

**CLASSROOM MANAGERS IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM POLICY:
THE LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHER**

BY

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Leadership, Management and Policy**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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DECLARATION

I, Loveena Ganesh, declare that

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This dissertation is submitted with/without my approval.

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01 April 2015

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Protocol reference number: HSS/0235/015M
Project title: Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher

Dear Mrs Ganesh

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 26 March 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

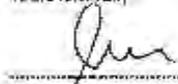
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Yours faithfully


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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to

My late dad Mr H. Kandhai and my late mother in law Mrs Tharamoney Jungli

for believing in me and encouraging me to pursue with my studies.

ABSTRACT

The rationale of the study was to examine the experiences of Life Orientation teachers during curriculum implementation. The uniqueness of an efficient classroom manager is apparent and to some extent obvious. However, what may not be clear is how you develop into an effective classroom manager. Research evidence supports the assertion that good quality classroom managers are made, not born. Effective classroom managers are teachers who can identify with their learners and use definite teaching techniques. Education management is an organised, inter-connected process used by professionals who manage education and training at schools. Leadership does not only involve the principal; teachers are leaders and managers of their own classrooms. They must also ensure that all management tasks are implemented such as: planning, organising, leading, controlling, monitoring and co-ordinating. School principals and school management teams should be actively involved in the Life Orientation programmes. This study provided valuable insight into the challenges experienced by the Life Orientation teacher and further makes recommendations in order to improve on curriculum implementation within the classroom. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic theory. According to this theory the Life Orientation teacher cannot teach this subject in isolation. The micro, meso, macro and chrono systems have to be taken into consideration during curriculum implementation.

This research was located within an interpretive paradigm and the methodology of this study was qualitative in nature. Purposive sampling was used in order to nominate the two schools for this study. The participants for this study consisted of two Life Orientation teachers from each school and their Heads of Department responsible for this subject. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with four Life Orientation teachers and two Heads of Department members. During the deductive analysis process five themes emerged. The research findings indicated that Life Orientation teachers experience various challenges during curriculum implementation. Challenges ranged from teacher's personal competencies, learners with learning difficulties, problems with the Department not meeting the expected demands, lack of resources, curriculum being too broad and the teaching of sensitive issues. This study further makes some recommendations such as allowing teachers to become masters in Life Orientation

(allow teachers to teach the subject for more than three years), allocate the subject to teachers who have a flair for the subject, try to attain help from the community, use the Health Department facilities to come in and educate learners on sensitive topics, fundraising activities could assist in generating sufficient income in order to purchase equipment. It was also highlighted that any school can succeed if they have a strong School Management Team who can assist and be able to support their teachers all the way.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	-	Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement
DoE	-	Department of Education
HOD	-	Head of Department (school level)
L.O	-	Life Orientation
LoLT	-	Language of Learning and Teaching
SMT	-	School Management Team

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The success of any institution, whether in the industrial world or in the education sector will ultimately depend on the effectiveness of its leader. The need to make education institutions realise their goals is felt throughout South Africa. The orientation chapter gives background to the different policies introduced to the education system. It also focuses on the Life Orientation subject and how teachers ensure that classroom management practices are effectively implemented during curriculum. This corresponds with Langdon's opinion on educating learners to become responsible citizens. This research is limited to the study of two primary schools in the Durban Circuit area. The leadership and management roles of HODs and teachers in these two schools are thoroughly explored through interviews.

We are in a new political dispensation which has led to the formation of new government structures. The principal no longer holds all the responsibility for running a school. The principal's work is now more formally shared with the Deputy Principal and Heads of Department (HODs). Together they form a school management team (SMT). The next level relates to the teacher. The responsibility of a classroom teacher is to craft a learning milieu from the unrefined tools of books, paper and the required curriculum. Teachers express themselves through their style of classroom management. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defines classroom management as a gestalt combining a variety of teacher traits, together with reflection and investigative skills in supervising learner activities and the capability of affording an engaging education (Hansen & Childs, 1998). The intention of education is to educate learners to be conscientious citizens (Langdon, 1996). Classroom management is the fundamental teaching skill. Teachers cannot educate and learners cannot gain knowledge in a classroom inundated with disruptions. When teachers begin their careers in the classroom, they often start with optimistic visions of their classrooms and learners. According to Feistritzer and Haar (2005), most teachers report entering the teaching profession due to the desire of helping young people to learn and develop holistically.

However, the role of the teacher has become very complex. Currently teachers are driven by accountability and various challenges which they face in the classroom in relation to the teaching of Life Orientation. Life Orientation is a compulsory school subject from Grade R to Grade 12. Prior to 1994, this subject was known as school guidance and it was a non-examinable subject. It focused mainly on vocational, character and socially appropriate behaviours. However, Pedersen and Carey (2003) have concluded that guidance and counselling cannot be omitted from the school programmes since it develops and promotes the scholastic accomplishment and psychological development of learners. Hence when the new curriculum was introduced post 1994, this new learning area was introduced in schools.

This is followed by a discussion of the statement of the problem, rationale, significance of the study, key research questions and the demarcation of the study. Finally, it provides the structure of the dissertation outlining what each chapter entails.

1.2 Statement of the problem

It is imperative that readers take note that as a student of Leadership and Management the study will focus on the teacher as a classroom manager, however this study will use Life Orientation as a lens in order to gain a better understanding on the teachers' classroom management practices. Life Orientation was implemented as a new learning area in Curriculum 2005, (Department of Basic Education, 1997 b). Although some teachers had obtained "specialist" training in some of the aspects dealt with in Life Orientation the Department of Basic Education had stated that the majority of teachers had not been trained during their pre-service or-service training as teachers. In 2002 a strengthened aerodynamic *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9* was introduced and then it was further revised and changed to *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12*. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) came into effect in January 2012 to streamline and to advance the execution of learning areas including Life Orientation. According to Pretorius and Lemmer (1998), the rationale of introducing Life Orientation in schools was mainly to groom learners to be able to manage with the complexities of the dynamic life in the 21st century. However, I have observed that the manner in which curriculum implementation takes place in the school at which I work is problematic.

According to The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2012), Life Orientation deals with the holistic growth of the learner throughout childhood. Life Orientation aims to develop learners through three different, but interrelated study areas, that is, Personal and Social Well-being, Physical Education and Creative Arts. It guides learners to accomplish their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. It teaches learners to implement their legal rights and responsibilities and to value the rights of others. Learners are guided to make knowledgeable and accountable decisions about their health and surroundings. It develops artistic, communicative and pioneering individuals. Skills such as self-awareness, investigative, interpersonal relations, management and efficient communication skills are developed. Learners need to be provided with publicity to experience fundamental skills in dance, drama, music and visual arts. It also allows learners to enjoy the health benefits of exercise and expand on their social skills through dynamic participation in Physical Education.

The question to ask is: Are management structures effective enough to ensure that classroom managers are fully equipped to implement this curriculum effectively? I strongly feel that teachers should not only be restricted to exercise leadership in their classrooms, but to extend their leadership qualities within the school. I believe that if the School Management Team (SMT) encourages and supports teachers, there will be definite changes in terms of improvement and school effectiveness. Ultimately this will have a positive effect on teachers and the way they perform their management duties within their classrooms. However, I have noticed that many schools still follow the autocratic and bureaucratic leadership styles. The ultimate decisions are made with the people who hold formal management positions. According to Grant (2006) some schools claim to have changed but in truth not much has changed. In these schools, a top down approach is still used. I believe that it is of utmost importance for teachers to be recognised and appreciated in all spheres of the school.

It is also very important to focus on the various understandings of the concept teacher management and the role of the School Management Team (SMT) in promoting and hindering teacher management. Hence as this study unravels questions on the effectiveness of class managers will be answered. Effective classroom managers are teachers who identify with and use precise techniques during curriculum implementation. For a curriculum to be effective, teachers need to take many factors into consideration.

The changes made to the curriculum means that schools need to restructure themselves into learning organisations. Whatever the quality of the curriculum, its success or failure depends largely on teacher quality (Foulds, 2000). Teachers need to change and increase their skills, not necessarily qualifications for the successful deliverance of the Life Orientation curriculum. In order for self-management to be triumphant, it must be accompanied by an internal devolution of power within the school level and by transformational leadership amongst teachers. They deal directly with the implementation of the curriculum and the management of their classes. It is very important for teachers to extend and sustain a mutual, proficient school culture and to help solve problems amongst each other more effectively. Transformational leaders in schools are required in order to change, transform, lead and manage their classrooms effectively. According to Bush and Middlewood (2005, p.11), transformational leadership is more powerful and multifaceted and occurs when one or more teachers elevate one another to advanced levels of devotion and perseverance.

1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study

During my years of teaching I have also witnessed how this subject has continued to face various challenges. The first entailed that the implementation of Life Orientation was constrained by a variety of social (school environment including social, political, economic and demographic conditions) and structural contextual factors (school principal, teachers and learners). Some of the teachers gave most of their attention to what they perceived as priority subjects e.g. Math, Science and the Languages at the expense of Life Orientation. The training workshops for teachers only involved 1-2 days of training. This short duration of training was insufficient to develop an understanding of the content. It did not equip and empower teachers on how to mediate sensitive topics like HIV/AIDS and sexual matters. Schools were at a total disadvantage of not having physical education specialists at schools (preferably with a Sports Science degree), consequently teachers were left to their own devices. Due to this, safety on the types of activities and implementation of movements became a major concern for both the teacher and the learner. The new graduates lacked content knowledge of the curriculum. A lack of resources made it very difficult to bring out the creative and hidden talents of learners, consequently many activities and topics were omitted from the Life Orientation programme.

There was a major blockage between teachers, parents and the community component. Many schools were without school psychologists. Hence learners with serious problems were not able to receive professional advice and treatment. Although inclusivity focused on the inclusion of vulnerable children, teachers were not skilled in handling diversity within their classrooms. The terminology used within the Teachers' Guide often contributed to the omission of certain areas in the curriculum by teachers who struggled to understand and teach certain topics. I have selected this study because of a personal interest in teaching Life Orientation. I am teaching for 14 years and have taught Life Orientation for the past 5 years. I have observed a disjuncture between the intended and implemented Life Orientation curriculum. Therefore, I feel it is very important to conduct this study in order to explore the Life Orientation teachers' experiences on the implemented Senior Primary Life Orientation curriculum. The reality being that majority of the Life Orientation teachers are not entirely trained to teach Life Orientation corresponds with the research done by Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007). Teachers' beliefs can play either a facilitating or an inhibiting role in translating curriculum guidelines into a complex and daily reality of classroom teaching. If teachers hold positive beliefs that are compatible with the changed curriculum, change is likely to occur but if they hold negative beliefs, barriers or obstacles are likely to occur instead of a changed curriculum.

Hoadley and Jansen (2013) deem that it is important to have an approved or intended curriculum because it helps to standardise teaching and the knowledge that is regarded essential is taught by all teachers. When the subject aims and objectives are laid down firmly, one would expect the curriculum to produce creative, artistic, strong minded and productive learners who can contribute positively to national development. It is very evident that there are a lot of good intentions with the execution of Life Orientation as set forth in the National Curriculum Statement and by other authors. Without a doubt the goals for this subject are commendable but the question still remains whether or not they are achieved in practice. Although the features of an effective classroom manager are comprehensible and even somewhat obvious, what might not be clear is how you become an effective classroom manager. Effective classroom managers are teachers who recognise and use precise techniques. According to Marzano (2003), understanding of and preparation in these techniques can change teacher behaviour, which in turn changes learner behaviour and in due course affects learner attainment positively.

Education management is an organised, inter-connected process used by professionals who manage education and training at schools. Leadership does not only involve the principal, teachers are leaders and managers of their own classroom. They must also ensure that all management tasks are implemented such as: planning, organising, leading, controlling, monitoring and co-ordinating (Van der Westhuizen, 1999, p. 55). School principals and school management teams should be actively involved in the Life Orientation programmes. These types of exercises will ensure that teachers are empowered to teach the entire curriculum and they will also be fully aware of the subject's expectations and goals. A way forward in facilitating the victorious execution of this subject at school level is to unravel challenges in the philosophy of this learning area, scrutinise potential causes of these challenges and recommend how these problems can be addressed. If problems are tacit then assistance can be accessible to the Life Orientation teacher and to managers who are designing educational programmes.

According to scholars Fullan (1992) and Pratt (1980) they have noted that the achievement of any syllabus hinges on investigating the challenges during its execution stage. A curriculum can be very well designed; however it can be useless if it cannot manage to obtain the desired results during its performance stage. Fullan (1992, p.22) mentions an important motive for investigating the execution phase in curriculum growth. He states that if the execution view point is understood genuinely and validly, it can be a dominant source for attaining actual improvements within the classroom and school level. Fullan (1992) also states that individual teachers will only employ an innovative programme in ways that are reliable with their own philosophy and practices. The set national goals and aims can easily be achieved if the implementation follows the prescribed or intended curriculum. According to Morrison (1998) effective management of change in education, requires correct understanding, skills, qualities and characteristics for managing change.

Therefore, it is hoped that the results of this study would be used to inform School Management Teams and teachers about the manner in which curriculum relating to Life Orientation may be effectively applied at school level.

1.4 Significance of the study

The main aim of this study is to verify the perspectives of Life Orientation teachers accountable for the implementation and classroom management of the Life Orientation policy at their schools. It also looks at how managers empower teachers to teach this learning area and to ascertain whether their mentoring and supervision is adequate for the success of this learning area. It also addresses how some of their challenges can be overcome during curriculum implementation.

1.5 Key research questions

Main research question

What are the teachers' management experiences in the implementation of the Life Orientation policy at their school?

Sub-questions

- (a) What management practices facilitate the effective implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum at their schools?
- (b) What barriers do Life Orientation managers face when implementing the curriculum policy?
- (c) How teachers seek to overcome the barriers and what informs their efforts?

1.6 Demarcation of the study

This study is conducted in the surrounding Durban region. It focuses on two urban schools. The first school has limited resources and facilities. Many learners are from the informal settlements and only a fraction of parents contribute towards the paying of school fees. Due to the lack of funds the school relies on sponsorships and donations during the course of the year. Purchasing basic sporting equipment such as bats and balls for sport is last on the list of priorities. The school receives partial government funding however the money is used for paying the utility accounts. The school has two small areas called the boys and girls playground. The second

school has a higher socio-economic status. Most of the learners are from affluent homes however social problems do prevail in some families.

Outline of the study

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1

Chapter one introduces the study. It also provides background to the study, the rationale to the study and the critical questions that guided the research.

Chapter 2

This chapter reviews international and local literature on classroom managers at schools, in particular their roles and responsibilities. It also defines the key concepts related to the issue under study namely; management and curriculum implementation. In addition, this chapter also provides a detailed account of the theoretical framework which guides the data.

Chapter 3

This chapter provides a description of the research process, design, methodology and methods, as well as justifications for such methodological choices. It also presents and explains the methodological processes chosen in order to generate and analyse data in response to the critical research questions of this study.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the analysis of data and the actual challenges and strategies which classroom managers' experience during curriculum implementation.

Chapter 5

This is the last chapter which discusses the findings of the research. Conclusions and the implications of the study are presented with some recommendations for future development.

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an outline of the problem statement, purpose and rationale for this research study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the chapters to follow in this study. In the next chapter the literature review and the theoretical framework will be discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a background and orientation to the study. The chapter also foregrounded the motivation and rationale for the study, significance of the study, key research questions and the structure of the dissertation. The aim of this study is to investigate how classroom managers ensure effective curriculum implementation. The research questions investigate the experiences, perceptions, challenges and strategies of school managers and classroom managers during curriculum implementation. It reviews the existing literature related to curriculum implementation and classroom management. This chapter also reviews literature on the eco-systemic theory.

2.2 Defining Life Orientation

The Life Orientation subject is fundamental to the holistic development of the learner's compassion for their intellectual, physical, personal, social, spiritual and emotional growth (Department of Education, 2011). This subject promotes learners to attain and exercise life skills that will support them to grow and be self-sufficient and successful in accepting life's challenges and to participate in a dynamic and accountable role according to our social order (Department of Education, 2011). The subject aims to expand learners' knowledge through three different, but interconnected study areas which are Personal and Social Well-being, Physical Education and Creative Arts. According to the Department of Basic Education (Department of Basic Education, 2011) the above areas can be summarised in the following discussion.

Personal and Social Well-being is the study of the self in relation to the milieu and the general public. This aspect provides opportunities for learners to carry out life skills necessary to make knowledgeable decisions concerning personal lifestyle, health and social well-being. It will provide learners with the necessary skills to narrate confidently with and contribute to the family, community and society. Learners will be equipped with skills that will support them to tackle demanding situations confidently and identify, develop and converse their abilities, welfare and skills with self-confidence. They will become skilled with principles such as reverence for the

rights of others and open-mindedness for cultural and spiritual diversity in order to construct a democratic society.

Physical education aims to build up learners' physical well-being and awareness of movement and wellbeing. The Department of Education (2011) policy further explains that during the physical education lessons, learners will extend their motor skills and contribute in a variety of physical activities. It also emphasises that involvement in physical education will cultivate constructive attitudes and principles that will support learners to be physically fit, mentally alert, emotionally balanced and socially well-adjusted.

Creative Arts offer coverage to an array of art forms including dance, drama, music and visual arts. According to the Department of Education (2011) policy the purpose of creative arts is to educate learners on how to become creative, artistic individuals, with an admiration for the arts. The teacher's main task is to provide a secure and accommodating setting for learners to investigate experiences and articulate their opinions, ideas and concepts within an ambience of honesty and recognition. The Department of Education (2011) policy also indicates that Creative Arts make available opportunities for learners to express their opinions and understandings, independently and in relation with others. Creative Arts education, when effectively applied, has been confirmed to develop literacy and to decrease education dropout levels (Department of Education, 2011).

2.3 Competences required of teachers by the National Policy

In February 2000, the former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, gazetted the *Norms and Standards for Educators* as national policy. This policy highlighted the notion of teacher competence and explained what competences were required for them to act across a range of teacher roles. Eraut (1998, p.128), pointed out, that the use of competence is no less diverse, than the use of terms such as knowledge, skills and ability. The term competence in relation to a vocation such as education is certainly that the competent person has the knowledge, skills and capability to perform the responsibilities and roles under acceptable standards. The *Norms and Standards for Educators*, focuses very sturdily on the scheme of functional competence as an overarching concept which embodies the three interrelated forms of competence.

Practical competence is the established ability. This means that the teachers must show that they are able to do things within the classroom. According to Eraut (1998) practical competence is grounded in foundational competence, whereby the teacher demonstrates an understanding of expertise and this is integrated through reflexive competence, in which the teachers critically reflect on the ways barriers to learning can be conquered. Minnaar and De Kock (2003) emphasise on how teachers have to handle the feelings of colleagues and learners, as well as their own feelings on a daily basis. According to the Department of Education (2000b), the policy implies that all Life Orientation teachers need to be specialists in all the learning outcomes as stipulated in the policy. The Department of Education (2008) highlights the importance of teachers as subject specialists and further acknowledges that the success to teaching Life Orientation relies profoundly on the teaching approach preferred by the teacher. This implies that teachers must not only be subject specialists, instead they need to be competent in ensuring that various teaching methods are initiated during specific topics under discussion. To ensure that teachers are guided, the Department of Education set out specific Learning Programme Guidelines. These guidelines were given to assist teachers, in adopting new teaching methods.

According to the Department of Education (2003), all teachers are expected to demonstrate virtues of a sound administration leader. Victorious Life Orientation teachers should replicate the subsequent virtues: they should be amicable individuals; good quality listeners; they should show empathy towards learners and colleagues and they should be truthful and confidential regarding certain sensitive issues pertaining to learners. Life Orientation teachers need to exhibit a hale and hearty life style, they must be able to channel learners in making ethically accountable decisions and they need to possess good communication skills. These teachers must have an enthusiasm for the elementary principles of our Constitution and they should also be sensitive towards community values and be non-judgemental (Department of Education, 2003). According to the above policy document, a teacher with such remarkable character traits when not given Life Orientation due to a scarcity of teaching period, loses the opportunity to etch those precious moments and provide invaluable advice to all those under their pastoral care.

2.4 The definition of management and classroom management.

The study of education management should enable a teacher to become a professional educational leader within their school and the education fraternity. This will further develop and grow to ensure excellence in South African schools. According to Morris (1996), management can be defined as a process of working with and through individuals and other stakeholders in order to accomplish organisational goals. Achieving organisational objectives through leadership is management. This means that everyone is a manager during specific activities. In every organisation management is very important and an organisation will not be able to survive without effective management.

McBer (2000, p.15) describes classroom climate as the combined awareness by learners of what it feels like to be learners in a specific teacher's classroom. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003, p.18), effective teachers use their knowledge, skills and performance to craft efficient learning environments within their classroom. The key issues for Rogers (1998, p.199) is that teachers should strive for consistency. There are three stages in building a positive climate within the classroom. The first stage is the Establishment phase. The teacher aims at minimising unnecessary disruptions. The second stage is the Consolidation phase. It is very important for the teacher to continue to teach, encourage and maintain what was established. The third stage is the Cohesive phase. This phase is characterised by sturdy relational ties with the class. Throughout this phase, cooperative learning, classroom meetings and peer teaching are the acceptable norms.

Classroom management makes many demands on a teacher. The teacher has to take full responsibility for the effective management of everything in their class. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003, p.18) classroom management entails premeditated well thought-out activities and events which allow for successful teaching and learning to take place. It is characterised by well-planned and wide-ranging lessons, minimum disruptions and punitive problems, a variety of differentiated directives for learners with diverse needs, traditional routines for precise behaviours and an ambience of respect. Pretorius and Lemmer (1998, p.55), state that managers have to decide what must be prepared and how it should be concluded. They must give directives that it should be finished. In professional language this relates to the terms planning, organising, leadership and controlling.

Manning and Bucher (2003, p. 297) find that teachers fail to develop their own classroom management styles. These teachers constantly change from one strategy to another. They often alternate between autocratic and democratic management methods. The same authors, Manning and Bucher (2003) identified that effective teachers generally seem to have well-thought out classroom management practices. They use classroom management practices that mirror their own theoretical beliefs. They reflect about their administration practices and why they use them. These teachers take into contemplation the steadily increasing learner diversity within their classroom. Provision is made on how to handle aggressive behaviour and they ensure that their classroom management ideas are concrete and can be translated into action.

A classroom environment based on communal respect whereby learners experience the love and security will diminish the need for disciplinary action and it will also support learners to develop self-control. The Department of Education (2000a) suggests that teachers should adopt a proactive approach by preparing programmes, exercising self-control, having additional work accessible, ensuring that teaching and learning takes place constantly, ensuring that learners are motivated making room for relaxation or a conflict-resolution area and building constructive relationships with learners. Teachers have entered a new age of classroom. Faced with many new challenges teachers and administrators have searched for interchanging traditions to manage classrooms. Freiberg and Lapointe (2006) inflate this visualisation of classroom management by defining classroom management as the capability of teachers and learners to concur upon and take forward an ordinary framework for societal and scholastic communications, by creating a philosophy of endeavour within a social structure that is built in due course, and eventually leads to student self-control. Teachers with a learner orientated approach, vision classroom management as a mode of preparing learners for life. They focus on developing learners' attitude for the future. Teachers and administrators, who move towards classroom management from this perception, define classroom management as the development of creating an optimistic social and emotional ambience in the classroom (Morris, 1996). Donaldson (2001), further states that to be able to build successful relationships, teachers need to be aware of learners gestures, body language and their tone of voice in order for them to use their skills and other intelligences to build successful interpersonal relationships.

2.5 Curriculum implementation

According to Carl (1995, p.48), curriculum undergoes four related phases. They are the design, development or dissemination, implementation and evaluation phase. Curriculum has to be designed before it can be implemented. In my understanding, curriculum implementation includes putting into practice the aims, content and methods which are planned and developed for schools as guides for teachers to implement. It is the phase where design is put into practice (Carl, 1995). It is recommended that in order for a curriculum to be effectively implemented it should be evaluated to see whether the changed curriculum is achieving its outcomes. Curriculum implementation is the main focus of the four phases because it is where the actual dissemination of planned content is actually delivered. Carl (1995), mentions that curriculum evaluation can be understood as the continuous effort to trace its effect in terms of content towards achievement of the defined goals.

Marsh and Willis (1995) demonstrate that careful planning and development is very important, however it is worthless unless teachers are aware of how they can implement it successfully in their classroom. They also highlight the importance of teachers becoming highly confident and competent managers, who can implement curriculum effectively within their classroom. It is highly imperative that teachers adopt a good perception of both the theoretical underpinnings and the classroom functions of the changed curriculum.

It is very important for the teacher's beliefs in implementing a new curriculum because it ultimately affects curriculum implementation. In the current education system, many challenges hinder the successful implementation of a new curriculum. In countries like Turkey the new curriculum for the primary school was piloted and finally put into action in 2005. Caliskan and Tabancali (2009) identified how Turkey's education system went through reform in order to attain a quality contemporary education system. This was necessary for survival and prosperity considering the dynamics of a rapidly changing world. This change also affected the role of the principal. Principals had to take a more active role in understanding the curriculum, hence they would be able to cascade information to teachers during curriculum implementation. Their new curriculum enabled them to identify a number of learning experiences due to it being student-centred rather than teacher-centred.

2.6 Challenges faced by teachers and learners

Teachers need to be aware that there are many barriers to learning which could possibly occur amongst learners in a class. The following are some of the factors which cause barriers to learning.

2.6.1 Socio-economic factors causing barriers to learning

There is a strong connection between learners' school achievements and the socio-economic status of the community (Nieman & Monyai, 2006). Growing children for example find it very problematic to focus on their school work if they are hungry and cold. In South Africa, the socio-economic status of the majority of our learners is very low. Many of learners come from homes where they don't have healthy foods, little medical care, insufficient clothing and no electricity to keep warm during those winter months.

According to Nieman and Monyai (2006), most of the time, learners from poor socio-economic environments have no place where they can do their homework in peace and quiet. They do not receive cognitive stimulation, and services such as libraries and photocopying facilities are not available due to financial constraints. In addition, they sometimes work in the afternoons and over weekends to supplement the family's income. Many of these learners live with grandparents and other caregivers who are illiterate and do not appreciate the value of attending school.

A study conducted by Visser (2005), identified several challenges experienced by teachers during a Life Orientation programme which focused on HIV/AIDS. Many teachers particularly in rural schools found it extremely difficult to deliver due to a lack of knowledge on HIV/AIDS (Visser, 2005). Further, that research suggested that respect and sensitivity regarding such topics also hindered the successful implementation at classroom level. Children suffering from psychological, physical and sexual abuse are prone to experience severe barriers to learning and development however it can be avoided if there is widespread involvement from schools and families (UNESCO, 2009).

2.6.2 Barriers caused by language

According to the policy document UNESCO (2009) individual barriers include communication problems such as when the learner's first language is different from the rest of the learners, poor motivation for learning, insecurity which often leads to low self-respect and a lack of self-assurance. Articulation and enunciation are not necessarily a problem, but if the enunciation and articulation cause learners to spell inaccurately or to misconstrue the contents, then it will undeniably become a problem. A study conducted by Prinsloo (2007) highlighted the challenges experienced by teachers. For instance, due to cultural barriers, teachers and learners often face communication barriers hence they are unable to speak the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). This eventually affects the quality of teacher-learner relationships. Ultimately, such factors hinder the success of understanding and the ability to apply and respond in an empathetic manner to issues related to Life Orientation (Prinsloo, 2007).

2.6.3 Barriers caused by learning problems

The term learning problems covers various forms of impairments that hamper learning. A number of learners encompass learning difficulties as a cause of impaired intellectual development, while others, with average or above-average intelligence also experience learning problems. According to Nieman and Monyai (2006), these learners usually struggle with oral abilities such as reading, spelling, general language tasks and basic literacy. These learners encompass learning problems as a result of attention deficiency, inability to concentrate and hyperactivity. According to the studies conducted by Christiaans (2006), Rooth (2005), Van Deventer (2008) and Van Deventer (2009), although some teachers are trained in Life Orientation and some of its learning outcomes, they have to teach all the other outcomes despite a lack of training in all. This particularly applies to the learning outcome of Physical Education.

It has also been noted that various problems occur when the curricula is unyielding and does not act in response to the diversity of abilities, needs and circumstances amongst learners (UNESCO, 2009). It is very lucid that when teaching approaches and teaching resources are not learner friendly or responsive to the diversity of requirements and abilities amongst learners, it poses a major learning barrier. A range of problems occur when assessments and evaluation systems only access the scholastic level of children according to universal standards instead of their

individual progress. In an ideal situation the academic, social, emotional and physical development should be assessed and evaluated.

2.6.4 Barriers caused by behavioural problems

Learners with behavioural problems have serious difficulties relating to their parents, teachers and peers hence they underachieve or produce unsatisfactory work (Nieman & Monyai, 2006). These types of learners usually have a pattern of consistently negative behaviour which can lead to their learning being disrupted or that of the rest of the class. Nieman and Monyai (2006) further explain that behavioural problems can also occur as a result of a learner's intellectual abilities. It becomes very evident that these learners are unable to keep up with their school work and the rest of their class and often try to distract the attention of others.

2.6.5 Classroom factors that can cause barriers to learning

According to Nieman and Monyai (2006) the following factors in the classroom can be barriers to learning. Learning content that is too difficult or too easy, when the textbooks are limited and the use of outdated worksheets which are not stimulating enough can also act as barriers to effective learning. According to Prinsloo (2007) a lack of resources also hindered the successful implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum in schools. Furthermore, the study revealed the teachers dissatisfaction with the Department of Education. The skills and delivery from facilitators were identified as inadequate and teachers required more direction regarding the specific needs for curriculum implementation. Prinsloo (2007) states that low motivation and confidence levels amongst teachers were due to the lack of sufficient training and knowledge from workshops.

Various problems prevail in overcrowded classrooms which can hinder effective learning if the teacher does not give the learners the support and encouragement in order to apply methods, such as group work or to resolve the predicament of large classes. Teachers who don't communicate effectively, or if they cannot establish good rapport with learners, will also hinder learning instead of promoting it. Problems will also arise when lesson presentations are unstructured and if the teacher has insufficient subject knowledge. Nieman and Monyai (2006) also mention that neglecting to mark learners' work quickly and thoroughly or failing to give feedback will also

hinder effective learning. They also point out that teachers who are unprepared, unmotivated and incapable of maintaining good discipline in their classes also contribute to various learning problems. Research conducted by Rooth (2005) identified several areas of concern for Life Orientation. Her study revealed that the allocation and selection of Life Orientation teachers was made up of a high percentage of unqualified teachers. This was due to the unavailability of suitable staff members to fill up the required number of teaching periods or as a result of a human resource management decision. A large proportion of her participants strongly felt that the subject matter covered by Life Orientation should be taught by members of the society, particularly parents being identified as the ideal role model for such information. Further problems identified in her study included concerns about time allocation, the class sizes, a shortage of resources and learning materials, and difficulties experienced in assessing the learning outcomes.

The study also revealed the lack of support from the Department. Teachers also experienced concern regarding learners' attitudes and discipline. There was also confusion regarding the difference between the Life Orientation curriculum and the previous subject called Guidance. Hence the teacher's values and decision to teach or omit certain assessment standards was also an area of concern. Research conducted by Christiaans (2006), focused on the General Education and Training Band. It highlighted that principals, learning area co-ordinators and teachers had insufficient knowledge and understanding of Life Orientation. The introduction of on-going professional development workshops and further support and feedback to teachers was supported by curriculum advisors. Pre-service training to gain in-depth knowledge was also suggested in order to facilitate the successful implementation of Life Orientation.

It is imperative that teachers plan and create environments which are safe, secure and valued regardless of their ability, background or situation. We, as teachers, may feel that we are unable to reduce or remove these learning barriers however it is of paramount importance that we are aware of its implications. If Life Orientation can create an inclusive and learner friendly environment, then I am certain we will be able to diminish the consequences of environmental barriers.

2.6.6 The need to be versatile (knowledge and skills)

According to Nieman and Monyai (2006), in order for lessons to be effective, the teacher needs to possess effective classroom management skills, the ability to establish a good rapport with students and effective lesson implementation skills. Strategies employed may not suit all lessons however it is imperative that teachers know the direction which their lessons should take in order to make an appropriate choice of strategy. Teachers should have at their disposal a repertoire of teaching strategies which can be used and adapted to the requirements of a specific learning situation. Nieman and Monyai (2006), further explain that teachers need to be versatile in their ways of imparting knowledge. This can only be achieved by using different teaching strategies in order to accommodate for learner differences within the classroom. Teachers must ensure that learners are self motivated hence they will adopt a positive attitude towards their actions. All these factors will not be possible to achieve unless a variety of teaching strategies are employed.

2.7 Overcoming these barriers

According to the Teachers Guide for the Development of Learning Programme Policy Guidelines (2003), all barriers to learning need to be recognised and addressed in an appropriate and proficient manner. A good team effort involving all staff members could give a learner the one opportunity to make a success of his or her school career or life.

2.7.1 Proposals for supporting learners with socio-economic barriers to learning:

Learners whose socio-economic background is a barrier usually dislike school. For them school is one humiliation and failure after the other, and most of the curriculum seems irrelevant to their lives in the past, present and future (Clark & Starr, 1996, p.293). It is very important to mediate a feeling of competence in these learners and to encourage them to cultivate a positive self-image and a belief that they will be able to rise above their circumstances. According to Clark & Starr (1996), learners who have socio-economic barriers to learning can be supported in ways such as improving their reading abilities because poor reading abilities often account for the inability of learners from a poor socio-economic environment to cope with school work.

Adjusting the reading level of the study material and providing extra reading support can make a huge difference between the learning process and a learner being frustrated. Teachers need to

teach learners study techniques because children from poverty-stricken environments often do not know how to study. They should be taught all kinds of study skills, such as how to ask questions, how to take notes, how to summarise and how to read.

2.7.2 Proposals for supporting learners whose home language is not the LoLT:

According to the Department of Education (2003), it is imperative that teachers create an environment whereby all children feel equally valued. Children in the Life Orientation lesson should be authorised to converse in their first additional language, although the medium of instruction might be different. In this way the Life Orientation lessons will be able to provide a platform for learners to express their thoughts and opinions on various issues. According to the policy document of UNESCO (2009), teachers need to craft an environment whereby all children will experience value and love. When children are endorsed to communicate in their first language it will enable them to understand concepts more clearly. If the teacher is unable to speak the child's first language then, other teachers in the school can be utilised. Children must be certified to articulate their thoughts and opinions. This will lead to children building on their self confidence and being motivated to continue with their learning (UNESCO 2009).

Johnsen and Skjorten (2001) emphasise that children must be encouraged to state their opinion and both boys and girls must become drawn into all curricular and extra-curricular activities. The UNESCO (2009) policy also mentions that teachers need to evaluate the academic, social, emotional and physical development instead of just measuring their performance in association to others. It also highlights the importance of organising the classroom and seating children accordingly to optimise opportunities for communication, interaction and learning. It is also essential for teachers to express their care and love towards their learners.

The support the teacher gives learners should not only promote learning in the specific subject but it should also improve the learners' proficiency in the LoLT. According to Nieman and Monyai (2006), the following tips can be put into practice with regard to language support. These include allowing learners to summarise in their home language what they have learnt, providing various opportunities for learners to discuss their understanding of concepts and ideas with other learners and learners should be given the opportunity to interact with the learning material written in LoLT. It is of utmost importance that teachers explain difficult concepts to

learners draw up vocabulary lists relating to the learning area, they must use visual support in the form of diagrams and pictures and most importantly take heed of their verbal usage. Extended sentences containing complicated language and dealing with a variety of diverse concepts can become very perplexing for learners (Nieman & Monyai, 2006).

2.7.3 Proposals for supporting learners with learning problems in the classroom:

Adapt teaching activities according to the curriculum by giving learners with impaired intellectual development less school work or fewer tasks to do or make their tasks less challenging (Nieman & Monyai, 2006). It is very important that teachers plan classroom groupings in order to reduce the sense of isolation. It is very important to prevent distractions or avoid anything that might distract these learners by seating them in front or in the middle and giving them more attention. Opportunities must be created so that learners can respond in an environment which they perceive as less threatening. They must be encouraged to work hard and it is of utmost importance they understand that success is achieved by making an effort and that people have to be prepared to work for what they want. Teachers must organise reading classes. Reading material must be easy to read, but interesting and suitable for primary school learners. It is highly recommended that teachers adjust activities and also their assessment tasks to suit the needs of learners (Booth & Ainscow, 1998).

2.7.4 Proposals for dealing with learners with behavioural problems in the classroom:

According to Ayers and Gray (1998), teachers should be aware that emotional support and development are fundamental to the entire development and learning process. Hence it is imperative that teachers seek the advice and expertise of educational psychologists, social workers, counsellors and even former teachers. Teachers must consider the social skills of the learner with a behavioural problem with a view to establishing his or her weaknesses and strengths. If learners are kept busy and interested throughout the lesson, there is less chance of destructive behaviour in the classroom. Ayers and Gray (1998) recommend that teachers give these learners responsibilities. This often provides them with a sense of importance and improves their self confidence. It is imperative that teachers use positive reinforcement and encourage all forms of positive behaviour. According to Joubert (2008) in order to motivate learners' teachers need to create a pleasant working environment with order and plenty of stimulating challenges

and opportunities for the learners to work independently. Learners that are co-operative are less likely to be disruptive in class. Joubert (2008) further states that teachers with a positive attitude are likely to have learners with positive attitudes.

2.7.5 Adapting teaching strategies for use in the classroom:

The UNESCO (2009) policy also emphasises the importance for teachers to be generous, genuine and honest regarding praise. This method will assist in developing a child's confidence and self-esteem. It is also recommended that boys and girls are encouraged to get involved in all curricular and extra-curricular activities. The Life Orientation policy also emphasises that teachers have an important task to evaluate the academic, social, emotional and physical growth instead of just measuring their performance in relationship to the other learners in the class (Department of Education, 2003). It is also vital that Life Orientation teachers organise their classrooms and seat children in strategic places in order to create opportunities for communication, interaction and learning. The teacher must also convey her understanding, care and love at all times towards her learners.

Bender (2002) makes the following proposals on how teachers may structure a lesson to help learners with barriers to learning. It is very important that teachers provide clear instructions this will help them concentrate on the learning task. Providing a lesson outline will assist learners focus on what will come next. Teachers need to also develop at least two worksheets that present the same content at altered levels. The exercise of unconventional assignments is essential for differentiated learning. According to Bender (2002) all worksheets must be very clear so learners are not confused and distracted. Peer teaching can prove to be very successful during lessons. The Teachers Guide for the Development of Learning Programme Policy Guidelines (2003) further highlights that teachers must ensure that all activities planned are inclusive sequentially to certify that no learners are left behind and vulnerable learners are given support to ensure active participation in the curriculum. For example in the movement outcome (Learning Outcome 4), teachers need to make the necessary arrangements regarding the rules and the use of sporting equipment in order to ensure maximum participation from all learners.

The Teachers Guide for the Development of Learning Programme Policy Guidelines (2003) further explains that Life Orientation teachers must be compassionate and approachable individuals. These teachers need to work together and create some sort of balance and harmony in addressing learners needs and achieving assessment needs. This is an important part when providing learner support. There are many barriers to learning, however it is important for all teachers to identify and build on the learner's strengths. According to the policy, opportunities for success must become an important aspect of curriculum planning and support must be an important part of the learning and teaching process.

2.8 Factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards curriculum implementation

When teachers are involved in all phases of the curriculum development, then one is sure to have a curriculum reflecting a spectrum of perspectives regarding classroom strategies (Bennett & Lubben, 2006). It is also assumed that teachers will bring rich experiences in respect of information, directives as well as needs in the curriculum. It is also very important that teachers must be involved in expressing their opinions on the design and development of a curriculum. This opportunity will allow teachers to gain some training before the actual implementation of the curriculum. In conferring with the above, Hord and Hall (2006) also believe that the top-down management can only be successful if there is continuous communication, continuous teacher support programmes and positive criticism regarding implementation.

Roehrig, Kruse and Kern (2007), state that an additional feature which influences teacher classroom practices is their perspective about their responsibility as teachers and how learners actually learn. In my opinion, if curriculum designers do not prepare teachers adequately this change results in failure. Motsoane (2004) also agrees that a curriculum will be unsuccessful if the professional development of teachers is ignored because systems cannot change by themselves, they are changed by people. There must be continuous training for teachers in the form of professional development workshops. This will result in teachers becoming fully equipped with new skills and ideas for the execution of a new curriculum. Teachers need to be guided and supported by specialists in their classrooms in order to evaluate the delivery of the new curriculum. Positive criticism can also be shared amongst peers for further development and support.

Phakisi (2008) states that workshops held over short periods of time are ineffective and have a very low success rate on the teacher's classroom practices. She also mentions that the level of unqualified teachers and the training received on the content knowledge definitely influences the rate and whether they can adapt to change. She further explains that when a curriculum undergoes change, it often requires skilled and well qualified teachers. This is the idealistic situation whereby teachers will be able to understand and internalise the new approach, however, this is not the case in most situations. In addition to Mdtshane (2007) teachers must be empowered with the necessary skills and strategies in order to manage change in their schools particularly within their classrooms. He also expresses that often people become reluctant to acquire new knowledge hence this creates feelings of incompetence. I can definitely relate to this because lack of training in a particular specialisation often causes apprehension and insecurity when implementers are uncertain as to whether they are on track. Mdtshane (2007) also stresses the importance of regular training sessions and the continuous assistance to teachers. He further states that if this does not happen, implementation can be a serious problem for teachers in the classroom.

Cotton (2006) reviewed the attitudes of teachers in implementing controversial issues in the United Kingdom secondary schools. He demonstrated that the role of teachers should be to encourage independence and to promote a specific world view. This study suggested that teachers need to impart knowledge instead of acting as change agents. It also revealed that teachers are keen in promoting positive teaching attitudes however they are restricted on time and resources. This study also looked into the implementation of the Technology curriculum. It revealed the teachers dissatisfaction regarding the absence of functional workshops for curriculum implementation. Teachers expressed their views on how the lack of instructional materials, textbook and training manuals hindered the successful implementation of the learning area.

Prinsloo (2007) conducted a study on the implementation of Life Orientation programmes and the perceptions of principals and the subject teachers. His findings concluded that problems were related to the professional training of Life Orientation teachers in understanding content. Prinsloo's results also revealed that rural teachers were ill equipped to implement the Life Orientation programmes. Due to these negative factors teachers were not motivated hence

learners were not interested in the development of values. This also corresponded with the research conducted by Van Deventer (2008), in selected Western Cape schools. He identified that teachers who lacked proficiency and knowledge also affected the learner's perspectives and knowledge about the subject.

Wise and Bushner (2001, p.122) have concluded that learner accomplishment is higher when the responsibility of curriculum managers is clearly acknowledged and efficiently implemented. There are many tasks and responsibilities attached to a particular post within the school. It has to do with relationships with staff members and creating a culture of teaching and learning. The functions of curriculum managers include the premeditated course and progress of a subject or learning area, a professional role as a teacher in the classroom, setting examples for effective teaching and learning, leading and managing staff, efficient and valuable use of the personnel and resources and a more private role. The way a manager's role is performed depends on an individual's persona, attributes and skills. Wise and Bushner (2001, p.124) state that curriculum developers need to develop skills in acting as a bridge between the senior management and the rest of the teaching staff, transformational leadership to create a shared vision and collegial culture and mentoring in improving staff and learner performance. They also need to create professional networks with district officials in obtaining and understanding knowledge of new governmental policies.

In order to help their colleagues advance the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum managers need to understand the relationship of a subject or learning area to the revised curriculum as a whole. To be effective in their role, curriculum leaders need to be effective teachers themselves and leading professionals in their learning areas. They need to also respect and attempt to understand their colleagues' views where these differ from their own. The curriculum leader who cannot develop successful relationships with senior managers and other staff members are unlikely to be able to manage the curriculum effectively. The most effective schools are those that have found ways of involving teachers in decisions regarding the implementing of the curriculum. The culture of learning and teaching is therefore closely bound to strategic management as determined by a school's values, vision and mission (Coleman, 2003). According to Hord and Hall (2006) the success of curriculum implementation depends on classroom teacher's ideas and understandings of subject material and the teaching and

knowledge of such a subject. This can only be successful if teachers are provided with comprehensive professional development.

It is expected that schools prepare the youth for work and for economic independence, in order to enable them to live constructively in responsible communities and to empower them to live in a tolerant, culturally diverse and rapidly changing situation. The biggest challenge facing schools today is to assist learners to build lives which will have importance and purpose in society. The biggest challenge to teachers is what education requires in attaining success. A system is required whereby there are new creative leadership approaches which can address the current educational challenges. Amidst economic, personal and technological challenges, education is also faced by social challenges such as cultural or ethnic diversity.

2.9 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is defined by Phakisi (2008, p.17) as a justification of a particular set of experimental phenomena in terms of a scheme of constructs and laws that interweave these constructs to each other. A theoretical framework is considered an imperative element of research. It maps the way for the researcher to accomplish a suitable research as it provides theoretical underpinnings, which permit the researcher to formulate the research problem, ask appropriate research questions as well as a channel in choosing the research design (Phakisi, 2008). Since my study is related to Life Orientation, the eco-systemic theory is discussed

In this study, Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory was used to investigate the experiences of how Life Orientation teachers implement policy within their classrooms. This theory is pertinent to the study because it highlights the relations amid the individual's growth. Bronfenbrenner's theory is based on a model of human development which comprises of layers or levels of interacting systems, which leads to changes, growth and maturity namely physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural, hence the outcomes in one system affects and is also affected by other systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). Human behaviour, experiences, actions and perceptions cannot be attained if the contexts within which they occur are not reviewed.

In terms of the *eco-systemic theory*, the Life Orientation teacher cannot teach the learners without taking the micro, meso, macro and chron-osystems into consideration (Donald et al. 2007, p.34). It is upon this background that this study will use the eco-systemic theory as a lens

in looking at how teachers can support learners in constructing knowledge during the correct implementation of curriculum. In the micro system, the teacher is looked at in relation with the class as a whole. The class has a tremendous influence on the life of a teacher and the learner. The communication amongst peers and the class teacher in the micro system, shape the life of a learner. According to Berk (2000), the micro-system encompasses the associations and connections a child has with their immediate surroundings. In the meso system the teacher and the learner are surrounded with curriculum implementation from the Department. Proper curriculum implementation shapes the life of a learner. In the macro-system the school plays a pivotal role in instilling skills, values and attitudes to learners (Berk, 2000). In the school system, teaching other subjects are equally important and they are all inter-related with Life Orientation. In a child's life there are various changes that occur over a period of time hence this is represented within the chrono-system level (Donald et al. 2007). The child's development can be affected by some structures within the chrono-system level (Berk, 2000). In this level the child may not be directly involved, however, he will definitely be able to consider the positive or negative forces concerned with his own system.

Therefore in choosing the eco-systemic theory as a lens, the teacher must be aware that the subject Life Orientation requires that a learner should be taught in a holistic way; which will denote that the systems play a chief role since they have an influence on the learner's life. According to the eco-systemic theory if relationships within the immediate micro-system breaks down, then learners begin to experience various problems in exploring other parts of their social life. These shortcomings eventually show themselves in adolescence as anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline and the inability to provide self-direction (Addison, 1992).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1990), this theory can have dire implications for the practice of teaching. He believes that the principal connection begins with somebody who can provide a sense of caring and support. This relationship must be adopted by someone within the immediate sphere of the child's influence. The Life Orientation teacher can only fulfil a secondary role and cannot offer the intricacy of communication that can be provided by primary adults. It is vital for schools and teachers to work together in supporting the primary relationships and to create an environment in which the learners feel safe and secure. The above systems have to pull together and support each other equally in order to attain success.

According to Fullan (2001), teachers need to realise that change is not a linear course or just a series of procedures, it involves the interweaving of various factors that could result in changes being made to how things were previously taking place within the school. Change is a long term journey and for it to be successful all stakeholders need to embrace it with a positive attitude. However, Fullan (1993) argues that teachers cannot be forced to respond to change immediately without proper training or an explanation for this sudden change. He further explains that if change takes place, then materials used in the classroom including the teacher's classroom teaching methods will also have to change. Whenever change takes place within an organisation, there is bound to be anxiety and resistance from stakeholders. Thereafter it is imperative that teachers understand that there must be a valid reason for a curriculum to be changed. Fullan (2001), states that in order to persuade people concerned in curriculum, curriculum designers need to make available valuable reasons as to why they find the present curriculum unsuitable.

Koosimile (2004) explains that if teachers are unable to comprehend the content of a new curriculum, it is very likely that they will not accommodate it in their teaching practices. This results in teachers implementing what they understand instead of applying what was originally intended by the curriculum designers. In my opinion, teachers should have a platform to express their opinions on the envisaged changes. When one begins to recognise the rationale for change, then they become keen to accommodate such transformation into their teaching practices.

Fullan (2001, p.9) explains that "to achieve large scale reform one cannot depend on people's capacity to bring about substantial change in the short run", there must be adequate teaching and training materials available for equipping teachers. In simple terms this can be translated into providing intense training workshops consisting of more than 2 days of training. It is very important to note that if government decides on a curriculum change, teachers have to accept it and turn it into a positive learning experience. Fullan (1993) highlights that it is complex to change from one curriculum to another and to further implement it on a national scale. He also explains that proper skills and training should be accessible to cater for the new curriculum.

It is extremely important for curriculum implementers being the teachers in this case, to see a need for change. It is imperative for teachers to identify areas of weaknesses before they can acknowledge and accept new approaches and methods. Fullan (2001), mentions that the systemic change of a curriculum requires assistance from the district-level on administration for the

professional development of teachers. It is crucial that teachers be trained on how to develop their own resources in order to compliment all the materials which are disseminated by the Department of Education. It is also important for an effective school to share its goals with all stakeholders and also promote shared decision making and empowerment. It further recommends that good relationships are maintained between principals and staff members. School management teams also need to assist and empower their staff members. Therefore it is fundamental that classroom managers be willing to move to the centre in order to transform a school into a successful learning organisation.

Literature has revealed that at times leaders are not proactive especially when a new curriculum has been introduced into the system. However with the passing of time it is hoped that curriculum implementation will be successful within every classroom. Classroom managers will eventually become more confident and knowledgeable regarding curriculum implementation.

2.10 Chapter summary

Curriculum implementation and school effectiveness are all necessary for the growth of our changing South African schools. In this chapter I examined the barriers which classroom managers face during curriculum implementation. This chapter also discussed the theoretical framework that underpins the study, which is the eco-systemic theory. In the next chapter, we look at research methods.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the literature that was reviewed around the critical questions and the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This chapter focuses on and explains the methodological processes that were employed in eliciting and analysing data. In presenting this chapter, I firstly discuss the paradigm in which this study is located. This is followed by a discussion on the methodological approach of this study, an account on the data elicitation methods and data analysis techniques. Finally, I discuss ethical issues, trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Guba (1990) in Denzin & Lincoln (2005), a paradigm is a “basic set of beliefs that guides an action” that is embedded within its theoretical orientation. This research is located within an interpretive paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002) the interpretive paradigm sets out to comprehend how individuals interpret the world around them. It is therefore fundamental to revisit and examine the importance of epistemology, ontology and methodology of the interpretive paradigm. The question of ontology refers to “the nature and form of reality” (Maree, 2007). It is imperative for the researcher to ask herself what she believes about the nature of reality or how this reality can become known through knowledge. Epistemology can therefore be defined as a process in which reality and knowledge become known to the researcher (Maree, 2007).

This can be seen as the interaction between the researcher and knowledge which prevails but needs to be identified. The methodology of a study is the way in which the researcher positions epistemology and seeks to bring the unknown of reality into the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Ontology, can be seen as the belief that every individual has a socially constructed view of reality, and that “there is no single, observable reality.” Relatively, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event (Merriam, 2009). Hence there can be no one objective reality and for the epistemological element of the interpretive paradigm, a process needs to take place whereby multiple realities can become available.

According to Maree (2007) the subjective nature of reality within the interpretive paradigm can only become acknowledged by probing questions into the reality and the meanings which people attribute to the events which takes place in their lives. Hence the interpretive paradigm relies on precise methods to ensure that reality is subjective. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) elucidate the characteristics of the methodology within interpretive paradigms as being “interactional, interpretive and qualitative” in nature.

Hence the method of interviewing within the interpretative paradigm in this study elicited the views of Heads of Department and teachers on how they experience and understand the management and implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum.

3.3 Research Design

According to Durrheim (2006) a research design is a premeditated framework which serves as a connection flanked by research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Hence a research design is a crucial building block of any study as it provides the sketch of the planned research process in order to ensure that the methods engaged will lead to the answering of the research questions. Durrheim (2006) also identifies four principles namely the principle of the research, the framework in which it takes place, the research paradigm, and the techniques used.

This study can be classified as an interpretive research and according to Durrheim (2006) meanings only emerge through social interaction which is conducted by the researcher. According to Rule and John (2011) a case study involves a very in-depth investigation which is systematic regarding a particular situation in order to generate further knowledge.

I chose a case study design in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the teachers and school manager's experiences regarding the teaching and implementing of the Life Orientation curriculum policy. For the purpose of this study, the case involved two primary schools. I selected two teachers and one Head of Department from each school for this study. Hence the experiences of four different teachers assisted me in understanding how teachers implement curriculum policy within their classrooms. These teachers were selected based on their years of experience and expertise with the subject. Given that this is a study of limited scope one method was used to generate data during this study, namely semi-structured interviews.

3.4 Research Methodology

The research methodology of this study was qualitative in nature. This kind of approach enables the researcher to attain real-life experiences of the participants (Cohen et al. 2007). According to Patton (2002) the qualitative approach enables researchers to obtain rich information from the participants. According to Merriam (2009) the four main characteristics of qualitative research include focus on meaning and understanding and the way in which people make sense of their world, the researcher is the principal instrument of data collection and its analysis, the qualitative research process is inductive in nature and it aims to make available a rich description of the research findings.

My study will look into how classroom managers specifically the Life Orientation teacher implements curriculum policy. This approach is suitable for this kind of enquiry as the aim is to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the different perspectives of these participants. The qualitative approach will also enable me to capture real-life experiences from the selected teachers.

3.5 Research sampling

Sampling is described by Christiansen *et al.* (2010) as making decisions about people, setting, events or behaviours to observe or study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) explain sampling as defining the population on which the research will focus on.

This study makes use of purposive sampling. According to Bertram (2010), purposive sampling means that the researcher makes precise choices about which individuals and sites to encompass in the sample.

The Life Orientation teachers were chosen purposively for this case because they have dealt with this curriculum and are still functioning with it presently. The teachers have different qualifications and years of experience teaching at this level giving a possibility for varied responses. In purposive sampling the researcher targets a precise group, knowing that the group does not represent a wider population (Christiansen, Bertram & Land, 2010).

This study will be based on two senior primary schools in the Durban Central Circuit. The participants for this study will comprise of two Life Orientation teachers from each school. In order to triangulate the information provided by the teachers a semi-structured interview will be conducted with the relevant Heads of Department from each school.

3.5.1 Description of the Case Study Schools

V.W. Primary School and Toyota Primary School, pseudonyms given to the case study schools, are situated in the Durban Central Circuit. V.W. Primary School has a total of 17 teachers employed at the school, five of which make up the School Management Team. Many of the learners are from disadvantaged backgrounds with a host of socio economic problems.

Toyota Primary School has thirty teachers employed of which six of them make up the School Management Team. Learners are from influential backgrounds however various social problems prevail within these homes.

3.5.2 Description of the Participants

For this study, six teachers were purposively selected from the two schools. The summary of the biography information of these teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Biographical information of teachers

Name of the teacher	Name of the school	Qualifications held	Position in school	Grades taught	Age	Teaching experience
Mrs Corolla	Toyota Primary	Bachelor of Education Degree	Level 1 teacher	Gr. 4	30-35	14 years
Mr Yaris	Toyota Primary	Higher Diploma in Education	Level 1 teacher	Gr. 7	45-50	30 years
Mrs Lexus	Toyota Primary	Bachelor of Education Degree/ Honours Degree	HOD	Gr. 6	50-55	30 years
Mrs Vivo	V.W. Primary	Sports Science Degree / Post Graduate Certificate in Education	Level 1 teacher	Gr. 4,5	30-35	10 years
Mr Polo	V.W. Primary	Bachelor of Education Degree/ Honours Degree / Masters in Language and Media Sciences	Level 1 teacher	Gr. 7	30-35	10 years
Mrs Golf	V.W. Primary	Bachelor of Arts Degree / Bachelor of Education Degree/ Honours Degree /Masters in Education Psychology	HOD	Gr. 6	50-55	35 years

3.6 Data Generation Methods

According to Maree (2011) there are various methods of data elicitation, instruments and sources which can be used in qualitative research. These can include observation, surveys, interviewing, document analysis, questionnaires, artifacts and voice recording. However, in this study, semi-structured interviews were used. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) conducting

an interview is a normal form of communication with people. Therefore interviews are appropriate and fit well with the interpretive approach to research.

3.6.1 Individual face to face Interviews

The research instruments that were used were semi-structured interviews. They were administered with two types of participants namely two Heads of Department and four Life Orientation teachers. According to Wellington (2004), semi-structured interviews are flexible and the interviewer is in control of the situation. This means that the interview schedule only served as a guideline and was not a formalised framework. The interviewer also created opportunities to probe respondents in order to attain the desired views and experiences required for the study. Wellington (2000) further states that closed-ended questions allow the interviewer to begin with simple questions and then move to more difficult questions. In my study I also adopted this approach beginning with close-ended questions and advancing to more complex and thought-provoking questions which required more thought and interpretation. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes per participant.

3.7 Data Analysis

Cohen *et al.* (2011) describes qualitative data analysis as making logic of data in terms of the participant's definition of the situation, noting pattern, themes, categories and regularities. As this research study is qualitative in nature the data analysis is intended to elicit participants' experiences and understanding on a specific phenomenon and in this case how classroom managers implement curriculum policy. Analysing data enables the researcher to assemble constructive descriptions and be able to identify the relevant themes and eventually justify with substantial explanations. In order to analyse interviews the actual words recorded must be transcribed. According to Henning *et al.* (2004) audio-taping and transcribing are imperative as it allows the researcher to reflect and review data. Once I transcribed the data, a process of 'coding' was used. This method allows the researcher to divide data into specific themes.

According to Henning *et al.* (2004) once the themes are identified accurately, then each theme can be used as a foundation for an argument in the discussion part of the research. Interview transcripts can be analysed using the discourse analysis, thematic analysis or the content analysis

method. Discourse analysis requires the researcher too take into consideration non-verbal actions of the participants. It does not only look at what the participant said but how they said it (Rule & John, 2011). They further explain that the process of content analysis looks at data from different angles with the view of identifying keys in the text that will help to understand and interpret the raw data.

Thematic and content analysis requires the researcher to take the responses of participants and then identify possible themes (Rule & John, 2011). I chose to use the thematic analysis process of interpreting data. I wanted to identify what is similar and different regarding the classroom managers understanding and perspectives concerning the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum within their classrooms. The process of ‘coding’ was used in my study. Coding allows the researcher to separate the data into different themes, with each theme assigned to a specific focus. This was a time consuming task as it required me to read the raw material repeatedly and then separate it into different codes. I used different colours to represent different foci. This method eliminated confusion and over-lapping of data. Prior to generating the data, I did have pre-conceived focus areas which emerged from my literature review. However throughout the study I tried my level best to stay focused and listened to everything my participants shared with a clear conscience.

3.8 Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) and Christiansen *et al.* (2010) the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability should be used to guarantee the superiority of the study. Qualitative research is more interconnected with meanings and personal experiences of individuals. It also aims to illustrate and not to evaluate. Transferability according to Lincoln and Guba (1985); Carlson (2010) is a degree to which the research can be transferred to other similar contexts. To address transferability, I included in my research, the data generating instruments, interview transcripts and data analysis so that other researchers can decide as to which extent the findings of this research can be transferred. The second principle of trustworthiness is confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) declare that confirmability is a qualitative investigator’s concern for objectivity. To ensure confirmability I took notes during the interviews as well as audio recorded the interviews.

Note taking and audio recording was used to confirm the authenticity of the data. According to Rule and John (2011), credibility refers to the “extent to which a case study has recorded the fullness and essence of the case reality”. To ensure credibility in my study I revisited the schools to ascertain if my interpretation was the same with those of the participants. According to Rule and John (2011), the principle of dependability “focuses on methodological rigour and coherence towards generating findings” which researchers can self-assuredly acknowledge. To ensure the dependability of the instruments, I conducted a pilot study to fine tune the instruments.

3.9 Ethical Issues

The UKZN Research Ethics Policy applies to all members of staff, graduate and undergraduate students who are concerned in research on or off the campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. According to Rule and John (2011) ethics emerge from a system of moral principles which are embraced by a society or community. In order to conform with the ethical requests as stipulated by the University and the Department of Education, I firstly sought ethical clearance and permission to conduct the study from the relevant institutions (see Appendix A, p.87). I then wrote letters to gatekeepers, seeking authorisation to carry out research at their schools (see Appendix C, p.90). Letters were given to the two principals requesting permission to conduct research at their schools. Participants were also given a letter containing a concise synopsis of the intention of the study along with a letter requesting consent for them to take part in the interview (see Appendix D, p.94).

Christiansen *et al.* (2011) state that it is imperative that all research studies follow certain ethical principles and these principles need to include autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. Because research involves humans it is therefore essential for the rights of these individuals to be protected from any harm that might be caused by the research. All participants were given assurance that their real names and schools were not going to be used because pseudonyms would be used throughout the study. The second element is known as ‘non-maleficence’. As the researcher, I assured all participants that no harm would be caused to them or any other individual during the course of the study. Lastly, the beneficence element of research ethics was obtained by providing feedback to participants.

I also used debriefing sessions after the study, during which participants got the opportunity to work through their experiences. Furthermore, a complete report would be made available at UKZN library in a form of a dissertation and participants were informed of the possible availability of the information should they need to review it.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are areas that can affect the credibility of the study. There were some limitations regarding this study that were taken into account. This study was qualitative in nature meant that only a limited number of participants were used during this study. Interviews were only conducted in the Durban Central Circuit hence generalisations cannot be made for the whole of KwaZulu -Natal. In a research that involves interviews, the researcher has little command over the data collected because events can take an altered route from the premeditated one.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on discussing the research paradigm and methodology, as well as the research design and how it attempted to respond to the research questions of this study. In addition to this, the ethical considerations made in the study and issues of data verification were discussed. The findings of the research will now be presented and discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an outline of the research design and methodology used to generate data for this chapter. In this chapter, focus will be placed on presenting data that was elicited in relation to the perspectives of how classroom managers implement the Life Orientation policy. This chapter presents data which was elicited through semi-structured interviews as discussed in chapter three.

In order to ensure that the participants' voices were not lost, verbatim quotes were used in the data presentation. In addition, the discussion infused scholarly works which were reviewed, as well as the theoretical framework that informed the study which was initially discussed in Chapter Two.

4.2 Themes that emerged from data analysis

The data is presented in terms of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the deductive analysis of the interviews conducted with participants from V.W. Primary School and Toyota Primary School. When analysing the data there were five themes which emerged. These five themes reflected the subjective realities of the Life Orientation teachers involved in the study and their perception of how classroom managers implement curriculum policy.

4.2.1 Lenses through which Life Orientation teachers view their management practices

The Life Orientation teachers who participated in this research study had definite views regarding the importance of managing Life Orientation at primary school level. These views ranged from what skills and qualities Life Orientation teachers required in order to meet the expected demands according to policy documents. This will now be discussed under the appropriate categories.

4.2.1.1 Roles and responsibilities of the teacher

When the participants were asked the question regarding their roles and responsibilities, their responses revealed that they understood that their role as the Life Orientation teacher was much deeper than initially anticipated. They expressed their thoughts regarding the fulfilment of the policy document and also acknowledged that their duties ranged from offering support to learners to guiding them along the right path. All the participants confirmed that Life Orientation teachers needed to create a space whereby learners were able to voice their problems and concerns. This can be best described by Mr Polo from V.W Primary School:

It must be managed because you can never achieve the aims if you don't manage that learning area.

Each teaching and learning situation in the school is formally designed and structured. However during lessons, planned and unplanned interaction takes place between the teacher and learners regarding the learning content. It is very important for teachers to be able to report back regarding the learning outcomes of their lesson. All the participants agreed that they were guided by the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Mr Yaris from Toyota Primary expressed his thoughts regarding the importance in delivering information during Life Orientation lessons:

Teachers have to be very careful not to deliver misinformation. We want to ensure that the Life Orientation curriculum is delivered cordially and effectively. It is important to be part of an effective management team who emphasise effective planning and effective teaching skills.

Mr Yaris further agreed that the management of Life Orientation at Grade 7 level was extremely important for ensuring that we have responsible, mature and strong headed individuals which enter our competitive society:

Life Orientation is a very important subject because it's a life skill and it has to be done in a proper manner in order to direct the needs of children. We must remember we are working with children in their primary stage and their minds are enquiring for more information so we have to ensure that the moulding of these little minds is done correctly.

Life Orientation teachers cannot expect to be victorious in creating a satisfying learning milieu if they are persistently engaged in supremacy battles with their learners. A flourishing classroom will be where the teacher and the learners are functioning collectively to cultivate a safe and secure environment whereby learners can share their dreams, thoughts and future plans with a teacher who really cares and wants to listen to them.

Mrs Corolla was very sentimental regarding the teaching of Life Orientation at Grade 4 level. She felt her role was much more than just a teacher in the classroom:

.....personally I found that I get attached to children so when they leave in grade seven and I taught them in grade four, I get very emotional because I formed such a bond with these children over the years. It's a bond you form with these children when you walk through something like that with them.

Life Orientation teachers need to be very caring, compassionate and approachable thereby creating an environment for the child to feel confident enough to trust and share their problems. Learners often bring problems to school which originates from other areas in their lives and it is important for Life Orientation teachers to recognise these problems and deal with them in an amicable manner. Mrs Corolla highlighted that Life Orientation teaches learners baseline skills which they will later require and build on in becoming responsible adults.

From the data generated, it emerged that all participants were in agreement that the role of the Life Orientation teacher was of paramount importance. According to the Department of Basic Education (Department of Basic Education, 2011) Life Orientation encompasses the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of the learners. Hence it is crucial that teachers are able to display qualities which are of a professional level within their classrooms Department of Education (2003). The data further shows that in terms of the *Eco-systemic Theory*, the Life Orientation teacher will be unable to teach the subject without taking the micro-system, meso-system, macro-systems and chrono-systems into consideration (Donald *et al.* 2007, p.34). In the micro system the teacher is viewed in relation with the class as a whole. In this study it is very evident that the Life Orientation has a tremendous influence on the life of the learner. The initial relationship built with the Life Orientation teacher and learner eventually leads to strong bonds and a relationship of understanding and trust

4.2.2 Practices which facilitate the effective implementation of Life Orientation

Two important sub-themes emerged from the above theme. All four participants agreed that teaching strategies and the emotional and professional competencies of teachers were extremely important during the teaching of Life Orientation lessons. Each of these sub-themes is discussed below.

4.2.2.1 Teaching strategies

All participants were asked what teaching practices facilitated the effective implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. Their responses revealed that in order for lessons to be effective it was very important for Life Orientation teachers to match their lessons to a particular teaching strategy or a selection of strategies. All four participants further agreed that correct strategies needed to be used and if possible adapt these strategies to suit the level of the learners. All four participants were very eager and creative, also proving to be very innovative with ideas which contributed to the success of their lessons. These participants had the following to say regarding their teaching strategies. Mr Polo stated that:

Firstly, in order to be a successful manager and succeed in your lessons you need to develop different teaching strategies in order to assist you for example the way you question learners, the way you assess learners, discussions and also you need to be a very patient and disciplined Life Orientation teacher.

Mrs Vivo expressed her thoughts on having a good management plan before the school year began. A positive environment encouraged learners to become more excited about their learning experiences:

...to make the lessons more appropriate and interesting I also did research on how to incorporate and what to do with the disruptive learners during lessons.

Mrs Corolla expressed her passion towards Life Orientation and highlighted that in order for lessons to be successful, teachers needed to do research and design stimulating yet fun filled worksheets and activities for their learners.

Mrs Corolla also mentioned that and in her case the motherly approach seemed to be very effective. She stated that:

You need to be very creative and come up with innovative ideas to ensure that the Life Orientation lessons are successful. I always tend to take a more motherly approach with my learners. Personally, I feel that such an approach with the young ones work very well.

Mr Yaris emphasised the importance of getting all learners involved in discussions during the lesson. Learners experiencing reading and writing problems were also in a position to be a part of discussions during case study exercises:

.....establishing an ethos where I the teacher can create a forum for learners to open up. But we also can use drawings or pictures as an alternate method for assessment. If need be we use video clips to enhance our discussions. Case studies and role plays are very successful. It's very important that at the beginning of the year I set the tone where all learners are aware of the rules during a Life Orientation lesson.

According to Policy (Department of Education, 2008) the success to teaching Life Orientation depends on the teaching approach chosen by the teacher. Teachers cannot only be subject specialists, instead it is imperative that they research and apply various teaching methods during the implementation of Life Orientation lessons. In February 2000, the former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, gazetted the *Norms and Standards for Educators* as national policy. It was made very clear that mediators of learning should be in a position to use teaching techniques such as higher level questioning, problem solving tasks and projects, group work, whole class teaching and individual self-study. It is also a requirement that they become competent to adjust their teaching techniques according to the growth level of learners. Teachers need to also be able to cater for learners with barriers to learning, learners with unique learning styles and any other differences which might exist amongst learners in their class.

Personally, I feel that teachers need to be versatile in their ways of imparting knowledge to learners. Considering our multicultural position in South African schools, it is imperative that teachers have at their disposal a selection of teaching strategies which can be used and modified according to the requirements of a specific learning situation. Life Orientation aims to build learners through three unique, but interconnected study areas namely, Personal and Social Well-

being, Physical Education and Creative Arts (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Hence if teachers can take these three study areas and vary their teaching strategies they will then be able to accommodate different learning styles. Teachers can also adapt their teaching content according to what learners really need to know and how they gain access to the information according to the learners needs. It is very clear that all teachers agreed that various teaching strategies were required to accommodate all the learners' differences and needs. As teachers we need to be very cautious and aware that the learners in our class are not the same just because they are in the same class. Another important factor to remember is that although learners are in a particular grade they might not necessarily understand the subject content very easily. Hence it is crucial for teachers to employ various teaching strategies in a solitary lesson to add diversity and develop the attentiveness level of learners. Teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that the classroom is a secure and industrious educational environment. In order to attain this, teachers have the right to establish realistic rules and regulations.

4.2.2.2 Emotional and professional competencies

All four participants from the two participating schools agreed that Life Orientation has to be managed by competent individuals with a wide range of skills. They further agreed that competencies included teaching methodologies, classroom management skills and subject knowledge. It was also noted that all participants felt very strongly and made it very clear that teachers needed to be proficient with a sound knowledge of the curriculum in order to be able to apply it appropriately to the relevant topics as stipulated according to the policy document for each grade. All participants further agreed that Life Orientation teachers need to develop a certain degree of emotional competency in order to function effectively within the classroom. Having basic counselling skills were echoed by all participants as a pre-requisite during the teaching of Life Orientation. Mrs Corolla stressed on this by saying:

Life Orientation teachers need to know the curriculum very well before they can impart the skills, knowledge and values to learners.

Although all the teachers agreed that subject knowledge was important some teachers also expressed how they felt teaching certain aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum. Some of these aspects will be discussed under challenges experienced during curriculum implementation.

All teachers expressed the importance of creating a safe environment for learners to communicate openly and feel a sense of trust from their teacher. Mr Yaris added that:

Firstly, I have to ensure that I have prepared a proper working environment and that would also improve my persona as well. Life Orientation deals with such important issues and we can't be laughing about things. We need to be more respectful and sensitive regarding sensitive issues. So another part of a Life Orientation manager is being a counsellor.

In addition to this learners who developed positive connections with their Life Orientation teachers due to their positive outlook on matters were more likely to follow school and classroom norms. The relationship and understanding between the teacher and learner was highlighted by all teachers. Mr Polo echoed his feelings by saying:

All my learners feel very comfortable and relaxed to speak to me. So again that respect and understanding helps to ensure that curriculum implementation is successful.

Policy makers have made it very clear as to the type of teachers they want in the education system. The Norms and Standards for Educators document (Department of Education, 2000a) and the revised National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (Department of Education, 2007a) deals with teachers in schools and ways on equipping the teaching profession in order to meet the demands of our South African schools in the 21st century. However, it is the ultimate task of the teacher to take charge of their own progress by identifying areas recommended during the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). They should see this opportunity as a positive way of growing professionally and be empowered to do something about their improvement, hence becoming better teachers.

According to Minnaar and De Kock (2003) you are an emotionally intelligent teacher if you can understand your own emotions better and manage your emotions more effectively. It is highly imperative that teachers understand their learners first and hopefully in doing so interact more comfortably with other people on all levels and in all walks of life. This will eventually lead to building more satisfying relationships with other people thereby improving the teachers' personal power and productivity. It is very clear that from the above definition made by Minnaar and De Kock (2003) that emotional intelligence is an integral skill for optimal effectiveness of

classroom management. An individual can only function to maximum level if he or she manages the many emotions in everyday life in an intelligent manner.

Findings at the meso-system level clearly indicate that many learners come from unsupportive home environments. One participant mentioned that various social constraints existed amongst community members. Many learners came from the informal settlement where the employment rate was very low. This had a huge impact on teaching and learning because the majority of the parents were not really interested in their child's education. Furthermore, many learners lived with grandparents and unfortunately they were unable to provide the academic support required by these learners. It was further revealed by one of the participants that most homes were taken care of by the eldest child who was still a minor. This had a detrimental effect on the scholastic development of the child.

Findings have also shown that some learners did try on many accounts to discriminate against learners, label and reject learners with social and academic learning barriers. However, it was also revealed that teachers from V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary were proactive and often nipped problems whilst in the bud stage. These teachers worked hard in trying to instil positive relationships amongst their learners. However, many teachers did acknowledge that various teaching strategies were employed in order to address the diverse needs of their learners.

Education is the most powerful instrument and since this instrument is in the hands of teachers, they need to possess a certain degree of quality to ensure its effectiveness. I personally feel that the teacher has to be a very mature and strong minded individual in order to meet the unexpected demands of the calibre of learners we have in our classes today. Classroom management will only improve as teachers develop their own talent and skills as professionals.

4.2.3 Challenges experienced during curriculum implementation

The two schools identified several challenges which acted as barriers towards the successful implementation of the Life Orientation Policy. It was imperative to understand such challenges in order to address them appropriately.

4.2.3.1 Sensitive issues

All teachers expressed that the theory aspect relating to Life Orientation was at a manageable level for them. However they did share their concerns regarding the teaching of sensitive topics. All participants felt very awkward during certain sensitive topics. They expressed the lack of knowing how far one needed to go with these young learners. It was noted that the younger participants were the ones who were often placed in difficult situations. The more mature participants were somehow able to control the lesson with disruptions kept to a minimum. Mr Polo very sadly expressed his feelings regarding discussions of a sensitive nature:

I can teach with confidence and keep the lesson under control, but when it comes to sexuality, I personally feel very uncomfortable when sometimes I am placed in a situation where I can't answer some questions.

Mrs Corolla also felt she was not versed to communicate and address sensitive and personal issues with learners. She felt very embarrassed and uncomfortable to teach and answer questions of a sensitive nature. Mrs Vivo expressed her frustration regarding how learners used it as a platform to make fun of others. She further stated that:

Being a young female teacher I often feel caught up between these learners and my duty as a teacher. So a lot of sensitive issues are blown out of proportion.

She also acknowledged that despite these challenges she would always reassure her learners that she was always available if they wanted to discuss matters of a sensitive nature. Mrs Golf the HOD at V.W. Primary made it very clear that:

..... at the beginning of the year we tell our teachers that sensitive topics must be kept very confidential. They are told not to discuss this with other children.

She also mentioned that parents did not lend much support hence this area was largely covered by the Life Orientation teacher. However, she further expressed her disappointment, that parents were very quick to intervene and demonstrate their grievances against teachers that were providing too much of adult information to their children. She also added that some parents were uneducated and failed to realise that the society we live is moving so rapidly that these once “taboo” topics had to be discussed.

4.2.3.2 Broad curriculum

All four teachers expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the Life Orientation curriculum being too broad and their main challenge being time. Both schools emphasised that more time should be allocated towards Life Orientation. They all felt that the Life Orientation curriculum comprised of too many aspects which often left teachers in difficult situations whereby sections had to be omitted due to time constraints.

Mr Polo from V.W. Primary expressed his sadness of how his Life Orientation lessons always fell towards the end of the day and it was then lost due to extra-curricular activities. Mr Polo stated that:

I feel they should either decrease the content or increase the teaching time.

Mr Yaris from Toyota Primary also confirmed time constraints as being a challenge for him. He shared that being in a multi-faceted school there were lots of planned and unplanned disruptions. Mrs Corolla also confirmed that a Life Orientation teacher needed to be very versatile in order to deal with so many aspects relating to the different areas. This was also echoed by Mrs Vivo:

So they realised that one teacher cannot teach all three aspects as it is very demanding. Also I find the curriculum is a bit too much and really speaking time is not sufficient to complete everything as stipulated in the policy.

It was very evident that V.W. Primary school had managed to come up with some solutions regarding issues raised by their teachers. However, this will be discussed later.

4.2.3.3 Lack of core competencies

Various gaps or lack of competencies were identified by the two schools. It must be noted that both learners and teachers experienced various problems concerning the teaching of the Life Orientation curriculum. All participants highlighted that they lacked basic counselling skills in order to address certain sensitive topics during lessons. Participants also acknowledged that they were dissatisfied when asked to teach physical education lessons. Participants also expressed their disbelief on how learners lacked basic reading and writing skills with this having a negative impact on teaching and learning.

The first competency gap identified by the two schools involved the need for some sort of basic counselling training. Mrs Corolla mentioned that:

at times I personally feel that the Department needs to send all teachers on a basic counselling course.

All teachers felt that it would be beneficial if they could attend a basic course because at times they were approached with problems and felt very helpless. Also teachers reported that this kind of counselling sessions would prove to be very successful during class discussions and create a safe learning environment. As Mr Polo very clearly highlighted that:

well in order to address the specific aims of the curriculum you must be able to address the challenges.

Secondly, all teachers reported that they need to develop their skills and competencies in Physical Education. Mrs Vivo expressed how teachers reacted when allocated to teach Physical Education:

It has also been noted that when teachers are just given PE without consenting to teach the subject they become very grumpy and irritated because it's not their field and at the end they don't do justice to the subject.

Thirdly, teachers reported many learning barriers which hindered the successful implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. V.W. Primary experienced more challenges compared to Toyota Primary. This was due to their social dynamics. Mr Polo was shocked and stated that:

many learners can't read and construct basic sentences. Many of them when given an exam paper end up rewriting the entire paper out again.

Mrs Vivo also expressed her disappointment by saying that:

in terms of writing because majority of the learners are second language speakers they are unable to construct basic sentences.

V.W. Primary teachers also mentioned that the learners in their school displayed a very negative attitude towards Life Orientation. Many of them had a preconceived attitude that they could do whatever pleased them during the Life Orientation lessons. Due to this negative attitude, teachers found it very difficult to get the maximum out of their learners. Mrs Vivo expressed her frustration regarding the learner's attitude by saying that:

their attitude towards Life Orientation for many is a fun lesson and they can do whatever they want to in the lesson. This negative attitude really frustrates me.

Teachers at Toyota Primary experienced language problems with their new admissions. These were with learners coming from the informal settlements. All teachers identified the need to have a sound knowledge of the curriculum. However, they all admitted that they did experience challenges during curriculum implementation. Many of the teachers had not been formally trained in certain areas related to Life Orientation. Mrs Vivo expressed her concerns by saying that:

if you can't draw using pencil, charcoal and tonal lines then how do you teach drawing to learners. Most of the time our teachers complain regarding not having enough knowledge.

Mr Polo and Mr Yaris also stated that they experienced curriculum problems at times. Despite their lack of knowledge on certain areas pertaining to the teaching of Life Orientation they worked really hard to ensure that lessons were successful and enjoyed by all learners. Mr Polo stated that:

when you are allocated to teach Life Orientation or any other subject which you know nothing about, you then need to work very hard to learn and implement this curriculum according to policy guidelines.

Teachers from both schools expressed their thoughts very openly and from their responses it was evident they were very interested in finding solutions to their challenges.

4.2.3.4 Resource needs

Although the two schools experienced different degrees of resource needs they both identified the need for a qualified school counsellor or social worker being employed by the Department. Teachers acknowledged that learners often approached them with problems which they felt they were not adequately equipped to deal with and provide the correct solutions. Hence they all agreed that having a professional on the school premises would prove to be beneficial to all learners and teachers. V. W. Primary teachers also shared some of the problems experienced due to a lack of resources for Physical Education lessons. Furthermore, Mrs Vivo shared her thoughts regarding not being qualified to answer questions and provide suitable solutions to problems:

I personally feel that I am not a qualified psychologist who is able to question and answer appropriately to these sensitive issues with both learners and parents.

This will be further discussed in the subsequent section. V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary expressed various difficulties experienced during Physical Education lessons. However, it was very evident that V.W. Primary had more problems compared to Toyota Primary. This was obviously due to the infrastructure of their school.

Mr Polo and Mrs Vivo expressed their frustration with regards to teaching the Physical Education aspect of Life Orientation. Due to their financial constraints they confessed that at times they left out certain activities relating to Physical Education:

I teach the physical aspect of Life Orientation and sometimes the aims and objectives are difficult to manage because we don't have sufficient space, equipment and resources therefore we are challenged in certain ways. Our schools have one or two balls each for netball, volleyball and soccer. Now really is that sufficient for an entire school.

Hence both agreed that at times following the stipulated requirements according to policy became a major challenge for them. Solutions of how they overcame these issues will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Mrs Golf the HOD of V.W. Primary confirmed by agreeing that teachers in their school experienced problems during their Physical Education lessons. She also highlighted that:

Today's children need that outdoor play which is very, neglected in some schools. However, due to the lack of equipment, our teachers do experience problems during their physical education lessons. We do have limited space but our teachers try their very best to ensure that lessons are conducted with the little we have at our disposal.

Human resource needs were expressed by both the schools confirming the need to have specialist Life Orientation teachers. Mr Polo from V.W. Primary stated that:

I try to the best of my ability to follow the CAPS document. I am not a music or drama educator and often I wonder how to apply myself when I have not been formally trained to teach these art forms.

Mrs Vivo also mentioned that it was imperative for the School Management team to plan and allocate teachers who were capable of teaching all aspects related to Life Orientation. This would ensure that learners were receiving the knowledge and skills from teachers who are capable of implementing curriculum effectively. She shared her thoughts when subjects were not allocated correctly:

.....we not given the correct parts of it because at the beginning when it was implemented we were teaching all three components, the theory part, the creative arts and the physical education and honestly speaking some of the teachers in our school are not trained in these aspects.

Mr Yaris also expressed his sadness with regards to Physical Education lessons being allocated to him:

Another challenge for me was sport. I am an effective teacher, however when I was told to conduct the physical education aspect I personally felt very threatened.

He also added that staff allocations according to the teacher's expertise and their interest for the subject needed be taken into consideration when allocating teaching subjects for the New Year. This would prove beneficial for both the school and learners.

4.2.3.5 Departmental workshops

All four teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with regards to Departmental workshops. They all agreed that the CAPS policy document was very detailed and complex. Despite these challenges they attended workshops with the hope of learning something new. However they all agreed that the facilitators presenting had very little knowledge themselves. The HOD's from both the schools also expressed their frustration regarding workshops conducted which were not to their satisfaction. Mrs Vivo expressed her frustration with facilitators by saying that:

When we attend these workshops the facilitators are standing in the front and reading from a policy document. So I feel that each aspect in Life Orientation should have a facilitator who can actually conduct practical demonstrations or lessons for us. This will be more interesting and beneficial to everyone.

Mrs Naidoo also expressed how annoyed she got when all workshops were structured in the same way:

I personally feel that they should have more workshops in Drama and in Arts and Crafts. These workshops should be presented by experts who can really come in to teach us something new and exciting.

All four teachers highlighted that workshops conducted over one day was insufficient to equip teachers with the necessary skills to teach the subject. They all agreed that workshops needed to be more info-packed. Mr Corolla confirmed by adding that:

Generally these workshops by the Department are not necessarily always informative and to be frank always a waste of our time, sometimes when someone just reads from a book. So I don't feel as a new teacher going there you going to learn anything new and exciting which you can then take into your classroom and implement.

Mrs Lexus the HOD from Toyota Primary backed her teachers by totally agreeing that some of the Life Orientation workshops were a waste of time. He stated that:

You know any workshop will be beneficial no matter what time of day it is, as long as it's well planned, interesting and beneficial to the teachers. But if it's someone coming there and reading from a policy document, then it is insulting our intelligence. It becomes extremely boring and it's not very successful amongst the teachers. Whereas if it was interesting then teachers will buy into their ideas and take it back and implement it within their classrooms.

She also stated that various discipline problems emerged when teachers were constantly taken out of the class to attend workshops which were of no benefit to anyone. She also added that valuable time was lost which was very difficult to gain back.

Reflecting on teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of Life Orientation, it was evident that teachers from both schools agreed regarding the importance of this subject. All the teachers confirmed that Life Orientation equipped the learners for life and acknowledged the importance of their role in this regard. However, the findings of the research indicated that teachers did experience shortcomings during the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. Visser's (2005) study revealed many problems regarding sensitive issues. In his study many teachers found it extremely difficult to teach second language speakers of English. Teachers at V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary expressed their concerns regarding the teaching of sensitive topics and problems experienced with parents. They all agreed that proper training was required in this area. Another common finding between the two schools further indicated that the time allocation for Life Orientation was insufficient. Mr Yaris expressed his frustration regarding the loss of time due to unplanned activities whilst Mrs Vivo stated how she raced through activities.

All teachers confirmed the importance of having a qualified counsellor on the school premises to address the deeper problems which affected their learners. Teachers further indicated their lack of knowledge regarding the teaching of Physical Education. Prinsloo's (2007) study also revealed the negative attitude from teachers who were inadequately trained in Physical Education. Findings of the research indicated that V.W. Primary experienced more learning barriers compared to Toyota Primary. Mr Polo and Mrs Vivo expressed concerns regarding reading and writing problems experienced during lessons. In terms of resources, Toyota Primary regarded their school as being sufficiently resourced however problems were identified with

regards to the teaching of Physical Education. V.W. Primary expressed their concerns regarding the lack of sporting equipment.

According to Nieman and Monyai (2006) various teaching and learning barriers occur when there are very limited resources available in the school for the teacher to use during lessons. Such barriers cause major disruption and teachers are often placed in challenging situations. Mr Polo and Mrs Vivo confessed that certain activities under the Physical Education aspect were neglected due to the limited resources in their schools. According to the Department of Education (2000b), the policy emphasised that Life Orientation teachers needed to be specialists in all the learning outcomes as stipulated in the policy. However, with regards to teacher training workshops, the teachers from V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary including the both Heads of Department members expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of support shown from the Department. According to all participants, workshops were too short and most of the times it was a waste of their time.

The findings at the eco-systemic level indicated that Life Orientation teachers experienced challenges during curriculum implementation. Participants indicated that the lack of parental involvement due to their low literacy level sometimes lead to various misunderstandings between the parent and the teacher. Teachers highlighted that problems occurred when sensitive issues were discussed during Life Orientation lessons. Parents who were uneducated often saw this as a threat that learners were exposed to, too much of sensitive information. Hence the importance of collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers were very important at this level in order for the learners' development and for them to understand that both parties were dependent on each other.

My opinion correlates with the teachers from both the schools regarding the importance of teaching Life Orientation at primary school level. If we reflect on our past we all will be in a position to identify a number of challenges experienced along the way. However, I am sure all of us would have addressed those challenges in an appropriate manner. In the same light it is imperative to note that challenges will unveil during curriculum implementation, however, Life Orientation teachers need to be strong and committed in finding the best possible solutions in trying to solve these short comings.

4.2.4 Addressing challenges

All four teachers expressed their views on various aspects relating to their school dynamics. Teachers made suggestions and recommendations towards addressing challenges which many faced during the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. This data will be presented according to positive reinforcement, then support programmes and lastly communication with parents.

4.2.4.1 Positive reinforcement

All four participants were able to identify the support and motivation which they implemented within their classes. All participants tried their level best by using different strategies to encourage learners to participate in all activities. The school HOD's also highlighted how they motivated their teachers by allocating duties in order to develop their co-ordinating skills. In the same light Mrs Vivo stated how she turned challenges experienced during her Physical education lessons into positive values which also developed learners into adopting a more positive outlook to things around them:

For example cans or coke bottles are used for cones. So we try to improvise all the time even if I require an obstacle course I will use the benches, tables etc to make one. So improvisation is very important especially when you are in a school which faces financial constraints. Also we get these learners to decorate these bottles so this activity filters into the visual arts component.

The HOD from V.W. Primary also mentioned how they empowered their teachers:

We give them to co-ordinate certain activities for example the Life Orientation teachers become responsible for all our sporting activities. They become empowered and confident to co-ordinate activities. This builds their morale and has a direct influence on their teaching within their classroom.

The other teachers also shared some of their reinforcement strategies which have worked within their classrooms. Mrs Corolla stated how she tried to identify something positive about the child, hence awarding them with a certificate. Mrs Vivo also had ideas on making charts and putting

stickers next to their name for outstanding work or good behaviour. She also rewarded her learners with participation certificates. Mrs Lexus the HOD from Toyota Primary also highlighted how management became involved in promoting good work and behaviour:

So we try every method from “A-Z” and all our teachers have seen a great improvement amongst our learners. We also have learner of the week, where we expose these good learners to everybody in assembly. We also have boards up around the school where we put up the child’s good work so we motivate them using these positive reinforcement strategies.we have seen results improve and they become more responsible and surprisingly more mature.

Mrs Lexus also mentioned that learning was an on-going process at their school and they were constantly working to reach higher levels. She further highlighted that it was work in progress and they were constantly trying to raise the bar every year in order for their teachers to become the best.

4.2.4.2 Support programmes

The two schools were able to identify the support they received from management. All four teachers were also in a position to share how they supported their learners’ needs. It should be noted that Toyota Primary made it very clear that they were well supported with having only a few school related needs which needed to be addressed. However, this was not the case with V.W. Primary school. Despite their financial constraints which have posed certain restrictions on them, it was encouraging to note how they managed to solve all their challenges experienced along the way.

In terms of receiving support from the School Management Team, both the schools firmly agreed there were strong support programmes in place for newly appointed teachers at their schools. Mr Polo from V. W. Primary went down memory lane recalling his first day at the school. He stated that:

... if you are a new teacher on our staff, immediately a workshop is conducted to induct you as a new teacher. You will have an HOD assigned to you who will assist you step by step.

He further explained how the Life Orientation Committee met regularly to come up with possible solutions or to share strategies in order to minimise problems. Both teachers agreed that the HOD's displayed warm personalities and never refused to assist them. Mr Polo added that:

....there is always a feeling of relief knowing that support is given starting from the top and our school management team ensures that no teacher is left behind because at the end of the day, we are the managers in our own classroom.

Toyota Primary were pleased that professional experts conducted the Music and Physical Education lessons, however this did not apply to V.W. Primary. Although they sought help from attending workshops with other schools it was still not sufficient. The subject advisors from the Department were not very helpful in assisting with the practical components of Life Orientation.

Hence Mrs Vivo thought of a brilliant idea of seeking the expertise of their senior teachers. Years back there was specialisation hence many of those teachers had qualifications in music, drama, needle work and handwork. She expressed her thoughts by saying that:

I had no idea regarding the teaching of music and they couldn't assist me in any way. I must say they are very good when it comes to avoiding questions. I then had to resort to someone on our staff who had some knowledge on music.

So in order to solve this problem she started attending short crash courses held by the senior teachers in order to develop her knowledge on the arts and music areas in Life Orientation. This idea spread throughout the school and proved to be very successful. Mrs Vivo also mentioned how she empowered other teachers on her staff regarding swimming and gymnastics.

Both schools reported that they had a very cordial relationship with their school Principal and their School Management Team. Mrs Vivo expressed her joy when her concerns were addressed:

So our concerns were heard and our School Management Team did assist to an extent by splitting the three components up.

Mr Yaris also praised the Principal and School Management team at his school:

But I must add that we have such a strong School Management Team that when such issues arise, unlike other teachers who might be scared to take it up with the Principal,

we on the other hand have such a good relationship, an open door policy and we are always guided along the channels in order to provide the best possible assistance to this child. Our Principal and his team never leave us alone.

He also added that the HOD's assisted all the teachers with forms regarding learner's referrals etc. Hence none of the teachers became stressed regarding problems relating to learners. Mrs Vivo also mentioned the importance of an understanding leader and how this positive trait made such a huge difference to the teacher's morale.

I must also mention that we have a very understanding principal who listens to us and together with the HOD's they took the decision to split Life Orientation. Other schools are not so fortunate.

Toyota Primary identified a further source of support by their School Management Team. Mr Yaris stated that:

The school Governing Body took it upon themselves to employ a qualified Physical Education Teacher.

However, prior to this the Life Orientation committee realised the importance of networking with other schools. These networking sessions allowed many teachers to contribute and share their ideas regarding the teaching of Life Orientation. Mr Yaris stated that:

...if teachers are experiencing problems with the Physical Education aspect of Life Orientation then others who are trained can provide some coaching workshops just to empower those who are less fortunate and are unable to employ professional coaches.

He also explained that if schools were not in a good financial position they should seek other avenues of fundraising. They could utilise students who were studying in the direction of a sports degree to assist their school. Mrs Vivo and Mr Polo from V. W. Primary had major issues relating to equipment. However, they realised that the Department was not going to assist them in anyway hence they sought alternate methods and ideas. Mr Yaris mentioned that:

With equipment I do make contact with other schools so if I am playing a particular sport such as baseball and if our school doesn't have it I then borrow it from our neighbouring schools. I also try and arrange matches using schools which have all the equipment.

All schools identified problems which occurred during discussions regarding sensitive issues. Knowing about their financial situation the Life Orientation teachers at V. W. Primary were very smart and productive by roping in the Health Department to come in and address their learners. Mr Polo had suggested this idea:

I am relieved in a way because after all these are professionals and with the assistance of charts and other resources they actually end up doing a fantastic job, sometimes even better than what I would have done.

On the other hand Toyota Primary was in a position to employ professional help from the outside to workshop their staff and learners. They felt it was very needs related and they had seen a drastic decrease in the recurring practice. Mrs Lexus shared their idea on how they decided to invite parents from different grades for workshops which they called “positive parenting” workshops. She further explained that:

Workshops will be researched and presented to parents on how they can provide positive reinforcement to their children and also provide them with affirmations to use with their children, thus motivating and encouraging their children. We have also taken a decision to have a different workshop each year.

Both schools agreed that management tried their best to provide opportunities for teachers to attend workshops and various District and Cluster meetings. However, Toyota Primary was in a position to conduct workshops utilising the help of professional experts from the community. Mrs Lexus also highlighted how the school took the decision to employ a qualified swimming instructor and gained the expertise of a qualified music academy.

Despite financial reasons V.W. Primary's teachers and management members never despaired. They found alternate ways to workshop their staff. Mr Polo stated that:

For other topics such as pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, I try to get the Health Department to come in and have short programmes.

He also mentioned they got the help and advice of students who were studying. He stated that:

We also have psychology students who are completing their honours. They assist us all the time with referrals and whenever we have any sort of problem...

An overall support which was identified by both schools was the structured programmes put in place to address the learning needs of learners. Mr Polo mentioned that in his school the reading ability of learners were very low however the School Management Team assured all the teachers that they would look into it and come up with the best possible solution. He stated that:

...we developed a remedial programme for English. We have also given the weak learners break through words which assist them with the construction of sentences.

He also stated that to ease the load of their teachers they sometimes obtained the help of parents to assist learners during the breaks and after school. Toyota Primary also utilised the expertise of a member from a nearby Learning Academy. Mrs Lexus stated that:

The person responsible has a day set aside for these particular learners experiencing academic problems and its free of charge for these learners.

Teachers expressed their views regarding the need to have School Psychologists or Social Workers permanently employed at their schools. Mrs Vivo stated that although they were pleased with their psychology students, it would have been great to have had help available throughout the year.

Mrs Vivo further mentioned that:

This will really help us teachers because many of our learners come from disadvantaged homes and hence having these professionals around will really help in understanding the child and the professional support we need to offer as a school.

4.2.4.3 Communication with parents

All four teachers expressed the importance of maintaining a good relationship with parents. They were very positive with regards to having parents on their side in order to assist them with

certain problems relating to their learners. All teachers felt that having active parents also indicated that they were concerned regarding their child's future.

The HOD, Mrs Lexus was very pleased and stated that their school had a very good relationship with parents. She further stated that:

At our school we are constantly encouraging our parents and constantly promoting that we want "hands on parents". We are very big on core values. We have our set of core values for our school. We expect our parents to reinforce these core values at home.

The seven basic values a child required was constantly reinforced at their assemblies and during the Life Orientation lessons. Mr Polo also shared ideas which were working well in their school. They began by calling parents to inform them on what was going on with their child. However, before meetings Mr Polo conducted a thorough investigation on the child hence he was able to present a strong case before the parent and other relevant stakeholders:

Another method which is working well for us now is to call the parents each term to fetch the report. So getting the parents and the child together at the meetings really assists us with our findings as to why this child could be underperforming or displaying disruptive behaviour.

Mrs Corolla made it very clear that she tried her best to curb situations quickly within her class. She also mentioned that she did not like when matters were blown out of proportion. Hence she made parents aware of the school's open door policy.

Mrs Corolla also stated that:

We don't necessarily interrogate the parents but we do try to ascertain what is going on because we are aware that children do tend to exaggerate at times.

Mr Yaris highlighted that once parents were called in the School Management Team tried their best together with the teacher to solve the problem. He further expressed that teachers and management always encouraged parents to be positive, cooperative and patient throughout the process.

Mrs Lexus was also very pleased to inform me that teachers on their staff were always looking for opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. He expressed his excitement by saying that:

We have an in house teacher who is in her final year of psychology. So we have a referral system where we obtain permission from parents, they sign if they want their child to be counselled which is free of charge, so she counsels these children and records her findings and reports back to the teacher and we then try to work out how to support this child.

She also added that as the HOD she found it very useful to “tag” all the special cases. She also shared her idea of keeping a special file and in the new school year informing the new grade teacher everything regarding the child’s progress and short comings.

According to the Teachers Guide for the Development of Learning Programme Policy Guidelines (2003), it is imperative for all learning barriers to be addressed appropriately with all the relevant stakeholders involved. According to McEwan (2000) it is imperative that one understands the link between effective leadership, motivation, communication and the establishment of sound interpersonal relationships in order to create a safe classroom environment for effective, educative teaching and learning to take place. The teacher being the leader must be in a position to build trust and credibility amongst their learners. The two schools firmly stood their ground regarding the learner’s need for security and safety. They both conferred that an insecure environment would lead to learners experiencing fear, anxiety and insecurity, leading them not to learn properly.

According to the Department of Education (2003) teachers including Life Orientation teachers, must create an environment for learners to feel safe and experience a sense of security. A fundamental part of relationship building is to connect with parents and families hence they become actively involved in their children’s schooling. According to Walker and Hoover-Dempsey, (2008) parent involvement acts as a positive factor in children’s social growth and academic performance. Hence as parents discover new ways to contribute to their child’s schooling, they sculpt the importance of education and also assist in strengthening bonds between home and school.

The successful implementation of a curriculum according to Prinsloo (2007) ultimately depends on the support of the school principal. Prinsloo's (2007) study further identified that the lack of support and commitment by principals contributed to failure instead of ensuring the successful implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. V. W. Primary and Toyota Primary have both indicated the support and development received from their School Management Teams. The professional support provided by both principals including management members have made a huge difference to the way teachers in their schools implement the Life Orientation curriculum. It was pleasing to note that teachers acknowledged the effort put in by their School Management Teams, however this was not the case when research was conducted by Christiaans (2006) which focused on the General Education and Training Band. His research revealed the negative attitude from teachers when principals, learning area co-ordinators and teachers had insufficient knowledge and understanding regarding the teaching of Life Orientation.

Although teachers from both the schools expressed their disappointment with regards to workshops, they also acknowledged that they benefitted a great deal utilising the expertise of other staff members in their schools. It must be noted that V.W. Primary school experienced more challenges compared to Toyota Primary school, however with the support and management from the School Management Team they have managed to find solutions and addressed most of their challenges. On the other hand Toyota Primary being in a financially better position used this to their benefit by acquiring the help of professionals within their community.

According to Donaldson (2001) it is imperative that teachers have well developed interpersonal skills which will assist them to use their own intuition about learners, and to use their own feelings, ideas and beliefs. Applying this notion to Life Orientation teachers would mean that they should be able to rely on the non-verbal cues they pick up to understand others better. Furthermore gestures, body language and tone of voice will sometimes assist them in terms of what is going on in relationships in class, rather than the spoken words. As McEwan (2000) mentioned it was highly recommended to build working relationships with families and also understand that a number of issues plagued families causing them to develop a negative perception regarding their children's life at school level. Donaldson (2001) also conveyed the same message regarding the importance of open channels of communication and trusting relationships between parents and teachers.

The research findings indicated that V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary were in agreement regarding the importance of communication between the parent and school. The findings at the macro-systemic level focused on the support received from School Management Teams. V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary revealed that their School Management teams displayed sufficient commitment with regards to addressing learning barriers experienced by learners in their schools. It was further noted that both management teams looked at the learning barriers experienced in their schools as a challenge. Hence they then looked at the wider community as a source of assistance to their learners and teachers.

Experts in various Departments were also called in to offer valuable advice to their learners and to educate their teachers and also develop their teaching skills. Managers were also proactive in terms of developing their relationships with parents by having various parenting workshops to address pertinent issues relating to them and to their child's development. Personally for me the acknowledgement and support from relevant support groups is very important. It was very encouraging to note that both schools were supported fully by their School Management Teams. When problems were identified no teacher was left alone, instead all stakeholders involved tried their best to come up with possible solutions in order to address all their challenges. It must be noted that the two schools received support and assistance from their School Management Teams. However this may not be the case in other schools which could result in some challenges never being solved.

4.2.5 Support for the way forward

It is imperative that all teachers involved in curriculum implementation adopt an attitude of maturity and responsibility towards their learners.

4.2.5.1 Upgrading qualifications

When participants were asked to comment regarding the upgrading of their qualifications they all became very sentimental. All the participants expressed the importance of having a specialised teacher to teach Life Orientation. They also mentioned the importance of allowing teachers to grow and develop in their learning areas, hence allowing them to become specialists.

Mrs Vivo was very big on having the correct qualifications. She personally felt that if all teachers took this subject seriously, then it would be treated with respect just as one would do with Maths and English. She was very explicit with her thoughts and stated that:

I know we all have teaching degrees etc, but in order to become a Life Orientation specialist the teacher needs to complete a short course for approximately a year.

Mr Polo also felt there was a possibility for teachers to become specialist Life Orientation teachers if only given the chance. He was very serious regarding this issue and personally felt that it was time for all School Management Teams to evaluate this problem and come up with possible solutions. He was very saddened and stated that:

Challenges can become obstacles, for example if you identified a few challenges in Life Orientation and if the next year it was taken away, then you suddenly don't see the need to address those problems you identified because you are no longer teaching the subject. But let's say you were teaching it then immediately you would address the problems and plan in such a way that these problems never arise again.

He further pointed out if management made this decision then at least in the next few years the teacher would become a specialist. He stated that:

So for me the best way for teachers to become specialists is for management to just give them that opportunity to develop and become the best in a particular learning area.

Mrs Golf the HOD from V.W. Primary proudly commended her teachers by saying that:

We also have a very dynamic group of teachers who are very passionate about teaching and they are always willing to go that extra mile for their learners and develop themselves in order to improve their teaching within the classroom.....this is very evident with the number of teachers currently studying at our school.

Teaching is a noble profession. Teachers can truly influence the lives of their learners and as a result have some impact on our nation. The task of teachers is therefore daunting yet very exciting. Teachers have an important duty in trying to ascertain the most efficient and effective way of developing that passion for learning.

Many people feel that children today are very different from those 20 years ago. To some extent it may be true, however the world has changed and children and their behaviour reflect in the way they have had to adapt to these changes. According to the Department of Education (2003), all teachers are expected to display qualities which can have some positive effect on learners. It is an important responsibility for a Life Orientation teacher to guide learners along the way hence they will be able to make responsible decisions regarding their future. Department of Education (2003) also highlights that teachers with such remarkable character traits when not given Life Orientation to teach will actually be losing out on the opportunity of developing young responsible and individuals.

4.6.2 Shaping the life of an individual

All participants when questioned expressed how their behaviour and actions shaped the life of their learners during Life Orientation lessons. They were all very weary regarding the impact Life Orientation lessons had on their learners. It was also very evident that all participants were aware of their role in facilitating this subject in order to equip learners with their current and future needs required by society. Mr Yaris expressed his thoughts by saying:

The key feature for me under the objectives in Life Orientation is “Empowerment”. Life Orientation lessons empower our learners so eventually they can choose whatever they want in life because it would have already grounded them. Secondly, Life Orientation creates responsible citizens.

Mr Polo also highlighted that in Grade 7, learners’ studied about career choices. This aspect in Life Orientation would eventually determine their career choices. All participants agreed that Life Orientation permeates into every aspect of the teaching day. Mrs Corolla from Toyota Primary mentioned that was imperative for all Life Orientation teachers to take the subject seriously because things could sound petty, however it could assist in a young child’s life, especially when it was of a more serious nature.

Mrs Lexus from Toyota Primary school expressed her passion regarding Life Orientation by saying that:

I personally feel that's the "heart beat" of education. I know in life they say don't sweat regarding all the small things but I constantly preach to all my educators to make a fuss about every small thing in their class example manners, being responsible, keeping clean because if you get all these little things right then everything else falls into place within your classroom.

Also Mr Polo stated that it could prove to be very beneficial if the Department employed full time psychologists at each school. In this way all the teachers would be able to provide appropriate assistance and advice to all their learners. He further highlighted:

...that our children are tomorrow's leaders so we must mould them into strong, responsible individuals.

All the participants agreed that employing a qualified Physical Education teacher would prove to be very beneficial for the learner. They also mentioned that some learners might even further their sporting careers on a more professional level. Mrs Vivo has a Sports Science Degree and she was very big on sports and stated that,

....if we don't have passionate people to teach PE then we are already at a disadvantage. And if we don't address this problem early we are not going to develop professional athletes in South Africa who will be able to represent our country during international events. So school managers really need to ensure that they allocate well trained and passionate people who can really make a difference in these learners' lives and do justice to the subject.

Mrs Lexus also expressed her satisfaction with the School Governing Body for employing a qualified Physical Education teacher:

We identified that many important sections were omitted due to the teacher not being skilled to teach due to a lack of training and may I say "not having the zest" to teach physical education. Hence learners were actually being disadvantaged and I am very glad that we took this important decision to employ a qualified instructor because some of learners actually study towards Sports Science Degrees.

It was very important for teachers to motivate learners by building up on his or her self-image and self-confidence. Life Orientation teachers at V.W. Primary and Toyota Primary both acknowledged the importance of instilling good values and morals in their learners.

They also worked hard in ensuring that learners felt special and constantly reinforced that they were a great value to society. The creation of opportunities is one of the most important motivational tasks for a Life Orientation teacher. V.W. Primary teachers also motivated their learners by emphasising how their teachers were constantly trying to upgrade their qualifications.

Findings indicated that at the chrono-systemic level, as the child gets older he will react to his surroundings according to the knowledge gained while growing up. Hence Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory focused on the eminence and circumstance of the child's background. It was imperative that Life Orientation teachers used this opportunity to instil the correct values in each learner. This positive interaction in school between learner and teacher would eventually assist a child throughout his life when making valuable decisions as well as for others. All teachers were able to relate to the importance of their role as Life Orientation mentors to these young learners.

In my opinion teaching should be viewed as a lifetime learning occupation whereby new and old or recognised ideas on teaching are continuously assessed and experimented with. The best way for teachers to accomplish this is for them to be involved in their own personal classroom research. Teachers need to seek ways of improving their own qualifications then only will they be in a position to reflect on their own teaching and on teaching in general. No matter how brilliant we are there is always room for improvement. Teachers can have a significant impact on the development of individuals and this is why we all need to become more effective classroom practitioners.

4.7 Chapter summary

It is clear that Life Orientation teachers experience a variety of support needs. These needs exist on various levels within the school environment. These needs indicate that certain areas in the Life Orientation curriculum need to be addressed hence ensuring the positive functioning of all teachers. Chapter five will offer concluding remarks and recommendations with regards to Life Orientation teachers implementing curriculum policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the presentation of the data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews conducted at two schools. These interviews comprised of four teachers and two Head of Department members. In this chapter a summary of the study is firstly presented. Secondly, conclusions are made emanating from findings related to my key research questions, which concludes with my recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one provided the background and orientation to the study. I elucidated explanations and a rationalisation as to why this research topic is an area of interest for me. From a professional point of view, I have noticed various problems emanating during the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. During my years of teaching I have witnessed many problems relating to the Life Orientation curriculum. Chapter two provided a review of literature including the discussion of the theoretical framework. This chapter drew on literature from academics in the field of education management as well as other emerging academics who have conducted smaller scale studies. Chapter three provided a description of the research design and methodology employed in the study. The fourth chapter presented the findings from the research. In order to present the data systematically, the data was analysed and separated into themes. These themes were further divided into categories. Hence the last chapter summarises the study, presents the findings and concludes with the recommendations.

5.3 Research questions restated

In order to present the findings I used the research questions initially posed in chapter one. This enabled me to bring together all the themes as discussed in chapter four.

The main research question that guided the study was, What are the teachers' management experiences in the implementation of the Life Orientation policy at their school? There were three sub-questions and they were; What management practices facilitate the effective implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum at their schools?; What barriers do Life Orientation managers face when implementing the curriculum policy?; How do teachers seek to overcome the barriers and what informs their efforts?

Each of the research questions were then used as a heading which frames the discussion of the findings.

5.3.1 What management practices facilitate the effective implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum at their schools?

The findings indicated that the teachers who participated in this research were fully aware of their roles as Life Orientation teachers. More details regarding their opinion and attitude towards this subject can be found in Section 4.2.1 of Chapter Four. During the interview session I was able to conclude that these teachers displayed a very professional attitude towards this learning area and all of them confirmed that they were guided by the CAPS document. Teachers emphasised that Life Orientation teachers needed to be very compassionate and approachable in order for learners to be able to confide and share their problems. The Department of Education (2003) made it very clear that teachers were to display qualities of a professional level within their classrooms.

The research findings also indicated that in order to ensure that curriculum implementation was successful various teaching strategies needed to be employed in order to cater for the different ability levels. Teachers needed to become more artistic, creative and prepared in order to implement more innovative strategies. As mentioned by the Department of Education Policy (2008) teachers cannot only be subject specialists, they need to adopt and apply various teaching methods during curriculum implementation. Participants expressed the importance of teachers possessing the competence and skills to ensure that they were successful during curriculum implementation. The detailed discussion of these issues can be found in Section 4.2.2 of Chapter Four.

5.3.2 What barriers do Life Orientation managers face when implementing the curriculum policy?

Research findings have shown that teachers experienced various challenges during the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum. The first factor involved sensitive issues. Teachers lacked knowledge regarding how they needed to address sensitive topics. They were often placed in uncomfortable situations. The broad curriculum also posed a challenge and teachers expressed that the Life Orientation curriculum was too broad. Too many aspects and activities in the policy document often lead to teachers racing and leaving out certain sections.

Teachers expressed how they lacked skills as counsellors. They often felt helpless when learners required the assistance of professional counsellors. Physical Education skills were also required in order to meet the expected standards laid out according to The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) document. Another challenge faced by teachers was how learners struggled with basic knowledge such as writing, reading and the construction of simple sentences. Schools experienced various resource shortages. Due to this problem, teachers were often placed in challenging situations.

Teachers expressed the need for qualified teachers who could teach the subject effectively. Teachers are the most important shareholders to the transformation of education in South Africa. They have to play multiple roles and from the results of this study it is evident that all teachers considered themselves more than just facilitators of knowledge. Findings revealed the increase in social and academic problems thus creating a negative impact on learners' achievement.

Another challenge mentioned by the participants were the workshops conducted by the Department of Education. Teachers expressed their opinions that workshops were not structured and it was evident that teachers had negative thoughts regarding these Departmental workshops. For more details on these challenges and their personal opinions regarding these challenges; please refer to Section 4.2.3 of Chapter Four.

5.3.3 How do teachers seek to overcome the barriers and what informs their efforts?

The findings showed that the use of positive reinforcement strategies in both schools proved very beneficial. Both schools complimented their School Management Teams. The school Head of

Department teams were very proactive and they provided support to all their teachers. Regular meetings and support programmes proved very beneficial. Toyota Primary was in a good financial position and managed to secure the services of qualified instructors while V.W. Primary utilised the assistance of their senior teachers who were specialists in certain aspects of the Life Orientation curriculum. They also managed to obtain permission from the Department of Health to address certain topics related to Life Orientation.

Communication with parents proved very beneficial in building strong bonds. Both schools confirmed that regular meetings were conducted with parents and learners. Teachers from both schools saw the importance of having an open door policy with the parents. Teachers from Toyota Primary were proactive in terms of conducting workshops which eventually proved beneficial to all stakeholders.

The findings of this study however, implied that although teachers understood the importance of their role as Life Orientation teachers, there were many shortcomings during curriculum implementation. Hence all participants expressed the importance of being adequately trained in order to facilitate all learning aspects in Life Orientation. Many of them were dissatisfied with the Department of Education highlighting that training workshops were too short and there was a need to have qualified counsellors based at schools. Although teachers at both these schools complained regarding the above shortcomings, together with their school management teams they decided to work around their problems and come up with possible solutions. Participants from both schools praised their School Management Teams for their support and continuous assistance provided to all teachers at their schools. All participants felt that with this support they were competent enough to teach Life Orientation at primary school level. Support and mentorship provided by management was given to all new teachers hence no one was left behind regarding teaching matter. Subject committee meetings enabled teachers to share and build on their ideas hence allowing them to become more confident regarding their teaching strategies.

These schools also sought the assistance from their more experienced teachers who were previously specialists in areas such as art and music. The School Management Teams agreed that the Department of Education needed to cater for more well structured and meaningful workshops which in turn would ensure the successful implementation of Life Orientation. Networking and

cluster groups also proved beneficial in sharing and working with other schools in order to assist with the limited resources. More details regarding how they addressed the different challenges can be found in Section 4.2.4 of Chapter Four.

Reflecting on teachers' perspectives regarding Life Orientation and its execution, research findings concluded that the teachers at these two schools were indeed very passionate regarding this subject and valued its importance in the curriculum. These teachers were fully aware that this subject equipped learners for life, and were very conscientious regarding their role as Life Orientation teachers. Both schools acknowledged the importance of continuously upgrading their qualifications. Participants were also aware that their role as Life Orientation teachers would eventually shape the lives of these young learners. Hence all participants were eager to upgrade and extend their knowledge regarding Life Orientation. Furthermore teachers were fully aware that their main task was to ensure that all learners were provided with adequate opportunities in order to increase their skills and knowledge and to be proficient enough to sustain a well balanced and significant role in our very fast and challenging society. For a more detailed discussion on upgrading qualifications and how a single individual can make such a huge impact on a child's future, refer to Section 4.2.5 of Chapter Four.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendations made in the study are directed at School Management Teams and teachers involved in the teaching of Life Orientation.

* It is imperative that School Management Teams conduct regular meetings with their Life Orientation teachers.

*There should be recommendations put forward regarding specialised training from the Department of Education in order for teachers to become more knowledgeable on this subject.

*Every effort should be made to workshop teachers on the different strategies on how to cope with this learning area.

*It is imperative for teachers to become more hands on and be in a position to assume many more roles than initially anticipated.

*Parents in all schools should at least become more involved with the school and their children's well being.

*Proactive Life Orientation committees should be formed for Life Orientation teachers. Hence their experiences and ideas could be shared and developed amongst each other.

*When drawing up the timetable at the beginning of the year, recommendations should be made from those who are experienced or a specialist to teach Life Orientation. Their input regarding the execution of this subject might prove to be very beneficial to those going to teach this subject.

*Fund Raising projects need to be part of the year plan. Monies generated could be utilised for purchasing the required resources for Life Orientation.

*Practical suggestions from subject advisors must be addressed with teachers on how they can accommodate diversity in their classroom.

*Managers need to become more proactive during supervision and mentoring, especially to the newly qualified teachers.

*High profile community members should be part of the School Governing Body in order to address learners on certain topics relating to current affairs. These members could assist with designing relevant and current workshops with the youth.

*Management needs to be more vigilant and strict with regards to deviant behaviour.

*Teachers need to be able to obtain permission from local authorities with regards to using sporting facilities to ensure that games and fixtures are held according to the year plan.

*Consequently it becomes quiet clear that the Life Orientation teacher needs to develop a more empathetic attitude towards learners in order for them to express themselves and feel a sense of trust and understanding. Such qualities etched in Life Orientation teachers will prove very beneficial in opening up that gap between teacher and learner.

*Careful consideration should also be taken into account during allocation of subjects. Life Orientation requires an individual who is patient and kind also possessing the competence in order to do justice to the subject.

*Participants also expressed their thoughts on trying to attain qualified instructors to teach Physical Education. If schools are in a financially secure position then a qualified instructor can be employed. However, if finances are an issue then fundraising activities can assist in order to employ a qualified instructor or monies generated could be utilised for purchasing the required resources for Life Orientation.

*Schools can also utilise the help of local authorities during the teaching of sensitive issues hence various issues can be addressed and teachers will not be placed in uncomfortable situations.

*Teachers expressed the importance of utilising different teaching strategies during curriculum implementation. This was highly recommended due to the multicultural setup we now face in our classrooms. Having the support and assistance from parents proved to be an added advantage in ensuring that learners were disciplined and teachers were fully aware of any sensitive issues pertaining to their learners.

In addition, further research is required regarding how teachers in the Foundation Phase begin to implement the Life Orientation curriculum. Teachers play an important role in the successful implementation of this subject hence their practices on how they begin implementing it in the Foundation Phase might prove beneficial in order for teachers to implement it in the higher grades.

5.5 Conclusion

This study in its small-scale nature has attempted to bring an understanding regarding teachers' understanding and perspectives during the implementation of the Life Orientation policy. During my interaction with participants I gained valuable knowledge and insight into the teaching and understanding of this subject. Having completed this research it is evident that teachers need to stop complaining about the situation. They need to take a more active stand and address the problem head on. Teachers need to become proactive in various committees and attend regular

meetings and most of all communicate with other teachers regarding their short falls in Life Orientation. Without a doubt, teachers have to cope with many challenges on a daily basis. Teachers need to plan and prepare themselves adequately in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Effective teaching requires teachers to become committed role models. It is very evident that these two schools had very efficient managers however this is not the case in all schools. All the relevant stakeholders were also proactive in joining together in order to build a brighter future for their learners. Our education system has to support the development of the Life Orientation subject in order to develop learners to function effectively in today's demanding and technologically advanced society.

This study began by providing a summary of the entire study and concluded by presenting the findings that were organised under the research questions. It presented findings and made recommendations that were directed to school managers and to teachers teaching Life Orientation.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

76 Sialkot Crescent

Merebank

4052

13 January 2015

Attention: The Superintendent-General (Dr N.S.P. Sishi)

Department of Basic Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Loveena Ganesh, a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in schools under your jurisdiction in and around Durban.

The title of my study is: **Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher**

The main aim of the study is to determine the perspectives of Life Orientation teachers regarding the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum policy at their schools.

Life Orientation was implemented as a new learning area in Curriculum 2005. In 2002, a strengthened and streamlined Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 was introduced. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) came into effect in January 2012 to improve the implementation of learning areas such as Life Orientation. The purpose of introducing Life Orientation in schools was mainly to prepare learners to be able to cope with the complexities of the dynamic life in the 21st century. Effective classroom managers are educators who understand and use specific techniques during curriculum implementation. Managing a classroom makes many demands on an educator. The educator has to take full responsibility for the effective management of everything including the implementation of the curriculum.

This study will use semi-structured interviews, and policy reviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with four teachers and two managers. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr TT Bhengu at 031-260 3534 / 0839475321. E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: P. Mohun, HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: [Loveena Ganesh] Tel: 031- 4623518... Email: loveenaganesh@gmail.com; Cell No: 0822987768

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Loveena Ganesh

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref: 2/4/8/351

Mrs L. Ganesh
76 Sialkot Crescent
Merebank
DURBAN
4052

Dear Mrs Ganesh

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "**CLASSROOM MANAGERS IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM POLICY: THE LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHER**", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 February 2015 to 15 February 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

Umlazi District
Pinetown District

Nkesinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 03 February 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lemkele House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: www.kzndoe.gov.za

APPENDIX C

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

76 Sialkot Crescent

Merebank

4052

11 March 2015

Attention: The Principal

_____ Primary School

Durban

4052

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Loveena Ganesh, an MEd student and a level one educator. As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. My study title is: **Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher.**

Please be informed that I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and has been granted (See copy attached).

This study aims to explore the perspectives of Life Orientation teachers regarding the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum policy at their schools.

The planned study will focus on Life Orientation teachers and the Head of Department. The study will use semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with two senior primary teachers and one Head of Department member. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All the responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr TT Bhengu at 031-260 3534 / 0839475321. E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: P. Mohun, HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Loveena Ganesh Tel: 031- 4623518 Email: loveenaganesh@gmail.com; Cell No: 0822987768

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Loveena Ganesh

.....

Declaration of informed consent

I (Full name and surname of principal) of (School name) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study:
Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent to my school participating in the research project.

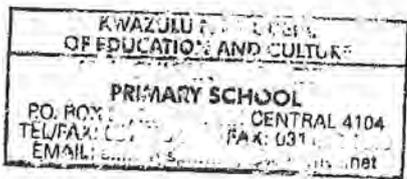
I understand that the school is at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should they so desire.

Signature of Principal: W. S. S. Date: 6/3/2015

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely
Loveena Ganesh

SCHOOL STAMP



Declaration of informed consent

I (Full name and surname of principal) of (School name) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study:
Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher

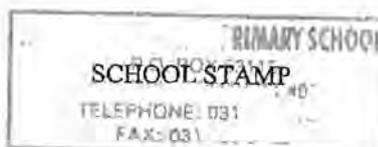
I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent to my school participating in the research project.

I understand that the school is at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should they so desire.

Signature of Principal: Date: 12-03-2015

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely
Loveena Ganesh



APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

76 Sialkot Crescent

Merebank

4052

10 March 2015

Attention:

The Educator

_____ Primary School

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Loveena Ganesh, I am a M.Ed student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. My study title is: **Classroom managers implementing curriculum policy: The Life Orientation Teacher.**

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for 30-45 minutes and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.

- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable with an √) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I Loveena Ganesh can be contacted at:

Email: loveenaganesh@gmail.com

Cell: 0822987768

My supervisor is Dr T.T. Bhengu who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za ; Phone number: 031 260 3534.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through:

Mr P. Mohun (HSSREC Research Office)

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Uk
.....

22/06/2015
.....

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

22/06/2015.....

DECLARATION

I, ~~NAME~~..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

[Handwritten signature]
.....

2015/06/22.
.....

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

28/05/2015
.....

DECLARATION

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....*[Signature]*.....

.....28/05/2015.....

DECLARATION

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I consent/~~not consent~~ to the interview being voice-recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

2015/05/28

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH TEACHERS/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Interview guide for teachers

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the teacher and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants]

1. There is a view that Life Orientation implementation in the classroom has to be managed. What are your views on this? [**Probes:** can you share your views about the aims and objectives of LO? Do you think that the way you implement it in your classroom complies with these objectives? Please elaborate!]
2. What does the management of LO in the classroom entail? [**Probes:** Do the teachers in your school receive guidance and support from the school management team with regards to the planning and presenting of Life Orientation lessons? Please elaborate on that!]
3. What management strategies do you have in place to ensure the effective implementation of the Life Orientation Curriculum in your classroom?
4. What are some of the challenges you face as a class manager during your Life Orientation lessons?
5. How do you overcome these challenges?

6. Do you think that you have enough knowledge on each of the learning outcomes of Life Orientation to be able to implement the learning area successfully? (Motivate)

7. What kind of training in your opinion will be required to ensure that Life Orientation teachers will become “specialist” managers in the classroom?

8. Why is it of utmost importance to address all the above listed challenges during curriculum implementation?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Interview guide for the Head of Department

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the teacher and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants]

1. How does the school management team monitor the planning and assessment of all the Life Orientation teachers? Please elaborate!
2. How does the School Management Team equip teachers with the skills to become successful educational managers in their class?
3. How do you assist those teachers who face classroom management problems?
4. What kind of support do you give to newly appointed teachers?
5. What kind of support, in your opinion should be offered by the Department of Education to the teachers of Life Orientation to ensure that the policies in this learning area will be implemented successfully?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

APPENDIX F

TURNITIN CERTIFICATE

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Originality GradeMark PeerMark CLASSROOM MANAGERS IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM POLICY: THE LIFE BY LOVEENA GANESH turnitin 7% SIMILAR OUT OF 0

CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The success of any institution, whether in the industrial world or in the education sector will ultimately depend on the effectiveness of its leader. The need to make education institutions realise their goals is felt throughout South Africa.

We are in a new political dispensation which has led to the formation of new government structures. The principal no longer holds all the responsibility for running a school. The principal's work is now more formally shared with the deputy principal and heads of departments (HODs). Together they form a school management team (SMT). The next level relates to the teacher. The responsibility of a classroom teacher is to craft a learning milieu from the unrefined tools of books, paper and the required curriculum. Teachers express themselves through their style of classroom management. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defines classroom management as a gestalt combining a variety of teacher traits, together with reflection and investigative skills in supervising learner activities and the ability of affording an engaging education (Hansen & Childs, 1998). The intention of education is to educate learners to be conscientious citizens (Langdon, 1996). Classroom management is the fundamental teaching skill. Teachers cannot educate and learners cannot gain knowledge in a classroom inundated with disruptions. When teachers begin their careers in the classroom, they often start with optimistic visions of their classrooms and learners. According to Feistritzer and Haar (2005), most teachers report entering the teaching profession due to the desire of helping young people to learn and develop holistically. However the role of the teacher

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