sinclair, 2003; Tiendrebeogo *et al.*, 2003; UNAIDS, 2002; Visser *et al.*, 2004; World Health Organization, 2003] could have been determining factors in their perceptions of Life Orientation as *essential*. This view of Life Orientation corresponds with some educators' definitions and descriptors of Life Orientation as a learning area that *assists* learners and deals with *core needs* such as HIV and AIDS and health.

Educators who did not think Life Orientation was important, or who indicated that Life Orientation was important but, as student-teachers observations indicate, did not use the Life Orientation period to teach, may have held these attitudes for a number of reasons. The influence of the historicity of guidance and physical education as a marginalised subject [Alexander, 1998; Dube, 1994; Euvard, 1994; Ganie, 1997; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; Ntshangase, 1995; Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2004; Wentzel, 2001; Wilson, 1995] together with life skills struggling to find its place [Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Mangrulkar et al., 2001; Sinclair, 2003], may be partially responsible for the continuous undervaluing of Life Orientation. As Kelly *et al.* [2001, 46] observed, there is

> little promotion of the value of the concept of teaching lifeskills amongst teachers; and perceptions that it is a soft teaching option which is not highly esteemed among teachers.

Intermediate Phase learners were overwhelming in their support for Life Orientation as a learning area that they enjoyed, liked and found interesting. However, this result needs to be seen in context of the likelihood that Intermediate Phase learners were possibly not predisposed to respond negatively about Life Orientation in their interviews.

Observations by both student-teachers and researchers were indicative of the fact that Intermediate Phase learners appeared to "want to please".

On the other hand, the anonymous questionnaires that Senior Phase learners completed gave them ample opportunities to express any opinions about Life Orientation. The majority of Senior Phase learners also expressed positive opinions about Life Orientation, with only a negligible percentage holding negative viewpoints. That Life Orientation was deemed as *important* holds some significance, as it could be an indication that learners appreciated the value of Life Orientation in their lives.

Senior Phase learners were given the option of adding comments about Life Orientation in an open-ended question in the questionnaire. The bulk of these comments supported their positive opinions of Life Orientation. Positive comments generally revolved around what learners *gained* from Life Orientation and the *important role* it played in their lives.

> *I think Life Orientation is the king of all subjects that I have ever learnt before.*
>
> *I think Life Orientation is the right way to teach children. It teaches us how to take care of ourselves and how to solve our problems and make right decisions.*

Negative comments, although much less in evidence than positive comments, centred mainly on *educators*, *teaching methods*, and other *learners* and the Life Orientation learning area *content*.

> *We need more discussion in groups. The teachers talk all the time.*
>
> *The Life Orientation teacher is boring, he is not good.*

Where learners indicated they were unhappy with the content of Life Orientation, it was because either the emphasis was excessively on HIV and AIDS over an extended period, or learners felt uncomfortable with sexuality education in the class [Reddy and James, 2003]. Learners in Limpopo who complained about the overt nature of sexuality education may have reflected local taboos about sexuality [Madu, Kroplunigg and

Weckenmann, 2002]. Reference to other learners hinged on their indiscipline, as they were seen as "spoiling the lesson for all of us". This corroborates student-teachers' observations on the general indiscipline of learners in the Western Cape, and of some educators' tendencies to only teach HIV and AIDS.

Of note was that both Intermediate and Senior Phase educators ranked Mathematics as the *most important learning* area, Languages the second and Natural Sciences the third. Senior Phase learners' ranking of learning areas corresponded to that of educators regarding Mathematics. This is similar to the findings of the Nelson Mandela Foundation [2005] in rural areas where English, Mathematics and Science were rated as the most popular learning areas by learners.

Life Orientation was ranked as the fourth most important learning area by educators. However, learners differed from educators as they ranked Life Orientation as the *second* most important learning area. Life Orientation as answering to learners' needs could have been a crucial contributory factor in their high ranking of this learning area. Life Orientation deals with issues relevant to Senior Phase learners [Department of Education 1997b, 2002b]. They indicated the importance of self-concept, careers, HIV and AIDS education, human rights and general life skills acquisition. It does, therefore, appear that learners saw the value and significance of Life Orientation and that their ranking of it as the second most important learning area may be a reflection of reality, even though this may not have been consistently evident in the reality of the classroom as discussed in section 6.8.

Due to the intense campaigns to promote Mathematics and Science and the influence of Shuttleworth [Ngubane, 2002; Surty, 2004], as well the emphasis placed on Languages [Department of Education, 2001d], the rankings are not unexpected. Timetabling is also indicative of Departmental emphasis, with Languages allocated 25%, Mathematics 18%, and Natural Sciences 13%, in contrast to Life Orientation's 8%, of teaching time [Department of Education, 2002a]. English, Mathematics and Science are also seen to be the most useful for future studies and work [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005].

Concurring with learners' indications of Life Orientation as important and useful, learners' choices of Life Orientation *themes* and *topics* indicate the relevancy of Life

Orientation. Their most often cited choices are all prominent aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum. The highest percentage of Senior Phase learners said that *believing in myself* was the most useful topic, with *HIV and AIDS* following a close second. Both these topics form a quintessential part of the Life Orientation curriculum.

Career education, reflecting the findings of Euvrard [1994] and Stead and Watson [1998] was cited as the most important *theme* by a relatively high percentage of Senior Phase learners, with *life skills* and *health education* running second and *human rights* third. The only marked differences between the provinces were in the choices of *careers* and *health education*. In Limpopo significantly more learners opted for *health education* than in the Western Cape. More health education took place in Limpopo than in the Western Cape, so learners were more exposed to it. In the Western Cape a higher percentage of the learners than in Limpopo said *career education* was the most important theme. The reason could be that more career education took place as part of guidance in the Western Cape and therefore learners were more exposed to it. Mbokazi [1999] refers to the propensity of some schools to only offer *career guidance*; student-teachers observations indicate that this aspect is prioritised in some schools. In other schools, *career guidance* is only offered in the final year as an emergency measure [Mashimbye, 2000], which could explain why relatively few learners in Limpopo opted for *careers*, as they may not yet have dealt with this topic. In addition, the stark reality of limited career choices and unemployment in Limpopo could have further influenced their choices. Euvrard [1994] posits that learners may favour a topic because they have been exposed to it and realise its worth. This could account for learners' choices to some extent.

Du Toit [2003] indicates that the problems with career education in schools are that the focus is on self-knowledge and the world of work, without any comprehensive labour market information on occupations and training opportunities. In addition, there is a dire lack of information on the demands for specific skills and occupations. Learners thus are not informed about the trends and demands in the workplace, which may result in their feeling that career education is not that relevant. The RNCS [Department of Education, 2002b] aims to address this issue.

That *human rights* was chosen by so many learners, particularly in Limpopo, may be an indication that their rights are not yet being met and they expressed a need to know more about their rights. Poverty [Mukhuba, 2000] and lack of access to basic rights such as health and housing, are still prevalent. The findings of a recent study in rural South Africa, including Limpopo [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005] indicate that the majority of learners in rural poor communities receive less than is their right. In addition, some educators still use corporal punishment [Department of Education, 2002c; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Phurutse, 2004], which in South Africa is a violation; "Classrooms are not places where learners' rights are respected" [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, 82]. Parental and partner violence affect learners [Dawes *et al.*, 2004]. Gender abuse is a serious problem for learners and girl-learners' sexual rights in particular are violated [Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation, 2003; Hirschowitz *et al.*, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2004; Mathews *et al.*, 2004; Reddy *et al.,* 2003; Wood *et al.*, 1996]. Observations indicate that human rights is not consistently taught in Life Orientation nor modelled by educators; learners may have felt the need for this aspect to be included.

Of interest was that *sexuality education* and *relationships* received only a relatively low response as the most important theme. This is unexpected, given the emphasis in HIV and AIDS training [Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Tiendrebeogo *et al.*, 2003; UNAIDS, 2002; UNICEF, 2004] as well as Senior Phase learners being at the adolescent stage. Sexuality education as a taboo topic in Limpopo [Madu *et al.*, 2002] and a possible overemphasis on HIV and AIDS in the Life Orientation class [Reddy and James, 2003] and as evidenced by student-teachers, may have contributed to this low incidence. The publicity given to the reactionary, ill-informed, homophobic and antiabortionist Christian Rights' opposition to sexuality education may also have influenced learners [Gospel Defence League, 2002].

The learners' low rating for *physical education* is alarming. The need for physical education is well established [Kahn *et al.*, 2002; McKenzie *et al.*, 1996; Spence and Lee, 2003; Stone *et al.*, 1998; Wilson and Rogers, 2004; Van Deventer, 2004, Wentzel, 2001]. Learners' increased lack of exercise is a serious health concern [Reddy *et al.*, 2003; Van Deventer, 1999 and 2004], meaning that physical education is quintessential to their well-being. The marginalisation of physical education [Alexander, 1998; Reddy

et al., 2003; Van Deventer, 1999, 2002 and 2004; Wentzel, 2001] in South African schools could have influenced learners' responses. In addition, some educators' methodology for physical educators may have been dated and not inspired learners, according to student-teachers' observations. In Limpopo, where many learners have to walk far distances to schools according to researchers' observations and do chores before school [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005], physical activity may not be seen as a priority as learners were tired. However, for many learners school is the main environment for their being physically active [Bailey, 2004], which further underscores the essentiality of physical education as part of Life Orientation. Physical activity can lead to participation in sport, which is an extra mural activity not included in Life Orientation, but connected in the sense that Life Orientation can promote participation. Learners have the right to play and participate in recreational and leisure activities (Article 31), Convention of the Rights of the Child [1989], and the practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all (Article 1), International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, [UNESCO, 1978].

Of concern is also the low rating environmental education was given. With environmental health and justice still lacking for the majority of learners, environment as a cross-cutting theme [Department of Education, 2002a] for all learning areas needs special attention in Life Orientation [Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001]. Observations indicate that environmental education generally consists of cleaning up the school grounds and recycling once a year. Conversations with Senior Phase educators indicated that learners refused to "clean up" once they were at high school, as they saw it as a "primary school activity". Makhado [2002] found a lack of support, resource material and training to be the cause of learning difficulties in environmental education.

Religion education received the lowest rating. Religion in a civic rather than religious context [Department of Education, 2003a] may not yet have been implemented in all schools, according to student-teachers' observations. Learners may have felt that religious institutions were dealing with religion adequately. Some learners may have felt alienated by the marginalisation of their religions. Others may have found current methodologies of dealing with religion monotonous.

It will be useful to probe why more learners did not opt for topics such as *smoking* [Panday, 2005; Swart *et al.*, 2004], *drug abuse* [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre, 2004] and *alcohol abuse* [South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 2004], as these are pertinent issues. Learners may not necessarily have considered substance abuse to be problematical. Alternatively, learners may not have felt secure enough to indicate that these were in fact problematical issues.

The significance attributed by both educators and learners to Life Orientation and the high ranking of Life Orientation in relation to the other learning areas, is a strong indication of the substance and merit of this learning area. With the belief of the need and respect for the vision of this learning area, implementation can only be enhanced and augmented. As long as Life Orientation continues to answer to learners' needs, it will have a prominent role to play and be highly rated.

6.4 THE EDUCATORS ASSIGNED TO TEACH LIFE ORIENTATION

> *Teachers are important because they make the difference*
> *as to whether schooling is meaningful for learners or not*
> [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, 110].

The status and practice of a learning area is deeply rooted in the epistemology and skills of the educators who teach that learning area. If suitably qualified professionals are responsible for a learning area, they are equipped to fully dedicate their attention to help learners achieve the necessary outcomes. Conversely, if educators either do not see Life Orientation as a priority or/and still have to grapple with determining what the learning area is about, teaching and learning may be compromised. Hence, the importance of the *choice* of educators assigned to Life Orientation, as well as the *rationale* underlying the choice, needs to be understood as a facet of the status and practice of Life Orientation. The findings indicate that, similar to the range of definitions and descriptors depicted for Life Orientation, this learning area was taught by a broad spectrum of educators.

Because Life Orientation is a new learning area, educators do not have many years' experience. It was difficult to ascertain the level of expertise of Life Orientation

educators as a whole, as there was a range of proficiencies. Some educators indicated that they were *qualified* to teach Life Orientation. However, on further questioning, being *qualified* or a *specialist* Life Orientation educator had varied meanings, ranging from attending a three-day HIV and AIDS course or a two-hour Life Orientation workshop, to being an ex-guidance, ex-religion or ex-physical education educator. Even though in this research a specialist educator was defined as an educator who taught mostly Life Orientation and had been specifically trained for Life Orientation, the nature and length of the training was not specified. However, in the reality-based context of Life Orientation as a new learning area within a curriculum in rapid transition, it is understandably not possible to immediately have thoroughly trained and experienced educators available for Life Orientation in all schools.

Although a seemingly high percentage of Intermediate Phase educators (75%) indicated that there was not a *specialised* educator for Life Orientation at their schools, this is not necessarily a cause for concern, as in many instances in the Intermediate Phase most educators are responsible for *all* learning areas. So it was not unusual to find that more Intermediate Phase educators indicated that *all educator*s taught Life Orientation, with fewer saying that *the Life Orientation educator* was responsible.

However, of concern are the 54% Senior Phase educators who said that there was not a specialist Life Orientation educator at their schools. This means that for more than half of the schools' sample, there was not a specialist Life Orientation educator, concurring with the findings of Dube [1994], Kelly *et al* [2001], Khulisa [2000], Macintyre *et al.* [2000], Magnani *et al.* [2003] and Ntshangase [1995] that guidance and life skills were taught by educators from a range of subject areas. Corroborating these findings, in a national study Shisana, Peltzer, Zungu-Dirwayi and Louw [2005] found more educators were teaching life orientation than were trained for this learning area. A current research project [Western Cape Education Department, 2004c] has identified as a major problem "that 'any' available teacher is the Life Orientation teacher, with or without specific training or experience." Similarly, Van Deventer [2004] indicates that physical education specialists are not appointed at schools, which results in generalist educators, who have no training in physical education, being required to teach Life Orientation. Van Deventer [2002] cites studies showing that 95% of educators are not trained to teach physical education. Kahn *et al.* [2002] question whether general educators will be

as effective as physical education educators. It is difficult to see how educators, who are not particularly trained or qualified for Life Orientation, will take ownership of this learning area and give it their full consideration. It could possibly be a transitory duty, which could change from year to year.

Some Senior Phase educators (21%) indicated that *all educators* were responsible for teaching Life Orientation. The polemic about *all educators* being Life Orientation educators in the Senior Phase needs to be critically and carefully considered. If all educators are to teach Life Orientation, they will need exte nsive training, in addition to being co-ordinated by a specialist Life Orientation educator. It is not plausible that *all* educators at all schools would be inclined to teach Life Orientation with passion, motivation and sound knowledge. What would prevent a learning area educator from using the time for her or his particular learning area, instead of for Life Orientation, which may have been seen as an imposition? Commenting on the fact that *all educators* were responsible for Life Orientation at a school, a student-teacher observed:

> *Although this teacher saw the value in the subject, she didn't like to teach it. While I was at the school, she asked me to teach Life Orientation every week for her. When I could not teach this lesson one week, she simply said that 'she did not feel like teaching life skills' and she used the time for a science lesson instead. I do not know how often this happens. She told me that she thinks that there should be a Life Orientation teacher who should teach this subject to all grades as she feels that she doesn't have the time to prepare this lesson every week.*

Educators may resent having to learn how to plan and prepare for what they may see as an *additional* burden to their already heavy teaching loads. The high attrition rate of educators [Hall, Altman, Nkomo, Pelzer and Zuma, 2005], adds to educators' workload and stress [Phurutse, 2005], and may have an adverse effect on Life Orientation, as educators will not have the luxury of specialising in this learning area. A student-teacher observed that at a school where *all* educators taught Life Orientation, pre-planned and designed teaching packs were handed to educators at the start of the year, and educators taught in a "paint by numbers way", irrespective of learners' needs or interactions in class. Certain educators would introduce the topic of the day by telling learners "let's just quickly get this Life Orientation out of the way so that we can get back to …(whatever the so-called more important learning area was)". If educators

resent having to teach Life Orientation, it is not probable that they will do their utmost for this learning area.

Some learning area educators may feel they are Life Orientation educators anyway, as they deal with relationships, diversity, group dynamics, communication, study skills, conflict, self-concept, goal setting, motivation and other psychosocial skills in their classes, no matter what learning area they specialise in. Their view is hence that there is no need for specialist Life Orientation educators. However, this is a limited view of Life Orientation, and could lead to the demise of this learning area. In the same way, every educator is also a language educator, by using language and promoting multi-lingualism in their learning areas; however, this does not mean that there are no specialised language educators at the school. Although all educators should have a basic understanding and some general training in Life Orientation to be able to fully integrate and use teaching moments appropriately, for example when there is conflict in a group, further specialisation is essential in order for Life Orientation to become a fully fledged learning area. The danger is that if everybody teaches Life Orientation, nobody will teach it; it will be so integrated in other learning areas that it will be invisible. In the same way that all learning areas need to integrate [Department of Education, 1997a and 2002a] and make natural links, other learning area educators need to link up with Life Orientation. However, this does not mean that they can integrate to such an extent that they annihilate the learning area.

The integration across disciplines into learning areas and across all learning areas in all educational activities [Department of Education, 1997a] needs to be put into practice with circumspection. Apart from being repetitive [Rooth and Schlebusch, 2000], learning area content knowledge is at the risk of being minimised UNICEF also encourages a move away from integration [Gillespie, 2002]. Student-teachers reported that some educators would spend approximately 2 minutes at the end of a lesson talking about a Life Orientation concept; they then indicated that they had "integrated Life Orientation and dealt with it for the week"! The integration of Arts and Culture with Life Orientation in the Intermediate Phase in C2005 [Department of Education, 1997a] often meant that Life Orientation issues were not explicitly dealt with; learners made pretty pictures and collages, with no reflection on process or Life Orientation related learning. Taylor [2001] notes the importance of the systematic development of

knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each learning area, where integration should not confound the general knowledge structure and unity of each learning area. The *Review Report* [Department of Education, 2000a, 44] critiques C2005 as being "strong on integration and weak on conceptual coherence or progression." Hence a recommendation is that:

> Integration across learning areas should be promoted by the SAQA critical outcomes and by assessment exemplars; and integration within learning areas should be promoted by the learning area statements and the learning programmes [Department of Education, 2000a, 95].

Integration of learning outcomes and assessment standards *within* Life Orientation is essential. As the fragmented views of Life Orientation discussed in section 6.2 indicate, this aspect will need intensive interventions. It is essential for Life Orientation educators to perceive the learning area holistically and teach it as *one* learning area.

Life Orientation is based on a range of underlying theoretical constructs, which contribute to it being a highly specialised learning area requiring specifically trained educators. Social cognitive theory, cognitive problem solving, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence and emotional literacy, and risk and resilience theory are core [Mangrulkar *et al*, 2001]. Life Orientation educators who are not cognisant of these theories as well as their practical application, will not readily comprehend the theoretical foundations underlying this learning area.

Kelly *et al.* [2001] refer to life skills programmes based on a social learning theory model, including behaviour rehearsal and behaviour modelling, the use of role play techniques, the participatory learning methods of Freire, and the drama techniques of Boal. Life Orientation, specifically life skills education, relies on learners' higher levels of cognitive learning, identified in Bloom's Taxonomy as analysis, synthesis and evaluation [Sinclair, 2003]. However, as these activities are time-consuming in the context of overcrowded timetables and examination pressures, the higher level activities are often under represented. In addition, they also challenge teachers, if they are not familiar with suitable methods or are not confident in the subject [Sinclair, 2003]. Panday [2005] posits that the social cognitive approach is useful in developing tobacco control programmes for our South African culture, and sees self-efficacy as a consistent

correlate of smoking onset and cessation. Panday [2005] further advocates that cognitive-behavioural tobacco programmes for adolescents need to be augmented by skills to cope with psychological and physiological dependence.

Bandura's [1977] social cognitive theory has been extensively applied in the area of preventative health and coping skills [Mangrulkar *et al*, 2001; Sinclair, 2003]. Research findings indicate that the more effective school-based programmes for HIV and AIDS prevention were grounded in social cognitive theory [Sinclair, 2003]. Notions of self-efficacy [Bandura, 1977] are central to Life Orientation related learning and teaching [Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001]. Rotter [1966] and Bandura's [1995] work on the importance of locus of control situatedness for learning is salient to Life Orientation. Self-concept theory [Burns, 1979; Jersild, 1952; Kohut, 1977; Mboya, 1993; Wylie, 1979] is vital to educators teaching this focal aspect of the Life Orientation curriculum.

Constructivist psychology theory [Vygotsky, 1978] has a core influence on life skills education [Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001]. Cognitive problem solving [Botvin, 2000; Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001; Sinclair 2003] is directly applicable to Life Orientation. Sinclair [2003] sees higher level cognitive skills as often presented in relation to decision making and problem solving regarding health issues. Resilience and risk theory [Bernard, 1991; Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001] identify resilient learners as having acquired social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose. Mangrulkar *et al.*, [2001] view resilience and risk theory as central to life skills education, because life skills programmes do not merely address behaviours directly, but build the competencies that can mediate the required behaviours. Life skills competences [Adkins, 1984; Botvin, 2000; Donald *et al.*, 1997; Egan, 1984; Gachuhi, 1999; Hopson and Scally, 1981; Larson, 1984; Nelson-Jones, 1992; Rooth, 1995; Sinclair, 2003; United Nations, 2003a; United Nations, 2003b; World Health Organization, 1993] need to be developed for Life Orientation's assessment standards to be achieved.

Multiple intelligences theory, which takes the range of human cognitive capacities into account, [Gardner, 1993], needs to be foundational to Life Orientation teaching and learning. Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy [Goleman, 1997; Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001; Weare and Gray, 2003] is a consistent underlying facet of the Life Orientation

curriculum. Weare and Gray [2003, 20] recommend that educationists use "emotional and social competence (to focus) on the learning and teaching of knowledge, attitudes and skills."

Physical education links with the above theoretical constructs. Intrinsically motivated behaviour is associated with psychological well-being, interest, enjoyment, fun and persistence [Ryan and Deci, 2000] and is essential for improved health behaviour [Malherbe *et al.*, 2003]. Life Orientation educators need to help learners develop their intrinsic motivation to persist with exercise and fitness programmes. Digelidis *et al.* [2003] refer to the schism between current knowledge in sport psychology and physical educators' levels of knowledge; this will be even more evident if *all* educators with no physical education training are to teach Life Orientation. Alexander [1998] sees physical education educators as health workers who have an important role to play in preventative and promotive health care. This vision needs to become a reality from particularly within the Life Orientation framework.

The findings in this study indicate that in some schools, the school principal is responsible for teaching Life Orientation. Khulisa [2000] also found that principals and heads of department are responsible for guidance/life skills. That school principals are teaching Life Orientation, is a cause for concern. School principals are often called away on administrative duties and for workshops and meetings. They may relapse into lecture-type lessons, according to student-teachers' observations, or, due to the positions of authority they hold, be seen as threatening.

It is a concern that some educators indicated that they were teaching Life Orientation in the Senior Phase because *nobody else was available* or that they had *free periods to fill up* , or that they were *asked or told* to do so by the school principal, or "found it on my timetable". This renders a section of educators who were not necessarily teaching Life Orientation because they chose to or were qualified for the task. However, this does not exclude the possibility that of these educators, some may become interested in, qualified for and committed to teaching Life Orientation. In an interview with a Limpopo Mathematics educator, he indicated that initially he was opposed to teaching Life Orientation, but soon became so interested that he was willing to add more Life

Orientation periods to his timetable and aims to specialise in Life Orientation exclusively in the future.

Educators who want to teach Life Orientation because they are interested, qualified, passionate and motivated can only auger well for Life Orientation. Educators who have no choice whether they want to teach Life Orientation or not, may not be interested in teaching Life Orientation. A student-teacher's observation is pertinent:

> *The educators who are teaching Life Orientation are doing it because they have free periods on their timetables. They are not qualified to be teaching Life Orientation and their attention seems to be on the other subjects that they teach*

The acute shortage of educators, especially in rural areas [Hall *et al.*, 2005; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005], combined with the knowledge base of previous guidance, life skills and physical education educators, as well as the fact that Life Orientation is a new learning area, renders the use of such educators of the previous so-called components of Life Orientation appropriate. If schools had such a selection of educators available, they could team-teach.

However, this may impinge on the learners' holistic experience of Life Orientation, as some educators may not integrate the various Life Orientation learning outcomes and present their field of expertise as a separate entity. This may also give educators minimal opportunities to grasp and master Life Orientation as a learning area that is more than the sum of its parts. The extent to which ex-guidance, life skills and physical education educators could readily offer Life Orientation in its entirety, is uncertain. Student-teachers were adamant that in many instances minimal incorporation of aspects *not* in the educator's particular field of expertise, was evident. A student-teacher described how an ex-physical education educator, now responsible for Life Orientation, had decorated his class with 90% of the pictures depicting sport, and spent most of the time talking about sport. This educator indicated that he was uncomfortable with dealing with citizenship education, conflict and diversity issues, and would invite a guest speaker rather than deal with these aspects himself.

Another student-teacher observed that:

> *Teachers who were previously physical education instructors have now been placed in academic posts and have to teach*

Life Orientation. They end up seeing Life Orientation as phys
ed. and do not see the value of Life Orientation as a whole.

Such observations corroborate the findings of Jansen [2001b and 2001c] that educators still teach in the way they taught in the past and their curriculum content still reflects the dominance of the past. The National Education Policy Investigation [1993, 22] indicates that "Citizenship (or life) skills and practical skills are often segregated in the curriculum." The issue is to connect the learning of functional and civic skills. Educators who are rooted in their past specialisations appear to find this particularly challenging.

Most educators felt it was mainly 'the schools' responsibility to teach Life Orientation, concurring with the findings of Reddy and James [2003] that a high percentage of educators agreed that it was the schools' responsibility to teach life skills. Of interest is that a comparatively high percentage of Intermediate Phase educators, in contrast to the fewer Senior Phase educators, said that *parents* should teach Life Orientation, while Senior Phase learners minimally preferred a parent. Intermediate Phase educators could possibly have been indicating that their learners were in their formative years; hence the greater need for parental support. Student-teachers' discussions with educators revealed that some educators felt that, particularly with regard to sexuality education and HIV and AIDS, parents should be primarily responsible. To what extent educators felt that they could delegate responsibility for aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum, was not clear, but it could be a matter for concern if educators felt it was not their responsibility.

The supportive roles of clinics, community, NGOs and other support structures were minimally mentioned. It is possible that their potential was not fully realised by educators. These structures offer vast resources that schools can access, especially in the fields of health, physical and personal development, environmental education and citizenship education. Taylor [2001] refers to the service courses presented by NGOs. As far as Life Orientation is concerned, NGOs are particularly useful, with the caveat that NGOs and other supportive organisations ground their inputs within the Life Orientation curriculum. A balance needs to be found so that schools are not inundated with more programmes than are viable [Life Orientation Learning Area Committee, 2004], and so that the Life Orientation educators can cope with both the organisation

and co-ordination of Life Orientation related support. As Pampallis [2004, 430] indicates, "Most NGOs have been established to fulfil a mission intrinsic to their particular work, such as improving the quality of education, promoting democratic practices…". Life Orientation can tap into this vast pool of expertise and knowledge.

Donald *et al.* [1997, 21] emphasise the importance of community involvement and ownership in the schooling process: "…all teachers, students, parents, and other members of communities in which schools are situated, as well as society as a whole, should be involved". Mangrulkar *et al.* [2001] point to the need for building co-operation across life skills programmes and sectors as a ke y implementation issue and challenge, while El Ansari *et al.* [2002] underscore the importance of community partnerships in health promotion. The National Education Policy Investigation [1993, 221] sees schools as a "priority area for support services" and mentions special learning problems, physical health problems, emotional difficulties, career education needs, lack of life skills and issues related to poverty as areas of difficulty experienced by learners, in need of support. Van Deventer [2002] gives examples of the successful partnerships between physical education and sporting bodies and NGOs.

Although the findings indicate educators had not rated community organisations, clinics, volunteers and parents highly to teach Life Orientation, they can play a beneficial role in enhancing the teaching and learning of Life Orientation. Partnerships and relationships need to be forged; Life Orientation educators need to be trained how to network, how to co-ordinate and how to infuse support programmes into the curriculum. Care should be taken not to assume that all added programmes should be the responsibility of the Life Orientation educator, as this could overburden the educator with administrative duties. Projects such as life skills training and the tobacco use prevention and cessation programme [Medical Research Council, 2005], which is grounded in the Life Orientation curriculum, are core to the future success of Life Orientation and should serve as examples to service providers.

The results indicate a wide range of educators are responsible for teaching Life Orientation, with an array of training and skills. Life Orientation is a highly specialised learning area with a broad base of content, which the RNCS [Department of Education, 2002b] explicitly details. It is clear from the Life Orientation curriculum that specialised

training and knowledge are a prerequisite to teach Life Orientation. Not all educators have the capacity, inclination, interest or personalities to teach Life Orientation. If even Life Orientation educators struggle to teach Life Orientation, the probability of non-Life Orientation educator managing is negligible.

Ex-guidance, physical education, life skills and religious instruction educators need further training in Life Orientation; similarly, general learning area educators assigned to Life Orientation require intensive and extensive further training. The question *who should teach Life Orientation?* needs urgent attention and should form the core of serious discourse. It is not conceivable that all educators could or should teach Life Orientation, apart from the required integration across learning areas. Specifically trained Life Orientation educators are required to ensure the outcomes of this learning area are achie ved.

6.5 LIFE ORIENTATION TIME ALLOCATION AND USAGE

The findings of the study indicate that lack of Life Orientation teaching time was evident. These general findings on time allocation for Life Orientation corroborate the earlier findings of minimal time allocation for guidance in South African schools [Dube, 1994; Makhoba, 1999; Mashimbye, 2000; Mbokazi, 1999; Ntshangase, 1995; Wilson, 1995]. Similarly, findings highlighted the minimal time allocation for life skills education or Life Orientation [Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Magome *et al.*, 1998; Visser *et al.*, 2004]. In a national study Khulisa [2000, 32] report that guidance/life skills/Life Orientation is generally taught once a week, but that the schedule is not adhered to; "despite the fact that Life Skills is on the timetable or a scheduled part of the school week, compliance with this schedule is irregular." Life skills education within Life Orientation has minimal time and is accorded "Cinderella status" [SADTU, 2004]. Concurring with the findings of this study, Reddy *et al.* [2003] found minimal time allocated to physical education in South African schools. Physical education was also assigned negligible time in the past [Van Deventer, 2004], following an international trend to reduce physical education time allocation due to preferences for examinable subjects [Jago and Baranowski, 2004; McKenzie *et al.*, 1996].

Schools varied to a great extent in the way time was allocated. However, what was clear was that the 8% of teaching time required by the Department of Education [2002a] for Life Orientation was not evident in most schools. In some schools Life Orientation was integrated with other learning areas to the extent that it had minimal or no time; in other schools Life Orientation was offered only for six months of the year or presented in a cycle, with learners having Life Orientation for 30–45 minutes every 7 to 10 days, thus not even per week. In some schools Senior Phase learners in different classes in the same grade or phase were classed together for the Life Orientation period to save time table time, resulting in more than 100 learners being grouped in a hall or large class. This then could lead to educators experiencing the problems associated with large classes and also encourage them to use transmission teaching.

The positioning of the Life Orientation time slots on the timetable is also an indication of how the learning area is perceived. Often, Life Orientation is allocated the last two periods on a Friday - which may translate into 'frees' due to early closing. So even less time would be spent on Life Orientation and the impression given that it was acceptable to forego a Life Orientation period. "Lunch hour" periods (1-2 p.m.) are often allocated to physical education, when the sun is at its hottest and the learners are tired.

Precise time allocation was not a straightforward factor to ascertain, largely due to the diffuse definitions and understandings of what constituted Life Orientation manifested at some schools. In some instances, timetables depicted physical education as separate from Life Orientation, while in other cases life skills was cited as a separate subject. In some schools, assembly and/or afternoon sports were seen as part of Life Orientation, with the result that a school could claim to offer two hours of Life Orientation a week, with minimal or no actual Life Orientation class time allocation. Educators, learners and student-teachers in the study had difficulty answering the questions about time, and in some instances contradictory responses were obtained from educators and learners at the same schools. A plausible explanation is that if the boundaries of Life Orientation are not explicitly set, there is still uncertainly about what encompasses Life Orientation and what not. For example, educators may consider assembly as part of Life Orientation, and similarly view guest speakers who address the whole school on a Life Orientation issue. Another explanation is that because there was no common understanding of what Life Orientation encompasses, the time allocation could not be

pinned down. Hence, in some schools where physical education is a separate entity on the timetable, some educators may add it to Life Orientation's time allocation and some not, adding to the confusion.

The integrated nature of aspects of Life Orientation further complicates ascertaining time allocation and adds to an understanding of the discrepancies in student-teachers' and educators' indications of time allocation. If educators feel that Life Orientation can be infused in whatever they teach, there will not be a specific time slot assigned to Life Orientation. Furthermore, student-teachers reported that formal timetables, as they appear in school staff rooms or foyers, may have periods ostensibly assigned to Life Orientation, but in reality these are allocated to other learning areas, as the timetables are not necessarily followed in all instances.

Senior Phase learners gave an altogether different picture of Life Orientation on the timetable, with a high percentage stating they attended Life Orientation class every day. It could also mean that learners saw Life Orientation as integrated. Possibly some learners saw Life Orientation as part of assembly, which occurs every day in some schools [Phurutse, 2004]. Learners, particularly in Limpopo, indicated they went to Life Orientation class every day. The learners who indicated twice a week attendance, concurred with Senior Phase educators' views as well as with observations of actual timetabling. The instances where learners' perceptions of Life Orientation timetable allocation differed from actual timetabling, may be an indication of the confusion inherent in what constituted Life Orientation.

It is perturbing that a relatively high percentage of Intermediate and Senior Phase educators felt that there was *enough time* allocated to Life Orientation, when this was not the case according to actual time allocations. Only a low percentage said there was *not enough time* allocated. Student-teachers reported that many schools only allocated 35 minutes a week for Life Orientation. Interestingly, some Senior Phase learners felt that the time for Life Orientation was *just right*, while others indicated that there was *insufficient time*, and only a few said there was *too much* time. More Senior Phase learners than educators felt that there was *not enough time* for Life Orientation. This may be an indication that learners were aware of the *value* of Life Orientation, and felt that they were not benefiting optimally. Conversely, due to the cited instances where the

Life Orientation lesson was seen to be used as a 'free period', learners may have enjoyed Life Orientation for reasons that had nothing to do with the learning area as such.

The time issue is serious and can have severe repercussions for Life Orientation. As recently as 2004, student-teachers in both primary and high schools complained about the lack of Life Orientation time allocation in the Western Cape. This resulted in their not getting sufficient practice in the teaching of Life Orientation. Many student-teachers indicated that they had to contend with a mere 35 minutes in the Senior Phase per week, which is insufficient. The need for dedicated time for programmes similar to Life Orientation is apparent [Sinclair, 2003].

Time allocation and utilisation are intrinsically related to the significance attributed to Life Orientation, as well as to the way it is taught. Guidelines for time allocation versus actual time allocations, as well as how and if this time is used for Life Orientation, impinge on Life Orientation's status and practice. Time restraints may cause educators to choose only those aspects of Life Orientation they prefer, and to exclude others. Their choices may have serious ramifications for the holistic implementation of Life Orientation. Time restraints may further encourage educators to utilise transmission teaching methods, as they are less time-consuming that participatory activities. Educators' expectations for achieving learning outcomes may also be moderated by attitudes of helplessness due to limited time allocated to Life Orientation. "What can I do in such a short time?" was a typical lament heard by student-teachers in the Western Cape.

6.6 THE PRACTICE OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM

> *Timetabling and teaching followed traditional subject divisions, with the only concession being the grouped seating arrangements in some classes. Whatever the seating arrangement, pedagogy was formal. Although most teachers appeared kindly, the teaching did not approximate learner-centredness. The teacher poses a question…learners chant responses once the answer has been approved; key knowledge of this kind is frequently consecrated by the teacher writing it on the chalkboard.*

Reasons for the traditional approach included,
predictably, a lack of resources. But the limited number of
available textbooks were not being used. Apart from those,
the only available resource was the chalkboard [Harley
and Wedekind, 2004, 202–203].

The findings of this section centre on teaching methodologies, the use of assessment in Life Orientation, availability of learning support materials, as well as the problems and successes of Life Orientation (see chapter 5.6). These findings highlight pertinent issues that may have an impact on the status and practice of Life Orientation. Matters such as transmission teaching, difficulties educators expressed with assessment, the lack of learning support materials and other resources, large classes, lack of time and learners' lack of discipline, may all contribute to implementation difficulties in Life Orientation.

The role of educators is cardinal to educational change [Hargreaves, 1994], and it is their function to interpret and apply the Life Orientation curriculum. The way that educators teach possibly evidences the greatest problems with curriculum innovation [Fleisch, 2002; Harber, 2001; Jansen and Christie, 1999; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. The methodologies utilised by educators are indicative of how Life Orientation is put into practice in the classroom and have important ramifications for its successful implementation. Toddun [2000] found that educators did not understand their tasks as Life Orientation facilitators. It has to be kept in mind that Life Orientation is a new curriculum within the scope of a broader, newly introduced education system, and as Chisholm [2003b] maintains, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure successful curriculum transformation. Hence educators' practice of Life Orientation in the classroom can be seen as an evolving process.

6.6.1 Teaching methodologies

Life Orientation educators in this study appear to make extensive use of transmission teaching methodologies, concurring with the findings of research conducted with general learning area educators [Fleisch, 2002; Harber, 2001; Harley *et al.*, 2000; Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Jansen, 2001c; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Phurutse, 2004; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. Minimal evidence of interactive, participatory and creative methodologies was obtained in this study, in contrast to educators' indications of their use of a range of OBE- related methodologies, concurring

with research findings in rural schools [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005]. Similarly, student-teachers' observations (examples are cited below) in the Western Cape give credence to Jansen's [2001c] finding that educators are still using methods dating to the previous era in education:

> *I observed two consecutive life skills lessons on sexual relationships… Both lessons were done in lecture style with minimal participation. The teacher tried to make the learners feel scared of sex and guilty. She came across as the enemy, not an understanding person.*

> *Life Orientation is fraught with problems. The greatest contributing factor is the fact that the current Life Orientation teacher has had no prior training in the content and methods used in Life Orientation. The school employed an ex-history teacher for the Life Orientation post. He took a package in 1996 but the school got permission for him to come back. He was very honest and told me he had no idea what he was supposed to be doing, but he had taken on the job because he needed the money. While observing lessons, I saw that he was using only talk and chalk methods. He was also uncomfortable with subjects such as sex and sexuality. I only ever saw him teach religious education. He used to write long essays on the chalkboard and the learners would have to copy these essays in their notebooks.*

The above observations are not isolated, as similar observations were made by many student-teachers as well as the researchers stationed at a range of schools. The use of talk and chalk and other dated methodologies were evident. Phurutse [2004] refers to Limpopo educators' use of monologues, which in some instances are counter-productive, but in other cases useful. Transmission teaching has a role to play, but cannot be the sole method of instruction for Life Orientation, as the literature cited below indicates.

In a smoking cessation study in the Western Cape Province, Panday [2005] found that learners, commenting on programme delivery formats, preferred participatory approaches that catered for interaction, instead if being merely recipients of information. Lectures were seen to be boring and likely to be ineffective. A learner thus commented:

> Firstly, we've had it with (the principal) standing there in his very smart suit and going on and on…about smoking

and how bad it is for you…He keeps ramming it in, 'this is
really, really bad for you and it does this to your lungs'
and you just go to sleep [Panday, 2005, 100–101].

The findings in the study indicate that learners mentioned boredom, often due to educators "talking all the time", as an aspect of Life Orientation that they did not like. Further research is required to isolate the variables in educators' methodologies that lead to learners' boredom and disassociation from this learning area.

Student-teachers' observations were indicative of the tendency for educators to focus on *information giving*. This is supported by Reddy and James [2003], who found that educators gave less attention to the *life skills* components of an HIV and AIDS course, while they tended to focus on *information* about HIV and AIDS, which lead to a greater improvement in learners' knowledge, than in their confidence and behaviour. It is easier to teach facts and content, as student-teachers' observations attest. According to student-teachers, the number of true/false tests given on for example the 'myths of HIV and AIDS', far exceed any skills practice opportunities. It appears that some Life Orientation educators prefer to teach facts, rather than give learners the opportunities to interact with their learning of life skills such as assertiveness, decision making and communication skills. Botvin's [2000] extensive research has proved that these skills are essential to any substance abuse or life skills programme. Decision making is cardinal to achieving Life Orientation learning outcomes [Department of Education, 2002b]. Learners require opportunities to practice these skills.

Cognitive skills, life skills, emotional literacy skills and risk reductive behaviour cannot be learnt solely through transmission teaching. Interactive techniques such as role plays, group discussions, brainstorming, creative activities, behaviour rehearsal, participatory activities and discussions are useful for acquiring life skills and learning from experience [Rooth, 1995; 1997 and 2000]. The benefits of experiential learning and participatory methodologies are well researched [Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1994; Hall and Hall, 1996; Hobbs, 1992; Johnson and Johnson, 1991; Larson, 1984; Luckmann, 1996; Nelson-Jones, 1992]. McGrath [1997, 170] posits that by putting the focus on doing instead of knowing, a competency-based approach is thought to move learning away from "sterile information gathering" to the application of knowledge. It is

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particularly in Life Orientation that the OBE principle of developing competencies to apply practical skills [Department of Education, 1997b], is essential.

Learners cannot achieve the outcomes of Life Orientation by copying endless case studies from the board as observed by student-teachers and researchers, or by being instructed on how to live, without opportunities for active participation and practice of skills. Chidester [2002b, 19] indicates that international projects on religion education have in common a learner-centred, "participatory, engaging, multiple, relational, dynamic and open approach to teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity". Reddy and James [2003, 37] say educators report that repeating the basic facts of HIV and AIDS too often can result in learners resisting the topic and "switching off". Hence methods that are rooted in transmission teaching have very little scope in Life Orientation.

Educators' understandings of group work and discussion as methodologies need to be further investigated before conclusions can be drawn from their use of these methods. Observations detected that learners mostly sat in groups in classrooms; however, they did not *work* in groups or *discuss* in groups, as the educators mostly talked at them. This is similar to the findings on group work of Harley and Wedekind's [2004] research in KwaZulu-Natal and of the Nelson Mandela Foundation [2005] in rural areas, including Limpopo. It appeared that educators' use of group work portrayed superficial change [Fullan, 2001], rather than deep change in new methodologies and learner-centred approaches [Jansen, 2001c].

The lack of creativity and innovation in lesson preparation and planning was evident in many instances. Student-teachers report in the Western Cape on the lacklustre offerings of physical education:

> *Physical education featured prominently at the school and was called Sport Skills, on the time-table every Tuesday and Friday from 1–2 p.m. This appeared to be an excellent way to encourage physical development and movement for all learners. However, this was not always so. More than half of the learners did not participate in the cross-country group, which was just running laps around the school. Many of the other sports on offer during sport skills were similar in that there were very little skills involved. It was more a case of Sport Kills than Sport Skills. The areas of perceptual motor development, games, and*

recreation and play were often not a feature of sport skills.
Many of the teachers that we helped with sport skills, viewed it
as a waste of time. Much of the time was wasted on roll call and
activities that were monotonous and boring. Many of the
teachers avoided the important outcomes of this area of Life
Orientation at the school.

Educators' methodologies may be one of the most serious shortcomings of Life Orientation emanating from the findings, thus calling for further urgent action. Without vibrant, creative, learner-centred, participatory, creative and experiential methodologies, Life Orientation may not achieve its outcomes nor be emancipated from the restrictive legacy of past subjects such as guidance, physicaleducation and religious instruction.

6.6.2 Problems experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation

The main problems reported by educators were: assessment, lack of learning support materials and equipment, lack of time, large class size, lack of learners' discipline, lack of Department of Education support, lack of collegial support, general implementation difficulties and the confusion between guidance and Life Orientation. This is not a unique phenomenon, as the literature cites educators' lack of clarity about the curriculum innovation, their lack of skills and knowledge, unavailability of instructional materials, incompatibility of organisational arrangements and lack of motivation, as restricting curriculum implementation [Gross *et al.*, 1971]. Cross *et al*, [2002] refer to the disparity between conditions of implementation and actual practice in developing countries; Fullan [2001] deems innovation overload as detracting from change implementation; and Hoyle and Bell [1972] point to innovation fatigue as barriers to successful change, coupled with shortages of resources, time constraints and collegial support difficulties. Harber [2001] notes the wide resource disparities and insufficient educator training in South Africa. Poverty is a problem not only affecting the learning and teaching of Life Orientation, but all learning areas. Many schools in Limpopo evidence abject poverty [Mukhuba, 2000; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Phurutse, 2004 and 2005], are without water, electricity, sufficient classrooms and furniture, and learners are hungry, with some not having eaten for two to four days.

Assessment difficulties in Life Orientation

Assessment difficulties (which were not further researched within the confines of the study to identify the exact nature of the difficulties) were indicated by both Intermediate

Phase and Senior Phase educators, concurring with the findings of Toddun [2000] that Life Orientation educators indicated a need for training, particularly in assessment. Hariparsad [2004] found that educators do not have an understanding of assessment policy and do not change their assessment practices as required by the new policy. Jansen [2001c] established that old-style examinations even now determine the what, if and how of what is taught.

Discrepancies between provinces were marked in this study. Although extensive assessment training and support were given in the Western Cape [Western Cape Education Department, 2002], educators in that context experienced a much higher percentage of assessment difficulties. This concurs with the findings in rural areas where educators indicated that they did not experience difficulties with assessment [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005]. In Limpopo further questions about this phenomenon evidenced that many educators had not yet considered assessing in Life Orientation and hence it was not a problem. A few educators indicated that they did not know what was meant by assessment and therefore did not cite it as a problem. Fleisch [2002, 140] refers to "the recognition of the complexity of putting in place a new assessment culture."

The word *assessment* needed extensive explication when administering questionnaires to learners in Limpopo. That the majority of learners in both provinces indicated that Life Orientation should be assessed, possibly indicates that learners realise the value of assessment for the learning area and for helping learners to take Life Orientation seriously. However, student-teachers' observations of learners' reluctance to do assessment tasks, add a further dimension to the issue of assessment in Life Orientation.

A few educators in Limpopo indicated that their assessment entailed marking exercise books by looking at the accuracy with which learners recorded written work from the board. An educator said he let learners memorise names of cities in Africa as part of Life Orientation assessment. Observations of some learners' workbooks showed marks being assigned for correct copying from the board. Case studies invariably all had the same answers, word for word. Educators correcting learners' exercise books for their written work appeared normative in Limpopo, concurring with this observation: "Learners read and write and correct. Teachers mark and learners do corrections"

[Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, 90]. In the Western Cape some educators focused more on product than on process, giving learners marks for the "prettiness" of a collage or poster rather than the information it contained and the process that went into the creation. The integration of Life Orientation with Arts and Culture in the Intermediate Phase had the adverse effect of highlighting the end-product, which is incongruent with the philosophy and rationale of Life Orientation as being process, rather than product, orientated [Department of Education, 2003c].

Intermediate Phase educators may have experienced more problems than Senior Phase educators with assessment, as they have had the opportunity to implement the curriculum before Senior Phase educators. The problems associated with assessment revolve around not knowing *how to assess* because Life Orientation has never been assessed before. Demonstration of skills and performance are also assessable in Life Orientation [Department of Education, 2002b]. For educators who are rooted in test and examination assessment formats, the new modes of assessment call for a huge paradigm shift.

However, the introduction of assessment for Life Orientation is a necessary and useful way to add to the status of the learning area. In the past, guidance and physical education were not assessed, which contributed to their low status and lack of implementation [Alexander, 1998; Dube, 1994; Makhoba, 1999; Mbokazi, 1999; Sitzer, 2001; Van Deventer, 2004; Wentzel, 2001]. The fact that Life Orientation is assessed is a positive step in the right direction. However, educators will need extensive training as even though The World Health Organization [2003] indicates that life skills are assessable, such assessment has not yet been done extensively in South Africa. Similarly, Life Orientation is not necessarily straightforward to assess, but is assessable. Some of the concepts are hypothetical constructs, such as self-concept, while others such as physical development need demonstration of skills and performance.

Some student-teachers observed that educators tended to focus excessively on assessment in the Life Orientation class, with learners only filling in assessment forms and completing individual assessments, and with no class teaching or learner interaction evidenced over a period of time. The way Life Orientation will be assessed possibly holds the key to the way in which it will be regarded. If educators degenerate into using

endless multiple choice tests on only factual knowledge, Life Orientation will lose its affective nucleus. Learners need opportunities to demonstrate skills learnt, do projects and research issues pertinent to Life Orientation.

A lack of learning support materials and equipment

> *Despite this ambitious commitment to the provision of high quality and progressive learning materials, it is widely felt that schools are not receiving the materials they need* [Vinjevold, 1999, 164].

Most Senior Phase educators had resource books but only a relatively small number were satisfied with these books. Just over half of the Senior Phase learners did not have textbooks. Many Intermediate Phase educators indicated they had problems with resource materials. Disparities in provinces were marked, with a much higher percentage of educators in Limpopo than the Western Cape citing learning support materials and lack of equipment as being problematic, similar to the findings of the Nelson Mandela Foundation [2005] and Phurutse [2005]. The lack of resources [Harber, 2001; Hlalele, 2000] and minimal sharing of resources Kelly *et al.* [2001] and Macintyre *et al.* [2000] were factors seriously affecting curriculum implementation. Access to resources has an impact on access to and attainment of knowledge [Bernstein, 1996]. Zafar [2005] points to the need for education policies to be backed by the required resources to achieve their outcomes.

Fleisch [2002] notes an improvement in delivery of books to schools, although the materials may not be linked to training programmes or to assessment. Observations of learning resource materials indicated the poor quality of some of the resources. Educators in rural areas found that their textbooks were not easy and "the material in textbooks difficult to explain to learners" [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, 85]. This may be why some educators indicated that they were not satisfied with their books.

Adequate and relevant learning support material and equipment for Life Orientation will greatly enhance the teaching and learning of this learning area. An inter-sectoral and integrated community effort is required to address the lack of resources in creative and innovative ways.

Overly large classes

Many more Limpopo educators than their Western Cape counterparts indicated that classes were too large. Overcrowding was substantiated by observations in both provinces, with classes particularly in Limpopo ranging from 46–75+ learners in many schools. This concurs with the findings of Phurutse [2005] that Limpopo is the province with the largest class size. In some schools in both provinces, all the classes in a grade would be combined for Life Orientation lessons. This meant that over 100 learners would be in the same class, which then forced educators to use lecture-style methods.

Educators indicated that overcrowded classrooms made giving attention to individual learners difficult [The Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005]. Large class size was cited by educators as adding to their workload stress and job dissatisfaction [Hall *et al.*, 2005]. Overly large classes impinge on the teaching of all learning areas, but once again especially on Life Orientation. When dealing with personal development and sensitive issues such as sexuality education, smaller classes are preferred. To give all learners opportunities to practise and demonstrate skills learnt requires smaller classes. To effectively monitor role plays and derole learners (to help learners get out of their roles) also requires smaller classes.

However, given that large classes are a reality, Life Orientation educators have to use large class group work techniques. Most training courses and learning support materials do not explain how to teach large classes. Large classes were used by teachers as the reason for utilising transmission methods in their teaching. Large classes take more time to teach, are more difficult to keep discipline in and tend to overwhelm some educators. Large classes do not allow for much individual attention, nor opportunities for learners to practise their skills in a sheltered environment. It is, hence, understandable that educators opt for transmission teaching when confronted with overly large classes.

Fullan [1993] notes the impact of class size on the teaching and learning environment. Overcrowding impinges on the kind and quality of teaching, use of time, content that can be covered, as well as resources that can be afforded. As Harley and Wedekind [2004] observe, the impact of operational efficiency on curriculum implementation is far reaching.

A lack of learner discipline in the school

Learners' lack of discipline was more of a problem in the Western Cape than in Limpopo. It was also more of a problem in the Senior Phase than in the Intermediate Phase. Although lack of discipline affects all learning areas, it particularly affects the teaching and learning of Life Orientation. Given the minimal time allocation for Life Orientation, in which educators' time is spent on trying to get a class to co-operate rather than on teaching, discipline becomes a serious problem. Concurring with educators' indications of discipline problems, student-teachers were concerned about the time wasted on disciplinary matters. They complained about the difficulty in getting learners to co-operate, the high levels of noise in the classes and the refusal by most learners to do any Life Orientation assignments or homework. Hall *et al.* [2005] found that educators who wanted to leave the teaching profession cited lack of learners' discipline as one of the reasons.

An additional ramification of discipline problems is that educators indicated they did not use group work as the learners were "too uncontrolled" when in groups. They said that the only way to control learners was to lecture them and give them no options for entering into discussions. Some educators indicated they did not want to take learners outside to do physical exercises as "the learners run wild and make noise". The time wasted on getting classes to attend, and on other disciplinary matters, affected the teaching of Life Orientation adversely. Student-teachers indicated that many learners at some schools refused to do take-home tasks, even if they were for portfolio and assessment purposes. However, the same learners would do their Mathematics and Science homework. This could be a residual attitude from the non-examinable nature of guidance and physical education in the past.

Learner discipline is not only a Life Orientation problem, as this is a whole school and community issue. However, Life Orientation teaching and learning are affected by a lack of discipline and as such need to be involved in strategising solutions together with all the necessary stakeholders.

The problems Life Orientation educators experience are not insurmountable. However, concerted and goal-directed interventions will be required to alleviate these issues. This will enhance the overall implementation of Life Orientation.

6.6.3 Successes in teaching Life Orientation

Regardless of the problems Life Orientation educators cited, there were numerous instances of success. Educators appeared to achieve job satisfaction from teaching Life Orientation as they felt they were doing something worthwhile and the learners generally responded well. Further research will be needed to do a comparative study of Life Orientation educators' job satisfaction and morale versus other learning area educators.

Successes reported by Life Orientation educators in both provinces, such as learners' *interest* in Life Orientation and learners' *good response*, were the most cited by Intermediate Phase educators. This could signify the relevance of this learning area to learners. The relatively high number of educators who found the *HIV and AIDS emphasis* in Life Orientation necessary and useful, is another indication of the relevance and issue-driven nature of Life Orientation. The findings in the study concur with those of Reddy and James [2003], who found that educators mentioned learners' interest and the importance of the topic (HIV and AIDS) and their satisfaction from doing important work.

Other successes in teaching Life Orientation cited by Intermediate Phase educators that received a high incidence were that the learners became more *confident* and more *respectful* towards a range of cultures, beliefs and social groups. This could be an indication that some of the outcomes of Life Orientation, and C2005 in general, were being achieved.

Senior Phase educators differed in their ratings of successes in teaching Life Orientation, with more maintaining that the focus on *HIV and AIDS* was a success and slightly fewer saying that *sexuality* education assisted the learners. This could, once again, be an indication of the relevance of Life Orientation to current needs. In addition, it could also be because many educators focused solely on HIV and AIDS as this was the only training they received and for which they had extensive resource material.

Of note are the successes experienced by student-teachers in their practice teaching. They reported that learners responded well if they used participatory and interactive

techniques. Student-teachers found learners' good responses to be rewarding and motivating. The relationship between learners' reactions to Life Orientation and educators' motivation to teach Life Orientation, needs further research.

The learning area is not only beset by problems. It is important to balance the successes and excellent work done by educators, with the problems and less effective teaching methods, during this period of transition. The successes experienced, as well as the instances of excellent teaching and learning in Life Orientation in both provinces, should form the basis from which further interventions could emanate. Furthermore, the successes strengthen the belief that this learning area is core to learners' growth and development.

6.7 LIFE ORIENTATION EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

> *The manner in which we teach probably does more to*
> *instil values than the subject matter of what we teach*
> [O'Regan, in Department of Education, 2001d, 11].

Life Orientation educators' views of curriculum transformation and the Life Orientation curriculum, as well as the attributes of their personal values, may have an effect on how they approach and teach Life Orientation. The attitudes and values that educators articulate could have a profound impact on the way that Life Orientation will evolve as a learning area. Educators who, due to their values, desist from teaching part of the Life Orientation curriculum, will underscore the fragmentation of this learning area and will not enable learners in their holistic development towards well-being. Educators' attitudes towards curriculum transformation, their values around core issues such as religion, human rights and citizenship education, sexuality education and HIV and AIDS, are the major issues discussed in this section.

6.7.1 Educators' attitudes towards curriculum transformation

The findings of this study indicate that most Life Orientation educators profess to support C2005 and OBE. This concurs with the findings regarding general learning area educators cited by Fleisch [2002], the Review Report [Department of Education, 2000a] and Harley and Wedekind [2004], but contradicts the findings of The Nelson Mandela

Foundation [2005] that the majority of Limpopo educators (67%) indicate they are unhappy with OBE. Possibly the different time frames, sampling and contexts of the research could account for differences in findings.

That Life Orientation educators are mostly positive towards curriculum transformation in the confines of this study, is an encouraging sign, particularly when viewed in the context of negativity of some academics [Jansen and Christie, 1999; Jansen, 1997; Meerkotter, 1998; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. That both Intermediate and Senior Phase educators in this study indicated that curriculum transformation was exciting, with only a small minority saying that C2005 could *not be done*, augers well for Life Orientation. The caveat by some educators that they were *provisionally positive*, if certain conditions could be met, such as smaller class sizes, more resources, better training, as well as auxiliary Education Department support on an ongoing basis, is understandable in the context of problems identified by educators [Fleisch, 2002; Harber, 2001; Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Jansen, 1999a; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999]. The period in which this research was conducted was 2002–2004, by which time most educators may have overcome their initial resistance, if any, to curriculum change. Educators were getting used to C2005 and OBE, and some could see the beneficial differences [Rooth and Schlebusch, 2000]. The "embrace of C2005 as a political instrument" [Harley and Wedekind, 2004, 199] further promoted the acceptance of curriculum transformation. In general, Life Orientation educators have conceptually and in principle accepted curriculum change. Whatever implementation contestations and complications the Life Orientation curriculum encounters cannot be singularly ascribed to educators' attitudes towards curriculum transformation.

6.7.2 The teaching of Life Orientation and educators' values

Values around contentious issues such as sexuality education, HIV and AIDS, religion and the South African Constitution, including human rights, appear to have some influence on *what* and *how* educators teach, similar to the findings of Harley *et al.* [2000] and Veugelers [2000]. Chisholm [in Department of Education, 2001d, 26] referring to C2005, states that:

> the structure of the curriculum currently allows teachers
> free choice in the selection of content…content chosen

can be equally racist and anti-racist: ultimately the
decision rests with the teacher…

In addition to the "free choice" of content described above, given that there does not appear to be sufficient time allocated on the timetable to cover the entire Life Orientation curriculum (see chapter 5. 4), educators are forced to make choices about what they teach. How they teach is also to some extent determined by their particular value systems. The link between authoritarianism [Department of Education, 2002c] and transmission teaching [Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999] needs further research, in the context of a learner-centred pedagogy [Department of Education, 1997a; Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005]. Student-teachers' observations in particular give lucid and at times disturbing descriptions of how educators' values affect their teaching. The study's findings suggest that religion and sexuality education are the most often cited issues with which some educators have problems (see chapter 5.7).

Religion education remains a contentious issue that some Life Orientation educators cannot appear to accommodate. Life Orientation as associated with specific religious teachings, in contrast to teaching *about* religions, is radically distinct. In some schools Christianity is still promoted, virtually to the exclusion of all other religions and belief systems. This is apparent not only in the Life Orientation class, but in the ethos of a number of schools, where the Life Orientation educator merely reflects the philosophy of the school, and strengthens that particular religious outlook in the Life Orientation class. In this sense, Life Orientation becomes a conduit for certain religions. Educators who predominantly promote Christianity speak about "school ethos", possibly as a mode of justification for their exclusive and restricted focus. Roux [2003] found that many schools need exposure to religious and cultural diversity. Religion education clearly should be about teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity [Department of Education, 2003a], and *not* about promoting the school ethos when dealing with religion in Life Orientation. The White Paper on Education and Training [Department of Education, 1995a, 22] clearly points to "the active encouragement of mutual respect for our people's diverse religious, cultural and language traditions". Whether this is being achieved, is questionable. The implications of exploiting the Life Orientation learning area as a means to promote a particular

school's religious dogma, are dire as such practices may harm its status and implementation.

The terminology some educators use - such as "Bible education" in lieu of religion education, and "We are a Christian school" - indicate that they are still a long way from teaching about diverse religions and beliefs. The similarities with the previous governments' Christian and Bible focused ethic [Chidester, 2002a] and some of the educators' values in the study are evident. They see the school as responsible for the religious development of learners, when in fact this is not the schools' responsibility. This resistance to change is not wholly unanticipated; Chidester [2002a] underscores that religion education is a remarkable departure from past religious instruction, while Roux [1998a] refers to educators' fear of different religions as a factor to consider in religion education.

The amalgamation of Life Orientation and school assembly in some schools further complicates religion education within Life Orientation. Many school assemblies are still single -faith forums [Phurutse, 2004; Porteus, 2002] as opposed to the required opportunities to celebrate diversity [Department of Education, 2001b]. Jansen [2001d, 30] wants schools to be banned "from using Monday mornings to run church services (as it is) the most divisive and the most destructive event in the life of a public school." Life Orientation's association with these unconstitutional assemblies risks damage to its status and vision.

Student-teachers' observations implicate schools in tokenism, such as giving minimal time to "other" religions. If Life Orientation is to enhance religious literacy through religion education, authentic efforts are required to move beyond the often emotive and spiritually confining boundaries of singe-faith advocacy. It is difficult to envision learners accepting that they belong within a broader community [Department of Education, 2002b] if they are not exposed to diversity.

Some educators profess to be so uncomfortable with teaching about religions *other* than their own, that they will only invite guests to speak about these religions. They may feel threatened by other religions due to their own religious indoctrination, intolerance or as an outcome of the legacy of Christian National Education in South Africa. A lack of

experience with inclusive environments [Porteus, 2002] may further prevent educators from accepting change. To counterbalance the educators who resist change, there are some educators who, in focus groups, were willing to debate issues of religion. Some Life Orientation educators argued for an *inclusive* approach to religion, and tried to encourage other educators to follow the Life Orientation curriculum, Constitution and Education Departmental guidelines to ensure that religion education has a *civic* rather than a *religious* function [Department of Education, 2002b]. The studies of Roux [1999] underscore the viability of religion education within Life Orientation. Tolerance enhancement and appreciation of diversity [National Education Policy Investigation, 1992] through religion education with a secular focus such as in Mexico [Levinson, 2004], combined with the ethical and moral development of learners [Department of Education, 2003a], is a crucial duty and challenge Life Orientation needs to contend with.

In South Africa the need for teaching and learning about traditional indigenous religions are key [Department of Education, 2001d]. Conversely, traditional African beliefs and spirituality appear to be neglected as they were not mentioned in focus groups and student-teachers observed little or no teaching in this regard. However, a pilot project on the teaching of African traditional religion was successful in the Western Cape [Mndende, 1994]. There is, therefore, no practical reason for educators to desist from teaching African traditional religion, apart from their own values and possibly a lack of knowledge. Isla m, Hindi and Buddhism were also marginalised. In the Western Cape a large proportion of learners are Muslim; however, it appears that Islam is marginalised in overtly Christian schools.

In this study some educators indicated that they regard their Christian God as the highest law, *not* the South African Constitution, and hence would teach by Christian principles more than by constitutional principles. This tension could detract from the teaching of Life Orientation, in particularly learning outcome 2, which deals with social development and citizenship education [Department of Education, 2002b]. How the new formations of global citizenship [Chidester, 2002b] can be attained if religion is not seen as a core civic matter, is unclear. Educators' values around religion, the South African Constitution and human rights is a salient indication in the findings of the study.

Similar to the findings about religion education, human rights and citizenship education are antithetical value-laden concepts for some educators. This concurs with the findings of an extensive international study, including Asia and Europe, that some educators continue the beliefs and practices of authoritarian political cultures [Torney-Purta, Scheille and Amadeo, 1999], and with the findings of Morris and Cogan [2001] in America, that some educators do not subscribe to democratic values. South Africa is still in the process of recovering from the impact of a violent and authoritarian apartheid regime; it is to be expected that a number of educators will still be rooted in past dogma. Harber [2001] notes the impact of old values grounded in inequality, such as racism and sexism; and Jansen [2001c] refers to the legacy of the previous government as still apparent in the schools.

In this study student-teachers observed that some educators desist from teaching human rights, or in their teaching depict attitudes and methods contrary to the spirit of the South African Constitution. This corroborates the findings of a school-based research report [Department of Education, 2002c, 59] "…that there is a hesitant relationship between education and the so-called 'culture of human rights'." This is a cause for concern, as human rights and democratic principles are cornerstones of educational transformation in South Africa [Department of Education, 1995a; Department of Education, 1997a; Department of Education 2002a; Republic of South Africa, 1996a].

The precise extent of educators' awareness of the South African Constitution as the highest law in the land and the guiding text for teaching Life Orientation, is not evident from the focus group results in this study. Observations indicate that some educators do not have copies of the Constitution and/or are not conversant with constitutional principles, and/or do not promote these principles in their teaching methodologies, similar to the findings of the Nelson Mandela Foundation [2005]. Harber [2001, 83] calls for educators who are "ideologically committed to democratic values and skilled in democratic forms of teaching and learning". Life Orientation in particular needs such educators.

Some educators in this study believe that the citizenship and human rights aspect of Life Orientation belongs in Social Sciences, and not in Life Orientation. They do not accept Carrim's [2001] position that Life Orientation is the conceptual home for human rights

education. These educators thus, in essence, propound that human rights should be taught from a historical perspective, rather than from a psychosocial skills or ideological stance. Lubisi [in Department of Education, 2001d] promotes the integration of human rights across the curriculum, including Life Orientation.

The importance of citizenship education as more than the "mechanics of government approaches" [Simon and Merrill, 1998, 31] underscores the necessity for Life Orientation to deal with these issues from a values perspective. The inclusion of social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy in citizenship education curricula [Crick, 1998] is vital. The efficacy and potential of human rights and citizenship education is well described in the literature [Cogan and Morris, 2001; Flowers, 2002; Keet *et al.*, 2001; Kerr, 2003; Menezes, 2003; Naval *et al.*, 2003; Pitts, 2002; Rauner, 1999; Schoeman, 2003; Tibbitts, 2002 and 2003; Waghid, 2004]. However, it appears that a number of educators have not yet grasped the holistic picture of Life Orientation as *one learning area*, and choose not to teach those aspects that they feel do not belong, or make them feel uncomfortable. Human rights and citizenship education are integral to the vision and aims of Life Orientation; accordingly, to leave out or trivialise these foci is to omit a quintessential component of Life Orientation.

Figure 6.1 illustrates a conceptual framework for human rights education within Life Orientation.

Figure 6.1 A Human Rights Framework for Life Orientation Education

Human rights education
Social development
Personal and practical application of: The South African Constitution, citizenship education, democracy, diversity, gender, religion, inclusivity, environmental and social justice, nation building, values, political literacy [Life Orienta tion learning outcome 2]

Health education
Health rights, health information, preventative and promotive approaches in HPS framework, well-being, life skills [Life Orientation learning outcome 1]

Personal development and life skills
Life skills, emotional literacy, decision making, practical application of human rights e.g. assertiveness, conflict resolution skills, gender and sexual rights [Life Orientation learning outcome 3]

Physical development
Physical fitness, well-being, lifestyle, movement, participation in sport and recreation, nation building [Life Orientation learning outcome 4]

Career education
Rights in the workplace, volunteerism, community building, entrepreneurship, nation building [Life Orientation learning outcome 5]

Student-teachers report that in some schools, as soon as learners show resistance or misunderstand the content of Life Orientation, instead of refining teaching methods and content, educators opt to *leave that aspect out* of the curriculum. For example, if a learner, after a human rights lesson, believes that he/she should not have to do any simple chores at home because it is cited as *illegal child labour*, the problem does not lie with the Life Orientation curriculum, but with the way in which the content was interpreted and taught. Even very young learners are able to discern between normal everyday chores around the family home versus exploitative labour practices. Learners' misinterpretations appear to be used by some educators as a rationale for neglecting to teach content matter that they find discordant with their values; some educators in focus groups mentioned this as the reason why they do not deal with human rights.

The concept of gender [Department of Education, 2001d and 2002d] straddles human rights and citizenship education, and is a core concern in Life Orientation. Learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3 include gender issues in various formats [Department of Education, 2002b]. In this study gender equity was not universally underscored in educators' discussions in focus groups. Some educators appeared concerned about "girls not showing respect to men" and expressed the fear that if gender equity were promoted, the girl-learner would somehow be "disrespectful" to men. Similarly, Dei [2004] found that in Ghana gender is a crucial aspect of social difference that seriously affects the process and experience of schooling.

Life Orientation expressly promotes gender parity and strongly opposes women abuse [Department of Education, 2002b]. In the context of widespread gender-based violence in South African schools [Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2001], the inclusion of gender as a feature of citizenship education in Life Orientation is logical. However, if Life Orientation educators do not subscribe to the principles of gender equity, their teaching of this aspect could be compromised. Hence, the educators who display the values and attitudes of gender disparity are antithetical to the outcomes of Life Orientation as well as to the South African Constitution. Dreyer, Kim and Schaay [2001], Dreyer [2002] and Schaay [2002] found that educators minimally applied what they had learnt in a Western Cape gender-based training programme to the reality of the classroom setting. Educators'

values appear to be deep-rooted and to require more than short training courses for change to occur.

The girl-learners' health and sexual rights as well the link between gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS [Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, McIntyre, Gray and Harlow, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2004] further necessitate an urgent and consistent Life Orientation intervention to promote gender equity. If Life Orientation is "to promote and protect human rights" [Keet, 2001a, 133], then the need for "a very different type of teacher from that encouraged under apartheid" [Harber, 2001, 83], is both urgent and essential. Sexual rights have taken on a vital role in the context of gender abuse and HIV and AIDS, further highlighting the need for extensive sexuality education.

Educators' values with regard to sexuality education were at times strongly expressed, particularly by those refusing to deal with it. It appears that Intermediate Phase educators have more problems with sexuality education than Senior Phase educators. The young age and "innocence" of the learners, as well as feared "interference by parents", was often cited as reasons for their reluctance to deal with sexuality education. Of concern are the attitudes of some educators that sexuality education is only necessary in "township schools". This is a false perception and perhaps an indication of a broader racist and attitudinal problem [Department of Education, 2001d]. Other educators felt that it was the parents' responsibility to teach about sexuality and so they refused to become involved. For whatever reason then, their learners were denied an integral and important aspect of the Life Orientation curriculum.

Sexuality education also remains a taboo with some educators due to community norms and cultural heritage [Madu *et al.*, 2002]. Accordingly, there was a tension between what the Life Orientation curriculum *demanded* and what the educators could *deliver*. Some educators felt very strongly that they either were not equipped to teach issues of sexuality as they had not been trained, or that their cultures or beliefs were in direct opposition to such teachings. A number of educators felt that all that was necessary was to instruct learners that "sex before marriage was wrong". "Learners should just abstain and let us get on with our work" perhaps summarises the thoughts of some educators on sexuality education. The dangers of a prescriptive approach to values [Porteus, 2002] and the imposition of values on learners in a mode similar to guidance teaching [Burns,

1986a; Dovey and Mason, 1984; Ganie, 1997; Mbokazi, 1999; Naicker, 1994; Ntshangase, 1995; Rooth 1997] will set Life Orientation back in its quest to equip learners with the skills and moral reasoning to counter risk behaviour [Kuther and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2000].

Educators expressed anxieties about the role of parents and school governing bodies and feared sanctions if they dealt with sexuality education. Some learners expressed views that signified an aversion to sexuality education:

> *Life Orientation is not good because the educator*
> *teaches by sexuality.*

Chisholm [2003c] refers to the reaction of the Christian right to the Life Orientation curriculum:

> The curriculum was painted in lurid colours as promoting
> sex education of babes hardly out of swaddling clothes,
> unseemly practices amongst boys and girls and abortion.
> Gross misrepresentations and distortions were touted in
> the media in order to show that this was an ungodly
> curriculum which was forcing South Africa's children into
> amoralism and paganism [Chisholm, 2003c, 11].

This publicity may have impacted on educators' and learners' values as well.

Harley *et al.* [2000] refer to the difficulties educators experienced when they had to teach according to values that differed from local communities' values and norms. This phenomenon was much in evidence in Life Orientation educators' conversations about sexuality education. Some educators even expressed fears of physical violence such as the "burning down of our homes", if they broke with tradition and offered sexuality education.

If educators desist from teaching sexuality education, they cannot teach HIV and AIDS appropriately. Neither can they equip their learners with the necessary information to make responsible lifestyle decisions. Magome [in Department of Education, 2001d, 35] posits that "Certain qualities of character are essential for HIV prevention and management. And essentially, those qualities of character are values." The interplay between values, sexuality- and HIV and AIDS education requires Life Orientation educators to be willing to address these issues to facilitate their learners' well-being.

Because some educators do not want to teach HIV and AIDS, they invite guest speakers as a one-off event and then feel that this aspect of the curriculum has been dealt with. The session is not integrated with the rest of the Life Orientation curriculum and the appropriate life skills complementing HIV and AIDS education are not dealt with, concurring with the findings of Kelly *et al.* [2001] that HIV and AIDS is not always addressed in a life skills approach. The efficacy for life skills education as an essential component of HIV and AIDS education is well researched [Coetzee and Kok, 2001; Gachuhi, 1999; Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Kelly *et al.*, 2001; Khulisa, 2000; Macintyre *et al.*, 2000; Magnani *et al.*, 2003; Magome *et al.*, 1998; Peltzer and Promtussananon, 2003; Tiendrebeogo *et al*, 2003; United Nations, 2003a and 2003b; USAID, 2002; Sinclair, 2003; Visser *et al.*, 2004; World Health Organization, 1999 and 2003]. Where educators deal only with HIV and AIDS without accompanying life skills, possibly because they merely go through the motions of teaching to "get it over and done with as soon as possible" and due to their particular values, the effectiveness of the lessons are questionable. The seriousness of the HIV and AIDS pandemic facing sub-Saharan Africa is acknowledged [Bot *et al.*, 2001; Bradshaw *et al*, 2004; Cullinan, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Pettifor *et al.*, 2004; UNAIDS, 2002]. Given the pandemic, a balance needs to be sought as learners can be "over taught" [Reddy and James, 2003], which may have the opposite effect of the well-intended outcomes. With the HIV and AIDS pandemic being a core issue that educators have to address, and with excellent training courses [Tlakula, 2003], together with useful materials and resources for both educators and learners freely available from the Health and Education Departments [Magome *et al.,* 1998], educators cannot say they *do not know how to* educate learners on HIV and AIDS.

A concern emanating from the findings is that, particularly in some private schools, in both provinces, the prevailing attitude expressed is that HIV and AIDS education is not relevant to *their* learners, which is similar to educators who express views that sexuality education is only necessary in some schools. This is a myth that denies learners the knowledge to which they are entitled. A private school stated that, "We do not deal with HIV and AIDS as we are a Christian school." This was reiterated by some Life Orientation educators in interviews.

The study revealed that the possibility exists that, in many instances, the way HIV and AIDS is or is not taught, is a variable of educators' values around sexuality education, HIV and AIDS and religion, in the context of perceived community norms. Furthermore, the findings suggest that not all Life Orientation educators promote Constitutional principles, human rights and citizenship education, diversity and gender equity. The impact of educators' values on their teaching may have ramifications for the optimal teaching of Life Orientation. Parry [1986, 135] notes:

> …our values enter into our definitions, our definitions
> prescribe content and method, and our practices and
> procedures encapsulate our aims.

Educators dedicated to democratic values are the mainstay of the Life Orientation learning area. The findings suggest that a great deal of work still needs to be done to achieve such an education force. The significance of values permeating the Life Orientation educators' choice of content, methodology and approach, needs to be given due cognisance. Corresponding interventions to promote constitutional principles are crucial to prevent educators' unconstitutional values from thwarting Life Orientation to be the empowering force it potentially can be.

6.8 THE RHETORIC - PRACTICE INTERFACE

In this study the rhetoric - what educators say they *do* in the classroom and what they *believe* in - differs from the practice - what educators *actually do* in the classroom and how they *act on their beliefs* [Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005]. The disparity between professed actions and beliefs, and actual actions and beliefs, as played out in the Life Orientation classroom, highlight the limitations of both the structured and unstructured interview as a tool for measuring educator methodologies, values and attitudes. Hence student-teachers' observations as well as researchers' field notes were particularly useful to augment educators' and learners' responses in the context of reality. This serves as an example of the beneficial use of triangulation [Cohen and Manion, 1985; Gray, 2004; Krathwohl, 1998] and illustrates the supportive role of qualitative findings [Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Huberman and Miles, 2002, Miller and Salkind, 2002]. In this section, student-teachers' observations are accentuated as they illustrate the rhetoric - practice incongruities prevalent in the Life Orientation classroom.

The rhetoric - practice interface is a key policy implementation challenge; educators need to go beyond the professed support for curriculum transformation, to the actual implementation of these changes. Supporting the findings in this study, Harber [2001], Harley *et al.* [2001], Harley and Wedekind [2004], the Nelson Mandela Foundation [2005] and Vally and Spreen [2003] all note in particular the contradictions between educators' verbal support for C2005 and their actual classroom practices. Kraak and Young [2001] point to the need for continuous dialogue between vision and theory, and policy and practice. The multidimensionality of innovation and the varied depths of change [Fullan, 2001], where educational change can be superficial [Hoyle and Bell, 1972], are important aspects of curriculum innovation to consider.

In this study, contrary to educators' indications that they used group work, discussions and participatory methods, student-teachers observed that educators were often textbook and transmission teaching orientated and did not use creative activities, group work or discussions. For example, a student-teacher noted:

> *During the interview she maintained that she employed many different methods in the classroom, but during four weeks of observing her I only ever saw a talk and chalk style. Her lecture style classes involved minimal class participation and the content did not grab or excite the learners.*

Professed group work was generally merely a façade, as discussed in section 6.6.1. Educators have accepted that group work is part of the new dispensation, and say they use group work, but have generally not yet assigned a deeper meaning in practice. That they continue with transmission teaching while learners are only *physically seated in groups,* is corroborated by Harley *et al.* [2000], Harley and Wedekind [2004], and Taylor and Vinjevold [1999].

The relationship between the significance attributed to and time table usage of Life Orientation also highlighted acute rhetoric-practice incongruities. Educators generally indicated that they valued Life Orientation as an important learning area; however, their actions at times contradicted this. Student-teachers particularly noted this discrepancy:

> *I do not believe that Life Orientation is really seen as essential. I believe that teachers provided me with the appropriate answers. I noticed that other learning areas were prioritised. I don't think they gave me honest answers because*

during my nine weeks at the school, I only twice observed Life Orientation lessons taking place.

Although the teachers saw it as essential, they did not teach Life Orientation as per timetable. It was easy to be put aside if other lessons had to be taught.

Similarly, learners, although they expressed positive views of Life Orientation, generally still needed to actualise their notions. Student-teachers' observations indicate that learners, who professed to regard Life Orientation as important, did not follow through in their actions. Learners often refused to do Life Orientation tasks and assignments and tended to want to use the Life Orientation periods for free periods. Learners did homework in other learning areas, but not in Life Orientation, particularly in the Senior Phase. Plausible reasons could include the historical view of guidance and physical education as subjects devoid of homework; so learners may have felt that they should not be forced to do homework in Life Orientation. Educators' attitudes towards Life Orientation as a non-academic learning area may also have influenced learners' attitudes towards tasks and assignments. Student-teachers observations include:

Most learners responded positively to Life Orientation as a whole, although their behaviour in class didn't always tie in with the fact that most of them find Life Orientation useful or important.

I found teaching Life Orientation quite disheartening. It highlighted again for me one of the most challenging aspects of being a Life Orientation educator — that very often your classes are viewed as 'frees', lessons that are not of academic value and are therefore dismissed as irrelevant and not worth becoming fully involved in.

The biggest problem with Life Orientation is the mindset of educators and learners. When they hear we are doing Life Orientation they think 'free periods' or time to play soccer, which it is not.

Educators invariable indicated they used all the allotted time for Life Orientation for this purpose; in reality this did not appear to happen:

One teacher did express that the classes were too short to address issues adequately; however, this teacher seemed very inconsistent with her class attendance. The amount of work she had covered with the grade 9s this year was dismally poor, and she seemed very unprepared for the only life orientation lesson that I saw her go to in five weeks.

> *The Life Orientation teacher claims that the teaching time for Life Orientation is not enough, but when I was at the school observing, he was not even using the little time that is being allocated in the timetable. He is always in the staff room during the Life Orientation period. In the questionnaire he said that all the time allocated for teaching Life Orientation is used for that. I found this strange because … he was teaching SS* (social sciences) *during the Life Orientation period. It was not something new, he usually does this, sometimes he does not attend the class at all. Other teachers then teach their learning areas because they see that the class is free and they are making noise.*

In the interviews educators indicated they included all the core focus areas in Life Orientation, yet in their actual teaching tended to focus on only some aspects. For example, student-teachers noted that in some schools *only* HIV and AIDS was taught, while in other schools *no* HIV and AIDS was taught. In some schools *no* physical education was taught, whereas in others physical education was deemed so important it superimposed Life Orientation. It appears that educators may know what they are supposed to include as part of their Life Orientation teaching, but that they do not carry this out. Student-teachers observed that some ex-guidance educators spent all their time counselling in lieu of teaching; yet they indicated they taught all the Life Orientation foci. The reasons could be diverse, ranging from a lack of time, to educators' values, the school ethos and what educators feel familiar with and knowledgeable about. The residual effects of guidance, physical and religious education cannot be discounted as a core determinant of what educators teach. Further research in educators' choice of foci, their preferences for what they teach and the reasons for the incongruities between what they say and do, is needed, before definite conclusions can be drawn on this phenomenon.

Student-teachers and researchers observed that when educators were asked to cite their successes, they had great difficulty. It was easier for them to respond to a suggested success as listed in the interview question. In addition, some student-teachers indicated that the successes cited by educators did not play out in the reality of the classroom. An explicit example is:

> *It is believed by the school that the successes of their LO* (Life Orientation) *curriculum, in the form that it is, is seen through the fact that the learners became more competent in*

> *relationship building, are more confident and are more skilled in resolving conflicts. The teacher also believes that the learners also learn to become more respectful of other cultures, beliefs and social groups. However, it is here that I must strongly disagree. It can be seen that, in general, these boys are not made aware of any other culture other than Christian, middle class, white culture. Unfortunately, there is little tolerance amongst the learners of any other cultural group.*

To counterbalance the observations, it is necessary to note that in some instances educators' interview responses were congruent with their teaching practice in the classroom.

> *During my practice teaching the teacher that I observed used different methods when she taught Life Orientation …I feel that the teacher that I interviewed was sincere and did a lot to contribute to improving the learners' education.*

When viewing the results, it is of paramount importance to take the rhetoric - practice incongruities into account, as they do temper the results into a more realistic presentation. It is perhaps a positive indication that educators are aware of what is expected of them. Possibly, given time and the necessary interventions in this transformation process, these expectations and requirements will play out in reality.

6.9 THE INTERCONNECTIVITY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research foci and issues emanating from the research are intertwined, with a reciprocally interrelated and collective impact on the implementation of Life Orientation. How Life Orientation is defined and attributed with significance, will affect how, if and when this learning area is taught. Who teaches Life Orientation will influence the way it is taught and how it is perceived and experienced. If arbitrary educator allocation to Life Orientation is made, with minimal Life Orientation specialisation evident, these educators will not come to terms with this learning area. This will further marginalise Life Orientation. The timetabling of Life Orientation will affect how it is taught, by whom and how it is attributed with significance. The less educators use the allocated time to teach Life Orientation, the more it will be seen as a soft option, a non-academic learning area and a readily exchangeable period for the "more important" learning areas. How and what is taught, will impact the way Life

Orientation is seen, its significance as well as its definitions and meaning attributions. The values educators adhere to will affect their choices of what to teach, and how and when they teach, which in turn affect all other research foci. The more educators adhere to unconstitutional values, the more Life Orientation will regress into the dictatorial dogma of the previous guidance and religious instruction subjects.

Within the broader context, poverty [Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Phurutse, 2005], educators' morale and attrition [Hall *et al.*, 2005], violence at schools [Human Rights Watch, 2004; Vally, 1999b], the HIV and AIDS pandemic [Children's Institute, 2003; Cullinan, 2004; Pettifor *et al.*, 2004] and generic curriculum transformation issues [Chisholm, 2003b; Fleisch, 2002; Harber, 2001; Harley and Wedekind, 2004; Jansen, 2001a; Jansen and Christie, 1999; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999] also impact on the status and practice of Life Orientation. Shortages of educators may mean that there are fewer options to appoint specialised Life Orientation educators, which may mean that all or any educators with free periods get assigned to Life Orientation, which affects the practice of this learning area. Likewise, educators with low morale will not be sufficiently motivated to do their utmost for Life Orientation. Poverty implies that resources are limited, classes are large and learners malnourished, which affect both teaching and learning. The challenges that Life Orientation face are inherent in this cycle and add to the specific challenges that the findings of the study have highlighted.

6.10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The emergent picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation is that of a newly conceptualised learning area within the framework of curriculum transition, OBE and C2005, grappling to define itself and take its rightful place on school timetables.

The need for Life Orientation, the essentiality of this learning area and the necessity for optimal implementation of Life Orientation, were apparent from both educators' and learners' perspectives. However, this was contradicted by some educators, when they did not use the allocated time to teach Life Orientation, and by some learners who did not complete Life Orientation assignments. This is an example of the manifestation of the rhetoric - practice interface, which was characterised by tensions and incongruities.

Some educators and learners showed a tendency to *not apply* their professed regard, need for and conceptualisations of Life Orientation in practice.

The use of different descriptors for Life Orientation, such as *life skills* and *guidance*, could be an indication of a new learning area in a transitional phase. Educators still need time to formulate their own understandings, and make paradigm shifts about their own speciality subjects such as guidance and physical education, into a holistic perception of Life Orientation as *one learning area*. Educators' terminology for Life Orie ntation could be a manifestation of the confusion and ambiguity they perceive inherent in Life Orientation. The constituents of Life Orientation are rooted in and accompanied by their historical contexts, and may appear to be partly responsible for the fragmentation of Life Orientation into discrete 'subjects', which are dissipated on some schools' timetables.

There is, as was expected, a lack of experienced and qualified Life Orientation educators, due to this being a new learning area. Specialised Life Orientation educators are required to ensure that this learning area can achieve its outcomes. Although all educators should incorporate aspects of Life Orientation in their learning areas, Life Orientation needs specifically trained and qualified educators. The educationally unsound practice of arbitrary assignment of educators to Life Orientation positions does not auger well for this learning area. All educators are not equipped and motivated to be Life Orientation educators.

The research literature supports findings pertaining to the efficacy of active skills practice and behaviour rehearsal for life skills related learning. Generally, educators are still utilising transmission teaching and do not make optimal use of group work and discussions in Life Orientation. Teaching methodologies need to promote Life Orientation teaching and learning; hence the lack of facilitation, creative participatory and interactive methods is perturbing.

Educators generally depict optimistic attitudes about curriculum change, with the caveat that more training, smaller classes and better resources be made available. Their values come strongly to the fore in their teaching about religion, sexuality, HIV and AIDS and gender equity. Constitutional principles are not yet embraced by all Life Orientation

educators. Religion is still taught mainly from a Christian and moralistic perspective, and is not inclusive of other religions. Citizenship education is mostly ignored and human rights education in both theory and as played out in daily class interactions, requires strengthening.

Problems experienced by educators are not insurmountable and the successes they were already experiencing bode well for Life Orientation. Concerns about the lack of support in the period of rapid curriculum transformation, poverty, large classes, lack of learning support materials, lack of learner discipline and shortage of qualified Life Orientation educators, need to be addressed. The successes indicate that this learning area has the capacity to equip learners for successful living and learning in the 21st Century.

With the necessary support and strategic interventions to address the issues highlighted in the study, Life Orientation has the potential to become a cardinal learning area at the forefront of assisting learners to achieve the critical and developmental outcomes. The next chapter deals with recommendations derived from the findings, to help promote the status and practice of Life Orientation.

CHAPTER SEVEN
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a summary of the study precedes the recommendations suggested to promote optimal Life Orientation practice and to enhance its status. Recommendations based on the findings and implications of this study are made against the backdrop of the challenges that educators encounter, contextualised by an emergent democracy within a developing country. Because cognisance is taken of the reality of fiscal restraints and the legacy of educational disproportion inherited from the previous apartheid government, the recommendations are essentially practical and economically viable. The purpose of the recommendations is to serve as a firm basis from which action strategies can be implemented to promote the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. The spirit in which the recommendations are made emanate from a supportive and collaborative stance.

Specific recommendations relating to the main research foci findings and ge neral recommendations to enhance the status and practice of Life Orientation are made. The limitations of the study are discussed and further areas for research suggested. The implications of the study are outlined and conclusions drawn to end the study.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. The research was judged necessary, given that preliminary research indications pointed to the possibility that the status and practice of Life Orientation in South Africa were not optimal. The research was conducted in two provinces at geographical extremities in South Africa: in 45 schools in rural areas of Limpopo and in 49 schools in urban areas of the Western Cape. Comprehensive structured interviews were held with 134 educators in 94 schools. Learners were also involved, as 280 Intermediate Phase learners were interviewed briefly in structured interviews and a total of 1 284 Senior Phase learners completed questionnaires. Furthermore, 26 unstructured interviews were held with Life Orientation educators and

departmental officials. Observations and reflections of student-teachers and the researchers' field notes were added to further elaborate on the emergent depiction of Life Orientation. The investigation was initiated in 2001 (pilot study), the actual research commenced in 2002 and it continued until the end of 2004.

The need for this learning area is urgent, as discussed in chapter one. In particular, youth risk behaviour, the HIV and AIDS pandemic and other health challenges, such as lack of physical exercise, underscore the necessity of Life Orientation. Moreover, the high unemployment rate and poverty index, coupled with the need for an application of a human rights culture in our new democracy, the lack of gender equity and ensuing unacceptable violence towards women and children, call for urgent interventions, of which Life Orientation could be a prominent role player and driving force.

Learners' expressed needs for, among other topics, self-concept enhancement, HIV and AIDS education, human rights and career education indicate that the Life Orientation curriculum is relevant. The potential of Life Orientation to help learners to achieve the critical and developmental outcomes [Department of Education, 2002a], and to achieve Life Orientation's mission of equipping learners for successful living and learning [Department of Education, 2002b], contributes to the body of evidence that Life Orientation is a core learning area, which necessitates prominence on all school timetables. The complexities of this learning area and the manifold constituents that shape Life Orientation require that it be taught by specifically trained professional educators.

The findings of the study indicate that Life Orientation, as a fledgling learning area within the context of curriculum transition, coupled with the legacy of its constituents, is still struggling to define itself and is fragmented. All aspects of Life Orientation are not yet seen as part of this learning area.

Life Orientation is not always allocated the prescribed time allocation on many school timetables and Life Orientation periods are often usurped for other learning areas that are perceived to be more academic. A comprehensive core of specially trained Life Orientation educators is not yet available and the allocation of educators to teach Life Orientation is not necessarily grounded in educators' qualifications or expertise.

Educators' values appear to affect their teaching of Life Orientation, specifically due to Life Orientation's value-laden content of HIV and AIDS, sexuality education, religion and issues dealing with constitutional principles such as diversity, human rights and gender.

The rhetoric-practice interface, which is the correlation between what educators *say* and what they actually *do* in the reality of the classroom, is characterised by incongruity. This indicates that many educators are aware of expectations but have difficulty with implementation.

Teaching methodologies used at present reveal an overuse of transmission teaching, with minimal use of experiential methods. Overly large classes, learners' lack of discipline in some schools and a scarcity of learning support materials further add to the predicament of Life Orientation educators.

The problems that were highlighted in this study are not insurmountable. Pockets of success in Life Orientation bode well for this learning area. Youth assets and youth resilience, coupled with the dedicated educators who drive this learning area, contribute to the potential of Life Orientation to achieve its outcomes. With immediate action taken on the recommendations that follow, Life Orientation can become a strong force in both preventing and ameliorating problems, resulting in learners being equipped for life in the 21st Century. Life Orientation can become a substantial learning area that is viewed as of paramount importance, with Life Orientation educators sought after, and recognised as valuable assets, cardinal to promoting the advantageous education of South Africa's learners.

7.3 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations to enhance the status and practice of Life Orientation, with particular reference to the research foci, are given. In order to avoid repetition, recommendations are not made firstly for the improved status and secondly for the enhanced practice of Life Orientation, as the two aspects overlap and recommendations for them are interrelated.

7.3.1 Life Orientation defined, described and interpreted

Life Orientation needs to be clearly and unambiguously defined and described, so that a *common interpretation and understanding* of this learning area can be attained. If educators can reach a shared appreciation of Life Orientation and accept the way it is defined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement [Department of Education, 2002b], it would promote both its status as well as implementation, as Life Orientation would connote meaning and manifest in congruent modes. This important first step in reaching consensus about what Life Orientation entails is needed to lay the foundation for further and deeper understandings and applications of this learning area.

Educators, authors and the media have to use Life Orientation terminology with care and accuracy. For example, a clear distinction between life skills and Life Orientation needs to be made because Life Orientation is a *learning area* , while life skills education is one central *aspect* of Life Orientation. The components of Life Orientation need to be seen as part of the whole learning area. Life Orientation should not be confused with, or reduced to, for example, merely physical education, guidance, life skills or HIV and AIDS education. In order to achieve this clarity about what Life Orientation is and entails, special attention needs to be paid to definitions and description of Life Orientation in training sessions with principals and educators, media briefings and meetings with parents.

The focus areas that constitute Life Orientation need to be elucidated to assist educators to accept and include all Life Orientation foci in their teaching. Attempts need to be made to help educators see Life Orientation as a whole, not as separate aspects. Links between Life Orientation learning outcomes should be emphasised in training sessions and support materials. Equitable weighting has to be given to the five focus areas' time allocation, assessment and emphasis to ensure all aspects of Life Orientation are dealt with. Educators, who do not accept that, for example, physical education is now part of Life Orientation, and propagate for its separation from this learning area, need to be informed of the cardinal links among physical education, health promotion and general well-being. If these links are not made, physical education will revert to the isolated subject it was prior to curriculum change, often neglected and underrated and seen as an optional extra, primarily for schools with the funds for a physical education specialist educator. The practice of offering physical education and life skills as separate subjects

on the timetable is unsound and requires urgent attention, because this further fragments the learning area and polarises educators' and learners' understandings of Life Orientation.

Attempts to help disseminate information about Life Orientation can include the distribution of information brochures. User-friendly booklets in which Life Orientation learning outcomes and assessment standard are briefly outlined, summarised and illustrated, should be distributed to schools, other education institutions and the media. The focus areas need to be briefly described with attractive visuals, and links made between the various constituents of Life Orientation, so that they can be located within Life Orientation and understood as part of the whole. Educational supplements sponsored by advertisers can be inserted in national and community newspapers. In addition, posters outlining the definitions, aims, scope, foci and learning outcomes and assessment standards of Life Orientation can be created. Such posters could serve as useful reminders to all learning area educators of the meaning of Life Orientation. Radio and television programmes need to include interviews with Life Orientation learning area specialists to aid the necessary publicity to clarify the meaning of this learning area. Excessive emphasis on sexuality education and religion education should not be the focus of such interviews, as Life Orientation entails much more than these seemingly contentious issues.

Whatever materials are developed need to be carefully checked by Department of Education Life Orientation curriculum experts to ensure that the information is correct. Advertisers could sponsor the publication of the information booklets and posters. Sponsors should be chosen carefully. No alcohol advertising for Life Orientation should be allowed (tobacco advertising is already banned), nor for mobile phones, until there is clarity as to whether mobile phones are dangerous to learners' health or not.

A national conference entitled *What is Life Orientation?* should be held as a matter of urgency. Such a gathering could give various role payers in Life Orientation the opportunity to help educators unpack this learning area, in order to facilitate their grasp of what Life Orientation is, and what it is not.

A Life Orientation educational journal needs to be initiated, with an academic section as well as a practical hands-on, skills in the classroom, segment. In addition, a section portraying educators' successes in Life Orientation would serve as motivation to others. Educators should be encouraged to submit articles. This could be an important vehicle for disseminating information and a forum for continued discourse. Links could be made with existing initiatives and journals on life skills, emotional literacy, physical education, citizenship education, career education, health promotion and well-being. An African perspective should be a priority and extensive space given to articles dealing with indigenous knowledge within a Life Orientation context. The journal should be available as hard copy as well as on a freely accessible website.

7.3.2. The significance attributed to Life Orientation

An advocacy strategy, in tandem with the above recommendations and consisting of practical actions, needs to be followed to enhance the status of Life Orientation. To increase the value and significance of Life Orientation, the public and the various role players involved in education, such as school management teams, need to understand not only what this learning area is about, but also what it achieves. A concerted, sustained, goal-directed and well-organised campaign to promote Life Orientation is required.

Advocacy strategies to promote the status of Life Orientation could include:

- A national annual Life Orientation promotion day needs to be scheduled (in addition to the dissemination of information strategies outlined earlier), where the need for this learning area is given publicity. On this day, fairs, markets, carnivals, tournaments and exhibitions can be held, with guest speakers, learners' and educators' presentations highlighted and parents in attendance. Advertisers, corporates and NGOs, as well as government departments, could help finance the promotion, as well as showcase the work they do that is relevant to Life Orientation. Events that can be offered at schools to coincide with the day include a forum where educators' success stories in Life Orientation can be highlighted and the opportunity for learners to present aspects of their Life Orientation work, such as poster presentations, collages, debates, short dramas, indigenous games

tournaments and other sporting events, environmental awareness campaigns, outcomes of their volunteer work, career expos and HIV and AIDS awareness promotions. Media such as newspapers, radio, television and the internet can play a useful role in promoting Life Orientation by giving publicity to these events.

- A concerted effort should be made to ensure that promotion opportunities and remuneration of Life Orientation educators are on a par with those of any other learning area educators and that equitable funds are allocated to Life Orientation.

- Campaigns at higher education institutions to encourage prospective students to become Life Orientation educators should be initiated.

- Bursaries for Life Orientation educators should become available to either train as Life Orientation educators or upgrade their qualifications in Life Orientation.

- A road show needs to be put together by the Department of Education to visit schools to speak to principals and deputy principals about the *importance* of Life Orientation.

- Life Orientation educators need to form a professional body that will campaign for the promotion of this learning area and for the rights of Life Orientation educators and learners. A charter of rights for Life Orientation educators and learners can be developed by Life Orientation educators and learners. Such a charter could include the following basic liberties:
  – The right to teach Life Orientation for the duration of the Department of Education's [2002a] determined time allocation, i.e. 8% of teaching time
  – The right to not have other learning areas that are deemed more important, usurp the Life Orientation lesson period
  – The right to quality training in Life Orientation and the right of learners to be taught by specifically qualified Life Orientation educators
  – Equal rights to funding for Life Orientation resources and materials

- A code of conduct for Life Orientation educators, including educators' willingness to teach Life Orientation as a whole, not only some aspects, and to base their teaching on South African constitutional principles

- A code of conduct for learners. Life Orientation tasks and assignments should get the same respect from learners as other learning areas and assessment should be seen in the same light as all other learning area assessments.

7.3.3 Life Orientation time allocation and usage

The time allocation for Life Orientation at schools should follow Department of Education [2002a] guidelines of a minimum of 8% of teaching time. This time allocation for Life Orientation is fair if optimal use is made of this time. At schools where minimal time is allocated and used for Life Orientation, the time allocation should increase. Circulars should be sent out to all schools outlining the stipulated time allocation for Life Orientation. Life Orientation educators who indicate that they integrate Life Orientation in other learning areas and hence do not specifically need to teach it, should be guided on how to teach Life Orientation. Schools that include assembly and afternoon sports as part of the Life Orientations' 8% time allocation, need to add extra time to the Life Orientation period in order for the curriculum to be completed.

The actual time usage during the Life Orientation period needs to be improved so that the Life Orientation curriculum is the focus, and the periods are not used for administrative, disciplinary or other matters. The usurping of Life Orientation time slots for other learning areas that are regarded as 'more academic' or important or easier to teach, should not be condoned. The practice of some educators of using the Life Orientation period for a 'free period' should be curtailed.

Timetable slots should ensure that Life Orientation is not consistently given the last two periods on a Friday afternoon or the first hour on a Monday morning, to the exclusion of all other time slots. In the event of public holidays, sport meetings, choir competitions and other events that may impede some learning areas' completion of the curriculum, it

should not be normative to use the Life Orientation period to 'make up' for lost time. Life Orientation is an academic and assessable learning area in its own right and should be treated as such.

The practice of saving time by grouping all classes in a grade for the Life Orientation lesson should be restricted to situations that are conducive to such a combination. This could be, for example, when there is a guest speaker, or when the classes need to present their projects to a larger audience, or participate in a games tournament.

7.3.4 The educators responsible for Life Orientation

Educators responsible for Life Orientation need to be *Life Orientation learning area specialists*, who are specifically trained and qualified to teach Life Orientation. The practice of assigning Life Orientation to any educators who have free periods should be halted.

Where ex-guidance and ex-physical education educators are available, they should be used and some team teaching could take place. However, Life Orientation as a learning area should still be the responsibility of an educator who is the Life Orientation educator. In the event of team teaching taking place, the educators need to collaborate to ensure the learners see the link between the different Life Orientation focus areas.

When allocating Life Orientation classes to educators, it needs to be taken into consideration that Life Orientation is a learning area that also requires assessment, marking and lesson preparation similar to all other learning areas. Accordingly, educators require the same number of free periods and work load as other learning area educators. In addition, Life Orientation educators are often required to co-ordinate events and programmes and liaise with the various partnerships relevant to Life Orientation. This should be taken into account and seen as part of the Life Orientation educators' workload, and should not be an additional burden.

The same educators should teach Life Orientation for a number of sequential years to ensure continuity. Life Orientation educators - and not merely any educators who have free periods or are willing to go - should be sent on workshops and training courses

relevant to Life Orientation. Course materials need to be disseminated at school and the learning implemented and shared with other Life Orientation educators. This would ensure that if a Life Orientation educator leaves the school, there remains a semblance of continuity.

School principals should not be solely responsible for Life Orientation, but can be involved in offering some lessons. In the event of the Life Orientation educator being promoted to vice principal or principal, an attempt could be made to still teach, but other educators should be responsible for holding the learning area. This will ensure that no teaching time is lost due to principals' administrative duties and absences from class due to other school business.

Where the school lacks educators and there is no Life Orientation educator, support could be obtained from local community organisations (see section 7.4.3) and higher education institutions as an interim measure. Note that support from community organisations should be gained, even if there are Life Orientation educators available. Higher education institutions could assign student-teachers on a regular basis to teach at the school throughout the year. Learnerships (education and training programmes provided by government for skills enhancement) are another option, and preference could be given to assigning Life Orientation learnership students to schools without Life Orientation educators.

7.3.5 Life Orientation methodology

Experiential learning, facilitation and group work should be core methodologies for Life Orientation teaching, as they are especially suitable for Life Orientation teaching and learning. Transmission teaching or chalk and talk methodologies need to be used sparingly. There are opportunities for teaching moments where information is given, but these should be kept to a minimum. Active learner participation should be normative.

Creative teaching and learning methods need to be included in educators' methodologies to ensure learners' interest, optimise their learning and encourage enjoyment of this learning area. Such methods do not necessarily require expensive equipment and materials. For example, newspapers are a useful tool for teaching Life Orientation and are donated freely to schools by some media. Recycled materials can be

used for some aspects of the curriculum, as well as donated items collected over time. Ideas and resource support from various educational organisations and social responsibility programmes are available. Educators need to be encouraged to use the resources that are available, and not desist from teaching Life Orientation because they feel they require expensive resources to do so. The most important resource is the learners themselves; and they should feature prominently in all class activities.

Training sessions on methods for large-class teaching, geared specifically towards Life Orientation, would be particularly helpful. Large -class teaching is not an issue specific to Life Orientation, but due to the content of Life Orientation, is possibly a more serious issue than in some other learning areas.

7.3.6 Life Orientation content

Particular recommendations referring to Life Orientation foci and their core premises, namely health promotion, social development and citizenship education, personal development and life skills, physical education and movement, and career education, are developed in this section. The recommendations are grounded in complexities identified in the study that could deter Life Orientation from achieving its outcomes.

Health promotion

The Health Promoting School concept should be promoted at all schools [Department of Health, 2000]. The Life Orientation educator could co-ordinate such efforts, but cannot be solely responsible for this - it should be a team effort where most educators have delegated responsibilities and all contribute to the ethic of a health-promoting school.

The needs and challenges highlighted in the findings of the *Youth Risk Behaviour Survey* [Reddy *et al*, 2003] could drive the planning and teaching of health promotion. Summarised versions of the survey, presented with user -friendly graphics, need to be disseminated to educators. Each section of the survey can be presented in a separate booklet. Life Orientation educators need to consult the findings from this research when drawing up their learning programmes to ensure relevancy and that the major youth risk issues are addressed. Life Orientation educators need to focus on provincial findings to ensure further relevance to their learners.

It is important that Life Orientation educators give learners not only the facts about health, but also the learning opportunities to develop their skills, values and attitudes to make informed and responsible decisions about their own health, safety, well-being and lifestyle choices. Merely knowing the facts about health is not a sufficient factor in changing health behaviour.

Environmental education should include environmental and social justice and environmental health. Attempts need to be made to expand environmental education to include more than recycling and cleaning.

New ways of dealing with HIV and AIDS education need to be continuously explored to prevent learner boredom and over-exposure to repetition. Learning programmes need to be so structured that they are progressive from grade to grade and increase in depth and breadth. All HIV and AIDS learning should be firmly located in a life skills approach, and connect with all Life Orientation learning outcomes, with learning outcome 1 (the learner is able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health) on health promotion as core.

The role of HIV and AIDS education needs to be clarified and clearly located within the Life Orientation curriculum. The Life Orientation educator should hold this important responsibility to co-ordinate all HIV and AIDS education initiatives. While all learning area educators need to include HIV and AIDS in their curricula, Life Orientation is the notional home and the logical and most prominent learning area for HIV and AIDS education.

HIV and AIDS education is vitally important, but not the only aspect of Life Orientation. The practice of some schools of teaching only HIV and AIDS education is counterproductive, as learners become inundated with HIV and AIDS education and stop listening, hence making them even more at risk. Likewise, to invite a nurse from the clinic only once a year to speak to the whole school about HIV and AIDS is also unacceptable, as this is not sufficient and is not placed in the Life Orientation curriculum. Any inputs from guest speakers should be followed through by activities in the Life Orientation classroom to consolidate learning. With the spiral planning of Life Orientation, which means that no outcome is written off as completed in the term, but

revisited each term, HIV and AIDS can be revisited in greater depth during the school year. A conceptual framework for integrating the Life Orientation learning outcomes with health promotion, specifically HIV and AIDS, is outlined in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 Conceptual framework for the integration of HIV and AIDS education with all the Life Orientation learning outcomes

Learning outcome 2: social development
Caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, social responsibility & volunteerism, the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, non-discriminatory practices & gender equity. Policies, regulations, government services, economic and social support within government framework. Poverty alleviation. Advocacy strategies.

Learning outcome 3: personal development
The necessary life skills to: resist peer pressure, form a positive self-concept, be assertive, respect others' right to say *no*, set goals, reduce stress, make informed and responsible decisions and solve problems. Strategies to prevent and oppose rape, practise human rights in relationships, develop empathy to understand people living with HIV and AIDS, respect own and others' bodies.

Learning outcome 1: health promotion
Facts about HIV and AIDS, prevention measures, sexuality education, nutrition for people living with HIV and AIDS, disease management and treatment options. Environmental justice.

Learning outcome 4: physical development and movement
Healthy & balanced lifestyle development, participation in sport and games, physical development through movement and healthy recreation, respect for body.

Learning outcome 5: career education
Rights of people living with HIV and AIDS in the workplace, goal setting and motivation to follow a career, mission and vision for the future, life-long learning. Careers in HIV and AIDS research, education and related fields.

Learning outcome 1, dealing with health promotion, is the core focus area incorporating HIV and AIDS, and links with all learning outcomes. Learning outcome 3, dealing with personal development and life skills, is particularly integral to learning outcome 1, as supported by learning outcomes 2, 4 and 5. Learning outcome 1 needs to be located

within the comprehensive strategies of the Health Promoting School framework [Department of Health, 2000].

Social development

Citizenship education, which is often ignored, needs to be highlighted and extensive training for educators initiated on this aspect. Human rights education needs to be a permanent part of the Life Orientation curriculum, as stipulated in the Revised National Curriculum Statement [Department of Education, 2002b]. Educators who do not agree with the South African Constitution and do not teach according to the values of our constitution, should not be responsible for this learning area as it is not clear how they will address issues of human rights, gender, diversity and democracy.

Similarly, educators who have problems with teaching about any religion other than their own, should not be Life Orientation educators, as they will not be equipped to deal with learning outcome 2. Respect for and information about a range of religions, belief systems and world views are core to the Life Orientation curriculum and are congruent with constitutional principles promoting freedom of religion. However, there are educators who, through training and with time to adapt, will be able to follow the curriculum as it was intended, even though they may initially be in opposition. Hence, they should be given the opportunity to get used to the new curriculum.

Personal development

The competencies associated with life skills' acquisition need to be clearly identified in Life Orientation educators' learning programmes. A logical progression in the teaching of life skills is essential.

Aspects of social cognitive theory, the underlying notions of self-efficacy, constructivist psychology theory, cognitive problem solving, resilience and risk theory, as well as an understanding of multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence and emotional literacy, need to be clarified to Life Orientation educators to give them a firm grasp of the content and methodology best suited for personal development and life skills education.

Learners need to be provided with ample opportunities to practise their life skills within the safe confines of the classroom, through the extensive use of role play, group work, active participation, debate, discussion and active action-reflection.

Repeated links with life skills need to be made when dealing with the other Life Orientation focus areas. This will help learners consolidate and extend these skills and apply them to diverse situations.

Physical development

The importance of physical activity is well established, yet often ignored in schools, as indicated in this study. To counteract this tendency, guidelines should be given to schools to enable all learners in all grades to actively participate in appropriate exercises to enhance cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance and flexibility, on three alternative days of the week, i.e. Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, for a minimum of 20 minutes a day. Furthermore, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, all learners should spend at least 20 minutes on a low-intensity activity, such as walking. However, in some rural schools and schools in impoverished areas where learners may walk long distances to school, a sensitive approach to learners' needs has to lead to an adaptation of the exercise programmes. Alternative exercise such as relaxation techniques could be included.

The above exercise time should be linked to the Life Orientation curriculum and followed through in the Life Orientation class with reflection, analysis and motivation, as well as continuous self-assessment of fitness levels. The activities need to be varied, so that learners do not get bored. Learners can suggest their own ideas for aerobic activities as well as for moderate exercise activities. The physical activities need to be fun and encourage learners' enjoyment, rather than being in a military style. Learners' low rating of physical education as an important topic indicates a need to bring more enjoyment to the physical development focus area. For example, dancing is fun, is aerobic and can promote learning about different cultural dances. In addition, martial arts such as Tai Chi and Taekwondo and other self-defence practices would both interest learners as well as add to their fitness and safety.

Timetabling should take the heat into account and not schedule the exercise times between 1 and 2 p.m. These recommended exercise times need to be used in addition to the 8% time allocated for Life Orientation, and should not be subtracted from Life Orientation periods. If all schools start each day 10 minutes earlier and end each day 10 minutes later, 20 minutes can be added to the timetable each day, which can be used for physical activity.

A distinction needs to be made between sport and physical development as expounded in Life Orientation, so that educators know how to structure their learning programmes. Life Orientation provides learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to participate in extramural sport, but Life Orientation does not equal sport. Sport is an *extramural* activity [Department of Education, 2003b], which should be promoted and offered at the school. The task of Life Orientation is to motivate learners to participate in sport and kindle their interest in sport, as well as equip them with the information to know the importance of a healthy and balanced lifestyle, which would include sport. The games and other physical activities played in the Life Orientation class can alert learners to the enjoyment of sport.

Indigenous games should be promoted in Life Orientation and are ideally suited for activities within the Life Orientation curriculum. Recreation, acceptance and respect for diversity, community building and nurturing of our rich heritage are some of the important aspects that indigenous games can promote.

Career education

Because of the changes in the world of work that occur continuously, there is a vast amount of career information that Life Orientation educators need to gather. To keep up to date is a challenging task. To help Life Orientation educators, local schools need to co-operate with existing or establish career resource centres for the learners.

As career education is not highly rated by some learners, yet is of vital importance, innovative methods need to be employed to make this focus area exciting and relevant. Textbooks need to promote the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework's (NQF) vision.

To assist Life Orie ntation educators to keep up to date, quarterly short workshops need to be offered to inform them of the latest developments in the world of work, opportunities and funding possibilities for learners.

Dedicated career education websites specifically designed with South African learners in mind, need to be readily available. Higher education institutions and the corporate world could collaborate in the upkeep and updating of these websites.

7.3.7 Assessment in Life Orientation

Assessment in Life Orientation forms an integral aspect of the new curriculum in South Africa. Innovative and interesting ways of assessing learners have to be promoted. Creative assessment training sessions need to be offered to Life Orientation educators, with accompanying support and evaluation to assist them in developing assessment repertoires.

Educators need to guard against taking the 'heart' out of Life Orientation and merely focusing on factual tests and tasks. Life Orientation is much more than merely the dissemination of facts in the classroom: learners get the opportunity to share and express their feelings, practise skills in a safe environment, discuss their problems and anxieties and debate polemical issues. An over-emphasis on assessment, especially of the factual type, and on product instead of process, can be detrimental to this learning area.

Learners need to be aware of the importance of tasks and assignments in Life Orientation. Life Orientation cannot rely solely on class work. Although the Life Orientation curriculum does not inundate learners with an overload of work, some homework, tasks and projects are required in order for the curriculum to be adequately completed and for learners to achieve the desired outcomes. Learners who are still rooted in the past phenomenon of guidance or physical education not requiring homework or assessment, need to be encouraged to perceive Life Orientation in a new light. Learners' attitudes towards Life Orientation as a 'free' period should not be condoned. Educators' behaviour is key in this regard, as they need to lead by example.

Nationwide assessment of competencies similar to the ongoing numeracy and literacy tests, need to be administered for Life Orientation in all phases. The results could inform teaching practice and materials development. Learning programmes need to link closely with the results to ensure that they are appropriate.

7.3.8 Life Orientation Learning support materials

Learning support materials need to be developed to equip educators and learners with the required Life Orientation knowledge, skills, attitudes and values pertinent to the curriculum.

- Learning support materials should be grounded in the Life Orientation curriculum.
- Revamped guidance books are of no use. Publishers need to produce *new* Life Orientation books based on the Life Orientation curriculum.
- Authors writing Life Orientation textbooks should have had experience of teaching *Life Orientation* in government schools in South Africa and be aware of the realities of poverty, large classes, time constraints and lack of equipment. Authors with no specific Life Orientation experience or qualifications should not be considered as equipped to write for Life Orientation. Authors who teach only guidance and counselling at private schools and academics with no recent classroom or teaching experience should not be the sole authors for Life Orientation texbooks, as they can address only a small aspect of the curriculum.
- The poor quality of some publishers' educators' guides needs to be addressed. Small print, lack of graphics and art work and summary-style writing, without detailed direction on how the content should be taught, does not promote optimal Life Orientation education.
- Piloting and revision of textbooks based on pilot research findings should be normative. The Department of Education needs to give publishers sufficient time to accomplish this, and encourage publishers to research their textbooks adequately.

Life Orientation educators could subscribe to regular updates on health, obtainable free of charge, such as the HealthLink newsletter of the Health Systems Trust as well as the

Health-e newsletter (see Reference section). This will contribute to educators keeping in touch with the latest health-related issues, which they can address in class.

A dedicated Life Orientation website will be useful. An integrated, one-stop website specifically for Life Orientation educators, where all government departments, higher education institutions and community organisations post Life Orientation-related information, bulletins, programmes and events, as well as update contact details, will make access to information easier.

7.3.9 Educators' values and curriculum transformation

See section 7.3.6 on social development for recommendations concerning human rights and religion education. Although values cannot be enforced on educators, exposure to constitutional principles, diversity and the sharing of ideas may contribute to educators reconsidering their values. Open forums, discussions and debates concerning values need to be encouraged so that issues can be unpacked and addressed. Life Orientation educators need to be encouraged to complete advanced certificates in human rights and values offered at universities.

Workshops to help educators think laterally, creatively and in novel ways, combined with practice in seeing things from a range of perspectives, may also contribute to educators' abilities to reflect on their values. Sessions on developing empathy, walking in the shoes of the other person, and on addressing preconceived ideas, stereotypes and prejudices, should be offered. Gender sensitivity, racial diversity and inclusivity workshops need to be offered to educators to ensure that they address gender equity, race and inclusivity issues appropriately.

Educators need to be made aware of the difference between surface and meaningful change, and be given the space to reflect on the degree to which they have accepted the new curriculum and implemented change. Psychological support structures have to be put in place to help educators cope with curriculum transformation and make the transition smoothly and with the least amount of stress.

7.4 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Central general recommendations pertaining to issues that can enhance Life Orientation implementation are given, generic to all Life Orientation outcomes. Recommendations are made concerning educator development, with particular reference to the role of higher education institutions, as well as the training and support that the Department of Education can give. The important links that can be made with South African government departments and NGOs, pertaining to the Life Orientation curriculum, are suggested. The beneficence of partnerships with a range of international initiatives, such as the United Nations educational programmes and other global projects, if placed within the Life Orientation curriculum, is put forward, as well as the importance of partnerships with community organisations. Suggestions are made on how to raise funds for Life Orientation.

7.4.1 Educator development

Higher education institutions need to develop educator-training methodology courses in Life Orientation with the new curricula as their mainstay, and develop novel strategies and course designs to accommodate this new curriculum. Practices of offering 'method of guidance and counselling' in lieu of Life Orientation, need to cease. An undergraduate course in psychology as one major should be a requirement for entry to the Life Orientation method course. A firm grasp of psychology would benefit future Life Orientation educators, due to the psychosocial nature of Life Orientation.

Some higher education institutions' practice of transmission teaching for methodology subjects such as Life Orientation, do not promote the acquisition of OBE applicable methodologies for educators. Methods based on experiential learning, group work and facilitation need to be promoted as well as modelled by higher education institutions' lecturers.

Higher education institutions should make a greater effort to contribute to curriculum transformation and to work closely with, and be guided by, the Department of Education so as to play a far more supportive role in the training of educators. Higher education institutions' close collaboration with Department of Education curriculum specialists in Life Orientation should be normative. Higher education institutions should

present their new course designs to Department of Education officials for comment and assistance, to ensure they have interpreted the Life Orientation curriculum correctly.

To help promote Life Orientation, higher education institutions need to develop advanced courses in Life Orientation for post-educator-diploma students. BEd and Masters courses in Life Orientation should be on offer. The courses should be closely aligned with the aims and rationale of Life Orientation and be based on the Life Orientation curriculum as a whole. The practice of courses entitled Life Orientation, but which focus on only inclusive education or HIV and AIDS or health promotion, *are not* Life Orientation courses per se and should not propound to be, as this adds to the confusion about what Life Orientation is and what it is not. Inclusive education is a matter for all learning areas, not only and not specifically for Life Orientation. If HIV and AIDS courses are offered under the Life Orientation umbrella, they must then clearly be demarcated as part of Life Orientation and placed within the Life Orientation curriculum. Similarly, health promotion is but an aspect of Life Orientation and should not be marketed as Life Orientation in course descriptors.

Bursaries funded by higher education institutions should be made available for prospective Life Orientation educators for in-service programmes and short courses. There should be similar incentives to become Life Orientation educators as those offered to mathematics and science educators.

All student-teachers should get some exposure to Life Orientation as a generic module. This could include an overview of the basic content to help all educators comprehend and respect the value of this learning area, and to assist them to integrate Life Orientation in their other learning areas. However, such a module should not be seen as equipping all educators to teach Life Orientation; Life Orientation should ideally be taught only by specialised educators who have been specifically trained.

Within a few years, each school should have at least one educator who has completed either an Advanced Certificate in Education in Life Orientation or Life Orientation as a Method in a Post Graduate Certificate of Education, which should contain a practical core in both instances. To help facilitate the opportunities for educators to complete

courses, all higher education institutions need to offer such courses and actively recruit in-service educators.

Ongoing educator support during the first ten years of Life Orientation implementation is essential to place this learning area firmly on the South African education landscape. Key educators need to be identified who could serve as role models and mentors to new Life Orientation educators.

Short courses should be offered to Life Orientation educators, with a frequency of at least once a term. Short courses should include ongoing support through school visits and focus groups. Website support, posters in newspapers, newsletters and radio and television educational programmes, as well as training videos, should supplement the support curriculum advisers give Life Orientation educators.

Funding should be obtained to equip the Department of Education with the financial means to employ many more Life Orientation curriculum advisers, as the advisers have far too many schools to cope with. Each curriculum adviser should not have more than 20 schools to mentor. (See section 7.4.4.)

Good practice in the Life Orientation class needs to be given exposure. For example regular meetings at local district offices with Life Orientation educators can be held, where success stories could be showcased and problems brainstormed.

Psychological support should be available to Life Orientation educators due to the often evocative nature of Life Orientation teaching. As Life Orientation deals with the affective dimensions of the self, feelings and emotions are awakened. Life Orientation educators often also have to deal with learners sharing their traumas and problems, and need support in coping with this. Death has become a reality for many learners in South Africa due to HIV and AIDS. The curriculum requires time to be spent on coping with grief and trauma. Educators need to know how to cope with these aspects themselves before they can assist their learners effectively.

7.4.2 Partnerships with government

An inter-sectorial and inter-departmental approach to Life Orientation will be conducive to the growth and development of this learning area.

The Department of Health

Although solid partnerships already exist, such as the Life skills HIV and AIDS initiative [Magome *et al,* 1998] , continued and close collaboration between the Department of Health and Department of Education is essential. The use of clinics and traditional healers in Life Orientation teaching and learning is of vital importance and should be integral to Life Orientation.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

The Department should continue to develop classroom activities and provide resource packs to assist Life Orientation educators to achieve the environmental education aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum. An emphasis on environmental justice is essential as this is an often neglected aspect of environmental education.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

Each Life Orientation educator should be provided with a copy of the South African Constitution, and each classroom a copy of the poster of the Bill of Rights produced by the Human Rights Commission. Educators should be equipped with the knowledge to guide learners how to access the equality court.

The Department of Labour

The various initiatives by the Department as well as the Umsobomvu youth project are vital to career education and could be located in Life Orientation. Life Orientation could be the vehicle through which the information is disseminated at schools. Regular career updates in the form of bulletins will equip Life Orientation educators with the knowledge to prepare career education lessons.

The Department of Social Development

Information on how to apply for child grants, where to do volunteer work, and how to alleviate poverty should be made available to Life Orientation educators. Poverty,

especially in rural areas, needs to be addressed with the assistance of this and other departments.

The Department of Sport and Recreation

The physical development aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum could benefit enormously from a close collaboration with this Department. The South African Sports Commission has done sterling work on compiling a facilitator's guide on indigenous games; this needs to be disseminated to Life Orientation educators [South African Sports Commission, 2003]. Initiatives around the Soccer World Cup could link with Life Orientation. The recommendations of Van Deventer [2002] on partnerships with sporting bodies need to be incorporated.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

Water-saving education lesson packs can be made available to Life Orientation educators, as well as ideas on water-saving drives that learners can launch in the community as part of their Life Orientation project work. For example, this Department also links water and health and they have sponsored, with the Water Research Commission [2004], a careers booklet: "water@work: a Career Guide".

The Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs

Information on healthy nutrition, food gardens and land rights need to be made available to Life Orientation educators. All schools should be encouraged to maintain food gardens. Well-resourced schools could share the food with under-resourced schools. All learners need to be skilled in basic small-scale food growing techniques.

The Department of Safety and Security

School visits by the educational units of the police can be linked to the Life Orientation curriculum, and anti-crime and violence prevention drives need to be run in conjunction with the Life Orientation educators' learning programmes. Self-defence lessons could be offered by this department, as well as safety tips.

Further inter-sectoral partnerships

The role of psychological services and educational support services needs to be clarified and ways identified to link with Life Orientation. An attempt should be made to

ascertain how psychological services could assist Life Orientation. For example, school psychologists could train peer counsellors, run specific sessions with learners, and assist in co-ordinating some of the Life Orientation-related programmes. However, all school psychologists who deal with Life Orientation-related matters should become thoroughly acquainted with the Life Orientation curriculum. Life Orientation educators need to be familiar with day-to-day counselling techniques as well as referral procedures; school psychologists can assist with their training.

The reciprocal benefit of a close collaboration between the National Youth Commissions' National Youth Policy [1997] and Life Orientation is apparent, with related common characteristics, aims and outcomes. Such a cross-sectoral network will promote the ideals of both Life Orientation and the National Youth Policy.

7.4.3 Partnerships with local and international organisations

The useful and essential contributions the United Nations' education and health programmes make are cardinal to learners' well-being. However, these programmes need to be strongly linked with the Life Orientation curriculum. Consultations and communication with programme developers are essential. For example, it would be beneficial and have a possible long-term impact, if the United Nations' education programmes can fund Life Orientation as a learning area, instead of funding separate projects, some of which never reach the schools for which they are intended. A co-ordinated effort can thus ensure that Life Orientation is the learning area that takes responsibility for implementing the United Nations' programmes. Educators need to be trained and supported in order to implement the programmes, with ongoing research conducted on the efficacy of the programmes.

The many initiatives, programmes and events that are related to Life Orientation and introduced at schools, often on an ad hoc basis, need to be co-ordinated and placed within the Life Orientation curriculum. A good example is the Life Skills Training series [Medical Research Council, 2005] based on preventing smoking, which is firmly rooted in the grade 8 and 9 Life Orientation curriculum and can readily be incorporated by educators.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), community based organisations (CBOs), and faith-based organisations (FBOs) have an important role to play in supporting Life Orientation in schools. Ongoing partnerships and networks with these useful organisations should be forged. For example, there are NGOs that deal specifically with particular issues of Life Orientation, such as substance abuse. They have the necessary expertise, resources and information to greatly assist Life Orientation educators who may not necessarily be experts in all the Life Orientation fields (e.g. Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre). Physical development and movement can be enhanced by continuing to build on partnerships with sporting bodies [Van Deventer, 2002]. Other sectors of the community could also play an important role in Life Orientation. Traditional and indigenous organisations need to be included in partnerships with Life Orientation.

7.4.4 Funding for Life Orientation

See section 7.4.3 for United Nations' funding for Life Orientation. Equal access to funds for Life Orientation educators at schools should be normative. This means that Life Orientation educators should be able to photocopy worksheets for Life Orientation in the same way that mathematics educators have these privileges.

Taking into consideration the lack of funding for education and priorities such as physical school buildings, water and electricity [Department of Education, 2001f], schools need to take the initiative and engage in fund-raising for Life Orientation in particular, in close partnership with the Department of Education. Funding for Life Orientation needs to be more prominent as recent drives have focused solely on mathematics and science funding.

Corporate social responsibility programmes, which are outreach programmes funded by businesses, need to contribute to Life Orientation in addition to the current funding they make available for literacy, mathematics and science. Life Orientation needs to be marketed to corporate programmes in order for them to understand the cardinal importance of this learning area.

7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.5.1 Limitations of the study

For an extensive discussion on the limitations of the study, see chapter 4. The study's constraints and limitations centre on interpretive measures, parameters, interpretation of educators' responses, sampling and sample size. In addition, the scope of the study was limited to Life Orientation in the Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase only. The phenomenon of the South African curriculum in transition, although a core facet of the study, added further challenges to this study. During 2002 - 2004, in some instances three different curricula for Life Orientation were used, namely the core interim curriculum, C2005 and the RNCS, thus making it difficult to pinpoint findings pertinent to Life Orientation [Department of Education 1995b; Department of Education 1997a; Department of Education 2002b].

Sampling and sample size limited the study. The fact that only two provinces, with only a rural area in the one and an urban area in the other were used, limits the extrapolations that can be made to the rest of South Africa's provinces to some extent.

The extensive indications of the rhetoric-practice interface incongruities may indicate that respondents wanted to please, to the detriment of gathering factual information. This may have skewed the results to portray a more positive picture of the status and practice of Life Orientation than is the case in reality.

Educators and schools did not have a consensual understanding or definition of what Life Orientation was or entailed; hence Life Orientation meant different things to different respondents. It was thus difficult to ascertain time allocation for Life Orientation and integration of Life Orientation in other learning areas, as Life Orientation was not clearly defined and identified.

As Life Orientation is a new learning area, there was a dearth of research in Life Orientation with which to compare the study. At best, the components of Life Orientation were reviewed, which is not as optimal as holistic studies of Life Orientation would have been.

7.5.2 Recommendations for further research

In view of the fact that Life Orientation is a new learning area, there are manifold opportunities for further research. In addition, the urgent needs of learners require in-depth further research in a Life Orientation context to ensure this learning area responds to these requirements. Additional research will add useful information to the Life Orientation knowledge base. The following are suggested areas for further research:

- A similar research project to the study, conducted in all South African provinces.
- A comparative study of Life Orientation as taught by *any educators* versus Life Orientation taught specifically by *Life Orientation educators.*
- A baseline test of learners' Life Orientation knowledge in all grades, to enable a longitudinal study to track learners' development in Life Orientation.
- In-depth, extensive analytical classroom observations, of the teaching and learning of all Life Orientation learning outcomes, to ascertain what best practices are.
- The extent to which learners' psycho-social and health needs are met by Life Orientation.
- The role of Life Orientation in promoting gender equity.
- Strategies within Life Orientation to promote environmental health and justice.
- Approaches to promote indigenous knowledge within Life Orientation.
- The role of indigenous health and well-being in Life Orientation.
- The impact of educators' values on Life Orientation education.
- How physical education can be further integrated in the Life Orientation curriculum.
- How school timetables can be structured to best serve Life Orientation without neglecting any other learning areas.
- Continued research on the efficacy of school-based HIV and AIDS programmes that are located within the Life Orientation curriculum.
- The impact of educators' abilities to fashion their own resources and improvise, where needed, on the delivery of the Life Orientation curriculum.
- A longitudinal investigation of higher education institutions' training of student-teachers in Life Orientation, combined with tracking past student-teachers over at

least three years, to ascertain how they implement the Life Orientation curriculum in the classroom.

- The impact of the lack of Life Orientation training courses at some higher education institutions, and the effect this may have on the development of Life Orientation.

- The impact the perceived low status of Life Orientation has on Life Orientation educators' self-concept formation, and the ensuing effect this may have on their teaching.

- Student-teachers' experiences of Life Orientation during teaching practice as a deciding factor in determining whether they will teach Life Orientation, as unsatisfactory experiences may deter them from this learning area.

- An investigation of the qualifications and experience of authors of Life Orientation learning support materials to determine whether suitable authors are materials developers.

- The quality and use of educators' guides for Life Orientation textbooks.

- The potential and role of multimedia in Life Orientation education.

- The role that psychological services can play in Life Orientation.

- Research into ways to encourage educators to utilise methods conducive to Life Orientation teaching and learning, such as experiential learning, group work, facilitation and the creative use of other participatory teaching methods, within the context of large classes.

- The impact of the introduction of Life Orientation as a fundamental and examinable subject in the Further Education and Training band on the status of Life Orientation.

- Based on the study, methods to enhance the implementation of the FET Life Orientation curriculum, so that this transition will not face avoidable challenges.

- How educators understand integration in Life Orientation, both within and across learning areas.

- How Life Orientation could best accommodate the various initiatives, programmes and 'add-ons' relevant to Life Orientation, that are introduced at schools.

- An investigation of optimal assessment methods in Life Orientation to promote the achievement of Life Orientation learning outcomes.

7.6 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study has revealed that, although Life Orientation has the potential to make an enormous beneficial difference to the lives of learners in South Africa, optimal Life Orientation implementation is not yet evident. Hence, the status and practice of Life Orientation requires urgent improvement.

Life Orientation is a new learning area within a restorative educational transitional phase, which still requires educators' clear definition, interpretation and comprehension. Life Orientation is fragmented because its constituents are not yet linked sufficiently to form the learning area as a whole. Ramifications from the past's education era impinge of some educators' perceptions of Life Orientation, thus hindering the progress of this learning area.

Issues such as a lack of specifically trained Life Orientation educators, the arbitrary allocation of Life Orientation responsibilities to non-Life Orientation educators, the lack of teaching time allocation for Life Orientation, as well as the newness of assessment for Life Orientation, contribute to a learning area grappling to establish itself. The value-laden content affects some educators who opt to neglect aspects of the curriculum. The necessity for educators to base their Life Orientation teaching on the Constitution of South Africa, has not yet been grasped by all Life Orientation educators.

The urgent need for Life Orientation is well established. In particular, human rights and diversity, gender and constitutional principles, life skills development, youth risk behaviour, health problems such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic, substance and sexual abuse, a lack of exercise and physical fitness, and career education needs, are addressed through the Life Orientation curriculum. International and local schemes to address these issues need to contextualise their programmes within Life Orientation to ensure an integrated approach.

In the event of Life Orientation continuing without the necessary interventions, such as the recommendations given in this chapter, this learning area may not achieve its aims and its status could decline further. In addition, it may have a minimal impact on the lives of South African learners. However, with attention to sustained training and

support of educators and a general strengthening of the status of Life Orientation, manifested as adequate time allocation, equitable funding and the forming of a professional body of Life Orientation educators, together with other recommendations made in the study, this learning area can conceivably achieve its outcomes.

Life Orientation is uniquely positioned to ameliorate the problems learners encounter and to equip them to deal with the challenges of growing up in the 21st Century. The holistic education of the learner, from a sociological, psychological and physical perspective, contributes to the well-being of a knowledgeable and skilled citizenry, with the necessary values and attitudes to be life-long learners who successfully interact with the world in which they live. Fortified with the knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible decisions, confident, motivated and emotionally literate, with a strong ethic of volunteerism, acting as human rights practitioners and contributing to the economy of South Africa with pride and dedication, the youth of South Africa can become leaders of our African Renaissance. High-quality Life Orientation education can play a paramount role in making this vision a reality.

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APPENDIX A

LEARNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

You do not have to put your name on this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers, no good or bad answers. You do not have to talk about your answers to anybody. Please make sure you complete all 14 questions. Please mark your choices with a tick √ or write a number in the box when asked.

1. YOUR GRADE: 7 or 8 or 9

2. How many learners are in your life orientation class? ☐

3. WHAT IS *LIFE ORIENTATION* CALLED AT YOUR SCHOOL?

3.1	Life orientation	
3.2	Guidance	
3.3	Counselling	
3.4	Life skills	
3.5	Physical education	
3.6	Religion education	
3.7	Health education	
3.8	Career	
3.9	Other:	

4. HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND LIFE ORIENTATION CLASS?

4.1	Every day	
4.2	Twice a week	
4.3	Once a week	
4.4	Once every two weeks	
4.5	Once a month	
4.6	Once a term	
4.7	Never	
4.8	Other:	

5. WHAT IS THE **MOST** IMPORTANT LEARNING AREA FOR YOU?

5.1	Arts & culture	
5.2	Economic and management sciences	
5.3	Languages	
5.4	Life orientation	
5.5	Mathematics	
5.6	Natural sciences	
5.7	Social sciences	
5.8	Technology	

6. WHAT IS THE **LEAST** IMPORTANT LEARNING AREA FOR YOU?

6.1	Arts & culture	
6.2	Economic and management sciences	
6.3	Languages	
6.4	Life orientation	
6.5	Mathematics	
6.6	Natural sciences	
6.7	Social sciences	
6.8	Technology	

7.1 WHICH OF THE THEMES BELOW DO YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT?
Please tick the **one** theme that is **most important** to you.

7.1.1	Career education	
7.1.2	Environmental education	
7.1.3	Health education	
7.1.4	Human rights	
7.1.5	Life skills	
7.1.6	Physical education	
7.1.7	Relationships	
7.1.8	Religion education	
7.1.9	Sexuality education	

7.2 LIFE ORIENTATION CLASS DURATION:

7.2.1	Life orientation classes are too short	
7.2.2	More time is needed for life orientation classes	
7.2.3	Life orientation classes are too long	
7.2.4	Less time is needed for life orientation classes	
7.2.5	The time for life orientation classes is just right.	

8. CHOOSE 3 TOPICS THAT YOU THINK ARE USEFUL IN LIFE ORIENTATION:

8.1	Being accepted and liked by others		8.14	Knowing about HIV/AIDS	
8.2	Believing in myself		8.15	Knowing my rights and responsibilities	
8.3	Choosing a career		8.16	Learning about other religions	
8.4	Communication		8.17	Looking after my environment	
8.5	Conflict management		8.18	Making friends	
8.6	Coping with change		8.19	Managing my time	
8.7	Coping with depression		8.20	Opposing racism	
8.8	Coping with my problems		8.21	Physical fitness	
8.9	Decision making		8.22	Stop drinking alcohol	
8.10	Feeling confident		8.23	Stop drug use	
8.11	Getting a date		8.24	Stop smoking	
8.12	Goal setting		8.25	Stress management	
8.13	Healthy lifestyle		8.26	Study skills	
			8.27	Understanding feelings	
			8.28	Understanding sexuality	

Any other topics? Please add:

9. HOW DO YOU USUALLY FEEL ABOUT THE LIFE ORIENTATION CLASS?

9.1	Useful		9.8	Meaningless	
9.2	Interesting		9.9	Tiresome	
9.3	Enjoyable		9.10	Too much work	
9.4	Fun		9.11	Hate it	
9.5	Love it		9.12	Useless	
9.6	Like it		9.13	Boring	
9.7	Important		9.14	Other:	

10. Do you have Life Orientation textbooks?	YES	NO
10.1 Are you satisfied with these books?	YES	NO

11. Do you think life orientation should be taught in school hours? YES NO

12. Do you think life orientation should be taught after school hours? YES NO

13. Do you think life orientation should be assessed? YES NO

14. WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD TEACH YOU LIFE ORIENTATION?

14.1	Your present life orientation teacher	
14.2	Any teacher at your school	
14.3	Your school principal	
14.4	A parent	
14.5	Somebody who is not a teacher at the school	
14.6	A counsellor	
14.7	A prefect or youth leader	
14.8	A learner in your class	
14.9	Other:	

15. Please write down whatever else you want to say about life orientation:

APPENDIX B

LIFE ORIENTATION: SCHOOLS QUESTIONNAIRE
INTERMEDIATE PHASE.

The information in this questionnaire is confidential and for research purposes only. Your name as well as the schools name will not appear in any publications or research reports. However, this information is necessary for administrative purposes.

DATE...................................

STUDENT NAME & SURNAME...

STUDENT NUMBER...

NAME OF SCHOOL WHERE YOU COMPLETED YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE

....

*Your task is to explore the state of **Life Orientation** in the **intermediate phase** at the above school. You can tick* [√] *as many boxes as necessary for the questions. Where a YES or NO answer is required, please tick only one box. Where **other** is applicable, write a few words in the space provided to explain. Think about how you would get the required information and plan accordingly. Please read through the questionnaire **before** consulting teachers and learners.*

1. **LIFE ORIENTATION**

1.1   What is the school's **understanding** of life orientation? How does the teacher describe life orientation?

....

....

1.2 Is Life Orientation taught at the school?

Yes	No

1.3 Is Life Orientation referred to as any of the following instead of as *Life Orientation* at the school?

1.3.1	Civics	
1.3.2	Counselling	
1.3.3	Guidance	
1.3.4	Health education	
1.3.5	Life skills	
1.3.6	Peace education	
1.3.7	Physical education	
1.3.8	Religious Education	
1.3.9	Social skills	
1.3.10	Other:	

1.4 Teaching Life Orientation
Is there a specialist intermediate phase teacher for Life Orientation at the school? *That is, a teacher who teachers mostly Life Orientation and has been specifically trained to teach Life Orientation.*

Yes	No

1.5 Who teaches Life Orientation in the intermediate phase at the school?

1.5.1	Principal	
1.5.2	Head of department	
1.5.3	All teachers	
1.5.4	The Life Orientation teacher	
1.5.5	Guidance teacher	
1.5.6	Counsellor	
1.5.7	Other:	

2   TEACHING TIME

2.1. Is Life Orientation offered in grades 4, 5 and 6?

GRADE	Yes	No
4		
5		
6		

2. 2 How often is Life Orientation taught in the intermediate phase?

	Occurrence	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
2.2.1	Every day			
2.2.2	4 days per week			
2.2.3	3 days per week			
2.2.4	2 days per week			
2.2.5	Once per week			
2.2.6	Never			
2.2.7	Other			

2.3 How much teaching time is allocated to Life Orientation in the intermediate phase on the time-table? Base your answer on total minutes per week. You have to determine the number of periods as well as the duration of the periods allocated to life orientation.

	GRADE	Total minutes per week
2.3.1	4	
2.3.2	5	
2.3.3	6	

2.4 Is the time allocated for teaching Life Orientation in the intermediate phase used for that purpose?

2.4.1	All the time is used for Life Orientation	
2.4.2	Only some of the time is used Life Orientation	
2.4.3	None of the time is used for Life Orientation	

3. INTEGRATION

3.1 Is Life Orientation integrated with other learning areas?
I.e. is Life Orientation combined with other learning areas when taught?

Yes	No

3.2 Is Life Orientation integrated?

3.2.1	All the time	
3.2.2	Some of the time	
3.2.3	Never	

3.3 Is Life Orientation integrated with:

3.3.1	Languages	
3.3.2	Arts & culture	
3.3.3	Economic and management sciences	
3.3.4	Human & social sciences	
3.3.5	Natural sciences	
3.3.6	Technology	
3.3.7	Mathematics	

If you have ticked more than one learning area, please show which learning area Life Orientation is integrated with most, by putting the number 1 in the box next to that learning area.

3.4 Is the integration of Life Orientation:

3.4.1	Complete, i.e. Life Orientation is fully integrated	
3.4.2	Token, i.e. Life Orientation content is only mentioned briefly	
3.4.3	It depends on the topic being dealt with	
3.4.4	Life Orientation is the main focus, with the other learning area content only briefly referred to.	

3.5 Please explain what the teacher understands by integration:

....

....

4. THE LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHER

*Determine at least one intermediate phase **teacher's attitude & opinion** regarding **Life Orientation**. Please make sure your conversation is with a teacher who has not yet been involved in this questionnaire by one of your fellow students.*

4.1 The intermediate phase teacher expressed these opinions about Life Orientation. Life Orientation is:

Essential ☐   Of average importance ☐   Unnecessary ☐

4.2 The intermediate phase teacher expressed these opinions: Life Orientation should be...

4.2.1	Taught by all teachers at the school	
4.2.2	Taught by the Life Orientation teacher only	
4.2.3	Only be an extra-mural activity	
4.2.4	Handled by NGO's and other experts	
4.2.5	Handled by NGO's and other experts for certain aspects only [give examples]:	
4.2.6	The task of parents at home	
4.2.7	The responsibility of school management teams	
4.2.8	The responsibility of the school clinics and other support structures	
4.2.9	Taken out of the curriculum	
4.2.10	Other	

4.3   The intermediate phase teacher expressed these views about Life Orientation:

4.3.1	It is the most important learning area	
4.3.2	It has a valuable contribution to make	
4.3.3	It is of value, but other learning areas should be prioritised	
4.3.4	It is meaningless	
4.3.5	It is a waste of time	
4.3.6	Do not understand what the learning area is about	
4.3.7	Is not academic enough and does not belong in a school	
4.3.8	Other:	

4.4 The intermediate phase teacher experienced **problems** with Life Orientation:

4.4.1	No problems	
4.4.2	Lack of teaching time	
4.4.3	Lack of support from colleagues	
4.4.4	Lack of support from school management	
4.4.5	Lack of support from WCED	
4.4.6	Difficult to understand new curriculum	
4.4.7	Difficult to implement new curriculum	
4.4.8	Assessment difficulties	
4.4.9	Lack of resource and support material	
4.4.10	Learners are not interested	
4.4.11	Learners are not co-operative	
4.4.12	Classes too large	
4.4.13	Lack of discipline in the classes	
4.4.14	Lack of equipment	
4.4.15	School waits until there is a problem and then expects Life Orientation to act	
4.4.16	Spend the time counselling instead of teaching Life Orientation	
4.4.17	Other:	

4.5 The intermediate phase teacher experienced **successes** in teaching Life Orientation:

4.5.1	Learners responded well	
4.5.2	Learners were interested	
4.5.3	Sexuality education helped the learners	
4.5.4	HIV/AIDS emphasis necessary & useful	
4.5.5	Assisted substance abuse prevention	
4.5.6	The outcomes were achieved	
4.5.7	Learners became involved in developing healthy lifestyle plans.	
4.5.8	Learners became competent in resolving conflicts.	
4.5.9	Learners became more confident	
4.5.10	Learners became more skilled in relationship formation	
4.5.11	Learners became more respectful towards a range of cultures, beliefs and social groups.	
4.5.12	Learners became aware of the importance of career knowledge	
4.5.13	Other:	

4.6 Which methods does the intermediate phase teacher generally use for Life Orientation?

4.6.1	Facilitation	
4.6.2	Group work	
4.6.3	Creative activities	
4.6.4	Participatory activities	
4.6.5	Project work	
4.6.6	Discussion	
4.6.7	Textbook oriented	
4.6.8	Talk and chalk/ Lecture style/ Teacher talks and learners listen	
4.6.9	Other:	

4.7 How does the intermediate phase teacher feel about C2005 in general?

4.7.1	Exciting innovation with a great deal of potential	
4.7.2	It works well	
4.7.3	It's a lot of nonsense	
4.7.4	It will never work/ It cannot be done	
4.7.5	Refuses to implement C2005	
4.7.6	Other	

5. TIME AND THE TEACHER

Does the teacher feel that:

5.1	There is sufficient time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
5.2	There is not enough time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
5.3	There is too much time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
5.4	There is not enough time to prepare for the life orientation lessons	
5.5	There is ample time to prepare for life orientation lessons	
5.6	Life orientation requires long sessions that cannot be accommodated by the time-table.	
5.7	It will not be fair to add to the learners workload by increasing the life orientation time allocation.	
5.8	Other comments about time allocation:	

6. RESOURCE BOOKS

		Yes	No
6.1	Does the teacher have Life Orientation books?		
6.2	Is the teacher satisfied with the resource books		
6.3	Do the learners have Life Orientation books?		
6.4	Are learners satisfied with their resource books?		

7. LEARNERS PERCEPTIONS

7.1 How do **learners** feel about Life Orientation? *Speak to at least 5 intermediate phase learners.*

		learner 1	learner 2	leaner 3	learner 4	learner 5
7.1.1	Useful					
7.1.2	Interesting					
7.1.3	Enjoyable					
7.1.4	Fun					
7.1.5	Love it					
7.1.6	Like it					
7.1.7	Boring					
7.1.8	Meaningless					
7.1.9	Tiresome					
7.1.10	Too much work					
7.1.11	Hate it					
7.1.12	Useless					
7.1.12	Not enough time is spent on it					
7.1.12	Too much time is spent on it					
7.1.13	Other					

8. STATUS AND IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED TO LIFE ORIENTATION

Rank the learning areas according to the status / importance of the learning area at the school. Write the numbers in the blocks. Number **1** will be **most important**, number 2 second most important and so on, with number **8 least important**.

8.1	Arts and culture	
8.2	Economic and management sciences	
8.3	Human & social sciences	
8.4	Languages	
8.5	Life Orientation	
8.6	Mathematics	
8.7	Natural sciences	
8.8	Technology	

Please explain how you got this information.

....

....

....

APPENDIX C

LIFE ORIENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE: TEACHING PRACTICE [SENIOR PHASE].

The information in this questionnaire is confidential and for research assignment purposes. Your name as well as the schools name will not appear in any publications or research reports. However, this information is necessary for administrative purposes.

DATE:_____
STUDENT NAME:_____
STUDENT NUMBER:_____
NAME OF SCHOOL WHERE YOU COMPLETED YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE:
_____

*Your task is to explore the state of **Life Orientation** in the **senior phase** [grades 7, 8 & 9] at the above school. Please tick √ the applicable boxes. You may make as many ticks as needed. Where a YES or No answer is required, please tick only one box. Where **other** is applicable, write a few words in the space provided to explain. Consider how you would get the necessary information and plan accordingly. Please read through the questionnaire **before** consulting teachers.*

1. LIFE ORIENTATION

1.1   What is the school's **understanding** of life orientation? [For example, does the school view life orientation as counselling, or guidance, or physical education, or the occasional input on HIV/AIDS, or a learning area in its own right?] Try to get a description of the schools understanding- this will be evident from your discussions with both the principal and teacher, as well as your observations.

....

....

....

1.2 Is life orientation taught at the school? | YES | NO |

1.3 Is Life Orientation referred to as any of the following instead of as *Life Orientation* at the school?

1.3.1	Civics	
1.3.2	Counselling	
1.3.3	Guidance	
1.3.4	Health education	
1.3.5	Life skills	
1.3.6	Peace education	
1.3.7	Physical education	
1.3.8	Religious Education	
1.3.9	Social skills	
1.3.10	Other:	

1

1.4 Does Life Orientation include?

1.4.1	AIDS/HIV Education	
1.4.2	Careers	
1.4.3	Environmental education	
1.4.4	Health education	
1.4.5	Lifeskills	
1.4.6	Physical education / human movement /sport	
1.4.7	Religion education	
1.4.8	Sexuality Education	
1.4.9	Other:	

1.5 Is any one of the above areas focussed on more than the others? I.e. is more time spent on a particular aspect?
If yes, which aspect(s)? ....

YES	NO

1.6 Is the same teacher responsible for all the above aspects?

YES	NO

1.7 Which of the above aspects are taught by different teachers?

....

2   TEACHING INCIDENCE

2.1. Is Life Orientation offered in grades 7, 8 and 9?

GRADE	Yes	No
7		
8		
9		

2.2   How often is Life Orientation taught in the senior phase per class?

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Every day			
Twice a week			
Once a week			
Once every two weeks			
Once a month			
Once a term			
Never			
Other:			

2.3 How much teaching time is allocated to Life Orientation in the senior phase on the time-table? Base your answer on **total minutes per week**.

TERM 1

GRADE	Total Minutes per week	Total number of weeks
7		
8		
9		

TERM 2

GRADE	Total Minutes per week	Total number of weeks
7		
8		
9		

TERM 3

GRADE	Total Minutes per week	Total number of weeks
7		
8		
9		

TERM 4

GRADE	Total Minutes per week	Total number of weeks
7		
8		
9		

2.4 Is the time *allocated* for teaching Life Orientation in the senior phase used for that purpose?

2.4.1	All the time allocated is used for Life Orientation	
2.4.2	Only some of the time allocated is used Life Orientation	
2.4.3	None of the time allocated is used for Life Orientation	

3. THE LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHER

3.1 Is there a specialist senior phase teacher for life orientation at the school? *That is, a teacher who teaches mostly Life Orientation and has been specifically trained to teach Life Orientation.*

Yes	No

3.2 Who teaches life orientation at the school?

3.2.1	Principal	
3.2.2	Head of department	
3.2.3	All teachers	
3.2.4	The life orientation teacher	
3.2.5	Guidance teacher	
3.2.6	Counsellor	
3.2.7	Other:	

3.3 How long has the teacher been teaching life orientation? Number of years:

3.4 Why is the teacher teaching life orientation?

3.4.1	The teacher is qualified to do so	
3.4.2	The teacher is interested in this learning area	
3.4.3	The teacher is passionate about the subject	
3.4.4	The teacher has free periods to fill up	
3.4.5	The teacher volunteered because nobody else was available	
3.4.6	Other:	

4. TEACHERS ATTRIBUTION OF SIGNIFICANCE

*Investigate the life orientation teacher's **attitudes, opinions & views of Life Orientation**. If the school does not have a Life Orientation teacher, choose the person who is responsible for Life Orientation related issues and indicate as such in this space:*

....

4.1 The senior phase teacher expressed these opinions about Life Orientation. Life Orientation is:

Essential ☐   Of average importance ☐   Unnecessary ☐

4.2 The senior phase teacher expressed these opinions about Life Orientation. Life Orientation should be...

4.2.1	Taught by all teachers at the school	
4.2.2	Taught by the Life Orientation teacher only	
4.2.3	Only be an extra-mural activity	
4.2.4	Handled by NGO's and other experts	
4.2.5	Handled by NGO's and other experts for specific content [specify]	
4.2.6	The task of parents at home	
4.2.7	The responsibility of school management teams	
4.2.8	The responsibility of the school clinics and other support structures	
4.2.9	Taken out of the curriculum	
4.2.10	Other	

4.3 The senior phase teacher expressed these views about Life Orientation:

4.3.1	It is the most important learning area	
4.3.2	It has a valuable contribution to make	
4.3.3	It has value but other learning areas should take priority	
4.3.4	It is meaningless	
4.3.5	It is a waste of time	
4.3.6	Does not understand what the learning area is all about	
4.3.7	Is not academic enough and does not belong in a school	
4.3.8	Other:	

4.4 The senior phase teacher experienced **problems** with Life Orientation.

4.4.1	No problems	
4.4.2	Lack of teaching time	
4.4.3	Lack of support from colleagues	
4.4.4	Lack of support from school management	
4.4.5	Lack of support from WCED	
4.4.6	Difficult to understand new curriculum	
4.4.7	Difficult to implement new curriculum	
4.4.8	Assessment difficulties	
4.4.9	Lack of resource and support material	
4.4.10	Learners are not interested	
4.4.11	Learners are not co-operative	
4.4.12	Classes too large	
4.4.13	Lack of discipline in the classes	
4.4.14	School waits until there is a problem and then expects Life Orientation to act	
4.4.15	Spend the time counselling instead of teaching Life Orientation	
4.4.16	Confusion between Guidance and Life Orientation	
4.4.17	Other:	

4.5 The senior phase teacher experienced **successes** in teaching Life Orientation.

4.5.1	Learners responded well	
4.5.2	Learners were interested	
4.5.3	Sexuality education helped the learners	
4.5.4	HIV/AIDS emphasis necessary & useful	
4.5.5	Assisted substance abuse prevention	
4.5.6	The outcomes were achieved	
4.5.7	Learners became involved in developing healthy lifestyle plans.	
4.5.8	Learners became competent in resolving conflicts.	
4.5.9	Learners became more confident.	
4.5.10	Learners became more skilled in relationship formation	
4.5.11	Learners became more respectful towards a range of cultures, beliefs and social groups.	
4.5.12	Learners became aware of the importance of career knowledge	
4.5.13	Other:	

4.6   Which methods does the senior phase teacher generally use for Life Orientation?

4.6.1	Facilitation	
4.6.2	Group work	
4.6.3	Creative activities	
4.6.4	Participatory activities	
4.6.5	Project work	
4.6.6	Discussion	
4.6.7	Textbook oriented	
4.6.8	Talk and chalk/ Lecture style/ Teacher talks and learners listen	
4.6.9	Role play	
4.6.10	Other:	

4.7 How does the senior phase teacher feel about C2005 & OBE in general?

4.7.1	Exciting innovation with a great deal of potential	
4.7.2	It works well	
4.7.3	It's a lot of nonsense	
4.7.4	It will never work/ It cannot be done	
4.7.5	Refuses to implement C2005	
4.7.6	Other	

5. RESOURCE BOOKS

		Yes	No
5.1	Does the teacher have Life Orientation books?		
5.2	Is the teacher satisfied with the resource books?		

6. TIME AND THE TEACHER
Does the teacher feel that:

6.1	There is sufficient time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
6.2	There is not enough time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
6.3	There is too much time allocated to life orientation on the time-table	
6.4	There is not enough time to prepare for the life orientation lessons	
6.5	There is ample time to prepare for life orientation lessons	
6.6	Life orientation requires long sessions that cannot be accommodated by the time-table.	
6.7	It will not be fair to add to the learners workload by increasing the life orientation time allocation.	
6.8	Other comments about time allocation:	

7. STATUS AND IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED TO LIFE ORIENTATION

Rank the learning areas according to the status / importance of the learning area at the school. Write the numbers in the blocks. Number 1 will be **most important,** number 2 second most important and so on, with **number 8 least important.**

7.1	Arts and culture	
7.2	Economic and management sciences	
7.3	Human & social sciences	
7.4	Languages	
7.5	Life Orientation	
7.6	Mathematics	
7.7	Natural sciences	
7.8	Technology	

Please explain how you obtained this information.

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APPENDIX D

Examples of a selection of reflection worksheets for student-teachers.

REFLECTION LIFE ORIENTATION TP 1

Name & surname:

Name of school where you did your TP:

Grades you mostly taught:

1.   What was Life Orientation called at your school?

2.   Who taught Life Orientation?

3.   How often did you get to teach a lifeskills/guidance/Life Orientation lesson?

4.   What would you say the status of Life Orientation/lifeskills/guidance was at the school?

5.   What were your main frustrations, if any, with teaching Life Orientation/ guidance/ lifeskills?

6.   How did learners generally feel about Life Orientation?

7.   How did the lifeskills/guidance/Life Orientation teachers feel about their learning area?

8.   In what sense did counselling happen at the school? Please list any other support services ofered.

9.   Which methods did you mainly use for Life Orientation?

10.   How did your teaching practice experiences of Life Orientation compare with your own experiences of guidance when you were at school?

11.   In what way, if at all, did your observations differ from the way teachers and learners responded to the interviews and questionnaires?

12.   What were your major successes in Life Orientation during your teaching practice?

[Please use back of page for further comments and observations on Life Orientation]

Name:

TP 2 school:

1. Reflect briefly on your <u>observations</u> of how Life Orientation was taught at your school:

2. Were there any differences between your TP 1 and TP 2 schools regarding how Life Orientation was offered? Explain.

3. What suggestions can you make, as a response to your TP 2, for successful implementation of Life Orientation in schools?

4. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least and ten the most, how do you think Life Orientation was generally rated in importance at your TP 2 school? Circle your choice.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

5. What were your successes and challenges in teaching Life Orientation this time round in TP2?

6. Briefly explain the relationship of physical education, health education, life skills, religion education and citizenship education [as well as career education, if you taught senior phase] within Life Orientation.

Any other comments about Life Orientation? Please write on back of page.

Reflection TP 1 Life Orientation

Name:

Name of school:

Grades you mostly taught:

1. What was Life Orientation- [or similar] - called at your school?

2. Who taught Life Orientation?

3. a) How often did *you* teach a Life Orientation lesson?
b) How often was Life Orientation taught?

4. What was the status of Life Orientation at the school?

5. What were your main frustrations or challenges, if any, with teaching Life Orientation?

6. How did learners generally feel about Life Orientation/ react in the Life Orientation class?

7. How did the Life Orientation teachers feel about their learning area?

I feel…

I think…

I am…

8. In what sense did counselling happen at the school? Any other support services offered?

9. Suggest ways to strengthen Life Orientation in schools.

10. What was the role and impact of HIV and AIDS / life skills education with regard to Life Orientation?

11. What were your major successes in Life Orientation during your teaching practice?

12. What do you think the role of Life Orientation should/can be?
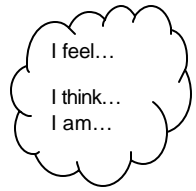
13. Any other comments on your observations of Life Orientation in practice?

Reflection TP 2 Life Orientation

Name:

Name of school:

Grades you taught:

1. What was Life Orientation called at your school?

2. Who taught Life Orientation?

3. a) How often did *you* teach a Life Orientation lesson?

b) How often was Life Orientation tau ght, i.e. minutes and periods per week?

4. Which focus areas did you mainly teach?

5. List the lesson topics you taught for Life Orientation during your TP

6. What was the status of Life Orientation at your TP school?

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least and ten the most, how do you think Life Orientation was generally rated in importance at your TP school? Circle your choice.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

7. What were your main frustrations, problems and/ or challenges, ifany, with teaching Life Orientation?

8. What were your major successes in Life Orientation during your teaching practice?

9. How did learners generally feel about Life Orientation/ react in the Life Orientation class?

10. How did the Life Orientation educators feel about teaching Life Orientation?

11. In what sense did counselling happen at the school? Please list a ny other support services offered.

12. Which of these Life Orientation topics were focussed on the most? Rank the topics in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 8 least important. If the topic was not taught, put a 0 next to topic.

HIV and AIDS

Life skills [list which life skills]:

Sexuality education

Substance abuse

Careers

Physical education

Health education

Citizenship education

Any other topics:

Which of the above topics did you focus on? List in order of time you spent on topics.

13. Any other comments on your observations of Life Orientation as taught at your TP school ?
[Please also use back of page]