

High school learners' experiences of life orientation as a teaching subject with reference to the new curriculum framework

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Policy stipulates that learners need to apply knowledge, skills and values in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. Furthermore, educators need to take the local context into consideration, while at the same time being sensitive to global imperatives. In the teaching of life orientation, which is part of the curriculum transformation in our country, it is important to know its status and practice in order to make meaningful adjustments which meet learners' needs. The objective of the study was to ascertain High School learners' experiences and perceptions of knowledge that they receive in their schooling, using life orientation as an example of the initiative of curriculum transformation in South Africa. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire which was administered to a sample of High School learners in order to ascertain their experiences of life orientation. Results revealed that High School learners have a strong sense of self and anything that relates to themselves as individuals when they are still young; as they advance to High School, they begin to take into consideration the things that occur in their immediate environment. It is advisable that policy implementers and stakeholders who interact with learners of this age group be mindful of such issues in facilitating the transition of learners from school life to the world of work. It implies allowing and assisting learners to change from the "who" to the "what" in the learning process.

Key words: Learner centeredness, meaningful learning, strong sense of self, self-reflection, classroom practice, teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

Learners' spend 12 years of schooling without their thoughts, perceptions and needs regarding the curriculum being evaluated. This fact relates to "curriculum as experienced" as opposed to "curriculum as blueprint" [1]. Learners enter into a contract that is not negotiated with them, because they are deemed to occupy a low level in the bureaucratic ladder. In the past, the South African Education system was highly centralised and bureaucratic, with an authoritarian top-down approach to the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers were seen as mere "curriculum receivers", as opposed to "curriculum developers". With reference to classroom practice, the old approach to teaching and learning was characterised by passive learners, examination driven textbooks/worksheets and teacher-centeredness. Motivation was dependent on the

personality of the teacher. Knowledge that learners possessed was regarded as "museum possession of knowledge" as opposed to "workshop possession of knowledge", where learners are active in the process of teaching and learning [1]. This scientific paradigm became irrelevant and it was replaced by the new approach to teaching and learning which does not only focus on transmission of knowledge, but goes as far as looking at skills, values and attitudes.

Parker [2] argues that in order for learners to reach intended outcomes, they need to be self-directed, high level thinkers; collaborative contributors; innovative producers; community participants; adaptable problem solvers; physically and emotionally able individuals; and knowledgeable people. The issue of "self" is critical in the growth of High School learners. This sense of self is

neglected at the expense of a content coverage mentality [3], as educators engage with learners in the teaching and learning process. It involves the experiences of the learners, which assists them in active engagement with the tasks and activities that educators provide them with during the process of learning.

Educational discourse, on the other hand, has certain epistemological implications, as well as axiological connotations in teaching and learning. These need to be teased out in an attempt to find out whether there is a harmonious “fit” between what theory says and what is taking place in practice [4]. Life Orientation (LO) is an area of learning that equips learners to live a meaningful life in a rapidly changing society. The study of high school learners’ experiences of LO as a teaching subject intends to determine curriculum as experienced, as opposed to curriculum as blue print. LO integrated six traditional school subjects which had no relationship with one another. The subjects were atomistic in nature and include the following [5]:

- Life skills
- Health Education
- Human Rights Education
- Guidance
- Religious Education
- Physical Education

Life Orientation is a learning area that is studied by all learners in high schools. It is a learning area that enhances the practice of positive values, attitudes, behaviour and skills in the individual, within the context of community. If one looks at the micro-dimension of the study, on a personal level, an educator wants to be meaningful and relevant to one’s students. With the current developments that have occurred in our country, the researcher wanted to determine if the LO Curriculum had resulted in a meaningful impact on the learners.

This study will help educators to determine if the changes that our country has recently experienced recently are effective or not. It will also help to determine if current innovations in education (in terms of the New Curriculum Statement) make any positive impact towards equipping learners with quality education. An investigation into the attitudes of High School Learners towards LO will indirectly reveal the following:

- There is a ‘fit’ between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’. With the current developments that have occurred in our country, one wants to find out if what has been policy in terms of the current teaching and learning practices in Curriculum 2005, achieve what they purport to achieve in terms of equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and values fit for the 21st Century.
- By providing a platform for learners to have their voices heard, the learners’ will have the opportunity to critically reflect on their schooling experiences by articulating their

feelings regarding what they believe their schools have done for them, especially in relation to LO. The findings of this study will help the researcher to ascertain if changes in the curriculum from the so-called ‘school subjects’ to ‘learning areas’ has resulted in significant learning [6] and whether or not that change is only structural.

In a study by Njozela [7] on the attitudes of learners towards LO, with reference to the new approach to teaching and learning, it emerged that learners are interested in issues that relate to themselves as individuals, before they consider what happens in their immediate environment. It needs to be considered that learners are rational beings, even more High School learners who are capable of being self -reflective and self-critical. To put the study into perspective at a macro level, the outcomes of this study intend to make a contribution to policy makers and stakeholders, in order to allow them to be mindful of the kind of citizens that this country is likely to have, based on how empowered learners feel by LO.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and is interpretive in nature. Standardized information from high school learners was collected by means of a questionnaire in order to ascertain how many high school learners possess a particular attribute or opinion [8], with reference to how they empowered they feel by LO. Grade 10-12 High School learners were selected from twelve high schools in the two districts of KwaZulu-Natal. The deciding factor for the selection of schools was a high Grade 12 pass rate, because the investigator wanted the study to yield rich data. The investigator was assisted by official from the Department of Education (DoE) in selecting such schools in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg districts.

Schools were homogenous in the sense that they were all Government schools and they offered LO in grades 10 -12, which was mandatory. All schools had electricity, except for one school which was a rural school. The researcher based the study on the following research questions:

- What are the learners’ attitudes towards LO?
- To what extent do learners feel empowered by LO?

Questionnaire Design

Literature on research methodology reveals that there are different types of questions that one can use when constructing a questionnaire. The content and outcomes that are supposed to be achieved in LO were taken into consideration to ascertain the attitude of learners towards this learning area. The questions (appendix A) had two

sections, namely; Section A and Section B. In Section A, the focus was on the personal details of the respondent. In Section B, respondents were required to select one of the five options in a Likert scale that included the options 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Uncertain', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. The remaining sections of Section B allowed for 'Yes' or 'No' responses. Respondents were also required to rate the knowledge received in LO using a scale of 1-10. The very last question required learners to express their views about what they learn about in LO.

Questions

The characteristics of the learners were important in the analysis of data. Learners were asked about these aspects in Section A of the questionnaire. The themes that need to be covered in LO were used to construct the questions, namely; career, Ubuntu (communality), personal relationships, tolerance, lifestyle and self-image; these were some of the aspects that were considered when the questions were constructed. Other related aspects were taken into consideration, such as: HIV/AIDS, human rights, social responsibility, rating of LO on the scale of 1-10, and finally, learners were asked to identify topics which are not covered in LO that they would like to be taught. The questionnaire was comprised of a total of thirty-five questions.

Validity and Reliability

Robson [8] states that because positivist's and interpretivist's ways of doing things differ, validity can be judged differently. Furthermore, they argue for some of the following ways of measuring validity:

- By asking peers to examine the data; if more than one person examines the data it means that aspects which one researcher might overlook would possibly be picked up by other researchers.
- The researcher needs to acknowledge bias and possible circumstances that may affect the data in any way.

Cohen *et al.* [9] state that internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular issue or set of data, which research provides, can be sustained by data. In other words, the findings must accurately describe the phenomenon that is studied in qualitative and quantitative research. Among other aspects that Lincoln and Guba (cited in [9]) suggest in order to increase levels of credibility, are the following:

- Triangulation (of methods, sources, investigations and theories).
- Peer debriefing (this is done in order to test honesty and to identify the next step of research).
- Member checking in order to assess intentionality to

offer respondents further information or put information on record.

- The issue of multi-site studies assists in increasing validity and needs to be considered.

To put the study into context, in as far as content validity was concerned; the investigator demonstrated this issue by taking into consideration that the data collection instrument covers items that the learning area purports to cover, in an attempt to reach pre-stated outcomes, in order to find out about the attitudes of learners towards Life Orientation. The investigator was careful to be highly observant when she visited schools, as these are complex environments [10]. The effect of this issue was confirmed when the investigator conducted fieldwork in different sites to collect data. The questionnaire was piloted to check its authenticity and corrections were effected as informed by the results of the piloting process. Furthermore, DoE Regional personnel were also asked to assist with validating the questionnaires. Educators of LO were also asked to provide input to the investigator, some of whom provided the investigator with the test papers.

Vital and Jansen [11] argue that reliability is about consistency of a measure, score or rating. The test that was piloted was given to a co-researcher and the rating score was the same. The Cronbach alpha correlation formula was used to ascertain reliability, as this formula measures how well items measure latent constructs. This is reflected in the section on data analysis.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

Initially the researcher had hoped to distribute the questionnaires within the four regions of KwaZulu-Natal. The study was changed because of lack of funding, and it was limited to the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas. Fifteen schools were identified, with research being carried out in twelve of these schools. Appointments were made telephonically with the principals, who, in most cases, referred the researcher directly to the Life Orientation educator. This process took approximately twenty days. Research was conducted in a classroom environment. The response rate was excellent because the respondents were easily accessible; the total number of responses obtained was 385.

Research Sample

A cluster sample that was representative of the total population in the regions of Durban and Pietermaritzburg schools in KwaZulu-Natal Education Department was selected. The sample size was significant because of the homogeneous nature of the population and it also provided a degree of reliability in the investigation. Data was captured using a standardized structured questionnaire.

The Department of Education personnel advised the

researcher to include schools that were part of the pilot project in LO in order to obtain more reliable and effective data. The meeting with the departmental officials helped the researcher to identify such high schools. In order for every member of the target population to be selected, there was a consideration of the former Model C schools. The sample size was fair because the population was not variable.

Administrative Procedure

Permission was requested from the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, as custodians of learners, to administer the instrument to the sample group. The researcher was referred to the unit that is responsible for Life Orientation. An appointment was secured with the respective unit and the data collection strategy was altered as per the Education Department officials' recommendations. The officials were informed of the following procedures that would be followed when visiting the selected schools:

- The respondents would be informed of the purpose of study and assured of the confidentiality of the information to be given to the researcher.
- That participation would be strictly voluntary, with the students being free to withdraw from participation at any time during the study.
- The learners would be made to sign a consent form, indicating their willingness to participate.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher was aware of the subjects' rights and values that could possibly threaten the research. Such threats could range from the data collected (highly personal information) to the nature of the participants (emotionally disturbed adolescents) which was a high probability and relevant to this research project. Therefore, to address ethical concerns, the researcher requested permission from the DoE (Appendix B), as custodians of the learners in schools, and issues relating to ethics were discussed, as reflected above. Learners were given letters to sign, as well as their parents who needed to provide consent for their children to participate in the study before data collection commenced (Appendix C).

Statistical Techniques

Cohen *et al.* [9] argue that social science research at both individual and social level is characterized by great complexity, about which we understand very little. One way to address this, they argued, is to begin to tease out relationships among those factors or elements that have a bearing on the phenomena in question. The relationships that needed to be teased out in this study were the characteristics of learners and their attitude towards LO. A regression table was used to ascertain the degree of

accuracy of the responses. The researcher used a Lickert-scale, where respondents were expected to express their agreement/disagreement with a given statement on the scale of 1-5 for data scoring. The researcher used the services of a statistician to assist in the analysis of data. Computer software called SPSS was used for this purpose. The investigator employed multiple approaches in analyzing data. This included non-experimental, interpretive analyses; a survey; and descriptive research strategies. The interpretive strategy assisted in generating concepts and theories which arose from the enquiry rather than by testing it [8]. It is therefore defined as a hypothesis generating study rather than a hypothesis-testing study. Collection of data took approximately twenty days to complete.

The methodology used in this study favoured a form of data analysis that starts from content analysis, which strives to build theory grounded on data. Robson [8] argues that content analysis is described as the refinement of ways that are used by lay people to describe aspects of the world about them. The effective way of working with this process is to start with the research; this is the strategy that the researcher adopted. The content of the data was collected by means of the questionnaire and was coded and analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The discourse in analysing qualitative data culminated in a global analysis, which revealed High School feelings and perceptions regarding the degree to which they feel empowered by LO.

RESULTS

The scale of 1-10 in the questionnaire was perceived as relevant in terms of ascertaining how High School learners feel empowered by LO. Respondents said they felt that they were conscientised and empowered and they viewed LO as a learning area that had practical value to them as individuals. Learners who gave a low rating to LO as a subject generally, made comments that were appropriate to this rating. The low rating from the learners and related comments implied that learners felt they needed to know more about this learning area. Almost all responses corresponded with the reasons provided by the learners in terms of the value of the rating. The assumption was that learners knew what they were doing when they were responding to a questionnaire and they were aware of the contribution of LO to them as individuals. The researcher observed that some learners chose low rating scores, such as 1, the lowest available option. This could be perceived in a negative light; despite this, one can highlight the following positive factors:

- Learners had an understanding of the rating scales used in assessment.
- The low rating was in accordance with the comments provided.

- The low rating implied the possibility that learners had knowledge of assessment, which is a requirement for peer assessment in the new approach to teaching and learning.

The overall findings showed that the learners' attitudes towards LO were positive, because the learning area was concerned with issues relating to them as individuals. The response pattern generated by the questionnaire revealed a positive inclination towards the learning area. Furthermore, it was evident that younger learners were more concerned about issues related to themselves as individuals, as compared to older learners. It is important to note that 57% of learners involved in the study are likely to exit the education system in the near future, in order to enter the world of work. Being near the end of Grade 9, this is an option which is available to the learners when they receive their General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and schooling is no longer compulsory. The other implication that the researcher drew from learners' low ratings, although they were in the minority, was that learners who gave a low rating to LO said that they do not have enough time to study it. One can infer that this is caused by the fact that LO in the school timetable is sometimes used for other learning areas, as established in the study by Ntshangase [12]. Although this study was conducted fifteen years ago, and no subsequent study seems to have built on it, the researcher suspects that the findings are still valid at this time.

The researcher analysed the evaluation of learners in each scale by using the following analysis schedule: On the rating scale, 1-5 indicated a low regard for the learning area; whilst 6-7 on the scale represented the average score, indicating an average consideration towards the learning area; and 8-10 on the scale was deemed to indicate a high regard for the learning area. Furthermore, the low rating (1-5) was deemed to imply a negative attitude towards the subject and an 8-10 rating, a positive attitude towards the subject, with 6-7 being in the middle of the range, if one takes the continuum into consideration. The following were some of the LO related comments made by learners on different scales:

Scale of 1-5 (low scores and related comments): Complete waste of time it must be banned/don't remember anything from LO/ I would like to learn more/learned about Life Orientation in Grade 9, never heard of it afterwards.

Scale of 6-7 (average score and related comments): One already knows a lot of things/one is a better person/Not all questions are answered/ it is easy to understand. One has learned things that one has not experienced in life/ learned about real life issues/ I have a good understanding of things/ I only did LO in Grades 8 and ,9 it was not offered in Grades 10-12, but it gave me

good knowledge about life/ still a lot of unanswered questions/ sometimes LO is confusing/assisted me in living a better life/ have learned other things from other subjects/ reasonable knowledge gained/ still feel that there are other things to learn.

Scale of 8-10 (high scores and related comments): LO helps students to discover themselves and it also provides them with information about themselves that they did not know about/ one is aware where one stands because of LO/ we are given deep things that we did not know/ one always considers one's choices from the knowledge that one gathered from LO/ it is easy to understand LO because it deals with things that are happening to us/ LO has taught me a lot that one did not know about life/ I still need to get some information about life.

DISCUSSION

The status and practice of LO revealed that some learners have a positive attitude towards LO, but they appear to place more emphasis on, and display more attitudinal reaction to, issues such as HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the study revealed that aspects of LO that are peripheral to individuals, such as the qualities of Ubuntu (communality) and tolerance, were only considered important later in the lives of learners. The attitude of learners is influenced by the context which they find themselves in. Educators were found to have contributed to the attitudes of their learners as interpreters of the curriculum. Further to this, findings also revealed qualitative development of wisdom in learners as they progressed through the upper grades, during their High School years. Learners are thoughtful and concerned about the future, including what they would like to achieve in terms of their goals and dreams. The following topics and issues were identified by learners as being important for inclusion in the LO curriculum (learner's comments included verbatim):

Need to have fun in learning/ adolescent stereotypes/ step parents (this comment was made by a learner who had no parents)/ how to avoid an argument/ how one needs to react to things as an older person/ many students reach Grade 12 without knowing their self-image and that results in them not knowing what to do/ things that youth encounter which are demons/ how prisoners are given rights/choosing a marriage partner. Relationships/communication skills/ to be a good citizen/ decision making/ physical well-being/ safety and the environment/ how we can help in the community that is full of problems/ how we express our feelings to other people.

Although the researcher noted the above suggestions

from learners, there were, however, areas that are part of LO but were not explicitly stated. The fact that educators are viewed as interpreters of the curriculum impacts on learners' attitudes. A study conducted by Rooth [13] on the status and practice of LO in South African schools revealed the following results, which are in agreement with the present study:

- 75% of learners view LO as Learning Area that makes a valuable contribution to their lives.
- 89% of learners felt that LO was an essential Learning Area.

Holt [14] states that societies, in general, have a certain level of influence on each other. The kinds of educators who teach high school learners are reflected as restricted professionals. They rely mostly on experience rather than policy requirements. They confine their responsibilities to their definition of what is academic within the classroom. In their interaction with their learners, educators influence their learners unintentionally. This was revealed in the attitude of learners who are taught by educators belonging to different race groups and the influence which they have on their learners. Broadfoot [15] argues that educators value their privacy and autonomy more than collaboration with their colleagues. On the other hand, educators who are extended professionals display reflective competence. They are practitioners who are constantly re-examining their values in order to make good decisions. This has a reflection on learners, as Plato 427-348 B.C (cited in Akinpelu, 1989, p. 30 [16]) argues that a lit candle can light another candle.

If one reflects deeply on this issue, one can ascertain that everything starts with learners as individuals, followed by their relation to society (social responsibility) which includes human rights. Brofennbrenner [17] calls it self-consciousness. The results also revealed that being knowledgeable about career choices made learners value LO. Learners who gave a low rating to LO said that they would have had a more positive response if they had access to books on the subject. The findings of the research requires the attention of the DoE in order to empower educators, so that they can positively impact learners' attitudes towards a desired outcome, because they determine what is regarded as valuable knowledge. The need to place equal value on other aspects of LO requires strengthening in order to produce learners who will live meaningful lives in a society that requires rapid transformation and adaptability.

Egocentrism

The Oxford Dictionary describes egocentrism as considering only oneself or selfish. It comes from the noun "ego" which is described as an individual's idea of herself or himself, especially in relation to other people or the outside world. The issue that comes to mind, which is

understandable to a layman, is that learners are inward looking before they become outward looking. In the new approach to teaching and learning, which is Outcomes Based Education (OBE), those who argue for active engagement with learners in teaching and learning, further argue for the importance of feeding into the curiosity of learners' minds [18]. This involves what learners bring to the classroom, which is a reflection of the issues that they have internalized and which make sense to them as individuals. This needs to be used as a point of departure in an attempt to reach the pre stated objectives in teaching and learning. It also feeds into the building of the strong sense of self if learners view themselves as people who have made meaningful contributions to the learning process. This requires moving from "who" to "what" in the learning process, the "who" being their experiences of themselves in the learning process before the "what", which refers to the learning content. It is the opinion of the investigator that if people identify themselves with what they do, they pride themselves in that venture and it becomes part of who they are.

It is argued that people like to talk about themselves. The experiences that the author refers to are the ideas, the way they view things and how they have solved problems in as far as issues that confront them in their lives are concerned. This should not be overlooked because it transforms learners to move from known to new experiences with confidence, viewing themselves as part of the process of learning process. It has been discovered that elements such as the learning environment, students of teachers, teaching aims, colleagues' interpretations and parents' interpretations are able to change curriculum [1]. Woods [19] identified "concern with self" and "concern with others" as two central motives that he argues generate attitude change and attitude resistance. The two elements are both formed by direct experience (DE). They predict future behaviour based on situations that are formed without prior experience. Reward and punishment can provide a form of understanding of reality. The investigator further states that the motives have implications for information processing and that attitudes change in the public and private context. Research carried out by Zimbardo [20] on optimism reflects a positive orientation towards life, leading to managing difficult circumstances with less subjective stresses and less negative impact on physical well-being. Lubisi *et al.* [1] reveal that there is not always a "fit" between policy and practice. It means then that even if policy requirements may have certain stipulations, learners, on the other hand, may have their private interpretation of issues that affect them and they may not be able to communicate these issues to their educators. A study by Williams (cited in Mwamwenda [21]) revealed that the older the subjects, the less concrete and the more abstract their thinking becomes in analysing issues that relate to them. It is upon these experiences that an

individual's future behaviour is predicated.

What is pointed out in cognitive development is that younger individuals exhibit different thought processes as they engage with their environment, in comparison with older learners. That requires abstraction of the concrete object which allows them to move to higher levels of thinking, as spelled out in hypothetical-deductive thinking. At this stage, adolescents are exceptionally sensitive to other people's perceptions and regard themselves as being more important than other people. Their egocentric nature manifests itself in the creation of an imaginary audience [22,23]. At this stage, the adolescent is concerned with analysis of his/her own beliefs and ideas and this is characterized by formal operations. Adolescents believe that everyone is watching and analysing them; this indicates that the adolescent is not yet comfortable with the broader social world. They believe that their singularity and individuality are distinctive of their experiences, talents, perspectives and values. Their egocentrism manifests in the conviction that they cannot be conquered or harmed by anything [24].

Most learners gave explanations appropriate to their ratings. This indicates that learners do possess assessment skills that are now practiced in the new curriculum framework; in as far as peer assessment is concerned. The fact that learners are positively disposed towards the learning area was strength on its own. This is an indication that learners are aware of the LO learning area and the value which it has to them as individuals.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The aspects of LO which had the most significant contribution to how high school learners felt empowered were those aspects which relate to learners as individuals, such as HIV/AIDS, personal development and careers. Learners said these aspects empowered them to live a meaningful life in a society that is rapidly changing. Other aspects of LO were considered by High School learners later and they were issues or aspects that are peripheral to them, such as human rights issues and social responsibility.

Furthermore, learners were concerned with things that have practical value. Dewey (cited in Akinpelu [16]), the main proponent of pragmatism, reveals that people in general are interested in the practical usefulness of any activity that is undertaken. The high premium placed on practical usefulness of LO perpetuates the popular spirit and attitude of this age more than any other philosophy. Some issues that are outside of the experience or interest of learners as individuals are not considered until later in life. This is supported by the study by Rooth [13], which reveals that the least important things that are identified by adolescents are abstract and they may develop and improve on such skills with life experiences. The least of these, according to the study, has to do with coping with loneliness.

Although learners have a positive attitude towards this learning area, it was revealed in the study that they still feel that there is more that needs to be learned in LO. Taking the above issues into consideration, one can conclude that if the DoE wishes to impact learners, they need to recognise the issues of personal empowerment as priorities in curriculum design. Furthermore, they need to invest in the educators who teach these learners. It can be inferred from this study that schools have not prepared learners to be divergent thinkers, because the educators who teach them are restricted professionals.

It was mentioned earlier that different stakeholders such as parents, educators, community based organizations (CBO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) need to work together to turn schools into centers of excellence. The inputs of different stakeholders will also go a long way towards addressing the extent to which High School learners feel empowered by Life Orientation.

This study is one of the many studies that needed to be conducted in this country since the advent of the new democracy. This paper has assisted students in the B.Ed programme to develop community outreach for Further Education and Training High School learners' around their areas. This is done by identifying issues during the B.Ed. students' experiential learning time when they become involved in work integrated learning and are required to develop a programme that will address learners' needs. Recently B.Ed students once identified a theme called Positive Living, which was an attempt to try to help High School learners to resist drugs, as informed by personal development in this research. Furthermore, there is a need for further research into the impact of the race of educators on learners' attitudes.

The study of attitudes does not provide simple explanations and answers to the present research problem. One of the reasons is that attitudes are not explicit, there are many factors that inform and affect attitudes such as psycho-social, cognitive, conative and affective aspects, just to mention a few. This study can be developed and improved, among other things, by adequate channels of two-way communication, conferences and workshops where people are brought together to exchange and interchange their ideas in order to make sense of their environment. Katz [25] states that although one may consider this stream of thinking to be desirable, it does, however, have its own limitations, in that the subject does his or her best to give rational meaning to an issue and that people see the world in terms of their own needs.

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APPENDIX A

Evaluation of the Knowledge of Life Orientation

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about your attitude towards Life Orientation. There are no correct or wrong answers. Do not write your names in any of these documents. Responses are confidential and should be answered honestly and without restriction.

Instructions

Below are various statements/questions, which are divided into two sections. At the end of each statement or question, you are asked to make a cross (X) where it is applicable to indicate the response which best represents your point of view, attitude or perception.

Section A

Personal Details

1. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Age

Below 14
14 - 17
18 - 21
22 - 25

3. Grade

Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
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4. Race

African	
Coloured	
White	
Indian	
Other Specify	

5. Symbol obtained in life orientation in the last examination written

Rating code	Description of competence	Marks %
6	Outstanding	80-100
5	Meritorious	60-79
4	Satisfactory	50-59
3	Adequate	40-49
2	Partial	30-39
1	Inadequate	0-29

Value of each symbol

- A = 75 +
- B = 70 - 74
- C = 60 - 69
- D = 50 - 59
- E = 40 - 49
- F = 30 - 39

G = 20 -29
 H = 19 and below

6. Who helped you choose a career?

Parents	
Peers	
Siblings	
TV	
Radio	
Teacher	
None	
If other Specify	

7. Tick the box that is applicable to you

Science	Technology	Commerce

Other (specify) _____

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Section B

Rural	Urban
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Career:

8. Life Orientation (L.O.) has made me aware of many career choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

9. L.O. has helped me choose a career best suited to my talents.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

10. L.O. has helped me set realistic life and career goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

11 L.O. has made me realize and focus on what I want to achieve in life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Ubuntu:

12. I have been able to apply skills learned from L.O. to improve the manner in which I relate with my friends, members of my family and community.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

13.L.O. has helped me to understand my role amongst friends, family and community.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

14. L.O. has taught to participate in community activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

15. L. O. has taught me to value and appreciate the role played by friends, family and community in my life.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

16. L.O. has taught me how to become a better member of family and community.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Personal Relationships:

17. L.O. has helped me to deal with difficult situations in my relationships.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

18. L.O. has improved my attitude towards sexual matters e.g. abstinence before marriage and sexually transmitted diseases.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

19. L.O. has given me skills to choose a future partner.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

20. L.O. has taught me to take relationships seriously.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Tolerance:

21. L.O. has taught me to respect other cultures.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

22. L.O. has taught me to respect other people's rights.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

23. L.O. has taught me to accept other people's opinions even when they differ from mine.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

24. L.O. has taught me to respect less gifted and disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Lifestyle:

25. L.O has taught me correct diet and exercise that lead to healthy lifestyle.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

26. L.O. taught me good and bad behaviors/habits which lead to both good and bad lifestyle.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

27. L.O. has helped me to approach life positively.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Self-Image:

28. L.O has taught me to accept and appreciate myself for who I am.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

29. L.O. has helped me to identify my weaknesses and my strengths.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

30. L.O. has helped me to approach life positively.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

Indicate with "Yes" or "No" the extent to which L.O. has helped you.

31. L.O. has helped me to understand matters related to HIV/ AIDS.

Yes No

If yes explain.

.....

.....

.....

32. L.O. has informed me about human rights issues.

Yes No

If yes explain.

.....

.....

.....

33. L.O. has prepared me to be a responsible social member.

Yes No

If yes explain.

.....

.....

.....

34. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the knowledge you receive from L.O.

Give reason for your rating

.....

.....

.....

35. Using the space provided say something that we have not covered which you learnt from Life Orientation.

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX B

Durban Institute of Technology
 Indumiso Campus
 Private Bag X9077
 Pietermaritzburg
 3200
 15 December 2005

The Superintendent General
 Department of Education
 288 Pietermaritz Street
 Pietermaritzburg
 3200

Dear Sir/ Madam,

'Request to conduct research in KwaZulu-Natal schools.

I would like to have permission to conduct research in the schools around Durban and Pietermaritzburg Regions on learners in Grades 10-12. This is part of my Doctoral Thesis (D.Ed) that I am doing with the University of Zululand in the Department of Psychology.

My research topic is: **"An Investigation of the Attitudes of Learners towards Life Orientation in High Schools in Durban and Pietermaritzburg Regions"**. The instrument that will be administered to learners, aims to get response patterns of learners towards Life Orientation.

The information that will be given by the learners will be confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. The questionnaire will be administered once and it will take about \pm 20 minutes. The researcher hopes to arrange the research at mutually convenient times with the school principals and Life Orientation educators.

I intend collecting data as soon as schools open in 2006. It will last twenty days.

Please find enclosed approved research proposal for my study.

I hope that my request will reach your favourable consideration.

Should you wish to contact me urgently please phone me at 082 435 7628.

Yours faithfully

Duduzile Njozela
 (Senior Lecturer – Education Department) Durban Institute of Technology.

APPENDIX C

Durban University of Technology
Indumiso Campus
Private Bag X9077
Pietermaritzburg
3200
18 February 2006

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Parent/Guardian

Permission to Conduct Research: ‘Attitudes of High School Learners towards Life Orientation’

I am a student at the University of Zululand, and I am presently registered for an Educational degree called D.Ed or PhD. It is a requirement of my study that I collect information from Grades 10-12 high school learners who are doing Life Orientation.

I therefore request permission to agree to your child’s participation in the study. Learners are required to respond to a questionnaire, which lasts for 20-30 minutes. This will be done in the classroom together with the educator who teaches Life Orientation in your child’s school. The Department is aware of what I am doing as a researcher.

The information that I am going to get from this study will be useful for all the stakeholders in education. In particular it will help your child’s teacher to get a fuller understanding of what and who they teach and perhaps for future planning in the area of Life Orientation.

All information gained as a result of your child filling the questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality. Any articles that will be published from this research will ensure the anonymity of your child and the school.

It is unlikely that the child will find filling the questionnaire distressing in any manner. Your child has been selected to participate in research and I am asking for your permission for him/her to take part.

With this in mind, I ask you to sign and return attached form to me.

Yours sincerely

Ms D. Njozela
(Researcher)

I ----- (Please write your full name)

☺Agree ☹Disagree

I ----- (Name of the learner)

Agree ☹Disagree

Thank you in advance for your positive response.