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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIFE ORIENTATION
CURRICULUM IN SELECTED FORT BEAUFORT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS**

By

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF EDUCATION

In the Faculty of Education

At the

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

PROMOTER: MR. MIKE ADENDORFF

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that *An investigation into the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in selected Fort Beaufort District High Schools* is my 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.

Toyin Mary Adewumi

January, 2012

Signed:

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to God Almighty, the giver of every good and perfect gift. I would not have completed this study but for His wisdom and strength. Lord I am indebted to you and all I want to say is **Thank You** for seeing me through.

I also want to thank the Faculty of Education in particular the School of Postgraduate Studies at the University of Fort Hare, for offering me the opportunity to pursue my study. My supervisor, Mr. Mike Adendorff, for his patience and guidance. Thank you very much.

My sincere thanks to the Fort Beaufort Education District in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa that authorised the study and to all the principals, teachers and learners of the participating schools who shared information with me to make this study possible.

My colleagues, Faith, Jenny, Joyce, Sevious, Simon, Xolisa, Demias, Elizabeth, Bhebhe, Benedicta, and Mrs Obi, thank you all for your support. Equally, my appreciation goes to Mr. Oshin Ifedayo for his support, may God bless you sir. Also to Pastor Tella and all the brethren of The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Rehoboth Parish, God bless you all. To Dr. & Mrs. Aina, Amanda, Olawunmi, Idowu, Tolulope, and Doyin, I love you all; you are all special. To my family members in Nigeria and the United State of America, thanks for always being there for me.

Last but definitely not the least, I am very thankful to my husband (**OLOWO ORI MI**), Mr. Lawrence Adegoke Adewumi, for believing in me and giving me encouragement when I needed it most. Without your support and love I would never have succeeded. Thank you so much my Love!

ABSTRACT

The challenges of implementing the curriculum for the Life Orientation learning areas in the National Curriculum Statement have been a matter of concern for South African schools. This study sheds light on the implementation of the LO curriculum in selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District, in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

The study adopted a qualitative approach and used face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observation and document analysis to collect the data. The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort District. Six high schools from the six clusters in the Fort Beaufort District were purposively selected to form the focus of the study. The participants were six principals, six LO teachers and thirty-six learners.

The study revealed that lack of adequate teaching and learning materials in schools affected the implementation of the curriculum. Inadequacy of teaching and learning materials affected both the teachers and learners as they sought to make up for the shortages of teaching and learning materials by sourcing for local materials like news paper and magazine. In some of the schools, teachers made photocopies of textbooks for learners which could be time consuming and added to the teachers' workload. The study found that some of the teachers were frustrated because of the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials in LO.

The results also revealed that the majority of the teachers had the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE LO) qualification and/or an undergraduate qualification in Psychology, which are basic requirement for teaching LO, while the others had general teaching qualifications in other subjects.

It was found that many learners were positive about LO, but it could not be proven that learners meant all their positive responses as it seemed that learners' responses were too good to be true. However, the results showed that learners had at least

been taught and were aware of the consequences of the social problems like teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS that affect them.

Some of the challenges that teachers encountered in the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum were also highlighted in this study. These include; lack of adequate training which some of the teachers complained did not allow them to handle some topics like career choice and religious education as they should. Some of the teachers also stated that their culture and belief did not permit them to share some LO topics with their learners. There was also the challenge of learners turning against things taught in LO class.

The study found that the support and monitoring put in place for LO teachers are in the form of documents such as subject guides, textbooks and sometimes funds to take learners out on outdoor activities, extra teachers to lessen the teachers' burdens, advice, workshops and training. There is course moderation where teachers' and learners' files are marked. In some of the schools where monitoring is carried out, it starts with the Heads of Departments (HODs) and ends with the principal. Many of the schools do not monitor the teaching of LO because of the trust the principals have in the teachers and challenge of school size. Class visits is prohibited by South African Democratic Teachers' Union. The subject is not being handled properly despite its importance in helping learners to be adequately guided towards positive self-concept formation, the realisation of their potential, and enabling them to protect themselves from various forms of social violence and abuse, and this in turn would make the society safer.

ACRONYMS

ABC	Achievement – Based Curriculum
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
ACRWC	Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
B.ED	Bachelor of Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DOE	District Education Officers
GET	General Education and Training Band
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome
HOD	Head of Department
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
INSET	In-service Training
LO	Life Orientation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPI	National Educational Policy Investigation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
OBE	Outcome Based Education
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
AU	African Union
PE	Physical Education
PET	Physical Education Task
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education

RNSC	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADOE	South Africa Department of Education
SADTU	South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	South Africa School Act
SEAL	Social and Emotional aspect of learning
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UP	University of Pretoria
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child
WPET	White Paper on Education Training

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many learners in South Africa are at risk because of inadequate opportunities for harmonious socialisation in their communities (Richter, Brookes, Shisana, Simbayi and Desmond, 2004). They are not adequately guided towards positive self-concept formation or the realisation of their potential. Consequently, they are at risk of growing towards an irresponsible and unfulfilled adulthood in which they may never experience the joy of harmonious relationships with their fellow men and women (Prinsloo, 2005). Such young people have little respect for their own dignity, suffer from negative self-concept, refuse to accept authority, and show little respect for the values of others, or for their lives and possessions. In adulthood they often adopt anti-social attitudes and habits, and may lapse into criminal activities (Prinsloo, 2005:33). Their lack of emotional stability contributes to the trends of violent crime, rape and murder reported daily in the South African press (*Pretoria News*, 2006).

Hence, Life Orientation (LO) was introduced as part of the new national curriculum in 1998 as part of the solution to these and other social problems. It was proposed in line with ideas about health, sex, and reproductive education which would enable learners to understand issues of masculinity and femininity, and which would also make it possible for learners to protect themselves and live healthy lives, free from risks (Coombe, 2002; Department of Education, 2006). Also, according to a proposal from the national Gender Task Team of 1997, Life Orientation (LO) was introduced to serve as a way of curbing sexual violence in schools and enhancing gender equity. The Department of Education realised the scope and intensity of this problem and endeavoured, through the introduction of outcomes-based education, and in particular through the Life Orientation (LO) learning area, to put in place mitigatory programmes which could make a difference in the lives of a new generation of learners. Although these health and sexuality elements were to the fore in the early proposal stages, the eventual Life Orientation (LO) curriculum was more holistic, and incorporated other aspects of a 'preparation for life' (Coombe, 2002).

The South African Department of Education (2003:3) views Life Orientation (LO) as the study of self in relation to others and to society. It applies a holistic approach. LO has to do with the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners, and the way in which these dimensions are interrelated and used in life (South African Department of Education, 2003). Its concern is the development of self-in-society, and this is intended to help the development of balanced and confident learners who will contribute to a just and democratic society, a productive economy, and a good life for all (South African Department of Education, 2003). This learning area aims to guide and prepare learners for life, and for its responsibilities and possibilities. Life Orientation (LO) addresses knowledge, values, attitudes and skills relating to the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation, physical activity and career choices. It teaches learners to solve problems, to make informed decisions and choices, and to take suitable actions to enable them to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003:3).

The development of Life Orientation (LO) programmes has brought educators and educational planners to the realisation that the only hope of reaching children at risk lies in a holistic support system. Extensive research completed by researchers from South Africa and countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe, highlights the need for orientation programmes that prepare learners adequately for the complex and dynamic life of the 21st century (Pretorius, 1998; Engelbrecht, 1998; LeRoux, 1994; Mwamwenda, 2004; Eggen and Kauchak, 1997; DoE, 1992; National Educational Policy Investigation, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1993; White Paper on Education and Training (WPET), 1995; Republic of South Africa, 2000).

However, it appears that the introduction of Life Orientation (LO) in the curriculum comes with attendant challenges that can threaten to derail it as a solution. For one thing, it appears that teachers have difficulties in teaching Life Orientation (LO) programmes which entail discussing personal and societal values and norms with

learners (Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma and Janse, 2006). Teachers are expected to find a balance between their own beliefs and the idea that they must sometimes teach material they believe should not be taught to learners, such as the practice of safe sex (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006). Teachers seem often to be placed in situations where they lack expertise or find themselves 'out of their league', which creates stressful situations for them. This also raises a number of questions for the learners, who are able to sense the incompetence of unqualified teachers and their ineffectiveness (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2008:135).

Life Orientation (LO) teachers also encounter challenges in their work when they have to deal with learners of diverse personalities who also exhibit different levels of maturity and growth (Wight and Buston, 2003; Landry, Singh and Darroc, 2000). While this occurs among the learners, teachers are often moved around, leading to a situation where learners encounter too many different Life Orientation (LO) teachers and may therefore tend to become a little more unstable themselves (Christiaans, 2006:10). In addition to this complex situation, some teachers are not qualified to handle this subject, and learners at times feel short-changed by it. Hence some learners do not put great effort into learning the subject, and this leads to learners questioning the value attached to Life Orientation (LO) when it is presented by unqualified teachers (Christiaans, 2006:11; Van Deventer, 2009:128). Yet another problem that has been identified is that working with small groups, which tends to be more effective in teaching Life Orientation LO, is hardly possible with large class sizes (up to sixty students in a class), and facilitation of group work is challenging when there is limited space and there are no teacher assistants to manage large classes (Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, Jansen, Mukoma and Schaalma, 2009:51).

Furthermore, the Life Orientation (LO) programme remains marginalised as time allocated for it is in practice often used for subjects like Mathematics, which are deemed more important, since Life Orientation (LO) does not involve external assessment, despite the fact that it is a compulsory subject. The prominent academic Prof. Jonathan Jansen went so far as to write, in his popular column in *The Times*, that Life Orientation (LO) will be no help whatsoever in boosting learners' chances of gaining a place in higher education (Jansen, 2011:40). Life Orientation

(LO) is also widely perceived as a subject not requiring much preparation or skill (Coombe, 2002; Koplán, 2001). Moreover it appears that learners also show negative attitudes toward learning the Life Orientation (LO) programmes because they fail to understand its objectives (Rooth, 2005:68).

Concern has therefore been raised regarding the implementation and status of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. Informally, the public and the media have tended to attribute the difficulties encountered by teachers in implementing Life Orientation LO to teachers having difficulty in teaching personal and societal values and norms. However, the problems, as discussed above, seem more wide-ranging. In addition, learners are reported to have difficulties in understanding the terminology, the norms and values, and the teachers struggle to clarify these for them (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006:627).

Some teachers have informally expressed concern that they have been encountering challenges in trying to get a balance between their own beliefs and the idea that they must teach certain material that they believe should *not* be taught to learners (Ahmed *et al.*, 2009:50-51). There are concerns that students might take things literally and interpret messages about sex as teachers condoning sex as a norm for their age group (Aaro; Flisher and Kaaya, 2006). At times teachers feel that the values they hold are contrary to the content they are expected to teach. This is true in the example of having to teach learners to use condoms, which most teachers feel encourages loose morals. It is in cases like this that teachers who feel this causes promiscuity may teach *against* the values fostered in the Life Orientation (LO) programmes, (Kaaya, Mukoma, Flisher and Klepp, 2009). This study confirmed this during the interviews with some of the participant Life Orientation (LO) teachers, school principals and learner focus groups. It was disclosed that some Life Orientation (LO) teachers shy away from teaching some sensitive topics like sex, and HIV/AIDS.

Darius Cornelissen (2009), spokesperson for National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), believes that there is a great deal of concern among teachers about how to teach the subject. During the interviews in

this study, some of the Life Orientation (LO) teachers complained that they did not know if they were doing the right thing because they were not trained to teach Life Orientation (LO). Teachers have complained that learners are reluctant to discuss their personal values and beliefs in the presence of their peers (Gallant & Maticka-Tyndale 2004). There may well be strategies for dealing with such challenges, but teachers are often unaware of these. The Development Bank of Southern Africa education policy analyst, Graeme Bloch (2009), is of the view that there is very little realistic support for teachers in their classroom practice.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Life Orientation is a programme put in place by the Department of Education to equip learners to solve social and personal problems, and make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health. It further guides learners to make sound choices and to take suitable actions to enable them to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society (South African Department of Education, 2003).

According to the literature available, although Life Orientation (LO) is currently being implemented as a Learning Area/subject in the NCS, the programme remains marginalised, as time allocated for it is often used for formal subjects like Mathematics, which are deemed more important, since Life Orientation (LO) does not involve external assessment, despite the fact that it is a compulsory subject. Life Orientation (LO) is thus perceived as a subject not requiring much preparation or skill on the part of teachers (Coombe 2002 ; Ahmed *et al*, 2006).

Life Orientation (LO) teachers also appear to encounter challenges in their work when they have to deal with diverse learners who exhibit different levels of maturity and growth (Wight and Buston, 2003; Landry, Singh and Darroch, 2000). Many learners also show negative attitudes toward the Life Orientation (LO) programme because they fail to understand its objectives. While this occurs among the learners, teachers are often moved around, leading to a situation where learners encounter too many different teachers, leading to instability (Christiaans, 2006:10). In addition

to this complex situation, some teachers are not qualified to handle this subject, and learners at times feel short-changed. Hence some learners do not put great effort into learning the subject, and this leads to learners questioning the value attached to Life Orientation (LO) when presented by unqualified teachers (Christiaans, 2006:11; Van Deventer, 2009:128).

Life Orientation (LO) has been in place since 1998, yet it appears that relatively little has changed in the behaviour of learners. The high rate of teenage pregnancies in the Eastern Cape Province is just one piece of evidence of this (*Sunday Times*, 7 June 2007). It is within the above context, gleaned from available literature, that the study investigates the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum by high school teachers in the Fort Beaufort District, given its apparent low status among both teachers and learners.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort District.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

1.4.1 Main research question:

- How is the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum being implemented in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District?

1.4.2 Sub-questions

- What materials and other resources are used in teaching Life Orientation (LO)?

- What qualifications do the Life Orientation (LO) teachers have, and what sort of in-service professional training in Life Orientation (LO) teaching have they received?
- How have the monitoring and support mechanisms put in place benefited teachers in teaching Life Orientation (LO)?
- How do learners and parents perceive the Life Orientation (LO) programmes?
- What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching Life Orientation (LO) and implementing the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study should contribute to a debate in which teachers can share their difficulties in teaching Life Orientation (LO), and the results might assist the Department of Education to become more aware of the implementation challenges. Above all, the study will seek to use the findings as a pointer to the conditions needed for the successful implementation of Life Orientation (LO) programmes in schools.

Hopefully, the study should ultimately benefit learners and society in the sense that successful implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum might help learners to be adequately guided towards positive self-concept formation and the realisation of their potential. It will hopefully also enable them to protect themselves from various forms of social violence and abuse, and this in turn would make our society safer. This study should also benefit Life Orientation (LO) teachers, subject advisors and other national and provincial curriculum personnel, principals and generally the community of scholarship interested in the national curriculum, and particularly those interested in Life Orientation (LO) and associated topics such as human rights education, values education, sexuality education and environmental education.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION/RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

There has been extensive research carried out into understanding the challenges faced by teachers in teaching the Life Orientation (LO) learning area. However, little

research has been conducted regarding teachers' and learners' perceptions of the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. Life Orientation (LO) was introduced as part of the new national curriculum in 1998 as a partial solution to various social problems (Coombe, 2002; Department of Education, 2006). It was also introduced as a measure to guide learners towards positive self-concept formation and the realisation of their potential (Prinsloo, 2005:33). However, it appears that the introduction of Life Orientation (LO) in the curriculum comes with attendant problems that can threaten to derail it as a solution. How are teachers managing to make a success of the subject? Research on the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum is needed to understand the nature of implementation difficulties being experienced by Life Orientation (LO) teachers.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in six high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District in the Eastern Cape. It covered one high school from each of the six high school clusters in the district, from each of which one Life Orientation (LO) teacher and six learners (three from each of Grades 11 and 12) were selected.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Implementation

Implementation is defined as actions by the public, individuals or groups that are directed at the achievement of the objectives set forth in prior policy decisions (Ham and Mill, 1984:104). Implementation in this study will refer to the way Life Orientation (LO) programmes in the national curriculum are put into action. The term is also meant to include teaching Life Orientation (LO).

1.8.2 Curriculum

Despite justifiable broader definitions of 'curriculum' which are current, including those which focus on the curriculum as a process rather than a 'blueprint', and the 'curriculum-as-experienced' (by the learner), in this study the term will be used to mean the set of courses and their content offered at a school. Thus a curriculum is an educational plan that spells out which goals and objectives should be achieved, which topics should be covered, and which methods are to be used for learning, teaching and evaluation (Wojtczak, 2002).

1.8.3 Life Orientation

Life Orientation (LO) is the learning area that teaches learners to grow towards responsible and fulfilled adulthood. It is aimed at teaching learners to be emotionally stable, and brings them to the realisation of their potentials.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study is divided into the following six chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the background to the study, the research problem and purpose, research objectives, research questions, significance and rationale of the study, delimitation of the study, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 reviews related literature.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the research data.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings, the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter deals with the relevant literature on major aspects of and issues in the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. Literature by researchers like Botha (2002), Van Deventer (2004), Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006), Prinsloo (2007), Panday (2007), Jacobs (2011) was reviewed. Some of these researchers, like Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007), have shown in their studies that Life Orientation (LO) as a learning area faces a number of challenges, such as poorly qualified teachers, and a shortage of human, material and financial resources, which have impacted negatively on its implementation. Literature on issues such as teachers' training and the availability of suitable teaching materials was reviewed. Also, the researcher reviewed literature on monitoring and support mechanisms maintained by school heads and district education staff in relation to the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) in high schools.

The second part deals with theoretical and empirical studies relating to the teaching of Life Orientation (LO). This study adopted two theories, Rogan and Grayson's implementation theory and the Achievement-Based Curriculum (ABC) Model.

2.2 The Life Orientation Learning Area in C2005 and the National Curriculum Statement

According to the Department of Education (2007), the South African government started the process of developing a new curriculum for the school system in 1995. This was important since South Africa had changed from apartheid to a new dispensation championing the democratic values of a government that catered for all people, reflecting society's diversity. It became necessary therefore to revise the national curriculum for schools so as to reflect the recently embraced values and principles. Also, curriculum revision was necessary as a result of the level of change in the world, the growth and development of knowledge and technology, and the

demands of the globalised 21st Century which required learners to have exposure to higher and different levels of skill and knowledge than those existing in the South African curriculum.

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced into the Foundation Phase in 1997. This was the first version of the new curriculum for the General Education Band. After less than three years, teachers' concerns led to a review of this curriculum in 1999/2000. The reviewed Curriculum 2005 offered the basis for the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for General Education and Training (Grades R-9) and the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 (Department of Education, 2007).

However, factors such as insufficient orientation and training, lack of learning and teaching materials, and inadequate support to teachers hindered the success of the curriculum (Christie, 1999:15). Professor Jonathan Jansen predicted in his widely read paper "Why OBE will fail" (1997a) that a number of factors would lead to the failure of outcomes-based education in South Africa, all of which were borne out in due course. Over-crowded classrooms, teachers getting lost in the technically complex language, the complex structure of OBE as it was set out in Curriculum 2005, excessive teacher time spent on continuous assessment and record keeping, and so on. Other factors identified by Jansen and Christie (1999:81) were the availability of financial and human resources. Consequently, teachers' development and training were hindered by the quality of the trainers and training provided. The provision of suitable learning support materials was overlooked. Also, time frames that were not realistic were set, when many of the new Provincial Departments of Education were still not fully operational.

The Department of Education (2007) states that the National Curriculum Statement provides for 29 subjects. Subject Statements developed by subject specialists were built into the National Curriculum Statement. In 2001, the draft versions of the new Subject Statements were published for comment and then re-worked to take note of the comments received. Twenty-four subject statements and an overview document were declared policy through the Government Gazette in 2002. An additional five subjects were added in 2004 to the National Curriculum Statement. The National

Curriculum Statement now consists of the Subject Statements for the following subjects:

- Language – eleven official languages and thirteen non-official languages
- Mathematics; Mathematical Literacy; Physical Sciences; Life Sciences; Computer Applications Technology; Information Technology
- Accounting; Business Studies; Economics
- Geography; History; Life Orientation (LO); Religious Studies
- Consumer Studies; Hospitality Studies; Tourism
- Dramatic Arts; Dance Studies; Design; Music; Visual Arts
- Agricultural Sciences, Agricultural Management Practices, Agricultural Technology
- Civil Technology; Mechanical Technology; Electrical Technology; Engineering Graphics and Design (Department of Education, 2007).

2.3 THE CONTENT AND NATURE OF LIFE ORIENTATION AS A LEARNING AREA

Life Orientation (LO) is one of the eight learning areas in both C2005 and the NCS. The Department of Education (2002b:4) views Life Orientation (LO) as the learning area that is aimed at empowering learners to use their natural gifts to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potentials. It is concerned with the holistic social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners, with a focus on self-in-society. Hence, Life Orientation (LO)'s scope includes health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement as well as orientation to the world of work. All these are specific focus areas of Life Orientation (LO) (Department of Education, 2002b). Life Orientation (LO) aims to assist learners to make informed decisions about personal, community and environmental questions and to promote physical health, while it also seeks to encourage learners to form positive social relationships. It intends to enable learners to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities. This learning area aims at helping 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. Life Orientation (LO) further seeks to assist learners to make informed decisions about further study and career paths while they develop a constructive orientation to study and work (Department of Education, 2002b).

Life Orientation (LO) is expressed as a subject containing four areas of focus in the national curriculum. The four focus areas are: personal well-being; citizenship education; recreation and physical activity; and careers and career choices. Each of the four key Learning Outcomes for Life Orientation (LO) is taken from one of these focus areas. These four Learning Outcomes for Life Orientation (LO) are as follows:

LO 1: Personal Well-being, which enables learner to achieve and maintain personal well-being.

LO 2: Citizenship Education, which allows learners to be able to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and enhance social justice and sustainable living.

LO 3: Recreation and Physical activities, which make learners to explore and engage responsibly in recreation and physical activities, and to promote their own well-being.

LO 4: Careers and Career Choices, which enable learners to be able to demonstrate self-knowledge and the ability to make informed decisions regarding further study, career fields and career-pathing.

Life Orientation (LO) is informed by nine principles that form the basis of the National Curriculum Statement, which will be discussed in the following nine aspects:

2.3.1 Social transformation

It was important to transform South African society through various transformation mechanisms in order to address the legacy of apartheid. Therefore, social transformation aimed at addressing the imbalances and discrimination of the past and making provision for equal opportunities for all sections of the population. Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 4 of Life Orientation (LO) contribute to social

transformation by giving recognition to all learners' potential and assisting them to live meaningful lives (Department of Education, 2007:8).

2.3.2 Outcomes-based education

Life Orientation (LO), like all other subjects in the National Curriculum Statement, uses Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards to describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate. Learners are expected to develop specific skills, knowledge, values and attitudes as a result of their learning. Life Orientation (LO)'s content deals mainly with life skills application. Learners are encouraged to make informed decisions and choices which will guide them to take appropriate action based on their decisions and choices. This is in line with the practical application of life skills and an activity-based approach to learning, teaching and assessment (Department of Education, 2007:9).

2.3.3 High knowledge and high skills

The National Curriculum Statement aims to develop a high level of knowledge and high skills in learners. Life Orientation (LO) puts particular emphasis on creating opportunities for all learners to realise their full potential as human beings who will bring about improvement in the quality of life for themselves and others in society. The content and complexity of the Assessment Standards in particular were weighted against various criteria, including the South Africa Qualifications Authority level descriptors, and are the minimum levels of skills and knowledge to be achieved in each grade (Department of Education, 2007:9).

2.3.4 Integration and applied competence

According to the Department of Education (2007:9), there is an integrated approach to learning, teaching, and assessment in Life Orientation (LO) in that the issues dealt with in the different Learning Outcomes of the subject lend themselves to integration. Therefore, the four Learning Outcomes of Life Orientation (LO) are addressed and built on Life Skills, and also interact with one another. Life Orientation (LO) teachers should therefore consider it important to reflect the integrated nature of the subject in

developing Learning Programmes for Life Orientation (LO) to ensure that the content of the four Learning Outcomes is learnt, taught and assessed in an integrated and holistic manner.

2.3.5 Progression

In the National Curriculum Statement there are Assessment Standards for each Learning Outcome. These are designed at various levels of complexity and depth to provide for progression as learners move from the beginning to the end of a grade, and from grade to grade. An instance of this can be seen in Life Orientation (LO) when looking at the first Assessment Standard of Learning Outcome 1 for Grades 10-12, where the Assessment Standard increases in complexity by moving from focusing on the self to focusing on relationships, which involves more than the self. Similarly, the content specified for each Assessment Standard in a grade in the Content Framework for Life Orientation (LO) is decided by taking progression across the grades into account (Department of Education, 2007:10).

2.3.6 Articulation and portability

The Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards of Life Orientation (LO) in the Further Education and Training Band link up closely with those in the General Education and Training Band in that the National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12 (General) focuses on similar areas of skills, knowledge and values to those focused on in the Revised National Curriculum Grades-9 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2007:10).

2.3.7 Human rights, inclusivity and environmental and social justice

The National Curriculum Statement promotes human rights, and social and environmental justice, and adopts an inclusive approach to learning, as evident in the teaching and assessment of Life Orientation (LO) (Department of Education, 2007). Life Orientation (LO) seeks to promote a culture of human rights and justice. This is obvious in that environmental and social justice and human rights are dealt with in Learning Outcome 2, through focusing on issues such as discrimination and

the violation of human rights, diversity (including, race, age, gender, religion, culture) and environmentally sustainable living (Department of Education, 2007:10).

2.3.8 Valuing indigenous knowledge systems

In the South African context, indigenous knowledge systems mean the body of knowledge anchored in African philosophical thinking, and social practices that have developed over thousands of years (Department of Education, 2007:10).

The richness of indigenous knowledge systems, and their contribution in helping transform the values of learners, is acknowledged in Life Orientation (LO). Learning Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 reflect indigenous knowledge. These Learning Outcomes deal with traditional practices at various life stages, traditional authorities, traditional belief systems, and indigenous games and activities. (Department of Education, 2007:10-11).

2.3.9 Credibility, quality, and efficiency

The aim of the National Curriculum Statement is to attain credibility through pursuing a transformational agenda and through the provision of an education that can be compared in quality, breath, and depth with those of other countries. Life Orientation (LO) credibility and quality are linked to the fact that its focus areas are internationally recognised as relevant for learning, teaching and the assessment of life skills (Department of Education, 2007:11).

2.4 CONSTITUENT TOPICS OF LIFE ORIENTATION

This study also reviews the content of some *constituent topics* of Life Orientation (LO), knowing full well that every component of Life Orientation (LO) is important to the learning area.

2.4.1 Values education within Life Orientation

According to Rhodes and Roux (2004:25), a value is “more than a belief; it involves the 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 teachers would have to “facilitate the integration of different values and belief systems into all learning area across the curriculum, especially in Life Orientation (LO)” (Rhodes and Roux, 2004:26).

The importance of value promotion cannot be over-emphasised for both personal development and the creation of a national South African identity based on values different from those that marked apartheid education (Department of Education, 2002a). Asmal (2002:4) points out that in order to “live our constitution”, “we have to distil out of the constitution a set of values that are comprehensible and meaningful.” This is one of the main responsibilities of the Life Orientation (LO) teacher: to make the values in the Constitution liveable for learners so that they are imbued with constitutional values. Ngwena (2003:201) agrees that “successful implementation of Life Orientation (LO) should enhance the practice of positive values, attitudes, behaviour and skills, both by the learner and the community.”

Trissler (2000) notes that the values learners hold are shaped by parents, peers, television, music and other external pressures. If this is true, then learners bring with them a wide range of behaviours to the classroom, which it is up to the teacher, through Life Orientation (LO), to shape appropriately to match what is expected in school. According to Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1998), these values should not be imposed on learners. However, as part of the “hidden curriculum” within the school, the values embodied in the school culture serve to socialize students, who may take on these values for themselves.

Green (2004:109) identifies international research that suggests that educators view the school as a “moral environment” and that they see an aspect of their function as educators as being to provide “moral education”. Indeed Life Orientation (LO) educators see themselves as having to teach values and morals, due to the content of the course. However, Veugelers (2000:40) explains that the values which

educators “find important for their students are expressed in the content of their instruction” *and* in the way they teach. The values that educators adhere to, and the values they teach, covertly and overtly affect Life Orientation (LO) teaching and learning as a whole. Veugelers’s point raises the important issue of Life Orientation (LO) teachers needing to “live out” or *model* the values that they teach, which is an important corrective to the more authoritarian forms of values education that many people think is required of teachers.

Porteus (2002) points out the dangers of the prescriptive approach to values education such as conveying 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 as being problematic is particularly appropriate to Life Orientation (LO), as the legacy of the former subject Guidance was one of value *imposition* that had educators preaching to and imposing values on learners. Values, especially moral values, are “caught” rather than “taught” – values teaching that comes close to *preaching* simply doesn’t have much lasting effect on young learners.

2.4.2 Environmental education within Life Orientation

Environment is the combination of natural and human systems – the urban and rural landscapes and everything that happens within them (Department of Education, 2001b:7).

Therefore, environmental education comprises more than nature study or environmental studies; it prepares 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).

According to the Department of Education and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2001:10), “until the activities dealing with environmental issues are linked with curriculum outcomes, they are not likely to develop the scope and

depth of knowledge and skills required of environmentally literate and active citizens. Since Life Orientation (LO) deals with environmental issues in the context of demonstrated learning outcomes, learners are likely to derive more lasting personal and social value from learning about environmental issues.

The importance of the psychological dimensions of environmental education cannot be over-emphasised, and this where Life Orientation (LO) specifically has the potential to play an important role. Each learning area deals with one aspect of environment or the other, but Life Orientation (LO) basically has the capacity to focus on intrinsic motivation and the affective aspect of learners' behaviour, which are vital if learners are to become committed to environmentally sound values. According to Winter (2000), many people do not see sustainable living as a psychological problem, but the world's environmental dilemma is caused largely by human activities which are accompanied by thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values. Neo-analytic, behavioural, social and cognitive psychological approaches may contribute the necessary insight to help teachers promote environmentally appropriate behaviour (Winter, 2000). Oskamp (2000) noted the pressing changes to human lifestyles and cultural practices that are needed to prevent a serious ecological predicament, with psychologists in the forefront of supporting people to accept sustainable methods of living. According to 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 ecological problems.

Jurin and Fortner (2002) state that 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.

McKenzie-Mohr (2000) emphasises that, to their disadvantage, most environmental programmes intending to uphold sustainable behaviour have been characterised by information-intensive operations that make little use of psychological knowledge. Learning Outcome 1 in Life Orientation, which deals with personal development, is core to environmental education.

According to Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2001), learners' understandings of the environmental context of personal and social development, together with life skills, are central to the development of a secure sense of self-in-society. For instance, informed decision-making, critical and creative thinking and building healthy relationships are important to developing the competencies needed for sustainable living practices. Life Orientation (LO) 's goal is to focus on the self-in-society, which is important in ensuring that learners have the capacity to address global problems while having a local perception. Urquhart and Arkinson (2002:11) state that "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 (LO) 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 (LO) 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 of how their lifestyle choices, such as substance abuse, excessive consumption and risky sexual behaviour, affect the environment and the health of the community (Department of Education and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2001).

2.4.3 Human rights education within Life Orientation

The right to a human rights education is a basic human right in itself according to the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (Article 19) (United Nations, 1996). This is evident in the RNCS (Department of Education, 2002a) and National curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education, 2003a), in which human rights is one of the fundamental principles.

The Life Orientation (LO) learning area should make provision for a focus on human rights and inclusivity, in addition to the cross-curricular infusion of human rights in South Africa (Keet *et al.*, 2001). Carrim (2001) suggests that the components of democracy, human rights and inclusive education provide learners with basic political literacy and peace education. Although all learning areas are supposed to address these issues, Life Orientation (LO) is seen to be their “conceptual home”, and to provide “a space for a systematic, albeit basic coverage of human rights and inclusivity issues” (Carrim, 2001:18).

Key human rights documents, including the South Africa Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations,1996), the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (Organisation of Africa, 1999), the 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 all central in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. The attitudes, values, skills and knowledge that are encouraged in Life Orientation (LO) are very important to the promotion of human rights in democratic settings. Life Orientation (LO) should be “successful in balancing the transformation of the society with the interests of promoting the human rights culture marked in the Constitution” (Ngwena, 2003:201).

2.4.4 Sexuality education within Life Orientation

Sub-Saharan Africa has become well-known for its high rate of HIV infection, with South Africa, despite its relative economic wealth in the region, being no exception. Based on ante-natal figures, the Department of Health South Africa (2007) estimated a 29.1% prevalence of HIV amongst women and 13.7% amongst young women below the age of 20. In addition to HIV, concern is expressed regarding unwanted pregnancies amongst young women. The percentage of women between the ages of 15 and 19 who have ever been pregnant is estimated at about 15%, with 66% of these women not wanting the pregnancy at the time of conception (Pettifor *et al.*, 2005).

Addressing these sexual and reproductive health issues is part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing the incidence of HIV and improving maternal health. Indeed, it has been strongly emphasised that progress towards *all* of the MDGs rests on the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) reproductive health goals, that include the promotion of healthy, voluntary and safe sexual and reproductive choices (Bernstein and Hansen, 2006).

Reaching young South Africans with effective prevention programming has come to be seen as key to slowing the rate of HIV infection and to ensuring a stronger future for the country. One of the main strategies the South African Government has used to build HIV prevention awareness and promote behaviour change among young people is school-based life skills education, which is part of the Life Orientation Programme. The National Department of Education has made this an educational priority for Grades 1 through 12. An estimated 12 million youth attending approximately 26,000 schools participate in these classes, which use HIV prevention messages and education to reach both youth who have not yet engaged in high-risk sexual behaviours and those who have. Initial indications are that this programme is of some benefit in terms of promoting sexual and reproduction knowledge and perceived condom self-efficiency (Magnani *et al.*, 2005).

Educators are considered to be well positioned to play a role in sexual health promotion (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006; Wight *et al.*, 2002). While the research focus has been on educators' levels of HIV knowledge, according to Gingiss and Basen (1994), emphasis is increasingly being placed on determining educators' attitudes and feelings towards sexual health education. Reluctance to engage in discussions about sexuality is common (Gallant and Maticka, 2004). The moral views of educators about teenage sexuality results in sex education being challenging to teach, (Schaalma *et al.*, 2004). The fidelity of the programmes is largely compromised when the reservations and personal conflicts of educators are not addressed, and the community is not actively engaged (Kaaya *et al.*, 2002; Mathews *et al.*, 1995).

2.4.5 Guidance within Life Orientation

In South Africa, the way guidance is incorporated into Life Orientation (LO) 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 (LO).

Life skills, health and career education are the core aspects of guidance that have been absorbed into Life Orientation (LO), with personal and career development dealt with in depth. Career education cannot be seen as a separate or ancillary aspect of Life Orientation (LO), as it is developmental and includes psychosocial life skills development. Career education is now firmly ensconced within Life Orientation (LO). It is not an auxiliary service, neither the sole focus of Life Orientation (LO). Rather, career education is one of the focuses in Life Orientation (LO). Life Orientation (LO) includes career guidance in Learning Outcome 4, 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 4 (which deals with the world of work) with, specifically, Learning Outcome 1 (which deals with personal development) in Life Orientation (LO) 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 (LO) Learning Outcome 4 is also linked to Learning Outcome 2, which deals with citizenship education. 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 4 links with Learning Outcome 3, which deals with physical development and movement. There are innumerable career choices in recreation and sport.

2.4.6 Life Skills and Health Education within Life Orientation

Life skills education is cardinal to Life Orientation (LO) and it is infused in and implied in all its Learning Outcomes (Department of Education, 2002b). Life Orientation (LO) Learning Outcome 1, dealing with personal well-being, 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 (LO) curriculum. Clear links, especially with Learning Outcome 3, which focuses on recreation and physical activities and life skills, are evident. Health education in Life Orientation (LO), being developmental, promotive and preventive, is inherently concerned with attempts to focus on wellness (Schlebusch, 1990) rather than merely on disease.

Learning Outcome 2, with its focus on citizenship education, 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 recreation and physical 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 (LO) curriculum (Department of Education, 2002b) in South Africa, are specifically found in Learning Outcome 1, which deals with personal development, and in effect, health education. Learning Outcome 3, 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).

2.4.7 Physical education within Life Orientation

Physical education in the NCS 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 (LO) as a learning area, as its contribution is vital in the achievement of all Life Orientation (LO) ’s outcomes.

Physical education can readily be integrated into all the Life Orientation (LO) learning outcomes. Learning Outcome 1, dealing with personal well-being, is clearly a direct link with physical development and movement. Learning Outcome 2, dealing with citizenship education, further incorporates physical education in the form of nation building, beneficial community and social interactions, and human rights in sport. South African sport has played an important part in the struggle against apartheid, as well as having an ongoing 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 recreation and physical activities, 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. Learning Outcome 4 is concerned with career education; it incorporates knowledge of the wide range of careers dealing with the sport industry, physical development and recreation.

2.4.8 Religious education within Life Orientation

As the Learning Area statement for Life Orientation (LO) (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 religious education. Life Orientation (LO) is seen as the obvious learning area to deal with religious education, not only from the perspective of knowledge about religions, but also from that of values. The Life Orientation (LO) learning area, through programmes like Life Skills, Religious Education and Social Responsibility, is well positioned to impact on the ethical and moral dimensions of learners' development (Department of Education, 2003a:10).

Chidester (1996:155) posits that "Rather than bounded cultural systems, religions are intra-religious and interreligious networks of cultural relations." As such, religious education can best be incorporated into Life Orientation (LO) Learning Outcome 2, which deals with citizenship education. Guidelines for how Life Orientation (LO) can enhance religious literacy in the GET Band 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, all of which learners will encounter in South Africa. Learners can further deal with and learn about the 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 religious 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 (LO) constitutes one assessment standard per grade within Learning Outcome 2, which addresses issues of religious education directly.

2.5 MATERIAL RESOURCES IN TEACHING LIFE ORIENTATION

Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) state that money and other resources are needed to support all school programmes for implementation to be successful. Money is required for materials and equipment to operationalise a new programme. It is also necessary to provide often-overlooked human support for the implementation effort. Research has catalogued failure of programmes to be implemented due to a shortage of financial support (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004).

Material resources, their adequacy, weaknesses and strengths are considered as important component of the successful implementation of Life Orientation (LO). Schools cannot operate without textbooks that contain appropriate examples, language, gender references, and learning activities, or without learning materials, equipment and the necessary infrastructure to teach Life Orientation programmes (Christiaans 2006; Prinsloo 2007). One of the instructional implications of Piaget's theory of cognitive development is that learners need to be kept active by providing them with "rich environments that allow for active exploration and hands-on activities" (Schunk, 2004:451). "(this) is echoed in the constructivist approach to learning which indicates that children need to be actively involved with processing new information by engaging with it; and one way to do it is through the use of appropriate instructional materials" (Prichard, 2005:37).

The curriculum needs support from responsible authorities with educational funding (Glatthorn, Boshcee and Whitehead, 2006). In many countries, like South Africa, Life Orientation (LO) is funded by the Department of Education (Gill, Fluitman, & Dar, (2000); Johanson and Adams, 2004). How funds are provided, managed, and training materials are procured influences the behaviour of training institutions and the outcomes of skill development. For example, institutions which are well-funded are able to procure adequate and up to date Life Orientation (LO) equipment for their learners.

Extensive research on the relation between school inputs and the level of learner achievement (that is, the relation between input and output in educational

institutions) has shown that learners' performance in developing countries is largely determined by the quality of school inputs, and not by external socio-economic factors (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). This means it is possible to improve learners' performance in Life Orientation (LO) by such measures as providing learners with textbooks and other learning materials. Evidence from Chile, Peru, the Philippines and Uganda, cited by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985), points to the importance of school textbooks and shows that improving the availability of textbooks may be one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways of improving school efficiency.

Studies by Tiendrebeogo, Meijer and Engleberg (2003) in Sub-Saharan African countries reveal that Life Orientation (LO) (Life Skill) curriculum development, delivery and innovation require relatively large financial inputs. These studies found that the whole infrastructure of support services, school inspection and supervision, in-service teacher education, curriculum development, and maintenance of school furniture, equipment and physical facilities has deteriorated throughout the region. The poor quality of these resources can compromise the implementation process and the quality of education.

Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007) add that the student-oriented and individually-paced nature of competence-based Life Orientation (LO) programmes requires heavy investment in equipment and the training of teachers. These authors indicate the importance of resource availability to the development and implementation of appropriate and relevant Life Orientation (LO) programmes in South Africa. In the researcher's view, the problem of unavailability of resources can only be solved through partnership between government, private sector and other social partners.

The importance of using appropriate instructional materials to promote learning is apparent in information processing theory (Schunk, 2004). The ability to control attention is highlighted in this theory. Strategies that would gain and maintain learners' attention include capturing learners' interest, and building variety into a lesson. Both of these strategies could be implemented through the use of

appropriate and stimulating teaching material (Schunk, 2004:147). Life Orientation (LO) is a hands-on discipline which requires learners to understand lessons taught and to be able to apply what they learn to their daily lives. This view is confirmed by Schunk, 2004:217), who posits that cognitive learning theory also highlights the importance of employing experiments in the science classroom to facilitate discovery learning.

A number of studies reveal that Life Orientation (LO) suffers from a lack of sufficient funding, and shortages of materials, facilities and equipment. This state of affairs can impact negatively in the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) (Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007). This view is shared by Gorton (1983), who states that efforts to implement innovations typically failed because of resources that were limited. It is in the presence of such circumstances that the researcher seeks to investigate the availability of resources in the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum.

2.6 PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS

The importance of in-service training, education and continuing professional development for the teaching profession in general is increasingly acknowledged in countries throughout the world (Fraser, Killian, Aileen, Reid, Lesley, McKinney and Stephen, 2007). Fraser *et al.* (2007:155), in a paper commissioned by the OECD, locate this trend within the wider policy agenda of promoting lifelong learning, and identify certain desirable characteristics associated with successful in-service provision, as follows:

- It should incorporate both on- and off-site school dimensions;
- Teachers should have a greater role in setting the agenda and being actively engaged in an experimental process;
- In many countries, through training-of-trainers' courses, teachers have been assisted to work with their peers as facilitators and team leaders. This gives rise to a sense of empowerment and confidence-building which cultivates a good *esprit de corps*; and

- Collaborative interactional techniques are very much in favour, rather than lectures to large groups (Fraser *et al.*, 2007:155).

It can be noted that for successful implementation of any curriculum, teachers need to receive professional development assistance, either from within the school or from outside the school. This may even mean teachers going to colleges for further education.

Life Orientation (LO) teachers as the implementers of Life Orientation (LO) programmes have the responsibility of bringing to life the Life Orientation (LO) programmes in their classrooms (Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007; Van der Walt and De Klerk, 2006). Life Orientation (LO) teachers training in this regard should be acknowledged as important to the delivery, and most importantly for the successful implementation, of this curriculum. Consequently, these teachers have to go through serious and continuous training to be able to successfully implement the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. In this study, this means that Life Orientation (LO) teacher training will affect the way in which they teach and implement the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. Life Orientation (LO) teachers with inadequate training will find it difficult to teach to the general critical cross-field outcomes of the NCS and the more specific learning outcomes of the Life Orientation (LO) learning area (Pandy, 2007).

In her study, Pandy (2007) states that many Life Orientation (LO) teachers have not had the specific training to be able to achieve the aims of the programme since they are not well equipped in terms of the demands of the Life Orientation (LO). She points out that teachers often blame the departmental facilitators for their limitations in implementing the Life Orientation (LO) programmes.

According to Coolahan (2002), it is also recognised internationally that teacher development is often best promoted within the context of school development, with more schools being encouraged to be involved in planning collaborative development training. While this view tends to emphasise the interest of the

education system, it need not be to the exclusion of the personal and individual needs of teachers.

Fraser *et al.*, (2007:155) suggest that “professional training is an essential part of improving school performance”. However, the problem is that the discourse about professional development is typified by ‘conceptual vagueness’ as it encompasses the following:

- Lifelong learning for professionals;
- A means of professional development;
- A means for individual professionals to ensure a measure of control and security often precarious in the modern workplace;
- A means of assuring the worried public that professionals are indeed up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancements; and
- A means where by professional associations can verify that the standard of their professional members are being upheld; and a means for employers to garner a competent and adaptable workforce.

Friedman and Philips (2004:369) indicate that the legitimacy of professional development activities is often perceived in terms of formal training courses linked to work, or in terms of gaining suitable qualifications – portable and bankable. However, an emerging paradigm is moving professional development away from the practice of attending courses and training days to the concept of lifelong or continuing learning. For instance, Middlewood *et al.* (2005), in their examination of the educational context, argue that professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review that articulates with development planning, and which meets corporate, departmental and individual needs. They also argue that learning is a process of self-development leading to personal growth as well as the development of skills and knowledge that facilitate the education of young people.

Therefore, it is under such circumstances that Kriek and Grayson (2009) argue that any effort which is aimed at improving the standard of education should target the teachers. That is, issues like learners’ extra lessons or weekend schools can only assist learners to pass examinations, but have little impact on education standards.

Kahle (1999:2) argues that, “Schools are only as good as their teachers, regardless of how high are their standards, how up-to-date is their technology, or how innovative are their programmes”. Therefore, any sustainable improvement in the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) should focus on teacher’s development.

Studies by Young and King (2002) show that instructional quality can be strengthened when school heads create internal structures and conditions that promote teachers’ learning. Therefore, it means establishing regular meetings with teams of teachers to plan and reflect on their practice, aligning school-wide professional development activities with school objectives, promoting social trust among staff members, and practising distributed leadership.

Teachers’ development can also be enhanced through in-service training programmes. These in-service training (INSET) programmes involve teachers and there are ways in which school heads can identify teachers’ areas of need and work on them so as to enhance staff performance. Chivore (1995) states that these in-service courses are meant to improve the contribution of staff to the overall goals of the school, both qualitatively and quantitatively. These programmes should aim at enabling individuals to be more effective in their curriculum interpretation as well as in instructional delivery.

The Department of Education needs to provide the necessary support for the recommended programmes so that they can be successfully implemented. This is to build self-confidence among curriculum implementers. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) argue that teachers often need in-service training or staff development programmes as well as time to feel comfortable with new programmes. Ron (1986:3) suggests that “staff development should be aimed at orienting staff for changing tasks, training staff for promotion posts, raising work standards and achieving a high degree of job satisfaction”.

The changing context of professional practice has significantly contributed to the need for continuing professional development. No amount of formal education is sufficient in today’s fast-changing professional environment (Frick and Kapp,

2007:446). A teacher's knowledge about implementing the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum can be easily become outdated in the fast-changing world of new technology and new social trends, hence the need for continuously updating the acquired knowledge and skills. It is argued that continuing professional development is a vital instrument through which professionals can remain relevant in society (Frick and Kapp, 2007). For Life Orientation (LO) to remain relevant to society, teachers should give learners skills and knowledge which will render them responsible and well- equipped in life.

Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007) argue that Life Orientation (LO) teachers' poor grasp of the *content* knowledge of the subject can act as a major inhibition to the teaching and learning of the subject. Strengthening teachers' content knowledge should therefore be an important component of any professional development programme. However, teaching content knowledge is not enough, as indicated by Adler and Reed (2002: 25) cited in Kriek and Grayson (2009: 186) who postulate, "The issue is how to integrate further learning of the subject with learning about how learners in school acquire subject knowledge".

Frick and Kapp (2007:448) argue that "professional development programmes are also important for the maintenance of the human resources base of any organisation; and should be seen as an integral part of the main organisation's strategy for maintaining its workers". This view is shared by Harris (2003), who emphasizes the importance of teachers' *continuing* professional training as very important in responding to the new challenges in the education system.

Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa reveal that many Life Orientation (LO) teachers are under- qualified due to the fact that they are not adequately trained (Tiendrebeogo, Meijer and Engleberg, 2003). Chendi (1998) observes that Life Skills in Malawi also suffers from a shortage of trained personnel. He reveals the case of the need in Kenya to develop a high number of new teachers with a life skills education background, as a number of teachers lacked adequate training. Chendi (1998) concluded that, among the problems causing serious constraints in the school for

Life Orientation (LO) were inadequate facilities, equipment and materials, as well as insufficient and poorly trained teachers. The most serious constraint faced by both

primary and secondary schools, however, was the availability of teachers qualified to teach Life Skills.

This same author shows that in Lesotho, curriculum was heavily biased towards knowledge, with very little curriculum content or time during lessons to spend on the skills and attitudes needed for behaviour development and change. Chendi (1999) found that head teachers had not received training in Life Skills teaching, and that many teachers lacked the confidence to handle sensitive topics. The situation was not different in Zimbabwe, as teachers were not adequately trained and teachers considered single-sex sessions to be better for discussing puberty, sex, reproduction, or gender-specific relationship problems, because they did not have the confidence to handle such topics (Tiendrebeogo *et al.*, 2003).

According to Botvin (2011), Life Skills in Australian high schools is a highly interactive skills-based programme designed to promote positive health and personal development for high school youths. The programme helps adolescents find their ways through the challenges of the high school years and prepares them for the independence and responsibility that they will encounter as young adults, based on the fact that the Life Skills Training Curriculum is highly effective. Botvin, (2011) states that the Life Skills Training High School Programme uses developmental, appropriate, collaborative learning strategies to help students achieve competency in the life skills that have been found to reduce and prevent substance abuse and violence.

In both England and Wales, and even in Scotland, which is operating a different educational system, interest in Social and Emotional Learning has been increasing rapidly. United Kingdom now promotes social and emotional skills in most schools, supported by voluntary agencies and universities (Botvin, 2008). This goes under a range of different titles, including emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, emotional health and wellbeing, personal and social development and mental health. In an

attempt to develop work in this area, and for learners to have clear entitlement, the government Department of Education and Skills has committed significant resources to developing explicit programmes for England that cover the entire age range. These go under the title “Social and Emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)” (Botvin, 2008). This programme, which is for learners between the ages of 4 and 18, is now well established. It can be found in about half of the schools, and evaluations are showing some encouraging results, including clear impact on behaviour and learning (Botvin, 2008).

Studies in South Africa by Coombe (2000), Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007) found that teachers need in-service training to deal with teaching Life Orientation.

2.6.1 Short-term courses

Short-term courses take from one hour to two weeks. The knowledge or skill level of the teachers and the work to be covered usually determine the duration. School-based courses can take up to two hours at most, while cluster- or district-based courses take up to a day. Such courses concentrate on specific aspects of the curriculum, such as feedback from the authorities, conferences or workshops.

For example, where a new syllabus is being introduced this may take two, three or four days, or even up to a week or two, depending on the material to be covered and the availability of funds. According to Prinsloo (2007), these short in-service courses include orientation, new curriculum courses and courses for untrained teachers.

Orientation courses aim at correcting certain deficiencies within the system, especially when teachers are appointed into a new school system that differs from the system in which they previously served, or teachers coming into new socio-cultural systems (Chivore, 1995). On the other hand “the new curriculum in-service staff development course is one which enables the teachers to face challenges resulting from changes in the syllabus or school curriculum” (Chivore, 1995:31). Teachers needed such an in-service course when Life Orientation (LO) was introduced. This is an updating process aimed at equipping teachers with the latest

developments in the new content and methodology of the new curriculum (Chivore, 1995).

2.6.2 Long-Term Courses

Long-term courses can have a duration of one term to a year or more. These mainly involve further studies at registered higher institutions of learning such as colleges or universities, and they culminate in one being awarded a certificate or diploma. Such studies can be taken on a full time or part-time basis (Chivore, 1995). This type of in-service programme is mainly meant for professionally qualified personnel or trained teachers to acquire higher qualifications to enable them to take on more responsibilities and improve their status within the secondary school system. In South Africa, these qualifications include the Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree or a Postgraduate Diploma.

2.7 MONITORING AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Overall school administration and the co-ordination of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in the schools is regulated by the Department of Education's South African School Acts (SASA, 1996). The responsibilities of the Department of Education include: the development of curriculum for the various levels of schooling, establishing standards for material resources, facilities and equipment, allotting money for facilities, equipment, programmes and salaries; and supervising the preparation of teachers to teach subjects such as Life Orientation (LO).

Fullan (1999) states that support from departments of education is often difficult to attain. This could mean that support from principals is also difficult to get. However, in a study by Gibbons (1995), at the school level colleagues and other teachers were considered the most helpful support in implementing the curriculum by offering advice and encouragement.

Not only do schools get limited support from the Department of Education; in many schools non-examinable subjects including Life Orientation (LO) have been given a

reduced time allowance, fewer resources and generally a lower profile (Raymond, 1998). It is therefore not surprising that supporting Life Orientation (LO) in schools might be a difficult task. However, it is not clear what the situation is like in high schools in the Fort Beaufort District specifically, hence one aspect of this study attempts to assess the availability of material resources and equipment as well as monitoring and support.

The tendency to ignore Life Orientation (LO) seems to have been the most formidable obstacle to excellence (Prinsloo, 2007). Life Orientation (LO) is supposed to be given a high priority in schools. The literature argues that Life Orientation (LO) is the only subject in the school curriculum that has significant potential to promote learners' physical, social, psychological and moral development (Rooth 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007). Thus school authorities need to create supporting mechanisms to address the many challenges facing Life Orientation (LO) in schools.

Parents and communities worldwide have increased their expectations of education and become more demanding of better school performance for their children during the past few decades (Cheng, 2000). "Also, there is an increasing demand for school accountability to the public and to demonstrate value for money because school education is financed by the taxpayers" (Cheng, 2002:109). Such issues have forced educational leaders at all levels to provide more clear avenues for parents and community to participate in the development of the school and the curriculum (Cheng, 2002).

According to Berger (1987), countries like Canada and the USA have a long tradition of parental involvement in their schools. Parental involvement in schools is also evident in Asia: in countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia and Japan, where it was a rare thing in the past. Schools in these countries have now recognised the importance of involving parents and local communities in the school affairs of their children (Cheng, 2002).

The school teaches learners on behalf of the parents and society. Parents are therefore partners and players in the educative process of their children, and have a

role to play. The idea of parental involvement is to get parents to play a more active role in their children's education, and this can be done in many different ways (Brown, 2001). Dempsey and Sandler (2005) argue that parental involvement in children's learning is a multidimensional construct that entails a wide range of parental characteristics and behaviours, but that it broadly refers to activities in which parents engage to support the academic achievement of their children (Dempsey and Sandler, 2005).

According to Chivore (1995:29), "parents provide the school with financial and material, as well as well human resources. They supplement books and help learners with their homework by way of supervision at home." He further postulates that this is only possible where there is close co-operation and communication between the school head, staff and community (Chivore, 1995). Parent's active involvement in their children's learning, such as monitoring or helping with homework, influences children's academic success through modelling, reinforcement, and instruction, which in turn support children's attributes for achievement, such as confidence and self-regulation (Hoover-Dampsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, De Jong, and Jones, 2001).

However, despite the fact that parents have been awarded this high status of partnership by governments, in many societies they have yet to play an active role in the process (Cheng, 2002). It is often believed that school education should be solely the responsibility of the teachers and the principal. Parents have always looked upon them as the custodians of and experts on education (Cheng, 2002; Machett, 1995). Such views are inculcated by the professionals themselves, who see parents as unqualified and unable educators (Edward and Warin, 1999). Cheng and Townsend (2000) concur with Edward and Warin (1999) in pointing out that parental and community involvement is often perceived as a mistrust of teachers and school heads. To involve them can be perceived as representing a loss of face among the professionals.

Involvement of parents and caregivers should be considered in teaching and learning Life Orientation (LO). It is believed that "parents' support cannot guarantee

the success of the aims of the programme, yet their lack of support can sabotage even the well-planned reforms” (Rambiyana *et al.*, 2002:10). It is therefore important to involve parents in the implementation process.

A study by Prinsloo (2007) revealed that many parents are not instilling obedience or respect for authority in their children. The disruption of family life, and a perceived disintegration and decline in values and norms in many communities, are leading to a lack of respect for teachers and school rules among many learners. In South Africa, lack of parental support for teaching can also be associated with poverty. Some parents have turned their secondary school children into prostitutes in order to earn money for food, and many of these learners have in turn become heads of households who struggle daily for survival (Prinsloo, 2007). In cases like these, teachers do not find it easy to achieve the aims and outcomes of personal well-being with the learners (Prinsloo, 2007).

Community involvement in school education can benefit the school by providing it with more local resources, support, and intellectual input. Parents and community leaders can share the management’s responsibility, strengthen communication between families, the community, and the school, motivate teachers, monitor school operations, and even assist the school in combating negative influences inherent in the local community (Cheng, Cheng and Tam, 1995; Golding and Sullivan, 1996).

Another way by which a designed programme or plan could be successfully implemented is to involve the principal in the process of making sure that the programme is carried out as planned. This includes providing resources, assistance and monitoring progress (Gorton, 1983). According to Fullan (1992:123), “the monitoring theme is not evaluation in the narrow sense of the term. It involves information systems, resources, and acting on the results through problem-coping and problem-solving.” Therefore, it can be observed that monitoring the process of implementation of Life Orientation (LO) is as important as measuring its outcomes.

Prinsloo (2007) further explains that evaluation of teaching in classrooms can and should take many forms involving the stakeholders – teachers and principal – who

have primary responsibility for the instructional programme. Thus the challenging responsibility for principals is to “provide multiple opportunities for teachers to examine their practices, to reflect on those practices, to collaborate with others as they are assessing the practices, and then empower these professionals to act on the many lessons learnt from these endeavours, as they attempt to influence teaching and learning through specific instructional leadership actions (Prinsloo, 2007: 161).

Hence school heads and district officials as the custodians of curriculum implementation have to monitor it (South Africa School Act, 1996). At the school level, the school head is the chief instructional supervisor. He/she provides means for curriculum implementation through timetabling, classroom allocation, textbook allocation, syllabus and all instructional materials as well as creating a conducive atmosphere for an effective teaching and learning process (Nkomo, 1995:36). Fullan argues that many good monitoring practices go unreported because of the isolation of teachers, schools, and districts from each other.

Hellinger (2003) shares the same view as Nkomo (1995) when he postulates that “monitoring involves the head looking at teachers’ weekly plans and learning objectives, and the plans teachers are working towards. These include examining samples of learners’ work, visiting classrooms, observing the implementation of teaching, learning and curricular policies, reviewing learners’ assessment information and evaluating learners, class and school levels of performance and progress.” As Zepeda (2006:103) affirms, “teaching is the primary work of teachers, and should be the basis for in-class assessment of teaching and learning for both teachers and learners.” This is important for schools if the curriculum has to be implemented according to its objectives.

Further guidelines are given by Van Deventer (2009) on the roles of the school head in guiding and monitoring Life Orientation (LO) implementation through ensuring that schemes of work, lesson plans and records of marks are prepared regularly and in accordance with the NCS. Above all, the head as an instructional leader has to monitor the actions of Life Orientation (LO) teachers and what is happening in the

schools and report on it to the district officials. However, it has to be noted that informal monitoring procedures by themselves do not produce better results, as revealed by Mortimore *et al.*, (1988), and by Odden and Marsh (1988) when they posit that all research on effective schools show that paying constant attention to students' academic, personal, and social development is essential for success. This is in line with the recent findings of the U.S Department of Education (2004:11) that successful school heads "analyse instruction and students' learning through regular classroom observation and provision of detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement."

Panday (2007) accepts that Life Orientation (LO) implementation has to be monitored and supported, that is it has to be supervised by school heads and district officials or inspectors. He acknowledges that the word 'supervision' is related to curriculum implementation. It is not only the manner of teaching which needs to be monitored but also the content that is actually being addressed which has to be supervised as well. The school head and heads of department provide guidance and make sure that teachers have the necessary skills and use the correct teaching methods or strategies (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Monitoring and evaluation have become an integral component of any reform process (Wilson, 1996).

Indeed, school heads' leadership support is crucial to the success of any curriculum implementation as they create a good climate as well as cordial working conditions. According to Coleman (2005), instructional leadership support is learning-centred. Its main concerns are likely to be curriculum, teaching and learning, and the monitoring of learning. Skills expected from these leaders are the ones that lead directly to the improvement of learners' performance.

Life Orientation (LO) teachers will always be willing to work in a healthy environment. If the head as an instructional leader is effective, it is likely that the Life Orientation (LO) teachers within the system will feel committed to and comfortable with the programme being implemented, as long as they are satisfied that the school will run smoothly (Van Deventer, 2009). Maslow's theory of motivation assumes that it is relatively easy to supervise individuals or teachers who are intrinsically motivated

(Everard, Morris and Wilson 2004). However, these teachers need professional support to keep them in line with new developments. Nkomo (1995) shares the same view as he stresses the need for instructional supervisors such as the District Education Officers (DEOs), heads of schools and heads of departments to maintain the standard of education as expected by the Government. The quality of these educational authorities is expected to determine the curriculum implementation process.

However, while there is a general agreement that the school head is a key person in enhancing the teaching and learning process (Hoy and Clover, 1986), research shows that school heads still have limited knowledge of the Life Orientation (LO) teacher's job description (Rooth, 2005:22). However, despite the limited research to date, there is continued interest in the way heads of schools run their school activities in order to enhance quality subject teaching (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). The head of a school has a great task to monitor all the school systems, from the distribution of resources and their use to monitoring (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996). The researcher agrees with this assertion as a lack of monitoring can cause unfair distribution of resources among departments, thereby adversely affecting the implementation of a subject like Life Orientation (LO) as well as conflicts among staff members.

Research studies by Gill *et al.*, (2000) reveal that school heads in some Sub-Saharan countries cannot take any actions against Life Orientation (LO) teachers who absent themselves or come late because of economic situations which have eroded their salaries. Some teachers spend time farming in their fields or running their business. If heads try to charge the offender, he/she may tender his/her resignation. Van Deventer confirms the problem of heavy workload in South Africa, although he cites the problem of additional sources of income as existing mainly among teachers in rural areas. "In some schools, heads find it difficult to observe their teachers due to large numbers of staff; while in rural areas the head carries a heavy load of teaching and does not have enough time to carry out effective supervision" (Madziyire *et al.*, 1998:175).

The South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006), found that new and young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties. Therefore, if young Life Orientation (LO) teachers are not assisted to interpret the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum, he/she is unlikely to implement it effectively. In most Sub-Saharan countries, Life Orientation (LO) (or Life Skills) suffers from a lack of qualified personnel to monitor it as well as a shortage of management personnel with sufficient knowledge of the subject (Tiendrebeogo *et al.*, 2003).

It is therefore of paramount importance that the school head, as an instructional leader, and the District Education Officials, occasionally undertake internal and external monitoring of curriculum implementation in schools. Their main objective would be that of checking the achievement of goals and set standards, so as to recommend areas for improvement and identify those which need staff development or in-service programmes (Panday, 2007).

To summarise from the literature above, it is clear that the Department of Education and school principals need to actively consider how best they can improve the standard of Life Orientation (LO) curriculum implementation by putting in place effective monitoring and support mechanisms and training opportunities.

2.8 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LIFE ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES

It may be difficult for Life Orientation (LO) teachers to deal with students who have negative attitudes towards Life Orientation (LO), and as a result, the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) in schools may be hampered. It is thus important to become aware of the perceptions of the learners, as they are the focus and reason for the existence of Life Orientation (LO). This can provide unique insights, opinions and experiences that can shed light on the current practice and effectiveness of Life Orientation (LO).

According to Bhana *et al.*, (2005) a study done in Gauteng, revealed that some learners have had no lessons in some of the Life Orientation (LO) programmes like sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. However, many learners from the former Indian and Coloured schools seem to have had a higher percentage of Life Orientation (LO) lessons on these topics than the former White and Black schools. This study also found that learners believe that it is the duty of the school to educate them about sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS through Life Orientation (LO). The study also found that parents, learners and teachers are slightly more comfortable with the idea of the learners learning about HIV/AIDS rather than learning about sex as such.

Furthermore some learners, according to Bhana *et al.* (2005), feel that the Life Orientation (LO) programme on sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS is helping them to protect themselves from being infected with HIV/AIDS, to understand more about HIV/AIDS, to want to know more about HIV/AIDS and to accept people living with HIV/AIDS. Learners also feel that Life Orientation (LO) materials on sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS give useful and interesting information that is not difficult to understand. However, some learners feel that some of the Life Orientation (LO) materials are confusing, and that there is insufficient information for their age group. Some of the learners lament that some of the materials are embarrassing.

According to Theron and Dalzell (2006), many learners perceive that the Life Orientation (LO) programme teaches them to make wise career choices and helps them to find employment skills, skills that help them discover who they are (self awareness), skills that teach them to value themselves (self esteem), and skills and attitudes that empower them to stand up for their rights. On the other hand, Theron and Dalzell (2006) state that learners do not attach much importance to some of the learning in the Life Orientation (LO) programmes such as religion education, socialisation, and value and interest clarification. And in his study of Life Orientation (LO) as experienced by learners in the North-West Province (2011), Jacobs indicates that many learners seem to view Life Orientation (LO) as unnecessary, boring and irrelevant. Furthermore, this study revealed that Life Orientation (LO) does not succeed in accomplishing its aims, as laid out in the National Curriculum Statement.

Prinsloo (2007) elaborates on the negative perceptions and reports that Life Orientation (LO) instruction did not always appear to be even moderately effective in changing learners' behaviour in even some of the desired ways. Many learners felt that they had learnt nothing new. The finding that Life Orientation (LO) was often not taken seriously probably contributes to this state of affairs, and is also confirmed by Rooth (2005:68). It was established that learners often saw Life Orientation (LO) as a 'free' period, or a time when they could 'hang out' with their friends. It seemed as if very little measurable written seat-work was done in the Life Orientation (LO) class. It was indicated that learners from former Model-C schools tended to make negative remarks concerning Life Orientation (LO), while learners from previously disadvantaged schools tended to be more positive. This to some extent supports the study conducted by Theron (2008), who found that Grade 9 township learners valued Life Orientation (LO). It will be important to listen to more learners from different cultures to see whether this finding is confirmed. It might be that learners from different cultures have different Life Orientation (LO) needs, as suggested by Theron (2008:62). There also appears to be the perception that Life Orientation (LO) focuses a lot on Health Promotion and Personal Development, such as AIDS and related topics. It appeared that learners felt these topics were "overtaught", which does not seem to agree with the study by Theron (2008), in which learners appeared to value the time spent on AIDS and related topics. The findings of the study by Jacobs (2011) on the perceptions of learners, as well as the 2008 study by Theron cannot serve as the only valid evidence for or against the learners' perceptions of Life Orientation (LO). It is in this regard that this study seeks to establish learners' perceptions of Life Orientation (LO) programmes in the Fort Beaufort District.

2.9 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS IN TEACHING LIFE ORIENTATION

According to the Department of Education (1997b), Life Orientation (LO) was a "new" learning area, with "new" content and "new" implementation challenges for teachers. One of the implementation challenges of Life Orientation (LO) is pre-conceptions about the non-examinable status of its previous constituents, such as Religious

Education, Physical Education, Guidance and Youth Preparedness (Department of Education, 2002b; Van Deventer, 2004; Rooth, 2005; Department of Education, 2008b). Christiaans (2006) is concerned that some principals' attitudes are not conducive to implementing Life Orientation (LO) successfully. For instance, a Religious Education teacher may be expected to teach all aspects of Life Orientation (LO), which may not be well-known to the teacher (Rooth, 2005:22). It appears that Life Orientation (LO) is often taught by teachers who are not specialists in the area (Van Deventer, 2004; Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Roux *et al.*, 2008). Christiaans (2006) states that inadequate support from school heads and the Department of Education worsens the situation.

According to Talbot (2001), Hardman (2003), Rooth (2005) and Christiaans (2006), the challenge of Life Orientation (LO) being taught by non-specialists should be handled as an important issue, since the status and practice of Life Orientation (LO) will be determined by the knowledge and skills of the teachers handling it.

It was noted by the Review Committee for C2005 in 2000 that motivated teachers who are sufficiently prepared with the needed support for their work, form the basis of the successful implementation of an outcome-based framework. It was also found among other things that many teachers in South Africa lack adequate training (Department of Education, 2000a). Botha (2002), Van Deventer (2004), Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006), Prinsloo (2007), Roux *et al.* (2008) and Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008) are of the same opinion as the Review Committee regarding Life Orientation (LO), i.e. that most of its teachers are inadequately trained.

Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006), Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) and Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008) all maintain that there are many misconceptions about Life Orientation (LO). Overall it appears that many teachers and learners do not attach much importance to the teaching and learning of Life Orientation (LO) as a subject.

From the reviewed literature it appears that Life Orientation (LO) within the context of curriculum transition, and coupled with the legacy of some of its constituents, is fragmented and struggling to define itself (Rooth, 2005; Van der Walt and De Klerk, 2006). Against this background, it is necessary to systematically investigate

teachers' and learners' perceptions of the implementation and of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum.

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.10.1 Rogan and Grayson's implementation theory

In this study, in order to explore how teachers implement the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum and how they teach Life Orientation (LO) lessons in the classrooms, the researcher adopted the implementation theory developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003), and the achievement-based curriculum model.

Rogan and Grayson (2003) base their theory of implementation on three main constructs: profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation, and support from outside agencies. The construct, 'profile of implementation' assists in understanding, analysing and expressing the extent to which the objectives of the new programme are put into practice. It recognises the fact that there can be multiple ways of putting a curriculum into action. However, it assumes that some broad commonalities of what constitutes excellence will emerge. In addition, the profile recognises that there can be different levels at which implementation might be said to occur. Therefore, implementation of a curriculum involves a number of factors and the course it may take is hardly predictable.

The construct 'capacity to support innovation' is concerned with factors that are likely to support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in the curriculum. The construct recognises that schools differ in terms of their capacity to implement innovations. Possible indicators fall into four categories: physical resources, school ethos and management, teacher factors and student factors. Physical resources are important, as poor conditions and limited resources can limit the performance of even the best teachers and students (Fullan, 1991).

The school ethos and management are considered together below as they are closely intertwined, particularly in schools in developing countries, though they are not the same. Teachers play an essential role in the implementation processes, and factors such as their background, training, subject matter knowledge, motivation,

commitment to teaching, and attitudes towards the proposed curriculum implementation influence their capacity and willingness to implement change.

Likewise, the background of students and the kind of strengths and constraints they might bring to the school, are crucial. A range of issues influence students' attitude to learning and responses to change. These include their home environments, parental commitment to education, health and nutrition, and their proficiency level in the language of instruction. The contribution of these four factors to the capacity of schools to support curriculum implementation is likely to be dynamic and changing over time.

The construct "support from outside agencies" describes the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organisations, such as provincial and district education offices, to influence practices, either by support or sanction; and the role of the District Education Officers (DEOs) to see that standards are maintained. They are there as quality assurance officers, to provide schools with expertise and professional development courses. In many developing countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies such as World Vision and local or international NGOs, which often provide teachers and learners with materials like teaching kits or text-books.

According to Rogan and Grayson (2003), the construct of support from outside agency is divided into two: material support and non-material support. The material support may include infrastructure such as specialist rooms and material resources such as learners' text-books, facilities and other equipment used in the learning process. Non-material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development. These involve in-service training where teachers' skills could be upgraded. This is probably one of the most visible and obvious ways in which outside agencies attempt to bring change in schools (Karsten, Voncken and Voorthuis, 2000). Therefore, non-material support can also be regarded as a sub-construct of school capacity. To bring about change, there is also a need for outside agencies to monitor the implementation process. This is mainly the duty of the regional and district officers. They have to inspect schools at least once in two years so as to give feedback to teachers on their performance. It is their duty to see that

the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum is being implemented according to policy documents.

Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theory of implementation will be used in this study because of its relevance to the areas of enquiry. This theory takes into consideration current realities that exist in different institutions of learning. There is diversity in various institutions created by different factors, like funding policies of the past government and social-economic conditions that exist in different communities. The theory builds on the strengths of various educational components present in the education system like district education personnel, teachers, learners, and the school environment. This theory does so in contrast to theories of development that attempt to remediate factors that are deficient in a "linear" way, expecting change to follow the dissemination of the new ideas.

2.10.2 The Achievement-based Curriculum (ABC) Model

The Achievement-Based Curriculum (ABC) model as a framework focuses on developing a programme that best meets the needs of all the learners and achieves the intended curriculum outcomes. An ABC model presents a breakthrough that could guide Life Orientation (LO) step-by-step through the process of translating curriculum theory into functional practice (Kelly and Melograno, 2004). See Fig. 1 below. Source: Kelly and Melograno (2004:67).

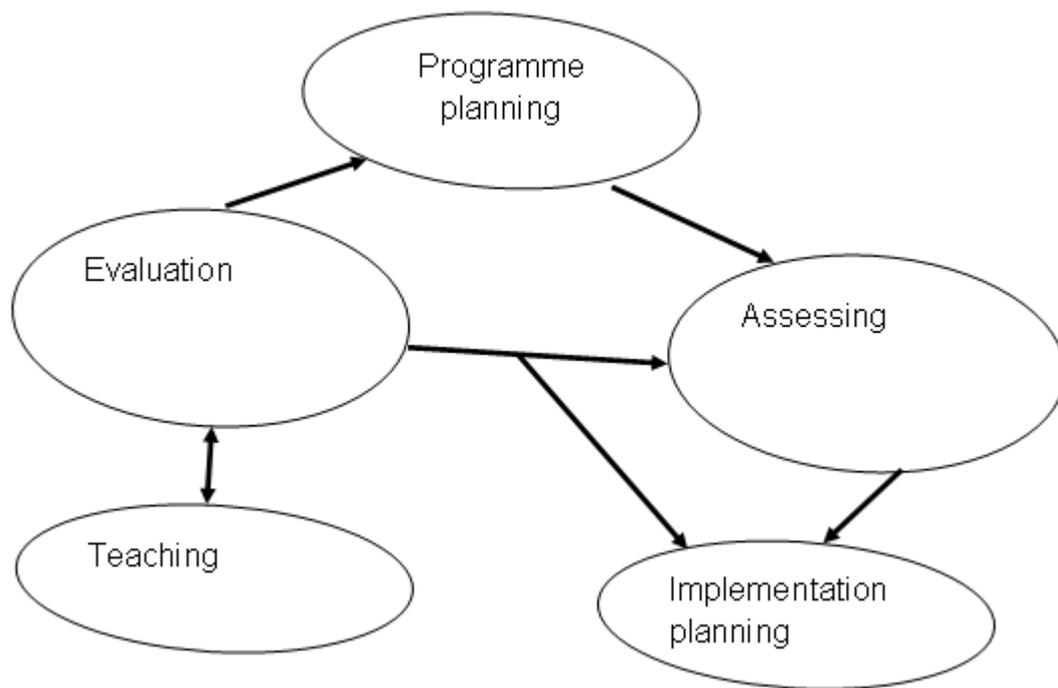


Figure 0.1: The Achievement-Based Curriculum Model, Source: Kelly and Melograno (2004:67)

Fig 2.1 illustrates the five components of the ABC model. The model was created to integrate the programme planning, assessing, implementation planning, teaching and evaluation components of Life Orientation (LO) instruction (Wessel and Kelly, 1986). The illustration demonstrates that an effective teacher should follow a specified programme plan, continually assess the learners, and use assessment data to plan and implement instruction. He/she uses the evaluation data (reassessment) to determine the learners' progress, the effectiveness of teaching and the appropriateness of the programme plan (Kelly and Melograno, 2004).

Further, the Achievement-Based Curriculum (ABC) model is not bound to any particular curriculum theory or philosophy; rather, it provides educators with a systematic decision-making procedure to help them develop a curriculum that addresses unique and diverse needs (Kelly and Melograno, 2004).

This model is relevant to the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) curriculum because it would serve as a guide to help teachers develop their programmes and monitor the progress of their learners by means of assessment tasks. It also helps the Life Orientation (LO) teacher to determine the effectiveness of the programme, and eventually how to overcome the challenges.

If the ABC model is properly implemented by all Life Orientation (LO) teachers, it could be easier to assess whether the objectives outlined in the curriculum are met or not. Without such programmes in place, teachers are bound to relax, become irresponsible and ignore the Life Orientation (LO) methods that result in poor teaching. The ABC model could guide LO teachers step-by-step through the process of translating curriculum theory into functional practice. For instance, this model could assist the teacher to follow a stated programme plan, continually assess the learners, and use assessment data to plan and implement instruction. The teacher uses the evaluation data to reassess and to determine the learners' progress, the effectiveness of teaching, and the appropriateness of the programme plan (Kelly and Melograno, 2004).

This model could also become a driving force that could motivate Life Orientation (LO) teachers to implement quality programmes and assess their success and challenges. It would encourage Life Orientation (LO) teachers to discover mechanisms to meet their challenges and strengthen their successes.

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed other studies of the subject/learning area Life Orientation (LO) – studies of relevant materials and teaching resources, of the professional training needed or provided, and of monitoring and support mechanisms. Literature on learners' perceptions of the LO curriculum and teaching, as well as the challenges of implementing Life Orientation (LO) were also reviewed. The chapter also went further to outline the theoretical framework which informs the study. This framework was based on Rogan and Grayson's implementation theory and the Achievement-based Curriculum (ABC). Rogan and Grayson's implementation theory is developed around three main constructs: profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation, and support from outside agencies. The Achievement-based Curriculum (ABC) Model centres on developing a programme that best meets the needs of all the learners and achieves the intended curriculum outcomes. The following chapter discusses the methodology adopted by the study to find answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum by high school teachers in the Fort Beaufort Education District. This chapter focuses on the research paradigm, research design, sample and sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, data collection procedures, data analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM OF THE STUDY

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005:40) reveal that it is important that all scientific research be conducted within a paradigm or way of viewing one's research material. This study is located in the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is characterised by a concern with the understanding and experiences of individuals, and with meaning. The central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. In addition there is need to make an effort to get 'inside the person's head' and to understand issues from within (Cohen and Manion, 1989). Miles and Huberman (1994) reveal that researchers in the interpretive tradition came to realise that the social realm is different from that of the natural sciences and cannot be investigated in the same way. They also state that this paradigm is concerned with human actions rather than human behaviour. Van Rensburg (2001:110) argues that interpretivists reflect an interest in meaning-making within this or that specific context rather than in arriving at law-like generalisations.

The interpretivist paradigm sees the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interaction with each other and with social systems (Ullin, Robinson and Tolley, 2005:17). Within this paradigm, social reality may be understood as the result of meanings and contexts that are jointly created in social interaction. These are interpreted by the participants in concrete situations within the

framework of their subjective horizons of relevance (Flick *et al.*, 2003). The advantage of this paradigm is that it can be used as a lens when investigating individuals or small groups in naturalistic settings (Jan van Rensburg, 2001:16). The paradigm was suitable for this study as the researcher collected information about the implementation of Life Orientation (LO) by high school teachers in their natural surroundings, drawing on the perceptions of the teachers themselves, as expressed in interviews. This paradigm allowed the researcher to find out detail about multiple realities in the teachers' different perceptions of their implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is defined as constructed plans and strategies developed to seek, employ and discover answers to research questions (Taylor, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (1985) define it rather differently, as "a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical materials." Research design can be said to refer to the manner in which the entire process is planned and managed until its final stage of report writing. It means the arrangement of procedures and methods of research that include sampling, data collection, analysis and results interpretation. This study adopted a case study research design.

3.4 CASE STUDY DESIGN

This study adopted a case study design. Bromley (1995) defines a case study as a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest. A case study may be simple or complex. For instance, it may be of a child or a classroom of children, or an event (Bassey, 1999). Also, the study is described as a form of descriptive research that gathers a large amount of information about a relatively small selection of participants, and thus investigates one or a few cases in considerable depth (Feagin *et al.*, 1991; Thomas and Nelson, 2001; Gorman *et al.*, 2000). In this study, data were collected through

interviews, classroom observation and document analysis in order to triangulate the data and findings about the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in six high schools in the Fort Beaufort District. Through the use of the case study approach, the researcher was able to gather considerable data from 6 school principals, 6 Life Orientation (LO) teachers and 36 learners.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:445), there are three types of case studies. Firstly there is the “intrinsic case study”, which Denzin and Lincoln describe as a study undertaken, first and last, because one wants a better understanding of the particular case. In other words, the study is undertaken because of the intrinsic interest of the case, not for generalisation or theory formation. Secondly, there is the “instrumental case study”, where a case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or generalisation. The case is of secondary interest, and it facilitates an understanding of something else.

Lastly, there is the “multiple or collective case study”, where a number of cases are studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition. The case may be similar or dissimilar. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them would lead to better understanding and perhaps better theorising about a still larger collection of cases.

This study was located within the multiple case study category. It was not the purpose of this study to gain an in-depth understanding of Life Orientation (LO) implementation in the Fort Beaufort schools because they stand out in any particular way, or to develop law-like generalisations based on the findings, but to provide insight into the phenomenon or general condition of implementing the national Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in South Africa, hence justifying the adopted research design. Therefore in this research, where the objective was to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum, the researcher used the cases of Life Orientation (LO) teaching and learning in six Fort Beaufort high schools to gain an in-depth picture of the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum.

A case study design was followed since it gives an in-depth and detailed account of the phenomenon and hence enables the researcher to discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research (Denscombe, 2001). It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events in order to understand complex social phenomena and to provide a holistic and meaningful picture of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, and organisational and managerial processes (Yin, 2003).

One of the advantages of a case study is that it can give “voice to the powerless and voiceless” (Tellies, 1997). In this study, where a case study design was adopted, the participants were allowed to articulate their views, perceptions and interpretations of the situation. The data collected in the process enabled the researcher to give an account of the findings from the respondents’ perspectives and interpretation of their world.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study used purposive sampling for participants. Purposive sampling is the process of selecting individuals who can offer an authentic account of the phenomenon under study, and who share sufficient common experiences with others as to represent a group (Yin, 2003). This sampling technique was appropriate to use because the study sought information from individuals (principals, Life Orientation (LO) teachers and learners) who could share sufficient common information and experiences.

The sample in this study were 48 participants, six principals, six Life Orientation (LO) teachers and thirty-six learners in six selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District in the Eastern Cape – the district that the researcher is most familiar with. Teachers who were most experienced in the teaching of Life Orientation (LO) were selected. The six high schools were selected by means of purposive sampling within each of the six high school clusters in the district to avoid possible bias in selection – one high school from each cluster. The principals of these high schools were interviewed. Gatekeepers such as principals and other colleagues were consulted to identify the six teachers. Three learners each within

Grades 11 and 12 were purposively selected, based on their behaviour and contributions noticed during the classroom observation. Thus the schools, principals, teachers and learners were all purposively selected.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS OF THE STUDY

The researcher sought permission to carry out the study from the Fort Beaufort Department of Education, Eastern Cape South Africa. Permission was granted without any delay (see appendices A and B). Further, the researcher sought permission from the school principals and teachers to arrange the dates for conducting the interviews (see appendices C, D, E and F). No hitches were encountered.

The adoption of qualitative methods in this study allowed the use of different kinds of data collection instruments to gather information, namely interviews, document analysis and observation. The researcher collected data using hand-written notes, observation, and tape-recorded interviews from all participants during official working hours. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, and all the participants were asked to review the transcripts for verification and to sign the agreement form, allowing the researcher to use the interview data.

3.6.1 Interviews

The interview is a widely used tool to access people's experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes and feelings of reality (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Based on the degree of structuring, interviews can generally be classified under four categories: structured, semi-structured, unstructured and focus group interviews (Gratton and Jones, 2004). The study used focus group and semi-structured interviews. An interview is viewed as a two-person conversation which is initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information as suggested by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The interview was the most ideal for this study since it enabled the production of in-depth data, in this case on the implementation of the national Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in high school. The interviews allowed

the researcher to get close to the data and to get first-hand information about the social world in question, thus enabling the researcher to understand the definitions, concepts and meanings that respondents attributed to their social world (Manga, 1996:42). Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Life Orientation (LO) teachers, principals and focus group interviews were conducted with the learners (see appendices G, H and I).

3.6.2 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were held with learners in two grades: 11 and 12 (three learners from each grade). Kreuger (1988:18) defines a focus group as “carefully planned discussions designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.” The recommended number of people per focus group is usually six to ten (MacIntosh, 1993), or as few as four (Kitzinger, 1995).

The number of participants depends on the objectives of the research (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). For example, smaller groups of 4-6 are preferable when the participants have a great deal to share about the topic, or have had lengthy experiences with the topic of discussion (Kreuger, 1988).

It is for that reason that focus group interviews were selected so that learners would discuss their perceptions of the Life Orientation (LO) programmes as a subject in a friendly, positive and non-threatening environment. This study included six focus group interviews; six groups of six learners per school in Grades 11 and 12 were interviewed in order to gain an understanding of their perceptions of the Life Orientation (LO) programmes.

The researcher noticed that focus group interviews allowed interaction between participants that highlighted their view of the world, the language they used about the issue in question, and their values and beliefs about the situation (Kitzinger, 1995). In this research it was used as a complement to other methods (Morgan, 1998), especially in triangulation with the individual interviews with the educators. In the focus group interviews the researcher had less control over the data produced; she had to allow the participants to comment on the topic and express their opinions

while having little control over the interaction other than keeping participants focused on the topic, as suggested by Morgan (1998).

The interviews were conducted in all six selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District. Thirty-six learners in focus groups of six were interviewed. The researcher facilitated the interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed, and notes were also taken for cross-checking purposes.

In this study an interview guide was used in the focus group discussions to guide the interaction between the participants. Lofland and Lofland (1984) agree that interview guides ensure the good use of limited time, they make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive, and they help to keep interactions focused.

At some schools the participants brought up issues that were not necessarily the focus of the study, and the researcher had to intervene to redirect the group's focus to the main objective of the interview. This study also found that in the focus group interviews it may take a lot of time to discuss just one question. However, Stewart and Shamdasani (1992) suggest that questions be ordered from the more general to the more specific, and that questions of greater importance be asked early, while those of a lesser significance be asked near the end. In this study, the interview guide was designed in this way (see appendix G).

Each interview began as Kreuger (1988:80) suggests, with the welcome, overview of the topic, ground rules and group members introducing themselves. Stewart and Shamdasani (1992) assert that it is a good idea to have group members introduce themselves and say a little about themselves. The researcher introduced herself first, welcomed the participants, provided the overview of the topic, stated the rules and asked the participants to briefly introduce themselves. All group interviews were conducted in a friendly way and conducive atmosphere, and there were no interruptions of any kind.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews facilitated direct interaction between the researcher and the Life Orientation (LO) teachers and principals. The interview format allowed the

researcher to collect rich, descriptive data from information-rich informants that provided an in-depth understanding of high school teachers' implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in the Fort Beaufort District.

According to Powney and Watt (1987), the semi-structured interview is a respondent interview in which interviewers have their "shopping list" of topics to which they want to get responses, but they are free in arranging the questions, in their wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics.

The semi-structured interview procedure first allowed the researcher to ask a series of structured questions before going deeper by using open-ended questions in order to obtain more data and allow respondents to express themselves (Borg and Gall, 1996). As a data gathering technique, the semi-structured interview's flexibility and adaptability permitted the researcher to probe for deeper responses, follow up leads, elaborate on original responses, obtain additional and more detailed data, and clarify answers (Borg and Gall, 1996; Creswell, 2007; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1989).

This study used interview guides during interviews with all the participants: learners, teachers and school principals (see appendices, G, H and I). Interview guides enabled the researcher to get all her questions answered within a limited time in a systematic way. Interview guides were used and, where necessary, probes and follow-ups were made in order to get more of the information needed. It is generally best to tape-record interviews and later transcribe these tapes for analysis. Hoepfl (1997) adds that tape-recordings have the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes might, and can make it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview. Further, whether one relies on written notes or a tape recorder appears to be largely a matter of personal preference (Hoepfl, 1997). For instance, Patton (1990:348) suggests that a tape recorder is "indispensable", while Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons because of the intrusiveness of recording devices and the possibility of technical failure. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) caution that jotting notes while conducting an interview will result in poor notes and also detract from the development of rapport between interviewer and interviewee. Development of rapport and dialogue is essential in interviews.

In this study, interviews were tape-recorded and all recordings of the sessions were transcribed in narrative form with identification made of each interviewee. A few notes were also taken to supplement the tape recorder or to be used in case there was any technical failure or other unanticipated problems with the recording devices. Fortunately, there was no problem with the tape recording devices and all the tapes used during the interviews are available on request

The use of an interview provided the researcher with a desirable combination of objectivity and depth, which permitted her to gather valuable data that might not have been possible to obtain successfully by any other method (Borg and Gall, 1996). Through face-to-face interviews, the researcher was able to informally validate the data immediately through non-verbal cues, including facial expressions and tones of the voice. Nachmias and Nachmias (1989) argue that the flexibility, adaptability and human interaction which are the interview's unique strength, also allow for subjectivity and possible bias, which are the interview's weaknesses.

In this study, interviews were conducted at the place of work. For example, all the teachers and the principals were interviewed at their places of work at times decided prior to the interviews.

3.6.4 Observations

Observation is another major means of collecting data in qualitative research. Observation is an essentially qualitative style. Marshall and Rossman (1999) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study". It offers first-hand accounts of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and documentary analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated. In qualitative research, there are two main types of observation: simple observation, where the researcher remains an outsider observer, and participant observation, where the researcher is simultaneously a member of the group under study (Sherman and Webb, 1991). In this study the researcher adopted the simple observation method to collect data from schools on the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum by high school teachers. The researcher listened to and observed (one

lesson per school) how teachers implemented the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in the classroom and how learners responded. The researcher recorded observations on a specially constructed data sheet.

This data collection method allowed directness. Participants were not asked about their views, feelings or attitudes; they were listened to and watched while doing what they normally do. Observation was used to explore questions that were uncomfortable for participants to discuss. Data from observation contrasted with, and complemented, information obtained by interviews and document analysis. Observation involved no artificiality, which is all too rare with other techniques (Handen *et al.*, 1998). Observation allowed the researcher to record behaviours as they occurred, and the researcher, being an outsider, saw phenomena in the situation which those people involved in it would probably have taken for granted (Cohen *et al.*, 1999; Tuckman, 1994).

However, a practical problem with observation is that it is time-consuming. There is also the challenge of knowing what the problem would have been like if it had not been observed. The researcher may be seen as intrusive. The researcher may not have good attending and observing skills and this may affect the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2002:123). The researcher of this study spoke to the teachers before the lesson started so that she would not be seen as an intruder.

The six selected Life Orientation (LO) teachers were observed in the classrooms to find out how they incorporated Life Orientation (LO) programmes in their teaching, and how learners reacted. One lesson conducted by each of the six interviewed teachers was observed. Using this data collection method, the researcher was able to observe the school and classroom environments, learners' seating arrangement, classroom management on the part of the Life Orientation (LO) teachers, and their teaching strategies. The instrument allowed the researcher to observe learners' participation and teacher-to-learner interaction as well as the use of material resources (see appendix K).

3.6.5 Document analysis

Document analysis is unobtrusive and non-reactive, and can yield a lot of data about the values and beliefs of participants in their natural settings (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Analysis of documents in this study complemented interviews and classroom observation in the data collection process. Document analysis helped to answer questions that the interviews could not address.

In this research, documents were analysed, partly in order to fill gaps that were left by the interviews and observation methods. Document analysis also provided the researcher with the opportunity to verify some identified issues with the respondents during the later interviews, and thus minimised the risk of imposing personal inferential interpretations of what was found in the documents (Chisaka and Vakalisa, 2000).

The study reviewed documents relevant to the study, which included lesson plans, and learners' and teachers' profiles (see appendix J). Information from these documents provided data that supplemented the data gained through interviews and observation. These documents were randomly selected and approached with a critical mind.

According to Creswell, (2003) several criticisms against document analysis methods are sometimes raised. Due to its social context and identity, the researcher may render a selective and biased understanding of a document and may even deliberately choose and select particular documents. Authors of documents may decide to record or leave out information on a basis informed by the social, political and economic environment of which they are part. However, the researcher of this study was conscious of these points. Therefore, as a basis for comparing Life Orientation (LO) teaching and learning against the benchmark set out in the National curriculum statement (NCS), the lesson plans, and teacher's and learners' files were analysed using the NCS guidelines for Life Orientation (LO).

Other documents which were analysed were learners' note books, to get information on the frequency of written work and the amount of work allocated by teachers to

students, as well as the regularity of such assigned work. Data were also sought on the consistency of the teachers' marking of work.

3.7 NEGOTIATING ENTRY TO THE RESEARCH SITES

The researcher sought permission to carry out the study from the Provincial Department of Education. Furthermore, the researcher sought permission from the principals of each school selected to arrange the dates for conducting the interviews. The researcher, although not a South African, did not find it difficult to interact with the participants. The use of English as the language of learning and teaching in high schools meant that local languages did not present a great problem for the researcher.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were coded systematically according to specific concepts and themes: teachers' qualifications and experience, in-service training programmes provided for LO teachers, materials used by LO teachers, implementation of LO, support mechanisms available for LO teachers, and monitoring strategies for LO teaching.

The themes were then analysed to address the main question which seeks to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum by high school teachers. The researcher compared the information from the interviews with the information from document analysis and observation.

Analysing data in qualitative research involves the following steps (Leedy and Ormrod (2005).

- Organising all data into small units of information like sentences, individual words or stories,
- Getting the sense of what the small units of information are saying and identifying categories and themes,
- Interpretation of single instances.

- Identification of patterns
- Synthesis and generalisation (ibid.).

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:99), qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and interactive (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysing and reporting are intertwined, not merely a number of separate, successive steps.

This study began the process of data analysis by transcribing *verbatim* audio-taped interviews. The results were cross-checked with the participants. The raw data from the interview was coded so as to come up with data sets. Responses were treated according to research questions the respondents were responding to. The researcher also referred to the transcriptions, and arranged the data listed under each research question. By so doing the researcher was able to compile data sets for each research question. The study also came up with inductive themes related to each question. The same process was used to analyse data obtained through observation and document analysis.

Indications of the number of participants who responded in one way or another are not intended as a basis for generalisation of the findings.

3.9 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE STUDY

In an effort to establish and maintain the trustworthiness of the results of this study, necessary procedures were employed. There are a variety of procedures which can be followed to establish the credibility of a study. For example: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness of the study is in part established when findings reflect as closely as possible the meanings as described by the participants (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln and

Guba, 1985). This study employed member checking, dependability and confirmability procedures to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

3.9.1 Member checking

Member checking is the process of going back to the participants to see if the analysis/interpretation makes sense to them and reflects their experiences (Creswell, 2003, 2007). The researcher went back to ask the teachers who participated in the study to comment on whether or not they felt the data had been interpreted in a manner congruent with their own experiences. Padgett (1998) pointed out that it is an important strategy that gives authority to the participants' perspective to manage the threat of bias. It also helps in establishing confidence in the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Member checking allowed participants to review findings from the data, thus they were able to confirm, and to challenge the accuracy of the work (Creswell, 2003).

3.9.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to that which can be readily believed, on the grounds of rigorous evidence or argument, authority, and so on. To enhance the credibility of the research findings, the researcher made use of both types of triangulation: multiple data sources (teachers, learners and principals) and multiple forms of data (observation and relevant documents in addition to individual interviews and focus groups). The researcher also kept notes on research decisions made, coded data, and used member checking to verify findings and enhance credibility (Maree, 2007).

3.9.3 Dependability and confirmability

Dependability is analogous to reliability. Confirmability is a technique used as a means of showing that clean data were collected so as to overcome method boundedness (Cohen and Manion, 1994) and by which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others, thus enhancing their dependability.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), both dependability and confirmability can be determined by way of a properly managed inquiry audit in which reviewers examine

both the research process and the product of the research for consistency. Dependability and confirmability can both be achieved by clearly stating research procedures and providing evidence of raw data (Henning, 1995). To ensure the dependability and confirmability of this study, the researcher has quoted liberally from the data, and has systematically stored the audio cassettes containing the raw individual and focus group interviews, the typed transcripts, and the final draft of the research project for verification by any interested individual.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study sought the approval of participants from all relevant bodies, including the Provincial Department of Education, school principals and teachers prior to the commencement of data collection. Consent was obtained from all the participants to take part in the study by informing all the participants about the purpose and methods of the research study in a way that was likely to be clear and understandable to them (Erlandson *et al.*, 1993:155).

All participants signed a consent form provided in the University of Fort Hare Postgraduates Qualification Policies and Procedures booklet (2010). Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time since their participation was voluntary. Privacy, confidentiality and the use of participants' time were at all times respected. Care was also taken to ensure that participants' interests were not jeopardised in any way. The entire study was conducted according to the Research Code of Ethics as provided in the University of Fort Hare Postgraduates Qualification Policies and Procedures, Faculty of Education (2010).

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodology adopted in this study. The study was located in an interpretivist paradigm which enabled the researcher to obtain data directly from the subjects themselves by sitting with the respondents and hearing their views, voices, perceptions, opinions, interpretations and expectations with regard to the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in high schools.

Hence, the researcher was able to identify several attitudes and actions that might escape researchers using other methods. Case study research design was adopted in the study in order to get in-depth information about what was actually happening in each school. The researcher purposefully selected respondents who she felt sure would give informed, quality and reasonable responses. The researcher was thus able to gather rich, detailed data of a qualitative nature through basic individual interviews, focus groups, classroom observation and document analysis. Data collected were analysed inductively so that themes and patterns were derived. The next chapter will present the findings obtained through the use of the stated methodology.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data gathered by the methods outlined in Chapter 3, with respect to five major themes: teachers' qualifications and experience, in-service training programmes provided for LO teachers, materials used by LO teachers, the implementation of LO, support mechanisms available for LO teachers, and monitoring strategies for LO teaching.

This study endeavoured to respond to the main research question, which sought to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District. The data presented in this chapter were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews, focus group discussions, observations and analysis of documents such as the National Curriculum Statement (NC S), Life Orientation (LO), and teachers' and learners' files.

The participants were: six Life Orientation (LO) teachers, six school principals and 36 Grade 11 and 12 learners in six purposively selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District (six focus groups of six learners each).

The participants are identified as follows: Focus groups (FG1-FG6), the LO teachers (T1-T6), the school principals (P1-P6) and the high schools (S1-S6). The coding of the participants is school-matched, as presented in the table below. For instance, FG1, T1 and P1 are all from School 1 (S1); FG2, T2 and P2 are from S2, and so on.

Table 4.1 The coding of the participants

School	Focus Group	Teacher	Principal
S1	FG1	T1	P1
S2	FG2	T2	P2
S3	FG3	T3	P3
S4	FG4	T4	P4
S5	FG5	T5	P5
S6	FG6	T6	P6

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The chapter begins with an analysis of the biographical data of the participants. This provides a picture of the various demographical subgroups represented among the interviewees, such as age categories, qualifications and years of experience.

In this study, the biographical data were used as a rough index of the maturity of respondents by virtue simply of age, and of their competency by virtue of qualification and experience

4.2.1 Gender distribution of participants

Table 0.2. Distribution of males and females

Gender	Principals	Percentages	Teachers	Percentages
Males	4	66.7	2	33.3
Females	2	33.3	4	66.7
Total	6	100	6	100

Table 1 shows that there were 6 principals and 6 teachers. Of the 6 principals, 4 were males while two were females. Of the 6 teachers, 2 were males and 4 were females. The data indicate that within the study population of this research, that is, in the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District, there were more female teachers teaching Life Orientation (LO). This could be attributed to the fact that more female teachers were trained to teach Life Orientation (LO). Of the only two male teachers in the study, only one was trained, while the other was co-opted into Life Orientation (LO) teaching by his principal. Also, it can be partly attributed to the fact that there are more female teachers than male in most of the selected schools.

4.2.2 Age ranges of participants

Table 0.3 Age ranges of teachers

Age range	Principals	Percentages	Teachers	Percentages
30-39	1	16.7	1	16.7
40-49	4	66.7	4	66.7
50-59	1	16.7	1	16.7
Total	6	100	6	100

As reflected in Table 2 above, the majority of the teachers interviewed (four) were in the age range 40-49 years. The other two were in the age ranges 30-39 and 50-59. This probably simply reflects the fact that the teachers were selected purposively on the basis of experience in the teaching of LO

4.2.3 Qualifications and experience of participants

The qualifications of the participant principals and teachers are presented according to their professional qualifications and qualifications in LO specialization. Years of experience are presented in terms of length of service and more specifically, in terms of experience in LO specialisation. These findings are presented below in Tables 3,

4, 5 and 6. Table 3 shows the professional qualifications of the LO teachers and principals.

Table 0.4: Professional qualifications of teachers

Highest Qualification	Principals	Percentages	Teachers	Percentages
BEd.(HON)	2	33.3	1	16.7
BEd.	2	33.3	1	16.7
BA	1	16.7	0	0
CE/STD/ACE	0	0	2	33.3
HED	0	0	1	0
DE	1	16.7	1	16.7
Total	6	100	6	100

The study sought to establish the highest academic qualifications of the participating principals and teachers, and it was revealed that two of the principals had Bachelor of Education (Honours) degrees. Another two had Bachelor of Education degrees, one principal had a Bachelor of Arts degree, and one had a Diploma in Education. The table also indicates that only two of the participating LO teachers had degrees (one also had an Honours degree). The others had diplomas or certificates.

4.2.3.1 Qualifications to teach LO

One of the key factors influencing the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in schools is the qualification of teachers in the subject area. To be able to teach LO in South Africa schools, a teacher should possess a minimum of the relevant Advanced Certificate in Education (LO), or an undergraduate course in Psychology (South African Draft policy on minimum requirements for teacher

education qualifications (2010:32-33). The study reveals that some teachers in the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District did not have the necessary qualifications to implement the Life Orientation curriculum in schools.

Table 0.5: Qualifications of teachers to teach LO

LO specialization	Number	Percentages
ACE	2	33.3
Psychology	2	33.3
Others	2	33.3
Total	6	100

Two teachers had Advanced Certificates in Education, which is one of the required qualifications for teachers who are already teaching Life Orientation. The same number of teachers had qualifications in Psychology (Psychology as part of their B.Ed.), which also qualifies them to teach LO. Two of the teachers had general qualifications in Education, which are required for admission to the profession, but do not specifically qualify teachers to teach LO.

Some of the principals interviewed stated that ACE (LO) and Psychology are the basic requirements for teaching Life Orientation. Principals P1 and P2 had this to say:

P1: *“LO requires that the teacher must have an ACE, but Psychology is also applicable for LO teaching. Due to the newness of the course and inadequate Psychology graduates, the Department of Education offers in-service training and courses provided by Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare. Some of the LO teachers in this school have a Diploma in Psychology; others have general training in education.”*

P2: *“Since LO is a new course, the Department introduced a two-year course to issue the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) for LO teachers. The LO teacher in my school was trained; she had an ACE qualification.”*

The positions of these principals on teachers’ qualification for teaching LO are in line with the Draft Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education, which requires that student-teachers specializing in LO should take a combination at least two of the fields of sociology, psychology, philosophy, political science, labour or

industrial studies. However, it is also required that psychology must be one of the two optional fields.

Some of the interviewed principals did not agree totally with the idea of LO teachers being required to have an ACE LO before they can teach LO. They were of the opinion that teachers with general education training and life experience are able to teach LO. P5 and P6 respectively had this to say:

“LO is a new subject, so not all teachers have the ACE. The teachers are able to teach LO because it is life experiences, academic background notwithstanding.”

“One of the teachers here was trained for LO. Others were not, but have to teach because of the number of learners. These other teachers have general teachers’ training and they are able to teach LO because they have a general knowledge of life.”

This research has thus established that while LO teachers are expected to have qualifications either in Psychology or an Advanced Certificate in Education (LO) before they are qualified to teach LO, the fact is that this is a “new” learning area, and there are not enough teachers as yet trained to be specialists in this learning area. This compels schools to use generally trained teachers to teach LO.

4.2.3.2 Teaching experience of teachers

The study sought to ascertain the teaching experience of the interviewed teachers, although this was not in itself part of the research focus. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 0.6: Teaching experience of teachers

Teaching experience	Number	Percentage %
1-5	2	33.3
6-10	1	16.7
11-15	2	33.3
20 years and above	1	16.7

Table 5 above shows that two teachers had teaching experience of 1-5 years. Two had worked as teachers for 11-15 years, while the other two had 6-10 years and more than 20 years respectively. Although not part of the research design, the “sample” included an equal number of teachers with less than, and more than, ten years of teaching experience

4.2.3.3 Years’ experience of teachers in teaching Life Orientation

In addition to years of teaching experience, the years of experience of teachers *in teaching LO* was also analysed, and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 0.7: Experience of teachers in teaching Life Orientation

Experience in teaching LO	Number	Percentages
Less than 1 year	1	16.7
1-5	1	16.7
5-10	4	66.7
Total	6	100

Table 6 above shows that the majority of teachers (four) had 5-10 years experience of teaching LO. One teacher had 1-5 years, and one was teaching LO for the first time.

Teachers who have had 5-10 years of teaching experience in LO are likely to have more general teaching experience compared with those with fewer (1-5 years) years of teaching LO. The study sought to establish the teaching experience of teachers in teaching LO because of the influence this might have on their implementation of the LO curriculum. Teachers with little experience might be less likely to know how to handle some of the challenges of implementation as they arise, whereas the more experienced teachers might be better equipped to handle such challenges as a result of precedents. Data gathered from teachers and observation revealed that teachers who had been teaching LO for over five years had more experiences on which they could draw than those who had relatively fewer years.

4.3 FINDINGS ON LO IMPLEMENTATION: IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMMES PROVIDED FOR LO TEACHERS AND HOW THEY FOUND SUCH TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The study sought to find out about the in-service training provided for LO teachers from the participants. T1 affirmed that:

“I have not received any in-service training from the Department of Education, because I was not teaching LO before in my former school, but because of the learners’ population I had to start teaching LO when I got here early this year.”

An interview with T5 revealed that although she had taught for more than three years, she had not attended any in-service training that had been beneficial to her LO teaching. She lamented that she had just been teaching without knowing whether what she was doing was right or not:

“I do not know the best way to teach LO because I was never trained to teach LO, and there isn’t any form of guidance from the subject advisor”.

T2, T3 and T6, on the other hand, had all received relevant training provided under the auspices of the Department of Education:

T2: *“I did the ACE [LO] qualification, and the programme was enriching.”*

T3: *“I had the NCS training, HIV/AIDS and Inclusive Education. All the trainings were beneficial.”*

T6 concurred: *“There are some workshop programmes provided to us LO teachers by the Department of Education. I find them motivating and [they] may instill a lot of innovation and understanding the importance of the subject as well.”*

T4 had also received some training; however, he complained that the duration of the workshops he had attended was too short.

In the interviews with the participating principals, all of them confirmed that the LO teachers at their schools had received some training from the Department of Education towards the teaching of LO. As P5 said:

“The LO teachers have a professional teachers’ degree and a secondary teachers’ diploma. They also attended the workshops organized by the Department of Education.”

P3 and P4, however, confirmed T4’s point about the training being too brief:

P3: *“Teachers were trained by the Department of Education, but the duration was too short to make any difference.”*

P4: *“The LO teacher in my school attended the workshop training by the Department of Education, but it was only for one day. If those trainings can take a longer period – for a week, not one day – they would have been effective.”*

Worth noting was a contradiction in School 1 regarding the in-service training. While the teacher stated that he had not received in-service training by the Department of Education, the principal claimed that all the LO teachers in the school had received the training.

A concern was raised in a discussion held with teachers that some LO subject advisers did not come to visit schools, and had ignored LO despite two of the LO teachers not having been trained. Some school principals confirmed that LO subject advisers had not been to their schools for the past three years. This is an indication that the needs of LO teachers are not properly addressed. It was not only teachers who stressed the need for better training and support for LO teachers. Principals 3 and 4 stated:

“The Department of Education needs to do more in the area of training, visitation and funds.” (P3)

“There is a need for different subject workshops because it is not adequate. The Department should provide more funds and workshops for LO teachers.” (P4)

It emerged that in-service training is a very essential component in the delivery of quality education, so that teachers can get continuing training in areas such as LO teaching methodology in order to upgrade their skills and knowledge. The majority of the participants expressed the need for beneficial and longer training in LO teaching. Most of them appealed for workshops to be organised for the LO teachers by the Department of Education so that they would be able to teach LO effectively, implement and achieve the objectives as outlined in the curriculum.

4.3.1 Relationship of the Department of Education in-service training course content to LO

Information was sought on how well the Department of Education in-service training related to what the LO teachers were expected to teach.

Some LO teachers stated that the Department of Education in-service training was indeed relevant to what they were teaching:

T2: *“The workshop content is very relevant to what I am now teaching in LO, because I was trained how to teach learners about life.”*

T4: *“It is very relevant and essential, if I may add, for it enables me to understand why learners respond the way they do.”*

T3 and T6 also confirmed that the in-service training was relevant to what they were teaching; however, these respondents stated that they would want to be retrained, as the training they had received was not long enough.

On the other hand, some other LO teachers interviewed stated that they had not received any in-service training in LO from the Department of Education. They responded that they were trained as Business Studies and Life Science teachers respectively.

T1 commented: *“...totally different from what I am now teaching in LO because I was trained to teach Business Studies, the course content of which is not the same as LO. I have not been trained by the Department of Education, but I was asked to teach LO because of the number of learners and shortage of trained LO teachers.”*

T5 concurred: *“I have not received the in-service training of the Department Education. I was trained as a Life Science teacher, but shortages of trained teachers in LO make me to teach Life Orientation, which I was never trained for.” These two course contents are different.”*

In summary, it is clear that whereas for the LO teachers who had been trained, the course content was relevant to what they were teaching in LO, for those who had been trained to teach subjects other than LO, and who had not received any Department of Education in-service LO training, they had in effect been left to fend for themselves.

4.4 MATERIALS USED BY THE LO TEACHERS

The study sought to investigate the materials used by the LO teachers in the schools selected, since sources, availability and quality of material resources are likely to affect the full implementation of the LO curriculum.

Table 0.8: LO Teaching/learning materials available in the schools

Schools	LO Teaching/learning materials available in the schools
S1	<i>Textbooks, Government-developed teaching files</i>
S2	<i>Textbooks, posters</i>
S3	<i>Textbooks, charts</i>
S4	<i>Textbooks, newspapers</i>
S5	<i>Textbooks, magazines, pictures</i>
S6	<i>Chalk, blackboard, textbook, games (box, ropes, tapes, music player) music player is used to demonstrate the issue of peer pressure</i>

Table 7 reveals textbooks as the most frequently reported LO teaching and learning materials in schools. However, other materials and equipment such as government-developed teaching files, posters, charts, magazines and newspapers were also available in small quantities at some schools. Also, materials and equipment that were needed for Physical Education activities such as balls, ropes, roller hoops, bean bags, bottle tops, rulers and playgrounds were not available at some schools.

4.4.1 Sources of LO materials

The study sought to find out about the sources of LO teaching material.

T1 affirmed: *“Government provides the materials through the Department of Education.”*

T2 and T3 said much the same.

T5 was of the opinion that: *“The teacher provides materials with learners’ support. The school also buys textbooks.”*

T4 agreed: *“Textbooks are provided by the school. I also source for relevant materials for LO teaching; magazines and newspapers”,* as did T6, who also mentioned the contribution of learners themselves: *“The school buys the materials and learners also bring some of these materials.”*

The principals concurred that the Department of Education has been assisting in the area of the provision of teaching materials. As P1 stated: *“The school, through the Department, provides textbooks for LO teaching.”*

Some of the principals also commented that the teachers and learners also provided materials for LO:

P5: *“The teacher provides materials with the learners’ support. The school also buys textbooks.”*

P6: *“These [textbooks] are provided by the school, and teachers source for extra materials.”*

4.4.2 Availability of textbooks and other teaching materials in LO

The study sought to find out about the availability of textbooks and other teaching materials used in LO. It was discovered during lesson observation that many learners and teachers did not have textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. In most of the schools visited, there was an inadequacy of textbooks. For this reason, learners in some of the schools shared textbooks in a ratio of 2:1, and in the worst cases, ratios of 5:1 were observed. The challenges around teaching and learning materials were expressed during the interviews with teachers in the selected schools.

T5 pointed out: *“Materials and textbooks are not adequate. The reason is that learners do not return textbooks given to them at the end of the year when they are leaving, which leads to a shortage of these textbooks every year. Currently, learners in this school share LO textbooks in a ratio of 5:1.”*

T1 confirmed this: *“The materials are not adequate. The textbooks are not enough for teachers; for instance, the three LO teachers in the school share one textbook. Also, learners’ textbooks are different from the teacher’s copy and are not adequate. Because of the shortages of materials, learners share textbooks.”*

However, because of inadequate materials, some teachers have opted to use local materials to improvise for teaching materials. The following is a comment from T5 in this regard:

“Materials and textbooks are not adequate. I go around to colleagues in other schools to get materials. At times I use magazines, newspapers, posters and so on for teaching LO because we do not have enough teaching materials.”

The lack of adequate materials was also noted by learners themselves. This was evident in one of the focus group interviews, where Grade 11 learners suggested that the school should buy more textbooks. The following responses were recorded in FG1:

“The teacher faces the problem of a shortage of textbooks in our school. We do not have enough textbooks; this makes learners to share. When the learner that is keeping the textbook does not come to school, the other learners suffer and this wastes the teacher’s time.”

They further stated: *The government should buy more textbooks for learners.”*

FG5 concurred that: *“Teachers and learners do not have enough textbooks and other learning materials. This makes learning difficult.”*

Both interviews and observation revealed that some teachers were improvising and had become resourceful in implementing the LO curriculum. As was evident in this section, the teachers were improvising because LO teaching materials were not adequate.

It can be argued that if the Department of Education does not provide enough funds to buy the needed materials, and considering the fact that some of the teachers were not trained to teach LO, teachers may get frustrated and lose interest. This was evident in the interview responses of teachers where one of them (T1) stated that he felt frustrated with teaching LO because there were so many problems:

“Teaching LO is frustrating because of the challenges of inadequate teaching materials, lack of support from colleagues, and lack of training.”

This sounds very serious coming from a teacher, and shows the negative attitude that a particular teacher has developed towards LO; an attitude that may be felt by others.

However, some LO teachers stated that on the contrary, they found that there were at least adequate *teaching* materials for LO. As T2 pointed out:

“There are many textbooks on LO at the school because LO is new. Many new books came as samples for teachers. They are adequate because there are many books available for use, but learners’ textbooks are not adequate.”

T3 concurred: *“Textbooks are adequate. Because we are under Section 21, we get money from the Government to buy textbooks. Textbooks are available for learners, but they are not enough, especially Grade12.”*

On the whole, the interviewed principals supported the views of the LO teachers:

P1: *“The materials are adequate for teaching LO. As a principal, my concerns are supply of textbooks and practical materials like scales, slabs and so on. The Department makes a direct deposit into the school account, and we buy textbooks for our learners and teachers with the funds.”*

P2: *“The school ensures an adequate supply of textbooks.”*

The problems around textbook and materials supply seem complex, and vary from one school to another, as the following comments from the other interviewed principals indicate:

P3: *“There is a challenge this year because we did not get funds timely from Government. Ordering of textbooks takes time, because the demands from the Eastern Cape are high.”*

P4: *“Textbooks are not enough, so learners share textbooks in the ratio 2:1.”*

P5: *“Textbooks used to be adequate, but learners do not return copies given to them, and this makes the textbooks not to be adequate.”*

P6: *“The textbooks are adequate, but other materials like sport equipment are not enough.”*

This means that the LO curriculum is probably not being implemented fully in many schools, as even the teachers who commented that teaching and learning materials in LO are available, nevertheless agreed that these materials were insufficient. Discussion with all the participants (principals, teachers and learners) revealed a consensus that adequate teaching and learning materials are absolutely essential to the effective implementation of LO curriculum.

4.4.3 The quality of textbooks for LO

Participants were asked to comment on the quality of textbooks for LO in schools. It was revealed that teachers used different textbooks in the selected Fort Beaufort District schools. They compared books, and used the one that best treated the topic they were dealing with. One of the participant teachers said that some textbooks were not relevant to life issues. The following is T1’s comment in this regard:

“The teachers’ textbook is very qualitative. So also, learners’ textbooks are straightforward. There are enough examples, and [they] are easy to understand.”

T2 and T3 confirmed what T1 stated by pointing out that:

“It is not bad, most of them are good. Most of the textbooks’ qualities are determined by the particular topic.” (T2)

“The textbooks are good. I use different textbooks, so I compare the textbooks and use the one that best treats the topic I want to teach, and sometimes I use more than one textbook for a topic.” (T3)

However, some LO teachers had different opinions about the quality of the textbooks. The following is the comment on the quality of textbooks from T4:

“Some of the textbooks are not up-to-date, and not very relevant to the life situations of learners.”

T5 stated: *“Some of the available textbooks are not of good standard; I do not have the recommended textbooks used by teachers in my cluster. I have to borrow books from other teachers in other schools.”*

In the interviews with principals, they were asked to shed more light on this question.

The majority of the principals concurred that the LO textbooks are generally of good quality.

P1 affirmed that: *“The textbooks are of good quality. Teachers have numerous copies of textbooks from different publishers, so they are able to get the best materials to teach.”*

This was supported by P2 and P6:

“Quality varies. Some textbooks are good, but do not have enough content and vice versa. But teachers have access to many books on LO from different publishers.”

“The textbooks are good; they contain enough examples and simple language that are easy to understand.”

However, some of the participant principals argued that some LO textbooks are not up to standard. The following were the actual words of P5, who disclosed that:

“Some of the textbooks are not up to standard, so teachers need to make up for them.”

P4 added: *“It depends on the publishers. The texts are not the same; what you do not get in one you can get in another. Some have activities, but no information, and vice versa.”*

P3 stated that it is difficult to describe the quality of textbooks since the publishers all have different approaches. He said it is only the examiners who know the quality of textbooks, that teachers only use textbooks along with the syllabus.

The opinions of the learners were also sought, through the focus group interviews, on the quality of the textbook they were using. The majority of the learners agreed that the LO textbooks are simple to understand, have enough examples, and are of good quality.

As one learner from FG2 stated, while the other focus group members nodded in agreement: *“LO textbooks are good; we enjoy using these textbooks because they are easy to understand.”*

And from FG6: *“LO textbooks are written in simple English that we understand. Sometimes we ask our teacher to explain any word that we find difficult.”*

4.4.4 The extent to which shortages of teaching materials in LO affect the teaching and learning of LO

Data were sought on the extent to which shortages of LO teaching materials affect the teaching and learning of LO, as this is bound to have a bearing on the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. The following is T1’s comment in this regard:

“Lack of teaching and learning material in LO is a serious problem; it affects smooth co-ordination among teachers. The three LO teachers have to share one textbook. This consumes time and increases the teachers’ workload. Teachers are also forced to combine classes because the textbooks are not enough.”

This teacher added: *“Learners get weary of writing notes because they prefer to have their own textbooks for personal study. If the learner who is keeping the textbook is absent in school, it becomes a problem for the other ones to learn without the textbook.”*

T3 and T5 also complained about the time-consuming effects of a lack of textbooks:

“Inadequate textbooks consume teaching time because the teacher has to give notes and the learners take time to copy.”

“It takes time to finish the syllabus because we have to share textbooks. We need more time because there are many topics to cover in LO.”

On the other hand, some of the teachers interviewed stated that shortages of teaching and learning materials did *not* adversely affect the teaching of LO. T2 had this to say:

“It does not affect the teaching and learning much because the school has a photocopier machine, so textbooks are photocopied for learners. Also, textbooks are not the only source material for teaching LO. Learners’ involvement by the teacher is also another learning resource; for example, bringing some learners out during the course of teaching to illustrate a particular topic.”

T 4 and T6 agreed:

“Shortages of teaching and learning materials do not affect learning because I make up with extra materials outside of textbooks, like relevant newspapers and magazines.”

“It is not ... a big gap, because most of the things in the textbooks are those they are exposed to in real life. Learners have other sources like the University of Fort Hare Library. So, inadequate textbooks do not have a serious bad impact on learning. Although it affects some learners when their partners holding the textbook are absent from class.”

In the focus group interviews, learners were asked to comment on how shortages of textbooks had affected their learning.

FG3, FG5 and FG6 all concurred with what their teachers had said about the inconvenience of a severe shortage of textbooks:

For instance, FG3 pointed out: *“We share textbooks and we are not happy about this because when we are given work after school hours, we have to go around for the assignment.”* [In order to have access to the few available textbooks, learners often visit the homes of other learners who are in possession of the textbooks.]

And FG6: *“Our teacher combines two classes because of a shortage of textbooks.”*

Nevertheless, some learners’ focus groups confirmed that inadequate textbooks did *not* affect the teaching of LO. As one of the learners from FG2, supported by the other members in the group, pointed out:

“We have a photocopier machine in our school. Our teacher makes copies for us, and we do not feel that textbooks are not adequate. Though we lose the copies easily.”

FG4 highlighted the resourcefulness of both teachers and learners: *“We use other materials like magazines, newspapers and visit the University of Fort Hare library to gather information.”*

In the interviews with principals, the majority asserted strongly that shortages of LO textbooks do affect the teaching and learning of LO in schools:

P1: *“Shortages affect the teaching and learning process, because learners should not depend on the educators alone, but also on their textbooks.”*

P3: *“It affects everybody and other subjects, because there is integration of LO into all other subjects. The learners suffer in this regard, as this affects their learning generally.”*

P4: *“It affects both the teachers and the learners. It slows down the rate of teaching and learning.”*

P5: *“Learners need to have textbooks, so that they see what they are being taught, and when they are given assignments it will be easy to do with their textbooks. Shortages of textbooks draw both the teachers and learners back and waste time.”*

P6: *“Shortages of LO materials affect the speed of the teaching and learning processes, and other activities of the learners like their homework.”*

However, one of the participant principals stated that he was not aware of shortages of textbooks because the LO teachers' needs were always taken care of:

“I am not aware of shortages with learning areas materials because teachers always make their needs known, and they are taken care of.”

On the other hand, it was revealed that one of the principals was not familiar with all that was going on in his school, as the LO teacher interviewed in his school was lamenting about the frustration caused by three teachers sharing one LO textbook. A lack of support on the part of the principal in this regard could be a reason why some teachers felt frustrated. In this instance, it was the principal who should have been responsible for all that was going on in the school, but he was not aware of the challenges some teachers faced in terms of LO teaching and learning materials.

Classroom observations also confirmed that shortages of teaching and learning materials in LO affected the implementation of the LO curriculum because sharing of textbooks by learners appeared to slow down the speed at which LO teachers could teach. Indications are that shortages of textbooks and other teaching materials affect both the learners and teachers. It is perceived by many to consume time and increase the teachers' workload.

4.4.5 Suggestions on the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials in LO which could assist in implementing the LO curriculum

Suggestions were offered by the participants on the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials for LO which could assist in implementing the LO curriculum.

Most of the suggestions revolved around provisioning. T1 made the following suggestion:

“The Principal and the Senior Management Team should inform the Department of the need for procurement of LO learning materials, so that Government could budget for the buying of major textbooks for LO teaching to meet the textbook shortage.”

T2 and T3 respectively stated:

“Universities around, especially the University of Fort Hare, can assist with booklets, e-booklets. The Department of Education should provide more money for purchasing more LO textbooks.”

“The school should mandate learners to pay for lost books or buy it themselves. Also, learners who lost textbooks should not be given their results, since the shortage is caused by learners not returning textbooks given to them.”

T5 wondered about the supply of textbooks specific to LO: *“Government used to furnish us with teaching aids in other subjects. I suggest they make these available for LO.”*

T6 felt that teachers could shoulder some responsibility for supplementing the under-supply of textbooks:

“LO teachers should source for relevant materials from colleagues and other sources to get needed materials. The Department of Education should release enough funds for buying LO teaching and learning materials.”

On the quality of materials, T4 had this to say:

“The textbooks’ content and relevancy should be reviewed by the publishers, since textbooks are lopsided with regard to information. Some topics like “stress” are under-treated, and other topics like “human-rights” have too much unnecessary information.”

All six principals echoed the call for the Department of Education to improve the supply of textbooks, or to provide more funds for acquiring teaching and learning materials. Only P3 commented more broadly:

“If books could arrive in time – ahead of the new calendar year. We also need an internet connection; it helps with updating information. A library will also help us to utilize available books in the school store so that learners can learn how to research, Many of them do not know how to open their textbooks to (appropriate) chapters.”
[The Principal opened a textbook.]

For their part, the learners in their various focus groups also agreed that more textbooks should be provided to schools by the Department of Education, to improve teaching and learning for both the teachers and the learners. The various

stakeholder groups consulted were thus largely in agreement about the need for Government to improve the supply of textbooks and other resources.

4.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF LO

4.5.1 Favourite subjects of LO teachers

The researcher sought to establish the favourite subjects of LO teachers. It is not unlikely that teachers' favourite subjects are usually the ones they were trained for, and that these are the ones they are most likely to be passionate about teaching. This may affect LO teaching and learning both positively and negatively - negatively perhaps where a teacher's favourite subject is a subject other than LO. Below is the information gathered in this regard from T1 and T5:

T1: *“Accounting and Business Studies are my favourite subjects, because I have a good foundation in them throughout my educational training, unlike LO which I am just teaching without training.”*

T5: *“Life Sciences and English. Life Science is my favourite, because I was trained for it, but it complements LO.”*

T3 also had this to say: *“My favourite subjects are Xhosa and LO. I like LO, but Xhosa is my favourite subject. This is because Xhosa is my home language and I was trained for it.”*

Nevertheless, some of the teachers were of contrary opinions; they indicated that LO was their favourite subject. Thus T2 stated: *“LO is my favourite subject. It is because LO is close to my heart.”*

T4 added: *“English, Social Science and LO. LO is dear to me, because of my past struggles and how I overcame them. I started smoking at the age of seventeen. My life became a mess, but thank God for His mercy that found me. I do not want these learners to experience the same thing.”*

It was established that participants had different favourite subjects for different reasons; several favoured other subjects because they were properly trained for those subjects and not for LO. But a number favoured LO because of its relevance to both the teachers and learners.

4.5.2 Experiences as LO teachers

Teachers' experiences in teaching Life Orientation can be referred to as the sum total of the information gathered, problems and challenges experienced and solved, and skills acquired by the teacher in the course of teaching LO in and outside of the classroom.

In this study, information was sought on the experiences of teachers in teaching LO. The following opinions were noted in the course of interviewing the participant teachers:

T4, T6 and T2 all stated that they enjoyed teaching LO. The following are their stated opinions:

"It is interesting. It makes me close to my learners and parents. Both learners and parents feel free to come to me and tell me about their problems." (T4)

"... most of the time (LO) is all about me, or somebody else sometimes; it addresses the problems that we meet in life. This makes both the teacher and the learners to be interested in LO, because they know that they are going to get problem-solving skills during LO class. They also know that if they have problems, they are able to voice it out and seek help from the LO teacher. I enjoy teaching LO because I like being with teenagers; I like to talk to them and I end up being a friend to them, so they are free to discuss anything concerning their lives." (T6)

"LO is an easy subject to deal with because learners can relate to it. LO is life, it is about ourselves and you cannot deprive anyone of life. LO brings me closer to my learners and helps me to learn from their experience. It helps me to know my learners' background, and brings me close to their families and communities and other support groups like the social work office." (T2)

T3 and T5 revealed the challenges they experienced as LO teachers, but at the same time they seemed proud of the work they did in response to these challenges:

"I have many challenges from the learners. My work is like a social worker. I have to deal with learners' problem. I have had to deal with issues of sexual abuse of a learner. I liaise with the Departments of Education, and Social Work [sic] and parents to resolve the problem. LO is very challenging because it deals with things that happen to the learners, which takes me out of the classroom." (T3)

"Sometimes it is hectic teaching LO with regard to topics. For example, there are a lot of emotional issues coming out of a topic. The section on "stress" brings up emotions and issues, and I had to stop and visit the community and social workers to help the learners." (T5)

Although several of the teachers responded that LO teaching was challenging, the same teachers also indicated that it was interesting and fulfilling. There were, however, some negative opinions with regard to teachers' experience. For instance,

T1 lamented: *"Teaching LO is frustrating because of the challenges of inadequate teaching materials, lack of support from colleagues and lack of training."*

T4 pointed out that *"...teaching LO is very challenging; there are times I have to go the extra mile of going home with learners who have personal problems, without asking for money to buy petrol in my car."*

The teachers' narration of their experiences of teaching LO indicate that some of them have mixed experiences because of the challenges they encounter and the extra burden that comes with teaching LO, which are not usually encountered in teaching other subjects. Some of the teachers felt it was a burden to combine the duties of being parents and LO teachers at the same time. They also made reference to the personal problems of learners and the consequent responsibility of teachers having to play the role of social workers; leaving their schools to visit the Department of Education, the Social Welfare office and learners' homes to address learners' problems of stress, sexual abuse and so on.

4.5.3 LO as a rewarding subject

The study also gathered information on whether participant teachers thought LO was a rewarding subject to teach.

T2, T3 and T5 stated that LO is a subject that concerns learners' needs as growing individuals. Their comments are as follow:

T2: *"It is rewarding. Teaching LO is concerned about how learners behave. It helps to show learners their limit, and helps them to make necessary changes in their lives."*

T3: *"It is (rewarding), because it is about life – it teaches learners to know about life."*

T5: *"LO changes and moulds children. It has helped the learners to determine a future they want while still in school."*

T6's comment draws attention to the LO teachers' influence:

“It is rewarding a lot, because, to understand these children takes a lot... Anytime I help a learner who is in need, I feel good because I have helped someone and a family – and the family is appreciative for this.”

In all of the cited comments above, it is clear from the teachers’ responses that teaching LO is rewarding for them because of its visible contributions to the lives of their learners. Also, one can conclude that most of teachers find the subject rewarding because teaching LO puts them in a position of influence and relationship with learners, parents and other social agents of society.

A contrary opinion was expressed by T4. He made the comment below in this regard:

“It is [rewarding] in a way. LO teaching helps the LO class to have a zero count in school teenage pregnancy a year after teenage pregnancy awareness. However, it can be frustrating, because feedback could be discouraging when learners go against the values taught in LO.”

The interviews with the majority of the participant principals also revealed that LO is a rewarding subject because it helps learners to determine their career while still in school. It helps learners to change the way they live their lives, and LO has helped to unite families. Many of the principals shared the view that LO encourages parents to come to school whenever they have problems with learners, and need to seek help from the school. The opinion that LO is a rewarding subject is also indicated through teachers’ sense of being appreciated when parents come to school to express appreciation for the changes in the lives of their children, partly as a result of the LO lessons taught in the schools.

However, it was also established that sometimes teachers feel frustrated because of the negative feedback they received from learners. Some of the teachers revealed that learners experimented with the information gained in LO class. For instance, some of them said they had indulged in drug abuse and sexual activities because these had been discussed in class, and so they had some awareness which aroused their curiosity. It was discovered that some girls had never used hard drugs until they were discussed in class.

4.5.4 The inclusion of Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum

The study sought the views of participant learners on whether they thought the inclusion of Life Orientation in the school curriculum was a good idea. The following are some of the focus groups' overwhelmingly positive comments on the inclusion of LO in the curriculum.

The comments quoted below represent the consensus of the group, as far as the researcher could judge. The researcher noted in the course of discussion that two, three or more members of the group usually agreed on the same point, although they expressed them differently. It was also noted that there were usually one or two different members who would be quiet in the group at any one time. Since it was not possible to be sure whether they agreed, dissented or were unsure/did not have an opinion, they are not mentioned; however, it would be best to remember that the statements reproduced here and in the rest of this chapter do not necessarily reflect the views of all the participant learners.

The following comments were made in FG1:

“Having LO as part of the school curriculum is great; we are enjoying it... It makes us to be aware about everything concerning life... It helps us understand the ways of life... It prepares us for the world so that when we finish school, we will be able to know how to deal with things...LO also helps teenagers to be aware of things they are expected to go through in life. This will enable them to be well acquitted about life [sic] and enable them to make right decisions.”

FG2: *“Through LO we have been warned about things we have not even experienced in life like sex, HIV/AIDS, career choice and so on ...LO teaches us how to take care of ourselves and to be responsible ...It is part of our lives; it boosts our knowledge about many things...We learn to cope with life and things that happen in our bodies during puberty.”*

FG3: *“Yes. It is good that LO is taught in schools as part of the school curriculum because it helps to develop knowledge about oneself and to acquire the skills needed to socialize with others ...Having LO as part of the school curriculum helps one develop positive attitudes toward physical activities and fitness.”*

FG6 saw LO as supplementing the parental or guardian role: *“Many parents find it hard to tell their children about the things that happen in their lives, like sex, relationships and drugs, but through LO these things are taught.”*

In this section, most of the comments showed learners' positive claims about LO. In their interviews, all of the participating teachers shared their learners' opinions,

though their comments often emphasized the moral influence on learners' values and behaviour.

For instance, the following comments were made by T2, T1 and T5 respectively:

"Yes, it is good to have LO in the curriculum, because LO is the umbrella of all the subjects. It is the foundation on which all the other subjects are built. It checks ... pregnancy rates among girls. It also helps in reducing quarrels among boys and girls."

"Yes, because LO affects learners' morals and physical bodies positively."

"Yes, it helps (learners) to respect themselves, parents and other people."

All the participating principals also shared similar views to those of the learners and teachers concerning the value of LO as part of the curriculum. The following comments were typical:

P4: *"Yes, LO teaches learners how to behave and live good lives. It prepares them for the future, to be able to differentiate between wrong and right. It also helps them to move away from dangerous things like drugs and alcohol, unsafe sex, and so on. LO gives learners guidance in life."*

P6 added that LO also helps to broaden the perspectives of learners, an important factor in schools in rural areas, or where learners are exposed to a limited range of ideas and thinking and cultural trends:

"... it is an eye opener for our learners in life. It helps the learners to approach life with more open minds."

There were almost unanimous indications from all three groups (learners, teachers and principals) that it is a good thing to include LO as part of the school curriculum because it seems to be the foundation for learners' learning since it can influence all the other aspects of their immediate and future lives.

4.5.5 Values that the LO programme is expected to foster in learners, and have they acquired them?

The views of participants were sought on values that the LO programme is expected to foster in learners. Participants were also asked to state if they thought the learners in their schools had acquired these values partly as a result of the LO lessons they were receiving. Examples of values that were mentioned by the participants were

respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, perseverance, trust, loving each other, 'Ubuntu', sharing, values that check the problem of xenophobia, and so on. Most of the participant teachers and principals said that some learners had adopted several values from the LO programme, partly because there are real examples in the textbooks which could help learners to adopt these values.

T1 stated: *"The values that the LO programme is expected to foster in learners include leadership, self-esteem and competitiveness among learners. Yes, I think learners in my school have these values because they have been demonstrating these values by conducting themselves well, even when teachers are not around to supervise them. Learners are able to provide leadership for themselves and organize their recreational activities with little supervision. Also, the pregnancy rate has reduced, and this shows that learners are responding to LO teaching."*

T2: *"The values of respecting themselves. If they respect themselves, they will respect their school work, parents and God... Yes, some of them do have this value because the pregnancy rate has highly reduced; there has also been a change in attitude of stealing from parents."*

T3: *"Change of attitudes. Yes, LO has helped learners to care for themselves, to reduce their sex partners [sic] and to watch their sexual behaviours."*

These comments may not be statistically provable, and one may also argue that LO teaching may not be enough, or the only factor, to bring about a serious behavioral change in young people, yet these views are noteworthy, partly because of the conviction with which virtually all the teachers spoke about the effect of LO on teenage pregnancy – they clearly believe strongly in the efficacy of what they are doing. As the quotations above show, the teachers attributed a reduction in pregnancy rate to the direct influence of LO teaching. T4 also noted that LO teaching had helped to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy to a zero count within a year of sexuality awareness being taught in LO in his school. T3 also commented that LO had helped to change learners' sexual attitudes and behaviours. She noted a reduction in the number of sexual partners and the use of condoms as new learned sexual behaviours among her learners, by their own testimony. This strong consensus among these four teachers thus suggests that it is at least partly based on a conscious observation on the part of the teachers.

T4, T5 and T6, on the other hand, while sharing their colleagues' general view of LO's positive influence on learners' values and morals, also added a more cautious note about the *limits* of this influence:

*“...many of these learners go **against** the values taught in LO, because they like to experiment with what is taught in the classroom.”*

“... to accept themselves for who they are and accept other people for who they are, not to have low esteem. Values such as honesty, responsibility, perseverance, trust, loving each other, respecting themselves and others. Few of them do have these values. There are others who are at the other extreme. I try to bring them close and advise them.”

“Yes, learners are trying to accept these values, as LO is new – so the impact is not of a high level – they are respecting others – they are learning to share and be opened.”

In the interviews with principals, their opinions were also sought on the values that the LO programme was expected to foster in learners. They were also asked to comment on whether they thought the learners in their schools had acquired these values. Some of their comments are as follows:

P1: “It is expected to foster general values of life in learners. LO supports the values taught by the family and society. Values like respect. Some of the learners have these values; they respect themselves and other people around.”

P2: “Values of knowledge about life, and attitudes. Yes, they respect each other and show respect towards their educators. Their attitudes towards life have changed. They can separate realities from societal myths.”

P3: “All the values coming from our society. The first value is ‘Ubuntu’, this means that you cannot do anything wrong to another person but must respect every person as a creation of God; a sense of communalism and sharing. Values that check problems of Xenophobia. Ubuntu addresses and inculcates other values of integrity and honesty. Most of them have these values, but they need to be developed. To become a full human being is a process that takes time – supported by society, the school policy and Christianity.”

P4 was in agreement with the above comments and added that learners in his school are in a boarding school environment (i.e. with a reduced parental influence on a day-to-day basis), yet they are taking responsibility for their studies and other things. He commented:

“LO is expected to teach learners values like respect, hard work, being responsible. Many of these learners have these values; they are here all by themselves, they are taking care of their things, studies and they respect themselves and their teachers.”

P6: added “Values like self-respect and respect for other people. LO opens the door of life to the learners. It makes them to be open-minded and able to deal with life in totality.”

However, one of the participant principals (P5) indicated that the values were *not* reflected in the behaviour of the learners in his school. The following was his comment:

“The value that LO is expected to foster in learners are: respect – self-respect, respect for one’s body. For instance, LO is there to guide them, but we are experiencing a lot of teenage pregnancy, so it is not working.”

It could be deduced from the data collected that Life Orientation is expected to foster some values which are in turn expected to supplement the values learnt in the home and in society. It is also clear that LO teaching has had some impact on learners’ social behaviour, and where the impacts are not obvious, it can be said that learners’ level of awareness about many life issues has increased. However, it must also be noted that while some learners in the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District have some of these values which LO is expected to foster in them, others have failed, or are still struggling, to accept these values.

4.5.6 The problems teachers experience in teaching young people Life Orientation

The researcher investigated the problems teachers experienced in teaching young people Life Orientation. Responses were sought from learners, teachers and principals. The following responses from the focus groups indicate that the learners themselves were acutely aware of a range of challenges faced by their LO teachers:

FG1: *“The LO teacher faces the problem of a shortage of textbooks in our school. We do not have enough textbooks; this makes learners to share ... When the learner that is keeping the textbook does not come to school, the other learners suffer and this wastes the teacher’s time ... Also, learners do not concentrate in class; they laugh when the teacher is teaching about sex... Whenever the LO teacher mentions social problems like drug use, we end up teasing each other about it ... At times we do not hear our teacher because he has a small and tiny voice.”*

FG4: *“The LO teacher is faced with the problem of many learners not taking the subject seriously; they take it as something to socialize with [sic] since it involves their personal lives ... Learners go through different stages in their lives; therefore they laugh and tease each other by looking at their stages in life, comparing that to what is taught in the classroom ... The LO teacher is also confronted with sensitive topics that make some learners break down and cry, while others get offended and become rude.”*

FG2: *“Some learners like to experiment with what we are taught in LO class and this makes them to fall pregnant because they do not listen to the teacher’s warning, and this makes our LO teacher to be sad... Others use drugs, alcohol and they also smoke... Our LO teacher is disappointed, and feels as if she is not doing her work ...Some of these learners are under peer pressure.”*

The other focus group members stated that LO teachers seemed to find it difficult to teach some sensitive topics like sex, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse because these teachers sometimes saw the learners as children who were not supposed to be exposed to such topics.

Another major challenge for teachers is that of how best to present a particular subject or issue, not because the teachers find it difficult, but because they feel handicapped by diverse and often conflicting political, cultural and religious sentiments, and by the background of learners as well as their own backgrounds. Also, there was a lack of parental guidance and monitoring at home to support the efforts of the LO teachers.

These comments raise concern. It appeared to be quite common that LO was not taken seriously by learners. This could be because some teachers were also not seeing it as crucial. .

The researcher naturally also enquired from the teachers themselves what problems they experienced in teaching young people Life Orientation. The following were their responses:

T1, T2 and T4 concurred on a lack of training being a major stumbling block:

T1: *“A lack of adequate training. This is because I have not been effective in the teaching of LO. I need training so that I will be able to teach LO effectively.”*

T2: *“Lack of training may be the biggest problem. An untrained teacher may not be able to manage different questions asked by learners. He or she may not have a good approach in handling sensitive topics in LO.”*

T4: *“...many other teachers are not aware of what is expected of them.”*

T3, T4 and T5 all found the seeming perversity of learners’ behaviour particularly distressing:

T3: *“There is the problem of learners challenging the information provided in LO class. Learners want to experiment, in spite of the information received.”*

T4: *“The biggest problem is seeing learners going against things taught in LO class.”*

T5: *“There is the challenge of learners wanting to experiment, notwithstanding what they are learning. They want to practise what is taught in class. So they are sexually active and contract STIs. (There is) teenage pregnancy and abortion. Some of the problems are also caused by a lack of parental examples and guidance.”*

However, T6 was of a contrary opinion: *“I doubt if there is problem. The prescribed texts are designed to meet with the level of learners, so I don’t think there is any problem.”*

To further shed light on this question, the principals were asked about the same issue, and they confirmed what had been indicated by the teachers, such as the inadequacy of training and learners’ tendency to experiment with what was taught in LO lessons. They added some other points like the issues of discipline, guidance and parental monitoring, cultural sentiments and some of the topics being above learners’ standards. Below are the samples of some of their comments:

P2: *“Some of these LO teachers were not trained, so they do not know how best to teach the subject.”*

P4: *“Some LO teachers do not know how to handle some of the topics like sex-related topics because of inadequate training and their religious background.”*

P5 referred to the limiting influence of culture over teachers’ smooth teaching of some aspects of LO:

“Our culture may affect the smooth teaching of LO because teachers may want to shy away from teaching some topics in LO like sex-related topics, because of cultural sentiments.”

P1 and P3 viewed the biggest problem as learners not taking the subject seriously.

P1: *“The problem is that learners are playful and do not concentrate as expected. I think the issues of child rights make them to be indisposed to discipline.”*

P3: *“Learners may not be serious.”*

P6 and P3, on the other hand, felt that the standard of lessons was high for the learners’ age-group:

“I think that some topics that learners have to deal with are above their age – topics related with sex. This is because they are young – more so, teachers are also parents, who may struggle to discuss these things with learners who they see (as being) like their own children.”

“There is always the challenge of raising the level of their development – they do not practise what they learn in class. This is because there is no guidance and monitoring by parents at home to support classroom learning.”

Though the comments and responses of some of the research participants suggest that learners’ tendency to experiment comes to the fore in the course of their exposure to certain ideas in LO class, it is highly likely that learners would have learnt about such things elsewhere. In other words, the assumption that they are experimenting with things they have “picked up” in LO is rooted in a conservative argument that tends to oppose sexuality education. It can also be said that this situation has become a sore spot for most of the LO teachers interviewed because the information that is supposed to liberate learners may be counterproductive.. These attitudes on the part of the teachers may reflect the challenges that come with improper qualification and training for LO teaching.

4.5.7 Suggestions from participants on how these problems could be solved

Suggestions were offered by the three groups of participants on how to solve, or at least address, the problems indicated above.

While T6 suggested, *“LO teachers who were not trained should be trained so that they will be able to handle LO effectively,”* T1 and T4 suggested that teachers should themselves take a leading role in solving the problems they experience in teaching young people LO:

“LO teachers in the district should organise meetings to share ideas and help LO teachers who have challenges with the subject.” (T1)

“The Department may not be able to solve the problems, but LO teachers can help by being exemplary. It starts with the teachers.” (T4)

On the other hand, T3 was of the opinion that *learners’* [peer] participation should be encouraged.

T3: *“I think involving somebody of their age group who can tell them his or her experience may help learners to pay attention.”*

The responses of the principals concurred with those from the teachers, with the majority of them agreeing that teachers should be trained and peer education should be introduced. Below are some of their comments:

P4: *“LO teachers should be trained and motivated to further their studies in the area of the subject.”*

P5: *“Peer education – learners in Grade 12 should teach learners in lower grades. Also social workers should visit the schools to talk to the learners.”*

In the interviews with learners’ Focus Groups, it was indicated that LO teachers should not see high school learners as children, but as young adults who have the right to know everything specified in the LO curriculum. This insight of the learners deserves attention, since it points to an important way for teachers to avoid having the learners treat LO lessons as something not to be taken seriously. The focus groups members were also of the opinion that learners should take the Life Orientation lessons seriously because LO is a basis for all the other subjects.

FG2 and FG6 postulated:

“Our LO teacher should not see learners as children because of her cultural and religious beliefs... She should teach us what the curriculum says we must know.”

“Learners should be serious with the LO lessons because it is the basis of all other subjects.”

It emerged from the data gathered that there should be more focused and active roles for the teachers and learners rather than only a focus on the content of LO lessons. There was some degree of consensus on the value of peer education whereby other young people are involved in the teaching of some of the topics in Life Orientation. In this case, learners are comfortable with people of their own age group, and are able to relate to the experience of people of their own generation.

4.5.8 Parents’ perceptions of/attitudes towards LO

It is of paramount importance to know how parents perceive LO, especially because of some sensitive topics that are taught in the curriculum. Views on this question were sought from all three groups of participants. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this study to consult parents directly to obtain their responses for only one question. Thus the researcher had to be content to gain indirect insight into this question. The following are some of the comments of the focus group participants:

FG5 and FG6 stated that their parents regarded LO simply as one of the subjects offered in schools.

FG5: *“They are okay with LO, because we are able to know what they as parents cannot tell us... Some of them see it as they see the other subjects that we are doing in school.”*

FG6: *“Our parents’ attitude toward LO is positive because through LO we are exposed to topics like the risk of dating and having sex, that our parents find difficult to teach us.”*

The above comments were supported by FG2 and FG3, whose parents, learners claimed, are positive about LO but also show some reservations:

FG2 affirmed: *“They are very excited about the subject because LO enriches our minds to know what is wrong and right, and to protect ourselves...The LO teacher is helping the parents to teach us to handle challenges that we would face in life, and our parents are happy about it... However, some parents do not like it because they think it is exposing us to sex.”*

FG3 added: *“Many parents have positive attitudes towards LO because some of us now handle problems at home... We know that engaging in early sex is dangerous, and the consequences of crime... Some of our parents do not want us to learn about LO because they think the subject is not right for children because of some sensitive topics like drug abuse and sex.”*

There are indications that the attitudes of many of the parents towards LO are positive, but some have reservations about the subject.

The LO teachers’ opinions were sought on this question; many of them were in agreement with their learners’ responses. They stated that many parents were positive towards LO, and that they sometimes showed this by visiting the schools to express their appreciation to the teachers and principal. However, one of the teachers revealed that some parents were not completely pleased with the teaching of LO in schools.

T 3 stated: *“Some parents like it, because they say it makes things easier for them – to talk with their children concerning sexuality and relationships. Others are saying it makes them to be more vulnerable.”*

T2 and T6, on the other hand, responded:

“They appreciate the fact that we are teaching them some of the issues that are difficult for them [parents] to talk about, like sex.” (T2)

“Positive – they feel like LO is more like a platform for their children to learn more about life, specifically, on concepts they find harsh such as sex and decision-making

with regards to their career choices. With that said, it is pleasing to know they feel this way about LO.” (T6)

The school principals were also asked what they thought parents’ perceptions of, or attitudes towards, Life Orientation might be. Most of the principals interviewed felt that LO has helped parents a lot; some of the parents were illiterate, and lived in the old traditions where parents do not communicate with children about sexuality. LO, they felt, has helped to bridge this gap; they say that it has, for instance, helped to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. The principals emphasized that parents understood that LO supplements the values taught at home and by society, so they appreciate its contributory role. The following is an example of such comments.

“LO is an eye opener to the parents who are sentimental and still believe it is a taboo to educate their children about sex and other sensitive topics. They now see LO as a subject that supports the values taught by our society.” (P6)

The participant principals indicated that parents showed their attitudes towards LO through their involvement and their visits to the school. It was revealed that parents on many occasions visited the school when learners had problems at home to share their problems with the LO teachers, and that some parents did likewise when teachers had problems with learners – they came and discussed issues. Parents also came to show their appreciation to the schools, to the LO teachers and the principals. A number of participants, however, mentioned that some parents did not like LO because they thought it exposed their children to ideas about sex.

4.5.9 Satisfaction with the way Life Orientation is taught

There are many challenges militating against the effective implementation of Life Orientation. This prompted the researcher to seek the responses of the participants regarding their satisfaction with the way LO is taught in high schools in the Fort Beaufort District.

Learners’ focus groups were asked this question, and their responses were positive. These participants were satisfied because they thought the LO teachers were handling the subject well. They revealed that the LO teachers taught in simple language that made sense, and that learners were allowed to ask questions when they did not understand. To some learners, LO was the only fun learning area

because they were free to express their views and have fun activities during Physical Education activities. This was a time to keep their minds out of books – learners played interesting games and relaxed during this period. The following were some of their comments:

FG2: *“Yes, we gain more knowledge with the way our teacher handles LO... We are always happy to attend LO classes because each day we have something new to learn, and surely it is helping us... Also the teacher is very experienced.”*

FG3: *“Yes, because our LO teacher is always punctual for her lessons and prepares for her lessons, and she delivers well... She gives clear examples from life in general. We’re often taken outside for exercise and explore the fun of learning outside the classroom... this takes our minds from class... We visit various places like hospitals ... to explore things that would lead us to a better future and knowledge.”*

FG6: *“Yes, we are satisfied as our teacher teaches us how to deal with stress and other things affecting our lives...We all contribute in LO class; our teacher does not spoonfeed us, which is what LO is all about, and this helps us to develop our communication skills.”*

The results show that what was seen as positive were lessons taught on stress, and physical exercise. It is possible that learners simply enjoy the physical exercise, however, and it has to be considered that learners might say this simply because they do not like the theoretical part of LO.

However, one of the focus groups (FG5) differed in their general response:

“No, we are not satisfied... One of the reasons for not being satisfied is because the time given to teach LO is very limited... LO is one of the exciting subjects, but we only have it once or twice a week... Again, our teacher is not flexible with the teaching of LO so that we can enjoy the teaching... She does not feel comfortable teaching us about topics that are sex-related; she usually skips the topic... Also about human organs, she ignores that part, claiming that we know our body parts, and this gives us problems as learners during assessment; we struggle when we are asked questions on these topics because all the schools in this area write a common paper... We only listen and talk about life things; why could we not get to watch them? Maybe a video or on internet once in a week that can catch our attention... It can make us learn and listen so that we could be warned in a clear way.”

Participant teachers were asked to comment on whether they were satisfied with the way LO was taught or not. Some of these teachers stated that indeed they were not satisfied with the way they themselves were teaching LO. They did not know if they were doing the right thing because they had not been trained. They lamented that they needed to be trained so that they could deliver well. They also complained that

there were no adequate textbooks from which to teach, and no assistance from the Department. They added that in spite of this, they tried to give of their best.

In contrast, some other LO teachers said that they were satisfied, because they had been trained to teach LO. They indicated that they could not think of any other way it could be done.

Participant principals were also consulted on the issue of their satisfaction with LO teaching. Some of them were satisfied with the LO teaching. One of the principals noted that it was important that learners write examinations on LO at the end of year, stressing that there was a tendency for LO to be looked down upon by learners and teachers because the subject was not yet examinable. The comments quoted below illustrate their general views:

P1: I am satisfied with LO teaching but it is important that learners write examinations on it at the end of the year. It is possible for learners and teachers not to take LO seriously because it is not examined at the end of the year. I am satisfied because the Department is trying to instill the importance of LO through training courses provided to teachers, and [through] the technical support of subject advisers. Also, the LO teachers are trying, but they will do better if Government can train more teachers. Also, the analysis of the results shows that teachers are doing well."

P3: "Yes, so far I am satisfied. The LO teacher likes the subject and prepares and teaches LO well. I am satisfied with LO teaching in my school. We have a cluster of LO teachers in my area, and I am aware of their performance. LO teachers in the cluster assessing one another."

Nevertheless, one of the principals (P5) had a contrary response. He was of the opinion that the fact that learners were performing well in LO assessment did not really mean that everything was fine; he expressed dissatisfaction with learners' behaviour in wanting to practise some of the things taught in the LO class:

"I am not satisfied with learners wanting to practise the information they gathered in LO class, especially on sexuality education, and drug abuse."

There are indications of mixed feelings in this section, as some participants were satisfied with the way LO was taught because according to them some of the teachers who were trained to teach LO were doing justice to this learning area. Other participants were not satisfied with the way LO was taught, their main reasons being inadequate training, and the inadequate time allotted for teaching LO.

4.5.10 Things LO teachers should do differently

Two groups of participants were asked about what LO teachers should do differently in order to teach LO effectively. Information was sought from the learners' focus groups and the principals. In the focus group interviews with learners, most of the learners were almost unanimous that more opportunities should be created for sporting activities, excursions to hospitals, neighbouring universities and different workplaces, where learners can experience aspects of the real world for which LO is seeking to prepare them. The following are some of their comments:

FG3: *"We need more Physical Education activities. That is, the LO teacher should take us outside the class to play games... Also, she should teach us more and reduce the stories that are not relevant."*

FG6 said: *"There should be more time for practical lessons"* [i.e. physical education].

On the other hand, members of FG5 wanted their teacher to use the LO curriculum to take them not only out of the classroom onto the playing field, but also beyond the confines of the school itself:

"By giving (us) a chance to see what she is teaching us – maybe visiting a hospital and going with us to concerts... She should be free to talk about sex and pregnancy. Also we need more practical and sports."

FG6: *"The teacher should come to LO class with instructional materials like posters, where there are pictures of how drugs or smoking affect and damage the lungs, and this will help to alert and inform learners... Our LO teacher also should feel free to teach all the topics, like those sensitive topics like sex and HIV/AIDS, because we have to know about them."*

It was also observed that some of the schools the researcher visited were not conducive to physical activities because they did not have playgrounds or sports fields. This may be the reason behind teachers not taking learners out often for practical lessons, as reflected in some of the focus groups' responses above, but it could be simply that learners do not like the theoretical aspects of LO.

Responses on the same issues were solicited from the participating school principals. The majority of principals expressed similar sentiments to those expressed by the learners – that LO teachers should engage learners, and listen to their views on all issues. Teachers must accept that learners know some things themselves – in some cases, better than the teachers. LO teachers should include

field trips in their teaching. Learners need to be taken out to see to see and experience the reality of what they are being taught about in the classroom – for instance visiting hospitals to see people who are sick with HIV/AIDS, taking learners to concerts and so on.

It was established that the learners felt that there should be competition among neighbouring schools, and that learners should be allowed to teach one another, partly in order to improve their communication skills, and partly because peer teaching has the potential to engage the learners more in topics that are, after all, of vital interest to them. LO teachers should also be able to feel free to talk about sex and pregnancy. Many learners also revealed that they needed more practical lessons and sports.

4.5.11 Topics of Life Orientation that learners would like to be changed or added

Responses on the LO topics that learners would like to have changed or added were solicited from learners. This was intended partly to encourage the learners to say what they felt should be the content and practice in LO and partly because there are some sensitive topics in the Life Orientation curriculum which learners may not be comfortable with. The majority of the learners in the focus groups were satisfied with the existing LO topics. The following are some of their comments:

FG3: *“LO topics are interesting...we like all the topics... we do not want any change.”*

FG4: *“We enjoy all the topics of LO... they open our eyes to things we did not understand before now.”*

It is evident that the above comments provided no clear answers. Although FG6 were in general agreement with their counterparts, they added that the curriculum should include a topic on the acceptance of HIV/AIDS:

“All the topics in the Life Orientation curriculum are about the reality of things that are happening... However, the curriculum must include how to accept HIV/AIDS because when we get in this situation, it is hard to accept it.”

This raises the question of whether some teachers did not cover all the prescribed topics, perhaps because of feeling uncomfortable about teaching certain topics. It

was not only the teachers, however, who felt uncomfortable about some topics. FG5 raised a strong cultural issue in their discussion. They indicated that they were not comfortable dealing in class with some topics that impinge on their culture, and would like this changed in the LO curriculum:

“We do not like the area in LO where we are taught about male circumcision in the presence of the girls in the classroom... This is against our culture; whatever happens during our circumcision is not to be discussed openly... We want this area/topic to be removed from LO lessons.”

Generally however, it can be said that, based on the data gathered, the learners welcomed the extent to which LO teaching and learning did connect with their lives. Hence, they would not want their teachers to shy away from tackling topics that form parts of that reality when they touch on some sensitive topics like sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS.

Another major issue is that of the influence and limitation of culture in the teaching of LO. It was discovered that there were some deep-seated cultural sentiments among learners, and even among some teachers, about what topics should be allowed or not in a classroom space. For instance, male learners in some schools under this study were strongly opposed to the open discussion of male circumcision, and they wanted the topic to be removed altogether. They considered such discussion in the presence of female learners as breaking a cultural taboo because women are not supposed to know about their circumcision experience. However, it was revealed that the female learners did not feel as strongly about this cultural taboo as the boys did, and a number of the girls actually said that they wanted this discussion to be included.

4.5.12 Teaching methods, and why the LO teachers use the methods

An investigation of the LO teachers' teaching methods was carried out to find out what were some of the methods they used more commonly in delivering LO lessons. The choice of methods may depend on the experience of the teacher and what he/she wants to achieve. In interviews, several participant teachers mentioned using more learner-centered methods such as group and individual teaching, group demonstration, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and practical

activities. However, some teachers seemed to prefer more teacher-centered approaches, including note-taking, using textbooks and explanatory sessions:

T1: *“I use question-and-answer, explanatory and note-taking. I use these methods because these methods have made the learners to understand the lessons.”*

T4: *“...Textbooks and information that I have regarding these issues that I am teaching. I use these methods because they have made learners to understand the lessons.”*

T2, T3, T5 and T6 responded respectively that they also used learner-centered methods in delivering their LO lessons:

T2: *“(I use the) textbook method, learner-centered, practical activities, demonstrations, group discussion, and case studies. The reason why I use these methods is because these methods have given the learners time to express themselves.”*

T3: *“OBE – learner-centered. This method is very effective in that learners enjoy and are able to understand the content well. This method allows for learners’ participation as specified in the NCS.”*

T5: *“Group work, mostly research. I use these methods because there is a change that I found amongst the learners because those who are not talkative are also involved and there is also improvement of language.”*

T6: *“Oral activities, practical activities (PET), outdoor and sporty, writing assessed and moderated, continuous tasks, innovation as well for it leaves room for those with artistic abilities. Such activities enable you as a teacher to know your learners’ abilities, and it will give you a lot of perspectives on the areas you ought to improve on as well as to invest more time. If you know what a learner is capable of doing excellently, you can assist them grow that talent, or improve on what they do not know.”*

It is not surprising that some teachers used learner-centred methods because it is stated in the NCS that learner-centred teaching methods should be used. The NCS recommendation on teaching method is that “Teaching should be learner-centred, allowing space for learners to be active participants in their own learning, and sometimes even in the design of what was to be learnt. Teaching was to remain learner-centred as a matter of policy” (Jansen, 2009:174).

Some teachers stated that the topics in LO determine the teaching methods. To deliver lessons in LO, some teachers explain that they first introduce the topic, then after a brief explanation some learners are randomly selected for role-play, or a

practical demonstration of key aspects of the lesson. For instance, in dealing with a topic like “First Aid Treatment”, a teacher explained that she gets her learners to demonstrate the steps in helping an accident victim. After this, learners are divided into groups so that they can demonstrate the steps and work as groups.

Another teacher explained that in delivering a lesson on a topic like “xenophobia”, he uses the following methods: the topic is first introduced and discussion is initiated with a probing question about learners’ experience of someone who was maltreated because of his/her colour or race. Attempts to answer this question help the teacher to draw out the learners, and get them to share their experiences. The teacher builds on learners’ various experiences and answers to drive home the objectives of the topic.

One of the teachers made the following comment about her Physical Education lesson:

“I first write my lessons in a lesson plan format. I practise some activities on my own before I do them with my learners. I first do warm-up activities with a whole group and start with my lesson or activities as planned.” (T5)

The following comments were made by participating principals during the interviews regarding the methods used by LO teachers in their teaching:

P6: *“They use NCS-compliant methods which include learner-centred activities. It is outcome-based learning, especially in assessment; teachers combine this with older approaches which are teacher-centred.”*

P3: *“Computers, television, telling method, question-and-answer. Teaching has changed, so we cannot teach learners in the old ways – the presence of technology has made learners cleverer, so that is why we use these technology methods.”*

P4: *“Group work and individual researching. They use these methods because these methods have helped the LO teacher a lot, because now the learners are able to learn differently. Their confidence has been boosted.”*

Teachers’ lesson plans analysed in this study showed that learner-centred approaches are often planned for LO lessons. This was revealed in the lesson plans that were drawn up and used in the lessons by some teachers. It was also revealed in the observed lessons that learner-centered teaching methods do ensure learners’ participation. It also helps the shy learners in particular to boost their egos and to be self-confident. However, some of the observed lessons revealed that there were performance gaps between what teachers said during interviews and their actual

teaching. Some teachers who claimed that they used learner-centred teaching methods presented their lessons without learners' participation. The lesson plans revealed that in some cases the planning on paper was totally different from what happened in practice. Sometimes the plan is very good on paper but there is no implementation as such, or what is being done is totally different from the planning on paper.

For instance, the use of instructional materials was mentioned in several lesson plans that the researcher scrutinized, but the majority of the LO teachers observed did not use any teaching aids in the course of the observed lessons. The researcher also observed that in some cases the evaluation that was included in the lesson plan to test if the stated objectives of the lesson had been met or not, was not performed by some of the teachers.

The class observations made in all the selected schools revealed that some of the concerned teachers used more learner-centred methods. Some of them employed a combination of different methods: teacher- and learner-centred. Many of the teachers made use of class discussion, group work and role-play for different tasks in the course of their teaching. The researcher observed that in the classrooms where the learner-centred methods were applied, there was better learner participation, and the majority of the learners were carried along in the course of the lesson.

4.5.13 How LO teachers plan their lessons, and reasons for using these methods

“An effective, relevant and good foundation in Life Orientation can be created and maintained among learners through effective practices that give LO teachers the opportunity to plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of all learners and result in positive learning outcomes” (Borich, 1996).

LO lessons are an ideal setting for shaping learners' behaviours to make them responsible adults, to teach them how to choose their careers, and for them to have a better future. Teachers who are qualified, well-trained and experienced use appropriate methods to plan the lessons. This study investigated methods that teachers use to plan their lessons, and the results are presented in the following sections. Participating LO teachers and school principals were interviewed in order

to gain an understanding of how LO teachers plan their lessons. The following are the teachers' comments in relation to this question.

T1 said: *"I always refer to file one (well being) and file 2 (recreational and sport activities). I plan my LO lessons like this because I do not know how to plan the lesson. I need ... workshops and training to be able to do better in planning and teaching LO generally."*

T5's experience of uncertainty because of insufficient training was similar to T1's:

"I collect the information from other books. I do not know the best way to prepare the lesson plan because I was never trained to teach LO. I plan this way because I want to increase my own knowledge to be aware of the points that the learners will understand."

Both T2 and T3 based their planning on the NCS: *"I use the National Curriculum Statement 2008 because it is better this way, and I am using the specified syllabus."*

"I plan my lessons according to the NCS 2008 templates and requirements. The reason is so that it can be easily understood by learners and other people who can have access to the lesson."

Like T5, T4 emphasised taking her preparation well beyond the curriculum guidelines. He was also of the opinion that ready-made lesson plans make teachers lazy and less creative because everything has been laid out for them. Therefore, in his case, he went beyond the NCS templates to explore other options that might best achieve the objectives of each LO lesson or topic:

"I make it a point that I have enough information about the topic I want to teach. And on top of that I do extra research on the topics. The reason is that I know the learners always have something to ask, so I have to prepare myself very well before the class."

In her response, T6 emphasised taking the learners' specific strengths and interests into account in her lesson preparation: *"Well, there are lessons that I do extract directly from the textbooks. I check them out first, evaluate them and present them the following day or later. Some of them are spontaneous, for my learners are very artistic, therefore I allow them to exercise such talents... My reason for planning this way is because it gives me time to understand the lesson first so that I can incorporate my style of teaching and later implement excellently."*

In the interviews held with school principals, the majority, perhaps unsurprisingly, laid some emphasis on the LO teachers using the NCS as the guide for their lesson plans. The following are some of their comments in this regard:

P1 revealed that: *“Lesson plans are designed and provided by the Department through the subject advisers. It is a new system by the Department, maybe with the target of getting teachers to study and prepare better prior to teaching.”*

Similarly P3: *“The Department of Education has a common lesson plan given to teachers. However, the lesson plan must fit the learners’ backgrounds and life situation. This is because the lesson is learner-centred.”*

For three principals (P2, P6 and P5), compliance to the national curriculum was clearly uppermost in their minds: *“Teachers follow the (learner-centred) NCS plans in planning LO lessons. They use lesson programmes which are according to the National Curriculum Statement because it is NCS-compliant.”* (P2)

“The Subject Adviser provides templates for lesson plans through workshops.” (P6)

“Teachers ... plan in accordance with the framework and schedule of the NCS ... because the lesson is outcome-based and learner-centred.” (P5)

Interestingly, only one principal, P4, was focused on other issues in responding to this interview question:

“The LO teachers in my school plan their lessons together. They consider the season of the year, the historical events and the programmes of the country, like SAFA programmes. They consider the above in order to plan according to them. I mean so that they can include them in their planning. The reason is that LO is about their surroundings, what is taking place around them.”

It was evident that some LO teachers relied on the NCS 2008 templates and requirements as a guide for their lesson plans, in part because of the security these gave them, and because it made their jobs easier and less time-consuming. Others drew attention to the fact that they explored more widely in their lesson planning, in at least one case even planning with the specific nature of their learners in mind. It is of course very possible that those who emphasized their use of the NCS also used other resources, but this did not emerge in the interviews.

The analysis of teachers’ teaching documents like the teacher’s portfolio, lesson plans and learners’ portfolio showed that on paper all the teachers were to a greater or lesser degree guided by the framework, schedule and lesson templates contained in NCS.

According to the teachers’ portfolios, lessons are planned over a period of a month divided into weeks, with each week dedicated to addressing different aspects of the LO curriculum. Although class observations revealed that some of the LO teachers

did use learner-centred methods during the observed lessons, the researcher's once-off class observation could not guarantee that this was a sustained practice.

4.5.14 The approaches used to assess learners in LO, and reasons for using these approaches

An investigation of the approaches used to assess learners was carried out to find out which methods were frequently used by the LO teachers. This information was sought in the interviews with the participating LO teachers, school principals and learner focus groups.

The majority of the LO teachers revealed that they used oral questions, discussions, peer assessment (debates) and educator assessment (class work and tests). In order to see if learners were progressing or not, the teachers had to assess to what extent the desired learning outcomes had been reached. The following comments reveal a variety of reasons for using these methods. Interestingly, and encouragingly, they emphasized the more intrinsic benefits of assessment (motivation for learning, feedback to teachers and learners, diagnosis of difficulties), rather than the more extrinsic aims (reporting to parents, accountability to superiors) – the teachers' reasons as identified by the researcher are given in brackets:

T1: *"I impose questions on them to answer, and give teamwork to do. I use these methods because it is working for me."* (pragmatic reasoning – because it "works"!)

T2: *"I assess learners with oral questions and written. The methods of assessment encourage learners to be more serious with their work."* (motivation for learning)

T6: *"I always plan a rubric, in terms of understanding application and projection skills. That way, things are easier to assess and learners get motivated during the whole process. I as a teacher and them as learners are satisfied. If I encounter a problem with them, we work it out together harmoniously. The relationship between you and your learners is based on basics like these, and when you assess a learner, you have to motivate (them) to do more, or if there is any criticism you make sure it is constructive criticism. That way problems are limited; everyone is happy."* (motivation for learning; diagnosis of difficulties in learning)

T3, T4 and T5 all gave reasons relating to feedback on learners' progress, competence or understanding:

T3: *“I use test writing, oral, discussions, class work and debates to assess learners in order to see if learners are progressing or not so that I can be sure of them, that they have the knowledge and that the outcomes have been reached.”*

T5: *“Peer assessment (debates), educator assessment (class work, test, examination). I use these methods of assessment because nowadays, they are the best way to know the development of a learner*

T4: *“Learners are assessed through class-work and tests. I assess learners with these methods so that I can know if they are getting what they are being taught or not.”*

The principals, again with an eye on compliance with the NCS requirements and accountability, highlighted that the LO teachers were using both formal and informal assessment, and following guidelines provided by subject advisors. P1 and P6 are examples of such comments:

P1: *Learners are assessed through written tests, projects with assigned marks, assignments and sometimes physical observation. They are also assessed along with other subjects. The teachers are also guided by subject advisors’ guidelines. The assessment systems are general. Some of them are used to engage learners before examinations. Tests at the end of term to assess what they have learnt.*

P6: *“Learners are assessed through the NCS systems like class work, written tests and examinations at the end of the term. This is the requirement of the NCS.”*

The document analysis carried out on teachers and learners’ portfolios revealed that there were gaps and inconsistencies, varying from school to school. In several of the schools where this analysis was conducted, the learners’ portfolios revealed scant class work and little in the way of feedback. It was also revealed that in some of the schools the assignments and class tests had not been marked. Also, the document analysis shows that apart from lesson plans, the only important information in the teachers’ files were the records of learners’ past assessment. This may mean that these teachers’ record keeping was inadequate.

4.5.15 Teachers' perceptions of learners' assessment results in LO and the perceived reasons for their performance

The educators were asked about their views on the learners' assessment results in Life Orientation. This information was gathered from the participating LO teachers and school principals, and was not intended as an objective analysis of the results.

The majority of the LO teachers stated that the learners' results in LO were reasonably good because the learners liked and understood the subject. The following were the LO teachers' comments in this regard:

T1: *"Learners always perform very well in LO. This has to do with learners' attitude to LO – they like the subject."*

T3: *"Learners' results in LO are good. I think the reasons are the way we teach it and also the love of the subject. The way the activities are designed for them."*

T6: *"Learners have good results in LO. The presence of a positive relationship with your learners serves as a secret weapon for successful teaching, which will later yield you good results."*

Although the teachers and learners' portfolios confirmed that these teachers felt that the learners in their classes performed well in LO, three factors challenge the veracity of these records. One, LO is not an examinable subject; that is, it is an internally determined assessment, and as such there is less focus on universal standards, or on supervision to ensure reliability and guard against any malpractice.

Second, there is also a tendency on the part of the teachers to award marks indiscriminately to learners because teachers' performance is evaluated partly on the basis of their submission of their teacher's portfolio. Thus teachers may want to impress subject advisers with impressive learners' performance. The teachers' claims should be measured against the researcher's observation of learners in the course of focus group discussions; by no means all of the learners had a good grasp of some major LO topics. Therefore their performance records were not really a reliable reflection of the performance of some of the learners that were observed in class. One of the teachers revealed that some LO teachers "cooked up" marks for their learners; the following comment was made by T4 in this regard

"Some LO teachers do not assess learners as they ought to but they manage to present records of assessment for course moderation because teachers' performances are evaluated on this."

This was also observed during the document analysis – there were signs of hurried report preparation to meet deadlines, and in some cases a comparison of teachers' and learners' portfolios seemed to show discrepancies. In some other cases, there were no records of assessment, whereas all this were supposed to be properly documented in both portfolios. However, it seems that the teachers would manage to present a perfect report when required for monitoring or moderation.

Third, it is wrong to base inferences of good performance on home projects which form the greater part of the overall assessment in LO because these too may not be a true reflection of learners' strengths. It is possible that learners have received outside help with these.

In addition, one of the LO teachers (T5) confirmed that the reported learners' performance may not truly be realistic. She revealed that the learners' results in LO were average. By "average" she seemed to mean "somewhat disappointing":

"Learners' results in LO are average. Shortages of textbooks and bad school attendance are the reasons behind it."

In the interviews with the school principals, the responses of most correlated with what the majority of their LO colleagues said: *"LO is about everyday life, so that is why they do well in it"; "LO is all about issues that concern learners."*

Notably however, two principals responded more critically, alluding to aspects of assessment peculiar to LO as a subject. P5 referred to the positive effect (less anxiety) of the absence of *external* examinations in LO:

"Results are good. This is because learners are afraid of external examinations, but LO is not externally examined, so learners tend to perform better."

Another principal suggested that the reason why the examination results for LO were always higher than in other subjects was that the greater part of the assessment was based on projects done after school hours rather than on written tests.

P1: *"The results for LO are always high, unlike other subjects. Maybe this is because greater parts of the assessment are based on projects done after school hours. Written tests are [only] a little aspect of the assessment."*

These responses provide a significant balance to the teachers' claims that the high LO marks can be attributed to the learners' love of the subject and to effective teaching.

4.5.16 Aspects that LO teachers find difficult to teach, and reasons why they experience this difficulty

The study sought to investigate the challenges that some teachers experience in teaching LO, and the reasons why they experience these difficulties, since this is likely to affect the full implementation of the LO curriculum. Among the challenges that the teachers identified were the challenge of certain concepts that some LO teachers find it difficult to teach. The LO teachers and principals were asked to give reasons why the teachers experienced this difficulty.

LO teachers made the following comments in relation to concepts they found difficult to teach in LO:

T1 disclosed: *"I need assistance everywhere because I am not familiar with the subject (LO). I was not trained."*

T5 and T6 confirmed there were some aspects of LO that they found difficult to teach. They stated: *"I find it hard to teach concepts concerning government like human rights. The reason is that I am not fully aware of what is taking place there, and I also hate anything concerning politics."*

"For me it has not been easy to teach practical sports and religious concepts. This is because my age and weight kind of get in the way sometimes... some of the learners are not Christians – their parents worship ancestral spirits. There is always conflict of which is religion is right."

Aspects of LO that some of the LO teachers said they found difficult to teach were career choice, human rights, physical education, and religion. From the interviews with the teachers, it was discovered that they had little or no training or information concerning some areas of LO teaching like career choice and human rights, and thus they were unable to teach effectively when these topics came up in class. In some cases, training may not help at all. For one, a bias against politics interfered with the teacher's ability to deal with topics relating to government. For another, the teacher's age and weight were the inhibiting factors – factors that the researcher confirmed in the course of visiting more than one school.

Culture was another strong factor that made some topics to be difficult for some of the teachers. It was also observed in the course of interviews with some of the teachers that they had certain limitations of their own as far as cultural issues were concerned. These teachers, in agreement with some of their learners, believed that some topics like circumcision and sex should not be mentioned in a classroom environment because of their cultural sensitivity. Another teacher was worried about conflicting religious practices, for instance when some learners believe in indigenous religions and the teacher is a Christian. Some teachers seemed not to be able to rise above their religious sentiments and be professional in the classroom; rather they got stuck in a confusion of contending values, and as such would rather avoid topics concerning religion altogether. This problem also arises for the teacher when learners in one class are divided along different religious lines.

In the principals' responses to this question, some of them noted that some LO teachers experience difficulty in teaching some concepts like sex-related topics and commerce-oriented career or other life skills topics. Below are some of their comments:

P3: "It depends on the teacher. Learners tend to be curious about sex-related issues in LO class. Some teachers do not talk about some issues relating to certain learners with difficult backgrounds. This may be a result [of the fact] that some teachers are not well-trained, and that there are no adequate teaching materials in LO, and support."

P5: "I am aware that the LO teachers in my school have a problem with the concept of sex. It is difficult to talk about this with learners because of their cultural background."

P6: "LO is a general learning area. It involves almost everything. LO teachers may not understand some areas. For instance, LO teachers seek help from other teachers on areas they find difficult to teach, like commercial-oriented topics."

It emerged that some principals were not aware of the challenges facing LO teachers. One (P1) was aware of this: *"LO is out of the way for me as the principal. My duty is the overall administration."* Another was not: P4 stated, *"I do not think there are areas that are difficult for the LO teacher in my school because he was trained to teach LO."* However, the LO teacher in this principal's school did complain of having difficulty in teaching about career choice.

4.5.17 Other challenges that LO teachers experience

The study sought to investigate other challenges that teachers experience in implementing the LO curriculum which are likely to hinder the full implementation of this learning area in schools.

The challenges identified were very varied. One of the LO teachers stated that she had a fear that she was becoming a social worker because she dealt with so many social problems of learners. Another teacher complained of experiencing learners involved in wrongdoing, like experimenting with what they were taught in sex education class, which at the end of the day make it seem that LO teachers were not doing their work properly. Yet another LO teacher complained of being overloaded with work. The following were their actual comments:

T3: *“I have the problem of ending up becoming a social worker (dealing with social problems of learners) and taking the role of a parent and a mentor too.”*

T4: *“Learners are always doing wrong things, like experimenting what they are taught in sex education class. At the end of the day it seems as if LO teachers are not doing their work properly.”*

T5: *“I am overloaded with work; I do not have enough chance to explore with LO. I wish I was teaching LO only the whole school.”*

The principals were also asked to comment on challenges other than “difficult-to-teach” aspects that were experienced by the LO teachers in their schools. Some of these principals revealed that LO teachers were concerned that LO was not an examinable subject, and they wanted it to be examinable. One principal explained that culture affected the smooth teaching of LO, because there were some topics in LO like sex that the local culture forbade adults to discuss with young people. It was also stated that LO teachers often complained that the LO curriculum is overcrowded and the time allotted is too limited for its coverage. These principals made the following comments in relation to this:

P2 revealed that learners could pose a challenge to the teaching of LO:

“The only challenge is with the learners’ seriousness and the influence of external factors on them like problems from home and peer pressure.”

The status of LO was what concerned P1:

“LO teachers have a concern that LO is not an examinable subject, and they want it to be examinable... There is a tendency to look down on the subject because no examination is written at the end of the term.”

P5: *“Culture is affecting the smooth teaching of LO, because there are some concepts in LO like sex that our culture forbids discussing with young people.”*

P6: *“Teachers often complain that LO is too broad and the syllabus is too long, and the time is too limited for its coverage.”*

The challenges faced can thus be summarized as follow:

- LO is seen by some as an unimportant subject because it is non-examinable
- Learners’ seriousness about the subject and openness may affect learning
- Cultural taboos and other religious sentiments
- The wide scope of LO as against the short time allotted to it.

The perception that learners are not taking LO seriously may well contradict the assertions of those learners who claimed to like LO as a subject. This can count as evidence that LO may not always be effective in helping learners to change.

4.5.18 Perceptions of how learners have benefitted from LO

Perceptions of how learners have benefitted from LO were sought from the participant teachers, learners’ focus group and principals. There is an indication from these responses that, as the teachers saw it, the knowledge gained through LO helped learners to live healthy lives, to understand that their destiny is in their hands, to take their study more seriously and to be able to handle challenges. The following are comments from participating LO teachers:

T1: *“The proof of what they have benefitted in LO is the good results, and the reduced rate of pregnancy.”*

T2: *“Learners have an understanding of many social problems and how to deal with them in LO. We address many social issues that affect them, like pregnancy, drugs and HIV/AIDS.”*

T3: *“They have gained a lot, because they are able to handle challenges, have developed assertive behaviour, and are able to make informed choices in life. In their studies they make a balance. They have developed a sense of responsibility. They are able to choose their future careers. They know their rights as learners and as children.”*

T4: *“Some of them have changed the way they do things; for instance, they now take their studies more seriously.”*

T5: *“A high self-esteem, self-discovery and acceptance, directories to their future in terms of careers, psychological understanding of life’s events, communication skill and self-projection. I feel confident to say that I equipped them with weapons for successful life and living.”*

T6: *“They now know that the result of being sexually active is pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. They know if they abuse drugs, it can affect their health. They have learnt about first aid and they can choose their career.”*

In addition to the above views, the principals also felt that the learners had gained in that they were able to handle challenges, handle stress, and make informed choices in life. They had developed a sense of responsibility. They were able to choose their future careers even while they were still in school. They knew their rights as learners and as young adults. They had learnt to respect people so that they could be respected.

Interestingly, in the focus group interviews, the learners largely concurred with the responses of their teachers and principals:

FG1 commented that: *“We have learnt that we must respect our bodies; we must not have sex before marriage... We must decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS... We must live a healthy life style. We must be able to identify and solve problems in logical ways... How to choose a career in life, how to weigh one’s strengths and weaknesses, dealing with examination stress... Valuing other people’s opinions or views. Being positive in life. We must not get involved in drugs and alcohol.”*

FG2 affirmed: *“We learnt that we must avoid teenage pregnancy... We now know how to relate with people. We can differentiate between right and wrong things. We know who we are, where we came from, how to protect ourselves in times of problems, especially as teenagers, and we respect ourselves and other people... We know how to face life’s challenges. We know the challenges we would face if we choose the wrong path in life.”*

FG3 had this to say: *“We have learnt how to take care of ourselves...Life Orientation tackles stress and prepares us for life challenges and problems.”*

FG4 added: *“LO has helped us to know more about ourselves and to live a happy and healthy life, to know the effect of drug abuse, to deal with stress, know when we are stressed... We now know that we are here on earth for a reason, and the power of our success is in our hands and we can boost high esteem or our confidence... We have learnt to deal with examination stress and stress in general, and the challenges that teenagers face... We have learnt so much about our country, culture and other religions.”*

One participating learner from this group commented (and other members concurred that):

“We have learnt a lot of things such as to believe in ourselves, how to handle stress and problems, peer pressure, abstaining from sex and drugs, and knowledge of changes that occur at puberty.”

It has been established that not only were the educators firmly convinced that the learners had benefitted from LO lessons; the learners themselves expressed a similar set of perceptions. It is also clear that learners are very familiar with the official learning outcomes of LO. They had learnt to choose a career, and they now understood many social issues that affected them, like pregnancy, drugs and HIV/AIDS.

4.5.19 Knowledge of human rights in LO and its influence on learners

The focus group interviews turned the spotlight on what learners had learnt in LO concerning human rights, and how this had influenced their behaviour towards others. The following are their comments:

FG1: *“We have learnt that human rights should not be violated...Human rights go with responsibilities. Government always protects human rights...This knowledge has influenced our behaviour towards others... Because of the knowledge of human rights we have learnt to respect others and to treat everyone equally. We learnt not to underestimate people who do not have an opportunity of education. We also learnt not to discriminate against people based on backgrounds of color, race or language.”*

One of the members of FG2 in support of her group members stated that: *“We have learnt that we have the right to vote... equality and equal rights... citizenship and dignity... The knowledge of human rights has helped us to respect people, and to expect to be respected.”*

FG3: *“We have learnt that human rights are important... There are rights to education, rights to be protected... Rights to shelter... Human rights knowledge has made us to respect others’ opinions, even if we do not agree with them... We now respect others the way we respect ourselves – we respect people in our community.”*

“Through human rights lessons we learnt that everybody is free... We have freedom of speech; we have rights to education and citizenship...This knowledge sometimes help us to discuss issues of rights at home based on LO teaching... Now we can talk before everyone, especially before the white people... It has influenced our behaviour – it makes some of us talk to our parents because we understand that we have freedom of speech.” (FG4)

FG5: *“We have rights to be educated and protected... rights to food, rights to freedom and citizenship...The knowledge has influenced us because now we respect people and expect to be respected... We behave in a positive way to people because we know they have rights as we do have rights... We now also respect other people’s culture.”*

One of the learners in FG6, supported by the other learners, added: *“We have learnt that human rights are essentials... Having human rights is a platform for self-expression...Everybody in South Africa has rights and should enjoy them... Human rights give freedom as human beings. It has influenced me – before I learnt about human rights I used to treat people anyhow, but now I have learnt it is wrong to do so.”*

It is obvious that learners have gained some knowledge of human rights in LO, and that, according to them at least, this has influenced their behaviour positively towards people around them.

4.5.20 How LO lessons have influenced learners to be sensitive about matters of gender, and actions they have performed to demonstrate this attitude

Responses were sought from learners on how LO lessons had influenced them to be more sensitive about matters of gender. They were also asked to give examples of actions they had performed that demonstrated this attitude in practice.

Learners stated that LO lessons had influenced them to be more sensitive about matters of gender:

FG1: *“Yes, we learnt that no sex is superior to the other... We now understand that we are capable of doing anything we set our minds on... Also, that God has created everyone with unique talents and gifts, irrespective of sex.”*

FG2: *“Gender means recognizing oneself as male or female... Yes, LO has influenced us to know that both girls and boys are equal, and can do same work.”*

FG5: *“We learnt to treat everybody equally, no matter their sex... We have knowledge that women can and should be able to apply for any jobs like men.”*

FG6 added: *“Absolutely, we are aware not to be sexually harassed by boys, so we are comfortable around boys... LO taught us how to conduct ourselves so that we will not be sexually violated... We know that if such should happen, legal action can be taken.”*

Learners were asked to give examples of actions they performed to demonstrate this kind of attitude. This is what they said:

FG1 responded: *“As female students we now play rugby... We now play netball based on the knowledge of LO teaching on gender... And as boys, some of us help with cooking at home.”*

FG4: *“As females we can now take leadership positions and lead men... boys and girls now get equal chores at home.”*

FG5 stated: *“We now get involved in sweeping, cleaning and washing dishes at home... Boys and girls are involved in cleaning classrooms and school yards in our school.”*

FG6: *“Through LO, we now understand that as females we can be interested in politics, because politics is not only for men as we used to think... We can participate as long as we are South Africans.”*

The focus group discussions showed that learners were informed about issues of gender, gender roles and popular stereotypes at home, in schools and society. Although this knowledge may not be demonstrated practically in the classroom environment, it can still be observed that some of the learners felt empowered by it, especially the girls who realized that there are no limitations to what they could achieve, and that being female is not a barrier.

In the case of the male learners, the researcher observed that they had been sensitized about issues of women abuse and protection of women’s human rights. The comments of some of the male learners, though not completely reliable, were also an indication that some of them had made some adjustments on some gender issues that they had identified and were confronted with. For instance, some of the boys agreed to participate in classroom sanitation, having realized that it was not just a job for girls.

4.5.21 Effect of Life Orientation lessons on the moral values of learners

Learners were interviewed on whether, and how, LO lessons had had an effect on their moral values, and how their values might have been affected. They made the following comments:

FG1: *“We feel comfortable talking about sexuality, unlike before when we felt it was wrong to talk about it... LO has helped us to be open about our views, freely and politely with our parents.”*

FG2: *“Through the knowledge of moral values in LO, we have learnt that impregnating a girl and falling pregnant as a teenager is wrong... This has helped us to be more careful, not to sleep around. It has helped us not to take drugs.”*

FG3: *“LO has taught us about early pregnancy and the bad effects of drug abuse... These are the things our parents did not know in their time.”*

FG4: *“It is helping us to be respectful, especially to others...LO has taught us to be open to our parents and freely discuss what is happening to us, even issues of relationships... It has also helped us not to laugh at people’s disabilities... We have learnt to respect other people’s culture... Before we only respected our own parents, but now we respect other people’s parents because we see them as our parents.”*

The validity of this section was, however, probably compromised by the fact that the learners seemed to want to impress on the researcher that LO lessons had affected their moral values. There is the possibility that many learners did not reveal their true views on this question.

4.5.22 What learners have learnt in Life Orientation about interacting or relating with others

Information was also gathered on what learners have learnt in Life Orientation about interacting or relating with people. The following were some of the comments from the learners’ focus groups:

FG1: *“We learnt that to be able to make someone our friend, we have to involve them in the things we do.”*

FG3: *“We learnt that we should respect people, even if they are young or old... We also learnt to share our problems with others and get advice... We should make our friends happy when they are not happy.”*

FG4: *“We have learnt about friendship – that there good and bad friends. And peer pressure can be a bad influence. LO helps us to trust our mothers and be open with them, to know who is good or bad to keep as friends. LO taught us to be self-confident and overcome challenges by believing in ourselves.”*

FG5: *“We have learnt not to laugh at people when they share their problems with us, but to give advice... We also learnt to listen to advice from elders, because in the*

past we used to ignore them... We no longer shout and beat our younger ones as a result of what we learnt in relating with others.”

The focus group discussions showed that learners had gained knowledge about social skills, relationship-building and friendship. There was also some indication that they were exposed to issues of peer pressure and its management.

It is, however, difficult to establish the demonstration of this learning in practical terms, even though some learners in the focus groups hinted at changes in their lives as a result of gaining this knowledge.

4.5.23 What learners have learnt about drug abuse

The study sought to investigate some of the things the learners had learnt about drug abuse, and how this knowledge had influenced their thinking. All the focus groups showed a fair knowledge of drug abuse, and were in agreement about the wrong effects of drug abuse on people:

FG2 pointed out: *“We have learnt that drugs are not good for health... We have learnt that drug abuse can destroy lives and kill.”*

FG3: *“We learnt that drugs are bad and can affect the way we think... Drugs can make you do things you are not meant to do, like crime, and rape.”*

FG6: *“LO tells us that drug abuse is wrong... We should keep away from it because of its bad effect on our studies, families and community.”*

Learners were further asked to explain how a knowledge of drug abuse had influenced their thinking:

FG1: *“The knowledge of drug abuse in LO has helped us to know that it is a lie that drugs enhance learning.”*

FG2: *“We now understand that drug abuse is bad – that we should not get involved. Also, we have learnt to stop self-medication, and consult a doctor before taking pills.”*

FG4: One of the girls in this group confessed that *“I understood that using ‘Dagga’ makes one go high and I wanted to experience it, but when I remembered it may kill, I did not take it”*. Two other members of her group confirmed that, *“Now we know it is a rumour and a lie that ‘dagga’ helps our memory.”*

One learner from Focus Group 5 who was a drug survivor revealed during the focus group interviews that:

FG5: *“I used to be involved in drugs and drinking with my older friends, but with the knowledge of drug abuse in LO, I had to stop because it made me do bad things, disrespect my parents and people in the community. I had to stop when I realized it was destroying me. It affected my plans negatively, and did not let me achieve my goals. I had to apologize to my parents and focus on my studies.”*

It could be established that through what they have learnt in LO, learners had at least been made aware that:

- it is a lie that drugs enhance learning,
- self-medication can be dangerous, and that a doctor should be consulted before taking pills,
- drugs can destroy one’s life and relationships with others.

It is obvious that saying such things in an interview does not mean that what these learners have learnt will be proof against their abusing drugs or alcohol in tempting circumstances, but it does indicate that they have at least been taught about the consequences of, and the problems that can accompany, drug and alcohol abuse.

4.5.24 Influence of sexuality education on learners’ attitudes or behaviour

The study also explored the knowledge learners had gained from sexuality education, and how it had influenced their attitudes or behaviour. In the focus group interviews with learners, they made the following comments:

FG1: *“We have learnt that sexual harassment and abuse can happen in the family and not only with strangers... We have learnt to protect ourselves from being raped by avoiding provocative dressing... Also, we learnt to abstain from sex in relationships because condoms are not 100% safe.”*

“We have knowledge about sex... LO helps us to understand the disadvantages of early sex, like pregnancy, STI, HIV...we also know that sex is good only in marriage, and we must wait for the right time... We have also learnt to use a condom during sex.” (FG4)

“Yes, we learnt about diseases like STI and HIV, that can be contacted through sex... We learnt that if we want to have sex, we must use condoms... Also we are aware of ABC, (abstain, be faithful and condoms)... Abstaining is the best option, for it will make us wait for the right time.” (FG5)

FG6: *“Yes, we love to do it, but through LO we have learnt to wait until we are ready... it is not about penetration but about the values being lost... And if we cannot wait, we can use condoms... LO has taught us to step aside from peer pressure of*

wanting to practice sex... We get alternatives to love through sex in LO class, like holding hands and walking together.... going to bed is not a way of showing your love to someone.”

The focus group discussion on this section establishes that learners may be sexually active, and that while they might be confused by myriad information from different sources, they have some ideas of their own with regard to issues of sex and sexual relations. Also, like many adults, their knowledge does not prevent them from bad choices and inappropriate sexual behaviour. The discussions further show that LO teaching is often a reinforcement of what they have already known, perceived or partially understood about sexual activities. The researcher realized from their expressions that there were a few of the focus group members who were not as informed as their counterparts, even those with a similar background. This group, usually female learners, apparently found some of the information in LO class useful in filling out their knowledge, especially about sexual relations with the opposite sex.-

4.5.25 Ways in which knowledge of HIV is of value to learners

The study sought to investigate what learners have learnt about HIV and the value of this knowledge to them. All participant learners showed a fair knowledge of HIV infections. The following are typical comments:

“With the knowledge of HIV, we now use condoms when having sex. We do not share objects like needles, tooth brush and razor blade.” (FG1)

“We know that HIV/AIDS is an incurable disease, which kills... If one has it, one has to live a healthy life and one can live longer but if the person does not accept it, the person may die.” (FG3)

“We realized that having HIV/AIDS infections does not mean the carrier is sleeping around, and that how one gets infected does not matter, but what one does about it... We must not judge HIV/AIDS infected persons, but encourage them to live their lives by taking their drugs and moving on with their lives... This knowledge helps to equip ourselves against HIV/AIDS and to help our families and friends who may be infected.” (FG6)

It could be established that the knowledge of HIV infections has helped learners to use condoms when having sex, not to share sharp objects, to wear gloves when in contact with a bleeding person, to stop having multiple sex partners.

The major discovery from the focus group discussions on the issue is that the learners had a reasonable awareness of the basic facts surrounding HIV/AIDS, and of what their response should be towards the disease and those infected. It was also evident from the discussion that some of the learners were sexually active, and that as a result condoms were a popular commodity among them. One may at least conclude that LO teaching on HIV/AIDS has probably helped to reinforce a sense of the importance of using condoms among the learners.

4.5.26 Social skills and ways that learners have made use of some of these social skills

The learners were asked about their acquisition of social skills, and about ways that they had made use of some of these social skills. The following are some of the learners' responses:

"We have learnt to help those in danger and trouble... More importantly, we learn how to collaborate with others... We have been taking responsibilities for our studies and for people in need." (FG1)

"It means being trustworthy, treating others with respect, caring for others... We do not just talk to our elders anyhow..." (FG2)

"It means to be responsible in life. We have been practising this by being responsible for ourselves. We are here without our parents, but we take care of ourselves... Being polite to everybody, even our peers, being polite to people even when they wrong us, to be confident even when people are not nice." (FG4)

While the researcher cannot conclude that LO teaching is directly responsible for imparting the social skills that the learners claimed to have acquired, the researcher noted that, at least during the group discussions, the groups were able to work as teams and organise themselves properly before and after the discussions, even in the absence of their educators. However, while it was easy for the researcher to relate with the members of learners' group in some schools without the assistance of their educators, this was not the case in all schools.

4.6 SUPPORT MECHANISMS AVAILABLE FOR LO TEACHERS AND THE ADEQUACY OF THE SUPPORT

The study attempted to find out what support is provided by the Education Department officials and school principals for teachers implementing the LO curriculum in the Fort Beaufort District. Particularly in view of the challenges inherent in teaching LO, and the fact that a number of teachers find themselves teaching the subject without having been given the appropriate initial training, it is desirable that the Department especially should put in place as many support mechanisms as possible to help teachers implement the curriculum and achieve its objectives. The following are some of the comments from the participant LO teachers:

“She recognizes the fact that I know and love the subject; therefore she gives me this recognition and space. The support is adequate for me.” (T2)

“The Principal gets involved in resolving issues and problems arising from LO teaching and learners by working with me to find solutions. I think the support is adequate.” (T3)

“The Principal is very supportive. She also teaches LO at grade 8. She has a similar background and training for LO teaching..” (T4)

“The Principal supports our field trips and provides whatever I ask for. She sees to the logistics of our field trips... The support is okay. (T6)

One teacher (T5) was more qualified in her comments about the support available within the school:

“The support has only been a verbal affirmation to help, but the textbooks requested have not been bought. However, the Head facilitates my meetings with parents and takes up the issues when they are beyond me. The support could be adequate if textbooks are provided.”

Responses on how the district officers supported the implementation of the LO curriculum were also sought – from the participant teachers and principals. Participants confirmed that they received support from the Department of Education in the form of funds, advice, materials, information, training workshops, course moderation and so on. However, the majority stated that the support from the Department was not adequate. As T1 commented:

“The Department provides the school with learning materials, files and updates information for teaching and assessment projects. But the Department doesn’t care

about our problems, they're not even aware of these problems, so their support is not adequate."

"The Department of Education organises workshops which LO teachers attend, and subject advisers from the Department do facilitate cluster meetings of LO teachers to share ideas. But it should do more to help the teaching of LO." (T4)

"I get nothing from the Department of Education in terms of support. The subject adviser promised to visit, but did not come." (T5)

The participant principals confirmed what the teachers said: that although schools received some forms of support from the Department, this is not adequate, especially since the schools are so poorly resourced and the communities they serve are so poor. It is thus not surprising that additional funding featured prominently in the principals' comments:

P1: *"We get training, funds, and advice from the Department and subject advisers. Yes, the department is trying, but the support is not enough. Although we get what we are supposed to get as a province, but the Department can do more in the areas of funds and visitation."*

P3: *"We get good support. Money is provided which is injected to our bank account. It is not adequate, given the poor background of the learners in my school. The government can do more by making extra funds available for learners and making jobs available."*

P5: *"(The Department) needs to provide more bursaries for LO teachers to study for ACE [Advanced Certificate in Education]."*

Training was also a concern for some of the principals:

P6: *"They (the Department) also organise clusters of schools to modify the teaching approach among LO teachers in the district."*

P4: *"The training and workshops organised by the Department are just for two to three days – they are not long enough to bring about the desired results."*

4.6.1 Types of support that LO teachers expect from the school or Department

LO teachers were asked about the types of support they expected to be provided by the school and the Department of Education since the majority of them responded that the support they received from the Department was inadequate. Respondents wanted more support in the areas of training, guidance and counselling, and regular visits to school by subject advisers. These were some of their responses – the

majority of them focused on, or at least mentioning, the need for more visits from subject advisors:

T1: *“I expect that the LO Subject Advisor ... should visit schools, interact with LO teachers and communicate his findings to the Department.”*

T2 and T4 made similar points: *“I would expect class visits, but the teachers’ body [SADTU] does not allow this from the Department because of the previous experiences from the apartheid time.”* (T2)

“There should be frequent visits to the school to do on-site support and to follow up on the quality of teaching. Though, SADTU does not allow criticism of teachers, which are usually done by the Department with the wrong approach.” (T4)

T5: *“I would like to be trained for LO teaching and counselling so I can help the learners with the issues that are coming up in my LO class. I’d also like the Subject Advisor to visit the school and provide me with guidance for teaching LO.”*

T6 thought an additional member of staff should be allocated to schools (something unheard of in such schools, yet taken for granted in affluent schools, especially in developed countries):

“I think there’s a need for a special teachers’ officer in school who can handle problems as they come up and can also go out and liaise with social workers, the police, families and the Department, so that LO teachers won’t use up teaching hours doing all this. The special teacher should be empowered to be able to access resources that can’t be accessed by LO teachers for needy learners.”

4.7 MONITORING STRATEGIES FOR LO

Monitoring is the process of ensuring that plans and policies are being implemented. School principals and District Education Officers have the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the curriculum in schools and give relevant support to teachers. “It is the direct responsibility of the principals and the District Officers that teaching and learning take place in schools” (South Africa School Act, no 27 of 1996).

Information on monitoring strategies was sought from participant teachers. T1 and T4 respectively revealed that LO teaching is *not* monitored in their schools. The following are their comments:

“There is no established monitoring system for LO teaching.”

“The school is small and the teaching staff is small. Therefore, there is no monitoring, but the Principal’s monitoring is based on trust of the teacher’s capacity. The onus is on me as the teacher to ensure the subject’s taught effectively.”

On the other hand, T3 and T6 disclosed that:

“Sometimes, the Principal does classroom visits and provides guidance.”

“She (the Principal) monitors through the timetable. She ensures that teachers attend classes. The Head of Department also ensures that the LO teachers do their jobs.”

One of the participant principals (P4) confirmed what teachers T1 and T4 stated above, perhaps from a surprising point of view. He commented that:

“There is no official way of monitoring the LO teacher because he is good at what he is doing. I have never had any reason to doubt his abilities.”

However, in some of the other selected high schools, there are different ways by which the principals monitor the teaching of LO. P1 and P3 respectively stated that:

“Monitoring is done through HODS and subject heads – the Subject Head for LO reports to the HOD. The LO activities are monitored once in a term. The Subject Head collects LO teachers’ files and passes them to the HOD, who in turn passes to the Principal – the officials moderate the documents at each level. The Subject Advisers are also involved. Class visits are done when there’s need for it. Class visits are done for scoring teachers’ performance – this is for the purpose of determining teacher’s progression and salary increment.”

“I have an HOD – as the Principal, I’m the overseer. Fortnightly, the HOD reviews the learners’ work.”

P5 and P6 also pointed out:

“I provide out-of-class support to teachers and learners. I also provide guidance to the teachers and learners. I review examination papers to ensure its (sic) quality.”

“It is done like all other learning areas. We do class visits; we inspect LO teachers’ work through the HOD.”

It was clear from the information gathered that in some cases principals do not monitor the teaching of LO. However, as it was confirmed in 4.6 above, the principals had been supportive in the teaching of LO.

It could also be established from the information gathered that there were different ways by which the principals monitored the teaching of LO. In some schools, monitoring is done once a term. Although this would constitute frequent intervals in terms of the official requirements of the Integrated Quality Management System

(IQMS), this is a relatively long interval considering the fact that some of these teachers are not qualified and may need consistent monitoring and support. It could be inferred from the information gathered that many of the selected schools lack adequate monitoring, since some schools do not monitor the implementation of the LO curriculum at all.

The provincial departments of education are responsible for most of the schools in South Africa. Therefore, it is not out of place to seek information from the participants on how the local Department officials monitor, and the benefits of the monitoring mechanism in the implementation of LO. Examples of how the Department monitors the teaching of LO were given as course moderation, examining teachers and learners' portfolios, but most of this activity was at a distance, and school visits seemed rare, as P1 explains:

P1: "Class visiting was used as a monitoring system during the apartheid period, so it's not done now, so that it may not be seen as reinforcing the system of the past... but it is highly needed. Subject advisors' visits have positive impact on the teachers."

"There's no monitoring through school visits, but through course moderation, reviewing of teacher's and learners' portfolios, which contain files of class work, learners' marks. Through this the Department is able to evaluate teachers' work. Class visiting would be ideal, but the teachers' body [SADTU] does not allow class visits from the Department." (T2)

Unsurprisingly, the principals were more inclined than the teachers to bemoan the rarity of class visits:

P2: "Constant on-site visitation is required, especially for new LO educators."

Cluster meetings, however, seem to have become a beneficial substitute for individual class visits by Department officials; however, it is significant that the monitoring focus at these meetings appears to be on reviewing portfolios (i.e. monitoring work done, and teacher accountability) rather than on interacting around actual teaching. These points emerge clearly in the responses of P5, P3, and particularly T5:

"We also have cluster meetings where we develop common papers – this helps the teachers to work faster. The monitoring strategies are beneficial because they help teachers to work faster." (P5)

"The Department of Education never came to me, but I have been involved in cluster moderation where teachers' portfolios are reviewed. I can say the course moderation

is helpful, though I do not know if I am doing the right thing with the way I am handling LO because I was not trained to teach LO.” (T5)

“There are subject advisors who organise meetings and workshops with LO teachers. There is common assessment implemented for all schools by the Department. It benefits LO teaching because LO teachers cannot just do their own thing. The Department ensures they keep with the standard expected of them as Government provides funds for the implementation of LO.” (P3)

One result of monitoring with an emphasis on accountability and work done, rather than on engaging teachers on teaching in the classroom, may be a tendency for teachers to focus on performance, and to fabricate marks:

“I can’t really say the monitoring strategies are beneficial, because some teachers cook up marks for learners when it’s time for course moderation.” (T4)

From the comments and discussion with participant teachers and principals, there are indications that the monitoring strategies currently used are to some extent beneficial to the teaching of LO because they help, or drive, them to work hard to finish the syllabus, and contribute to teacher accountability. However, several of the participant educators felt that this form of monitoring should be supplemented with school visits by Department officials.

In summary, the data presentation has hopefully provided a clearer understanding of the phenomena under study. The qualifications and experience of Life Orientation teachers in selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District were presented. It was revealed that four out of six teachers in the selected high schools had the Psychology and ACE qualifications, which qualified them to teach LO. Two LO teachers were not qualified to teach LO because they had only general teaching qualifications. The call for consistent and appropriate in-service training (not just two- or three-day workshops) and classroom support was virtually unanimous among the participants.

Inadequate material resources provision in schools is one of the factors that affect the implementation of the LO curriculum. Some teachers are frustrated because of the inadequacy of material resources. In some schools, learners share textbooks in the ratio 1: 5, which makes teaching and learning LO difficult for both the teachers and learners.

LO teachers revealed that they received support from the school and Department of Education in the form of funds, advice, materials, information, training workshops, course moderation and so on. However, the teachers generally felt that the support they received from the Department was not adequate.

Teachers' work is monitored through follow-up on teachers' work schedules and course moderation (teachers' and learners' portfolios, etc.). Class visits and other monitoring mechanisms are hardly encountered at all in some schools, despite the fact that LO is a compulsory learning area in all the grades in South African Schools, and despite the perceived advantages of subject advisors engaging with teachers around actual teaching in the classroom.

The next chapter discusses the main findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having presented and analysed the data in Chapter 4, this chapter provides a discussion of the findings. The discussion is based on five broad themes (see page 69) which are:

- teachers' qualifications and experience,
- in-service training programmes provided for LO teachers,
- materials used by LO teachers,
- implementation of LO, and
- support mechanisms available for LO teachers, and monitoring strategies for LO teaching.

The most important of these broad themes is that of how the national curriculum (NCS) in LO is implemented in the six selected high schools. This theme was pursued in terms of a number of diverse aspects, such as participants' perceptions of the inclusion of Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum, whether learners have acquired certain values fostered in LO, problems experienced in teaching LO, participants' (and parents') satisfaction with the way LO is taught, alternatives to current LO topics and teaching methods, methods of lesson planning and learner assessment, and how various key topics or foci in LO may have influenced learners.

5.2 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS IN LO

Studies have shown that the qualifications and experience of teachers have become a major concern for education practitioners and policy makers all over the world (Florian and Rouse, 2009:596, Savolainen, 2009:16). The effect of qualifications and experience on the quality of teaching and learning in high schools has negatively affected the successful implementation of LO (Rooth, 2005; Christians, 2006; Van der Walt and De Klerk, 2006; Van Deventer and Van Niekerk, 2008).

The academic qualifications and experience of Life Orientation (LO) teachers are two important factors in determining the quality of education (Chung, 2005). The South African government's policy of providing "more teachers" and "better teachers" is based on the belief that teachers are essential drivers of good quality education (DoE, 2006), a notion supported by Robinson and Latchem (2003a:10); Perraton *et al.* (2002:7).

In the South African Draft policy on minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (2010:32-33), it was noted that prospective students should take at least a combination of two fields of Sociology, Philosophy, Psychology, Political Science, Labour Studies, Industrial Studies and Human Movement Science in their undergraduate degree to qualify to teach LO. However, Psychology must be one of the two fields chosen. Also, LO teachers who are already teaching are required to have an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) is a professional qualification which enables educators to develop their competencies or to change their career path and adopt new educator roles (DoE, 2000). The admission requirement for the ACE is a professional qualification (CHE, 2006), which may be a three-year teacher's diploma, a four-year bachelor's degree in education (B.Ed.) or a PGCE – postgraduate certificate in education (University of Pretoria, 2009). The specified overall learning outcomes of the ACE require a qualified practitioner at this level to be able to fulfil the role of the specialist educator (DoE, 2001).

Most of the LO teachers selected for this study were qualified to teach LO. Two teachers had Advanced Certificates in Education, which is one of the required qualifications for teachers who are already teaching Life Orientation. Two other teachers had qualifications in Psychology (as part of their B.Ed. degrees) which also qualified them to teach LO. The remaining two LO teachers had general teaching qualifications (a Diploma in Business Studies and Accounting, and a B.Ed. in Life Sciences respectively) which are required for admission to the profession, but do not specifically qualify teachers to teach LO. It was revealed that these teachers were co-opted to teach LO in their schools by their school Principals because there were no adequately trained LO teachers available, and because of the number of learners in their schools. This could reflect a recent increase in the proportion of LO teachers

with specialist qualifications. Although the qualifications of many LO teachers in South Africa have improved since 1998, studies indicate that many LO teachers have not yet been sufficiently equipped to meet the education needs of learners (DoE, 2006).

Nevertheless, one of the participant principals in this study still believed that there was no need to consider the specialist qualifications of the LO teachers – as long as a teacher had a general teaching qualification and was experienced in life, he/she was able to teach LO (see page 74). This finding is in line with the findings of Christiaans (2006), whose concern is that some schools' principals' attitudes are not conducive for implementing Life Orientation successfully. For instance, a Religious Education teacher may be expected to teach all aspects of Life Orientation, which may not be well-known to the teacher.

In this study the Life Orientation (LO) teachers who *were* trained for this learning area had less than six years' teaching experience in LO, as the first set of FET Phase LO teachers in South Africa were trained only in 2006. Fullan (1991:41), however, found that there is a need for the teacher to be experienced to effectively execute his/her duties. The experienced teacher will be able to use relevant teaching methods, understand the interests and learning needs of learners, and know the subject contents thoroughly as well as use the relevant teaching materials (*ibid.*:41) Hence it is the teacher who, through his/her experience, has to translate curriculum from theory to practice. Therefore, teachers who lack experience can find it difficult to execute their duties effectively and efficiently, as they may find it difficult to interpret the curriculum. Teachers with long service are in most cases viewed as conversant with numerous teaching strategies and teaching methods, as well as with the interpretation of the school syllabus (*ibid.*:41).

This study revealed that the interviewed teachers who were trained for LO each had between one and five years' experience of teaching LO, though some had a greater number of years' teaching experience in other subjects. According to Carey's (1986) model, these teachers would be categorised as "practising teachers" (3–8 years of teaching experience). The "practising teacher" has to be assisted or mentored if he/she is to be effective and be aware of and conversant with the latest

developments in the field (Carey, 1986). This could imply that the majority of teachers in this study lack teaching experience in LO.

Ennis and Chen (1995) noted that the value orientations of teachers with between 10 and 20 years of experience are more stable and less likely to change. By the time teachers have 20 years of experience; their belief structures are firmly established and are very unlikely to change at all. As such, experienced LO teachers are more likely to be familiar with the subject than inexperienced teachers. It is thus perhaps worth noting that in discussing LO teachers in South Africa, the subject as it is now has not had a long existence, though of course many LO teachers were probably teaching related subjects such as Guidance or Religious Education in years gone by.

5.2.1 In-service training provided for LO teachers

Teachers play an essential role in the implementation process, and factors such as their background, training, subject knowledge, motivation, commitment to teaching, and attitudes towards the proposed curriculum implementation influence their capacity and willingness to implement change (Rogan and Grayson, 2003:1186). Focusing on the second of these factors, the data on in-service training provided for Life Orientation (LO) teachers revealed that though the Department of Education provided in-service training for LO teaching, the duration was too short to be effective and beneficial. It also emerged that two LO teachers in the selected schools have not received any form of in-service training (see page 76).

The Department of Education (1997b) found that teachers were prepared by the Department of Education for the implementation of C2005 with just a five-day orientation programme when that curriculum was implemented in the years following 1998. They were trained for an entirely unfamiliar outcomes-based philosophy and teaching approach, and to plan their teaching according to specific outcomes and assessment criteria, rather than being given training in subject-based content knowledge. Some teachers had been trained in certain special aspects of LO, like guidance, physical education, or religious education, but no teacher was trained, either pre-service or in-service, to teach LO, despite the fact that a Life Orientation

teacher is supposed to have a body of knowledge on a wide range of subjects as indicated by the prescribed specific outcomes (DoE, 1997b).

This study has further shown that two teachers who teach LO in high schools have not received any training in LO as a subject in the last three years. This is in line with the study by Chisholm, (2005) who found that LO is being taught by teachers who had little or no training in LO

Four of the LO teachers in this study were in the 40-49 years age range (see page 71), so they need regular workshops to upgrade their skills, keep up to date and acquire new knowledge; as such some of the school principals suggested that regular LO training workshops should be organized. Frick and Kapp (2007:448) argue that “professional development programmes are also important for the maintenance of the human resources base of any organisation; and should be seen as an integral part of the main organisation’s strategy for maintaining its workers.” This view is shared by Harris (2003), who emphasizes the importance of teachers’ *continuing* professional training as very important in responding to the new challenges in the education system.

Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma and Jansen (2003) noted that teachers have difficulty in teaching LO programmes which entail discussing personal and societal values and norms with learners because of a low level of training and teacher expertise and confidence. Capel (2004) argues that there are numerous types of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities which could enable teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. For example: reading current research, accredited and non-accredited courses, attending conferences and seminars.

It was also revealed in this study that LO teachers experienced challenges in teaching some aspects of LO such as career choice, human rights, physical education lesson, politics and religion. Three of the teachers were limited by their bias against politically-related topics, and this was a hindrance when they needed to treat topics such as human rights. It was discovered that these teachers usually had little or no training in these areas, and as such they were not able to teach effectively when these topics came up in class.

Van Deventer and Van Niekerk, (2008) noted that some of the high school teachers are unwilling to be adventurous since their qualifications are inadequate to give them the confidence to experiment in this specialist area. Placing teachers in situations where they lack expertise creates stress and raises a number of questions about what value is attached to LO if it is presented by unqualified teachers (Van Deventer and Van Niekerk, 2008). Hence, a fully-qualified LO teacher would be the best option.

This study indicated the importance of in-service training as a very essential component in the delivery of quality education, so that teachers can get continuing training in areas such as LO teaching methodology in order to upgrade their skills and knowledge. Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008) stated that specialist subject teachers are the norm internationally. They are capable of teaching a wide variety of skills and games, and of using a range of teaching methods and strategies, so that every learner will be encouraged to participate enthusiastically in Life Orientation (LO) activities. There is a need to have specialists who will assist schools in implementing the curriculum and achieve its intended objectives.

The participants in this study expressed the need for beneficial and longer training in LO teaching (see page 77). They appealed for workshops to be organised for them by the Department of Education so that they would be able to teach LO effectively, and implement and achieve the objectives as outlined in the curriculum. Christiaans (2006) concurs with the Department of Education that teachers should be trained to become specialists in LO teaching.

However, there was strong evidence from the data that while two teachers had not received training from the Department of Education, others who had received the training confirmed that the course content had been relevant to what they were currently teaching in LO (see page 78).

5.3 MATERIAL RESOURCES

It was revealed through this study that textbooks are the most available material used in teaching Life Orientation (LO). However, other materials such as Department-developed teaching files, posters, charts, magazines, pictures, newspapers, ropes, mats, tapes and music playing devices (the music player is used to demonstrate the issue of peer pressure) were also available in small quantities at some schools (see table 4.8).

This study indicated that the Department of Education provides the money to state schools for textbooks (see page 79), and for a very limited number of other teaching and learning materials; parents are not involved in buying teaching and learning materials because most of the schools in the Fort Beaufort District are under Zone 21 (the schools in communities below the poverty index). Only in the more affluent former “Model C” and private schools are parents required to pay the sort of fees that enable such schools to purchase significant quantities of teaching and learning resources. By contrast, Tempest (2006:175) confirms that the Eastern Cape has the highest percentage of impoverished people in South Africa, and that unemployment in the province stands at 43.6 per cent. The above finding is contrary to the study by Chivore (1995:29), who found that parents should provide the school with financial and material, as well as well human resources. They should supplement books and help learners with their homework by way of supervision at home. Rambiyana and Kok (2002:11) state that parents' participation in education is allowed by the South African Schools Act, mainly through representation in School Governing Bodies. Parents are required to be involved in their children's home learning as well as tackling learning problems with educators.

Despite the state funding of textbooks, this study showed that the funds provided are not adequate to purchase sufficient textbooks, let alone other teaching and learning materials, and that many schools do not have enough of these materials and facilities. A study by Legotlo *et al.*, (2002) on the perceptions of stakeholders on the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 in South Africa, revealed that one of the reasons behind learners' failure is a shortage of textbooks, amongst other things. This was confirmed by parents, school governing bodies, principals, teachers and

learners (Legotlo *et al.*, 2002). Textbooks seem to contribute immensely towards the development of knowledge, as they are a key source of information, especially in Africa's schools, which are often starved of alternative teaching resources and other sources of relevant information. Fullan's model of change (1991:68) also confirms that textbooks are an important factor in curriculum implementation. Several South African researchers like Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003) regard reading materials as particularly significant resources for children's literacy and writing development.

In most of the selected schools it was observed that there was an inadequacy of textbooks, and for this reason learners shared Life Orientation (LO) textbooks in the ratio of 2:1, and in worse cases 5:1. Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186) found that a shortage of materials is an important factor in the implementation of a programme, and that the capacity of teachers can be affected by this factor. It is worth noting that Life Orientation (LO) is a key part of the balanced curriculum in South African schools, and it would be good if more funding could be provided towards the provision of teaching and learning materials. Clearly this has to be a given priority as a matter of urgency in order to implement the LO curriculum. Kelly and Melograno (2004) confirm that adequate provision of facilities and equipment in schools would make it possible to implement an ABC model that could guide LO teachers step-by-step through the process of translating curriculum theory into functional practice. It was revealed that when a learner in possession of a textbook is absent, teaching and learning becomes difficult for both the teacher and the other learners. Inadequacy of textbook supply also made learners to run around, in order to have access to the few available textbooks. Learners often visit the homes of learners who are in possession of the textbooks to get their homework done. Participant teachers attributed the shortages of textbooks partly to learners' failure to return some of the textbooks given to them at the end of the previous year. The researcher found that this reason requires further scrutiny – if learners fail to return textbooks, this may imply poor administration and enforcement of regulations on the part of the principals and teachers.

Both interviews and observations revealed that teachers and learners had been improvising and became resourceful in implementing the LO curriculum, by sourcing materials such as newspapers and magazines. It was revealed that in two of the

selected schools teachers photocopied textbooks for learners to make up for shortages of textbooks; however, this was expensive, time-consuming, and increased teachers' workload. Kwaira (1997:229) found that teachers had been taught to improvise wherever possible. In other words, after attending university, teachers became more resourceful.

This study revealed that all the selected schools were challenged by shortages of textbooks, and there were clear indications that shortages of textbooks and other teaching materials affected both the learners and teachers, which could result in the provision of an unbalanced LO curriculum.

It was further revealed that teachers used different textbooks for teaching Life Orientation (LO). This study revealed that teachers compared and used the best textbooks that treated the topic they were teaching because there are different textbooks of different quality. The reason behind this is that it was revealed that some of the textbooks were of good quality, but did not have enough content and *vice versa*. Some were not up-to-date, and not very relevant to the life situations of learners.

According to Fullan (1991) and Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186), the effectiveness of curriculum implementation may be determined by school facilities. Adequate instructional resource materials, which include quality textbooks, teaching aids and stationery, need to be supplied on time in large quantities. Educationalists generally are in agreement with this fact. Learners seem to perform well with adequate resources in respect of classrooms, libraries, textbooks, finances and relevant curriculum (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004).

This study further revealed that two of the selected schools are lacking in playgrounds or playing fields where learners can practise the physical education activities of LO. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186), physical resources are another major factor that influences capacity. Poor resources and conditions can limit the performance of even the best of teachers and undermine learners' efforts to focus on learning.

This study also collected the suggestions of the participants on the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials in LO. Their suggestions included the

following: the Department of Education should provide enough funds to replace the lost textbooks and procure new teaching and learning materials for teaching LO. Local universities, especially the University of Fort Hare, should assist with booklets and e-booklets. Teaching and learning materials in LO should be ordered in time to arrive ahead of the new calendar year. Internet facilities should be installed, and libraries made available to provide access to up-to-date information, and a less wasteful system should be introduced. Fredriksson, Fumador and Nyoagbe (1999:15) state that teaching and learning must take place in a conducive environment, including the technology and resources necessary for teaching. Teaching must be offered to learners in adequately equipped school buildings where the students, among other things, have access to a school library and on-line services.

Bot (2005:7) found that most poor Eastern Cape homes have little beyond a Bible for children to read. Community libraries are rare in rural areas, and over three-quarters of schools nationally have no library. This combination of circumstances means that learners are almost completely dependent on their schools to provide them with books to develop grade-appropriate literacy levels (*ibid.*:7).

5.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF LIFE ORIENTATION

5.4.1 Favourite subjects of LO teachers

The teacher is one major determinant of the quality of education. Hence the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum depends on variables such as the teacher's specialisation, interest, training, level of confidence and commitment, all of which contribute to the teacher's capacity to implement the programme (Rogan and Grayson, 2003:1186). This study found that in two of the selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District there were shortages of specialised LO teachers, and that these two LO teachers were more trained for Business Studies, Accounting, English and Life Sciences. This approves Chisholm's (2005) finding that some teachers who implement LO are trained for other learning areas, not LO.

In addition, this study showed that the favourite subjects of the teachers who were not trained to teach LO were in all cases the subjects that they were trained for. This

is likely to affect the learners produced by these teachers. It is thus also likely that schools implementing the curriculum with unspecialised teachers will find it more of a challenge to implement the designed programme. A study on poor performance in Grade 12 in South Africa by Legotlo, Mamga, Sebego, Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Nieuwoudt and Steyn (2002) revealed that a shortage of relevant and qualified educators contributed towards learners' failure. In that study, one learner stated that teachers who are less qualified fail to explain concepts. Nevertheless, four of the Life Orientation (LO) teachers in the selected high schools had trained specifically for LO. These teachers confessed that Life Orientation was close to their hearts.

5.4.2 Experiences of LO teachers

Fullan (1991:117) stresses the importance of the teacher as the central change agent, as the teacher is the one who is primarily responsible for the successful implementation of a new curriculum. Teachers, as practitioners of the curriculum, can and should thus be regarded as the nexus for curriculum implementation. They have the responsibility to bring to life the curriculum in their individual classrooms.

This study found that LO teachers have mixed experiences because of the challenges they encounter and the extra burdens that come with teaching LO, which are not usually encountered in other subjects (see page 89). These teachers felt that LO is demanding, dealing with many emotional issues coming out of some topics. It was a burden to combine the duties of parent (for those who were also parents) and teachers at the same time. LO teachers found LO challenging because it deals with issues that deeply affect learners. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003:1187), learners' backgrounds, and the kind of strengths and constraints they might bring with them to school, are crucial. A range of issues influence students' attitude to learning and responses to change. These include their home environment, parental commitment to education, health and nutrition, and their proficiency level in the language of instruction.

The participant teachers in this study revealed that the learners experienced challenges and personal problems which also forced the teachers to play the role of social workers. For instance, they often had to leave their schools to visit the Department of Education, the Social Welfare offices, the police station and learners' homes to solve learners' problems of stress, sexual abuse and so on. Panday (2007:19) found that Life Orientation teachers seem to take on pastoral roles when teaching the subject. They have to assume pastoral roles and create opportunities for relatively intimate discussions because learners feel safe and are able to open up about their problems when LO teachers are approachable. The participants Life Orientation teachers agree that assuming a pastoral role is a demanding task; however, they are committed to doing so because they feel that the subject requires a special kind of teacher, teachers "with hearts" who are role models, who see the teaching of Life Orientation (LO) as a calling (Panday, 2007:19). Prinsloo (2007:168) concurs, stating that "the character of the LO teacher is of the utmost importance, and that the person of the teacher determines the degree of success with which all aspects of life, survival and communication skills are conveyed to and internalised by learners."

It was also indicated in this study that some of the lessons taught in LO may have been counterproductive. For instance, some of the learners indulged in drug or alcohol abuse or sexual activities, partly because it had been discussed in class and they were curious about some of the topics. The study of Bhana *et al.* (2005) attests that greater levels of risk perception were associated with greater exposure to Life Orientation lessons on HIV/AIDS, significantly associated with higher knowledge about HIV. Aaro *et al.* (2006) express concern that learners might take things literally and interpret messages about sex as teachers condoning sex as a norm for their age group. There is no evidence, however, that learners have not learnt about this information somewhere else, and the assumption that they are experimenting with things they have learnt in LO is often rooted in conservative beliefs that tend to oppose sexuality education. This situation has become a sore spot for some of the LO teachers interviewed because the information that is supposed to liberate learners is seen as counteractive. These attitudes on the part of the teachers reflect the challenge that comes with inadequate qualification and training for LO teaching.

In spite of all these challenges, the teachers interviewed revealed that teaching LO was fulfilling and enjoyable. They found LO to be interesting; it made them closer to their learners and the parents. On the other hand, teachers, who were not specifically trained for teaching LO, tended to regard it as frustrating because of a lack of adequate support from the Department of Education in the form of in-service training and an adequate supply of teaching and learning materials. According to the Department of Education (1997b), Life Orientation was a “new” learning area, with “new” content and “new” implementation challenges for teachers. It emerged that some of the participants thought LO should be externally examined at the end of the year, which would give it the deserved status among teachers and learners, who seem to look down on the subject because it is not presently externally examined, despite the fact that it is a compulsory subject. This is supported by the Department of Education (2002b, 2008b); Van Deventer (2004); and Rooth (2005) who all recognize that one of the implementation challenges of Life Orientation is the existing pre-conceptions about the non-examinable status of its constituents as they were in previous curriculum dispensations, such as Religious Education, Physical Education, Guidance and Youth Preparedness

5.4.3 The inclusion of Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum and LO as a rewarding subject

It was found in this study that almost all the participants, including the learners, felt that it was a good thing to include Life Orientation (LO) as part of the school curriculum (see page 92). LO was seen by some as “an eye-opener”, and as laying a foundation on which other subjects can build. This is attributed to the fact that LO deals with matters of central importance in life; for instance it boosts learners’ knowledge about physical changes, relationships, values, religion, and careers. It was asserted that LO helps to influence learner behaviour in the areas of drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and unprotected sex. It increases awareness in the areas of morals, career choice, guidance, being responsible and human rights. Learners stated that LO keeps a person in touch with his/her inner self and surroundings, while other aspects of the subject help one to keep fit. It also contributes to self-preservation, and is a way of making teenagers knows about the challenges in life. It was said that LO teaches learners how to behave and live good

lives. It prepares them for the future, and to be able to differentiate between wrong and right. LO has the potential to help learners to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are important for life as a whole, not just for making a living, in such a way that it makes learners aware of what is actually happening in the world around them. Coombe (2002) and the Department of Education (2006) both confirm that Life Orientation was introduced as part of the new national curriculum in 1998, as a partial solution to various social problems. It was proposed in line with ideas about health, sex, and reproductive education which would enable learners to understand issues of masculinity and femininity, and which would also make it possible for learners to protect themselves and live healthy lives, free from risks. Also, according to a proposal from the Gender Task Team 1997, LO was introduced to serve as a way of curbing sexual violence in and out of schools, and enhancing gender equity. The Department of Education realized the scope and intensity of this problem and endeavoured, through the introduction of outcomes-based education, and in particular through the Life Orientation learning area, to put in place mitigatory programmes which could make a difference in the lives of a new generation of learners (Coombe, 2002; Department of Education, 2006; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007).

There were thus many indications in this study that LO is a rewarding subject to teach, especially if one is appropriately trained. Teachers spoke of feeling gratified when parents occasionally came to the school to acknowledge the changes which the LO teacher had helped to bring about in the lives of their children. However, it was also established that sometimes teachers felt frustrated because of discouraging feedback about learners sometimes deliberately going against values taught in LO.

5.4.4 Values that the LO programme is expected to foster in learners

Trissler (2000) notes that learners are influenced by many factors, and that the values they hold are shaped by parents, peers, television, music and other external sources. If this is true, then learners bring with them a wide range of behaviours to

the classroom, which it is up to the LO teacher to shape appropriately to match what is expected in school.

The study identified the values that the LO programme is expected to foster in learners, partly as a result of the LO lessons they are receiving. Participant teachers and principals indicated such values to include: respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, perseverance, trust, loving each other, 'Ubuntu', and sharing; values that may have a positive impact on problems like xenophobia and so on (see page 94). According to Rhodes and Roux (2004:25), a value is "more than a belief; it involves the worthiness of a norm or a principle" of individuals, groups, religions or belief systems. Asmal (2002:4) points out that in order to "live our Constitution", "we have to distil out of the Constitution a set of values that are comprehensible and meaningful." This is one of the main responsibilities of the Life Orientation (LO) teacher: to make the values in the Constitution liveable for learners so that they are imbued with constitutional values. It is clear that learners are supposed to imbibe these values from the society and home; however, Life Orientation helps to reinforce these positive values. Ngwena (2003:201) agrees that "successful implementation of Life Orientation should enhance the practice of positive values, attitudes, behaviour and skills, both by the learner and the community."

Ten of the participant teachers and principals said that some learners had adopted several values from the LO programme, partly because there are real examples in the textbooks which could help learners to adopt these values. On the other hand, two of the interviewed participants indicated that some learners in the selected high schools were struggling to understand and live by these values. The researcher found that this issue is controversial. It could not be assumed that because a number of the teachers and principals had reservations about LO's effectiveness in influencing learners' morals, therefore in those schools the learners were not influenced. Just as it could not be argued that in the schools of those educators who did not have such doubts, all the learners were positively influenced by LO.

According to Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1998), values should not be imposed on learners. However, as part of the "hidden curriculum" within the school, values are one way that schools socialize students to adopt values for themselves. Some instances were given as examples of how LO learners had demonstrated the values

imparted in LO: conducting themselves well even when the teachers were not around to supervise them, a change in attitude towards stealing from parents, a change in sexual behaviour, reduction in pregnancy rate and respect for themselves, parents, teachers and people they came in contact with. Heisler (2008:4) views respect as a fundamental human value that forms the basis of character and personality. Alderman (2000) states that many learners today do not appear to know right from wrong, and that this has led to many problems in the world. It could be argued that LO lessons may not be enough to bring about a serious behavioural change in young people, yet it is noteworthy that most of the participants claimed that teenage pregnancy had reduced in their various schools, partly as a result of the LO lessons taught in their schools. It was also asserted that LO had helped to change learners' sexual attitudes and behaviours; it was also claimed that there was a reduction in the number of sexual partners and an increase in the use of condoms as instances of new learned sexual behaviours. The consensus among these teachers around these issues suggests a conscious observation on their part, given prevalence of teenage pregnancy in their respective schools.

5.4.5 The problems teachers experienced in teaching young people LO, and suggestions on how these problems could be solved

The findings in this section revealed a lack of training as one of the main problems for LO teachers, one which makes teachers to be confused as to whether or not they were doing the right thing (see page 97). It was established that an untrained teacher would not be able to handle adolescent learners and their curiosity, and may not have a good approach in handling sensitive topics in LO which could make teaching distressing. It emerged that the Department of Education needs to organise training for LO teachers who were as yet untrained to handle the subject. This finding supports the argument of Jansen and Christie (1999:81), who state that there was great uncertainty among teachers with regard to the correct implementation of Curriculum 2005. In short, implementation of the national curriculum at school level was riddled with uncertainties, ineffective classroom management and a general lack of academic performance by learners, mainly as a result of a lack of adequate training and ongoing support for teachers in the classroom.

Prinsloo's study (2007:165) found that teachers who did not have adequate training and skills lacked motivation and confidence. He also found that these teachers had little influence on learners' formation of values, and were unable to alter the learners' behaviour. This author revealed that teachers have to be adequately trained in understanding the content, aims, outcomes and methods of the LO programmes Prinsloo, (2007:158). They struggled to maintain the learners' interest in most of the outcomes prescribed under the rubrics Personal Wellbeing, Citizenship Education and Recreation, and Physical Well-being (Prinsloo, 2007:165). The Department of Education (2002:3-4) has a vision of LO teachers who are socially and politically critical and responsible, professionally competent, and in touch with current developments, especially in their own field, and open to views and opinions held by learners which may be different from their own. Clearly these are attributes which are unlikely to develop without adequate professional education.

Issues of learners' indiscipline, guidance and parental monitoring also emerged in the interviews. The participant principals indicated that many learners did not take the Life Orientation (LO) programme seriously. George (1990:1) views discipline in schools as "creating and maintaining a learning atmosphere in which teachers can teach, and pupils learn in an environment that encourages respect for teachers, classmates and administrators." In this regard Rambiyana (2001:42) contends that "discipline and the possibility of effective teaching go together."

The fact that learners did not take LO seriously poses a contradiction, since in some cases the same learners appeared to claim that LO was of value. Also, according to Prinsloo's study (2007), there was a lack of parental guidance and monitoring at home to support the efforts of the LO teachers. According to this observation, there is little continuity between what is taught in LO class and what is allowed at home. For instance, some of the parents condone behaviour which the LO programme condemns. Rambiyana and Kok (2002:10) noted that while parents' support cannot guarantee the success of the aims of the programme, "their lack of support can sabotage even the most well-intentioned reforms." Therefore parents' support has important implications for the implementation of the LO curriculum.

It emerged that religious background and cultural sentiments are other problems that the teachers in this study experienced, in that two LO teachers found teaching some concepts contrary to their religion or cultural background. This finding is supported by Schaalma, Abraham and Gillmore (2004), who found that LO teachers have expressed concern that they have been encountering challenges in trying to get a balance between their own beliefs and the idea that they must teach certain material that they believe should not be taught to students. At times teachers feel that the values they hold are contrary to the content they are expected to teach. This is true in the example of having to teach learners to use condoms, which many teachers feel encourages loose morals. It is in cases like this that teachers who feel this causes promiscuity may consequently teach *against* the values fostered in the LO programmes (Flisher, Kaaya, Mukoma, and I-Klepp, 2009).

Interestingly, almost all the responses in this section of the interviews focused not on the content of LO lessons, but on more active roles for the two parties involved – teachers and learners. As one of the part-solutions to these problems, peer education in terms of negotiated curriculum in learners' own classes was suggested. This could encourage learners' input and make them involved in the teaching as well as the learning of some of the topics in Life Orientation, so that learners could learn from the experience of people of their own age group. Adamchak (2006:5) noted that peer education helps to reach young people with information and skills. She stated that the goal of peer education is to develop knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed to engage in healthy behaviours.

It was also suggested that if the untrained Life Orientation teachers were properly trained, they would be more capable of handling LO in such a way that learners would take the subject more seriously. It was indicated that LO teachers should not see learners as children, but as young adults who have the right to know everything that is specified in the LO curriculum. It was also said that learners needed take the Life Orientation lessons seriously because it seems to be the basis for all the other subjects, but of course such "taking seriously" would depend to a great extent on how teachers approached the subject themselves.

5.4.6 Parents' perceptions of LO

This study shows that parents known to the participants had a positive attitude towards LO. It was revealed that these parents viewed LO like the other subjects in schools, in which learners are taught about some of the issues the parents could not talk about, such as sex and relationships (see page 101).

Learners claimed that their parents thus found that LO made it easier to discuss such matters with their children. At least parents saw the impact of LO in the lives of their children, as they said it gave direction and helped to discipline learners. This finding is partly in line with the study of Bhana *et al.* (2005:6), who found that two-thirds of learners believe that their parents are comfortable about teaching and learning about HIV/AIDS rather than sex and sexuality.

Participants also indicated that parents showed their attitudes towards Life Orientation (LO) through their involvement and their visits to the schools. Parents on occasion visited the school when learners had problems at home or school, to share their problems with the LO teachers. They also came to show their appreciation to the school, to the LO teachers and the principals. Miller and Pedro (2006:298) state that parents have potential to support school programmes and serve as sources of information if teachers have developed a respectful relationship with them. Teaching and learning is much more successful when teachers are able to contact parents as resources for support for themselves and the learners they teach.

The participants, however, mentioned that some parents did not like LO because they thought it made learners more vulnerable and that the subject was not right for children because of certain sensitive topics. They showed this by not responding well when the LO teachers discussed the problems of their children with them, or asked them to assist the teacher or learner in some of the assigned learning tasks.

Prinsloo (2007:162) found that schools struggle to get parents involved in their children's school work. This author also found that parents were not interested in stressing themselves on behalf of their children. Rambiyana and Kok (2002:11) state that parents' participation in education is allowed by the South African Schools Act (1996), mainly through representation in School Governing Bodies. Parents are

required to be involved in their children's home learning, as well as tackling learning problems with educators.

5.4.7 Participants' satisfaction with the way Life Orientation is taught

This section revealed the mixed feelings of the participants. It was established that two of the teachers were not satisfied with the way they were teaching LO (see page 103); they expressed confusion about the teaching of LO because they had not been properly trained to teach the subject. These teachers expressed the need for training so that they would be able to do justice to the learning area. Pandey (2007:10) and Christie (1999:15) found that LO teachers with inadequate training will find it difficult to teach towards both the general critical cross-field outcomes of the NCS and the subject-specific outcomes of the LO learning area. Four of the participant teachers, on the other hand, expressed their satisfaction in teaching LO; they stated that they were teaching the learning area more-or-less as expected because they were trained to teach. Data from the principals also revealed that participant principals were satisfied because it was revealed that the performance of the majority of learners in LO was above average. These principals were also satisfied because they were convinced that LO teachers were handling the subject well. However, one of the participants had some reservations about the status of LO as a subject. It emerged that he thought LO should be externally examined at the end of the year, which would give it the deserved status among teachers and learners, who seem to look down on the subject because it is not presently externally examined, despite the fact that it is a compulsory subject.

The focus groups interviews revealed that their LO teachers generally taught in simple language that made sense, and that learners felt comfortable to ask questions when they did not understand (see page 103). To learners, LO was the "fun" learning area because they were free to express their views and engage in fun activities during practical sessions. One of the learners stated that the physical activities time was always the time to keep their minds out of books; they were able to play interesting games and relax during LO practical, which focuses on perceptual motor development, games and sport, physical growth and development, recreation and play (NDE, 2002:10).

5.4.8 Things LO teachers should do differently

Data obtained from participant principals and learners' focus groups suggest that teachers should do some things differently in order to teach LO effectively. Both groups indicated that more opportunities should be created for sporting activities, and "field trip" visits to hospitals, universities and various workplaces (see page 105). This is to take learners beyond the confines of the classroom, to where they can experience aspects of the real world for which LO is seeking to prepare them. The need for competition among neighbouring schools and peer teaching was emphasized, partly in order to improve learners' communication skills, and partly because peer teaching has the potential to engage the learners in topics that are, after all, of vital interest to them. The awareness that learners know some things themselves – in some cases, better than the teachers – was also established, in that teachers should not see learners as children but as young adults, so that teachers would be free to discuss all the topics in LO, including the sensitive topics like sex, drug and alcohol abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Some of these learners were more exposed to these issues than their teachers through their use of the internet, television and so on.

The importance of instructional materials was also revealed in this section. It was indicated that teachers should use instructional materials to illustrate some of the LO lessons for the purpose of achieving clarity. Servey (1981) reveals that teachers do not use instructional materials that cater for different learning abilities of learners. This author shows that instructional materials used by teachers often did not meet learners' needs in terms of their levels of skill. No two individuals learn exactly the same way; the most appropriate means to learning appears to be highly individualistic, and is directly related to the type of learning desired.

5.4.9 Topics learners want removed or added to the LO curriculum

In this study, learners feel that the LO programme on sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS is helping them to protect themselves from being infected with HIV/AIDS. The programme makes them understand about HIV/AIDS, and to accept people living with HIV/AIDS. This study is in line with the observations made by Bhana, Brookes,

Makiwane and Naidoo (2005:6), in a study of Gauteng schools – that learners approved of the NCS HIV/AIDS programme. It was revealed in this study that scholars advocated that the curriculum should include details of how to accept HIV/AIDS, as it would be a great challenge to learners if they found themselves in such a situation and did not know how to deal with it. This could mean that teachers had not been doing justice to that topic, which in turn raises the question of whether or not teachers had not covered all the prescribed topics (see page 106).

This section revealed that learners welcome the extent to which LO teaching and learning does connect with their lives. However, this study discovered that there was a deep-seated cultural sentiment among boys, some of whom vehemently refused to have circumcision discussed in class (see page 107). For instance, male learners in some schools under this study are strongly opposed to the open discussion of male circumcision and they wanted the topic to be removed altogether, not even to be discussed in 'boys-only' class sessions. The discussion was considered a cultural taboo because women are not supposed to know about the circumcision experience. It was clear, however, that the female learners did not feel as strongly about this cultural taboo as the boys did, and a number of the girls actually said they wanted this discussion to be included.

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 both 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. Devenish (1999) stated that the right to culture is articulated in Section 31 of the South African Constitution as an individual right that is inherent in every person, and is not expressed as group or ethnic rights. However, this right is by its very nature group-oriented, since individuals share their culture with other persons constituting a group or community. Therefore individuals do not exist and operate in a cultural or religious vacuum and their rights do not exist in the abstract.

According to Haysom and Cachalia (2005), where there is a clash between the protection of cultural rights and ordinary statutes that seek to regulate cultural life in

a way that impinges on cultural practices, then a careful balance between the two has to be struck. By analogy, we may argue that when there is tension between the protection of the cultural rights of male learners and the rights of female learners to understand their own culture more fully in a modernising society, not only should a careful balance be struck between the two, but the entire matter should be handled with sensitivity. Once again, this is where the need for appropriate professional training for LO teachers is signalled.

With regard to the issue of using teaching strategies that can accommodate students' differences, Killen (2007) points out that there are a number of different teaching strategies such as discussion, group work, problem-solving, student research, direct instruction and co-operative learning for teaching students in classrooms where there is cultural tension. Co-operative learning is particularly relevant to embracing cultural difference, since it allows and helps different students to interact and share their experiences in their groups as they discuss.

5.4.10 Planning and teaching methods

An effective, relevant and good foundation in Life Orientation can be created and maintained among learners through effective practices that give LO teachers the opportunity to plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of all learners and result in positive learning outcomes (Theron and Dalzell, 2006:399).

LO lessons are an ideal setting for influencing learners' behaviour towards making them responsible adults, and teaching them how to choose their career in order for them to have a better future (Theron and Dalzell, 2006). The impact of the teacher and the teaching that goes on in the classroom has been identified by numerous studies as the crucial variable for improving learning (Rogan and Grayson, 2003).

The majority of teacher participants emphasised that they used learner-centred teaching methods which included group and individual teaching, group demonstration, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and practical activities (see page107). Other teachers revealed that they used teacher-centred approaches, such as note-taking, following textbooks and explanatory sessions. This study found that teachers used learner-centred teaching methods as far as possible

because it this is recommended in the NCS. According to the Department of Education (2008), teaching should be learner-centred, allowing space for learners to be active participants in their own learning, and sometimes even in the design of what is to be learnt. Sall, Ndiaye, Diarra and Seck (2009:54) found that the teacher's method of teaching is critical in any reform designed to improve educational quality. The successful implementation of the LO curriculum in high schools in South Africa likewise depends on the teaching strategies used by the LO teachers.

Learner-centred teaching methods tend to ensure learners' participation (thus counteracting the tendency of some learners not to take LO lessons seriously, discussed above). It also helps shy learners in particular to become more self-confident. Susan, Rastegar and Malekan (2007) argue that methods suitable for interactive learning provide opportunities for the learners to be active producers of knowledge, and allow them reflect on their own learning experiences. Therefore they are able to understand the contradictions between their existing understandings and new experiences, and to consider alternative understandings. In some of the observations in this study, there was evidence of performance gaps between what teachers said during interviews and their actual teaching. Teachers, who claimed that they used learner-centred teaching methods, presented their lessons without any strategies that might elicit learners' participation. In some cases the scrutiny of lesson plans showed that planning on paper could be totally different from what happens in practice. Huba and Freed (2000) note that in teacher-centred approach knowledge is conveyed from teacher to learners. Only learners are seen as learners, and they are treated as passive. These authors view learner-centred approaches as those in which learners construct knowledge through gathering and synthesizing information and integrating it using the general skills of inquiry, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and so on. Teachers and learners learn together, and learners are actively involved.

The Department of Education currently provides a common lesson plan to all teachers. Therefore, teachers are uniformly guided by the framework, schedule and lesson templates contained in the NCS. Most of the participant teachers were aware of the NCS planning methods because they were provided with it by the Department of Education through LO subject advisors. The issue of common lesson plans is a

controversial one, and may be seen on one hand as either de-professionalization or over-control of teachers, or on the other as a necessary (and possibly voluntary) option in a country where so many teachers are under-trained, under-qualified, or just unprofessional.

Middle (2005) stated that the development of uniform lesson plans is a task that should be shared by all teachers in the school. It limits the quantity of lesson planning required and increases the quality. It encourages teachers to brainstorm ways that they can embed their teaching expectations in their regular curriculum. Common lesson plans, if well-designed, give security and quality to lessons. However, they could make teachers lazy and less creative. Some teachers explore more widely in their lesson planning, and in this study at least one teacher explicitly planned a lesson with the specific nature of individual learners in mind. It is of course very possible that those who emphasized their use of the NCS templates in the interviews also used a wider range of ideas and resources in practice, but this did not emerge in the interviews or in the observed lessons.

One of the teachers stated that she did not use a lesson plan because there was no support and guidance on how to plan – a somewhat contradictory position. Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008:135) found that teachers seem often to be placed in situations where they lack expertise or find themselves “out of their league”, which creates stressful situations for them. This also raises a number of questions for the learners, who are able to sense the incompetence and ineffectiveness of under-qualified teachers.

5.4.11 The approaches used to assess learners in LO, and reasons for using the approaches

This study found that learners were assessed on the basis of NCS-approved systems, such as the use of formal assessment (oral interviews, spoken tests, written work and class tests, a variety of formally assessable learning tasks, and a test at the end of the term). Also, learners are assessed using informal assessment where, for instance, learners are individually and verbally assessed when they go outside and play, ask questions about their surroundings, or debate certain topics (see page 113). According to Kelly and Melograno, (2004) an effective teacher

should follow a specified programme plan, continually assess the learners, and use assessment data to plan and implement instruction. He/she uses the evaluation data (reassessment) not just for the sake of keeping records, or as an accountability measure to provide evidence of work done, but to determine the learners' progress, the effectiveness of teaching and the appropriateness of the programme plan.

This study found a variety of assessment activities, and reasons for using these methods. Interestingly they emphasised, at least in interviews, the more intrinsic benefits of assessment: motivation for learning, feedback to teachers and learners, and diagnosis of difficulties, rather than the more extrinsic reporting to parents, and accountability to superiors. This is in line with the specification of the National Curriculum Statement (2008), which states that teachers must make assessment part of their lessons, a formal, year-long programme of assessment. Learners should be monitored throughout the year using both informal daily assessment and the formal Programme of Assessment. In Grades 10 and 11 all assessment of the National Curriculum Statement is internal. In Grade 12 the formal Programme of Assessment which counts 25% is internally set and marked, and externally moderated. The remaining 75% of the final mark for certification in Grade 12 is externally set, marked and moderated. In Life Orientation, however, all assessment is internal and makes up 100% of the final mark for promotion and certification (NDE/NCS, 2008). It emerged in this study that teachers used the above-mentioned approaches to assess learners for a range of reasons which included:

- pragmatic reasoning (the teacher posed questions for the learners to answer, and gave a group work activity to do – because it works in practice and achieves its purpose)
- motivation to learn (assessing learners with oral and written questions which encourage learners to be more serious with their work)
- diagnosis of difficulties in learning
- feedback on learners' progress, competence and understanding.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the document analysis carried out on teachers and learners' portfolios revealed that there were gaps and inconsistencies, varying from school to school. The learners' portfolios in some showed little class work, and feedback to the learners was very thin. There were instances of assignments and

class tests remaining unmarked. Jacobs (2011:221) found that very little measurable written class work was done in the LO class, as LO periods are often seen as “free” periods, or time when learners could “hang out” with their friends. This supports the finding that LO was not always taken seriously, a point also made by Rooth (2005:68).

The document analysis in this study shows that apart from lesson plans, the only important information in the teachers’ files was the record of learners’ past assessment, presented as an exhibit – little more than evidence that work had been done. Egwunyenga (2009:112) points to the fact that there are a number of problems associated with record keeping in schools, including negative attitudes of some staff, badly implemented record management systems, insecurity of records, lack of training, and inadequate computer terminals and resources, as well as the lack of a school assessment policy.

5.4.12 General problems that the LO teachers experienced

This study indicates that LO teachers found it difficult to teach, not only sex-related topics, but also concepts like human rights, religion, career choice, and some commercially-oriented topics. It was discovered that they had little or no information concerning these areas of LO, and as such they were not able to teach effectively when these topics came up in class.

Another finding of this study related to conflicting religious beliefs and practices. In some situations the teacher was a Christian while the learners were of other religious persuasions; such teachers were faced with the challenge of rising above their religious sentiments in the face of contending religious values and contrasting opinions. This is problem pointing to a lack of adequate and appropriate training on the part of the teacher. It also points to an area that the Department of Education needs to consider in teacher’s capacity training. According to Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, Mukoma and Janse (2003), teachers are expected to find a balance between their own beliefs and the idea that they must sometimes teach material they believe should not be taught to learners, such as the practice of safe sex. It is also apparent that the introduction of LO in the curriculum came with attendant challenges that threaten to derail it as a solution. For instance, teachers who find it

difficult to teach aspects of LO such as religion and sexuality, and thus shy from doing so, seem to be helping to perpetuate the same problems the subject was created to address. By their attitude, beliefs and practice, some of the teachers inadvertently, and possibly knowingly, reinforce questionable values and harmful sentiments – to learners' detriment.

Another major problem which the study reveals is that schools principals show a non-committal attitude towards LO in administrative and academic planning, and this has a far-reaching negative impact in the teaching and learning of the subject as LO teachers are not adequately monitored or supported, and the subject itself is not adequately provided for in the administrative scheme of the school system. Interviews conducted showed that these principals were not familiar with the challenges LO teachers faced. Rooth (2005) and Christiaans (2006) confirm that the attitudes of some principals are not conducive to implementing Life Orientation successfully. For instance, a Religious Education teacher may be expected to teach all aspects of Life Orientation, some of which may not be at all well-known to the teacher. These authors state that inadequate support from principals and the Department of Education worsens the situation.

It also emerged from this study that LO teachers did not have enough time to explore with LO. This may be the case, as the teachers complained of being overloaded with work. LO was said to be too broad, the syllabus too long and the time available too limited for its coverage. It was found that LO teachers were often also responsible for other learning areas, limiting the time directed towards the teaching of LO. Panday (2007:10) confirms that the major outcry from many frustrated educators was that they were now faced with new terminology coupled with an over-load of integration, assessment, recording and paperwork. This problem raises the issues of curriculum review, using the teachers' concerns as points of reference. It seems that the teaching and learning of LO is always likely to be flawed, and may not achieve the desired end results as long as the curriculum implementation is faced with the challenges like an overcrowded curriculum.

5.5 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LO AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGE

Another important finding from this study was that the majority of the learners expressed positive attitudes towards Life Orientation as a subject. The findings of Theron (2008) reveal that learners found LO meaningful but expressed that it should be more contextually relevant, and that learner consultation should ideally be encouraged to determine such relevance. Theron and Dalzell (2006) confirm that many learners perceive that the LO programme teaches them to make wise career choices and helps them to find employment skills, skills that help them discover who they are (self-awareness), skills that teach them to value themselves (self-esteem), and skills and attitudes that empower them to stand up for their rights. On the other hand, Theron and Dalzell (2006) observed that learners often have negative attitudes towards some of the LO programmes like religious education, socialisation, and value and interest clarification. And in his study of Life Orientation as experienced by learners in the North-West Province (2011), Jacobs indicates that many learners seem to view LO as unnecessary, boring and irrelevant. Furthermore, this author revealed that LO does not succeed in accomplishing its aims, as laid out in the National Curriculum Statement. To stay with the negative perceptions, Prinsloo (2007) found that LO instruction did not always appear to be even moderately effective in changing learners' behaviour in even some of the desired ways. Many learners felt that they had learnt nothing new. The finding that LO was often not taken seriously probably contributes to this state of affairs, and is also confirmed by Rooth (2005:68). It was established that learners often saw LO as a 'free' period, or a time when they could "hang out" with their friends. Then there is also the possibility that learners from different cultures have different LO needs, as suggested by Theron (2008:62).

However, this study found that most of the learners were motivated to learn Life Orientation because they felt it empowered them with relevant life skills and attitudes, such as learning to live healthy lives, coming to understand that their destiny is in their hands, and taking their study more seriously (see page 121).

Through their LO lessons, the learners also claimed to have acquired a good deal of knowledge and awareness of human rights and their own rights as young persons, as well as learning what other people and their communities expected of them (page 122). 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 National Curriculum Statement (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-curricular 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 (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).

This study found that learners claimed that LO lessons had influenced them to be sensitive about matters of gender. They now understood that no sex was superior (see page 123), that they could do anything they set their minds on, regardless of their sex. Girls understood that if they were sexually abused, there could be legal consequences. Learners also indicated that they understood that women could apply for the same jobs as men. The study indicated that boys claimed to wash dishes and helped with the cooking at home, and that girls played soccer, grazed cows in the field, and played rugby as well as netball, based at least partly on the understanding of gender that they had gained in LO. Sutherland-Addy (2005:13) notes that a quality education, one which promotes equality in the learning environment and equality of opportunity, should be the direction for policy, programme and project goals. A quality education would address the issues that pose barriers to girls' access, participation and achievement, and the risks that threaten adolescent girls' well-being and life opportunities.

This section showed that learners were informed about issues of gender, gender roles and popular stereotypes at homes, in schools and society. Although this

knowledge may not be demonstrated practically in a classroom environment, it can still be observed that some of the learners felt empowered by it, especially the girls who realized that there are no limitations to what they could achieve, and that being female is not a barrier.

There were claims from the study that Life Orientation lessons had also had an impact on the moral values of learners, especially in the way they related to other people: their family members, teachers and fellow learners (see page 125). In this study all the learner focus groups stated that Life Orientation lessons had partly affected their moral values. Collier, Thomlison and Wilson (1974:6) define morality as a set of general principles or procedures, acceptable or inevitable for any rational person within a society. Morality defines a person's behaviour as good or bad, right or wrong. Something that should be learned and that requires effort, both on the part of the learner and the educator. In arguing for the school's involvement in moral development, Brezinka (1994:168) contends that the school cannot afford to be neutral in this regard, especially in a constitutional democratic state.

The South African Department of Education (2003) states that the ultimate purpose of LO is to equip learners to engage with society on personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life's opportunities. The challenge is also to prepare all learners to play a meaningful role in society and in the South African economy (South African Department of Education, 2003). The learners in this study claimed they had learnt in LO about interacting with or relating to other people, and that they have been able to demonstrate this in their relationships with their fellow learners, families and friends (see page 125). However, the limitations of this study placed constraints on the researcher's ability to gauge the reliability of such responses.

It emerged from this study that learners claimed that LO lessons had sensitized them to drug abuse in that some of them had stopped taking drugs, partly because of their knowledge of the effects of drugs abuse (see page 126). For instance, a learner claimed to have stopped using drugs because it made him disrespect his parents and people in the community. The learner had to stop drug abuse when he realized it

was affecting his behaviour towards other people, and felt it was destroying him gradually. It was found that some of the learners were now aware that it was a lie that any drugs enhanced learning. One of them also responded that she had stopped self-medication, and that she now consulted a doctor before taking pills as a result of the knowledge she had gained of the effects of self-medication. Again, like all the learning areas, it was indicated that learners' knowledge base about drug abuse was widened and strengthened through the teaching of LO. According to Burnett, 1998; Department of Health, 1998; Filsher, Reddy, Muller and Lombard (2003), South African adolescents frequently engage in a range of high-risk activities. Young people use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, engage in unprotected sex, have unhealthy dietary behaviours and are both perpetrators and victims of violence. It is obvious that saying such things in an interview does not mean that what these learners have learnt will be proof against their abusing drugs or alcohol in tempting circumstances, but it does indicate that they have at least been taught about the consequences of, and the problems that can accompany, drug and alcohol abuse.

It was also indicated that learners had benefited from the information they had received in sexuality education in relation to their attitudes or behaviour in matters of sex (see page 127). This study revealed that sexuality education had helped learners to understand that sexual harassment could happen within the family as well as with strangers. Rambiyana (2001:57) found that the provision of sexuality education can help to reduce incidents of child sexual abuse. Further, it can also limit the spread of HIV-AIDS. Fay and Gordon (1989:215) argue for sexuality education in schools, asserting that this is too important a matter to be left to chance, superstition, myth, peers and the media.

This study found that the learners had acquired a fair knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and that their better knowledge of HIV was partly derived from LO lessons. Some of the learners also said that the knowledge of HIV infections had led them to use condoms when having sex, not to share sharp objects, to wear gloves when in contact with a bleeding person, and to be faithful to their partners. The findings in this study are in line with Cromhout, (2005), who found that learners seemed to have internalised the

knowledge taught and achieved confidence and a degree of mastery of the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Another benefit that learners confirmed they had achieved through their LO lessons was learning and developing social skills. The South African Department of Education (2003) states that the challenge of LO is to prepare all learners to play a meaningful role in society and in the South African economy. This study found that learners had been able to demonstrate their learning in this regard by helping those in danger and trouble, learning how to collaborate with others, taking responsibilities for their studies, managing time well for different activities, working hard by reading to pass examinations, and getting involved in community work such as helping with the cleaning of the school environment (see page 129).

This study found that some of the learners demonstrated some of these attributes in their conduct among themselves and even in contact with the researcher. Many of them displayed attitudes of respect, and some of the focus groups were able to work as team and organise themselves properly before and after the discussions, even in the absence of their educators. It was easy for the researcher to relate with some learners focus groups in some schools without the assistance of educators, whereas this was not the case in every school.

This important subsection has shown research findings which indicated that most of the learners had claimed to benefit from LO lessons. Although many learners professed to be positive about LO in their responses, it is difficult to determine how honest they were being honest regarding these issues. This finding would at least to some extent support the study conducted by Theron (2008), who found that a sample of Grade 9 township learners valued LO. Even though learners were positive about the subject, it was not evident that they applied what they learned to their lives, which is a concern also mentioned by Prinsloo (2007:165).

It was found that some learners were in a sense contradicting themselves in the focus group interviews. Almost all the learners claimed that they liked LO, but some of them gave the impression that they actually engaged in risk behaviours that had been discussed in LO. This raises the obvious question of what it was that they

enjoyed about the relevant LO lessons. However, this study found that they have at least been taught about the consequences of the problems that can accompany sexual, drug and alcohol abuse. LO is also specifically intended to help learners face and cope with problems, such as drug abuse, AIDS, peer pressure, and STDs as well as societal issues and problems such as career choices, crime, and corruption. The assessment standards in the National Curriculum Statement (2002; 2003) assert that learners are expected to be able to solve or at least manage these problems in constructive ways. The results of this section of the study are not really clear as to whether LO really does achieve these aims.

5.6 SUPPORT MECHANISMS AVAILABLE FOR LO TEACHERS, AND THE ADEQUACY OF THE SUPPORT

This study found that all the LO teachers stated that there were some forms of support available, for instance, financial, material and human support from their principals. In terms of the adequacy of the support provided, LO teachers were of the opinion that the support they received from their principals was adequate (see page 130). However, the majority of the principals were less sure about the adequacy of the support provided by the Department of Education.

Nkomo (1995:36) noted that principals and district officials, as the custodians of curriculum implementation, had to support it. At the school level, the principal is the chief instructional supervisor. He/she provides the means for curriculum implementation through timetabling, classroom allocation, textbook allocation, syllabus and all instructional materials, as well as creating a conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning (*ibid.*). Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) also argue that principals and heads of department should provide guidance and make sure that teachers have the necessary skills, and use the correct teaching methods or strategies.

The South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) found that new young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties. Therefore, if young Life Orientation teachers are not assisted, the Life Orientation curriculum is less likely to be effectively

implemented by such teachers. This study found that trained LO teachers in the selected Fort Beaufort District had between one and five years' teaching experience (see table 4.7). This means that these teachers had relatively little teaching experience in this learning area. Therefore, there is a particular need for consistent support in this sector (new or inexperienced teachers) for them to be able to fully implement the Life Orientation curriculum. Yet a concern was raised by the participant principals and teachers that many subject advisers did not come to visit schools (or could not because of resistance on the part of the leading teacher union), and had ignored LO despite some of these LO teachers not having been trained.

It was established that the support mechanisms provided by the Department of Education are in the form of funds, advice materials; information, workshops and training, and course moderation (see pages 130 and 131). However, the participants stated that the support from the Department of Education was not adequate. There was a concern that two of the LO teachers had not received any form of support from the Department of Education in the form of workshop/training and advice. At the time of the study, there seemed to be shortages of teaching and learning materials used by LO teachers. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186), the construct "support from outside agencies" describes the kinds of action undertaken by outside organisations such as provincial and district education offices, to influence practices, either by support or sanction, and the role of the District Education Officers (DEOs) to see that standards are maintained. They are there as quality assurance officers, to provide schools with expertise and professional development courses. In many developing countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies such as World Vision and local or international NGOs, which often provide teachers and learners with materials like teaching kits or textbooks.

Non-material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development. These involve in-service training where teachers' skills can be upgraded. This is probably one of the most visible and obvious ways in which outside agencies attempt to bring change in schools (Karsten, Voncken and Voorthuis, 2000). Therefore, non-material support can also be regarded as a sub-construct of school capacity. To bring about change, there is also a need for outside agencies to monitor the implementation process. This is mainly the duty of the district officers. They have to

inspect schools at least once in two years so as to give feedback to teachers on their performance. It is their duty to see that the Life Orientation curriculum is implemented according to policy documents.

The study also inquired into the kind of support the LO teachers *expected* from the school principals and the Department of Education. It emerged that the participant teachers wanted more support in the areas of training, counselling, guidance, advice, and regular visits to the school by subject advisors. They further stated that there should be offices for specialist teachers to help the LO teachers, who would handle learners' problems as they arose, liaising with police and the Departments of Education and Social Welfare, and visiting learners' homes. This would help LO teachers to mind their classes, reducing their burdens and enabling them to concentrate on their school work. It was also recommended that such specialist teachers should be sufficient resources, especially funds, to run such an office.

5.6.1 Monitoring strategies for LO

This study found that there is no established monitoring system in two of the selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District. The LO teachers in these schools stated that there is no monitoring, and that the principal's monitoring is based on his/her trust of the teacher's capacity. To a certain extent, LO is being marginalised by the very people who are given the responsibility of making sure that this curriculum is fully implemented. It is the direct responsibility of the principals and the District Officers that teaching and learning take place in schools (South African School Act, 1996; Prinsloo, 2007; Christiaans, 2006).

However, in the other schools in this study, it was found that some kind of monitoring strategies were indeed put in place for the implementation of the LO curriculum. It was stated that monitoring is done in LO, as in all other learning areas, through the head of departments (HODS) and subject heads. It was revealed that in these schools, LO activities are monitored once a term. The subject head collects LO teachers' files and passes them to the HOD, who in turn passes them to the Principal. It was stated that sometimes class visits are done and examination papers are reviewed to ensure quality.

The Department of Education officials and school principals are supposed to visit schools and classes to monitor how LO is being implemented (South Africa School Act, 1996). In most of the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District, this appears *not* to be the case. The Principal has a great task to monitor all the school's systems, from distribution of resources and their use, to monitoring itself (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996). Panday (2007) accepts that LO implementation has to be monitored and supported; that is, it has to be supervised by principals and district officials or inspectors. She acknowledges that the word "supervision" is closely related to curriculum implementation. According to Panday (2007), it is not only the manner of teaching which needs to be monitored, but also the content that is actually being addressed which has to be supervised as well.

Hellinger (2002:472) shares the same view as Nkomo (1995) when he postulates that monitoring involves principals looking at teachers' weekly plans and learning objectives, and the plans teachers are working towards. These include examining samples of learners' work, visiting classrooms, observing the implementation of teaching, learning and curricula policies, reviewing learners' assessment information and evaluating learners, class and school levels of performance and progress. Zepeda (2006:103) affirms, "Teaching is the primary work of teachers, and should be the basis for in-class assessment of teaching and learning for both teachers and learners." This is important for schools if the curriculum is to be implemented according to its objectives.

The findings on how the Department of Education does go about monitoring the teaching of LO were found to be course moderation and examining teachers' and learners' portfolios. Some of the participant teachers and principals stated that the monitoring mechanism was beneficial because it helped teachers to work harder and faster to finish their work schedule so that they were not left behind by other LO teachers in their clusters.

Nevertheless, the other participants stated that these monitoring mechanisms were not beneficial as the district officials did not visit schools often, since the SADTU did not allow class visits. This is regrettable, since it emerged that some LO teachers "cooked up" marks for learners for the purpose of satisfying course moderation requirements. One of the LO teachers stated that there had not been any monitoring

from the Department of Education for the past three years that she had been teaching LO; in that time, the subject advisor had never visited her.

Perhaps it is instructive to see this lack of monitoring in a more global light. In most Sub-Saharan countries, Life Orientation (or Life Skills) suffers from a lack of qualified personnel to monitor it, as well as a shortage of management personnel qualified in Life Orientation (Tiendrebeogo, Meijer and Engleberg, 2003).

Maslow's theory of motivation assumes that it is relatively easy to supervise individuals or teachers who are intrinsically motivated (Everard, Morris and Wilson 2004). However, these LO teachers need professional support to keep them in line with new developments. Nkomo (1995) shares the same view as he stresses the need for instructional supervisors such as the District Education Officers (DEOs), principals and heads of department to maintain the standard of education expected by the Government. The quality of these educational authorities and their monitoring is expected to determine the curriculum implementation process.

Above all, the Principal as an instructional leader has to monitor the actions of LO teachers and what is happening in the schools, and to report on this to the district officials. However, it has to be noted that informal monitoring procedures do not produce better results, as revealed by Fullan (1992). Fullan posited that all research on effective schools shows that paying constant attention to students' academic, personal, and social development is essential for success. This is in line with the findings of the U.S Department of Education (2004:11) that successful principals "analyse instruction and student learning through regular classroom observation, and provide detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement."

5.7 SUMMARY

This study confirmed that LO in two of the selected schools is delivered with a lack of specialist qualified teachers with experience of teaching LO, little or no in-service training, inadequate provision of LO teaching and learning materials, and a lack of adequate monitoring and other support from the district officials. This chapter also

discussed the implementation of the LO curriculum. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the study by drawing conclusions about the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in the selected high schools, as based on this study's findings. The research questions are answered in terms of the research findings. The chapter also makes recommendations for the better implementation of LO, and for further study.

6.2 SUMMARY

Despite the fact that Life Orientation is a compulsory subject in high schools in South Africa, included in the National Curriculum Statement, this learning area faces many challenges that affect its full implementation. The challenges are shortages of teaching and learning materials, shortages of qualified LO teachers, inadequacy of in-service training, a range of implementation challenges and inadequate support and monitoring from the Department of Education and school principals.

At the time of the research, most of the selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District lacked the necessary teaching and learning materials to implement the curriculum; in most cases, teachers and learners were left to look for alternatives. The most commonly used LO teaching/learning material found in all the schools studied was textbooks. The above-mentioned shortage made it very difficult to implement the curriculum and achieve the stipulated learning objectives.

The results of this study revealed that there were non-specialist LO teachers in some of the selected high schools. It was found that some of these teachers had not received any form of training from the Department of Education, which led to them finding the teaching of LO frustrating.

The study also found that there was inadequate support and monitoring to enable teachers, qualified or not, to implement the Life Orientation programmes, especially

from the Department of Education. Some principals, however, provided a fair degree of both, to the extent that they were able.

Life Orientation is an important learning area which plays a critical role in the lives of learners. It focuses on the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and motor development and physical growth of learners, and on the way in which these dimensions are interrelated and used in life. Therefore, without the adequate provision of teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers and support, the benefits outlined in the curriculum may not be achieved.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

6.3.1 What are the materials and other resources used in teaching LO?

Inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials is a serious problem affecting the delivery of quality LO programmes in the selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District. Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186) found that a shortage of materials is an important factor in the implementation of a programme, and that the capacity of teachers can be affected by this factor. The most common available and commonly used, teaching material in all these high schools is textbooks. Equipment such as box, ropes, tapes, and music player are also available, in small quantities, at some but not all selected schools in the District.

A study by Legotlo *et al.*, (2002) on the perceptions of stakeholders on the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 in South Africa, revealed that one of the reasons behind learners' failure is often a shortage of textbooks, amongst other things. Also, Kelly and Melograno (2004) confirm that adequate provision of facilities and equipment in schools would make it possible to implement an ABC model that could guide LO teachers step-by-step through the process of translating curriculum theory into functional practice. Several South African researchers like Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003) regard reading materials as particularly significant resources for children's literacy and writing development.

The Department of Education supports the schools by providing funds for the provision of textbooks and other resources in teaching LO. It is usually the only source of such funding and provision. However, the funds are usually not enough to provide adequate LO teaching and learning materials, even a full supply of textbooks, for all the learners.

The inadequacy of textbooks affected both the learners and teachers; it made learners share textbooks, sometimes at a ratio of 5:1. Both the teachers and learners had to make up for the lack of textbooks by looking for alternatives in media like magazines and newspapers. Some teachers had to combine classes, and learners copied “never-ending notes”. It was also found that in some of the selected schools, teachers photocopied textbooks for learners in order to make up for shortages of textbooks. This practice is expensive, time-consuming, and increases teachers’ workload.

One reason for the textbook shortage that was provided by more than one interviewee, including learners, was that many learners do not return the textbooks given to them at the end of the year. This reason requires further scrutiny – if learners fail to return books, surely this implies poor administration and rule enforcement on the part of the staff concerned. In efficient schools, even in impoverished areas, virtually all the learners return their books annually.

Delay by the Department of Education in releasing the funds meant for ordering textbooks also contributed to the inadequacy of textbooks in schools.

It was reported that the quality of LO textbooks differed from publisher to publisher. It was indicated that there were good quality textbooks which did not have enough content and *vice versa*, and that some textbooks were not up-to-date, or not very relevant to the life situations of learners. Teachers stated that they compared these textbooks and used the one that best treated the topic under study.

Some of the teachers in the selected high schools indicated their willingness and interest in providing learners with quality LO programmes, but stated that they should

be equipped with appropriate materials and equipment to offer a comprehensive, well-balanced LO programme. It is the duty of the Department of Education to release adequate, timely funds to schools so that the latter can order quality teaching and learning materials that will arrive ahead of the new calendar year (South Africa School Acts (SASA) 1996).

6.3.2 What qualifications do the LO teachers have, and what sort of in-service professional training in LO teaching have they received?

The academic qualifications and experience of Life Orientation (LO) teachers are two important factors in determining the quality of education (Chung, 2005). The South African Government's policy of providing "more teachers" and "better teachers" is based on the belief that teachers are essential drivers of good quality education (DoE, 2006), a notion supported by Robinson and Latchem (2003a:10), and Perraton *et al.* (2002:7).

The basic requirements for teachers to teach Life Orientation are the Advanced Certificate in Education, Life Orientation (ACE LO), or an undergraduate qualification in Psychology. This is, according to the Draft Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, selected from the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2010).

In addition, teachers are required to be trained under the auspices of the Department of Education to be able to teach LO in high schools in South Africa. In this study, four out of the six participant teachers had the required qualifications. Two teachers had the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) qualifications which is a requirement for LO teachers who were already teaching, the same number of teachers had Psychology as part of their B.Ed. qualifications, which is also believed to be relevant to the teaching of LO. This means that (4) teachers in this study had the necessary qualifications to teach LO in the High School. Some of the teachers, however, felt inadequately trained to teach LO, and for that reason they suggested being provided with long-duration workshops and training in LO. The other teachers had different qualifications which enabled them teach other learning areas like Business Studies, Accounting, English and Life Sciences, but which did not specifically qualify them to teach LO. These teachers also reported not having been afforded in-service training

by the Department of Education although, as Harris (2003) emphasizes, teachers' *continuing* professional training is very important in responding to the new challenges in the education system.

It was indicated that the majority of the participant teachers had professional qualifications, and in some cases had received further training from the Department of Education to teach LO. However, both the specialists and non-specialist teachers called for specific workshops/training in LO. High-quality LO programmes require appropriately qualified teachers who have the relevant knowledge, skills, general and specific competences according to the level and opportunities for enrichment through Continuing Professional Development. As such, more support is needed in this regard to bring about quality teaching and learning in LO curriculum.

6.3.3 What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching Life Orientation and implementing the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum?

This study found that the majority of LO teachers had mixed experiences in teaching this learning area because of the challenges they encountered and the extra burden that came with teaching LO – particular tasks, often of a pastoral nature, which are not usually encountered in other subjects. Teachers revealed that there were challenges and personal problems of learners which took them out of their comfort zones and also forced them to play the role of social worker.

It was also indicated that learners reacted in undesirable ways to some of the lessons taught in LO. For instance, some of them indulged in drug or alcohol abuse, or risky sexual activities, partly in response to such topics being discussed in the LO class. It appeared that some of these learners took teachers teaching the use of condoms as condoning promiscuity. While it is possible that learners might experiment with certain drugs or less common sexual practices that they have heard about in LO, it is extremely unlikely that today's Grade 11 and 12 learners would only have heard about basic sexual intercourse or dagga in LO class. However, it is not at all unlikely that such a story would make a useful excuse for youthful experimentation in forbidden areas.

It was found that some LO teachers found it difficult to teach the concept of career choice, and concepts like human rights and religion. They blamed this squarely on inadequate training. Some of the participant teachers also revealed that their culture was affecting the smooth teaching of LO. These teachers claimed that there are some topics in LO like sex that their ethnic or religious culture forbids them to discuss with young people. These problems make teachers uncertain as to whether they are doing justice to the learning area. Schaalma, Abraham and Gillmore (2004) found that LO teachers express concern that they encounter challenges in trying to find a balance between their own beliefs and the idea that they must teach certain material that they believe should not be taught to students.

Lack of discipline in class was also an issue that teachers faced. Rambiyana (2001:42) contends that "discipline and the possibility of effective teaching go together." Some of the participant principals revealed that many learners did not take LO seriously, and these learners could not be disciplined because of their awareness of children's rights (ironically, something they had probably been taught about in LO). It was found that in many cases there was little or no continuity between what was taught in LO class and what was learnt at home. In other words, there was often a lack of parental guidance and monitoring to support the efforts of the LO teachers.

There was also concern that LO is too broad a learning area, while the time required for its coverage is limited. Panday (2007:10) confirms that the major outcry from many frustrated educators was that they were now faced, not only with new terminology, but also with an over-load of integration, assessment, recording and paperwork. LO teachers also lamented at being overloaded with other, possibly higher-status learning areas, which do not afford them the time to prepare well for LO. It was also revealed that participants were concerned that LO is not an examinable subject, and they wanted it to be examinable like the other subjects so as to give LO a higher status among teachers and learners.

If these factors affecting the LO curriculum are not addressed, learners in South African schools may not be adequately guided towards positive self-concept formation, and as a result they may become unfulfilled adults in life who are unable to fit into the society. However, LO can be part of a comprehensive, well-rounded

education programme and become a means of positively affecting the future and wellbeing of all school-going learners if it is fully implemented.

6.3.4 How do learners perceive the LO programmes?

The majority of the learners in this study were found to be positive about LO. It appeared that learners were familiar with most of the learning outcomes of LO, which are in the areas of Personal Well-being, Citizenship Education, Recreation and Physical Well-being and Career and Career Choices. Some learners advocated for more opportunities to be created for lessons on HIV/AIDS, Physical Education activities and field trips.

Other researchers have found learners to be appreciative of some of the benefits claimed for LO as a subject. Theron (2008) reveals that learners found LO meaningful but expressed that it should be more contextually relevant, and that learner consultation should ideally be encouraged to determine such relevance. Theron and Dalzell (2006) confirm that many learners perceive that the LO programme teaches them to make wise career choices and helps them to find employment skills, skills that help them discover who they are (self-awareness), skills that teach them to value themselves (self-esteem), and skills and attitudes that empower them to stand up for their rights. The learners' focus groups in this study were all positive about LO; however, it was difficult to determine whether learners were being candid in their responses, because it was not evident that they practised what they were taught, as some of them were still involved in risky behaviours – behaviours about which they had been cautioned in LO.

Additionally, some male learners in some of the schools studied were against the open discussion of male circumcision in the presence of the female learners because it was said to be a cultural taboo. The female learners, on the other hand, wanted this topic to be discussed and included in the curriculum. In cases like this LO teachers need to find a way of balancing the needs of the different learners to avoid clashes over culture.

Generally, this study points to a major issue to be tackled in curriculum development, which is the incorporation of a more effective mechanism for measuring the impact of

LO teaching on the learners. It seems that LO may have achieved more in the way of awareness creation in terms of imparting knowledge than it has in bringing about the behavioural changes that are expected. Therefore mere verbal feedback from learners in interviews or focus groups may not be enough to gauge how successfully the LO curriculum is implemented.

6.3.5 How have the monitoring and support mechanisms by the school heads and district officials put in place benefited teachers in teaching LO?

Writers like Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) argue that principals and heads of department should provide guidance and make sure that teachers have the necessary skills, and use the correct teaching methods or strategies. In this study, the majority of the teachers agreed that the support they received from their principals was adequate. The support mechanisms from the district officials were indicated to be in form of funds, advice, materials, information, workshops and training, and course moderation. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003:1186), the construct “support from outside agencies” describes the kinds of action undertaken by outside organisations such as provincial and district education offices, to influence practices, either by support or sanction, and the role of the District Education Officers (DEOs) to see that standards are maintained. They are there as quality assurance officers, to provide schools with expertise and professional development courses.

However, the majority of the participants in this study stated that the support from the Department of Education was not adequate because the Department’s subject advisors did not visit LO classes for supervision frequently enough to be in touch with the practical realities of LO curriculum implementation, or to assess the situation on the ground and support the teachers. In some cases, principals were also found to be wanting in the area of support in the form of actual class visitation; one principal seemed to be quite out of touch with the realities of LO teaching.

Some of the teachers seemed to contradict themselves in saying that they received adequate support from their principals, only to say, later in the interview, that the principals did not support and monitor the classroom teaching of LO. These teachers appeared to be covering up for their principals, while they were ready to point accusing fingers at the district officials for the inadequacy of their support and

monitoring in LO. It appeared that district officials and some school principals alike were themselves not taking LO seriously by giving LO a low status among the other learning areas. This is a pity in view of Panday's (2007) argument that LO implementation has to be monitored and supported; that is, it has to be supervised by principals and district officials or inspectors. She acknowledges that the word "supervision" is closely related to curriculum implementation.

Interviews with the principals revealed that in some cases they did not monitor the teaching of LO, either because the school was small and understaffed, or because of the trust the principal had in the LO teacher. The Departmental expectation is that monitoring should be done once per term. Even this frequency appeared to be inadequate for inexperienced and untrained LO teachers, who need consistent monitoring and support because of the challenges they face. As the South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) found, new young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties.

The methods used by district officials to monitor the implementation of LO were given as course moderation meetings (often in clusters of schools), examining teachers and learners' portfolios, and, when they happen, school visits. Some of the participants agreed that the monitoring strategies were beneficial, while others disagreed that they were not because they were not employed often enough. It may be argued from the information gathered that many of the schools in this study lack adequate monitoring and support.

The South African School Act (1996) places the responsibility for school monitoring and support on the Department of Education and school principals. However, in some of the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District, this appeared not to be carried out, as it seemed this responsibility was not taken seriously by the people concerned.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 Provision of material resources

- The Department of Education should provide adequate teaching and learning materials in Life Orientation in all rural and township high schools as a matter of urgency. This would help teachers to implement the curriculum and provide the most needed opportunity for learners to live meaningful and more active lives.
- School principals and deputies, who are responsible for making requisitions for the purchasing of learning materials and equipment, should be pressured to expedite this process, so that teachers who teach LO would receive an adequate supply in good time.
- Parents should be encouraged to support the Department of Education and schools in the provision of usable and locally relevant teaching and learning materials in LO.

6.4.2 Life Orientation specialisation

- Universities in South Africa should train more specialised teachers in Life Orientation. The Advanced Certificate in Education (LO), or an equivalent qualification, needs to be made available to a greater number of High school LO teachers.
- Incentives should be provided to encourage teachers or would-be teachers to become qualified Life Orientation teachers. The practice of appointing any teacher on the staff to take care of this learning area needs to be actively discouraged. Potential Life Orientation teachers should be identified by schools to be retrained and acquire further skills as specialised LO teachers.

6.4.3 Appointment of special teachers

- The Department of Education should appoint special teachers to be responsible for assisting LO teachers in their schools. These special teachers

will be responsible for meeting parents, visiting social work offices, hospitals, clinics and police stations in response to the personal problems of the learners. There should be adequate provision of resources, including funding, to enable these special teachers to do their work.

6.4.4 In-service training

- In view of the number of teachers who have not been trained in LO, and the fact that Life Orientation is a compulsory learning area in schools, there is good reason to conduct a needs assessment for effective in-service training programmes so that training can be provided to meet the urgent needs of teachers in the high schools.
- LO teachers should be given in-service training to help them reorient their thinking about religious education and cultural issues in the classroom.
- Also, more work needs to be done with officials at the middle-management levels (areas and district managers and principals), and with representatives of the governing bodies of schools. Also, master trainers and teachers lost to the programme need to be replaced, and those working on the programme need to be retrained regularly

6.4.5 Learners' participation

- Learners should be encouraged to contribute, or have input into, Life Orientation (LO). Learners' opinions could sometimes be asked for on what they would like to do and achieve in the lessons and the physical activities.
- Peer education should be encouraged, and an opportunity for a more negotiated curriculum should be created in Life Orientation (LO) classes.

6.4.6 Assessment in Life Orientation

- The Department of Education should consider making Life Orientation an examinable learning area like other subjects, since it is regarded as

compulsory, and in some senses a foundation for all the other subjects. This would give the learning area a higher status among learners and teachers.

- The assessment tasks and criteria need to be approved by LO Heads of Department or school principals to prevent LO teachers from forging marks for learners for the course moderation exercise.

6.4.7 Monitoring and support

District officials, subject advisors and school principals should monitor and support the Life Orientation activities in schools to observe firsthand the implementation of Life Orientation curriculum.

- Class visits should be encouraged to allow the monitoring and support that is needed by teachers.
- Visits to schools should be regular, as this alone would help with monitoring and supporting the implementation of the LO curriculum. Teachers should be given written feedback to help them reflect on their areas of weakness.

6.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is definitely needed on the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. The research should focus on the specific aspects of the curriculum.

Likely aspects for further research could include the following:

- Examination of the implementation of in-service training of Life Orientation teachers
- Examination of the monitoring and support mechanisms put in place for Life Orientation teachers
- Investigation into the involvement roles of the Department of Education in the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum.

This chapter presented the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It is important, however, not to lose sight of the study's findings presented, analysed and discussed here. There are indeed still gaps that need to be filled in investigating the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in the South African high schools.

Taking into consideration that all the participants gave their maximum co-operation in this study, it could be argued that this positive reaction from the participants indicates that indeed there is a gap to be filled, and that this study has helped to do just that.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

LETTER SEEKING FOR PERMISSION

The University of Fort Hare
School for Post-Graduate
P.O. Box 1314
Alice, 5700
South Africa
24th May, 2011

CES HRD & LABOUR RELATIONS

Department of Education
Private Bag x2041
Fort Beaufort, 5720
Eastern Cape, South Africa

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FORT BEAUFORT HIGH SCHOOLS FOR THE MASTER OF EDUCATION

Dear Sir,

I am Toyin Adewumi a Master of Education full time student at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa. I write to request your authority and permission to conduct research in six high schools in your District. The research study is on Investigation on the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum (grades 11-12).

The study intends to use face-to-face interviews with, six school principals, six Life Orientation teachers and focus group interviews with thirty-six grades 11 and 12 learners. I would also request your permission to observe and videotape one Life Orientation lesson in each of the schools selected. Furthermore, I would also request your permission to examine relevant documents relating to the subject of

study such as the Life Orientation NCS, lesson plans, teachers' and learners' profiles.

I wish to inform you in confidence that the findings/results of the study shall be for my academic studies only and all information about the participants will be treated confidentially.

Thank you in anticipation for your assistance

Sincerely,

T. Adewumi (Mrs)

APPENDIX B:

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE PROVINCE OF EASTERN CAPE EDUCATION

 Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

CAPE COLLEGE BUILDING * Healdtown Road * Fort Beaufort * Private Bag X2041 * FORT
BEAUFORT * 5720 *
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Website: www.ecde.gov.za

Ref. No. Tel.: 0466457827

Enquiries: Fax:
Mr. Z Dayile 04664527855

TO : THE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE
ALICE

FROM : CES HRD & LABOUR RELATIONS

DATE : 24 MAY 2011

SUBJECT : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT
OUR SCHOOLS: Ms TOYIN ADEWUMI

- Your letter dated 24 May 2011 has been acknowledged.
- Because education is a societal matter that cannot be left in the hands of the Department of Education alone, we are thrilled and delighted when everybody wants to get involved.
- It is in that context that as the District we are granting permission to your student to conduct her research.
- As the District we are more than willing to give her the necessary support she might need.
- The District wishes Ms Toyin Adewumi all the luck in her research.

building blocks for growth 
Ikamva eliqambeleyo!

- If possible we further wish your good office to expose us to findings and recommendations of her research as a way of assessing our performance.

Kind Regards.



CES HRD & Labour Relations: Mr. Z Dayile



APPENDIX C:

Study of implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District, 2011.

Covering letter for learners

Dear Participant

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I am Toyin Mary Adewumi, a Masters student at the School for Post-Graduate Studies, University of Fort Hare. I am conducting research on how the Life Orientation curriculum is taught in high schools.

The research involves face-to-face interviews with your Life Orientation teacher, the school head, and with six learners from Grades 11 and 12 in your school. I also hope to observe a Life Orientation lesson. I would be most grateful if you would answer all the questions I ask as honestly as you can.

With your permission, our interview will be tape-recorded (on audiotape). I undertake to dispose of the tape when the study is completed and written up.

You and all the other participants in the study will remain anonymous, and any sensitive information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point if you so wish.

I can be contacted on 0838772960 (cellphone), or by e-mail 201004811@ufh.ac.za

Thank you

Toyin Mary Adewumi

APPENDIX D:

Study of implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District, 2011.

Covering letter for LO teachers

Dear Participant

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I am Toyin Mary Adewumi a Masters student at the University of Fort Hare, School For Post-Graduate Studies. I am conducting research on the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools.

The research entails conducting face-to-face interviews with six Life Orientation teachers, six school heads (one per school from the six clusters in the Fort Beaufort District) and 36 learners (six per school, from Grades 11 and 12). You are kindly requested to answer all questions as honestly as you can.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded (audiotape), and the tape will be disposed of upon completion of the study.

I would also request your permission to observe and videotape one Life Orientation lesson, by prior arrangement, on a date and a time suitable to you.

Furthermore, I would also request your permission to examine relevant documents relating to the subject of study such as the Life Orientation NCS, lesson plans, and materials, and learner notebooks.

You and all the other participants in the study will remain anonymous, and any sensitive information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential.

You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point if you so wish.

I can be contacted on 0838772960 (cellphone), or by e-mail 201004811@ufh.ac.za

Thank you.

Toyin Mary Adewumi

APPENDIX E:

Study of implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District, 2011.

Covering letter for Principals

Dear Participant

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I am Toyin Mary Adewumi a Masters student at the University of Fort Hare, School For Post-Graduate Studies. I am conducting research on the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools.

I am requesting your permission to conduct this research in your school.

The research entails conducting face-to-face interviews and with six Life Orientation teachers, six school heads (one per school from the six clusters in the Fort Beaufort District) and 36 learners (six per school, from Grades 11 and 12). You are kindly requested to answer all questions as honestly as you can.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded (audiotape), and the tape will be disposed of upon completion of the study.

I would also request your permission to observe and videotape one Life Orientation lesson, by prior arrangement with the teacher concerned, on a date and a time suitable to him/her.

Furthermore, I would also kindly request your permission to examine relevant documents relating to the subject of study such as lesson plans and materials, learner and notebooks.

You and all the other participants in the study will remain anonymous, and any sensitive information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential.

I have also requested permission to do the research from the Department of Education.

I can be contacted on: cell 0838772960 or by e-mail 201004811@ufh.ac.za

Thank you, Toyin Mary Adewumi

APPENDIX F:

Informed Consent Agreement Form

Name of Researcher : Toyin Mary Adewumi

Institution : University of Fort Hare

Degree : Master of Education

Research Topic : An Investigation into the Implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in High Schools in the Fort Beaufort District.

The purpose and conditions of participation have been fully explained to me. I understand what my involvement entails and I am aware that my participation is voluntary and freely given. I have read the agreement, and am aware that I can terminate engagement in the interview at any point without penalty.

Signature _____ of _____ volunteer
respondent.....Date.....

Signature _____ of _____
Researcher.....Date.....

Contact Details

If you are willing to participate and you need further clarification contact

Toyin Mary Adewumi on 0838772960 or 0845763840

Email:201004811@ufh.ac.za or contact Mr Adendorff Mike School of Post Graduate Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare

Tel 07822009287 or by e-mail madendorff@ufh.ac.za

APPENDIX G:

LEARNERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A: Personal data of respondents

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: []
3. Grade : []

1. Is it a good thing to teach Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum?
Please explain your answer

2. Are there areas/topics of Life Orientation that you would like to be changed or removed?

If yes, what topics and why?

Are there new topics that you would like to be added to Life Orientation?

If yes, what topics and why?

3. Are you satisfied with the way Life Orientation is taught in your school? Please explain why you are satisfied or not.

4. What do you think the teacher should do differently in order to teach LO effectively?

5. What are some of the problems faced by teachers when teaching you LO?

6. Please explain the causes of some of the problems faced by the teachers when teaching LO?

7. What have you gained as a result of LO lessons taught by your teacher?

8. What are your parents' views of/attitudes toward LO?

9. Tell me a bit about what you have learnt in Life Orientation concerning human rights. Do you think this has influenced your behavior toward others in any way? If so, how?

10. Have Life Orientation lessons influenced you to be more sensitive about matters of gender?
11. Can you think of any action you perform that demonstrate this attitude? Could you give me an example?
12. Do you think Life Orientation lessons have had an effect on your moral values? (If yes:) Could you tell me how your values have been affected?
13. What are some of the things you have learnt in Life Orientation about interacting or relating with others?
14. Tell me some of the things you have learnt about drug abuse.
15. Has what you learnt about drugs in Life Orientation influenced your thinking with regard to drug abuse?
16. Has what you learnt in sexuality education influenced your attitudes or behaviour in any way? If so, how have your attitudes and/or behavior been affected?
17. Do you think you have learnt to exercise self-control in sexual situations as a personal attribute? Could you explain how?
18. Have you learnt about HIV infections?
19. In what way is this knowledge of HIV of value to you?
20. What do you know about social skills? (skills like working hard, being timely for tasks, preparing fully for lessons, being responsive to calls for help, being polite to people)? In what ways have you made use of some of these social skills

APPENDIX H:

Study of implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in Fort Beaufort, 2011

Guide for interviewing LO teachers

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated. The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in Fort Beaufort.

Kindly answer all questions as honestly as you can.

Section A: Personal Information

1.1 Gender: female male

1.2 Age range 20 - 29 years 30 – 39 years
40 – 49 years 50 – 59 years
60+ years

1.3 Highest professional qualification

Bachelor of Arts + Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.....
Certificate/Diploma in Education + Bachelor of Education.....
Masters in Education.....

Any other; please specify.....

1.4 Length of teaching service at a high school?

1 -5 yrs 6 -10 yrs 11 + yrs

1.5 What post of responsibility do you hold in the teaching hierarchy/ school administration?.....

.....
.....
.....

TOPIC: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULUM IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE FORT BEAUFORT EDUCATION DISTRICT

Materials used by LO teachers

1. What type of teaching materials do you use when teaching LO? Who provides these materials?
2. How would you describe the availability of textbooks and other teaching materials in LO? Are the materials adequate for the teaching of LO? Please explain further.
3. How would you describe the quality of textbooks for LO?
4. To what extent do shortages of teaching materials in LO affect the teaching and learning of LO?
5. What is the contribution of parents in terms of buying LO learning materials for their children?
6. What are your suggestions on provision of adequate teaching and learning materials in LO which could assist in implementing the LO curriculum?

Implementation of LO

7. What are the teaching methods or strategies you use in your lessons?
8. Could you please explain how these methods have enriched your lessons?
9. Could you please describe how you plan your lessons?
10. Why do you plan in this way?
11. Please tell me the approaches you use to assess learners in LO?
13. Please describe learners' examination results in LO?
14. What do you think are the causes of such results?
15. Please explain how learners have benefited from LO lessons you teach
16. In your experience, what concepts do you find difficult to teach in LO?
17. Could you explain why you experience this difficulty?
18. What other challenges do you experience in teaching LO?
19. How do you think learners' perceive LO? Why
20. What are parents' perceptions of/attitudes toward LO?
21. How do they show that?
22. What are your favorite subjects? Why?

23. Tell me about your experience as a LO teacher.
24. Do you think LO is a rewarding subject to teach? Please explain further
25. Do you think it is a good thing to include Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum? Why? Why not?
26. What values is the LO program expected to foster in learners? Please explain if you think the learners in your school have these values?
27. What do you think might be the biggest problem teachers experience in teaching young people Life Orientation? Why do you think this might be the case?
28. Please give suggestions on how you think these problems could be solved

Support mechanisms available for LO teachers

1. Could you please explain how the school head or the deputy is supporting the teaching of LO in your school? Do you think the support they give is adequate? Please explain.
2. What support does your school get from the departmental district officials in the teaching of LO? Is the support adequate? Please explain further.
3. What kind of support would you expect as a LO teacher from the school or department?

Monitoring strategies for LO teaching

1. How does the school head or the deputy monitor the teaching of LO in your school? Please explain further.
2. Please explain how the district officials monitor the teaching of LO in your school? Are the monitoring strategies beneficial? Please explain how.

APPENDIX I:

Study of implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in Fort Beaufort, 2011

Guide for interviewing Principals

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated. The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in high schools in Fort Beaufort.

Kindly answer all questions as honestly as you can.

Section A: Personal Information

1.1 Gender: female male

1.2 Age range 30 – 39 yrs 40 – 49 yrs
50 – 59 yrs 60+yrs

1.3. Marital status Single Married Widow

1.4 Highest professional qualification

Bachelor of Arts + Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

Certificate/Diploma in Education + Bachelor of Education.....

Masters in Education.....

Any other; please specify.....

1.5 Length of service as a teacher:

1 -5 years 6 -10 years 11 + years

1.6 Length of service in the principal position:

1-5 years 6-10 years 11 + years

TOPIC: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULUM IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE FORT BEAUFORT EDUCATION DISTRICT.

1. What qualification is required for teachers to teach LO? Do LO teachers in your school have these qualifications? If not, to what extent do their qualifications vary from what is officially required?
2. What level of professional training did the LO teachers in your school receive that enables them to teach LO?
3. What type of teaching materials do the teachers in your school use when teaching LO? Who provides these teaching materials?
4. How would you describe the availability of textbooks and other teaching materials in LO? Are the materials adequate for the teaching of LO? Please explain further.
5. How would you describe the quality of textbooks for LO?
6. To what extent do shortages of teaching materials in LO affect the teaching and learning of LO?
7. What is the contribution of parents in terms of buying LO learning materials for their children?
8. What are your suggestions on provision of adequate teaching and learning materials in LO which could assist in implementing the LO curriculum?
9. In your experience, what concepts do teachers find difficult to teach in LO? Could you explain why they experience this difficulty?
10. What other challenges are you aware of that LO teachers experience?
11. What values is the LO programme expected to foster in learners? Please explain if you think the learners in your school have these values?
12. What are parents' perceptions of/ attitudes towards LO? How do they show this?
13. Which are the teaching methods LO teachers use in their lessons? Could you please explain why they use them?
14. Could you please describe how LO teachers plan their lessons at your school? Why do they approach planning in this way?
15. Please tell me what kinds of approach teachers use to assess learners in LO? Why do they use this approach?

16. Please describe learners' LO examination results in your school?
17. Do you think it is a good thing that Life Orientation is included as part of the school curriculum? Why? Why not?
18. Are you satisfied with the way Life Orientation is taught, in general? Please explain why you are satisfied / not satisfied.
19. How would you advise that the teacher(s) should teach it? What would you recommend that teacher(s) should do differently?
20. What do you think might be the biggest problem teachers have in teaching young people Life Orientation? Why do you think this might be the case?
21. Could you please explain how you are supporting the teaching of LO in your school? Do you think the support you give is adequate? Please explain.
22. What support does your school get from the departmental district officials in the teaching of LO? Is the support adequate? Please explain further.
23. How do you monitor the teaching of LO in your school?
24. Please explain how the district officials monitor the teaching of LO in your school? Are the monitoring mechanisms beneficial? In what ways?

APPENDIX J

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The following documents were analyzed to validate and cross check the collected findings:

Teachers' lesson plans

Learners' profiles

Teachers' profiles and

Learners' note books

The focus of all the above documents was on the implementation of the LO curriculum in the high schools. Therefore, as a basis for comparing LO teaching and learning against the benchmark set out in the National curriculum statement (NCS), lesson plans, teacher's and learners' files were analysed using the NCS guidelines for LO. Another focus of the documents was to assess teachers' planning and delivery of LO lessons and how they assess the learners' activities.

APPENDIX K

OBSERVATION GUIDE

THE FOLLOWING POINTS WERE OBSERVED

- Is the school environment conducive for learning?

- What is the sitting arrangement?

- Is the classroom conducive for learning?

- How does the teacher manage the class?

- Which teaching method does the LO teacher employ?

- Which materials and other resources are used in teaching LO?

- Are the materials and other resources adequate for teaching LO?

- What weaknesses are cited in these materials and other resources used?

- What are the strengths of the materials and other resources used in teaching LO?

- Do these materials and other resources contain appropriate examples, language? Are they gender sensitive?

- How do learners' respond/participate in LO classroom?
