Teaching Grade 7 Life Orientation in South African Schools Through the Story Reading Technique: An African Centred Perspective

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Declaration

I, Sindiswa Mbali Shezi, declare that:

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Sindiswa Mbali Shezi

Signature ____________________ Date : July 2022

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Signature ____________________ Signature ____________________

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Dedication

To all Life Orientation educators: Continue to aim for a better society through relational pedagogy.

Abstract

The emergence of post-Apartheid South Africa in the year 1994 called for an urgent shift in the national education provision that would help to give birth to a new generation of South Africans who could see themselves as members of one nation. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) took this matter seriously and responded by introducing the Life Skills curriculum that was intended to guide and prepare learners for life challenges and possibilities to become independent individuals who can play an active role in the Rainbow Nation. This process required that in grade 7, learners should transition from Life Skills to Life Orientation (LO), where they are expected to engage with more complex value-based content (DBE, 2011). Unfortunately, despite the effort of the DBE to promote a viable LO curriculum, it has been discovered that the LO curriculum has, since inception, never fared well in its implementation stage. The challenge was the lack of appropriate resources for its effective implementation. The need for a new teaching approach that can make the delivery of the LO curriculum to inspire, motivate and encourage active participation from learners is germane. Hence, the need for this study.

The study derives its importance from the story reading technique, for delivering the topics pertaining to social issues in the LO curriculum that is needed to inspire the educators' confidence towards its successful implementation. To achieve this aim, the researcher developed an educator's guide consisting of didactic stories to accompany the social issues component of the LO curriculum. Using a qualitative research approach, the study involved subjecting the proposed educator's guide and the teaching stories it encompassed to a critical review and evaluation by five LO facilitators consisting of two educators, a subject advisor, and two lecturers. The participants were purposively drawn into the study sample. The phenomenographic method was used to analyze the data generated from in-depth interviews with the participants. The findings show that the proposed educator's guide was unanimously endorsed by all five participants as an effective additional teaching tool. Implications of these findings were drawn, and recommendations for relevant policy and practice shifts were made.

Keywords: Life Orientation; Grade 7; Social Issues; Story Reading; African-Centred

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The dawn of the new South Africa in the year 1994 called for an urgent and important shift in the national Education provision that would help to bring and bond together the younger generation of the different cultural and racial groups that make up the new nation. The Department of Basic Education (DBE[1]) took this challenge seriously and responded with introducing the Life Skills curriculum that was intended to guide and prepare learners[2] for life challenges and possibilities to become independent individuals who play an active and constructive role in the new South Africa. This process required that in grade 7, learners should transition from Life Sills to Life Orientation (LO), where they are expected to engage with more complex content (DBE, 2011). A similar shift was equally entrenched in the contents designed for young learners to those intended for pre-pubescent and adolescent learners. The contents taught in lower grades were extended, with greater emphasis placed on the promotion of self-motivation and goal-setting, as well as on problem-solving and decision-making strategies. These critical skills are known to underpin successful democratic societies, advance economic growth, and so are expected to enhance the quality of life of the young generation in South Africa.

Corroborating the above observations, the DBE states that:

Life Orientation is the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It addresses skills, knowledge, and values about the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity, careers and career choices (2011, p. 8). Indeed, the values reflected in the LO curriculum are engrained in the constitutional right to education; and Nathan (2018) states that in theory, these appear to be core values for adolescent learners which will help them become well-rounded citizens. In practice, however, instilling these values in learners is harder to achieve. Table 1 below depicts the curriculum topics stipulated for Life Skills and Life Orientation (DBE, 2011).

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[1] South Africa has two national departments that oversee overseeing education: the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which oversees primary and secondary schools, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which is responsible for tertiary education and vocational training. Both departments were under a single Department of Education up until 2009.

[2] An individual in grades R through 12 is referred to as a learner.

Table 1

Topics in Life Skills and Life Orientation

Life Skills		Life Orientation	
Foundation Phase	**Intermediate Phase**	**Senior Phase**	**Further Education and Training Phase**
(Grade 1–3)	**(Grade 4–6)**	**(Grade 7–9)**	**(Grade 10–12)**
1. Beginning Knowledge 2. Creative Arts 3. Physical Education 4. Personal and Social-Wellbeing	1. Creative Arts 2. Physical Education 3. Personal and Social Well-being	1. Development of the self in society 2. Health, social and environmental responsibility 3. Constitutional rights and responsibilities 4. Physical Education 5. World of work	1. Development of the self in society 2. Social and environmental responsibility 3. Democracy and human rights 4. Careers and career choices 5. Study skills 6. Physical Education

Note. Adapted from *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* [a] *Life Skills Grades R-3* (p. 6), [b]*Life Skills Grades 4-6* (p. 11), [c]*Life Orientation Grades 7–9* (p. 8), [d]*Life Orientation Grades 10-12* (p. 9), by Department of Basic Education, 2011, Pretoria: Government Printer.

The DBE prescribed these topics with the goal of promoting citizenship. According to Flinders (2016), citizenship education provides opportunities to cultivate listening skills, promote desired values, and engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and inspires learners to make a difference. The curriculum was designed to benefit from a more comprehensive approach that reflects learners' various contexts and challenges. A document entitled Education

in South Africa: Achievements since 1994 supports this view, which was endorsed by the DBE. This document states that:

> Values and the development of values are inevitable parts of schooling – underlying the formal selection of outcomes, teaching methods and assessment, and implicit in classroom processes, authority relationships, and the selection of contexts and examples to advance learning. Values need to be surfaced, and addressed consciously, critically and publicly. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30)

While some citizens argue that guiding children's value systems ought to be the responsibility of parents. Others argue that the underrepresentation of different contexts reflects the inequalities entrenched in South African life (Marais, 2013). In support of this view, Maphalala and Mpofu (2018) point out that the family structure has been disrupted by the apartheid system and its effects and emphasized the need for the Life Orientation curriculum to remain the responsibility of our education system to ameliorate the situation by instilling new values in the young generation. The two authors also noted that segregation of communities disrupted the family unit, as learners in privileged communities enjoy considerable economic and social advantages whereas learners in disadvantaged communities face environments rife with social problems. In support of Maphalala and Mpofu's view (2018), this study argues that the LO curriculum is critical for imparting values to learners. To explore the advancement of the instructional design from life skills to life orientation, this study focussed on topics relating to the social component of the LO curriculum in grade 7 as indicated on Table 1 above.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006), and Van Deventer (2009) discovered that educators[3] were hesitant to implement the LO curriculum due to a lack of confidence in their ability to teach the subject. The findings by Prinsloo (2007) suggested that the situation in our schools were not getting any better as the participants (school principals) indicated that learners were irresponsible and expressed no vision for the future yet demanded to receive whatever they deemed necessary with minimal effort. It was discovered that most of these learners came from communities facing high rates of alcoholism and substance abuse, violence, and crime. In an earlier study, Christiaans (2006) found that many new educators leave the training

[3] Used synonymously with class teacher(s).

institutions full of enthusiasm, only to realize that their training did not prepare them well enough to speak to learners' diverse contexts or prepare them to navigate a range of social issues. A study conducted by Ahmed et al., (2009) equally discovered that workshops and in-service training did not adequately prepare educators to navigate such issues like lack of confidence to adequately implement the LO curriculum. Given these scenarios, it seemed as though the implementation of the LO curriculum in our schools remains a challenge and does not currently accommodate the social issues that learners face. The situation left so much to be desired that educators found themselves struggling to motivate learners and cultivate the prescribed values entrenched in the LO curriculum (Nel, 2020).

1.2.1 The Implementation of Life Orientation

Indeed, research has shown that educators do not necessarily deliver the content as intended, partially attributable to their perceptions of the content as contradicting local cultural values. For example, a study conducted by Helleve et al., (2009) noted that many educators found it awkward and culturally inappropriate to say words such as 'vagina' and 'penis' in their native language. Mayo (2011) similarly posits that sexual health and sex education topics raise the same contentions due to differing moral opinions among educators and believes that such topics fall under parental and family responsibility. Some educators place more emphasis on moral standards and less on prevention methods for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections due to their personal values and beliefs.

Against the above, the key argument of this study is that for LO to accomplish its objectives, contents rooted in learners' lived experiences must be considered (Simango & Segalo, 2020). The findings of a study conducted by Jacobs (2011) echo this view as it was revealed that learners felt that LO does not respond to their needs. Learners felt that the LO subject matter did not engage real issues and educators were viewed as disconnected from learners' lives. They (the learners) also found the educators and the LO material 'boring.'

> In response, the DBE believes that the lack of enthusiasm that these scenarios appear to suggest is not related to the theoretical component, but to the implementation of the curriculum. According to the DBE:Consistent with the Constitution and Bill of Rights, we have focused on the values of equity, tolerance, openness, accountability and social honour. However, we have concerned ourselves not so much with the prescription of values per se as with

> defining a framework for approaching values education in schooling. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30)

Jacobs (2011) echoing this perspective, found consistent discrepancies between theory and practice in the implementation of the LO curriculum. Mahapalala and Mpofu (2018) agreed to this view and noted that educators did not necessarily uphold and embody the values they were prescribing to learners.

In a study conducted by Brown (2013), many learners highlighted key gaps in career guidance. They did not receive information about bursary opportunities for learners who came from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. The process of applying for higher education[4] was not discussed nor was there any school support for study or work opportunities. This appears to be an ongoing challenge as Prinsloo (2007) stated that educators, especially those in rural areas, face information barriers and struggle to help learners navigate diverse career fields. In agreement with this view, the findings in a study by Brown (2013) revealed that a lack of classroom resources—including limited Life Orientation textbooks—contributed to the dullness and repetitiveness of the lessons, as educators followed a routine of note-taking and discussion. Learners appeared more interested in discussion-based lessons on topics they found relevant and relatable.

These indications point to one thing: that although the LO curriculum is something that the nation has deemed as a promising saving grace for the kind of impact the schools should make in the lives of the new generation of South Africa, the problem of adequate implementation of the LO curriculum has remained a big stumbling block (Nel, 2020; De Lange, 2016; Wasserman, 2014).

1.2.2 The Construction of Meaning

Additionally, South African learners come from diverse language backgrounds that inform their engagement with language subjects and writing at school (Alexander & Fox, 2004). The learner, in this regard, may be viewed as an active participant or co-constructor of meaning, drawing from the language that they already know. As such, in a multicultural environment

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[4] Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is in charge of tertiary education and vocational training.

like in South Africa, consideration must be given to the view that the meanings formulated during reading are an interface between textual and extratextual[5] reality, coupled with the complexity of intertextuality (Yandell, 2013).[6] In the light of this, Williams advises that "We should not seek to extend a ready-made culture to the benighted masses" (1958, as cited in McGuigan, 2012, p. 15). Thus, it appears that although the content prescribed for LO is relevant, the approach used by educators in teaching has not been given a serious consideration. Based in a regurgitation of facts, the prevailing talk and chalk approach assumes a universal reality that does not capture both learners' and educators' diverse experiences and poses challenges to the take up of the curriculum.

Yandell (2013) asserts that the construction of meaning is not only about the medium of instruction (English) but also the best way to represent the lives of learners. Thus, for Yandell (2013), teaching and learning are relational sociocultural practices and teaching approaches that do not recognize subjectivity miss this critical conceptualisation. The DBE appears to be in alignment with this view when it states that:

> The pathway we have chosen is to go beyond awareness of values and provide learners with experiences that confront and cultivate values in action: critical thinking, personal expression, a local sense of meaning, and expanded ways of thinking and communicating. Four cornerstones have been identified as central strategies to 'seed' democratic values in our context (DoE, 2000d: 10): critical thinking, creative expression through art, a critical understanding of history, and multilingualism. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30)

Contributing to this debate, Nombela (2016), notes that among other reasons parents opt for their children to learn in English due to the perceived access to higher education and economic value associated with the English language. To this end, Mpofu (2013) states that in past years, the European representations of African culture in literature depicted inadequacy and inability while depictions of European culture indicated advancement and grandeur. For many years, Eurocentric perspectives have dominated Africa, and Mpofu (2014, p. 111) writes "The tragedy of it all is that, long after administrative colonialism was dethroned, there remains in the

[5] Extratextual: relating to, or being, something outside a literary text.
[6] Intertextuality: the interrelationship between texts, especially works of literature; the way that similar or related texts influence, reflect, or differ from each other.

African mind-set and imagination, including in the knowledge goods from the African academy, coloniality of thought or coloniality of knowledge." The depiction of African peoples in literature as subordinate to European distorts their image and identity which consequently poses challenge to engaging with multiple realities in multicultural classrooms. In response to this problem, Mpofu (2013) calls for a release of the African imagination and knowledge production from the grip of Eurocentrism. Walworth, as cited in Clements and Dixon (2009, p. 16) highlights the importance of respecting and valuing learners' diverse language backgrounds stating, "Whatever language the pupils possess, it is this which must be built on rather than driven underground." In other words, teaching materials, must be used in a way that promotes learners' confidence in their experiences as worthy of discussion and valuable in educational contexts.

Given the above, one of the key problems which the study was designed to address included the crisis of lack of confidence on the part of the educators to properly implement the LO curriculum and the search for relevant teaching resources that will make the implementation of the LO curriculum by the educators no longer boring to the learners.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

In response to the above challenges, the study proposes the need for the adoption of the story reading technique to ease the implementation and teaching of the social issues content in LO. The story reading technique (see section 1.6) is proposed to function as a stimulating introduction to LO topics, where two stories encapsulate a context (how/why something happens within a particular social setting) in relation to the subject content (facts) that will be taught. An educator's guide has been developed by the researcher to facilitate this process. Of course, the aforementioned educator's guide does not seek to replace the content that is taught in grade 7 but argues for a uniform inspirational introductory section that speaks to the integration of the topics and how they relate to one another and to the life of the learners.

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

In the light of the above, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Explore the participants' views on the aims, objectives, social issues content, and teaching resources for Grade 7 Life Orientation.
- Determine the Gender normativity conflicts in Grade 7 learners' appreciation for the teaching of LO through the story reading technique.

- Explore the participants' evaluation of the proposed educator's guide and the story reading technique to teach social issues in the South African classroom.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- How do the participants' view the aims and objectives of LO, as well as the social issues content and teaching resources for Grade 7 Life Orientation?
- In what way do gender normativity conflicts emerge in the Grade 7 learners' appreciation of the teaching of the LO through the story reading technique?
- What is the participants' evaluation of the educator's guide and the story reading technique proposed for use in South African classroom to teach social issues?

1.4 Rationale

As LO aims to impart skills, knowledge, and values that enhance learners' personal, social, intellectual, and emotional growth, this study argues that educators must adopt a teaching technique that promotes feelings of comfort and relaxation in the classroom. This increases learners' willingness to communicate thoughts and feelings, while encouraging active participation and cooperation between learners (DBE, 2011). The DBE write:

> Creative expression and participation assist in cultivating knowledge of self and others, expressing and communicating values. The power of performing arts and creative participation as an active celebration of diversity and expression must be harnessed as a tool to cultivate tolerance, openness, and compassion. Again, the classroom provides a context in which ways of expressing values, the values expressed, and the diversity of values can be discussed, and followed into action. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30)

In this regard, Rothfeld (2017) argues that the story reading technique corresponds with the curriculum goals. Story reading is a technique that centers on an account of an incident—true or fictitious—designed to evoke interest and emotion and/or instruct a reader. In line with this view, Pillay (2012) noted that story reading introduces new vocabulary to learners and enhances listening skills. Additionally, learners' memory capacity is enhanced when they are asked to recall details from stories as stories are not only about teaching morals but provoking thought and inspiring curiosity among learners, encouraging questions, and facilitating discussion in classroom settings. Interactive sessions encourage learners' imaginations. By

using a story reading technique, a subject becomes familiar and easy to relate to (Gama, 2015). Story reading is one way of maintaining classroom engagement, particularly for primary school learners who may be easily distracted and lose concentration quickly. In agreement with this view, the DBE states that: "Critical thinking and discussion allow diverse values to be surfaced and questioned in the classroom, and more deeply understood. Further, the values are set into the context of action" (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30).

Stories influence readers and promote feelings for the imaginary characters, facilitated by the ongoing process of review and reflection particularly on experiences that mirror personal situations (Rothfeld, 2017). Mezirow (2000, p. 20) posits that "imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by 'trying on' another's point of view." Through such processes, learners reflect on the content and premise of problems that improve their understanding and learning. Mezirow (1991) views reflection as a critique of assumptions underpinning beliefs (often acquired through cultural assimilation in childhood) to determine whether they remain functional in adulthood. However, Piaget (1964) noted that even though children at the concrete operational level (7 – 11 years) may not be able to think abstractly as yet, they are nonetheless able to imagine what another person might be feeling using simple deductive reasoning. Similarly, Kumschick, Beck, Eid, Witte, Klann-Delius, Heuser, and Menninghaus (2014) posit that when children read stories that contain feelings of fictitious characters, it can help them understand and accept their own feelings. Books that contain emotional content are believed to increase learners' emotional competence which in turn improves emotional regulation and contributes to positive interactions with their peers. Story reading, according to Vega (1996) promotes self-efficacy and an increased capacity for adaptive coping with adverse emotions. Awareness of one's feelings and the ability to identify causes may improve resilience in learners. Reinsborough and Canning (2017) add that stories teach us about life, about ourselves, and about others, and story reading is therefore a unique way to promote understanding, respect, and appreciation for their own and other cultures and among learners and can encourages positive attitudes towards people from different lands, races, and religions. For Mpofu (2014), storytelling is pleasure—akin to an art form and viewed as a gift of words passed through generations. Writing these stories and including them in the curriculum helps to Africanise or indigenise the curricula delivery process, thereby making them more accessible to the generality of the learners who are already familiar with the role of stories in promoting learning. This is a direct response to the caution sounded by Simango and Segalo (2020, p. 76) that "The

Euro-Western education model that South Africa insists on following leaves little room for African ways of knowing to thrive."

1.5 Significance of the Study

Part of the significance of the study is the effort it makes to ensure that the LO curriculum and its implementation is able to speak to the lived experiences of the learners and makes its delivery less 'boring'. According to Simango and Segalo (2020), this is a step in the right direction because in the past the education system never allowed space for African learners to identify themselves with and to see their circumstances reflected in the content of the curriculum. Nwoye (2017) concurs with this view, stating that the colonial interests shape the contents of the curriculum which young Africans have come to admit as their reality. This reality, he argued, must be challenged as young Africans will continue to see themselves in foreign terms and denounce the African values that shape their personhood. Although cultural values differ within the African context, what is shared is the transition to personhood via human beings' dialogical character, evidenced in the transmission of values and culture through stories, proverbs, and myths. Agreeing with this view, Mkhize (2020) calls for the emancipation of the African from the bondage of Eurocentricity that infiltrated the mental and epistemic standing of the African with prejudicial 'knowledge.' This same view is also reflected by the DBE:

> In South Africa now…[we] are developing our own approach to values in education, perhaps uniquely South African, based deeply on lessons from the past and moving us into the future. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 30)

Given the above, this study derives its importance from the new approach it proposes, the story reading approach, for delivering the topics pertaining to social issues in the LO curriculum that is not only needed but adjudged overdue. Corroborating this perspective, Carl (2005) asserts that educators are typically viewed as implementers of the curriculum, and as such educators must be included in curriculum development. This gives educators the right of access to subject content, including the mechanisms for delivery rather than having the curriculum imposed on them.

In an effort to promote such a collaborative development of the curriculum, the researcher developed an educator's guide consisting of stories to supplement the social issues component of the LO curriculum. Two LO educators in two schools used this guide to facilitate the substance abuse topic in term 3. Although substance use and abuse is registered in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), the CAPS outlines the theme on substance abuse and subtopics thereof. Thus, this study focused on substance abuse. The educator's guide proposed was reviewed by two educators who used it to implement the story reading technique in the classroom. It was also reviewed by one subject advisor (LO), and two lecturers. The participants were encouraged to critique all aspects of the educator's guide. Hence, the outcome of this current study is of importance to educators who lack the capacity to effectively deliver the LO curriculum towards achieving its stated objectives.

1.6 The Story Reading Technique

This study argues that the story reading technique may be used to give educators an alternate mode of instruction that supplements the use of a textbook. According to Simons (2006), stories[7] are an effective tool for education, particularly if they are believable and entertaining. When a story is believable— dealing with human-like experiences—learners perceive it as a credible source of knowledge which makes the information more memorable. Engagement with stories enhances thinking skills and helps the learner to understand spoken language. With stories, learners listen for general meaning and predict events based on the actions of characters. Stories communicate values and afford a medium for learners to explore their feelings. Stories written in simple language are easy to understand and learners enjoy revisiting stories to reinforce meaning ascribed to the story. Siahaan (2012) posits that stories are not to be viewed as 'an extra' but a necessity in the process of learning.

Yuniar and Kurniati (2016) note that learners who enjoy reading do so frequently whereas learners who do not enjoy reading often display low motivation to read. They prefer to watch stories on television rather than read them in books. Drawing from learners' love for stories, motivation to read can be stimulated by synthesising informal (unschooled) and formal (schooled) knowledge (Yuniar & Kurniati, 2016). Siahaan (2012) highlights that once a story or book is selected, it is advisable for the educator to encourage a discussion about the story to

[7] Story: a narrative account of an event or events–true or fictitious (Simons, 2006, p. 31).

ascertain what learners already know, by asking open-ended questions and prompting learners to predict the events that will take place in the story.

Francis (2012) conducted a study which gave insight into some of the educators' perceptions of the LO subject. One view found that subject content is too Broad. Educators found the combination of physical education, career guidance, religion, health education, human rights, and citizenship to be overwhelming to teach. A study by Pillay (2012) found similar results, where the diverse skills needed by educators were discussed in relation to the array of social problems to be addressed in LO classes. These include substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, divorce, and bullying. Allington and McGill-Franzen (2000) state that educators need to be supported with instructional materials to enhance the educational process as instructional strategies have profound enduring effects on learners. Although educators choose teaching materials on their own, the integration of teaching materials into the curriculum and workshops designed for professional development would improve consistency. Easy access to a variety of well-designed curriculum materials improves teaching as these materials also serve as a resource for educators' learning. Alexander and Fox (2004) argue that instructional materials can be reconceptualised to engage learners and enhance both cognitive capacities and individual identities and cultural views.

For the successful implementation of the curriculum, educators and materials (books) must cater to the knowledge that learners bring to the classroom. There are limitations to textbooks, as Allington and McGill, in Franzen (2000) warn that they are often misused. One reason is the assignment of books by grade level to all learners in the classroom regardless of their individual skill levels or circumstances, which denies them diverse learning styles. Kumschick et al. (2014) state that the content and layout of the stories need to be age-appropriate and based on emotional development hence the primary focus of the educator's guide developed in this study, is on the social component relating to substance abuse as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Substance Abuse Subtopics (CAPS)

Week	Subtopic
Week 1	Types/ forms of substance abuse - Recreational substances - Addictive substances - Depressants (alcohol and dagga) - Stimulants (nicotine, cocaine and ecstasy) Ways in which substances are taken: swallowing, smoking, snorting and injecting
Week 2	Symptoms of substance abuse - Physical symptoms behavioural symptoms
Week 3	Personal factors that contribute to substance abuse: - Intrapersonal - Interpersonal
Week 4	Protective factors that reduce the likelihood of substance abuse; and prevention measures: early detection

Note. Adapted from *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Life Orientation Grades 7–9* (p. 14), by Department of Basic Education, 2011, Pretoria: Government Printer.

1.6.1 An Overview of the Stories

Pillay (2012) states that educators need training in counselling skills as LO consists of topics that are difficult to address without inserting or asserting one's beliefs and judgements. The educator's guide includes information box that serves as a point of reference regarding each topic. Although pertinent information about counselling is not provided, educators can use the information box to enhance their understanding of the impact of social issues on learners and prepare for diverse responses (Lanigan, 2010). In this study, the educator's guide[8] minimizes paperwork for the educators as the lesson plan for each section is presented in the guide. The

[8] Educator's guide: a book that contains instructions or useful information about a particular subject.

educator's guide consists of five sections: introduction, structure of the stories, information box, reading the story, assessment activity, and the memorandum.

Both the stories, revolve around substance abuse as educators are often faced with challenges associated with substance abuse among learners. Sikes et al., (2009, p. 5) note that educators are not adequately prepared and supported to identify, address, or assist learners who are engaging in substance abuse. The South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use detailed a report that contains data from specialist substance abuse treatment centres in all nine provinces of South Africa. According to this report, in the year 2016, there was an increase in school going patients from 19% to 25%. Dada, Burnhams, Erasmus, Parry, Bhana, Timol and Fourie (2016) state that between the periods of January to June 2016, a total of 146 patients were treated at SANCA Central Eastern Cape where 36% of the patients were African learners enrolled in school. A study conducted by Groenewald, Khumalo, and Essack (2018) similarly found an overlap in risky health behaviours[9] such as drug use and sexual behavior among adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal. As such, they call for more comprehensive intervention or a curriculum that gives adolescents context-specific information.

This study does not claim that incorporating stories related to substance abuse in the Life Orientation curriculum will create behavioural change among learners. Instead, stories facilitate practical conversations between educators and learners, promoting a holistic view of substance abuse as opposed to a regurgitation of facts that appear disconnected from learners' circumstances. The stories proposed in this study are as follows:

- Story 1: a short story[10] consisting of four characters where each paragraph is no more than ten lines to promote easy comprehension of content for learners and the stimulation of emotions of empathy for the main characters (Reinsborough & Canning, 2017).

- Story 2: a comic. McCloud (1993, p. 9) describes comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce

[9] Risky health behaviours: activities that potentially expose people to harm, or significant risk of harm, which prevent them from reaching their potential in life and which can cause significant morbidity or mortality (Ansari et al., 2016, p. 133).

[10] Short story: a condensed fictional narrative in prose having a definite formal development.

an aesthetic response in the viewer." Abel and Madden (2012) affirm that in a classroom setting, comics can be a tool to convey large amounts of information in a short time particularly for subjects such as science and social studies.

Each story is presented in two parts which are to be read on separate days in relation to the topic at hand. For the first lesson, the first part of the story (part 1) ends with a cliffhanger[11] and the second part of the story (part 2) ends with a resolution.[12] This allows learners to catch parts they might have missed the first time around. Mezirow writes that "imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by 'trying on' another's point of view" (2000, p. 20). Rothfeld (2017) asserts that learners reflect on the content of the problem as well as the premise of the problem, enhancing their understanding of the content.

1.6.2 Theoretical Foundations of the Study

This study uses multiple frameworks, including Nwoye's (2017) Africentric theory of human motivation, Sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978), and Reader-Response theory by Iser (1972). The message of each these theories are briefly explicated below.

1.6.2.1 Story Content Understandable from the Africentric Theory of Human Motivation. The issues and crises that the main characters face in the substance abuse story are explainable from an aspect of the African theory of human motivation developed by Augustine Nwoye (see section 3.3.4). Nwoye's theory emphasized the social nature of human motivation as opposed to the intrapsychic focus of the Western theories of motivation such as the one credited to Abraham Maslow, in which motivation is assumed to be instigated from within the person. Nwoye's (2017) theory has been used to shed more light on possible circumstances, outside the characters that could instigate the desire for the use of substances by adolescents as well as strategies for educators to facilitate a lesson on substance abuse. Two key sources of motivation highlighted in Nwoye's theory are explored:

[11] Cliff-hanger: a dramatic and exciting ending to an episode of a serial, leaving the audience in suspense and anxious not to miss the next episode.

[12] Resolution: the part of the story's plot where the main problem is resolved or worked out.

1.6.2.1a The urge to compete favourably with one's age mates

This is an important motivational factor in the lives of many children in Africa. Once a child recognizes himself or herself as a member of an age group, he or she tends to monitor the performance or accomplishments of these age mates and compare his or herself accordingly. The tendency to resort to drug taking could be stimulated where the individual sees himself or herself lagging and completely intimidated in the race for life accomplishments in comparison with their mates. This is demonstrated in story 1.

1.6.2.1b The need to protect against shame

According to Nwoye's (2017) theory, in the African context as in other cultural traditions avoiding behaviours that may bring one's name into disrepute and/or tarnish the image of self or family is an important motivational spring in young Africans. This is demonstrated in story 2.

1.6.2.2 Classroom Discussions: The Sociocultural Theory. The stories developed for this study require educators to facilitate the discussion session in order to challenge learners and expand their thinking regarding the social issues under attention. The sociocultural theory of human learning presented by Vygotsky (1978) views learning as a social process. In other words, the sociocultural theory assumes that learners' environment plays a pivotal role in facilitating learning, and takes into account the influence of peers and the social context of school. Commenting in this regard, Pressley and McCormick (2007) view scaffolding[13] as the educator's ability to guide learners through challenges, encouraging them to find answers or by providing help and then gradually withdrawing so learners can complete tasks independently. Scaffolding, in this instance, refers to the process of assisting learners to get attuned to the story while it is being read, helping them to question the content, search for clearer meaning when they do not understand, and summarize texts. Back-and-forth dialogue between the educator and learners and between learners is encouraged in this process to improve their (learners') engagement with the topic.

[13] Scaffolding: Assistance from the educator that enables learners to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond their efforts if unassisted (Gonulal & Loewen, 2018).

1.6.2.3 Overarching Theoretical Framework of the Study: Reader-Response Theory.This study uses the reader-response theory to interpret the interactions between the participants and the stories. Clarifying the point of this theory, Probst (1994) highlights the two main assumptions of the reader-response theory that are explored in this study:

- Meaning can emerge only when a reader (participant) is actively involved in the reading process with the text (stories).
- Meaning depends on context and readers actively make meaning throughout the reading process. Different readers (participants) may therefore interpret the same text (story) differently.

This means that in reader-response theory, emphasis is placed on the reader, text, and a combination of factors that determine the interpretation of stories as participants bring their individual personalities, experiences, memories of past events, and present concerns to the reading of a story. The reader-response theory helps to account for the diversity of interpretations of the stories and encourages participation in creation of a more uniform interpretation through discussion/engagement with the educators (Hirvela, 1996).

1.6.2.4 Assessment Activities and Strategies: New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The educators that participated in the study were tasked to assess learners in order to determine whether the objectives presented for each story were met. This study adopted Marzano and Kendalle's new taxonomy of educational objectives (2007). This taxonomy is based on three systems that comprise six levels of information processing: retrieval, comprehension, analysis, knowledge utilization, meta-cognition, and self-system thinking.

1. The first four levels of processing are cognitive, consisting of retrieval (the least complex process), and the level of complexity increases through comprehension, analysis, and knowledge utilization.
2. The meta-cognitive system is the fifth level of processing which involves the learner's organization of their own learning via monitoring of the learner's process, clarity, and accuracy of learning.
3. The sixth level of processing is the self-system which comprises the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings that determine an individual's motivation to complete a task.

1.7 Outline of Chapters

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background of the study, highlights the problem with the current methods of teaching social issues in LO, and posits the use of stories from an African perspective as a technique for teaching social issues in LO.

Chapter 2 deliberates on the literature review with a focus on the reader response theory which posits reading as an active and creative activity. The value of reading fictional stories in the classroom as well as the complexities of story reading, are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptualisation of the educator's guide and outlines the story reading technique. The Africentric theory of human motivation guided the development of the characters and setting of the narrative; the sociocultural theory highlights the critical components of facilitating a lesson when adopting the story reading technique. The new taxonomy of educational objectives informed the development of assessment tasks that correspond with the story reading technique.

Chapter 4 focuses on the methods used for gathering the data for the study. A qualitative approach was adopted as well as the interpretive paradigm which posits that physical and social environments matter as experience and influence intersubjective and social interactions. Essentially, this is a phenomenological study where 5 participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews, a sessional observation schedule, and a self-reflective activity (for the participants and the researcher). Phenomenographic analysis was used to interpret the participants' responses about the story reading technique.

Chapter 5 analyses educators' pre-implementation of the technique, sessional observations by the researcher, and educators' responses following the implementation of the technique. The research findings are discussed in relation to the OECD evaluation criteria.

Chapter 6 delivers a discussion on the ten components of the educator's guide which were reviewed by the participants. The discussion is supplemented by background literature. This chapter also comprises the recommendations and concluding remarks.

1.8 Conclusion

The LO curriculum was designed to identify and teach knowledge, skills, and values grounded in local contexts to enable South-African learners to adjust effectively to the post-apartheid context. This chapter has presented the challenges associated with the social issues content and implementation of this curriculum. The study primarily argues for the adoption of the story reading technique that was developed to ease the implementation of the LO curriculum and be of benefit to learners.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature for this study and the conceptual framework undergirding it. In this regard, the first part of the literature reviewed focuses on research and writings by some illustrious African authors of African children's literature in which the importance of incorporation of story narratives in the production of African children's literature was highly emphasized. These authors, both singly and in combinations, minced no words in suggesting that it is by means of the story that African learners at the formative years could be assisted to assimilate the wisdom of their elders and gain effective orientation for facing life in our increasingly complicated and globalized world. Indeed, this set of literature was reviewed to show that the proposal championed in this study for the use of the story reading technique as a viable means of teaching the Life Orientation curriculum in South African schools is grounded on the understanding canonized in the field of African Literature that there is no better way of influencing the life and orientation of African learners than that of incorporating some pertinent stories for understanding life in the novels written for young people in Africa. Agreeing, Muoneke (1994), opines that the story must be understood as a vehicle for transforming of the human consciousness, and, indeed, an indispensable medium for cultivating virtue and ideals virtues. This perspective is palpably reflected in the crucial observation made by Achebe in his novel, *The Anthills of the Savanna,* (1987, p. 114) that "the story is our escort, without it we are blind."

Following this part of the literature review is a section on the theoretical frameworks of the study. There, effort was made to highlight the sources of the important concepts and technical ideas that constitute the conceptual edifice of the study. In this regard, two theories and the important concepts emanating from them that pertained to the present study were reviewed: the reader response theory and the cultural historical activity theory.

The final section of the chapter presents a general review of the literature on the mechanisms of the story reading process, the phenomenological perspective to reader-response theory, and Engeström's expended activity theory model. Although most of the literature is authored by scholars from outside Africa, in general, they all agree on the importance of the story and its assimilation as a medium for cultural education of learners since it is through the story reading

process that learners derive important principles and values by which to live. Previous empirical studies carried out by others on the theme and concerns of the Life Orientation curriculum in South Africa were also reviewed and highlighted below:

2.2. Empirical Studies on Life Orientation Curriculum in South African Schools

A careful study of the extant literature on empirical studies of the LO curriculum in South African schools shows that there are two classes of previous studies. The first are Master's level studies that include research by Nel (2020), which studied the experience of psychological well-being amongst high school Life Orientation teachers within the Kenneth Kaunda District; De Lange (2016), which investigated the psychological well-being and character strengths of life skills teachers in some selected schools in Potchefstroom, South Africa; Wasserman (2014) which examined the LO teachers' experience of context in the implementation of the LO curriculum; Matshikiza (2013), which examined the opinions of teachers on the policy implementation of life orientation curriculum in five schools in Cofimvaba Education District; Adewumi (2012), which explored the challenges to implementation of LO in selected Fort Beaufort district high schools; and Strydom (2011), which focused on identifying the support needs of life orientation teachers in the further education and Training band.

As far back as 2012 (p. v) Adewumi's thesis noted that: "The (LO) subject is not being handled properly despite its importance in helping learners to be adequately guided towards positive self-concept formation, the realisation of their potential, and enabling them to protect themselves from various forms of social violence and abuse, and this in turn would make the society safer." On the other hand, one limitation of each of these studies was that, after identifying the challenges and crises affecting LO subjects and their teachers, none of them recommended the story reading technique as a possibly effective response to the lack of interest in LO subject teaching among South African learners. This is another way of saying that although each of these studies was concerned with exploring the experiences and challenges of LO educators in South African schools, none attempted or suggested the solution as recommended in this study.

In addition to these Master's studies, there was also one PhD study on the theme of LO curriculum in South Africa. This was Roux's study undertaken in 2013, entitled "Life Orientation in the health promoting school: conceptualisation and practical implication." The research was done in the Gauteng Province of South Africa and was designed to give voice to

educators and health co-ordinators in terms of their views and comments on LO. The instruments for data collection included questionnaires and focus group interviews. The results showed that the participating educators and health co-ordinators agreed that LO has a major role to play in instilling knowledge and skills to promote health and well-being. Furthermore, the quantitative aspect of the research revealed key issues that needed to be addressed, especially proper water and sanitation, policies on tobacco and substance use, the enhancement of physical well-being of the learners, and an integrated nutrition program. The qualitative part of the research indicated that healthy lifestyles were promoted, with a particular focus on balanced diets, clean and hygienic environments, and adequate physical activity. The study concluded that LO has a prominent role to play in the Health Promoting School and argued that a successful initiative required the involvement of the entire school, changes to the schools' psychosocial environment, and participation from the parents and wider community.

Overall, the main irony with these findings was that, although the trends of the results appear to be largely on the positive side, the results of the subsequent studies (e.g., Nel, 2020, De Lange, 2016; and Wasserman, 2014) were vastly different from Roux's findings. Given the above, the need for the present study has been made more urgent in response to the negative trends found in those studies, which indirectly suggested that a way of improving the attitudes of educators and learners towards the study of LO orientation curriculum in South African schools must be found.

2.3 Reader Response/Reception Theory

Reader response is a literary theory that combines the words reader, reading, and response to postulate some basic assumptions about the reader's experience or interaction with a literary work (text). Galda and Beach (2001) indicate that research that explores the ways in which learners acquire interpretive and social practices through participation in communities of practice are fundamental to the education process. Such processes allow educators to promote critical reflection among learners through affordance of texts and readings that relate to the learners' lived experiences. The reader response theory highlights the role of the reader, text and the process of reading (activity). In this way, reader response criticism is a school of literary theory that prioritizes the reader (or 'audience') and their experience of a literary work. This contrasts with other schools or theories that place ultimate attention on the author or the content and form of the work. It was Wolfgang Iser who, writing in the 1930s, contributed to the foundation for the reader response approach to textual criticism. The reception theory, which

is but a version of the reader response literary theory, places particular emphasis on each reader's reception or interpretation in making meaning from a literary text. In this regard, the term "reception" is generally taken to mean audience reception in the analysis of communication models. The consensus in the literature is that in the late 1960s it was Hans-Robert Jauss who originated the reception theory in the field of literary studies. On the other hand, the cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, is recognized as one of the main proponents of reception theory, which was first developed in his famous 1973 essay, "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse." His approach referred to as encoding/decoding model of communication, was regarded as a form of textual analysis that focuses on the scope of "negotiation" and "opposition" by the audience. This was taken to mean that a "text"—be it a book, movie, or other creative work—is not simply passively accepted by the audience, but that the reader/viewer interprets the meanings of the text based on her or his individual cultural background and life experiences. The reception theory thus argues that the meaning of a text is not inherent within the text itself, but is rather created within the relationship or interaction between the text and the reader.

Applied to the context of the present study, the reader response/reception theory suggests that in the story reading process of the LO curriculum, the learners create their own meaning from the story that is being presented or read to them. In that way, multiple meanings are created in every story presented to the learners, and the job of the LO teacher is to first and foremost discover these meanings and foreground those that are congruent with the presented story while challenging those that are not.

According to Garzón and Castañeda-Peña (2015), this theory emerged in the 1930s as a response to the lack of acknowledgement of the reader's role in creating or co-creating meaning of text. Previously, theorists tended to place emphasis on either the author, content, or form of the text. In contrast, the reader response theory fostered a shift of focus from the text to the reader's experience of reading. Over the years, this theory has been presented from various perspectives. However, all reader response perspectives focus on "analysing both text and reader to reach meaning" (Lobo, 2013, p. 14). How meaning is constructed gives rise to different perspectives, although similar questions about the reading process are addressed:

- What is the reading process?
- What happens during the reading process?

In response to these questions, Tyson (2014, p. 170) asserts that "reader-response theorists share two beliefs: (1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and (2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature." Meaning ensues from the transaction between the text and reader. Some perspectives place greater emphasis on the reading process or the text, while others focus on the author's intentions and attitudes towards readers. In this way, meaning is said to be context dependent. The reader response perspectives outlined below have been adapted from Lobo (2013):

1. Transactional perspective

According to this perspective, meaning is created through the transaction between the text and the reader's interpretation which is influenced by their (reader's) background and emotional state.

2. Textual perspective

This perspective argues that the narrative (text) influences the narratee (reader) with whom the narrator (author) is communicating for meaning to be constructed.

3. Subjective perspective

Here, interpretation of the text is personal and distinct to the reader. The reader's perceptual experiences (internal/mental representations construct a text's meaning.

4. Psychological perspective

In this perspective, readers interpret the text to fulfil their psychological needs. Thus, cognitive or subconscious processes influence the meaning derived from the text. According to the proponents, readers project their emotions onto the text, making interpretations a revelation about the self and not about the text.

5. Social perspective

Proponents of this perspective argue that an interpretive community, such as schools, religions, and the government, construct an individual's response to a text. Readers approach texts with institutionalised assumptions that influence their constructed meaning. This, of course, is reasonable for biblical texts and their interpretation.

6. Historical context perspective

For the historical context perspective, an acceptable meaning of a text is constructed when readers share a cultural background. Without a shared heritage with the author, readers are less likely to recognise the text's intended meaning. Thus, two readers with different cultural and personal backgrounds may have different interpretations.

7. Affective stylistics perspective

This perspective proposes that the reader's experience creates a text's meaning. Because interpretation transfers from the text to the reader, a text's meaning cannot be independent of the reader.

8. Phenomenological perspective

Proponents of this perspective, argue that there are gaps in the text that the reader actively and creatively identifies and endeavours to fill in order to construct meaning.

Despite their differences, one thing that appears common to each of these perspectives is the notion that beyond the author, the reader is equally important in determining a text's meaning.

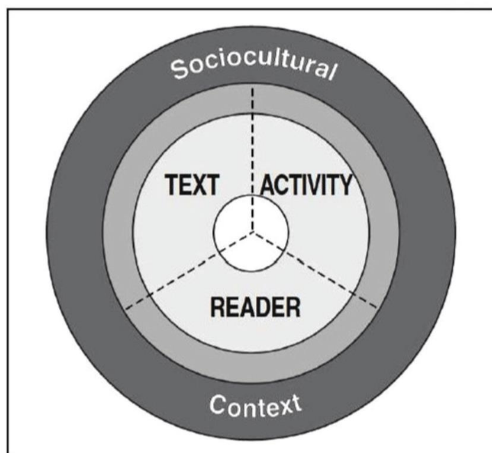
2.4 The Reader Response: Phenomenological Perspective

This study adopted the phenomenological perspective to reader response theory in relation to creation of meaning and types of readers as proposed by Wolfgang Iser. Lobo (2013, p. 21) defines this perspective as "a reader-response theory that emphasizes the perceiver and perception process over the text." In other words, the text presented by the author is incomplete as the meaning of the text must wait to be derived from the readers' ability to imagine and experience the work. However, before learners can accomplish this important task of meaning generation in a given text, Alvermann and Moje (2013) emphasize that reading comprehension tasks must first be mastered in the context of specific subject matter. In this regard, learning subject-specific vocabulary (words), text structures, methods, and perspectives requires acquiring both content knowledge and reading skills simultaneously. Mojapelo (2020) cautions that, in South Africa, many learners enter their classrooms without the necessary knowledge, abilities, or disposition to read and grasp the texts placed in front of them, which is one of the most perplexing difficulties facing educators in basic education.

Similarly, the US Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) convened 14 experts in the field of reading from a variety of disciplinary and methodological viewpoints in an effort to improve the quality and relevance of education research and development. The RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG) was tasked with developing strategic guidelines for a long-term research and development program aimed at helping high school pupils in the United States improve their reading comprehension. The RAND Reading Study Group developed a heuristic for thinking about reading comprehension.

Figure 1

A Heuristic for Thinking About Reading Comprehension



Note. From *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension* (p. 12), by RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, Rand Corporation

Figure 1 demonstrates three interrelated elements within a sociocultural context. These elements are:

- The reader who is doing the comprehending (capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that a person brings to the act of reading).
- The text that is to be comprehended (any printed text or electronic text).
- The activity (reading comprehension is a component of the goals, processes, and outcomes involved with the act of reading).

2.4.1 The Text

The word "text" itself is the past participle stem of the Latin verb "texere"; which means "to weave, intertwine, plait, or compose." The English words "textile" and "texture" also derive from the same Latin word. This etymology is apparent in expressions that refer to the

"weaving" of a story, the "thread" of an argument, or the "texture" of a piece of writing. In this regard, Halliday and Hasan (1985, p. 10) note that:

> The text is a product in the sense that it is an output, something that can be recorded and studied, having a certain construction that can be represented in systematic terms. It is a process in the sense of a continuous process of semantic choice, a movement through the network of meaning potential, with each set of choices constituting the environment for a further set.

Expanding, Brown (2003) indicates that this definition of text encompasses textuality or the language-style, figuration, rhetoric, polysemy of words used. This means that, according to Brown (2003), to be able to read or listen to text effectively and with understanding, learners must be able to interpret it in terms of all these meta-functions. That is, they must understand the processes being referred to, the characters, the circumstances as well as the time and cause associated with them. Therefore, for stage 3 learners (reading for learning the new), (see section 2.4.3), textuality should not be extraneous to a text's ascribed meaning ascribed. Instead, textuality should be a constitutive part of the story and presented argument such that learners understand it. Hatim and Mason (2005, p. 35) posit that well-formed texts, both oral and written, possess the following characteristics:

1. They are cohesive in texture.
2. They are coherent and exhibit a particular structure.
3. They serve a clear rhetorical purpose as texts.
4. They relay specific attitudinal meanings as discourse.
5. They are in keeping with the requirements of certain conventional formats as genres.
6. They serve a set of mutually relevant communicative intentions pragmatically.
7. They stand out as members of distinct registers.

Brown (2003) further posits that the three basic domains of textuality or characteristics from which texts derive cohesion and coherence encompass: texture, structure, and context as discussed below.

2.4.2 Domains of Textuality

The term "texture" covers the various components of language, such as verses, alliteration, and rhymes, that establish a continuity of meaning by making a sequence of sentences operational, through coherence and cohesiveness. Without texture, a given text would merely consist of isolated sentences that have no relationship to each other when read by the learner, hence the importance of coherence or the quality of being logical, consistent, and understandable. In this regard, coherence, according to Eggins (2004), embodies two aspects of context: the outer context of text or the context of culture which is known as generic coherence, and the inner context of text which is referred to as situational coherence. Generic coherence occurs in a particular communicative context, event, or genre. In other words, possible meanings which learners bring to the text are influenced by the socio-cultural environment, such as their ethnic group. In terms of the situational coherence, Butt et al. (2000) and Eggins (2004) describe three different systems of grammar: field, mode, and tenor. They propose that:

- The field system is used to identify the language used to talk about what is happening, what will happen, and what has happened. The field system comprises the ability of mastering background and situational knowledge (time, place, topic, formal or informal occasion, and relations between the characters).

- The mode system reflects language's role in interaction. The immediate concrete environment is not significant to the learners' interpretation of the text, but a series of assumptions that make up the social context. Learners form an expectation that they combine with existing knowledge to derive new assumptions about the interaction between characters.

- The tenor system addresses the relationship between the interactants. Shen (2012) identifies three ways in which a new item of information may have a contextual effect:
    1. Strengthening existing assumptions
    2. Contradicting the existing assumptions
    3. Combining existing assumptions with new assumptions

Stockwell (2020) notes that three distinct modes of meaning impart the three parameters above:

1. ideational meaning – propositional content; meaning about phenomena.

2. interpersonal meaning – the function of communication, the structure of interaction, and the expression of attitude.
3. textual meaning – theme-structure and how the text is constructed as a message.

Putri (2019), on the other hand, notes that readers from diverse backgrounds, particularly those who are second language speakers of the language in which the text is written, are more prone to making errors when translating texts. These errors include the inversion, addition, omission, deviation, and modification of meaning. Mistranslation could mean that the text's objective will be poorly communicated, potentially leading to reader confusion.

2.4.3 The Reader

Iser (1972) views reading as a phenomenon that is rooted in "two poles." The "artistic pole" refers to text produced by the author and the "aesthetic pole" is the meaning constructed by the reader from the literary work. Meaning is derived from the transaction between the text and the reader. The readers' experience of the text may be referred to as the "virtual dimension," which represents the "coming together of text and imagination" (p. 279). The present study focused on educators' and learners' experiences with text or short stories. Iser (1978, p. 36) asserts that "the reader's role is prestructured by three basic components: the different perspectives represented in the text, the vantage point from which he joins them together, and the meeting place where they converge." In other words, learners and educators bring their cognitive capabilities, motivation, knowledge, and experiences to the reading processes (Nardocchio, 1992). Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, and Schuder (1996, p. 1017) note that in the process of interpreting the text, learners may engage in the following activities:

- Predicting: Guessing what will happen next.
- Verifying: Confirming that a prediction was accurate.
- Visualizing: Constructing a mental picture of the information contained in the text segment (educator visualizes and vocalizes; learners visualize and audibilize).
- Relating prior knowledge or personal experience to text: Making an association between information in the text and information in the reader's mind.
- Summarizing or retelling: Saying the most important information or restating in one's own words everything that occurred in the text just read.

- Thinking aloud: Verbalizing thoughts and feelings about text segments just read.
- Monitoring: Explicitly verbalizing when something just read does not make any sense.
- Setting a goal: Deciding a purpose prior to reading, including decisions about both expository and narrative texts.
- Browsing or previewing: Flipping through the story, glancing at the pictures, or reading the back cover to getideas about the story.
- Skipping: Ignoring text parts that the learner does not understand and reading on.
- Substituting or guessing: Replacing a difficult part of the text with something else that appears to make sense and maintains the coherence of the text segments.
- Rereading: Returning to the segment of text that the learner did not understand.
- Clarifying confusions: Asking a specific question to resolve a comprehension problem.
- Asking someone for help: Asking another learner or the educator for help with the confusing text.

Intra-individual variability in the acquisition of reading competencies can be observed during each phase of reading development. Sometimes it is manifested in the uneven development of important skills and subskills that underlie proficient reading (Tyson, 2006). These differences entail attention, visualization, inferencing, reasoning, critical analysis, engagement, and motivation (understanding of the purposes and goals of reading). Khasanovna (2022) discussed the role of the educator in relation to the stages of reading:

- Stage 0: Pre-reading

It is the teacher's role to ignite learner' interest in reading by providing enjoyable experiences and activities, with a focus on vocal expression. The primary goal at this stage is to ensure that the learner is socially, psychologically, emotionally, and physically prepared to begin learning to read.

- Stage 1: Initial reading and decoding

The learner must develop the ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet. This is accomplished by utilizing a variety of teaching strategies to teach the alphabet.

- Stage 2: Confirmation and fluency

The learner is ready to identify words they are unable to pronounce and figure out how to pronounce them on their own, read simple stories, and feel confident learning new concepts. Learners use context clues, relying on information from the story to deduce the meaning of unknown words or concepts.

- Stage 3: Reading for learning the new

The learner can blend diverse sounds to make new combinations with unknown words. They are familiar with contractions and can recognize when they are being used. They can recognize compound words and smaller words within larger words. Emphasizes encouraging learners to read for pleasure and making reading a habit.

- Stage 4: Multiple viewpoints

Learners can read more quickly and with greater comprehension. A variety of reading materials should be offered for learners to choose from.

- Stage 5: Construction and reconstruction

Learners recognize the major ideas in a text and analyze and apply the knowledge they have acquired from it. They can construct and support arguments based on information from the text, other sources of information, or prior knowledge. Non-fiction materials, such as diagrams, maps, and encyclopedias, should be prioritized at this level.

2.4.4 The Activity: From Storytelling to Story Reading

Dujmović defines storytelling as “the art of narrating a tale from memory rather than reading, it is one of the oldest of all art forms, reaching back to prehistoric times” (2006, p.75). Storytelling is therefore the oldest form of teaching and can help learners develop emotional intelligence and gain insight into human behavior. There are two elements involved in storytelling: selection and delivery. The educator selects appropriate stories and prepares or rehearses for delivery. Dujmović (2006) further notes that the educator’s background influences the story: his or her choice of place and detail, as well as the relationship between the learners and the educator. The educator uses words, sounds, and language to create meaning. They use their voice, face, and hands to create impact, resulting in a shared human experience based on language and imagination. Learners develop a sense of structure when listening to stories, which will later aid them in understanding more complicated narratives.

People communicate their ideals, concerns, hopes, and dreams through traditional tales. Oral stories are a direct manifestation of a literary and cultural history, which is appreciated, understood, and preserved. Some tales are told for amusement, while others are used to teach lessons and transfer values and ideas, as well as share the history of a group of people (Kilpatrick et al., 1994). Learners acquire insight into the motivations and patterns of human behavior by vicariously experiencing various cultures. Hence, stories can aid social and emotional development by allowing learners to express their feelings and boost their ability to comprehend themselves and others in order to cope with the psychological challenges that accompany growing up. In other words, listening to stories develops the learners' listening and concentrating skills via:

1. visual clues (for example, pictures and illustrations),
2. their prior knowledge of how language works,
3. their general knowledge.

Similarly, Rossiter (2002) viewed stories as effective educational aids as they are believable, memorable, and amusing. The believability arises from the fact that stories deal with human or human-like experiences, which we tend to regard as genuine and trustworthy sources of information. Because they include us in the actions and intentions of the characters, stories help us retain information. Stories promote active meaning production in this way. As such, stories can both inform and transform learners because they lead from the known to the unknown. Dujmović (2006) also outlined some of the advantages of storytelling:

- Stories are inspiring and entertaining, and they can help build positive attitudes toward learning (especially in a second language).

- The learners' imagination is stimulated by stories. As they empathize with the characters and strive to decipher the narrative and images, they become emotionally invested in a story. This experience aids in the developing their own creative abilities.

- In class, listening to stories is a shared social experience, while reading and writing are typically individual activities. Storytelling elicits a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement, and anticipation that is not only entertaining but also enhances the learners' self-esteem, as well as social and emotional development.

Learners enjoy repeating stories. Certain language items can be learned while others are highly reinforced due to the constant repetition. Stories typically include spontaneous repetitions of important terminology and concepts. This aids learners in remembering details such that they can anticipate what will happen next in the story. Repeating the stories also aids in participation, allowing them to understand the overall meaning of a story and to relate it to their personal experience.

2.4.4.1The Use of Storytelling in Curriculum Delivery. Dujmović (2006) postulates that stories can be used in two dimensions to enhance the teaching and learning experience:

1. Stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development such as cause and effect.
   - Reinforcing thinking strategies: comparing, classifying, predicting, problem–solving, hypothesizing, and planning.
   - Developing strategies for learning language/English: guessing the meaning of new words, training the memory.

2. Stories can also develop the learners' understanding of other subjects in the curriculum.
   - Mathematics: quantity, measuring.
   - Science: animals, outer space.
   - History: understanding chronology.
   - Geography: the weather and climate.
   - Art and Craft: drawing, making props.
   - Music and Drama: singing songs, role play, miming.

Mojapelo (2020) concurs that, indeed, educators can utilize storytelling as a teaching resource to encourage learners to enjoy books and develop reading habits and skills. However, in South Africa, one of the obstacles faced by learners and educators is a lack of exposure to content- and age-appropriate reading resources at home and at school.

2.4.4.2 The Use of Story Reading in Curriculum Delivery. Osazee (1991, p. 74) defines children's literature or literature suitable for learners in primary school as:

> that piece of literary creation which draws its subject matter from the African world view and which is written in a language and style the African child can

> comprehend. It must be seen as promoting African culture and enable the child or young adult to understand and appreciate his or her environment better and it must give him or her some pleasure.

This means that while literature from other places may be both enjoyable and educational for learners, it does not promote African culture. As such, the quality of books available to learners is therefore critical as they internalize what learners read, thus influencing their behavior. Ngugi (2012, p. 61) confirms that: "Literature plays the role of strengthening the formation of values and feelings of solidarity, equity and firmly establishes the qualities of tolerance, compassion, sharing, caring, civil responsibility and ability to resolve conflicts through non-violent means and critical acumen." In the process of imparting these skills, Yuniar and Kurniati (2016) recommend that educators demonstrate how to read the story, using their voices and facial expressions such that learners enjoy and comprehend the story rather than trying to decipher words. Ntshikila (2022) conducted a study on seven learners' understanding of comprehension skills and emphasizes the importance of story reading beyond the impartation of values:

1. retrieve explicitly stated information.
2. making inferences: understanding a real-world application of text information and inferring the mood or tone of a story.
3. interpret and integrate ideas and information: recalling and connecting prior knowledge and experiences to the text.
4. evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements: identify genre forms, determine the intended audience, purpose, and context of texts.

Ntshikila (2022) found that story reading made it easier for learners to make predictions, apply their argumentation abilities with justification, and connect the text and their own experiences. Higher levels of questioning were noticed when learners constructed their own knowledge, evaluated their own and others' views, and asked thought-provoking questions using acceptable language skills. Learners learned to accept critique, respect others' viewpoints, and were exposed to different views, allowing them to think beyond their texts. In this light, Shihab (2011, p. 209) defines reading as "a number of interactive processes between the reader and the text, in which readers use their knowledge to build, to create, and to construct meaning." When reading, learners engage in an interactive process where the reader actively produces meaning through a set of mental processes. This interaction can occur between the reader and

the text, whereby learners construct meaning based partly on the knowledge drawn from the text and partly on the knowledge from their experiences. Grabe (2009) posits that the learners' interpretations stem from two processes of reading: lower-level processes, including word recognition and syntactic parsing, and higher-level processing that includes text-model formation (what the text is about), situation-model building (personal interpretation of the text), inferencing, executive-control processing (directing one's attention), and strategic processing. This includes knowledge of the language (e.g., the writing system, grammar, vocabulary), the text, the genre (e.g., editorial in a newspaper, a romance novel), and the world, including experiences, values, and beliefs. Learners engage in these processes to construct meaning. However, Lin, Lin, Liu, Kou, Kulikova, and Lin (2020) posit that the development of reading among first language (L1) and second language (L2) learners of English involves the reader interacting with a text through word recognition, global text comprehension, and the use of reading strategies. They note a distinction between L1 and L2 reading processes. L2 learners may neither possess similar reading schemas and strategies nor share lexical accessibility.

In their study, Luo and Sun (2018) found that L2 readers require more learner effort during text comprehension due to missing or inadequate content schemas, such as background knowledge or cultural familiarity, and formal schemas, which includes linguistic and rhetorical aspects of a text. Consequently, L2 learners use strategies such as 'guessing based on context' and have less frequent exposure to lexical items in English compared to L1 learners. Iser (1972) also posited that the reading process varies from individual to individual; however, the linguistic elements are fixed and thus the determinate meaning, or interpretation of events is guided by the text (physical descriptions). The reading process comprises three aspects: (1) the process of anticipation and retrospection, (2) the consequent unfolding of the text as a living event and (3) the resultant impression of life-likeness:

1. The process of anticipation and retrospection: the content that has been processed by the reader is compressed and stored in their memory. This content might be recalled at a later stage or under a different setting as the reader makes connections between past, present, and future experiences (Lobo, 2013).

2. The consequent unfolding of the text as a living event: indeterminate meaning may be construed from the text. This means that readers search for consistency where there are omissions or gaps (not what the reader expected). This consistency emanates from the

readers' need for coherence in their interpretation of the text. Thus, the individual's background and personal views influence the convergence of the text and the reader. Iser (1972), stipulates that the text promotes anticipation and retrospection. Therefore, reading the same text a second time allows the reader to make connections that they initially missed.

3. The resultant impression of life-likeness: readers feel involved in events that seem real to them even if they are far-removed from their reality. Iser (1972, p. 286) affirms:

> In whatever way, and under whatever circumstances the reader may link the different phases of the text together, it will always be the process of anticipation and retrospection that leads to the formation of the virtual dimension, which in turn transforms the text into an experience for the reader. The way in which this experience comes about through a process of continual modification is closely akin to the way in which we gather experience in life.

The DBE (2018) acknowledges that the text frequently includes many subject-specific phrases and/or acronyms. As such, learners may struggle to comprehend and complete the required readings. Lin et al., posit that, during reading, three cognitive processes occur as active knowledge construction:

- selecting relevant information,
- organising the information into a coherent representation, and
- integrating the information using prior knowledge.

When L2 learners are unable to read the text and contextualise its meaning, by default, they cannot engage with critical open-ended questions. A clear disjuncture arises between the learners' capabilities and the requirements of the activity (Hardman, 2005). By contrast, skilled readers go through integrative text-comprehension processes that involve (a) prior knowledge, (b) inferential reasoning, (c) self-regulation, and (d) efficacy and motivation (Lin et al., 2020).

2.4.5 The Sociocultural Context

De Wet (2002) states the learners' interpretations of text are imbedded in social, cultural, and historical views that they integrate to co-create patterns of consistency. These views are communicated through language which serves as a medium of instruction in schools. As such,

reading is a purposeful activity carried out by sets of actions through the use of “tools,” which can be physical or psychological. The latter includes language, which, according Whitford and Joanisse (2018) in agreement with Vygotsky (1978), is the most significant tool for collaborative activity. Thus, in a multicultural South African context, the challenge for curriculum delivery is the adoption of materials and teaching techniques that educators can utilise as tools to mediate the learners’ reading and critical questioning skills. Lin, Lin, Liu, Kou, Kulikova, and Lin (2020, p. 835) reaffirm that to enhance the learners’ motivation towards the activity of reading, educators “should pay heed to ways that learners’ cultural background affects the language learning process.” Hence, reading can be interpreted from a cultural perspective when considering what, how, where, and when learners read.

2.4.5.1 The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Barrett-Tatum (2015, p. 4) defines activity theory as “historically, culturally, and socially situated action in which people are engaged towards a shared objective.” Barrett-Tatum (2015) and Hardman (2005) discuss the three generations of the CHAT:

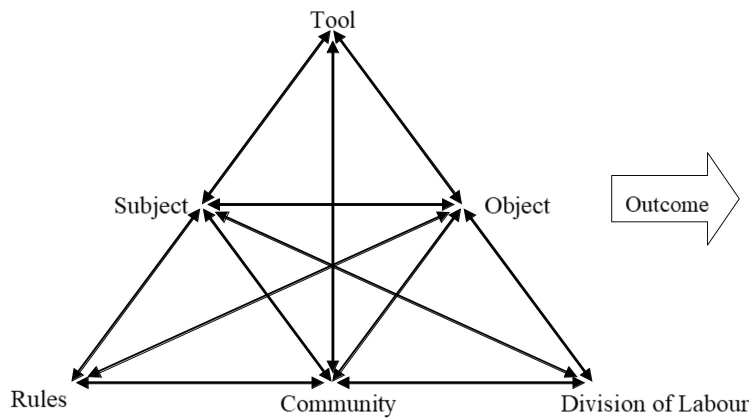
- Generation One: Vygotsky’s activity model included a subject, the objective, and the tools one uses to attain the object.

- Generation Two: According to Leontiev’s second generation CHAT theory, subjects have specific viewpoints as individuals within the community, which are influenced by the subjects’ relationships and interactions within the larger community. Thus, an activity or event centered on a certain objective can be analysed from the individual’s perspective, both at the personal level of interaction and within the larger social network. Although the second-generation activity theory aimed to analyse both the individual and the collective, it lacked the ability to show the social context and culture in which the activity took place.

- Generation Three: The third and most recent generation of activity theory was proposed by Engeström and is adopted in the present study. The third generation CHAT combines Bakhtin’s ideas about language as inextricably linked to social and historical factors as well as Leont’ev’s concept of activity. Engeström’s CHAT considers interactional, social, and cultural factors when analyzing instruction as demonstrated in figure 2.

Figure 2

The Structure of a Human Activity System



Note. Adapted from "Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical Reconceptualization," by Y. Engeström, 2001, *Journal of education and work, 14*(1), p. 135.

In agreement with Engeström (1999), Hardman (2005, p. 380) outlines some of CHAT's basic assumptions or principles:

1. Human activity is collective, and human behaviour originates within the social realm.
2. Actions are mediated by a complex network of socio-historically embedded tools.
3. Mind is social, growing out of joint activity.
4. Tools, which carry socio-historical meanings, mediate our psychology.

These basic principles are elaborated on below:

2.4.5.2 The Subject in Relation to the Tool and Object. The "Subject" is the doer of the action—the performer, the actor. The subject can be an individual or a group. The "Object" component reflects the motivational or purposeful nature of human activity which is targeted towards the satisfaction of identified objectives. Therefore, in this study, the term "object" may refer to the "objective" of the story reading technique. The "Tools" component of the model reflects the mediational aspects of human activity using both physical and conceptual tools (Mwanza, 2001).

Wiske and Spicer (2010) posit that there are internal and external components to activities. The internal components comprise of the subject's interpretation of the object, while the external "properties of the object penetrate into the subject and transform him or her." There is, therefore, a mutual relationship between the subject's internal and social process. In this present study, both the educator (individual) and learners (collective) may be viewed as subjects of the story reading activity. Hardman (2008) notes that the epistemic assumptions held by educators regarding learning, impact how they facilitate the lesson. Where an educator believes that learning occurs through active discussion with learners to promote problem solving, they may adopt the constructivist approach. Whereas an educator who believes that learners receive information from the instructor and passively internalise it, may adopt direct instruction. In relation to classroom instruction, Dlamini (2017) states that challenges are more common in under-resourced schools, which are mostly located in rural and township settings. Under-resourced schools tend to experience inadequate allocation of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). Being adversely affected by an inadequacy of qualified educators, particularly in specific subject content, educators are challenged to adopt instructional interventions to reconcile learners' preconceptions with curricular objectives.

2.4.5.2a Physical tools

The Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) policy by the DBE defines LTSM as "electronic material and all material that facilitates learning." These include "textbooks, library books, charts, models, computer hardware and software, television, video recorders, video tapes, home economics equipment, science laboratory equipment, musical instruments, learner desks and chairs" (2011. p. 9). Kutu (2020) et al., assert that uneven educational frameworks between affluent and non-affluent schools, poor academic achievement of learners, and high dropout rates characterize South Africa's education system. The causes of South Africa's poor academic performance are numerous and complex, including low socioeconomic status, a lack of resources, and poor school management. Dlamini (2017) notes that the legacy of apartheid resulted in resource shortages. When comparing the outcomes of independent or private schools to those of public schools, this becomes clear. The disparity in outcomes between private and public schools suggests that socioeconomics and resources have a significant effect on the learners' scholastic achievement. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) add that rural areas are typically isolated and underdeveloped. As a result, many schools lack the requisite physical resources and basic infrastructure for sanitation, water, roads, transportation, electricity, and information and communication technology. In some schools, educators are subjected to multi-

grade teaching where they are required to teach different subjects and different grades in one class. This has implications for educators in terms of arranging lessons for each day and period, managing their time to teach different grades, conducting assessments, and maintaining discipline. In such cases, educators frequently employ shortened curricula, which is rarely adapted to learners or contextual factors. As such, educators in under-resourced schools typically use textbooks to deliver the content.

Engelbrecht (2006, p.80) notes the long history of how textbooks were written during the apartheid era to promote the idea that:

- Whites are superior, while blacks are inferior.
- Legal authority is not questioned.
- The Afrikaner has a privileged relationship with God.
- South Africa rightfully belongs to the Afrikaner.
- The Afrikaner has a God-given task to fulfil in Africa.

These textbooks content influenced society's sociocultural generalizations to the point where they became part of the collective consciousness through which the world is experienced, interpreted, and understood. Engelbrecht (2006, p. 79) continues to say that "for decades South African textbooks were entrenched with racism, sexism, stereotypes, and historical inaccuracies." A new curriculum, as posited by Johannesson (2002) was needed; such educators adopt LTSM to instil LO values in learners in order to protect human rights, promote inclusivity, and enhance resilience. In this regard, the Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, Values, Education and Democracy (2002) highlighted six qualities to be actively promoted in schools: Equity, Tolerance, Multilingualism, Openness, Accountability, and Social Honour. Furthermore, the document calls for the adoption of:

- a tougher policy against illegitimate and harmful discrimination in schools.
- schools-based debating societies.

The DBE (2002, p. 5) clarifies that tolerance refers to "a deeper and more meaningful concept of mutual understanding, reciprocal altruism and the active appreciation of the value of human difference… in traditions, arts, culture, religions and sporting activity in the ethos and life of a school (p. 5).

Consistent with these documents, Omodan (2019) emphasises the importance of collaborative knowledge construction, teaching, and learning that enhances critical reasoning skills and a disruptive caring pedagogy to reflect democratic values. Disruptive pedagogies, according to Mills (1997), encourages learners to identify and challenge discourses and social norms of dominance and subservience perpetuated through social inequality within contemporary society. Social norms refer to shared standards of appropriate and inappropriate behavior within a cultural or social group (The World Health Organisation, 2009). In this regard, Fellmayer (2018) posits that education should be characterised by caring and respectful relationships between learners and educators when focussing on the importance of classroom discussions in relation to the learner's environment. Therefore, in the current pedagogical system, educators must possess knowledge, skills, attitudes that promote a capacity for criticism and reflection through clear communication and professional practice. Such skills are necessary to develop intellectual traits in learners, enabling them to think logically, and draw conclusions based on evidence when debating in the classroom. In this context, dissonance, as noted by Omodan (2019), is part of the contemporary classroom whereby learners learn from each other's experiences. Thus, teaching and learning strategies, methodologies, and resources should reflect acceptance and acknowledgment of learner differences. Likewise, the OECD (2018) posits that methods such as experiential and dialogical teaching, where learners engage with real-life issues could be helpful to instil classroom cultural practices that encourage openness and tolerance. The use of LTSM is, therefore, critical to the implementation of the LO curriculum. The DBE (2011) notes that textbooks include educators' guides, learners' books, learners' workbooks or activity books and reference books. Textbooks can serve different purposes for educators:

- a core resource,
- a source of supplementary material,
- an inspiration for classroom activities, and
- a curriculum itself

The DBE (2011) also lists some advantages of textbooks:

- assists in managing a lesson,
- saves time, give direction to lessons,
- guide discussion, facilitate in giving homework, and
- provides confidence and security to facilitate the lesson.

The effective use of textbooks in the classroom guide by the DBE posits that for learners, textbooks help them organise their learning inside and outside the classroom: "It enables them to learn 'better, faster, clearer and easier' (nd. p.5)." However, Johannesson (2002, p. 91) argued: "There is a general consensus that many of the school textbooks (the main form of learning support materials) produced for C2005 in all Learning Areas are of mediocre to poor quality. Some are even worse than what apartheid education ever produced." In this regard, Klymkowsky (2007) cautions that textbooks use ought to be determined by curricular goals, as some do not contain contemporary views and others might be difficult to integrate into lessons. In recognising that textbooks may contain prejudices, in 2016, a Ministerial Task Team (MTT) was established and tasked with identifying discriminatory and biased content to aid the production and adoption of inclusive LTSM.

The MTT focused on racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in the evaluation of textbooks in use at the exit grades of the four phases of learning:

- Grade 3: Foundation Phase
- Grade 6: Intermediate Phase
- Grade 9: Senior Phase
- Grade 12: Further Education and Training

Two textbooks were evaluated in each of the following subjects:

1. Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy
2. English (First Additional Language)
3. Afrikaans (First Additional Language)
4. IsiZulu (Home language)
5. Life Orientation, Life Skills
6. Social Sciences; and History

The MTT's Textbook Evaluation Report (2018) notes:

- South Africa's racial and gender diversity is reflected in the textbooks, however, a distinct disproportionality in how they capture different groups was identified.
- The focus is usually on the age-relevant learners (for the text) and adults. Older people, pensioners, and infants/children are seldom featured.
- The LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Queer) community is rarely represented.

- The textbooks have a strong inclination towards a middle-class normativity. The subjects described in the texts have values, desires, and decisions that are mainly those of a generic middle class. The texts were mostly produced from a "Western" perspective, with an implicit preference for "western" knowledge: "The texts did not sufficiently acknowledge that there are different epistemological traditions in the world. There would need to be greater acknowledgement of the ways in which African ways of knowing have been minimised and, in some instances, even erased" (DBE, 2018, p.130.).
- There are noticeable silences and omissions regarding religion, family status, and disability.

In most textbooks, the value of difference is not capitalised on as a learning opportunity. Hence, South African textbooks are missing out on the opportunity to engage learners in alternative ways of life and promote themselves as a learning tool for valuing difference and diversity. Therefore, textbooks must include the lived experiences of all learners to minimise exclusion from the official knowledge discourse presented in the classroom. The DBE (2018, p. 131) concludes by stating although the textbooks are not explicitly discriminatory or prejudicial, they could be judged to be "moderately to weakly inclusive." Despite the availability of extra materials and information on the internet, textbooks remain the primary source of classroom knowledge in the South African classroom (Riet, 2015). For LO educators who must teach a wide range of social issues, textbooks frequently lack contextual information. To supplement the content, educators use DVDs, CDs, exercises, posters, pamphlets, and other non-textbook (and non-primary) sources. Tobin and Ybarra (2008) assert that educators use supplemental materials for the following reasons:

- To assist tin teaching a variety of sensitive and complex issues, particularly ones about which they have limited training or personal experience.
- To supplement materials with perspectives and details that textbooks often lack.

2.4.5.2b Psychological tools

The National Language Policy Framework (2003) states that government language policy has failed to recognize South Africa's linguistic diversity since the Dutch first occupied the country in 1652. From the colonial and apartheid language policies, as well as political and socioeconomic policies, a hierarchy of languages emerged, mirroring the racial and class inequalities that characterise South African society. Under the democratic government,

multilingualism, the development of official languages, and the promotion of respect and tolerance for South Africa's linguistic diversity are all governed by Section 6 of the Constitution. It establishes citizens' language rights, which must be respected through national language policies. In this regard, the DoE (2003, p.3) states:

> A person's language is in many ways a "second skin": a natural possession of every normal human being, with which we use to express our hopes and ideals, articulate our thoughts and values, explore our experience and customs, and construct our society and the laws that govern it. It is through language that we function as human beings in an ever-changing world.

On the contrary, de Wet (2002) posits that English is a prominent language in South African public life, widely used in government, business, and the media. English has, in democratic South Africa, remained the national language of politics and records. It is also an official language in public/government schools starting in Grade 4 where the majority of African learners do not speak English as a first language. Cele (2001) argues that one of the challenges is that African languages have minimal scientific, business, or diplomatic heritage as they have not been adequately developed to meet the demands of modern education associated with global trends. The languages spoken most often by household members inside and outside their homes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Percentage of Languages Spoken by Household Members Inside and Outside Household by Population Group, 2018

	Black African		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White		South Africa	
	Inside	Outside	Inside	Outside	Inside	Outside	Inside	Outside	Inside	Outside
Afrikaans	0,9	1,0	77,4	68,8	1,3	1,5	61,2	37,2	12,2	9,7
English	1,6	8,6	20,1	28,3	92,1	95,8	36,3	61,0	8,1	16,6
IsiNdebele	1,9	1,6	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,2	0,3	0,1	1,6	1,3
IsiXhosa	18,2	15,6	1,1	1,3	0,4	0,0	0,1	0,1	14,8	12,8
IsiZulu	31,1	30,8	0,3	0,3	0,9	1,0	0,5	0,5	25,3	25,1
Khoi, Nama and San languages	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1
Sepedi	12,4	12,0	0,3	0,2	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,3	10,1	9,7
Sesotho	9,7	9,6	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,0	0,1	7,9	7,8
Setswana	11,1	11,5	0,7	0,8	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,4	9,1	9,4
Sign Language	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
SiSwati	3,5	3,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,8	2,6
Tshivenda	3,1	2,7	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,5	2,2
Xitsonga	4,4	2,9	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	3,6	2,4
Other	2,1	0,5	0,1	0,0	4,0	0,7	1,1	0,5	1,9	0,5
Total Percentage	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Total (Thousands)	46 307	46 135	4 961	4 930	1 430	1 426	4 442	4 420	57 143	56 914

Note. From *General Household Survey* (p. 9), by Statistics South Africa, 2019, Pretoria: Stats SA.

In 2018, just over a quarter of the population (25.3%) spoke isiZulu at home, while 14.8% spoke isiXhosa, and 12.2% spoke Afrikaans. English was the sixth most prevalent home language in South Africa, with 8.1% of people speaking it at home. However, outside the household, English is the second most spoken language (16.6%) after isiZulu (25.1%). Consequently, many of the learners entering the education system are not native English speakers, and many are still in the process of learning English by the time they reach the senior phase. Hence, de Wet (2002) cautions that during classroom discussions, educators must consider the learners' conceptual understanding regarding the language of instruction. Muñoz and Álvarez (2010) confirm that the medium of instruction typically exacerbates confusion among learners who do not have a good command of the language and might not feel confident to respond during classroom discussions. Cele (2001) cautioned that African learners who wish to improve their educational opportunities by transferring from economically disadvantaged schools to English medium institutions, where resources have historically been channelled, will be limited by their linguistic inadequacies: "They will therefore remain curbed within the limitations of their medium of instruction and become victims of poverty. This undoubtedly undermines and frustrates social redress and equality initiatives and widens the gap between the have(s) and the have-not(s)" (2001, p. 185). To change the status quo, educational institutions should provide differentiated language instruction to enable all learners to be confident, proficient, and fluent users of South Africa's official languages. Accordingly, learning materials and human resources needed to support individual learners' preferred language should be well-developed and easily accessible. Educators should be provided with structured teacher development and in-service training programmes with resources to support teaching in the official languages. Wessels and Wood (2020, p. 130) add that similar challenges can be found in higher education, whereby the teaching and learning is conducted in English, which is typically neither the mother tongue of the lecturers nor the students[14]. The lecturers must ensure that students understand the key concepts, and effective communication thus requires more contact time and preparation.

2.4.5.3 Rules, Community, and Division of Labour. This section provides the background to the DBE's policies that apply to the classroom context (rules), the general social environment in which educators work (community), as well as collaboration and the division of labour among all stakeholders involved in education.

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[14] A student is a person who has enrolled in a higher education institution.

2.4.5.3a DBE policy documents

The rules relate to both the explicit restrictions, laws, policies, and traditions that limit activities and the implicit social norms and standards among community members. Rules fundamentally guide the actions that the community accepts as well as the tools, models, and procedures that the community utilizes when engaging in activities. In the endorsement of an inclusive curriculum, among other documents, the DBE presented the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (The Manifesto, 2001), and the Education White Paper 6: Special Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001).

The Manifesto stipulates that a democratic pedagogy is necessary "to distil the good things of our past and give them definition, for the education of future generations of South Africans" (DBE, 2001 p. 2). This document presents the constitution as part of pedagogic practice by educators, administrators, and DBE officials. Strategies to integrate multiculturalism in education are emphasised by focussing on: Democracy, Social Justice, Equality, Non-racism and Non-sexism, Ubuntu (Human Dignity), An Open Society, Accountability (Responsibility), The Rule of Law, Respect, and Reconciliation. The DoE (2001), therefore, acknowledged that learners have a wide range of learning needs, and, if these are not satisfied, they may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the educational system. Physical, mental, sensory, neurological, and developmental disabilities; psychosocial disruptions; disparities in intellectual ability; life experiences; and socioeconomic hardship all contribute to learning demands. Furthermore, different learning needs may also arise because of:

- Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of difference.
- An inflexible curriculum.
- Language of learning and teaching.
- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments.
- Inadequate support services.
- Inadequate policies and legislation.
- The non-involvement of parents.
- Inadequately trained education managers and educators.

The Education White Paper 6: Special Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System is a policy framework that outlines the necessity of providing educational opportunities for all learners. Emphasis is placed on learners who face or have faced challenges to learning and development, or who have dropped out of school due to the inadequacy of the

education and training system to meet the diversity of learning needs, as well as those who continue to be excluded from it (DoE, 2001). Mariga, McConkey, and Myezwa (2014, p. ii) explain that inclusive education can succeed if there is "political will, good leadership, preparation of teachers and parental and community support." On the other hand, in the study by Walton et al. (2014), educators reported that implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms is difficult for them and that contextual issues, including a lack of support systems, play a large part in their dilemma. One of the challenges outlined by Nel et al. (2016) is that many mainstream educators do not have a formal teaching qualification that includes responding to diverse learning needs. Their training was either for general mainstream education or "specialised education," which took place in separate classes or schools. As such, continuous educator training and classroom support are required to ensure that educators acquire the requisite skills. What happens in the classrooms is equally important, particularly how all learners may participate meaningfully in various learning activities and how educators and peers view learners with learning disabilities.

Ntombela, (2011, p. 6.) notes that: "Inclusive education has been embraced as a means towards the creation of a caring, inclusive society." The principles guiding the broad strategies to achieve this vision include: acceptance of the principles and values contained in the Constitution and White Papers on Education and Training; human rights and social justice for all learners; participation and social integration; equal access to a single, inclusive education system; access to the curriculum, equity, and redress; community responsiveness; and cost-effectiveness (Icker, 2005). As such, educators' ongoing professional development should be a lifelong endeavour that allows them to improve their skills and classroom practices in response to changing contexts and economic demands. If such opportunities are not provided, educators' comprehension of the reforms would be limited, and they will be more inclined to reject them. Ntombela (2011) adds that communication channels between educational levels are ineffective. As a result, most educators regard the non-typical learner as an outsider who must be taught separately from the rest of the class, rather than examining how their own teaching and classroom management may contribute to learning barriers.

2.4.5.3b Socioemotional and economic challenges prevalent in South African communities

McMillan and Chavis (1986, p. 9) define a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared

faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together." They further posit that a community comprises of four elements:

1. Membership - a sense of personal relatedness thus promoting feelings of belonging.
2. Influence - feeling that one matters and can contribute or make a difference; hence they are importance to the group and the group also matters to the individual.
3. Reinforcement – the group provides resources that members use to fulfil their needs.
4. Emotional connection - members share a common place, time, and similar experiences.

Social relationships established through interaction are a major source of feelings of security and belonging. As such, the relationships between educators and learners could exert a positive or negative influence on the learners' success in the school environment. Goldschmidt and Pedro (2019, p. 474) define socio-emotional development as:

> the acquisition of a set of skills involving the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a positive manner, to accurately read and understand the emotional states in others, to develop empathy for others, to regulate one's own behaviour, and to establish and maintain relationships.

Booren, Downer, and Vitiello (2012) note that the development of social relationships is influenced by individual characteristics (emotion regulation skills), as well as classroom characteristics (classroom instructional practices). When learners are exposed to environments that encourage and foster prosocial behaviour, it improves their social competence as well as their socio-emotional development, learning, and health. Encouraging prosocial behaviour may reduce the development of emotional and behavioural problems. The DoE (2008, p. 103) outlined some of these issues as:

- A lack of positive role models that encourage educational engagement in families and communities with whom learners can identify. Learners may be more concerned with material gain (instant gratification) than with learning, which may be linked to a reduction in the importance of education.
- A lack of future perspective, ambition, personal goal-setting, and negative attitudes, as well as a failure to internalize the importance of academic accomplishment.

- Learner violence and engagement in inappropriate sexual activity as well as learner prostitution.
- Peer pressure.
- Participation of educators in substance abuse with learners.
- Family dysfunction and its resulting volatility in the home environment. Parental absence and insufficient parental communication, encouragement, and disciplinary boundaries to support learners' educational development.
- Abusive situations at home, in the community, and at school.
- Poverty and learner malnutrition. Although a high school learner may lack food, their stage of emotional and social development may make accepting any help offered at school challenging. The emotional impact of poverty on learners when they interact with their wealthier peers is a factor that could affect school attendance. The lack of financing is a factor for attraction to criminal financial gain or dropping out of school to find work.

Kutu et al. (2020) confirm that the situation has not changed as they present an overview of some of the factors that contribute to poor learner performance, such as a lack of resources, learner discipline, low morale, policy implementation challenges, and insufficient parental involvement in the learner's education. The DoE (2008) indicated that parental educational levels were substantially linked to dropout and interacted with gender. Girls who have educated parents are less likely to drop out than boys who have educated parents. Minority and non-minority groups suffer different effects on educational levels. Parents in rural areas typically hold basic jobs, have a low level of education, and place little value on schooling. Many of these parents are unable to purchase additional supplies required by school, which negatively impacts the teaching and learning. Kutu et al. (2020) reiterate that poverty and unemployment, which exacerbates the aforementioned issues, have a direct impact on educators' roles and the quality of education offered to learners.

The DBE (2008, p.131) also discusses the impact of practicalities, such as transportation and school location, regarding the learners' ability to access schools. Lack of accessibility is a concern in remote locations where transportation is rare, expensive, or non-existent. The impact of bad weather on learner attendance is also of concern. Learner absenteeism, learners who join school later in life when they are physically more capable of coping with the difficulties of walking great distances to school, and learner weariness and non-performance for those who travel long distances to school can be attributed to a lack of transportation. Even in urban areas,

parents may struggle to afford transportation to send their children to school, particularly if their children attend schools that are not in their immediate vicinity. Learner transportation safety issues, such as unsafe travel routes where learners could be threatened by dangerous people or travel through isolated places, are also a concern.

Although not a solution to the aforementioned problems, Du Plessis, and Mestry (2019) note all communities have a role in the education of its children. Active members of the community should be elected to school governing bodies so that they can monitor potential deterioration of school facilities. Hence, Du Plessis, and Mestry (2019) call for the government to increase community involvement in teaching and the improvement of schools as policies and programs can only be implemented successfully if the relevant community is included and participates.

2.4.5.3c Division of labor in South African education

The Division of Labor refers to the subjects' tasks and work functions as they go about their daily activities in the community (Mwanza, 2001). For a unified curriculum to transpire there needs to be collaboration between the different levels of the education system (Ntombela, 2011).

1. Department of Basic Education (National, Provincial and District)

   The DoE (2008) stipulated the following:

Lower drop-out rates have been linked to smaller class sizes, more personalized settings, and individualized learning programs. A more extensive interventional strategy is necessary in this regard as well as a more active stance in the management, monitoring, and ensuring of service-delivery in schools.

Improvements to the DBE's data collection systems are also necessary. The focus should be on standardizing data input and database structures, as well as using statistical tools to estimate margins of error for useful analysis. The learner tracking system also needs improvement. Good governance of resources is needed in schools to promote learning and retention.

Intensive staff development programmes for educators should be provided in order to improve their skills and ability to identify learners with learning disabilities. Learners at risk of dropping out should be identified, and a variety of instructional and assessment methods and techniques should be used. Workable disciplinary and corrective measures are also mandatory.

2. School Management Team (SMT) and educators

The SMT is responsible for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all learners and staff (Kwatubana, 2020). Educators should also create a positive classroom environment and cultivate supportive relationships with learners. They must be able to identify learner problems and intervene to provide struggling learners with the extra time and the help that they need. Extra aid should be tailored to the learner's specific needs, with monitoring in place to ensure that the extra help and time are effective. Educators can refer and work in collaboration with NGOs and other departments for psychological assessments of learners, counselling, and tertiary level interventions (DoE, 2008).

The DoE (2008) states that the programs must be established that address learners' career and academic development through educational counseling; career development, including life skills; and mentoring through exposure to positive role models.

Learners should be allowed to provide feedback on their educators' classroom methods, and the educators' professional performance should be closely monitored and evaluated. Educators must also be held accountable for their actions, and those who perform their duties well must be recognised (DoE, 2008).

3. Higher Education and Training

Student teachers[15] must learn to integrate theory and practice for more effective teaching (Wessels & Wood, 2020).

LO lecturers at HEIs must collaborate, including collaborative research initiatives. It is critical that scholarship be highlighted in order to elevate the status of LO in HEIs (Jarvis & de Jager, 2021).

4. Parents

Many teachers have reported feeling frustrated when they try to involve parents and receive little response, as they do not attend conferences or school open days, check homework, or answer notes (Maluleke, 2014). Children's positive school attachment has also been linked to

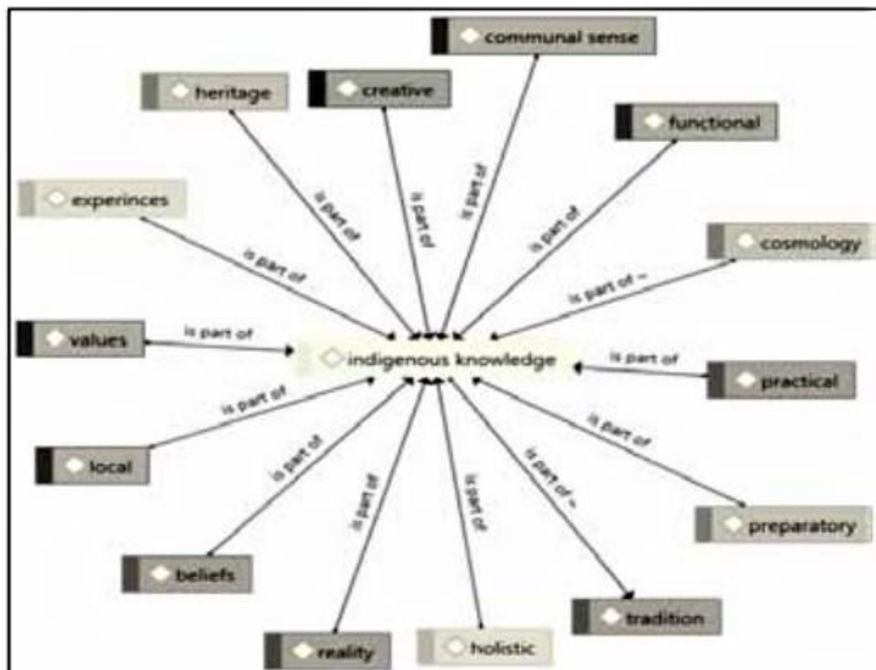
[15] A student teacher is a student who is teaching under the supervision of a certified educator in order to qualify for a degree in education.

family participation. Parental involvement in education, such as attending school events and helping with homework, improves children's self-esteem, academic performance, and school retention and attendance (Ross, 2016). Parent involvement can also promote mutual respect of the learners' culture, language, belief, and food in schools (Chindanya, 2011).

2.4.5.4 Outcome of Social Issues Through the Story Reading Technique. Manyau et al. state that the LO curriculum in South Africa lacks the complementary strengths of indigenous knowledge (IK). They advocate for an integration of IK and LO ontology(s), epistemologies, methodologies, values, and beliefs. IK entails "the local-holistic-preparatory-practical-creative-functional-traditional-experiences and communal sense which is based on heritages, values, beliefs and cosmological realities" (2018, p. 209).

Figure 3

Themes on the Meaning of Indigenous Knowledge



Note. From "Linking life orientation and indigenous knowledge education in South Africa: lessons learnt from literature," by T. Manyau, A. Cronje, and M.A. Mokoena, 2018, *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, 17*(2), p.209.

"Purification, respect, honesty, generosity, diligence, and hospitality" are examples of IK philosophical principles that could contextualize or deepen LO education (Manyau et al., 2018,

p. 210). However, Langill (1999) notes that in indigenous cultures, men and women have different jobs and duties, and they have differing sets of knowledge. The views of women and girls have often been marginalised because of their low social status within their own cultures. As such, the integration of IK with subject content should be within the bounds of policy so as to set a single standard for desirable behaviour and achieve the outcomes set for LO.

2.5. Conclusion

The chapter provides a review of the Reader-Response/Reception theory that emphasises how learners are assisted to make the most of the literature available to them. The multidimensional theoretical framework underpinning this study was also reviewed. The review reflects on several theories and literature to explain and unpack the importance of storytelling in Africa. In this regard, the chapter reviewed some observations that have been issued by scholars of African literature on the usefulness of African children's literature in the African education systems through the injection of story narratives in the novels intended for young people in Africa. The review of extant empirical studies on the challenge of LO teaching in South African schools was also reviewed because their presence supports the current study's claim that the LO curriculum in South African schools need improvement. At the same time, the gap created by such studies was clearly noted as none suggested the use of the story reading technique to solve one of the key challenges in LO teaching; namely how to get learners to value and become motivated in learning and making the most out of this curriculum. It is in this regard that the present study will contribute, by closing the existing gap noted in the extant literature on LO studies in South Africa. The methodology used in implementing the study is highlighted in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Conceptualisation of the Educator's Guide to the Story Reading Technique

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the process of developing the educator's guide presented in this study. Kivunja (2018, p. 45) posits that theories provide "research-grounded basis for understanding, applying, analysing, and designing new ways to investigate relationships and to solve problems in educational and social science contexts." Theory serves as a foundation for explaining behaviour, enhancing understanding of various social contexts in education, and updating existing knowledge to improve professional practice. The multiple frameworks informed the development of the educator's guide and the implementation of the technique. Kivunja (2018, p. 47), on the other hand, views a conceptual framework as a "logical orientation and associations of anything and everything that forms the underlying thinking, structures, plans and practices and implementation of your entire research project." Table 4 highlights the conceptual and theoretical frameworks adopted in various stages of this study.

Table 4

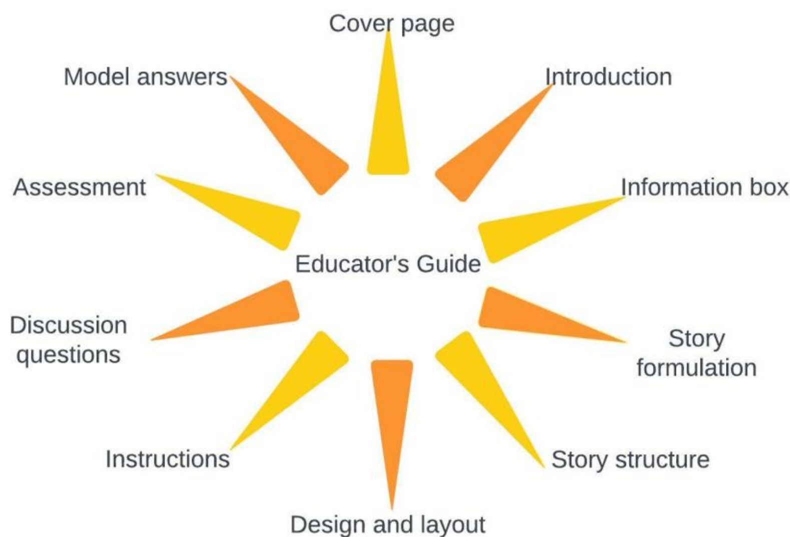
Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Stage of conception	Conceptual framework	Theoretical framework
Conceptual components of the educator's guide	Model created by researcher (author)	
Structure and content of the stories	Narrative arc Themes on the meaning of indigenous knowledge	Africentric theory of human motivation
Teaching and learning	Direct instruction	Social constructivism
Assessment tasks	New taxonomy of educational objectives	
Structural framework of the story reading technique	Model created by researcher (author)	

Dickson, Emad, and Joe (2018) state that a conceptual framework may be viewed as a graphical structure or narrative that explains the progression of the phenomenon under study. Jabareen (2009) notes that all concepts have components that define them. Figure 4, created by the researcher (author), presents the conceptual components used in the educator's guide.

Figure 4

A Graphic Representation of the Conceptual Components of the Educator's Guide

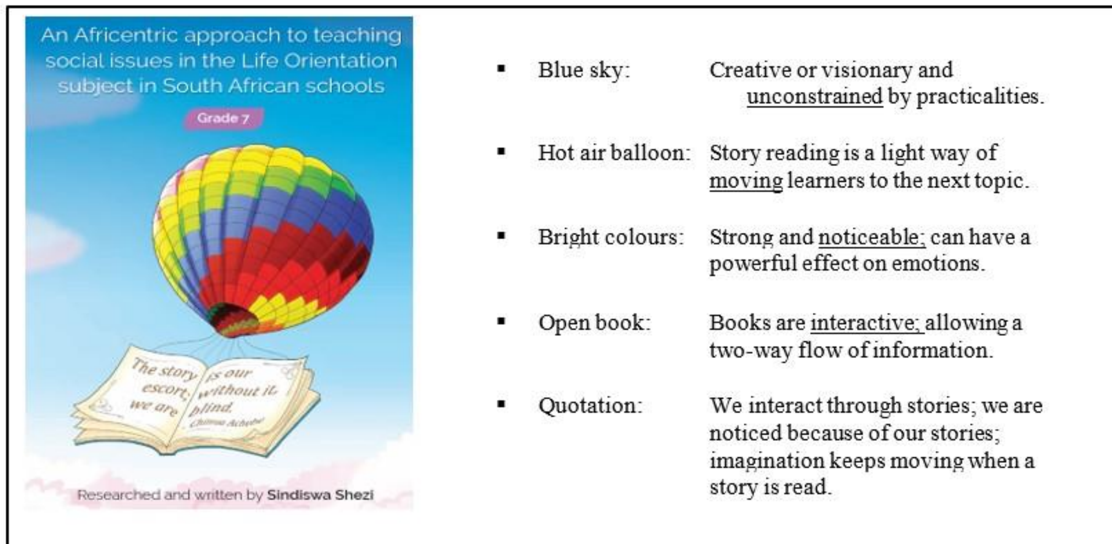


3.2 The Title/ Cover Page of the Educator's Guide

Drawing inspiration from the words of Iwana et al that: "The cover of a book is often the first interaction, and it creates an impression on the reader. It starts a conversation with a potential reader and begins to draw a story revealing the contents within" (2016, p. 5); and that the cover pages for fictional texts for children and adolescents commonly use bright colours; I have developed the proposed educator's guide with these insights in mind. I used bright colours in designing the cover page of the Educator's guide. The size and shape of the book as well as the image on the cover of the educator's guide were equally typically designed to attract potential readers to the book. Similarly, because Rosenblatt (1994) states that the title of the story may reflect the events and experiences that the characters will go through which gives the reader ideas about the content of the story, I have also designed the educator's guide to reflect this objective.

Figure 5

Elements of the Cover Page of the Educator's Guide



a. The Introduction

The introduction informs the educator about the topic, scope, context and purpose of the educator's guide. The introduction highlights the tasks to be covered and presents a background for the instructions (Shahab, Rashidi, Sadighi, & Yamini, 2020). In this study, the introduction covers the story structure and provides an overview of each story. The introduction entails four sections: objectives, remember to, instructions and; for your information as demonstrated in figure 6.

Figure 6

Introduction to the Educator's Guide

Educator's guide

Life Orientation: Story reading technique

Introduction

Story reading centres on an account of a true or fictitious incident designed to interest, evoke emotion in, or instruct a reader. This educator's guide consists of two stories and activities related to each story.

Note the following:

- The stories should be read out loud in class by the educator or the learners.
- Be animated, as this enhances the learners' imagination.
- Learners should silently read along with the educators.

In order to convey the intended outcome of the story, please remember to:

- have a clear focus and maintain concentration.
- make gestures that respond to the story.
- create a charismatic presence of the characters.
- use different, exaggerated character voices.
- pace yourself.
- use silence and pauses to add dramatic effect.

Story structure

Each story is subdivided into two parts.

Part 1: The first part of each story ends in a cliff-hanger[1], allowing learners to speculate about a possible ending. The learners, with the assistance of the educator, are then to complete the allocated activities.

Part 2: The second part of the story should be resumed, and the allocated task completed.

Story 2: Musa, you are not safe!

(Child Abuse and Substance Abuse)
Week 3 and 4

Objectives

- Illustrate possible circumstances that increase vulnerability[1] to substance abuse.
- Indicate some of the negative effects[1] of alcohol.
- Highlight emotional and physical abuse.

Remember to

- Emphasise that alcohol is not for people under the age of 18 years.
- Emphasise that we should not ridicule each other when we face hardships.
- Highlight that learners can report abuse to a social worker, educator or the police.

Instructions

- Educator: Read the story out loud in class.
- Recap the story with the learners and read out all the questions.
- Assist learners in completing the allocated task:
  - Allow the learners to discuss the questions in their groups.
  - Discuss possible answers with learners.

For your information
(not for teaching purposes):

Substance abuse indictors:

- Inappropriate clothing
- Unexplained bruises or burns (apparent accidents)
- Recurrent vague somatic complaints
- Fatigue
- Behavioural or emotional problems
- Changes in relationships with peers
- Distractibility or hypervigilance
- Discomfort with issues of substance abuse
- Unusual/sophisticated knowledge of drinking/drug practices

b. Objectives

Learners may be assessed at the end of the activity to determine whether the objectives of the story reading technique have been met. The objectives presented in the guide are aligned to the LO curricular goals discussed in chapter 1.

c. Remember to:- helping educators to remember what to implement and the steps to be followed

To achieve the intended learning objectives, a step-by-step explanation of how to implement the technique is outlined for the educator. Paris et al., (1995) notes that reading the guide and preparing in advance will assist educators in adapting the tasks to the topic for each week.

d. For your information:- information of the Educator

The guide provides (1) general information or a broad description of the topic (e.g., substance abuse) and (2) specific information related to the topic (e.g., indicators of substance abuse)

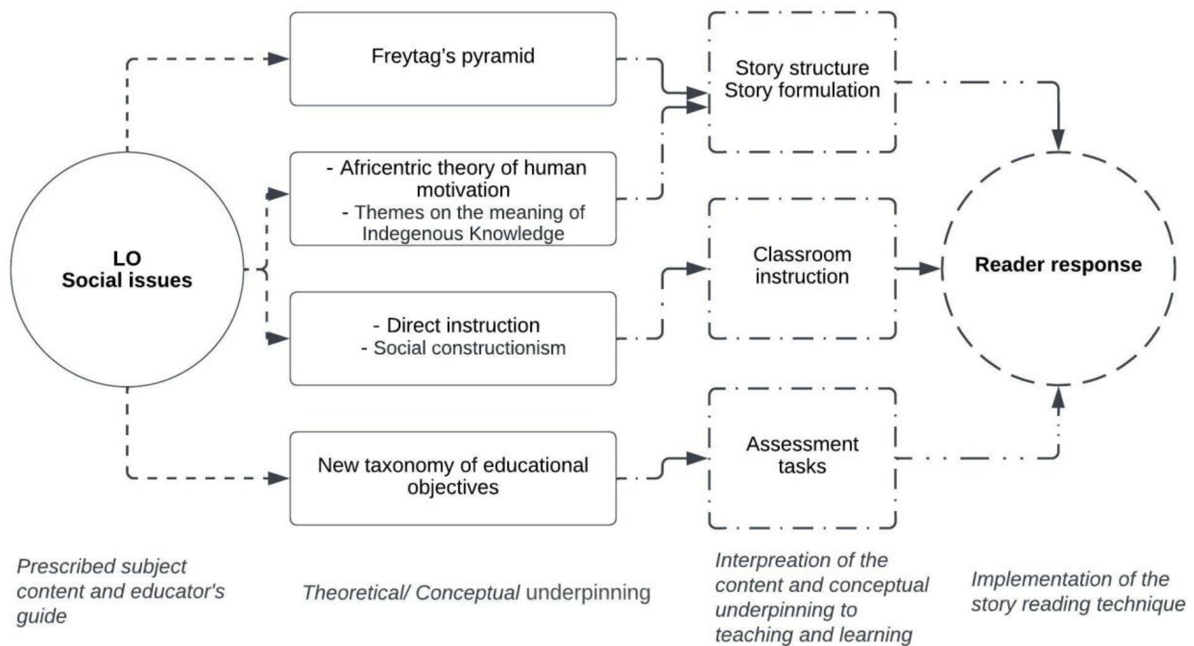
(Lash, 2001). The information box is a point of reference for educators to enhance their understanding of social issues (Lanigan, 2010).

3.3 Formulation of the Stories

Figure 7, created by the author, depicts the multiple frameworks.

Figure 7

Structural Framework of the Story Reading Technique



This flow diagram depicts the components of the technique (structure, content, teaching and learning, and assessment tasks) as they relate to the LO social issues topic. The symbols of the flow diagram are adapted from Sugai (1997). There are four basic elements of a story: characters, setting, theme, and plot (Calkins, 2001).

3.3.1 The Characters

Characters are the people who engage in dialogue and actions depicted in the story. It is through characters that each story moves forward. Piotrowski (2018) highlights that there are various types of characters that can be found in fiction. In the presented stories, there are 5 types of characters: protagonist, deuteragonist, antagonist, confidant, supporting and mute/non-speaking. The protagonist is the main character. Much focus is on this character who progresses the plot. They possess human weaknesses which are strengthened over time and the readers

typically care most about this character. The antagonist undermines the protagonist. They may hold power over the main character but ultimately cause them to grow by making difficult decisions. The deuteragonist/sidekick is most often a friend of the main character who offers advice. However, Aristova (2015) asserts that not all sidekicks are supportive as some hinder the main character. The confidante is a trusted friend or mentor of the main character. It is through the confidant that the main character reveals personal thoughts and feelings. A supporting character is not the focus of the primary storyline but has a significant role in moving the plot forward. They can be charismatic and memorable. A mute/non-speaking character does not directly engage in verbal dialogue but may communicate through bodily gestures.

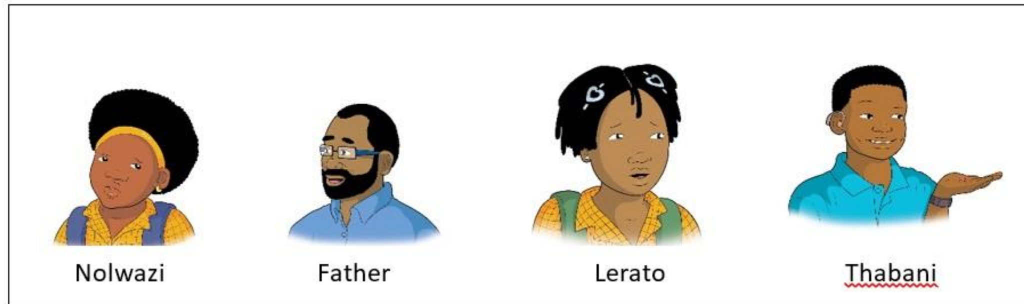
Learners typically have expectations about how characters should conduct themselves. These expectations may emerge from culture roots (Galda & Beach, 2001), as learners often evaluate characters as real people, despite knowing they are fictional. This enables learners to draw comparisons between characters' experiences and their own. However, Galda and Beach (2001) caution that learners may reject characters whose actions do not reflect their worldview or cultural expectations. This caution speaks to the importance of giving attention to the Africentric approach to teaching social issues within the LO curriculum.

Both stories presented in the educator's guide consist of four characters. Fewer characters foster a close interaction between the reader and the characters' physical and social environment. The characters in this study are of African descent, portrayed with a range of skin tones and hair textures. The names that have been given to the characters originated from the Nguni languages in South Africa.

In the African context, names frequently describe individuals' characteristics of the named individual (Agyekum, 2006). From the character's name, the reader can determine the sex, hierarchy in birth, relevant circumstances, and the character's social status. In this study, each story contains the main character's name in the title as "names can be more than tags; they can convey powerful imagery" (Martin, 1999, p 83). Learners are more likely to recall the story as they familiarize themselves with the characters names. The names of characters can also be used to convey irony as the character may behave in a way that is contrary to their name.

Figure 8

Story 1 Characters



Nolwazi: The name means the "one with knowledge" as demonstrated by the character when she was deciding on the 'right' decision towards the end of the story.

- Protagonist/Main character

Father: A term denoting the male parent of this protagonist.

- Confidant/Mentor character

Lerato: The name means *love* as the character thinks of herself as grown and knowledgeable about matters relating to romantic relationships.

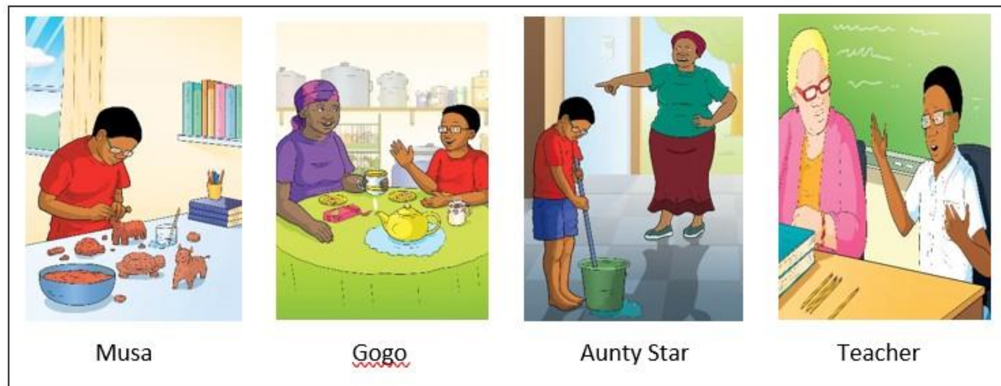
- Deuteragonist/sidekick.

Thabani: The name means *joyful* or *happy*. He brings the 'happiness' of drugs and woos girls with his charm or joyful nature (ironically, the character brings superficial joy).

- Supportive character.

Figure 9

Story 2 Characters



Musa: The name means *kindness, grace* or *mercy*.

- Musa was happy with his grandmother until she died, now there is little kindness in his life. His name is a reminder to be kind.
- Protagonist/Main character.

Gogo: A grandmother or elderly woman.

- She takes care of her grandchildren when their parents are absent.
- Confidant/Mentor character.

Aunty Star: In many African cultures, addressing an older person with their first name is considered impolite. Using the term 'aunty' signifies that the woman is older.

- The name means a *luminous astronomical object seen in the night sky*.
- This name highlights the situational irony that is created by the character as the name suggests that she will bring light to a 'dark' situation. On the contrary, she brings sadness and frustration.
- Antagonist character.

Teacher: A school subject facilitator who also focusses on the psychosocial wellbeing of learners.

- Mute/non-speaking character.

3.3.2 The Setting

The setting refers to the time and place in which the characters are located to convey the story: country or town, landscape and climate (Calkins, 2001). The context entails the time-period as well as the cultural setting. Mazonde and Carmichael (2020) affirm that the geographical or physical location of story contributes to the believability of the context. The stories are located in the Africentric context, representing a township and rural area that are predominantly occupied by Africans in South Africa.

In the educator's guide, story 1 takes place in Umlazi, the biggest township in KwaZulu-Natal. Residents live in formal and informal housing under the eThekwini Municipality. Residents in formal housing have access to running water, electricity, waterborne sanitation, and reliable road system. There are a few recreational facilities and schools that have playing fields used for all sports. Although social challenges are pervasive among residents in formal housing, Ngcobo (2016) notes that informal settlements are "characterised by socio-economic factors such as "sexism that privileges men and boys, a high unemployment and high crime rate, poverty, drug and substance abuse" (p. 43).

Story 2 takes place in Ezinqoleni, a rural area under the Ugu District Municipality on the south coast of the KwaZulu-Natal province. Chiliza (2004) states that most households in Ezinqoleni have a plot of land to cater for the needs of the family. Although some communities within Ezinqoleni make use of communal taps, the area lacks water, electricity, and sanitation facilitates. There are limited recreational facilities, no public transit options to get to urban areas, and schools typically lack resources. Mbatha (2017, p.7) found that the lack of access to services continues and might be inextricably tied to the increase in the prevalence of substance use as "rural youth start consuming alcohol from a young age and some have been found to be drunk while at school." Mbatha (2017) notes that despite the community's challenges, there are strong cultural and kinship ties. The area is mostly populated by Zulu communities who speak the isiZulu language and follow Zulu cultural norms.

In the stories, the cultural setting depicts the four components of a worldview: time-orientation; orientation to nature; human activity and, the relational orientation (Mkhize, 2004). In many African cultures, time-orientation encapsulates the past (history and traditions), the present (here and now), and future (goal-setting and forward-thinking). In story 1, the main character's upbringing (past) influences her thinking when she faced with peer pressure to use an illicit

drug at a party (present). Worried about addiction and negative impacts on her life (future), she declined the drugs she was offered. The 'orientation to nature' component focusses on people's relationship to nature. In story 2, the main character uses clay to make ornaments, cultivating his artistic abilities with a natural material. Story 2 also presents the 'human activity' and 'relational' components which explore social behaviour and community norms. The main character enjoys walking to school with his friends, learning about technology, chatting with his grandmother and community members, and fetching water and other chores.

3.3.3 The Theme

A theme is the main idea that is consistent throughout the story and is communicated through the thoughts, actions and utterances of the characters. Au (1992) posits that themes are open to personal interpretation and engaging in discussion during classroom instruction is crucial as themes transcend cultural beliefs and highlight universal truths. Galda and Beach (2001) note that when reading a story, learners interpret the characters' actions using different ideological frameworks. Through collaborative discussion, learners construct thematic meanings and display both their understanding of a story and beliefs about life.

In the educator's guide, both stories explore substance use. The stories draw from the CAPS-stipulated subtopics for the LO unit on substance abuse, which are: (1) types and forms of substance abuse; (2) symptoms of substance abuse; (3) intra- and interpersonal factors that contribute to substance abuse; (4) protective factors that reduce the likelihood of substance abuse; and (5) prevention measures: early detection. Each story contains a theme that connects the subtopics for a comprehensive understanding of substance abuse.

Story 1: The main character overcomes peer pressure (theme). At the beginning of the story, the main character is lured to a party by a friend. When she arrived at the party, she is offered ecstasy (type of/form of substance). She declines in fear of disappointing her father or her deceased mother (protective factors—e.g., strong kinship ties—that reduce the likelihood of substance use).

Story 2: The main character experiences bereavement and abuse (theme). The main character feels lost, alone, and abandoned following the death of a loved one. He turns to alcohol to relieve these negative feelings, exploring the curricular section on personal factors that

contribute to substance abuse—intrapersonal (bereavement) and interpersonal (abuse). The main character withdraws from social activities, has bruises on his arms, seems sad and withdraws from schoolwork—all symptoms of substance abuse. Observing the changes, his teacher calmly invites him to discuss any problems in his school and personal life (prevention measures: early detection).

3.3.4 The Plot

The events of the stories in the educator's guide draw from Nwoye's Africentric theory of human motivation (2017). This theory posits that for Africans, motivation is derived from social processes. He writes, "Africans would be better served if they are able to draw from their cultural heritage for values, rituals, cultures, and traditions that are most useful in the modern world" (Nwoye 2021, p. 2). He highlights five sources of motivation, of which two were adopted in this study: (1) the urge to compete favourably with one's age mates and (2) the need to protect against shame.

3.3.4.1 Story 1. The main character in this story considers using substances to fit in with her age-mates and gain the affection of a popular boy, improving her social standing. The relevance of this plot is embodied in the assertion made by Groenewald, Khumalo and Essack (2018) that the engagement of adolescents in risky sexual practices is perpetuated by the abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs. Risky sexual activities encompass early sexual debut, unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, forced or coerced sexual intercourse and transactional sex. These sexual activities increase vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy. Groenewald, Khumalo and Essack (2018) further report that "more than a quarter of South African school-going youth have had sex, 12% of whom had sexual debut before 14 years of age" (p. 57). The study revealed that 17% of these learners used alcohol and 13% used drugs before engaging in sexual activity. Cunha et al., (2012) posit that the major contributing factor is that "in adolescence, there is a heightened focus on self-other evaluations and competition with each other for acceptance, approval and status." (p. 204). In this regard, one might display concerns about their self-presentation, fear of rejection, and occupying an inferior social rank position among age mates.

Members of a social group are typically arranged in a hierarchy whereby some individuals who are considered superior enjoy power, influence, and dominance over the individuals who are considered to be subordinate (Koski, Xie, & Olson, 2015). An individual's status or rank is

measured through social opinion characterised by respect and admiration thus enhancing the individual's reputation, Nwoye (2017) states that individuals use the technique of sideshadowing to engage in social comparison aimed at helping them to keep track of what their mates are doing and the achievements they have made.

3.3.4.2 Story 2. This story opens with a main character who lives with his grandmother (primary caregiver) and aunt (secondary caregiver). He is emotionally close to his grandmother who dies unexpectedly. His aunt, who is now the primary caregiver, becomes emotionally and physically abusive towards him. He is afraid to report the abuse, not wanting to embarrass his aunt and tarnish his reputation in the community.

Burns et al., (2020) affirm that a child who has lost a primary caregiver may experience significant disruptions to their lives and mental health. Furthermore, child bereavement may negatively affect school performance and social wellbeing. Other challenges include financial insecurity, having to adjust to new caregiver(s), and changing schools.

The motivation to avoid shame comes from a fear of the consequences of socially unacceptable behaviour on self and family image and—as the Africentric theory of motivation holds— even on the clans' reputation. Nwoye (2017, p. 16) indicates two kinds of shame. The first kind is "shame of the face", a damaging action that would lead to a negative judgement by the society and loss of social standing. The second kind is "shame of the heart or soul", derived from the internalisation of a community's standards for acceptability and value. Individuals monitor their behaviour in relation to others and failure to adhere to group norms may create feelings of shame. Nwoye (2017) notes that child abuse, whether physical, sexual or emotional, may occur in families, but is rarely reported due to the possibility of negative scrutiny and judgement from the community, on the family concerned. Shweder (2013) elaborates on this feeling of shame:

> It is a terror that touches the mind, the body, and the soul precisely because one is aware that one might be seen to have come up short in relationship to some shared and uncontested ideal that defines what it means to be a good, worthy, admirable, attractive, or competent person, given one's status or position in society. (p. 1115)

3.4 Story Structure

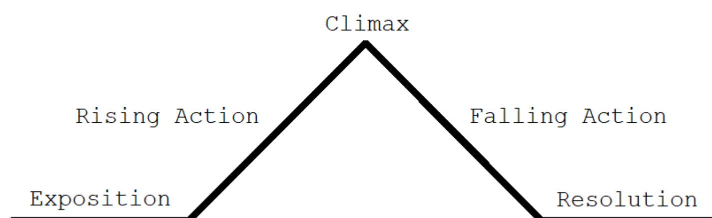
Story structure refers to the order in which the elements of a narrative are organized and unveiled to the reader. The structure may be accomplished with the aid of story theory and narrative structure. Gustav Freytag's pyramid was employed in this study to structure the stories.

A narrative entails a timeline of events which encompass the location, actions and motives of the characters from the beginning to the end of the story (Blackburn, 2015). Freytag (1894) proposed a narrative arc of setting and establishing the context (beginning), a plot progression as characters engage one another (middle), and the resolution of any conflicts (end). In stories 1 and 2, the narrative follows Freytag's pyramid, which consists of five segments:

- Segment 1 (base): General background information such as family history, age, gender, education, and hobbies of the main character that provides context for the reader.
- Segment 2 (upward slope): There is rising action as the characters interact with each other, often leading to tension or conflict.
- Segment 3 (peak): The climax of the story, where characters face external conflict and/or internal conflict.
- Segment 4 (downward slope): Characters begin to resolve their conflict.
- Segment 5 (base): The conflict is resolved, and the narrative concludes. Meaning may be constructed based on conflicts and resolutions (Blackburn, 2015).

Figure 10

Narrative Arc



Note. Adapted from *Freytag's Technique of the Drama* (p. 115), by G. Freytag, 1894, Scott, Foresman.

Boyd, Blackburn and Pennebaker (2020) assert that stories are narrated in chronological sequence to engage the reader at each stage. Even though the main character may have flashbacks, but the stories are told in the present. The attitudes and outlook of the main characters reflect common human experiences and emotions and motivate readers to connect to them. Freytag's pyramid suggests that tension peaks during the middle and towards the end of the narrative.

- Does the story tie itself to grander narratives, rather than to lie isolated?
- Does the author acknowledge obstacles that rerouted the flow of argument (O'Dea,1994)?
- Does the research story hold open different or difficult endings, rather than rushing to happy or premature closure (Bage, 2012, p. 17)?

Wandersee and Roach (2005) further posit that storytelling is an ongoing process rather than a single event. In the educator's guide, the time between part 1 and part 2 of the story may serve as a period of reflection to process the lesson and story so far During this process, learners may form new ideas by integrating the new information with pre-existing knowledge (Bage, 2012).

3.5 Design and Layout

Both stories combine text and illustrations. Fang (1996) indicates that illustrations enhance the enjoyment and understanding of the story. Furthermore, Akkaya (2013), states that visual literacy (interpreting illustrations) facilitates the retainment of new concepts. According to Fang (1996), illustrations assisting with establish the setting, set the tone and mood, define characters, and advance readers' understanding of the plot. This insight was considered in the design and illustrations effected in the educator's guide.

Stories encourage learners to think about different cultures. Therefore, pictures that positively depict racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are likely to improve learners' understanding and acceptance of difference. Hunter (2011) states that historical depictions of Africans in books and the media have neither been favourable nor accurate—featuring exaggerated and derogatory characterizations of hair, skin tone, facial features, and body shape. In contrast, whiteness and lightness are typically depicted as the dominant beauty standard, to which darker-skinned people should aspire. In this regard Fang (1996, p. 140) notes "it is imperative that teachers, textbook writers and illustrators become more sensitive to the information conveyed through the delicate interplay of print, pictures, and the child reader." Fang (1996)

also emphasises that learners may construct meaning by comparing pictures to their life experiences. In the educator's guide, the stories are presented in two formats: story 1 is a comic and story 2 is a short story.

3.5.1 Design and Layout of the Comic

In this regard, McNicol (2017, p. 21) notes that "comics have the potential not merely to relay facts, such as risk factors for a condition, but also to deal with social issues." The use of comics in the classroom encourages learners to follow a sequence of events, interpret characters' visual cues, and relate fictional themes to reality (Tiemensma, 2009).

The educator's guide features a comic and short story with a realistic art style, depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Story 1: Comic Design and Layout

3.5.2 Design and Layout of the Short Story

Martinez et al., (2009) and Bage (2012) assert that short stories with illustrations that capture learners lived experiences and improve their motivation and engagement with curricular content may be used to reconcile different perspectives. They spend more time focussing on decoding the text which hinders their ability to visualise the narrative. Drawing inferences and making predictions becomes increasingly difficult, thus the illustrations may serve as a framework through which meaning is constructed. Reiker (2011) writes that short stories typically have a limited number of characters and simpler plots which along with illustrations, increases engagement among primary and high school-aged. Godwin, Eng and Fisher (2017) agree with this view; however, they advise that illustrations may inadvertently contribute to a competition for attention over the text, thereby reducing decoding which minimizes comprehension of the narrative. Godwin (2018) et al., add that placing the text on top of illustrations increase competition for attention. Separating the text from illustrations, allows for readers to readily focus their attention on the text. In the story presented in the educator's guide, the text is partially separated and adjacent to the illustrations. This layout as noted by Reiker (2011) promotes entertainment while learning. Lundgren, (2001) also highlighted that the facial expressions of the characters might facilitate a discussion on emotions. A strong expression is best conveyed through both the text and illustrations as depicted in figure 12.

Figure 12

Story 2: Short Story Design and Layout

3.6 The Story Reading Technique: Facilitating the Lesson and Discussion Questions

"What teachers do, how students[16] learn, and theory about teaching and learning are entangled (Pang & Marton, 2003, p. 175)." The educator guides this social interaction by providing subject matter content to direct learners towards the objectives of the lesson (Kintsch, 2004). Amineh and Asl (2015) distinguish between an educator as a teacher and an educator as a facilitator. A teacher places greater emphasis on the learner's ability to replicate the subject matter content. Learners may assume a passive role by focussing on memorising the content which may not include context to explore or apply what they have learned. When an educator takes on a facilitator role, they help learners reach their own interpretations of the content. The focus of facilitation is encouraging learners to think more critically, improve their awareness, and be conscious of their thoughts and feelings. Munter et al., (2015) state that direct instruction combined with structured investigation and open exploration enhances learners' engagement with the content. For example, during the introductory stage of the lesson, educators may use direct instruction and present the stories to learners using social constructivist teaching methods.

3.6.1 Direct/Explicit Instruction

DI is defined as "an instructional model to teach well-defined knowledge and skills needed for later learning" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010, p. 409). Direct Instruction (DI) was advanced by Siegfried Engelmann in the 1960s as a teaching model that may be incorporated in curricular design (Engelmann, 1980). When adopting DI, the educator presents the desired knowledge clearly and systematically per the objectives of the curriculum. Learners may draw from background knowledge, but the central focus of DI is explicitly relaying prerequisite knowledge to leaners (Kim & Axelrod, 2005). Joyce and Weil (2004) identified five components of DI: orientation, presentation, structured practice, guided practice, and independent practice.

- Orientation: the educator provides an overview of the lesson, explains the purpose or objective of the lesson, and relates the new content to prior content taught in class.

[16] The terms "student" and "learner" are interchangeable when used in quotation marks throughout this study.

- Presentation: the educator explains the new material by breaking it down into manageable parts. Question & answer sessions at this stage provide additional guidance to improve comprehension.

- Structured practice: the educator engages in problem-solving with the whole class in order to minimise incorrect answers.

- Guided practice: the educator observes learners as they work independently on a task to check for errors and help them with corrections.

- Independent practice: when learners are able to complete at least 85% of the assigned work, they are encouraged to work independently. The educator provides feedback upon submission of their work.

The educator's guide advises educators as follows:

- Read the story out loud in class (presentation)
- Recap the story with learners and read out all the questions (structured practice)
- Assist learners with the completion of the allocated task (guided practice):
  – Allow learners to discuss possible answers in their groups.
  – Discuss possible answers with learners.

During structured practice, educators may ask learners to summarise and engage critically with the main events of the story. Bage (2012) outlines questions that can be used to facilitate the content and guide learners' comprehension.

Table 5

Direct Instruction: Questions in the Stories

	Questions that can be used in Direct Instruction	**Questions in story 1: Part 1**
1	Who is the main character?	Name the characters in the comic.
2	Where is the story taking place?	Where does Nolwazi live?
3	What is the big event?	Why is Nolwazi upset?

4	When did the big event take place?	Do you think Nolwazi should go to the party?
5	Why did the big event occur?	Do you think Nolwazi is boring? Why?

3.6.2 Constructivist Teaching

It is difficult for learners to make collective meaning of the subject matter if their experiences are overlooked by DI teaching techniques that prioritize objectivity. Mintzes et al., (2005, p. xviii) state that: "In its simplest form, we believe that human beings are meaning-makers; that the goal of education is to construct shared meanings and that this goal may be facilitated through the active intervention of well-prepared teachers." Constructivism may enhance learners' integration of the presented stories and the subject matter content. Baviskar, Hartle, and Whitney (2009, p.554) elaborated on four principles of constructivist teaching from this model:

- Eliciting prior knowledge: giving learners an opportunity to share what they already know is critical as their experiences shape how they engage with new knowledge.

- Creating cognitive dissonance: discussing the content in relation to learners' thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes is encouraged to encourage new ideas by facilitating old ones.

- Application of knowledge with feedback: where learners do not evaluate and adjust old information in the context of new knowledge, it is likely that new knowledge may be misinterpreted or rejected. Integrating the stories with the subject matter requires educators to offer feedback to learners for them to refine old information and integrate new constructs.

- Reflection on learning: learners must be encouraged to express what they have learned in discussion settings or assessments.

Kanselaar (2002) states that constructivism comprises of two major strands. Cognitive constructivism follows Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development which assumes that learners make sense of new information by evaluating it against previous experiences. When learners encounter challenges to their thinking, they experience a state of disequilibrium or

uncertainty Social constructivism, on the other hand, assumes that learning is facilitated through social exchange which is inextricable to culture and history.

Social constructivism follows the sociocultural theory by Lev Vygotsky. The theory holds that knowledge is constructed through language. As such, social constructivism assumes that learners construct meaning and understanding in collaboration with learners (Amineh & Asl, 2015). When learners interact with each other and share their ideas, they may relate the stories to their own circumstances. Learning is a process that occurs as learners synthesise new content, prior knowledge, and different cultural views. Social constructivist teaching methods may be integrated into the story reading technique to cater to diverse learner backgrounds. Within social constructivist teaching, learners are encouraged to develop their own understanding of the content. Learners are encouraged to ask questions and synthesise responses with their peers. Kintsch (2004) notes that the questions below educators may help learners draw from prior knowledge when making meaning of the content:

- Text based questions: questions that can only be answered by referring to the text. These questions promote a general understanding of the story. The questions: *Who is Thabani? What did Thabani ask Nolwazi to do?* (See Story 1: part 2). These questions can only be answered when the story has been read.

- Elaboration questions: information in the story is related to learners' background knowledge. This helps them to make connections between their lives and the content. For example, peer pressure is not defined in this story and learners may have to draw from existing knowledge to answer the question, *what is peer pressure?* (Story 1: part 2)

- Inference questions: learners are required to connect two or more separate text segments. The question: *why did Nolwazi refuse the drugs,* (Story 1: part 2) requires learners to discuss friendship, peer pressure, protective factors, and consequences of substance abuse. In such cases, learners may connect the story to the curricular content and their own lives.

- Problem-solving questions: Learners evaluate unexpected events.
  What do you think about Nolwazi's decision to walk away from her friendship with Lerato? (Story 1: part 2). This question requires learners to use information provided in the text to evaluate the situation.

In order to achieve the objectives of each lesson, social constructivism highlights the importance of prior knowledge when facilitating learning. This contextualises learning as learners discuss constructs that represent real life problems, attaching real meanings to abstract concepts. Mintzes et al., (2005) further note that synthesizing new experiences with existing knowledge makes subject matter meaningful in learners' lives. Narratives therefore help learners bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and the content of the LO curriculum.

Social constructivism posits that for learning to take place within the classroom, the educator must locate learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) and learners' limits. The ZPD refers to the difference between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can accomplish with assistance (Amineh & Asl, 2015). The educator must advance learners' pre-existing understanding and capacity (lower limit) to tasks that require teaching to complete (upper limit). Learners may engage in individual tasks, group work, and whole-class discussions. Educators engage in scaffolding, defined as the support provided to learners when they are unable to complete a task on their own (Jones & Carter, 2005). Educators may call on other learners or peers to provide support, expanding and sharing prior knowledge to advance learners' understanding of new concepts. Sharing ideas in small groups affords every learner the opportunity to participate in discussion. This enhances or sustains learners' motivation to complete assigned tasks.

3.7 Assessment Activities

Shepard (2000) notes that educators view assessments and instruction as serving separate purposes. Social constructivist teaching considers assessment and curricular instruction as interconnected components that achieve curricular objectives. Assessments determine learners' comprehension of the content and highlight areas where more intervention is necessary (Prinsloo & Harvey, 2016). Throughout each school term, educators engage in formative assessments which are frequent, interactive, and involve all learners in the class. The educator's guide may provide support for formative assessments as educators may adopt and adapt the activities provided in the guide to evaluate learners' understanding of the LO curriculum. The

assessment section of the guide provides support for summative assessments which are formal evaluations submitted for grades to determine if curriculum objectives have been met. (Prinsloo & Harvey, 2016).

3.7.1 The Assessment Process

As learning outcomes, teaching, and assessment methods are interrelated, assessment tasks must reflect constructivist teaching methods. Rust et al., (2005) state that assessment tasks must:

- Reflect a context that is relevant or has meaning to learners.
- Evaluate learners' problem-solving skills and ability to apply new knowledge.
- Evaluate learners' understanding and application of theories.

The authors outline 4 steps of the assessment process: (1) explicit criteria, (2) active engagement with criteria, (3) completion and submission of work, and (4) active engagement with feedback.

Explicit criteria: clearly stating the instructions and requirements of each assessment to learners, as outlined in the educator's guide (Appendix A, p.4).

Figure 13

Explain that the learners need to role play this comic.

- Working in groups, the characters in this comic must be allocated to learners (by themselves or by the educator). Each group must role play one part of the story; either part 1 or part 2. The group that is role playing part 1 should perform first, followed by the group that is performing part 2 of the story.
- Learners may improvise.

Active engagement with criteria: the educator evaluates assessment tasks using a clearly defined evaluation scheme. Table 6 demonstrates an example of the assessment criteria in the educator's guide (Appendix A, p. 20) that can be discussed with learners.

Table 6

Evaluation Criteria for Role-play

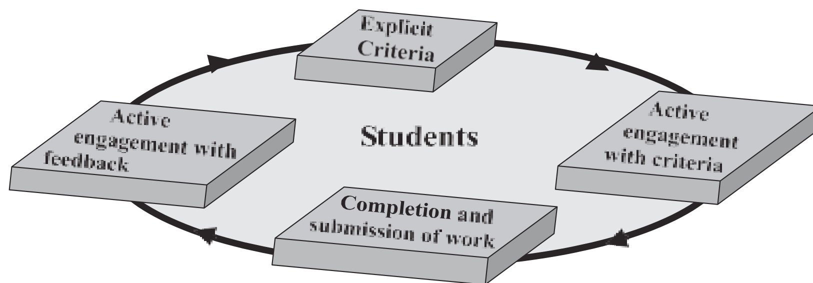
Understanding of topic	**0 – 1** No clear understanding demonstrated.	**2 – 3** Presented the story as written with no deviation.	**4 – 5** Drew from other sources to enhance the story.
Co-operation	**0 – 1** No co-operation. Lines were not memorised.	**2 – 3** Improvisation where necessary but lines were memorised.	**4 – 5** Lines were well memorised. Each member knew their cue.
Props	**0 – 1** No props or one prop which was not effectively used.	**2 – 3** Two props. Moderate use of props	**4 – 5** Three or more props. Good use of the props.
Creativity	**0 – 1** Lack of enthusiasm and no creativity displayed.	**2 – 3** Enthusiastic and introduced new ideas	**4 – 5** Commanded attention and excellent execution.
TOTAL (20)			

Completion and submission of work: educators must attend to for them to feel supported and minimise confusion. Educators may use the scaffolding method for learners who find the task too difficult and provide feedback where necessary.

Active engagement with feedback: once learners have submitted and the work is marked, the educator must provide feedback according to the evaluation criteria. Learners may compare their work to the evaluation criteria. While learners still have time to prepare for the next assessment, educators may provide specific and generic feedback to individual learners and the entire class. Figure 14 depicts the relationship between the separate elements of assessment.

Figure 14

Social Constructivist Assessment Model



Note. From "A social constructivist assessment process model: how the research literature shows us this could be best practice" by C. Rust, B. O'Donovan and M. Price, 2005, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 30*(3), p. 236.

3.7.2 Assessment Tasks and Model Answers

Mkabela highlights the prevalence of Eurocentric assessment standards across school curriculums. Formal education does not include "adequate reference to the indigenous education that Africans already had" (2005, p. 178). While the DBE has made strides in education reform—particularly in teaching methods—this has not necessarily improved content delivery and assessment standards. The assessment tasks proposed in this study focus on affect rather than evaluating cognitive abilities. This entails examining learners' attitudes and values, which Popham describes as having "a profoundly important role in students' postschool lives, possibly an even more significant role than that played by students' cognitive achievements" (2009, p. 85). As such, the new taxonomy of educational objectives was adopted in this study as Irvine (2020, p. 1) notes that "employing Marzano's taxonomy as a framework is particularly appropriate for studies involving student affect."

The taxonomy presented by Marzano and Kendall (2007) was adapted from Bloom (1956) who outlined a model to classify learners' skills, comprised of six graduated tiers of cognitive of complexity. Bloom's taxonomy has been criticised for oversimplifying learning processes. Despite revisions over the years, the model remains a cognitive taxonomy. Marzano (2001) notes that Bloom's taxonomy excludes critical considerations, such as learners' beliefs and feelings, and how they make sense of curricular content. Marzano and Kendall (2007) outlined a new taxonomy which integrates six levels of information processing in three systems: (1) self-system, (2) metacognitive system, and (3) cognitive system.

For each assessment task in the educator's guide there are corresponding model answers, which can be adapted as necessary. The aspects that educators may focus on for each task are discussed below.

Hull and Rose (1990, p. 268) write that "when we teachers enter classrooms with particular poems or stories in hand, we also enter with expectations about the kind of student responses that would be most fruitful." It is inevitable that there might be a mismatch between the expected and the actual responses from learners. The responses provided by learners may be influenced by their culture and environment which are not necessarily shared by educators. Hull and Rose (1990, p. 267) capture this view when noting: "the wooden shacks might not spark the same dramatic response in him as in a conventional/ middle class reader. Model answers can be viewed as ideal responses that are written by the author to aid a discussion or comprise a total of 100% when the marks are tallied (Huxham, 2007). Learners may compare their work to the answers provided for each activity. Model answers should be informed by grading criteria to minimize confusion (Frost, 2016).

Table 7

The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Level 6: Self-System Thinking	
Examining Importance Examining Efficacy Examining Emotional Response Examining Motivation	Students identify how important the knowledge is to them and the reasoning underlying this perception. Students identify beliefs about their ability to improve competence or understanding relative to knowledge and the reasoning underlying this perception. Students identify emotional responses to knowledge and the reasons for these responses. Students identify their overall level of motivation to improve competence or understanding relative to knowledge and the reasons for this level of motivation.

Level 5: Metacognition	
Specifying Goals Process Monitoring Monitoring Clarity Monitoring Accuracy	Students[17] establish a goal relative to the knowledge and a plan for accomplishing the goal. Students monitor the execution of specific goals as they relate to the knowledge. Students determine the extent to which they have clarity about the knowledge. Students determine the extent to which they are accurate about the knowledge.
Level 4: Knowledge Utilization	
Decision Making Problem Solving Experimenting Investigating	Students use the knowledge to make decisions or make decisions about the knowledge. Students use the knowledge to solve problems or solve problems about the knowledge. Students use the knowledge to generate and test hypotheses or generate and test hypotheses about the knowledge. Students use the knowledge to conduct investigations or conduct investigations about the knowledge.
Level 3: Analysis	
Matching Classifying Analyzing Errors Generalizing Specifying	Students identify important similarities and differences between knowledge components. Students identify superordinate and subordinate categories related to the knowledge. Students identify errors in the presentation or use of the knowledge. Students construct new generalizations or principles based on the knowledge. Students identify specific applications or logical consequences of the knowledge.

[17] The term student (in the table above) is used synonymously with the term learner in the present study.

Level 2: Comprehension	
Integrating Symbolizing	Students identify the basic structure of knowledge and the critical as opposed to noncritical characteristics. Students construct an accurate symbolic representation of the knowledge, differentiating critical and noncritical components.
Level 1: Retrieval	
Recognizing Recalling Executing	Students recognize features of information but do not necessarily understand the structure of the knowledge or differentiate critical from noncritical components. Students produce features of information but do not necessarily understand the structure of the knowledge or differentiate critical from noncritical components. Students perform a procedure without significant error but do not necessarily understand how and why the procedure works.

Note. Adapted from *The new taxonomy of educational objectives* (2nd ed., p. 67), by R. Marzano and J. Kendall, 2007, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

3.7.2.1 Level 6: Self-System. Self-system pertains to one's beliefs, efficacy, emotions, and motivation related to assigned tasks and objectives. Marzano and Kendall (2007) posit that learners are more receptive to assessments when they believe that tasks are important, and objectives are achievable. Assessments must be engaging, appropriate for learners' capacity, and foster a positive environment to explore, investigate, and interpret knowledge. Irvine (2020) notes that learners' motivation is not fixed and varies by assessment task. Consistent feedback may maintain learners' engagement with tasks and improve their confidence. Instructional and assessment strategies that include choice questions and connections to real life support self-system thinking. The technique can promote self-system thinking in written assessments. The example of a formal writing activity below can be used with the story reading technique.

- Formal writing activity: Write a paragraph about your favourite character.

Nunan (1989) states that:

> Writing is the act of putting down the graphic symbols that represent a language in order to convey some meaning so that the reader can grasp the information which the writer has tried to impart. In this sense, writing is an act of transmitting thoughts, feelings and ideas on paper. (p. 36)

Igel, Clemons, Apthorp, and Bachler (2010) suggest the following consideration when marking formal writing. Learners' description of their favourite character (personal traits - physical description from the illustration or the personality of the character). Learners may also explain or provide reasons for choosing this particular character (activate learner's prior knowledge and promote an emotional response).

The focus must also be on the writing mechanics and coherence of the paragraph (sentence structure). For formal written assessments, the educator may also use a rubric to indicate the aspects that learners need to focus on. Learners should aim to avoid contradictions in their writing for the educator to have a clear sequence of the expressed thoughts (Dahal, 2016).

3.7.2.2 Level 5: Metacognitive System. Educators evaluate the learners' application of knowledge, clarity, and accuracy. This means that the educator must specify the goal(s) of the lesson and monitor the process towards achieving the goal(s).

- Role-play

Kodotchigova (2002) states that role-plays can be performed individually and in pairs. Role-plays give learners opportunities to engage with their peers and explore different social contexts and roles. However, Huang and Shan (2008) posit that the use of role-play can be overwhelming for learners, particularly if scripts are long and English is not their first language. Kodotchigova (2002) notes that learners should be allowed to modify situations and dialogues to convey their interpretation of the story and encourage creative thinking.

A rubric was used in this study to guide the evaluation of the role-play such that educators may effectively communicate the expectations of this task for assessment. Andrade and Du (2005, p. 1) define a rubric as "a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor." Learners can plan, reflect on their work and refine accordingly.

3.7.2.3 Cognitive System. According to Neisser (1967, p. 4), cognition refers to "processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used." Timofte and Siminiciuc (2018) note that the cognitive system comprises of retrieval, comprehension, analysis, and knowledge utilisation.

3.7.2.3 a Level 4: Knowledge utilisation

Perales et al., (2018) state that knowledge utilisation, or the application of knowledge to various situations is the most complex level of the cognitive system. This process entails decision-making, problem-solving, experimentation, and investigation. Learners engage in generating and selecting alternatives (decision-making) to accomplish the set goal (problem-solving) as demonstrated in the reflection activity, discussed below. Learners may formulate and test hypotheses (experimentation) or may use secondary and/or historical data (investigation) to explain a phenomenon.

- Reflection activity: Look at the decision chart and read the options. Consider the option you think is best and provide possible solutions to the questions.

  The educator may administer this activity in written form or in discussion form. The educator may encourage a debate in groups (as per the options provided in the decision chart).

This activity is used to facilitate a debate between groups of learners or as a written activity. Debating is a skill that requires appropriate language use, decision-making, and problem-solving. Learners may grapple with situations that challenge their preconceptions as they relate to one another from differing perspectives which promotes empathy and respect for other worldviews (Hidayati, Choiron & Basthomi, 2019). At the beginning of the debate, learners in their teams must state a claim and provide evidence supporting it while interrogating and discounting that of the opposition. Osborne (2005, p. 40) iterated the importance of promoting debating among learners by stating that "for democracies are societies in which debate is central. Yet this culture of argument is initially alien to most students." Managing a classroom debate may be demanding on the educator who must explain the debate format, constitute the teams and communicate the roles. Points raised during the debate must be discussed with the whole class and sufficiently relayed to the subject matter content.

The questions below were proposed by Oros (2007) to evaluate classroom debate. Although educators may adapt the criteria to suit the debate, overall, emphasis should be placed on the content, clarity and persuasiveness of the argument. Evaluation criteria for the oral debate (Oros, 2007, p. 296):

1. Has the team provided clear, coherent arguments?
2. Has the team met the burden of proof, based on subject matter materials and/or outside research?
   – In other words, is adequate supporting evidence provided?
3. Were presentations clear and persuasive?
   – Are the speakers easy to understand?
   – Do the speakers make eye contact with the audience?
   – Is the team's delivery both dynamic and effective?
4. Effectiveness of argumentation and reasoning
   – Were the arguments and counterarguments presented logically consistent?
   – Do the speakers find flaws or inconsistencies in their opponent's reasoning?
   – Is the team able to confront opposing arguments and rebuild their own case?

3.7.2.3 b Level 3: Analysis

Analysis entails processing new information using matching, classification, generalisation, and prediction techniques as demonstrated in the example below:

- Matching: Answer the questions and write the letter of the picture that corresponds to your answer (see appendix A).

Learners also engage in classifying by defining characteristics of superordinate and subordinate categories. When completing the matching activity, learners may respond in simple sentences. In the activity presented in the educator's guide (p. 21), learners must match their written answer to a letter of the picture they think best complements the answer. If the written answer is accurate but does not match the letter of the correct picture, partial marks may be allocated. However, if the written answer is incorrect but the matching letter is correct, no marks should be awarded as the learner could not identify similarities between their answer and the letter of the picture they have chosen (Green, & Hawkey, 2012).

3.7.2.3 c Level 2: Comprehension

Comprehension is the interpretation and integration of the information. In the educator's guide, each story is accompanied by discussion questions that promote learners' comprehension of the story and subject matter.

- Oral assessment: Discussion questions

The discussion questions presented in the educator's guide may be adapted by the educator in various ways however, in this study, the questions were posed to the whole class. The educator guides learners when they get some answers wrong and prompts them to answer when they remain silent. This encouragement promotes interest in the task regardless of whether it will be graded (Joughin, 2010). When encouraging learners to respond, educators may request for further information or provide learners with extra information that might help them to formulate a response. Educators may also repeat or rephrase the question to which learners did not respond. Throughout this process, educators must be mindful of time constraints as the stories must be relayed to the subject content. Learners that are typically quiet may be encouraged to respond to the questions as this assessment is a whole class activity. This may bolster their confidence as Ahmed et al., (1999) state that oral assessment aids educators to identify learners' knowledge of the subject matter content. Also, learners' verbal communication skills are enhanced by correcting them when they make errors such as mispronouncing some words. During this process, however, educators must provide constructive feedback when learners' responses are incorrect. That is, supportive comments that help the learner to identify weaknesses in their response.

3.7.2.3d Level 1: Retrieval

Retrieval pertains to learners' ability to recognize items and recall related information (Irvine, 2020) (Appendix A, p. 18).

- Fill in the blank: Listen to the story and fill the blank spaces in the summary.

Fill-in-the-blank assessments may include a combination of correct and incorrect response options or require learners to recall the correct answer without a response bank. This assessment format is popular as "practising retrieval is an effective strategy to enhance meaningful learning" (Smith & Karpicke, 2014, p. 784). At the beginning of this activity the educator must indicate when and how learners should answer questions. For all the possible ways of administering this assessment, learners must recognize the presented information and

recall the missing words or construction of the paragraph (Moreira, Pinto, Starling & Jaeger, 2019).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the development and description of the study tools (the educator's guide and the stories). Ten components that constitute the educator's guide were highlighted which served as the main conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology applied in the study, where the following aspects of the research process are discussed: the qualitative approach, the interpretivist paradigm, the phenomenological design, and information about the study participants (who the participants were and how they were sampled), the data production instruments, and the method employed in analysing the data generated. The procedure's ethical considerations are also delineated in this chapter.

4.2 Qualitative Research Approach

The study took a qualitative research approach. In following this approach, the researcher was aware that a research study must entail a plan or procedures of inquiry, which means that it must have a research approach, paradigm, and design (Fox, 2008). According to Park, Konge, and Artino (2020, p. 690), positivist researchers who follow the quantitative approach "rely on the hypothetico-deductive method to verify *a priori* hypotheses that are often stated quantitatively." This is because positivism that is behind most quantitative research does not emphasise the importance of subjective experiences or the participants' personal values. Rather, positivist researchers operate in dualism, with the view that individual participants and the researcher are separate or do not influence each other. It is for this reason that positivist researchers assume that objectivity can be achieved.

However, within the social and applied human sciences, where a qualitative research approach is followed, as in the study, the notion of absolute truth is seen as difficult to achieve because knowledge is *a posteriori* (Kirby, 2013). This emphasis on the *a posteriori* nature of human knowledge gave rise to the philosophy of post-positivism, which "recognizes that dualistic thinking is usually inadequate, and that multiplicity and complexity are the reality of all human experiences" (Henderson, 2011, p. 342). Within this understanding of post-positivism, qualitative procedures of inquiry that place emphasis on the values, beliefs, and norms of the participants, are central in presenting reality as perceived by the participants. The constructs of interpretivism and constructivism emerged against this background, emphasising participants' meanings concerning their social context. Corroborating this observation, Malterud (2001, p. 483) posits that qualitative research entails the systematic collection, organization, and

interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversation. It is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context. Because the study was interested in doing exactly what Malterud (2001) said a qualitative study does, the researcher considered the qualitative research approach fitting for implementing the study.

Draper (2004) identified five methodological principles of qualitative research, which are highlighted below.

4.2.1 Philosophical Basis and Research Aims

According to Draper (2004), within the qualitative approach, participants develop subjective meanings of their experiences. The focus of the study is typically on how people experience or perceive aspects of their lives, individual or collective behaviour, and the dynamics that influence social interaction, including beliefs, social rules, and values. In the study, story reading was proposed as a technique for teaching the social issues component of the Grade 7 Life Orientation subject. The chief interest was on the LO facilitators' reviews and evaluations of the adequacy and relevance of the presented educator's guide and the story reading technique for use in South African schools. In this regard, the qualitative approach allowed for the detection of the influence of gender roles in the learners' responses during the implementation of the story reading technique.

4.2.2 Analytical Process

As noted by Draper (2004), qualitative researchers focus on the processes of interactions through inductive reasoning, that is, on detecting patterns and establishing themes emanating from participants' realities. Under this approach, participants are viewed as active contributors to knowledge production, whereby the researcher interprets the social realities presented by the participants. As the primary data generation instrument, the researcher analyses and presents data in totality rather than in isolation, and a theoretical framework could also be used to explain the data. This study adopted the reader response/reception theory (Fox, 2008).

4.2.3 Study Design

In a qualitative research approach, the design refers to the plan for the study, which entails the data generation procedures to answer the research question(s). The study design specifies the units of analysis (individuals or groups), recruitment, and sampling processes to establish the

credibility of the study (Creswell, et al., 2006). In other words, like in quantitative research, in qualitative research approach, the research design outlines how the study will be conducted before implementation. Robson (2002); and Mason (2017) discuss three forms of research design in qualitative research approach: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Within the qualitative study approach, descriptive research provides a written account of a person or event relating to the phenomenon under study. The focus is on the elements of the phenomenon (Robson, 2002). On the other hand, the exploratory research design is used when there are few or no earlier studies to understand the phenomenon or to rely upon to form a solution. The focus, in that case, is on understanding the research problem and gaining new insight to formulate a solution (Creswell, et al., 2006). In its own case, the explanatory design is used when the research aims to identify the causes and effects of the phenomenon under study (Mason, 2017). The focus is on why the phenomenon occurred.

The exploratory research design was adopted from a phenomenological perspective (see section 4.4). The focus is on determining how the LO facilitators viewed the story reading technique presented to them.

4.3 Research Paradigm

The study was grounded on an interpretivist research paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017, p. 26) define a paradigm as the "perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data." Using an interpretivist paradigm, the study focused on understanding and interpreting the meanings presented by participants through observation as well as their subjective viewpoints about the adequacy and relevance of the educator's guide and story reading technique they evaluated. As Kivunja and Kuyini (2017, p. 33) note, "The central endeavour of the Interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience." The four elements of paradigms identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are elaborated below in consideration of the interpretivist paradigm in the present study: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology.

4.3.1 Epistemological Assumptions

Within the interpretivist paradigm, the understanding is that*: "Realities are multiple and socially constructed"* (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 34). Hence, the fundamental tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that individually experienced reality is socially constructed (Punch,

2013). Based on this understanding, the present study assumed an intersubjective epistemology. Mascolo and Kallio (2020, p. 4) define intersubjectivity as “the capacity for shared or coordinated experience within episodes of joint activity.” Interactions with participants, comprised of dialogue, questioning, listening, observation, and recording (social construction of the “truth”), guided the interpretation (representation of “reality”), which the participants verified and validated. With this view in mind, Slavin (1984) discusses four sources of knowledge from which researchers articulate their findings: intuitive knowledge, authoritative knowledge, logical knowledge, and empirical knowledge. The kind of knowledge gained from the present study can be described as authoritative knowledge as the study participants are LO facilitators.

4.3.2 Ontological Assumptions

“There is inevitable interaction between the researcher and research participants” (Kivunja & Kuyini (2017, p. 34). This is one of the principal assumptions of the qualitative research approach. In this regard, the word ontology refers to the assumptions that the researcher makes regarding that which can be known about the phenomenon under study. These assumptions or propositions help the researcher identify the significance of the phenomenon, answer the research questions, and contribute possible solutions to the problem under investigation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The present study assumed a relativist ontology, in which the phenomenon of study comprised multiple realities that can be explored and meaning constructed or reconstructed through interactions between the researcher and the research participants (Sider, 2009). Although the participants were LO facilitators, they have different roles and responsibilities (multiple realities) and, therefore, different aspects of LO design and implementation. By interacting with each participant, the researcher acquired their constructed meanings and judgements in relation to the story reading technique presented to them.

4.3.3 Methodological Assumptions

“Contextual factors need to be taken into consideration in any systematic pursuit of understanding” (Kivunja & Kuyini (2017, p. 34). The present study assumed a naturalistic methodology. Data was gathered through interviews, reflective sessions, and non-participant observation of educators who implemented the story reading technique in their ‘natural setting’ or classrooms.

4.3.4 Axiological Assumptions

"Findings, can be value laden and the values need to be made explicit" (Kivunja & Kuyini (2017, p. 34). This is one of the axiological assumptions adopted in this study, and the term axiology is used here to refer to the ethical considerations when conducting a research study: defining, evaluating, and understanding concepts of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour relating to the research. This links to the study's trustworthiness, respect for the participants, and the drawing of appropriate meanings from the generated data (Finnis, 2011). The present research assumed a balanced axiology, where the research outcomes are believed to reflect the abovementioned values, demonstrating an attempt to present a balanced report of the findings.

4.4 A Phenomenological Research Design

A phenomenological research design was adopted in the study, which Marton (1986, p. 31) states is when a researcher is interested in exploring "qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them." Following this design, the researcher described the studied phenomenon from the participants' perspective or from those who have experienced it. The experience's meaning, what was experienced, and how it was experienced can be explored from different phenomenological viewpoints.

4.4.1 Transcendental/ Descriptive Phenomenology

The fundamental belief of transcendental phenomenology is that reality is in the individual's consciousness; it is internal to the knower. Therefore, the researcher must separate themselves from the phenomenon of study. Another belief of this phenomenology is the presence of universal essences, or eidetic structures, meaning that lived experience comprise features that are common to individuals who have/had the experience (Lopez & Willis, 2004). The researcher considers the phenomenon from different perspectives and identifies units of meaning that are then classified into themes. Textural descriptions, a narrative about the participants' perceptions of a phenomenon, are used to substantiate each theme. Thereafter, the researcher elaborates on the structures of experience (imaginative variation), thus creating structural description—a contextualisation of the factors that influence the participants' experiences. The phenomenon's meaning is assumed to arise when the textural and structural descriptions are integrated. To transcend bias, the researcher engages in epoché or *bracketing*; describing the researcher's *a priori* knowledge or subjectivity during data generation and

analysis. Furthermore, the researcher does not allow assumptions, or philological/scientific/psychological theory to interfere with the inquiry (Moustakas, 1994).

4.4.2 Hermeneutic/ Interpretive Phenomenology

Hermeneutics is "the theory and practice of interpretation" (Paterson, & Higgs, 2005, p. 342). More specific to the current study, hermeneutics explore "how we read, understand, and handle texts, especially those written in another time or in a context of life different from our own" (Thiselton, 2009, p. 1). In contrast to transcendental phenomenology, Martin Heidegger viewed people as both influenced by and influencers of their social world, thus the emergence of hermeneutic phenomenology. This phenomenology emphasises individuals' narratives to understand their experience of a particular phenomenon or their "lifeworld," a term coined by Heidegger (Zelić, 2008). Lifeworld refers to "the idea that individuals' realities are invariably influenced by the world in which they live." Furthermore, the term, "being-in-the-world," emphasizes that "humans cannot abstract themselves from the world" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 279). Specifically, people's interpretations of a phenomenon are influenced by their personal and social characteristics such as class, race, gender, and beliefs. Given this, hermeneutic phenomenology was adopted in the present study to interpret the participants' understandings and experience of implementing the story reading technique.

4.4.3 Principles of the Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research Design

Some of the principles of hermeneutic phenomenological research design that influenced the present study include the ideas that:

1. Meaning and knowing are social constructions, always incomplete and developing. The focus is on "the process by which meanings are created, negotiated, sustained and modified" (Andrews, 2012, p. 40). The researcher sought to understand the world of lived experience (LO teaching) from the perspective of those participants participants who engage in it. Based on the above understanding, the researcher sought to explore and interpret the meanings that the participants ascribed to the educator's guide and story reading technique presented to them.

2. The investigator is a part of the experience being studied, and the investigator's values play a role in the investigation. Based on this principal, the researcher and participants were understood as inseparable in the process of knowledge production.

This is reflected in the concept of Dasein, as discussed by Heidegger (1988), who stated that Dasein refers to "the notion of a 'living being' through their activity of 'being there' and being in the world" (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016, p. 2). In other words, the experience of the researcher and participants is embedded in a pre-existing social world where they are born, influencing their understanding of themselves and those around them (see section 4.4.7).

3. Bias is inherent in all research and should be articulated.
   Horrigan-Kelly et al. (2016, p. 2) noted that Dasein is central to the researcher's "inquiry into being and their ability to question and focus on personal existence." Consequently, researchers cannot separate themselves from personal characteristics; hence, pre-judgments form part of their interpretation of the participants' responses (Wertz et al., 2011). The present researcher engaged in reflexivity, which refers to the researcher's awareness of their subjective role, therefore acknowledging any preconceptions that may influence the research process. Hibbert et al. (2010) distinguished between reflection and reflexivity, noting that reflection pertains to observing or examining personal behavioural responses to external and internal stimuli and reflexivity is about questioning these observations and interpreting personal behaviour concerning the object of study (see section 4.4.7).

4. Participants and investigators share knowledge and are partners.
   Thiselton (2009, p. 14) emphasises that interpretation should move from "pre-understanding to fuller understanding." To attain a holistic meaning, the researcher continuously moved between the "general" and the "specific" meaning of the participants' responses, which were influenced by their professional context (see section 4.4.6). Similarly, the researcher incorporated the participants' views into the educator's guide. Therefore, the author (researcher) and the reader (participants) are part of the text (educator's guide) as demonstrated in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15

A Moderate Version of Reader Response Theory

Author ⟶ **Text** ⟷ **Readers**

Note. From *Hermeneutics: an introduction* (p. 31)*,* by A. C. Thiselton, 2009, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

5. Common forms of expression (e.g., words or art) are important.
   In hermeneutic phenomenology, dialogue is used to produce a shared understanding from different interpretations (intersubjectivity) of the phenomenon (Mottern, 2013). Thus, knowledge is relational, and meaning emerges through hermeneutic conversation (Sloan, & Bowe, 2014). More specifically, the researcher and participants (interlocutors) engage in conversation about the phenomenon of study through language. Here, the aim of the hermeneutic conversation was for participants to understand the story reading technique encapsulated in the educator's guide and draw from their understanding in order for the researcher to construct a more complete interpretation.

6. Meanings may not be shared by everyone. This study used a phenomenographic data analysis, where the focus was on the "qualitatively different ways in which people understand a particular phenomenon or an aspect of the world around them" (Marton & Pong, 2005, p. 335). The participants' responses to the educator's guide and story reading technique were categorised according to similarities and supported by descriptions taken from the participants' actual words to formulate an evaluation outcome.

4.4.4 Population and Sampling Method

The participants in this study were required to read the educator's guide presented to them and provide evaluative responses in their professional capacities. With reference to the reader response theory, Iser (1974) discusses two categorises of readers: the hypothetical reader and the real reader. The hypothetical/ideal reader is a fictitious being that captures all possible realizations or meanings of a text from a personal and historical view (Lobo, 2013). This reader is created in the author's mind and precedes the real reader to close gaps that appear in the text.

When developing the educator's guide for the study, the researcher constructed fictitious readers comprising of grade 7 learners and LO facilitators to write content that would be coherent to real readers. Therefore, the hypothetical reader, in this study, represented the target population.

Table 8

Target Population

	Reader/Participant	Role in the study
1.	Curriculum developers	Determine grade level of the educator's guide
2.	Graphic designers	Visualize and create graphics including illustrations and layouts of the educator's guide. Evaluate the educator's guide.
3.	Grade 7 Learners	Indirect participants: Evaluate the stories during LO lesson.
4.	Grade 7 LO Educators	Evaluate the educator's guide and implement the story reading technique.
5.	Grade 7 Subject advisors	Provide guidance on preparation for teaching and learning through the story reading technique. Evaluate whether the educator's guide is informed by the curriculum and supplements textbooks. Evaluate whether the stories match different learner abilities.
6.	Grade 7 LO Lecturers	Evaluate the educator's guide [and give feedback if they used it with student teachers to supplement textbooks].
7.	Grade 6 Life Skills (LS) Lecturers	Determine progression of the educator's guide from Grade 6 subject matter.

Table 8 demonstrates that purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants who have experience developing content or teaching LO. Thereby, purposive sampling is the intentional selection of participants based on predetermined characteristics or their ability to explain a particular phenomenon (Han & Ellis, 2019). An essential guiding principle in purposive sampling for the present study, as noted by Koerber and McMichael (2008) was to explore maximum variation, which refers to the inclusion of participants who reflect different perspectives concerning the phenomenon under study. In order to present the various viewpoints of persons who have specialized in LO, expert sampling was adopted (Etikan & Bala, 2017). In other words, the participants are active in the facilitation of LO in Basic Education or Higher Education and Training. In this regard, Lobo (2013) posits that the real reader denotes a reading group of individuals whose responses have been documented in relation to a particular text. In this study, the participants should be viewed as real readers because their responses have been documented in relation to the presented educator's guide.

Yeo et al. (2012) recommend a small sample size, 10–12, for phenomenography research. In the present study, the intended sample size comprised of four LO educators and two individuals in each of the five professional fields (see Table 8), totaling 16 experts. While every effort was made to recruit such participants into the study sample, only five individuals agreed to participate. Commenting on such shortfalls, Koerber and McMichael (2008) state that as long as researchers recruit a sample that is diverse enough to meet the objectives, such a sample size should be considered sufficient for purposeful sampling.

In sum, based on the clarifications above, the study participants consisted of five LO facilitators within two categories. Three participants evaluated the educator's guide [and story reading technique]:1 Life Orientation lecturer, 1 Life Skills lecturer, and 1 subject advisor. Two participants implemented the story reading technique in a classroom setting and evaluated the educator's guide: 2 educators from different schools. All participants were females between the ages of 35–55 years. Four were Africans, and one was white. All the participants possessed a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) qualification/equivalent or higher at the time of the study. One educator (Ms. SK) was located in a quintile 4 school (fee-paying institution), while the other (Ms. QN) was located in a quintile 3 (no-fee institution). Both schools were located in areas that are dominantly populated by Africans. The subject advisor was located in the district office. One lecturer was based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, while the other was based at the University of the Western Cape.

Grade 7 learners played the role of indirect participants in this study because their behaviour was observed in the implementation of the story reading technique. Smalley, et al. (2015, p. 479) define indirect participants as those who "may be affected by the intervention through their routine exposure to the environment in which the intervention is being deployed." The educators' review of the story reading technique encompasses their perceptions of the learners' responses to the stories used during each lesson. The primary focus was on the facilitators' responses because phenomenographic research relies on language to convey experiences. Study participants must be able to communicate their thoughts clearly in order to accurately depict diverse perspectives, even despite the small sample size. As such, all the interviews were conducted in English, in which the participants were fluent, and either taught LO or facilitated workshops in English (Palinkas et al., 2015).

4.4.5 Data Generation

Hermeneutic phenomenological research, like the present study, strives to be transferrable outside the study setting by generating, organizing, and evaluating textual material generated through dialogue or observation (Sin, 2010). The study used individual interviews, a reflective worksheet, and observation to generate data. In-depth interviews were used so that the participants were able to describe their experiences with LO teaching and respond to the presented educator's guide and story reading technique (Creswell, 2013).

With the participants' permission, all interviews were tape-recorded, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim by a research assistant and confirmed by the researcher (Ference, 2004). The data was generated in three stages:

- Stage 1: Pre-implementation interviews

  [Educators, Life Orientation lecturer, Life Skills lecturer, and Subject advisor]

In the very first stage, the researcher briefed each participant on the study's and interview's purpose. All relevant documentation was emailed to participants prior to the interview (information sheet, consent form, and semi-structured interview schedule). The interview was divided into two sections. Section A focussed on the participants' experience with LO. Once this section was completed, the participants were issued a copy of the educator's guide. Section B focussed on the participants' first impressions of the educator's guide and their understanding

of the story reading technique (Appendices B, C & D). Each interview lasted approximately one hour.

- Stage 2: Observation of the implementation of the story reading technique [Educators]

Participant observation requires researchers to immerse themselves in the participants' natural setting for an extended time (Korstjens, 2018). Under such circumstances, the researcher notes the participants' daily life, including their interactions with one another, formal and informal conversations, activities, and routines (see Appendix E). Brancati (2018) posits that participant observation is distinguishable by two dimensions: interaction between the researcher and participants (active versus passive observation) and whether or not the observation is concealed (i.e., overt versus covert observation):

- Passive participant observation: researchers observe and record the participants' behaviour in their natural setting without discussing or interacting with them.
- Active participant observation: researchers engage in dialogue with participants and take part in their daily life including their activities, rituals, and routines.
- Covert participant observation: The researcher does not make their presence known to participants. If they do, they do not identify themselves as researchers.
- Overt participant observation: The participants are aware that they are under observation.

When these two dimensions are combined—interaction and concealment—four different forms of participant observation emerge, as demonstrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Types of Participant Observation

	Overt	Covert
Passive	overt and passive	covert and passive
Active	overt and active	covert and active

Note. From *Social scientific research* (p. 173), by D. Brancati, 2018, Sage.

Overt and passive participant observation was employed in this study. Prior to implementing the story reading technique to select participants, the research assistant and the researcher observed various educators during classroom engagement with learners to seek educators who adopted different teaching styles in order to determine the suitability of the story reading technique to different instruction techniques. The research assistant and researcher observed the same class at the same time to see a natural representation of the study participants' setting and teaching technique(s). Moser and Korstjens (2018) explain that when researchers observe rather than interact with the participants, they are less likely to influence their participants' behaviour. Moser and Korstjens (2018) also observed that researchers must take meticulous notes when observing participants. In some situations, taking notes openly and consistently can be invasive and cause the guinea pig effect by reminding participants that they are being examined. In these situations, the researchers can take quick notes in the moment, then write down detailed field notes of what they remember later. To minimise influencing each other's note taking, the researcher and the research assistant sat separately and took individual notes, which the researcher neither read nor discussed until the end of the implementation stage. These notes included the interactions between the educators and learners as well as among learners, their reactions and attitudes. Correspondingly, the participants were also asked to complete a reflective worksheet (see Appendix F). Self-reflection is an important part of curricular implementation because it allows educators to make adjustments where necessary (Horton-Deutsch & Sherwood, 2008).

In this study, the researcher and the assistant observed the educators as they facilitated the lesson with the aid of the presented educator's guide. Lobo (2013, p. 23) states that "the critic should not attempt to explain a text, but rather study the reaction of the reader and the effect the text had on him or her." Here, the researcher and assistant observed both the educators' and the learners' reaction to the text, including the facilitators' gestures and facial expression in relation to the educator's guide, in order to corroborate participants' views and seek clarity where necessary.

- Stage 3: Post-implementation interviews

  [Educators, Life Orientation lecturer, Life Skills lecturer and Subject advisor]

At this third stage, the research participants were asked to analyse the presented educator's guide in relation to the focal areas presented below in Table 9 (see Appendix G). Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and thirty minutes.

Table 9

Focal Areas of the Educator's Guide

Conceptual component	**Focus area**
Cover page	*(Why is the cover page presented in this way?)*
- Introduction	*(How are the educators introduced to the guide?)*
- Information box	*(What is the purpose of the information box?)*
Formulation of the stories	*(What are the elements of the story?)*
- Story structure	*(Why were the stories structured in this way?)*
- Design and layout	*(Why is the guide designed and laid out in this way?)*
Instruction(s)	*(Why should educators use direct and constructivist teaching?)*
- Discussion questions	*(Why are discussion-based questions incorporated in every story?)*
Assessment activities	*(How were the assessment activities selected?)*
- Model answers	*(Why are model answers incorporated in the guide?)*

The focal areas assisted the researcher in analysing the participants interpretations as Lobo (2013, p. 30) asserts that “the reader takes the textual structures, constructing and converting them into a personal explanation for the text.” The participants’ responses were used to “close gaps” or omissions they identified in the text. These gaps, when found, emanated from the participants’ imagination, personal experiences, or a particular background. The participants were then asked to discuss their responses in relation to their emotions, memories, images in their minds, and any ideas they had about the text. McAuley and Nardocchio (1992, p. 96) affirm that “in their work as readers, they are thus engaged in the complex socio-cultural process of creation and self-discovery.” Beach (1993) indicates that some scholars might deem using reader response theory as untrustworthy due to various personal constructions of meaning presented by the readers. In that case, the responses may also be analysed from various reader response perspectives such as transactional, textual, subjective, psychological, social, and historical or affective stylistics, and different results would be obtained, further obscuring trustworthiness. The phenomenological perspective used in this study, however, allowed the researcher to analyse the participants’ responses holistically rather than isolating a single aspect. As Alsubaie (2016, p. 106) notes:

> Teacher’s opinions and ideas should be incorporated into the curriculum for development. On the other hand, the curriculum development team has to consider the teacher as part of the environment that affects curriculum. Hence, teacher involvement is important for successful and meaningful curriculum development.

4.4.6 Data Analysis

The study adopted the phenomenographic approach to data analysis. Yeo et al. (2012) note that Ference Marton, Lars-we Dahlgren, Lennart Svensson, and Roger Säljö pioneered phenomenographic research in the early 1970s, and Marton termed the research phenomenography in 1981. Hasselgren and Beach (1997) posit that the word phenomenography is derived from the Greek words *phainomenon* (“appearance”) and *graphein* (“description”), which when combined means "a description of appearances.” Marton (1992, p. 253) describes phenomenography as “a research method designed to describe the qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced, conceptualized, or

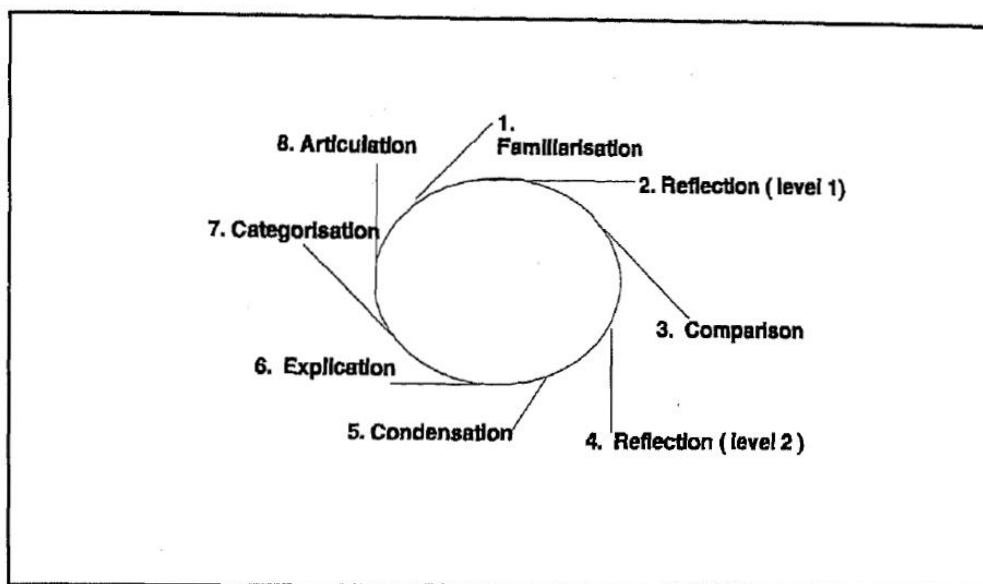
understood, based on an analysis of accounts of experiences as they are formed in descriptions.” In the present study, phenomenography was adopted for data analysis based on Marton’s (1986, p. 28) view that it was “designed to answer certain questions about thinking and learning.” Phenomenography is based on the idea that people perceive and experience the same phenomenon in different ways. For the researcher, it allows for the comprehension of a collection of different perspectives on observable occurrences. Rocha-Pinto (2019, p. 386) notes that this can be done by distinguishing and explaining the structural components of the conceptions identified in the data:

- “Explanatory dimensions”: the structural elements of the conceptions.
- “Conceptions/ descriptive categories”: the different ways in which the phenomenon is experienced, practiced, and conceived. These are supported by a selection of illustrative statements.
- “Outcome space”: tables, diagrams, or figures used to display the findings.

In this regard, the study employed the eight-step analysis process outlined by Bruce (1994) as demonstrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Phenomenographic Cycle of Analysis



Note. From *Phenomenography: Philosophy and Practice* (p. 117), by R. Ballantyne and C. Bruce (Eds), 1994, Queensland University of Technology.

The diagram above demonstrates that in analysing the study's generated data, the researcher performed the following stepwise processes:

4.4.6.1 Familiarisation. The research assistant transcribed the audio recordings from Stage 1 of the data generation process, and the researcher herself transcribed the interviews from Stage 3. Verbatim transcription was used, including nonverbals. Participants' gestures were also noted, as well as their tone of voice: when, where, and how certain words may have been emphasized. The researcher listened to all of the audio recordings again while reading the transcripts to verify the content.

4.4.6.2 Reflection (Level 1). In this second step, the researcher separated data into sections: (a) participants' background experience, (b) story reading as a teaching technique, (c) the educator's guide, and (d) implementing the story reading technique using the educator's guide. The data was "densely" coded, where, as much as possible, codes were extracted from the transcripts so that "the meanings as expressed" were noted (Bruce, 1994, p. 117).

4.4.6.3 Comparison. In order to develop an initial set of categories, the researcher searched for similarities and differences in the "general" meanings (void of specific setting/profession) of the participants' responses. Different or "specific" meanings could emerge in relation to the participants' professional context. However, at this stage, the aim was for each category to be distinct in order to reflect the experience's diversity.

4.4.6.4 Reflection (Level 2). In this fourth step, the researcher focussed on establishing the "specific" meanings (in the context of setting/profession) or the meaning embedded in the participants' words in the initial categories in order to group together similarities and differences in the participants' responses. Each conception was interpreted in two contexts: "first, the interview from which it was taken, and second, the 'pool of meanings' to which it belongs" (Marton, 1986, p. 43).

4.4.6.5 Condensation. Here, the researcher identified the most relevant conceptions of the participants' responses in relation to the explanatory dimensions, allowing response patterns to be revealed more easily.

4.4.6.6 Explication. In this step, the researcher made several attempts to establish the essence of the similarities and differences in regard to the conceptions. The researcher interpreted the connotations of words and the tone used by the participants in conveying the explicit meaning of the implicit statements.

4.4.6.7 Categorisation. Here, the initial categories and their descriptions were modified to establish a final set. The researcher wrote a description for each explanatory dimension, focusing on the illustrations that represented the qualitatively different responses from participants.

4.4.6.8 Articulation. In this final step, the findings in relation to the participants' perceptions and judgements on adequacy and the relevancy of the educator's guide and story reading technique were highlighted and explained through select quotes from all participants. The outcome space accompanying these attempts has two essential elements: explanatory dimensions and descriptive categories with illustrative statements. The outcome space was arranged chronologically (temporal ordering), which denoted the evolution of the participants' experience of the phenomenon studied as demonstrated in Table 10.

Table 10

Data Presentation of the Story Reading Technique

Explanatory dimension		Conceptions/descriptive categories
What are participants' views on the aims and objectives of LO, as well as on the social issues content and teaching resources for Grade 7 Life Orientation?		
1	Pre-reading the educator's guide	*Participants' perceptions of the social issues content and teaching resources in LO* - Educators (should) reflect on, accept the content, and implement the curriculum. - The prescribed content, educator teaching technique, and availability/scarcity of resources impact learning. - The social issues component of LO provides an opportunity for deeper and comprehensive discussions with learners.

2	Pre-implementation of the story reading technique	*Educators' perceptions about using the educator's guide to implement the story reading technique* - Continuing with the same characters from one week to the next helps to contextualise the content.
What gender normativity conflicts emerge in the Grade 7 learners' appreciation of the teaching of the Life of Orientation subject through the story reading technique?		
3	Implementation of the story reading technique	*Classroom observations* Focus on learner and educator conduct during the lesson - Educator: Asking probing questions, clarifying misconceptions and challenging bias views. - The learners' response to the stories (in relation to the subject content). - Educator: Providing feedback, reflecting and preparing for the next lesson.
What is the participants' evaluation of the educator's guide and the story reading technique proposed for use in South African classroom to teach social issues?		
4	Post-implementation	*Evaluation of the educator's guide and story reading technique (section 4.5.6) in terms of:* - relevance and coherence - effectiveness and impact - efficiency and sustainability

4.4.7 Reflexivity

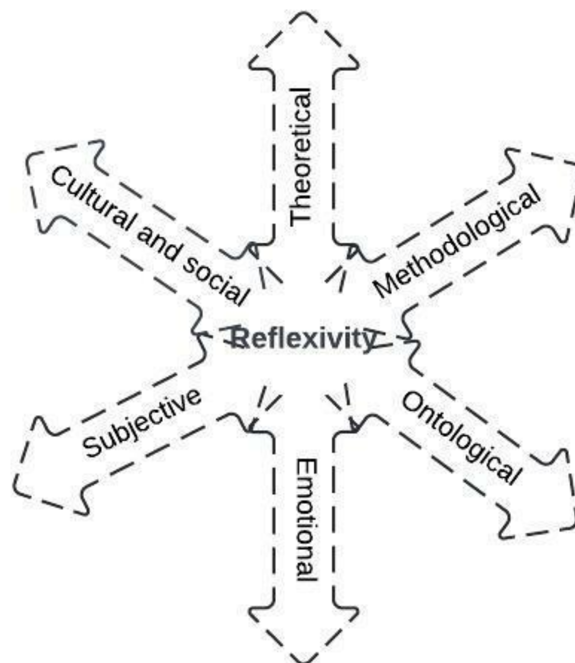
Reflexivity in qualitative research refers to the researcher's awareness of mutually affecting and being affected by the object of study. Hence, Alvesson and Skoldburg (2000), posit that interpretivist research contains two crucial elements: interpretation and reflection. The researcher's interpretation is influenced by their values and language use. The researcher's role is to think about how theories, principles, and assumptions on intellect, perception, culture, text, and cognition influence interpretation: "Reflection becomes a form of interpretation of the interpretation, and this is what makes the research reflexive" (Haynes, 2012, p. 2). The researcher must consider the intricate relationships between knowledge

production (epistemology), knowledge production procedures (methodology), and the researcher’s involvement and impact (ontology) as prior-knowledge and experience interacts with new knowledge to interpret the data. As such, “reflexivity is often centred on the process of writing and interpreting text, in all its various and multiple forms” (Haynes, 2012, p. 4).

In this study, the researcher engaged in six levels of reflexivity as depicted in figure 18. The researcher reflected mostly on the audio recordings, observation notes, and reflective worksheets as the multiple levels of reflexivity were interconnected. Although the present researcher (author) created the graphic (figure 18) showing how the levels are connected, Haynes (2012 p. 4) outlined the multiple levels of reflexivity.

Figure 18

Multiple Levels of Reflexivity



4.4.7.1 Theoretical Reflexivity. The researcher used the reader response theory to explore “the interpretation of interpreting subjects” (Haynes, 2012, p. 13). In doing so, she was directed by theory in interpreting the participants’ experiences, viewpoints, and expressions, which she applied, as she understood it, in relation to the story reading technique. Others may not have applied the theory in the same way; and it is here that the researcher’s theoretical perspective on intersubjectivity applies. The theoretical assumptions functioning under this heading could

be limited to the data's intersubjective interpretation. The researcher also cited the literature to support her interpretations and emphasize meanings associated to educators' and learners' lived experiences in the South African context.

4.4.7.2 Methodological Reflexivity. The researcher also engaged in methodological reflexivity in the analysis of the data generated. In this regard, Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) state that researchers must assess their methodological perspective's effectiveness in consideration of ethics, power relations, and language use. Here, all participants were LO facilitators, who were interviewed in their "natural" (classroom/office) setting, reducing power dynamics. The researcher was transparent with the participants regarding the purpose of and their role in the study. Moules and Taylor (2021, p. 8) assert that each interview develops "out of the context and timing, the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, the topic at hand, and most importantly, out of the conversa (Latin word meaning turning around together)." During the interviews, the researcher summarised and paraphrased each of the participant's responses to communicate her interpretation of their views. The participants confirmed the researcher's interpretations as accurate and, in some cases, went on to elaborate further, where they believed the researcher had insufficiently captured their views.

4.4.7.3 Ontological Reflexivity. Heidegger (1962) highlighted the ontological perspective of hermeneutics by asserting that in it, researchers are concerned with an investigation of being (Dasein), which refers to "being-there," "being-in-the-world," or "existence"—the human being's experience. Paterson and Higgs (2005, p. 345) discuss a three-fold structure of Dasein advocated for by Heidegger: "attuning to the past, articulating the situation in the present, and pressing forward to the new possibilities of the future." Applied to the present study, the story reading technique came into being in consideration for the past exclusion of African epistemology, an alignment with the real-life experiences of learners and educators, and the adaptability to future research and curricular implementation. In this study, the African perspective was proposed as a "way of being," and the stories used emanated from the researcher's experience as an educator, where learners found little value in LO when the textbook existed as the only teaching material used for this subject.

4.4.7.4 Emotional Reflexivity. As applied in this study, this refers to the "intersubjective interpretation of one's own and others' emotions and how they are enacted. Intersubjective means constituted in interactive relations with others" (Holmes, 2015, p. 61).

The intersubjective interpretation of the researcher's and participants' emotions, as well as how they affect the research, may be referred to as emotional reflexivity. Palaganas notes: "it is difficult not to influence and be influenced by the research participants." As such, "total detachment is unrealistic" (2017, p. 427). Corroborating this, during the researcher's observation of story reading technique's implementation, the researcher laughed with the educators and learners where jokes were made. The researcher, similarly, was sad to hear some of the learners' stories. For example, a boy in Ms. SK's class indicated that Musa's story resonates with him as his own mother died, whereby he had to live with his maternal grandmother as he did not know his father. He was worried that he might lose his grandmother, just like Musa had. The researcher also found herself feeling sad when another girl shared that she attended her grandmother's funeral three weeks prior to reading this story. The girl elaborated that although she was lucky that her mother is alive, she spent much of her time with her grandmother, and therefore, empathised with Musa. The researcher was pleased when the learners argued about representing the characters in the role play because the researcher interpreted their response as enjoyment of the story. To the researcher, the learners' emotions that emerged during the application of the story reading teaching demonstrated that the stories captured various experiences of their lives.

4.4.7.5 Subjective Reflexivity. The researcher also engaged in subjective reflexivity in the interpretation of the data generated and analyzed in this study. Drapeau (2002, p. 6) explains that interpretive research constitutes "Subjectivity in Understanding the Subjects," meaning that the researcher's values and views may prove difficult for her to distance herself, particularly where these have been internalised or form part of the researcher's identity. In relation to hermeneutic phenomenology, Zahavi and Kriegel (2015, p. 38) note:

> the "me" of for-me-ness is not in the first instance an aspect of what is experienced but of how it is experienced; not an object of experience, but a constitutive manner of experiencing. To deny that such a feature is present in our experiential life, to deny the for-me-ness or mineness of experience, is to fail to recognize the very subjectivity of experience.

In other words, subjective reflexivity entails a culmination of the researcher's everyday activities from which knowledge about social reality manifests. Subjectivity, therefore, comprises "a relational property of being" (Guillot, 2017, p.36). This includes the researcher's

awareness of adopting the reader response theory and hermeneutic design. Thus, data generation and analysis techniques were predetermined to align with the principles of the interpretivist paradigm as well as the discourse pertaining to the story reading technique (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992).

4.4.7.6 Cultural, Social and Political Reflexivity. The study also engaged in cultural, social, and political reflexivity. Heidegger (1962) also makes use of the term *das Man* ("the 'They'"). Egan (2012, p. 290) explains that das Man refers to the "socially constituted set of norms to which we often adhere and distantiality is our equally inescapable awareness of the difference that sets us apart from others." Social categories contain sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age and occupation, social class, and other factors that might be used to categorize an individual. Although socially ("the They") constructed, categorization allows for abstract thinking and the application of information to new contexts.

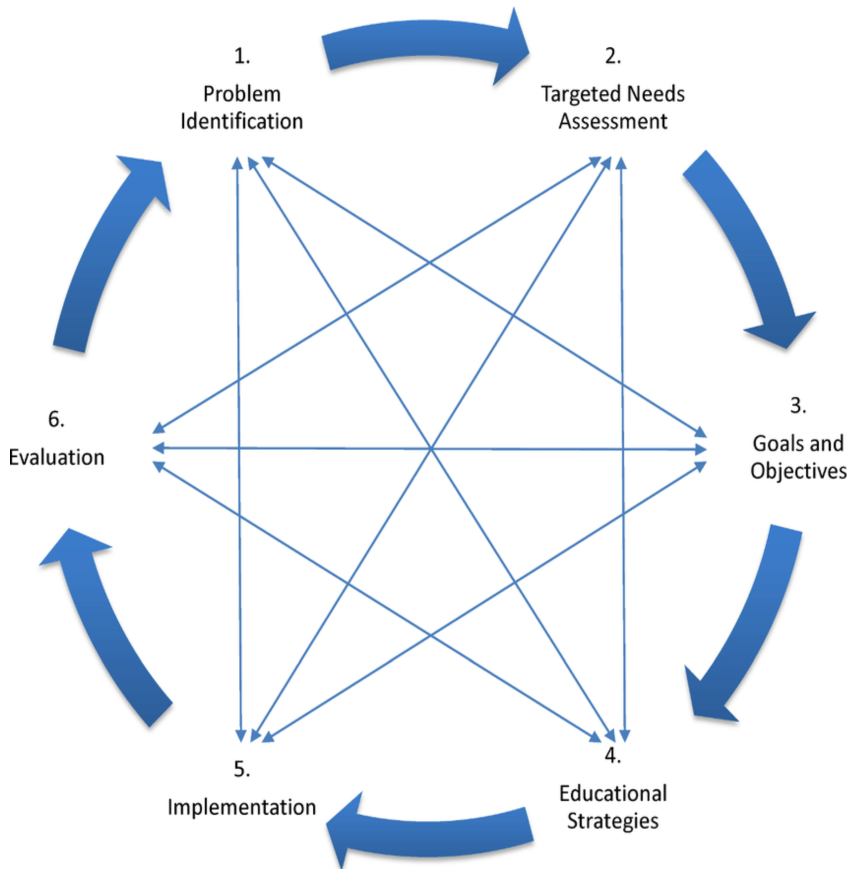
Based on these categories, the researcher was able to recognize some of the similarities and differences among the participants, and vice versa. These categories could be given meaning from a cultural, social, or political perspective. For this reason, the researcher could not determine the extent to which these classifications influenced the participants' or the researcher's analysis of the data. The researcher's focus was on participant responses, especially deviant views (distantiality) concerning the story reading technique and its applicability to cultural, social, and political discourse about the teaching of social issues in LO.

4.5 Developing the Educator's Guide and the Implementation Process for the Story Reading Technique

Ruddell and Unrau (1994, p. 1474) emphasize the necessity of producing "socio-culturally compatible" content and stories that incorporate experiences that learners can relate to. They view this as a "distinct contrast to the conventional classroom teacher-dominated recitation pattern." In this regard, Kern et al.'s (2016) six-step approach to curriculum development was adopted here. Although the model has been extensively used in medicine, the six steps are compatible with the development of the educator's guide in alignment with the LO curriculum and story reading technique.

Figure 19

A Six-step Approach to Curriculum Development



Note. From *Curriculum development for medical education: a six-step approach* (p, 7), by, P. A Thomas, D. E Kern, M. T Hughes and B. Y. Chen (Eds), 2016, JHU Press.

4.5.1 Problem Identification

1. Techniques used to teach social issues in LO:

   Brown (2013) notes that educators are typically not prepared to teach in a 'constructive pedagogy' which merges the curriculum and the needs of learners. Educators typically adopt the teacher-centered model where the primary focus is on the instructor, whereby the educator talks, writes on the board and learners listen and copy from the board. Learners are encouraged to work alone. As such, opportunities to engage with the content in relation to real-life contexts are missed.

2. Additional resources and information on the social issues content:

   Where educators use materials other than textbooks, they must consider the learners' age, language, purpose of the content (Alsubaie, 2016). As a result, educators may be

hesitant to seek additional resources because they feel ill-prepared to make such decisions. Supplementary instructional materials are therefore essential for effective curriculum delivery. This explains the basis for proposing the use of the story reading technique as one of those needed supplementary instructional materials.

4.5.2 Targeted Needs Assessment

Ruddell and Unrau (1994) assert that sociocultural values and beliefs constitute an important aspect of learning hence, the necessity for educators to demonstrate understanding and sensitivity to differing values and beliefs. The proposed guide considered “the learner, the teacher, the society, philosophy of education, psychology of learning, examinations, economy of the society, resources, subject specialists, and values” (Offorma, 2016, p. 3). The educator's guide offered here is aligned with the curriculum's knowledge bases, making it adaptable to the pervasive social issues topic. Thus, the story reading technique can be incorporated by educators as part of pedagogical content knowledge and procedural knowledge.

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to an educator’s interpretations of a subject-matter (social issues in LO) in order to facilitate learning. Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the task of understanding the processes required to teach the social issues content. The present study postulated that more effective teaching can be achieved through the use of the story-reading technique as outlined in the educator's guide subjected to Educators’ evaluation in this study.

4.5.3 Goals and Objectives

Offorma (2016, p. 4), posits that the goal of education is to “transfer knowledge, facts, skills, values and attitudes learnt from one situation to solving problems in another situation, and this is done through curriculum that reflects the culture of the people.” This view of education encapsulates the goal of L.O., addressed in this study. In this light, the story-reading technique as presented in the educator’s guide centres on the following objectives:

- Reflecting an African-centred perspective within the mainstream curriculum.
- Sequential stories for educators to use concurrently with the outlined topics as per the CAPS.

4.5.4 Educational Strategies and Assessment

The interaction between educators and learners was observed during the implementation of the story reading technique. The adopted teaching methods and assessment of learning were the main focus of the observation (see Appendix E). The researcher noted:

- at the beginning of the lesson: how was the story reading technique introduced?
- during each lesson: how was the story reading technique used to achieve the objectives of the objective of the lesson?

4.5.5 Implementation Checklist

The focus on roles and responsibilities was placed on the following:

The educators: Used the presented educator's guide to implement the story reading technique.

The researcher: Sought permission from all relevant gatekeepers (DBE, school principal, educators, curriculum developers, Institutions of Higher Education, lecturers and illustrators).

- Ensured that there were enough teaching materials as indicated by educators for each lesson.
- Compiled the online version of the educator's guide and additional teaching resources.
- Completed the observation schedule (see Appendix E) to use when observing the educators during LO lessons.
- Collected the reflection activity from the educators and seek clarity where necessary (see Appendix F).
- Analyzed the data in preparation for follow-up questions.

4.5.6 Evaluation

In this study, evaluation refers to the process of determining the value of the story reading technique (intervention). To accomplish this process, the Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria was adopted, which defines a criterion as an evaluation standard or principle with which to make decisions about the phenomenon (here, teaching the social issues component of LO by adopting the story reading technique presented in the educator's guide). The OECD (2021, p. 19) notes:

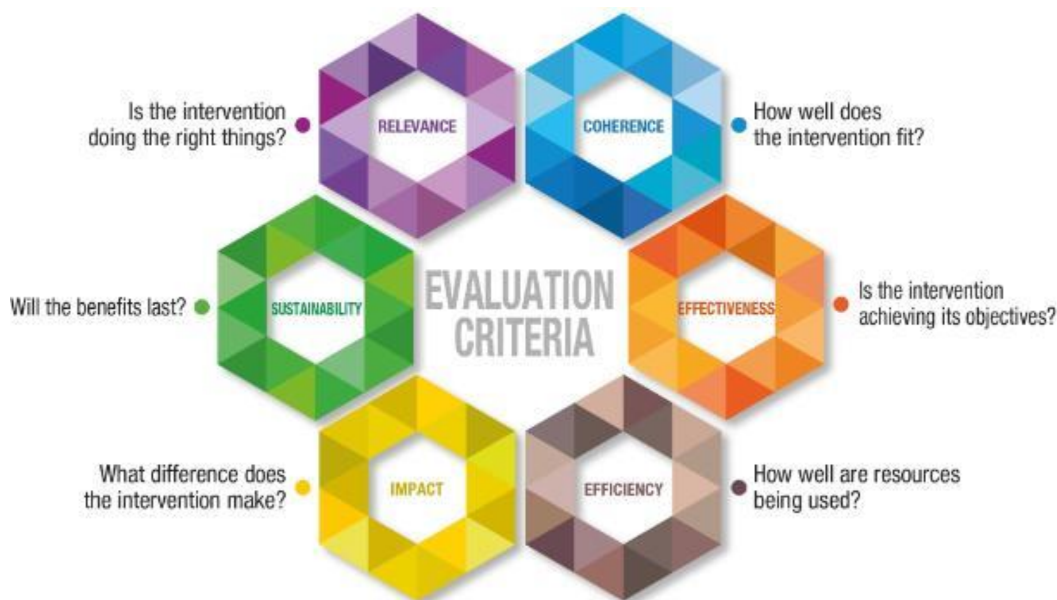
> The term "intervention" … encompasses all the different types of efforts that may be evaluated using these criteria. An intervention may denote a project,

programme, policy, strategy, thematic area, technical assistance, policy advice, an institution, financing mechanism, instrument, or other activity. The criteria have been used, for example, an evaluation of various projects supporting the education sector. The criteria may be adjusted to reflect the intervention being evaluated.

The OECD (2021) states that interventions should be contextually appropriate, cohere with other interventions, achieve results efficiently, and have positive, long-term effects for sustainable development. The criteria are interconnected and can be viewed as a complementary set, with each criterion providing a unique perspective on the intervention. Hence, each of the criteria can be used to assess an intervention before, during, or after it has taken place. The purpose of the criteria is to promote a consistent evaluation within a standard framework for intervention design and implementation, with the goal of improving future interventions. Therefore, the evaluation criteria are not a technique, and they are not the objectives of the intervention. Instead, they serve as suggestions for asking the correct questions throughout an intervention's evaluation as demonstrated in Figure 20 below.

Figure 20

The OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria



Note. From *Evaluation Criteria*, by The OECD DAC Network on Development, n.d. (https://www.oecd.org/dac/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully-543e84ed-en.htm)

4.5.6.1 Relevance. The participants assessed the usefulness of implementing the story reading technique in relation to learner and educator curricular needs for LO, including contextuality of the stories and quality of the design. They also looked at whether the story reading technique's objectives are adequately defined, realistic, and feasible.

4.5.6.2 Coherence. Similarly, participants were asked to determine whether the educator's guide aligns with the CAPS and other LO initiatives that focus on the social issues content. The quality of coherence of the educator's guide was evaluated along two dimensions: (1) internal coherence—the alignment with the broader policy frameworks of the institutions, and (2) external coherence—harmonisation with other interventions without duplication of effort.

4.5.6.3 Effectiveness. In this study, the term "effectiveness" describes how well an intervention is in reaching or having reached its goals. The participants identified elements that were most important in implementing the story reading technique and unforeseen consequences or unintended effects, both positive and/or negative. The educator's guide was also analysed to see if it aligns with the human rights principles, particularly gender equality.

4.5.6.4 Efficiency. Here, efficiency refers to the most cost-effective translation of inputs (funds, expertise, and time) into outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The participants discussed the comparative efficiency of using hardcopy and softcopy formats of the educator's guide.

4.5.6.5 Impact. Similarly, the study participants were asked to look at whether the educator's guide has the potential to facilitate a beneficial curricular shift from decontextualized to contextualized teaching of social issues content.

4.5.6.6 Sustainability. Finally, the study's participants assessed the extent to which the educator's guide's financial/ economic, social, and environmental benefits (as identified by them) would continue long-term. The focus was on whether the educator's guide has the potential to strengthen the LO content in relation to cultural context and its adaptability to changes in the curriculum.

4.6 Trustworthiness of the Study

Four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) of trustworthiness and authenticity as emphasized in qualitative studies were adhered to in the study. Kivunja and Kuyini posit: "in research conducted within the Interpretivist paradigm the positivist criteria of internal and external validity, and reliability discussed above, should be replaced with four criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity" (2017, p. 33). In line with the above perspective, the researcher articulated the aims of the study, the procedural decisions made, as well as data management such that readers could understand the sequence of events and the reasoning behind them in relation to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability elements in the study design. More on these criteria are given below:

4.6.1 Credibility

The researcher worked with the assumption that a study is credible when the findings are believable, authentic, and recognisable to the people who share the experience. Three of Shenton's (2004, p. 64) stipulations were implemented to increase trust in the story reading technique's accuracy.

4.6.1.1 The Adoption of Well-Established Research Methods. Operational measures were provided for the methods and major concepts adopted in this study, such as the qualitative approach, interpretivist paradigm, and phenomenological design.

- Specific procedures were employed, including data generation and data analysis, that were guided by studies that have been successfully implemented by adapted hermeneutic interviews and phenomenographic data analysis.

4.6.1.2 Triangulation. Triangulation was understood as referring to the process of addressing a research question by combining multiple datasets, techniques, theories, and/or investigators. Aspects of triangulation taken up in this study included:

- Data triangulation: where individual interviews were conducted with a range of participants occupying different positions in the field of education, specializing in LO. The participants' individual viewpoints and experiences were explored in relation to others such that differences and similarities in their responses could be identified for a more holistic understanding of the story reading technique investigated.

- Data was generated from two sites where the implementation of the story reading technique was observed, which were selected to minimize the impact of any factors unique to one institution.

- Investigator triangulation: in which two researchers (the researcher and her assistant) generated and analyzed the data. The research assistant possessed a Master of Education degree at the time of the study and has worked as an educator, thus understood the dynamic of education research. After discussing the study's methodological processes (training), both the researcher and the assistant independently conducted classroom observations and data analysis. The research assistant also reviewed the audio recordings and reflective worksheet, and both the researcher and the assistant found that they had reached similar conclusions for all data sets.

- Theory triangulation: the study made use of one overarching theme; however, various theories, conceptual frameworks, and models were used to substantiate the development of the educator's guide and the implementation of the proposed story reading technique (see table 4).

4.6.1.3 Member Checks/ Participant or Respondent Validation. For purposes of member checks/participant or respondent validation, participants were electronically given copies of their interview transcripts and were asked to read them as well as the researcher's interpretations (analysis). The emphasis was on determining whether the participants concurred with the version sent to them and that the transcript and the researcher's analysis accurately conveyed their intended meaning.

4.6.2 Applicability/Transferability

The researcher worked with the assumption that a study is considered to be transferable when the findings can be applied to other situations. In this regard, Hammarberg (2016, p. 500) argues that describing the scope of the study to the reader is critical as: "Larger sample sizes do not produce greater applicability." Continuing, Hammarberg (2016), opines that the findings must be interpreted considering the unique characteristics of the institution/organisation, as well as the geographic location in which the fieldwork was conducted.

In order to achieve the quality of transferability in the study, the researcher discussed in this chapter (not with the participants):

- the two schools from which the data was generated (see section 4.4.4).
- the target population and study participants (see section 4.4.4.).
- the data generation methods/ techniques (see section 4.4.5.).
- the number and duration of the interviews (see section 4.4.5).

4.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether decisions, choices, and analysis can be audited by reviewers or repeated by researchers. The same result would not necessarily be found in other contexts, but other researchers could find similar patterns as they would seek maximum variation in the experience of implementing the story reading technique (Silverman, 2015).

To promote the quality of dependability in the study, the researcher documented and retained the records (in a safe, as per the ethical guidelines) of all the research phases, including:

- problem formulation (see section 1.2),
- selection of research participants and all correspondence (see section 4.4.4),
- fieldwork notes and interview transcripts (see section 4.4.5), and
- data analysis decisions (see section 4.4.6).

4.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the results are representative of the participants' experiences. To achieve this, the "audit trail," was applied, which allowed the reader to trace the research progress step-by-step through the explanations of decisions made and descriptions of techniques used (Silverman, 2015). The table and figures below demonstrate how the data leading to the findings and recommendations was gathered and processed during the study:

- Table 9 indicates the focal areas of the educator's guide which were evaluated by the participants.
- Figure 18 highlights the researcher's reflexivity of the research process.
- Figure 19 documents the steps from developing the educator's guide to implementing the story reading technique.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) posit that participants have the right to dignity, which must be respected, and a fundamental human right to make choices that must be respected by researchers. As such, the researcher obtained ethical approval (see Appendix H) from the UKZN (Protocol reference number: HSS/0111/019D) and was granted permission to access the DBE schools and personnel (see Appendix I). Bell and Bryman (2007, p.71) highlight some of the ethical considerations reflected in this study.

4.7.1 Privacy: Confidentiality and Anonymity

The study adhered to this aspect of ethical considerations because:

- The topic investigated required only the participants' professional views on the issues studied. Data about their personal lives was not required, minimizing encroachment on their privacy and a provocation of distressing feelings.
- The study's interviews were conducted in the participants' offices and classrooms at date and time chosen by them.
- The educators chose their own pseudonyms; any information that can be used to identify participants has been withheld.
    - The participants were informed that their job titles would be revealed in the study and acceded to this.

4.7.2 Accuracy: Honesty and Transparency

This dimension of the study's ethical requirements was conformed to by the researcher:

- Prior to participating in the study, the participants received the information sheet (see Appendices J & K), which the researcher discussed with them. They signed a consent form (see Appendix L), confirming their understanding of the study's purpose and their role.
- The participants were not under duress as they volunteered their participation and were assured that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point.
- Participants were not asked to perform any physically strenuous tasks or demeaning activities during the study.
- The researcher promoted participants' engagement in member checking to avoid misunderstandings and misrepresentation of data (see section 4.6.1.2).

4.7.3 Property: Affiliation and Reciprocity

Regarding the study's ethical considerations regarding property, the researcher:

- Discussed with and informed the participants that they would not have the right to ownership of the study.
- Met with the participants during work hours in their workplaces, so that there were no costs to the participants.
- Indicated to the participants that even though there was no monetary reward for their participation, the study has social value to benefit those concerned with LO. Participants were made to know that the study could benefit them indirectly, as they explore an alternate educational resource and teaching technique that they could apply in their practice after their role in the study.
- Ensured that the story reading technique did not consume the educators' time. The researcher used an educator's guide that was well-aligned with the CAPS, such that additional time to implement the story reading technique was not required.

4.7.4 Accessibility

In relation to access to the data generated and the thesis emanating from the study:

- The researcher discussed this with participants and assured them that the raw data would be kept safe (electronic data will be encrypted) for five years.
- The researcher informed the participants that the research supervisors, research assistant, and the researcher would have access to the data during this five-year period.
- It was made clear to the participants that the completed thesis would be accessible on the internet and a copy kept at the UKZN library.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to highlight the methodology that was used in implementing this study to explain qualitative research as an approach, interpretivism as a paradigm, and phenomenology as a design pertinent to this study. In developing these explanations, the chapter demonstrated how the study's methodological aspects agreed with the research's ontological and epistemological stances. The data generation technique and analysis approach used on the data generated were discussed in relation to the sample, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study in relation to the research questions investigated.

Chapter 5
The Findings of the Study

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents this study's findings, which emerged from a phenomenographic analysis of the study interview transcripts on the issues studied. The focus is on the evaluation by the participants, of the educator's guide, and the story reading technique investigated. This chapter presents three data sets obtained from interviews with participants and classroom observations by the researcher, aimed at finding answers to the three research questions investigated.

Section A focuses on responses given by the participants before they read the educator's guide or implemented the story reading technique. Specifically, Section A presents the outcome of the analysis of data emerging from the first research question. The findings presented below focus on how the participants' view the aims and objectives of LO and their role in facilitating topics relating to social issues to benefit learners in basic education and student teachers in higher education.

Section B highlights the findings from a phenomenographic analysis of interview transcripts gathered in relation to the second research question. The findings specifically focus on the researcher's own observations during the participants' implementation of the story reading technique in their respective classrooms.

Section C highlights findings regarding the third research question. Section C's findings highlight the outcome of the analysis of the data on the evaluation of the educator's guide and implementation of the story reading technique. In this regard, the OECD (2021) evaluation criteria were adapted to reflect the participants' responses regarding adopting the educator's guide and story reading technique in the classroom to supplement subject content. Thus, the study findings below will be organized around the three research questions that guided the study, starting with the presentation of findings bearing on Research Question 1.

5.2. RQ1: How do the Participants' View the Aims and Objectives of LO, as well as the Social Issues Content and Teaching Resources for Grade 7 LO?

The findings generated in relation to this question emerged from the views offered by all five direct participants—2 educators, 1 subject advisor, and 2 lecturers—through individual interviews that explored their background knowledge about LO before accessing the educator's guide. During those interviews, the participants responded to questions about their understanding of the aims and objectives of LO, their role as facilitators, and the DBE's role. From their responses, the role of LO educators encompasses helping learners engage in problem-solving strategies (personal or scholastic), adapting instruction to learner needs, and promoting enthusiasm to learn. However, the participants also indicated that educators' beliefs might limit the interpretation of the presented topics. In this regard, three categories were identified: (1) the need to reflect, accept, and implement the curriculum; (2) the notion that only relevant content and teaching technique could impact learning of LO; and (3) taking advantage of the opportunity for serious discussions about life provided by the LO subject.

5.2.1 Category 1: Participants' Convictions on LO Educators' Need to Reflect and Accept the Content Before Implementing the Curriculum

- [Pre-reading the educator's guide: Reflections on the self]

This category is based on the participants' convictions regarding the need to avoid the problem of bias in the presentation of information in LO teaching. All the participants indicated that reflecting on the content before teaching is the first major step and the foundational principle essential for identifying one's biases and avoiding being overcome by those biases in the presentation of curriculum information. They also noted that conflict arises amongst educators when they try to accept content with which they personally disagree.

5.2.1.1 Subcategory 1A: Challenging Personal Opinions. As emphasized by the participants, overall, educators are expected to facilitate the subject content by engaging with the learners and promoting inclusiveness and empathy for diverse beliefs and preferences.

Commenting specifically in this regard, the Subject Advisor participant stated:

> *With me really, I must say, I've grown as a person. I can tell you my own perceptions about social issues. I'm not the same person as I used to be, if I may... maybe just make 1 example, I used to have my own views about the*

> *sexual orientation of people who are gays and lesbians but engaging with the content for life orientation, it made me look at things differently. You know when you talk about accepting people as they are… tolerance of people with different views, tolerance of people with different religious beliefs, tolerance of people with different cultural backgrounds. I'm just a different person. I'm moving away now from the word tolerance and I'm embracing acceptance. I grew up in an environment that did not embrace some of the aspect of my culture, my black culture, the issue of slaughtering a goat and giving a person *isiphandla (bracelet made from the skin of the slaughtered animal), those were things that I looked down upon because they were never really practised but my exposure to Life Orientation has made me realise the fact that I don't practise it or I don't really believe in slaughtering a goat to ask for blessings does not mean it is wrong for the next person to do that. Teachers always laugh when I say: I grew up in a time when we were never hugged as young kids but because I now understand that there's got to be that kind of connection with people and that connection might even include physical connection. You know giving a person that is stressed a hug does something for that person so in a nutshell life orientation and interacting with teachers has changed me as a person.*

Indeed, during the interview, the Subject Advisor participant appeared excited to talk about the social issues component of LO. Her openness about shifting from a rigid stance to a malleable approach in relating to those who do not share her sentiments indicated the need for teaching social issues in flexible ways that reflect the complexity of people in real-life situations. She also referred to appropriate forms of physical touch, such as hugging, between parents and children, which can be discussed in class. Her approach during the interview process showed that laughter can be considered as something typical from younger educators. This is a pattern that comes across when she laughingly commented on the lack of physical contact she experienced from her parents growing up. According to the Subject Advisor, the change in this norm appears to reflect the emergence of a transition in social norms in the African perspective, from reinforcing boundaries between adults and children, to not limiting physical contact, to the now generally accepted perception of communicating affection for one's children.

In her own words:

> *There is unbelievable value in the subject. Although you actually end up filling various roles. I'm talking about those life orientation teachers that are committed, that have passion for their subject, learners don't see them as teachers; they see them as people they can confide in. Life Orientation makes you feel like you are contributing positively to people you interact with around the subject.*

5.2.1.2 Subcategory 1B: Reflecting on one's Experiences can Lead to Teaching with Empathy. The subject advisor commented more particularly on the role of the LO educator. In this regard, she emphasized that, to facilitate active learning, tackle social issues, and respond effectively to emerging challenges, educators need support from the DBE:

Again, in her own words:

> *I'm going to tell you what it (role of the DBE) is according to policy. It is supporting the educators, monitoring what they do in Life Orientation, monitoring how the curriculum is progressing, if they (educators) are covering the content. Subject advisors have got to satisfy the other aspect of being a support structure to educators. Remember, in Life Orientation, there are also very sensitive aspects that are covered in the curriculum. The minute you talk about sexuality education… "personal development" touches all those things. I'm emphasizing sexuality education because I'm aware that there is a debate that is going on about comprehensive sex education in schools. Some teachers are very uncomfortable in dealing with those aspects so that is where a subject advisor comes in, to try and make them (educators) comfortable.*

The subject advisor's response highlights the importance of addressing educators' beliefs and guiding teaching practices for coherent curriculum delivery. Sensitive topics, such as sexuality, may require ongoing contact between educators and subject advisors. The LS lecturer also highlighted the value of reflecting on the subject content with student teachers (higher education). She commented saying:

I think it (reflecting on subject content) had an impact because some of the students that I'm teaching had children at a very young age so some of them could not understand why they were sexually active at that age but it happened. I was not there to judge my students, but I wanted them to reflect on their lives.

The LS lecturer's response appears to draw attention to her conviction that reflecting on one's life as an educator is critical to implementing the curriculum more efficiently, as LO focuses on the self in relation to others and society. In her response, one gets the impression that she has established a personal connection with the student teachers to discuss sensitive matters and foster self-awareness in practice. This is important since identifying areas of strength and those that require improvement becomes practicable only if educators are able to engage in self-reflection to be more conscious of their biases.

5.2.2 Category 2: Participants' Views on the Relevance of LO Content, Teaching Technique, and Resources to Impact Learning

- [Pre-reading the educator's guide: Reflections on the learning environment]

The LS Lecturer emphasised that educators can promote positive attitudes and desirable behaviour in learners through the implementation of the LO content; in which case, they could easily serve as advocates for transforming the minds of the learners whose negative social norms are harmful to themselves and others.

5.2.2.1 Subcategory 2A: Content Progression and Reflecting the Social Environment of Learners. The LS Lecturer postulated:

I know the theme on "development of the self in society" (Grade7) *is a continuation of the "personal and social well-being"* (Grade 6). *So, for Life Skills, we (student teachers) look at content pertaining to child-headed homes. I remember that 2 years ago, we were undressing issues around HIV and AIDS. In the last semester we were so much into the femicide because it the issue that is on everybody's tongue. They (student teachers) know about femicide, and some come from homes where people have been abused. Some of them understand that women need not act in ways that men expected them*

to before that qualifies the man to be violent. We look at issues of violence in general as well as issues of teenage pregnancy.

This participant's comments signify the importance of applying complex situations to the social issues component from the intermediate to the senior phase. Effective curriculum progression allows learners to draw on and challenge their previous knowledge and values. Ms. QN echoed this same perspective:

> *I think it [Grade 7 curriculum] is a continuation of the topics [Grade 6], and it does touch on important issues, but there are some issues that are not there, like teenage pregnancy, because even though it is a primary school, learners need to be taught about things like that since they are growing up. Also, staff like child abuse and sexual abuse because if you look at it, mainly their backgrounds where they come from, these things happen in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, and in their families, so they need to be prepared by having certain knowledge.*

The above quote, demonstrates that Ms. QN agrees that social issues are interrelated and that learners must be equipped with knowledge to identify, define, and ponder plausible solutions to the life problems that may confront them as they grow up. She continued:

> *For example, domestic abuse is very common, but it is missing in the curriculum. Children must be taught about their rights and how they can be able to see if they are being abused and what they can do or who they can talk to concerning people they trust like teachers, social workers and where they can be referred to a psychologist.*

Ms. SK affirmed the views above when she observed:

> *Yes, there is progression, but I don't think it [Grade 7 content] is sufficient because they need to know more so that if ever, they come across these things in life, they will know what to do. We just teach what is prescribed for us to do.*

It is interesting to note that both of educators appeared to have relevant knowledge about the learners' background and social environment, which will enable them to deliver content by using real life scenarios that reflect their learner's lives to promote critical thinking and enhance self-knowledge. However, some participants emphasized that educators must practice caution during discussions of sensitive social issues with learners. As the Subject Advisor notes:

> *When dealing with sensitive issues, particularly sexuality education, rather use English as a medium of instruction because when you are using IsiZulu or vernacular, it appears as strong language. Some words might be considered as vulgar by other learners who come from different backgrounds. Some might be from a background where parents refer to private parts in IsiZulu, but for another learner from a different background, they are told "we don't use those words." There are families where a child is not even allowed to say: "I'm going to the loo to do...." They are encouraged to say: "I'm going to the loo to do number 1 or number 2." So, let's stick to English so that we avoid a situation where parents come back and say: "please tone down your language, my kids have never been told what a penis is in IsiZulu."*

The Subject Advisor's response, in agreement with Harrison, Bailey, and Dewar (2002, p. 28), emphasises that "the teacher brings multiple perspectives of the discussions of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms." Incorporating culturally responsive instruction to celebrate differences in traditions, beliefs, and social behaviors appears critical in LO. In this regard, the Subject Advisor participant elaborated on their role:

> *We meet with educators through workshops. That is where educators often have slots to share good practices, to share challenges, share their own experiences, and maybe how they go about handling some of the topics that are in Life Orientation. More effective support is through school visits, where subject advisors go to schools to discuss mainly the curriculum coverage and give tips on how to handle ABCD….*

5.2.2.2 Subcategory 2B: Various Teaching Techniques and Resources Used to Enhance Interest in the Subject Matter. The LO Lecturer participant indicated that she incorporates economic, social, and cultural dynamics in the curriculum to train student teachers to teach social issues. She explained how she facilitates these lecturers, as follows:

> *I try to spend time, maybe a week or two per topic, and then we cover everything that needs to be covered through conversation so that I can be sure that the students' way of thinking about the topics are on point. If not, we can engage further to set that right. The challenge is that I think I have about 130 students in one classroom, so it is very difficult for me to get to know students' names and to talk to them on a one-to-one basis, so I lecture, and then what I normally do is give them tasks on a weekly basis. Tasks of topics that they must go and find out more about or do at home. One person per group gives feedback instead of having to hear what 130 people have to say; you listen to maybe 13 groups. You can also get an idea of what the class feels like and address any misconceptions. Conversation can inform your teaching. It can show you what you need to touch on and deal with. I also use online methods such as Kahoot!* [Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform, used as educational technology in educational institutions.]

Students can process information by sharing their thoughts with others as they come from different backgrounds and hold different viewpoints about the topic at hand. Debate can arise from opposing views until a consensus is reached, and the outcome is presented in class. While group members can work cooperatively, others might experience dread and loathing towards working in groups. The LO Lecturer appears to guide the student teachers by giving realistic expectations and constructive feedback, which can minimise negative feelings about working in groups.

Indeed, one crucial point emerging from this study is the importance of resources for student teachers when teaching where electronic devices are needed for learning purposes and are not readily available in public schools. Ms. SK also highlighted some of the resources she uses to facilitate LO lessons:

Most of the time I try to find pamphlets or charts, which they don't provide in our school because they can't afford. So, I have to look for them, google some information, download and make copies for them (students).

Ms. QN's comments below show that she also engages in similar practices:

I use 2 separate textbooks so that I can compare information… it depends on what I'm teaching and how I find the activities and how I think my learners will interact with the activities… which one will they be able to master properly. I can get a related story maybe from the newspapers which talks about the same issue.

This study suggests that both educators echo the need for additional resources beyond the textbook. Due to a lack of resources in schools and homes of the learners, educators task themselves with searching for additional content that reflects the learners' lives and can be used to supplement the curriculum. Ms. QN emphasised integrating stories from the internet or newspapers to enhance the learning experience. In her own words:

Sometimes it's nice to make them relate to the real world, touching on things that they know, things that are happening within their communities or just on in the world.

Corroborating this, Ms. SK also stated:

I think they (learners) need use the Internet and Google to find some of the things that can help them to learn because what they see on the textbook is not enough for the learners. They need to see things that are happening, like if the person is using a drug what would be the effect afterwards, u know... we cannot just learn without seeing the actual thing, how it happens and what are the affect, so we learn without seeing. Maybe if we can have at least videos in the classrooms so that they can see the videos at least, now our schools cannot afford any of those things and it becomes a problem to ask learners as some don't have.

One emerging conclusion from the educators' comments is that they prefer stories or references to real life situations to supplement the curriculum. This, however, means that they must consider the setting, plot, and length of the story so that it is appropriate for the grade level. Commenting on this, Ms. QN indicated that the stories are used as part of "*group discussions, whole class discussions, pair work, individual work, orals and plays.*" When asked to elaborate further, she said:

> *In group work, you give them (learners) the topic then they discuss it in their groups then briefly highlight some issues that are there within the story… what is good about it, what they've learned in it… some advantages or disadvantages of that particular thing that is being talked about within the story or how they feel… their emotions are important.*

Such group discussions appear to be short and informal. In using it, the educator poses a sentence starter or question, and the learners can evaluate the story's merit. The learners work together to explain the story's events in relation to their personal lives. One important trend that emerges from the above findings is the critical need that the educators have for using relevant and timely stories to facilitate the impact of their LO teaching in the lives and worlds of their LO learners.

5.2.3 Category 3: Need for Taking Advantage of the Opportunity for Serious Discussions About Life Provided by the Teaching of the LO Subject

- [Post-reading the educator's guide]

This category empahsises the participants' perceptions about using the educator's guide to implement the story reading technique. In an interview, one of the participants, Ms. QN, stressed the importance of discussions about social issues with the learners. On the other hand, the LO Lecturer referred to the necessity of a "*broader discussion between the institutions of higher education and the DBE.*"

5.2.3.1 Subcategory 3A: An Undervalued Subject that must be Prioritized. The focus of these discussions and collaboration, according to the LO Lecturer, should be to prepare student teachers to teach and handle social issues that affect learners:

I think each person is unique, each person has a unique culture, has a unique background, unique trauma, unique ways in which they have educated themselves and that might have an impact on the ways in which they are going to educate the learners in the classroom, so I think it is a prerequisite to unpack that. Also, there should be broader discussions because it isn't enough just to teach the curriculum, they (student teachers) need practical ways of handling the actual issues that learners face in their communities.

In one interview, while the LO Lecturer seemed enthusiastic about equipping student teachers with practical skills to effectively teach LO, the LS Lecturer highlighted another problem:

In south African schools, sometimes this subject… Life Orientation is not taken seriously as the other subjects like maths, science, and languages. Life Orientation is not taken seriously because you hear stories such as "it will not be compulsory, or it will be phased out… it's not examinable or the exam easy." Then people say "oh maybe it not important" of which it doesn't have to be a situation where a subject is compulsory or examinable before it qualifies as important.

5.2.3.2 Subcategory 3B: Development of LO Educators Through Collaboration with SMT and DBE for Efficient Curriculum Delivery. The following comment from the Subject Advisor confirmed this challenge:

Some schools don't really take it (Life Orientation) seriously, they use it as a filler for gaps in other subjects. You (educators of other subjects) have been given your subject to teach and periods per week but… you are still short of completing the content so throw one Life Orientation period here for this subject and there for that subject. You ask for Grade 7 teachers… you see new faces in the same school, so in some schools, teachers don't really develop in this subject. Sometimes you go to a school, and you get this very good teacher and you say to yourself, wow! What a teacher for Life Orientation! You try to develop that teacher… and they are also excited… the following week they are not there. So, I think the key people in making Life

Orientation be taken seriously is the SMT… the management of the school. In some schools, you find that the principals look down on Life Orientation.

The Subject Advisor participant was drawing attention to a broader problem for LO in South African schools, whereby LO educators need time and support to deliver the content but seem to be discouraged by fellow educators. In listening to some of these comments, what comes to mind is the question: does this mean that educators view cognition as more important than affect in school education generally? This would partially account for viewing LO as less significant. This point is raised here because it is a rather long-standing problem in education as Eisner (1996, p. 21) notes: "It is maintained, for example, that cognitive studies, those studies that require students to think, should be taught when they are fresh and alert since thinking, as contrasted with feeling, is demanding." It also appears that not enough time is allocated for each subject, hence the need for intervention from the DBE. When discussing these issues, the Subject Advisor spoke with sadness in her voice, but with what seemed like a beam of hope. She said: "*with younger educators it is becoming a little bit better because many of them come out with LO as a specialisation*." The LO Lecturer also shared the same sadness in her tone when she stated:

A life orientation teacher has such a low status according to research, so I find it quite interesting because that person needs to be an expert in a variety of areas like physical education, the personal development of a child, psychological background and then social issues and the environment so it is a very broad subject. I think it a tall order for one teacher to be an expert in all of those fields but I'm passionate about life orientation and I think it a pity that it has such a low status amongst learners, other teachers, principals and parents.

These views highlight that, despite the limitations in resources and social status, LO educators still care for learners, help them to understand and solve personal and scholastic problems, and motivate and excite them about the subject content. Despite the persistent shortfalls around the LO subject, it strengthens the content and delivery of the social issues component in basic and higher education institutions thus making it more relevant to South African learners.

5.2.4 Category 4: Using the Educator's Guide to Implement the Story Reading Technique: Adding Value Through Continuity

- [Participants perceptions on the implementation of the story reading technique]

The aim of the interviews conducted with both educators prior to their implementation of the story reading technique was to explore their perceptions of the educator's guide and the presented stories after they had read the material and prepared for the next lesson. The interviews were taken by the researcher as an opportunity for educators to raise any concerns about the educator's guide before using it in the classroom.

The findings showed that both participants did not have any questions and felt that they could implement the story reading technique. In their view, two parts of the same story might increase interest as the stories are about learners who are similar in age, and the presented situations reflect real life scenarios that they understand. The educators, therefore, appeared to find value in the educator's guide before they implemented the story reading technique. In this regard, Ms. SK presented the view that although educators may model the desired values they aim to instil in learners, much of the values learners tend to hold are influenced by the communities in which they live.

5.2.4.1 Subcategory 4A: The Absence of Teaching Materials that Represent the Lives of Learners and the Necessity for such Materials. For Ms SK, an educational resource that reflects the experiences and common values held by learners, as the one tested, promises to be more effective in achieving the lesson's objectives. In her words:

> *I think it (educator's guide) will add value, as much as our learners don't like to read long stories but I think it will help a lot. They need to explore many situations to help them to learn, but I'm not too sure about the length because we haven't tried it yet. We usually have case studies which are much shorter. They (learners) don't concentrate. The thing is they don't want to read something that is very long because they lose concentration most of time… that's the problem… but let's see. I don't know what to take out from the story because it's all relevant… maybe once I have read it with the learners, you will find that they enjoy it because it is about them, and you don't have to take anything out.*

The phrase "*about them*" appears to indicate that although case studies provide some context and insight about the topic, learners typically do not feel personally connected to the case. Here, the educator's guide comprised stories that are longer than case studies and thus provided a detailed setting. A progressive plot from one week to the next facilitates an emotional connection to the characters as they resolve conflicts that reflect the learners' lives.

5.2.4.2 Subcategory 4B: Using the Educator's Guide with Learners who have Reading Difficulties in a Crowded Classroom.

Ms. SK noted:

> *We've tried so many things to get them (learners) to read. The problem is we have a number of lessons in our classes, and I have, like, 50 learners in my class, of which it is not easy to cater for all of them. To check their problems and assist them. So, if at least we had, like, half of the class like in multiracial schools, maybe it would be easier because learners need to focus in class.*

Ms QN concurred:

> *Sometimes you don't finish the content in relation to that particular topic so you give it as homework so that when you ask them to recall, they would have at least read it. But the problem is that they hardly do it. Some say their parents can't assist them because they don't know English and don't understand the terms used so they have to wait for the educator to explain it.*

Ms. SK also raised concerns about textbooks:

> *Some learners are not interested in the textbook, especially if it is black and white. You know sometimes you make copies for those that don't have (textbooks). Others are not interested in the topic, so they don't see the point of reading and there are those who are overwhelmed by too much reading. So, this guide, like, the colours and everything looks nice… it looks really good. They can see Musa and Nolwazi and where they come from. So, I think even those that can't read will enjoy the visual because they can look and listen to the story and use the plot to tie to the content. You know, because*

now, they just look lost and you must try to explain and explain but with the stories, you can just tell them: remember when this happened in the story… what did we call it? I know they will remember the stories.

Ms. SK's response suggests that she feels constrained by over-crowding, limited resources, and lesson timeframes. She seemed to place emphasis on the prescribed content, but also indicated that the presented stories in the educator's guide might prove to be a great asset, especially for learners with reading difficulties. She feels that the stories are simple and memorable, and the learners can engage their imagination by using the illustrations to construct the plot. She also notes the importance of layout design such as the text font, images, shapes, and the exciting colours presented in the reading/supplementary resources.

Ms. QN shared the same interest regarding the educator's guide:

I think it is very good, actually (educator's guide), it is excellent because it can promote language. Learners will be able to read for themselves-pronunciation, vocabulary, and recall. Learners will have an interest in the story because they have read it themselves and it is relevant to them. I think that continuing the same story is a very good idea because learners are now familiar with the characters who are there in the story and they can use the previous knowledge to relate to the lesson. The case studies are short, and they change all the time, and sometimes they don't relate to the learners so learners forget about them but with this one (there is continuity) which is needed.

One of the revelations from this study is that, although it was initially thought that recalling facts without a context may be difficult for learners and both educators used case studies to contextualise the subject content, the educators lamented the shortfall of radical discontinuity inherent in case studies between the case and reality as a limiting factor to the learners' ability to recall the case and the subject content. Against this background, both educators found value in the presented stories, as they not only continued the plot but could be used to connect learners to the subject content from one subtopic to the next.

Taking all of this together conclusively showed that the participants agreed that they have no problem with the educator's guide and confirmed their capability and readiness to implement it in the classroom context.

5.3 RQ2: In What Ways do Gender Normativity Conflicts Emerge in the Grade 7 Learners' Appreciation of the Teaching of LO Through the Story Reading Technique?

The findings regarding this question are highlighted in the following sections based on observations during the implementation of the story reading technique, which were documented with the researcher's interpretations of the sessions as well as the educators' responses from the post-implementation interviews. The observations focus was first on the nature of possible gender normativity conflict that could emerge in the Grade 7 learners' appreciation of the teaching of the LO subject through the story reading technique presented in the educator's guide as a supplementary resource when delivering each lesson over a four-week period. Another focus was on both educators' teaching styles, the findings of which are reported in the three subsections below: during the beginning of the lesson; during the lesson presentation itself; and at the end of the lesson.

In relation to the teaching style used by the educators, the trend showed that while Ms. SK mostly adopted direct instruction approach, Ms. QN adopted the constructivist teaching strategy. However, it is interesting to note how, despite using different teaching approaches to implement the story reading technique, the two participants still found the technique comfortable to work with and relevant for their purposes. More details on trends emerging from the observations that were made are given below:

5.3.1 Category 1: Exploring the Learners' Expectations and Explaining the Purpose of the Story

- [Implementing the story reading technique - During the beginning of the lesson]

The beginning of the lesson period refers to the time from when the learners enter the classroom to when the story has been read. At this stage, the primary focus of the observations was on identifying the learners' expectations of the story and the lesson's objectives.

Exploring the learner's thoughts about the story they are about to read allows the educator to introduce the subtopic as the main focus of the lesson. When the educators allowed learners a few minutes to look at the story-booklet and discuss how it might relate to the subtopic, learners

appeared motivated to read the story and engaged in the lesson. Both educators indicated to learners that they are to refrain from referring to each other as the characters in the story once the story has been read.

5.3.1.1 Subcategory 1A: Challenging Gender Stereotypes and Promoting Gender Equality.

- Story 1 – Part 1: Ms. SK
  Week 1 (Topic: Types/forms of substance abuse)

Ms. SK adopted direct/explicit instruction during the orientation and presentation of the lesson. For the orientation, she asked the learners to state what they think about each character and what the story is about. She then indicated that the story would demonstrate how some learners may be exposed to different types of substances.

As the lesson progressed, it was observed that once the learners completed the story, Ms. SK engaged the whole class through the discussion questions. The details of her process are highlighted below:

> The educator introduced the topic and indicated that learners were going to read a story before reading the textbook. The learners seemed excited and drawn to the illustrations and colours. They started to page through the story-booklet and had discussions among themselves about the story. The teacher did not seem to mind their discussions as she let the learners enjoy a few minutes of engaging with the material and with each other. She then asked for volunteers who will represent each character. Both boys and girls raised their hands. The educator let the learners decide who will read. Some learners wanted to represent the same characters (Father and Lerato); however, the matter was quickly resolved by those who had their hands up as they agreed to alternate between pages.
>
> A boy picked up his hand and indicated that he wants to portray the character of Nolwazi. Some of his classmates laughed and others were quick to remind him that Nolwazi is a girl and must be portrayed by a girl. While holding up the booklet, the boy responded: "*It's just a character, it doesn't mean that I am a girl, but she is the star of the show and I like to be a star*." Silence creeped

in and the learners' eyes were fixed on the educator who replied: "*Ok, so you are Nolwazi… to the rest of you, there is no need to laugh*." This concluded the discussion on the character of Nolwazi. The designated learners read the story; thereafter, the educator started with the discussion questions.

Interestingly, the educator did not read the story as indicated on the educator's guide. To this end, she stated: "*Grade 7s can read on their own… they will engage more with the story*." She did not justify her reasons to the class for stating that the boy can portray a character of a girl nor did she reflect on any other aspect of the learners' engagement. Ms. SK indicated: *I did not want to take up too much time on engaging the learners about the story as the focus is on the subject content. We teach inclusion so there is no reason why a boy can't be a girl in the story.*

Although the main theme of the story is substance abuse, tension sparked from gender norms. The educator promoted one of the goals of LO as she allowed the learners to debate the issue calmly and respectfully. With little engagement from the educator, learners questioned their pre-conceptions about themselves without discounting their sense of self.

5.3.1.2 Subcategory 1B: Challenging Heteronormativity and Affirming Sexual Diversity.

- Story 1 – Part 2: Ms. QN

  Week 2 (Topic: Symptoms of substance abuse)

Ms. QN spent more time in introducing the lesson than Ms. SK, and she focused on eliciting knowledge and creating cognitive dissonance. During the elicitation phase, learners put forward their own ideas and were challenged to consider the ideas of their peers. In the restricting phase, the educator introduced viewpoints which contrasted with learners' preconceptions and explicitly promoted inclusivity while dispelling discrimination. Ms. QN asked learners several questions before reading the story. With each question she moved around the classroom. To elicit prior knowledge, she asked the learners to provide a definition of "substance," to name some substances that are abused by people to get intoxicated, and to explain how the substances are ingested. She then asked the learners to look at the pictures and asked them: "*what do you see?*" The learners responded, and the educator probed further. Some of the responses elicited are summarized in Table 11 below:

Table 11

Learner Responses to Illustrations

What do you see?	Learners' responses to probes
"School girls in casual clothes."	"The girls are going to a party."
"A father."	"It's nice to have a father you can call."
"A boy with partial hearing."	"He has a hearing aid but he is like the rest of us."
"A handsome boy."	"I like Thabani's eyes." "I like his smile."
"A cheeky girl."	"Look at the way Lerato is swinging her hair." "She is rude." "She is full of herself."
"A big Afro *(hair)*."	"I wish my hair was that big…. It's nice to have a long Afro, you can do anything with it… plat anything or style anything."

Ms. QN reflected the learners' feelings with each of their responses. She then asked them to identify some of the symptoms that they know and how they think substance abuse affects individuals and families. Some of the learners' responses included:

- *You have sleepless nights.*
- *You become extra thin.*
- *Your school performance drops.*
- *You steal in order to buy drugs.*
- *You become angry all the time.*
- *Your gums and lips go dark/black.*
- *They don't bath and their feet are dirty with cracks.*
- *They are always scratching themselves.*

The educator indicated that the lesson would start with part 2 of the comic and asked learners to give a summary of the plot from last week. The learners recalled the story with ease. She then asked learners to give a summary on the

topic from the previous week and they did. She asked: "*how come you remember the topic so well?*" The learners responded: "*it is because Lerato asked Nolwazi to take ecstasy*." This is how they remembered that they were focussing on types of substance abuse. One learner mentioned that she remembers the story because she has a crush on Thabani, so she has been waiting all week to see if Nolwazi and Thabani end up together. A girl responded: "*I have a crush on her* (Nolwazi)." The girl next to her responded: "*But Nolwazi is a girl… you are a girl*."

Creating cognitive dissonance: the educator noticed this interaction and asked: "Is it possible for a girl to have a crush on another girl?" The learners and the educator debated this matter. After a three-minute discussion, the educator asked the class to decide on who would portray the characters. The characters were chosen according to the sex/gender depicted in the illustrations. One girl wanted to represent Thabani, and the class became chaos: "But you are a girl!" said one boy. The girl persisted. The educator intervened by stating that in a drama setting, girls can be boys and vice-versa, so even if Thabani is illustrated as a boy, that does not mean that the character cannot be represented by a girl. Upon hearing this, some learners who had not turned the page, quickly browsed the story booklet to see whether Thabani can be portrayed by a girl. Once they saw the illustration, one boy said: "Ms, Thabani has to be a boy!" The educator explained that Thabani is a fictional character and, therefore, may be represented by any gender. The boys were adamant that the character should be portrayed by a boy. The girl that wanted to portray Thabani kept insisting on the matter, and some girls said to her: "leave them (boys), let him be Thabani so we can move on with the lesson." She was relentless and solicited support from other classmates. The educator watched as the learners went back and forth on the matter. She did not interrupt or intervene. At the end of a seven-minute discussion from the time the story booklet was handed out, it was determined by the learners that Brian would be represented by the girl. The educator stated: "You seem excited to talk about girls and boys… dating…." The class laughed. She called out the names of those who would portray the characters for part 2 and instructed the learners to read clearly and loudly and pretend like they were the characters.

Although the theme of the stories is substance abuse, much of the debate among learners in both schools related to gender dynamics. When the girl refused to give up the male character (Thabani) that she wanted to portray, other girls suggested she let the matter go. They did not want to argue against the boys who were dominating the conversation. From the foundation phase, as noted by Cekiso, the literature in South African schools typically portrays females "as submissive and dependent on men to rescue them." Boys, on the other hand, are "portrayed as having power, bravery, strength and wit" (2013, p. 201). Hence, during the discussions, the girls might have felt powerless and more compliant to the status quo, especially when the boys became rowdy. The interaction between the girls and boys indicates that the learners identified with the characters in their physical and social portrayal.

Table 11 also demonstrates the necessity of engaging with the learners' prior knowledge when introducing a lesson as well as the importance of reflecting the learners' emotions to normalise their feelings. The learners' thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes were challenged during this session to promote a shared understanding of the context and content of the story. The use of stories facilitated a discussion to explore one another's views.

5.3.1.3 Subcategory 1C: Conduct During Reading and After Reading. The focus of the observation here was on how the stories were read, how the educators posed and answered questions, and how learners responded to questions.

- Story 2 – Part 1: Ms. SK
  Week 3 (Factors that contribute to substance abuse).

Ms. SK stood in front of the class and asked learners to recall the events of the previous week when she had instructed them to role play. She indicated that due to time constraints, not all learners participated, only those that volunteered. The learners recalled their excitement about having watched or partook in the role play and debated who performed better than the others as indicated below:

> The learners recalled the story exceptionally well including the symptoms of substance abuse. They also seemed excited when the story booklet was issued to them. This time, they were greeted by a short story. They seemed to focus more on the pictures and started guessing what the story would be about.

> Much like the first two lessons, Ms. SK indicated that the learners would read the story, answer the questions as a class, and read the textbook. She did not comment on the learners' views about the role play. She continued to ask the learners: "*Why do you think some people engage in substance abuse?*" Some of the responses included:
>
> - *Girl:* *"They are forward…. They think that they are big…. they want to do things for grown-ups with their friends."*
> - *Boy:* *"They are stressed… old people always have stress."*
> - *Boy:* *"They like the taste." With a frown on her face, another learner responded: "but alcohol doesn't taste nice." The educator asked: "how do you know?" "I have tasted it Miss, hayi, it's not nice." A boy responded: "drink ciders its nicer… it's got sugar inside."*
>
> The learners seemed intrigued by this discussion and showered the boy with questions. The educator remarked: *"don't judge him."* She then concluded this discussion by stating: *"don't drink when you are under 18… you are too young. You will damage your body and your brain."* No further discussions were entered into. As the characters had already been chosen, the educator instructed the learners to start reading. The orientation and presentation of the lesson was brief. This seemed like a missed opportunity to further engage with the learners.

The learners' responses demonstrate that they are aware of factors that contribute to substance abuse. Galda and Beach (2001, p. 859) state that stories could be used to encourage the learner "to think about his own home community as plagued by the same kinds of social problems depicted in the novel." In this regard, the educator could introduce the subtopic by using the learners' responses, such as intrapersonal factors ("*they like the taste*") and interpersonal factors ("*they want to do things for grown-ups with their friends*"). The educator could also explore "*stress*" and what the learners think could be alternatives for using substances when one is "*stressed*."

- Story 2 – Part 2: Ms. QN

  Week 4 (Prevention measures: early detection)

Ms. QN asked the learners to recall the events in story 2: part 1 and engaged in a brief discussion about personal factors that contribute to substance abuse.

The educator introduced the topic for the day and asked learners to define "protective." Creating cognitive dissonance: She also asked: "*what do you think can decrease substance abuse among learners?"* The responses are highlighted in Table 12.

Table 12

Learners' Responses to Help Decrease Substance Abuse Among Learners

Learners' responses	Educator's responses
"The learners who are engaging in substance abuse must be beaten by their parents."	"Will they stop drinking once they have been beaten?" "How do you feel when you are beaten by your parents?"
"They must go to rehab."	"That is very good but what if they cannot afford rehab?"
"They must change friends."	"What will they say to their current friends if they don't want to hang out with them anymore?" "Where will they find new friends?" "What if they cannot find new friends?"
"They must stop being forward and just stop drinking."	"What if they are addicted?"

Once the learners were selected to read the story, the educator indicated that this would be the last day of using the story booklet. It was as if the learners did not understand what she just said, as one boy asked: *"Ma'am, will we get another booklet?"* Ms. QN stated that there wasn't another booklet, and that they will be using the textbook and "other resources." Ms. QN then asked: *"Do*

you think that Musa is getting along with Aunty Star?" One boy replied: *"Ma'am, Aunty Star gives me bad vibes."* The class laughed. A girl responded *"Ma'am, Aunty Star has to treat Musa nicely, he is her nephew and they lived together before Gogo died."*

The learners recognised rehabilitation centers as places where people of all ages can go for substance-abuse recovery. They believe that these centres for addiction treatment minimise chronic health conditions and restore a sense of responsibility for one's life. Consistent with constructivist teaching, Table 12 demonstrates how Ms. QN created cognitive dissonance at the beginning of the lesson to challenge the learners' thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes, thus encouraging new ideas. By prompting learners to predict future events of the story, learners engage in creative thinking and personalise the story as depicted in the response: "*Aunty Star gives me bad vibes*." When the learners' emotions are intertwined with the characters, they participate more in the discussion, challenge issues, and are willing to engage in debate, primarily to validate their feelings and point of view and, ultimately, to resolve the conflict.

Overall, Ms. QN took a total of nine minutes to introduce the subtopic, using the story booklet and reflecting on the learners' responses. She engaged with each response provided by the learners.

5.3.2 Category 2: Probing and Clarifying

- [Implementing the story reading technique - During the lesson]

The focus of the researcher's observations at this stage was on how the educators integrated the educator's guide with the subject content when teaching.

It was noted that decision charts may aid educators when asking probing questions and to clarify where necessary. The visual presentation, including colours and shapes, stimulates learners' interests and motivates them to read the text and construct personal responses to the questions. Educators can adjust their instruction to help learners to find personal meaning in the story and achieve the lesson's objectives.

- Story 1 – Part 1: Ms. SK

  Week 1 (Topic: Types/forms of substance abuse)

In this session, the learners seemed to enjoy reading and listening to the story as the class was quiet during the reading. Two learners were not following the story as they kept paging through the booklet. The educator noticed this but did not seem to mind. I (the present researcher) later learned that they could not read.

> The educator asked learners to summarise the story and proceeded to the discussion questions. The learners were forthcoming with their personal experiences. Both girls and boys were engaging during the discussion session, and the two boys who could not read also participated. When exploring the decision chart, the educator focused the conversation on going to the party and drinking alcohol, rather than taking ecstasy, as the learners had indicated that they were more familiar with alcohol in their homes and within the community. Most of the learners indicated that they knew where they could buy alcohol and that some of their friends indulged. The educator asked those who did not advocate for Nolwazi to go to the party to justify their response, and then she moved to the "maybe" option. Two learners responded, then the educator moved to those who were in favour of Nolwazi going to the party. To this, one girl responded: *"She should go… she can always say no to drugs. I trust myself; I would go because I know that I don't drink, and I will not drink. Ma'am, if you drink, you must drink everything in your glass before going to the loo."*
>
> On the contrary, a boy stated: *"I wouldn't go because they will influence me to drink… once a challenge is placed, I cannot back down. I have to prove that I can stand anything."*

Boys acknowledged the potential of being influenced by friends more frequently than girls. This indicates that boys may experience pressure from friends to engage in risky behaviours to prove their manhood, making the need for content that is contextually relevant apparent. As Groenewald, Khumalo and Essack note: "Initiatives should also not only enhance knowledge on the harms associated with substance misuse, but also provide adolescents with skills to resist engaging in these behaviours" (2018, p. 561). As such, a discussion platform and resources that promote social skills and problem solving are critical.

The educator did not probe much. After the discussion session, she asked the learners to guess the topic for the day. Some thought the topic will be about peer pressure. The educator asked the learners to indicate the types of drugs or substances that they have heard about or seen. She once again asked the learners to guess the topic of the day. Most learners indicated that the topic is on substance abuse.

Ms. SK asked learners to work on their textbooks. Some were sharing the textbook as there weren't enough for each learner. She read two paragraphs and engaged the learners in a discussion about Story 1 – Part 1 in relation to the textbook. She then linked the learners' responses to the paragraph in the textbook. Ms. SK continued in this manner until she completed the paragraphs.

The educator engaged in a structured practice consistent with direct instruction, where the subject matter content was the primary focus. Although individual beliefs were discussed, they were not explored further to reflect personal understanding. Learners were allowed to use the textbook or story booklet to answer questions. Emphasis was placed on whether the answers were correct or incorrect and aligning the learners' responses to the "ideal" answer.

- Story 1 – Part 2: Ms. QN

  Week 2 (Topic: Symptoms of substance abuse)

In this session, the learners read the story out loud and seemed animated. When they finished reading, some requested the story be read again so they could take turns portraying the characters. The educator indicated that they will role play the comic and have turns to portray the characters in the next lesson.

The educator asked learners: *"How do you think Nolwazi's life would turn out if she started using drugs?"* The learners gave various responses. The educator then said: *"What you have just discussed are the effects of substance abuse?"* Using the story, the educator went on to discuss the physiological symptoms and effects substance abuse has in disrupting families and communities. She then asked the learners to read the textbook as a class. She stopped them after every paragraph to explain further, using the story to relate the subject content.

When integrating the stories with the subject content, the educator focussed on the application of knowledge and gave feedback to the learners. She asked questions such as: *"Why do you think people that abuse substances become miserable when they don't have money to buy drugs?"* In other words, the learners had to elaborate on the aspects of the story that are applicable to the subject content. Their responses reflected the issues faced by their communities in relation to substance abuse, as demonstrated by one boy who said: *"They feel bad because they have to break into our homes to steal the money for the drugs."* Learners used personal meaning constructed from the story in relation to the subject content.

- Story 2 – Part 1: Ms. SK
  Week 3 (Topic: Personal factors that contribute to substance abuse: intrapersonal and interpersonal)

In this session, Ms. SK asked the boys to read the first paragraph and the girls to read the second paragraph. The girls and boys alternated reading until they finished the story. Then, the educator did not ask the discussion questions, but rather asked the boys to summarise half of the story and the girls to summarise the remaining part. There was not as much excitement as there was for Story 1. The learners appeared much calmer after Story 2.

> The educator asked how the learners felt about the story. One boy responded: *"I feel sad that his grandmother died.... My mother died and I live with my grandmother, and I wouldn't want anything to happen to her."*
>
> Another girl added: *"Maam, I lost my grandmother, and it is very painful... so I feel bad for Musa."*
>
> An overwhelming response by the class was: "*We sympathise with him."*

The learners appeared sincere in their responses, and many had experienced the loss of a loved one. They listened attentively to one another, and their responses reflected empathy for each other and sympathy for the main character. The educator asked: "*Why do you think that the story is called Musa, you are not safe!?"*

A boy responded: *"The grandmother was killed by Aunty Star; she is going to make Musa a slave. Musa left his grandmother in a healthy condition, now she is dead… and who was there… Aunty Star! I don't trust her… it's her. Maybe she is going to kill Musa too because she wants gogo's things like her money or her house."*

An opportunity to engage with the learners was missed as the educator moved to the next question: *"How do you think Musa will cope with the passing of his grandmother?"*

One girl replied: *"Aunty Star has been looking after him so she might be nice to him, and his friends will help him… or maybe his teacher or the community."*

This learner's response demonstrates the phenomenon of the communal self as posited by Nwoye (2006), where emphasis is placed on social solidarity as the learner focuses on the role of the community members to help during difficult times. However, this response was not explored further as the educator moved on to introduce the topic of personal factors that contribute to substance abuse. In doing this:

> Ms. SK explained the terms "intrapersonal" and "interpersonal." She then asked learners*: "If Musa starts to drink because he has lost his grandmother, would that be an intrapersonal or interpersonal contributing factor?"* A debate started when some learners indicated that *"it is an intrapersonal factor because he would be deciding for himself, inside his mind, that he wants to drink."* Other learners were adamant that *"if Musa starts to drink it would be because of interpersonal factors. His grandmother was his support system, now he has no one to support him. He might have friends but it wouldn't be the same so a lack of support is an interpersonal factor."* The learners went back and forth on this matter, and the educator asked the learners to read the textbook so that they can find the answer. The educator helped them to get to the correct answer. She posed the question: *"Why do you think that people engage in substance abuse?"* Learners had to indicate whether their response is an intrapersonal or interpersonal factor.

The educator used the story to promote empathy as she encouraged learners to think about someone else's perspective (character). The story had personal significance, and, thus, learners were forthcoming about how the presented situation might affect them. The learners articulated their and other's feelings clearly and respectfully.

- Story 2 – Part 2: Ms. QN
  Week 4 (Topic Protective factors)

In this session, Ms. QN read the first paragraph, and then asked the learners to read the next one. She alternated reading each paragraph with the learners. The educator then asked the learners in their groups to pick out one sentence that they felt was important from each paragraph. A conversation began given the different opinions over what was more important. Ms. QN then asked the learners who are usually quiet to answer the discussion questions, which they easily did.

> Ms. QN asked the class: "*What did you learn from this story?*
>
> One girl responded: *"Trust nobody… people pretend to love you."*
>
> A boy refuted this statement by stating: *"I can't say that 'don't trust nobody' but a person might not turn out in the way that they present themselves."*
>
> Another girl added: *"You must be kind to people… don't treat anyone badly, just because they don't have anything."*
>
> Ms. QN asked the learners: *"Why do you think Musa did not drink beer when he was staying with his grandmother?"*
>
> One girl responded: *"He had someone to love him and guide him."*
>
> A boy added: *"His grandmother respected him, and he respected her so there was no need to drink."*
> The educator responded: *"So you think that this is what prevented Musa from drinking?"* A girl responded: *"Yes, Ma'am and he wanted to be a pilot." "I*

see, so being loved and having dreams are protective factors. Who do you want love from… your boyfriend or girlfriend?" The class laughed.

One girl responded: *We want to be loved by our first parents at home and second parents (teachers) at school."*

Another boy added: *Aunty Star should have treated Musa like a family member… make him comfortable… make him feel at home.*

Initially there were differing views, but as the lesson progressed, the responses seemed to converge. The learners appeared to influence each other's thinking through reflection and incorporation of new information. The educator facilitated this process by scaffolding the subject content in relation to the presented story and learners' experiences. The learners' responses also demonstrate the importance of the pastoral role of educators. Thus, educators, especially those who teach LO, must be able to support learners' emotional needs.

5.3.3 Category 3: Providing Feedback, Reflecting and Preparing for the next Lesson

- [Implementing the story reading technique - Observations at the end of the lesson]

Here, the focus of the observation was on how the educators summarised and integrated the story with the subject content to complete the designated activities in the textbook or worksheet prepared by the educator. Giving feedback on thoughts and feelings about the story as well exploring learners' questions about the lesson was also observed. Further details are highlighted below.

Story 1 – Part 1: Ms. SK

Week 1 (Topic: Types/forms of substance abuse)

In this session, Ms. SK summarised the important points raised when reading the textbook in relation to the story. She read the first two questions in the textbook and asked learners to respond. Ms. SK indicated that their answers were correct, and that they could work in pairs to complete the activity in the textbook. Those who did not finish the activity could complete it as homework. Ms. SK checked to see whether learners would be able to answer the questions independently before asking them to work in pairs. She stated: "*This was a very engaging session. I thought it might be good to let them [learners] look at the pictures in the story*

booklet a little more. They like the characters so I know they will focus on that more but if they are going to be learning using these stories, they might as well get used to them."

While other learners worked on the activity in the textbook, most focused on the story-booklet. I then learned that this was because of the question: *"Is Nolwazi' s father an Indian or African man?"* The conversation had moved from substance abuse to the ethnicity of the characters. The educator heard the conversation among the learners but ignored it. She stated: *Let them figure it out on their own. I don't want to sit here and say Indians are like this or Africans like that*. I am just glad that they like the story. It makes it easier to teach because they can contextualise things (substance abuse).

The topic of ethnicity appeared to make the educator uncomfortable, as indicated by her avoidance of the learners' questions. Ms. SK missed an opportunity to challenge any misconceptions that learners might hold as she did not probe to discover the learners' reasons for asking the questions regarding ethnicity. Her response highlights the importance of awareness of personal biases and demonstrates the educator's tendency to control the learning process in relation to subject content. I (the researcher) listened to a discussion of the two learners' (boy and girl) closest to as they worked in pairs. Some of their responses included:

- *Boy: "Look at his hair. He is Indian."*
- *Girl: "He is too dark. He is African."* To which the boy responded: *"There are dark Indians too."*
- *Boy: "He is very close to Nolwazi… not many African fathers are like that."* To which the girl responded: *"My dad is like that… so he can be African."*

Although there was interaction between the learners, they seemed to independently reach conclusions about Nolwazi's ethnicity. They also seemed to find their own solutions to the task in the textbook. The learners' responses regarding ethnicity also point to a lack of stories that portray the African male in the role of a present and caring father.

- Story 1 – Part 2: Ms. QN

  Week 2

In this session, Ms. QN asked learners to read the case study in their textbook about symptoms of substance abuse and answer the questions in their groups. As the learners were reading, the educator walked around and asked each group a question relating to the case study.

> One of the questions asked by Ms. QN was: *"Why do you think the person in the case study took drugs?"* A boy responded:
> *"Ma'am, it's what we were talking about earlier; this thing of trusting your friends is no good. Because, maybe, it is the friends that told him (character in the case study/textbook) that 'take drugs and you will be cool' but now he can't stop. He is even starting to hear voices in his head. You don't have to trust your friends, you can love your friends, but you don't have to trust them… trust yourself only."*
>
> The educator looked surprised by this response and said: *"Thank you…. yes, remember when we were answering the question: Is Lerato a good friend? You all said that if someone asks you to take drugs, they are not your friend."* The educator used the story-booklet to aid the learners in their understanding of the textbook. Once she was done with group discussions, she asked learners to complete the activity in the textbook on their own. She also said that the learners could use the remainder of the period to prepare for the roleplay that they would perform the following week. There was excitement in the classroom as the learners chose their character to portray.

The educator used scaffolding to link the story to the textbook, going beyond the leaners' current understanding of the subject content. The importance of dilemmas that reflect the complexity of life is demonstrated in the learner's response: "*trust yourself only*." The learner's response indicates the reluctance of boys to be perceived as vulnerable. However, this statement was not explored further by the educator.

- Story 2 – Part 1: Ms. SK
  Week 3

In this session, Ms. SK asked the learners half of questions that are in textbook relating to personal factors. She then asked learners to complete the questions in the textbook individually: "*You have 15 minutes to complete the activity in the textbook. When you are done, complete the worksheet on Musa.*"

The educator used the story and textbook interchangeably throughout the lesson rather than completing all activities related to the story in the beginning of the lesson. She aided the learners with some of the questions, but thereafter left them to complete the tasks independently. Without the educator instructing them, the learners were aware that they could complete the tasks at home and return the worksheet next week, as this has been the practice in previous lessons.

- Story 2 – Part 2: Ms. QN
  Week 4

In this session, when completing the questions in the textbook about personal factors that contribute to substance abuse, Ms. QN asked: *"How would you assist a friend that you suspect to be abusing substances?"*

> A boy referred to Story 1: "*Ma'am, if you look at Nolwazi, she didn't take the ecstasy because she did not want to disappoint her father... so that is a protective factor. So, I would ask the friend to focus on the things that are good in his life.*"
>
> The educator probed further: *"If you look at the story of Musa, what is good in his life?"*
>
> A girl responded: "*His class teacher found out that Aunty Star is abusing Musa so she will help him. Maybe the social workers will take him to a place of safety.*"

> The educator reflected: "*So, there are still people who care about him…. That is good. Do you think that the educator finding out about Musa's situation and referring him to the counsellor is early detection?*"
>
> The girl continued: *"Maybe Aunty Star will still be nice to Musa…. maybe they don't have to split them up."*
>
> Some of the learners were adamant that Musa must be moved to a place of safety. The educator kept asking questions about the story in relation to the textbook. In the last 15 minutes of the lesson, she stated: *"You can work together to complete the activity in the textbook, but you must write your own answers."*

There was much interaction during the lesson, and the learners displayed a clear understanding of the subject content. The learners were aware that children who experience abuse or neglect might be placed in alternative care. However, they were sad at the possibility of splitting up with one's family. A sense of belonging is reflected in the learners' responses. When people are addressed by community members, particularly those they respect, such as teachers, they may realise that their actions are shameful. They may align their behaviour and attitudes with the community's expectations to avoid stigma (Nwoye, 2007).

5.3.4 Category 4: General Observations and Assessment Tasks

In sum, the learners meaningfully contributed to the conversations and confidently engaged with the activities for each lesson. There was more engagement in Ms. QN's class as she adopted constructivist teaching. She spent more time on the introduction and guided discussions, such that dominant learners did not control the lesson. Ms. QN ensured that all learners had an opportunity to voice their thoughts and beliefs. Both educators used the educator guide's assessments to aid instruction and enhance the learners understanding of the subject content. Ms. SK adopted direct instruction and placed more emphasis on obtaining the correct answers during assessments. She often asked learners to complete the assessment tasks individually, while Ms. QN asked learners to work in pairs or groups. Both educators familiarised themselves with the stories and created realistic expectations in the classroom regarding the set tasks. They encouraged respect during the lesson as learners were not allowed to interrupt each other while someone was speaking. However, Ms. QN frequently requested

that learners elaborate on their answers, adapted the content, and acknowledged accomplishments. The extract below demonstrates Ms. QN's observations during teaching:

> *Story 1 was good, the learners… they read it nicely and thoroughly but then when it was time to answer some questions, some were hesitant. Maybe it's because some of them have not been in the situations where they are being asked to do certain stuff like using drugs which is why I spoke about alcohol more because they are more familiar with it. But in story 2, they related with it very well because these are the things that are happening in the communities they live in even at their homes. I did not have adapt it.*

Taken together, these presentations demonstrate that both the educators and the LO learners appeared to be very comfortable using the proposed educator's guide and the story reading technique in LO subject teaching. The learners' enthusiasm and excitement, as well as their participation in these sessions, appear very encouraging and trend in a positive direction in relation to the use of the proposed educator's guide and the story reading technique in LO subject teaching. Although, initially, the learners found it difficult to allow volunteers to represent characters with a gender identity that did not match with their biological gender identity, with the intervention of the educators, the learners came to reduce the dissonance.

5.4 RQ3: What are the Participants' Evaluations of the Educator's Guide and the Story Reading Technique Proposed for Use in South African Classroom to Teach Social Issues?

After the implementation of the story reading technique was concluded, all participants were asked to evaluate the educator's guide in relation to its suitability and implementation prospects as a teaching tool for the story reading technique in LO. The participants' responses are presented *vis-a-vis* the six OECD/DAC evaluation criteria that have been conflated into three categories: (1) relevance and coherence; (2) effectiveness and impact; (3) efficiency and sustainability.

5.4.1 Category1: The Relevance and Coherence of the Proposed Educator's Guide

Participant responses on the relevance and coherence of the educator's guide and story reading technique are tabulated in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Participants Responses on the Relevance and Coherence of the Educator's Guide

Relevance	Coherence
LS Lecturer: *I think the guide is spot-on! Let's bring back what we grew up knowing and learn from that, like our grannies used to tell us stories and we would learn from those stories. Now there are characters on TV and Facebook and stuff like that and they (student teachers and learners) will tell stories that are happening there. Nowadays, (her tone dropped) the problem is that TV is the educator more than the educators and parents.*	**LO Lecturer:** *I think any learner would be able to understand and I think a good teacher will be able to apply any content to the learner's context. If it is not applicable to the learners, teachers can ask for an example from the child's own life that relate to what happened to Musa or what happened in the second story so I do believe even if children's circumstances are different, there are things that they can relate with…. That would be my take on it, but I do believe that there is a need for an Afrocentric approach in almost all the content we teach across the board, so I think this is very necessary.*
LS Lecturer: *The problem is leaving the television to educate our kids. This problem starts when they are young, and the parents just leave the kids to watch whatever they want. They watch all sorts of risky behaviours, they watch people taking drugs, they watch sex on TV, they watch violence, with no guidance of what is right and what is wrong. These things (behaviours) might seem 'cool' or 'fun' and the kids want to try them because they have no sense of self… or who they are, really. Cultural stories teach the learners about the essence of being.*	**Ms. SK:** *Most of the learners are raised by their grandparents… they don't have parents… maybe some of them died because of using these drugs so I think it does affect learners in so many ways. So, I think they (learners) will enjoy it (story reading-technique), it will be more relevant. More stories must be given to them to read about things that are happening even if they haven't been engaging in these things, but they know that these things are happening in their environment.*

These stories (educator's guide) are nice because I see Musa fetching water… it is not a shame or abuse, it is responsibility, but we seem to be losing this connection to stories to help shape the identity of a child.	
Ms. SK: *I think it is relevant because it is in line with the curriculum, topics like peer pressure and drug use are relevant and are prescribed in the curriculum. It also reflects on the knowledge that the learners already have… it is something that they know, they've seen in it their homes. Some of their uncles in their families are using drugs so they know because sometimes we talk about these things. I think it is of their level around their age.*	**Ms. QN:** *Recently we were doing the different types of substances which are illegal and legal substances and the symptoms which include changes… physical changes, emotional changes and changes at school and with others so when we were doing the story, we also find some types of substances that were being used by the characters, so it links with what we are doing in the classroom. Also, other LO initiatives must also align with the curriculum so, this guide is fine because it can be used with any initiative.*

The above excerpts show that the participants clearly gave a positive evaluation regarding the extent to which the educator's guide is relevant and its contents coherent for teaching LO in South African schools. They also agreed that the story reading technique is consistent with the traditional African cultural approach to the use of stories to generate lessons for children (Nwoye, 2006). It is interesting to note that in both instances of their assessment of relevance and consistency their point of reference for concordance is the African cultural practice. The participants agree that using stories to teach learners has become more relevant and vital these days as social and visual media are quickly trying to usurp the use of the intergenerational process of teaching African children through stories. Their comments show that they are in agreement regarding a consistency between the intended outcomes per CAPS, teaching methods, assessment tasks, and learning activities in the classroom and content of the educator's guide.

In sum, the participants viewed the educator's guide and the story reading technique as relevant to Grade-7 learners in South Africa and coherent with CAPS. They indicated that the story reading technique provided a vital opportunity to discuss both positive and negative feelings with learners when social issues are being taught. The discussion questions, according to the participants, helped learners think about the plot, process the content, and clarify their values. The learners spoke to cultural expectations in their analysis of the characters' behaviours as they identified with the characters' world.

5.4.2 Category 2: Effectiveness and Impact of the Educator's Guide as a Tool to Facilitate the Use of the Story Reading Technique.

The participants evaluated the effectiveness of the educator's guide as a tool to facilitate the story reading technique. The focus was on identifying any possible (in)consistencies in the educator's guide to allow for well organised implementation. Participants also commented on the possible impact or effects of the story reading technique on learners.

Table 14

Participants' Responses on the Introduction: Title page, Instructions, and Information Box

Ms. QN: *I think the cover page is very attractive, the colours blend well. The quote is relevant and compliments the hot air balloon. I like the hot air balloon because there are speech bubbles or balloons inside the guide, so you see the first balloon on the outside. The balloon also, as a mode of transport, is not too fast or too slow for you to see everything. The view is beautiful as you are in the sky, you can see everything, and you ride hot air balloon if the sky or weather is clear. So, I think this means that the educator, as the driver in the classroom, should create a fun environment where the content is delivered at move at a moderate pace and learners can read and formulate opinions from what they see. Then, the educator must link that to the curriculum as the quote there says "the story is our escort. Without it we are blind." It is for the educator to open the eyes of the learners by transporting their minds and imaginations through the story to reach the outcomes of the lesson. So, each time the lesson starts, the learners board the hot air balloon as each topic is introduced through the story. That is my understanding of the cover page.*

LS Lecturer: *I think it (title page) is very creative and free spirited… because it means you go where you want. From the time the story is given to you, and you see the pictures, the transportation has started. There is no 'traffic' (she smiled). In other words, you go where the story takes you in your mind… nothing is stopping you.*

Ms. SK: *The objectives and instructions… even the information box and everything… it is in line with the curriculum documents. The information box makes you, as an educator understand more before you go to learners to present the lesson.*

LS Lecturer: *Learners might see Musa in 1 of the learners and I don't want a situation in my class where there would be a learner that is now called Musa because of the story. So, the "Remember to "box is very important because sometimes educators may forget or take it for granted that the learners will be mature or understanding but this is not always the case, so it helps to start with this note so that it sets the tone for when reading the story and engaging in discussions.*

Subject Advisor: *Probably there will be one or two people that represent Musa and Aunty Star and so on in the learners' lives which might help them to understand the lesson using the story reading technique. In reference to the introductory part of the educator's guide it is, off course, important to emphasise that this is just a story. Even though there are real people who are like the characters, but we cannot use the characters names to refer to real people because this is insensitive to the people who are facing the challenges. This has been communicated well in this guide.*

The above excerpts taken together demonstrate that the participants gave a positive assessment in their response to the question of the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Introductory section of the educator's guide proposed. In doing this they did not just make one-word presentation of their views in this regard. They gave some justification for their positive assessment of this early section of the guide.

Table 15

Participants' Views on the Adequacy or not of the Formulation of the Stories and Story Structure Presented in the Educator's Guide

LO Lecturer: *The first story was awesome. I loved it because of the fact that learners can explore ways of saying "no" while they are in the safe environment of a classroom. I think the problem is: if the learners don't have Life Orientation lessons, they have to think of ways to respond when they are in the situation itself and then they don't have enough time to come up with such response or with responses that will help to protect themselves. I think children find themselves in situations that they don't want to be in but they don't know how to react so from a teacher's point of view, I think this story is a wonderful opportunity for learners to think of responses that they can use outside of the classroom when needed. I was proud of that girl (Nolwazi) to say "no" I think it so applicable to the lives of the children. It fits in part of their development phase… it very important.*
Subject Advisor: *The first story… I actually saw it as a very good example of teaching learners' assertiveness skills. For the second story, I was kind of like, shame, this child… losing Gogo who was supportive. I mean it is a good story if it gets you, as a reader, to be emotionally involved. It is not too emotional but, of course, educators and some learners will identify with losing a loved one but the story itself is not too emotionally upsetting.*
Ms. QN: *The stories are well presented. Story 2 is a bit longer than the other stories… like story 1 part 1 and part 2 it was a little bit short and I think it was good for those learners who can't concentrate for a long period of time. I think the language was fine, even the new words were not that hard or difficult… it wasn't too easy but again it was not too hard, it catered for almost all the learners. Perhaps just those who struggle to read might have been left behind when reading but they understood the stories and participated in discussion.*
Ms. SK: *Story 2 wasn't that long because they are used to reading stories which are even longer than this one in languages… not in LO. In LO, they are used to just paragraphs… one paragraph, short ones, so this (stories) is good for them.*

LO Lecturer: *For story 2… it was such a nice story to read. The 1st part was such a nice positive story and all of a sudden it ended. In the 2nd part, it became a negative experience for Musa which I think could help learners who are in the same position. You know if someone who has had a pleasant life and suddenly something happens which changes everything, I think it is important for children because that can happen to all of us at some time. Things can happen that throw one's life of course.*

Subject Advisor: *You got story1 part1 and that is followed by part2 in the next period. If you were to simply have 1 long story instead of having story1 part1and story1 part2, maybe it would be too long for the learners. We're talking about Grade 7's therefore we must be mindful of the fact that English as a medium of instruction can be a barrier for some learners so the fact that the stories have been broken up in this way, with questions for each, I think it is actually a very good way of introducing the lesson.*

Continuing, the Subject Advisor noted:
I think the language is not too easy, and not too hard. Of cause, you must understand that if you have to take same stories to an X model C school, they might take less time, if you go to schools where the learners' mother tongue is not English, you might find that they take more time so unfortunately, I cannot just give a blanket answer and say no the language is not too easy or not too difficult because it will also depend on the context.

LO Lecturer: *For now, I agree with the number of characters in the story, more characters can be added later. I think for part 3…. introduce new characters and situations in relation to the curriculum as you go along. These characters could also be used to help educators teach learners about sex education and more. It's easy to incorporate in the curriculum and wouldn't take long at all. I think Grade 7 learners should be able to understand, the stories and the words that are used in the stories because it straight forward… I'll say.*

It is clear in going through these excerpts that the participants agree that the formulation of the stories are on the whole adequate and that the characters are well chosen and look like ordinary people that could be found in the life and world of the learners. The LO and LS lecturers showed that it is possible where necessary that the number of characters can be increased but not that those suggested in the educator's guide are inappropriate. Ms SK and MS QN

mentioned that while some stories appear long, others are short and so amenable to be appropriated by the variety of the learners that can be found in a class. On the whole the participants are agreed that the language of the guide is accessible to the majority of the learners: as they are neither too hard nor too easy. This means that, in sum, the participants are positive in their assessment of the formulation of the stories and the story structure proposed.

Table 16

Participants' assessment of the Design and Layout of the Educator's Guide

Ms. QN: *They (learners) like learning looking at the pictures, they get excited, but sometimes they see, oh, Nolwazi looks like this, then maybe think... ok, Nolwazi is fat- why? Or maybe Nolwazi is thin, or she looks like me, or I like the way her body looks... you know. But, the characters are done well, they look like typical learners. The stories have colourful pictures and (speech) bubbles, learners are excited by these things I think it is well done and exciting because we can engage more about the characters and their background. Also, I like that Thabani has a hearing aid.*
Ms. SK: *They participated more in the first story… maybe it is the way it was laid out, with more colours… it was very interesting to them. They wanted to be the characters.*
LS Lecturer: *I was more interested in the (speech) bubbles, but for the short story, I like the fact that learners will read a lengthy passage because they will be learning about language as well. The length is not too much for the short story and I was able to conceptualise only 4 characters… that is not a lot.*
LO Lecturer: *The stories were nice and colourful which I liked and I think the guide is user friendly. I think that pictures of them (characters) making conversation with one another gives learners a visual of what they (characters) look like when talking to one another. The stories are easy to read and don't take too long.*
Subject Advisor: *You know what happens if you have pictures… even before the learner gets to read or to go through the story, they are able to just look at the pictures and form*

something in their minds… before they even start reading… so it is very exciting and enhances their (learners) imagination.

These excerpts show that the participants agree that the design and layout of the educator's guide was accurate. They showed that the educator's guide is very colorful and agreed that the pictures were exciting to look at and, therefore, in line with what appeals to Grade-7-aged learners.

The participants also referred to online teaching and the story reading technique. They postulated that some educators may lack adequate digital skills as technology is integrated with pedagogical practices, but that story reading can be easily incorporated into online teaching. Where some learners might have received black and white printed copies, they would see the full colour version if they downloaded them on their devises.

Table 17

Adapting the Educator's Guide and Story Reading Technique to Classroom Instruction

Ms. SK stated: *"The video (see link below) for educators is nice. I like it because not only do I have a hard copy which sometimes I forget in class, I can just click and there it is. Very convenient for prep. You know, if learners could use their cell phones, then we wouldn't have to print but not all of them can afford it, but it is nice to have it online."*

https://www.canva.com/design/DAEkc6n1PXQ/qMD9AlRwth4iPyPUhCDWmw/watch?utm_content=DAEkc6n1PXQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utmmedium=link&utm_source=sharebutton

The video is accompanied by other resources on substance abuse (see link below). In this regard, Ms. QN noted:

> *Having additional resources attached to the guide makes it more comprehensive for educators when doing prep. You know, you got most things there, guide from the DBE, videos on substance abuse, a presentation and even fun activities like puzzles. Really, it is engaging because if I was teaching online, I would just send the link and the learners could have more activities which are stimulating than only working with paper. I think, these are lovely and very useful resources.*

https://www.canva.com/design/DAE0MqfkgSw/LzxdTx2LCkquMfXob_-Lkw/view?utm_content=DAE0MqfkgSw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton

Ms. QN concluded:

> *I just want to say thank you for presenting this tool to me and also having to use it in the classroom to see how learners do and how they react because previously we've only thought that reading technique is more usable for language only as it can also help with learners reading, pronunciation of words, the structure of the language. Learners are able also to see 'oh this word is this in past tense' and how to read it. I feel that it (implementation of the story reading technique) was good because learners were able to read the story for themselves, they understood it and they were also excited about learning through this technique of reading.*

Table 18

Assessment Activities and Model Answers Incorporated in the Educator's Guide

Ms. QN: *The assessments, I think, are necessary because you have to assess whether learners understood the story for them to be able to apply it the curriculum.*

- Fill in the missing words:

  Fill in the missing words, is easy even for those learners who are struggling to read, it should be much easier for them to be able to answer or to give answers in 1 word because they don't have to write a lot of things. It is also good where learners are going to have other activities to complete because it does not exhaust or drain them too much.

- Decision chart:

  For the decision chart, they were able to write out the answers because they understood the story even though some were struggling. The options encourage them to think more of the things that they know, things that they

have seen and how they act to those things or to those situations or how they have responded or would respond to situations like that.

- Role play:

  I think the whole class enjoyed it and especially those who were role playing, the characters. It was good for them to memorise their lines and bring the characters to life. I think that is what they enjoyed… to make the characters as real as possible.

Ms. SK: *For Grade 7, the assessments are fine. Fill in the missing word is easy. The order of the discussion questions is good. We encourage role play, very much, we believe it really does have impact. I think they enjoyed more where they had to participate in the role play of the story, but all of the assessments were relevant.*

LO Lecturer: *I think the assessments are fair, as long as it can stimulate conversation about the topic at hand and how to deal with it and things that learners can apply in their owns lives, I see that as a success. For fill in the missing word, I think it would be fine if the story is taken away from the learners and it becomes a listening test where you say to the learners: 'listen carefully because there will be questions where you will have to fill in the missing words.' If learners will have to rely on their memories, then I think it would be alright but if it is a matter of looking through the content to find a missing word… I don't see the point in that for a Grade 7 learner, but I could be wrong.*

Ms. QN: *I think it is a good idea to have the memorandum (model answers) attached to the guide because I, the educator, I'm able to assess answers quickly, easy without having to formulate them myself, it makes my work a bit easier on the paperwork side. The assessment tasks were balanced out because there are questions that cater for learners who can't concentrate for a long time, learners who are unable to write things… some are not able to express themselves thoroughly in writing so if there are questions that can be answered orally, it is good as some learners are able to express themselves verbally. Some learners are very fast, some take things bit by bit, so I think it (educators guide) really does cater for different learners needs.*

LO Lecturer: *As a teacher, I wasn't clear if I could answer the question about Musa… the question why do you think the story is called "Musa you are not safe." I wasn't sure what that means but I saw that you have a memo (model answers), so it provides a guide, and the teachers are guided even for the discussion questions. I think that this is good.*

The above excerpts demonstrate that the participants were committed in their review and judgement of the assessment activities and the model answers provided. While, overall, they agreed that the assessment activities provided are relevant and adequate, some made suggestions for improvement. For example, one of the participants commented: "I think it would be fine if the story is taken away from the learners and it becomes a listening test where you say to the learners: 'listen carefully because there will be questions where you will have to fill in the missing words." Thus, according to this participant, learners do not have to rely on their memory in dealing with some of the assessments. The participants are also pleased with the model answers provided, as it saves the educator time when planning the lesson.

Table 19

Perceived Impact of the Story reading Technique

Ms. SK: *I like the response from the learners because as we teach, we have to see what are the outcomes, how are the learners reacting, how are they understanding the story, which knowledge are they acquiring from the lesson and are they able to link it with what they've already learned before. So, I think the outcomes were good. I don't think it (stories and assessment tasks) was too much for them, in fact, I believe it boosted their confidence for the questions in the textbook.*

Talking specifically about a boy in her class, she noted: *He wanted to be Nolwazi and I asked him 'are you sure you want to be Nolwazi?' He said 'yes Maam, I want to be Nolwazi' so I think it is good (story reading technique) because you can also talk about other things like gender and identity.*

Ms. QN: *I think it helps the learners to improve their reading skills and they also learnt about peer pressure of which is their main concern… the peer pressures of friends, of using*

drugs and the effects, so reading story helped the learners a lot so that they won't be able to be easily influenced, in future, by friends who will offer them different kinds of drugs… convince them to use drugs in future.

Ms. QN asked learners to indicate their favourite character and write a short paragraph about why they have chosen this character. The response below was submitted by a leaner:

Nolwazi because she was brave because
some people use drugs when they
see their friends after that they get
get addicted and start to steel
or break into our houses. When you
Start using drugs you are ruining
you future. Also you marks drop at
School. Also that when you parents
found out that you are using
THEY will kick you out of their
house just because you used drugs
That how drugs ruine your future

5.4.3 Category 3: Efficiency and Sustainability of the Proposed Educator's Guide

The implementation of the story reading technique requires funds for the educator's guide to be developed, printed, and delivered in a timely manner for learners to access, which the participants evaluated the educator's guide regarding. The focus was also on the sustainability of the story reading technique in a multicultural or ethnically diverse country. The study's findings on this category are tabulated below in Table 20.

Table 20

Participants' Responses on the Efficiency and Sustainability of the Educator's Guide and Story Reading Technique

Efficiency	Sustainability
Ms. QN: *Having a manual (educator's guide) makes things easier because its already there. If I go to get information from the newspaper because maybe sometime more the text book is needed but I have to go buy the newspaper and then I will have to search for the story that is suitable for example the language usage is it easy for them to understand, to read it for themselves even if I give them some work to do at home will they be able to do it on their own without my help.*	**Ms. SK:** *LO aims to create learners who are able to solve problems on their own… to develop learners' individual skills in communicating, being able to stand on their own and being able to identify problems then solve them and the stories provide an opportunity for them to do so.*
Ms. QN: *It would be lovely to have this resource especially as I can use these stories for assessment purpose because they already there. The questions are already there, I can just make a few adjustments like adding more questions or maybe making variety of the questions but within the story.*	**Ms. SK:** *I think it (educator's guide) is different because there are stories here which on other manuals or textbooks there will be… maybe 1 or not that much. But here, there is story 1 part 1 and part 2 so there is continuity in the learning process and story 1 part 1 and part 2 links to each other so there are still the same characters who are found in part 1 and again in part 2 and then the ending is clear.*
Ms. SK: *I don't think there will be much problems besides that sometimes people are scared of a little bit of change… somewhere, somehow so they think we getting lot of work on top of what we are already doing but I*	**LO Lecturer:** *So, this is a wonderful opportunity to start a discussion and, yah, I felt sorry for the little boy, and I think it is very applicable to the life of many learners, others circumstances might be different but I*

think it will be a good tool and will make life easier because it goes together with the curriculum so it can be extra resource that I use to make things easier for me and my learners.	*think they would be able to relate to his (Musa) situation. Student teachers can be equipped with facilitating sensitive topics in class and dealing with learners who are in such situations.*
LO Lecturer: *I think that educators need to be workshopped on many things and I think that in general teachers cannot have enough continuous development. I think it a very important part of any profession to be continuously developed and to keep on studying and being exposed to new content and measures. I think that teachers would be able to match this guide to the curriculum and understand clearly what to do without having to be workshopped on it. Even with me, I would use this guide with my students, in a same sense that we are currently talking about it… I would ask the students the same questions that you are asking me because I think that is a wonderful opportunity for them to become curriculum developers or to adapt the curriculum to the needs of their learners and also to ask them the questions that you are asking in the guide because I think it brings awareness and it very important.* *I also think it will work well online as we are moving to a digital age so this tool will be easy to use for learners and teachers.*	**LO Lecturer:** *I think a lot of time goes into reading new case studies. This time could be used to teach differently, so if you have 1 case study (story) that the learners are familiar with, it's much easier… you speak about Musa that they already know some character. I think it can save a lot of time you know to read a new case study every moment you teach can take half of the lesson and that can be problematic, and I think learners miss out on opportunities to learn through continuity.*

LO Lecturer: *I know in the textbook that I use for my students about the method life orientation, there is what they call a "Brain buddy" and that brain buddy goes through the textbook to each chapter with you and ask a few questions so in this character there is that continuity but yours is different because it is a story. In the life orientation books that I have used; I haven't come across an information box with symptoms and things like that... not when I was a teacher and as far as I can recall... I think it is unique and good to have.*	**LS Lecturer:** *I've seen case studies in manuals about a certain child's circumstances or experience to answer question on but what is unique in yours is the fact that you are looking at using the same case study (story) and develop that throughout the manual (educator's guide) in relation to each topic.... I think that is unique...the continuation of the same character in different situations from topic to topic is really good for coherence between real life and the classroom.*
Subject Advisor: *There is no such thing as a prescribed textbook... not just for LO but for all subjects, educators look for a textbook that addresses a particular sub-topic, but if you add more stories, this will actually work as an additional support material because sometimes educators hold on to textbooks that don't cover the whole curriculum*	**Ms. QN:** *I think the stories simplify things because I introduce the lesson with the story and then link the story to the lesson. I make copies and give learners to do at home. They will be able to do it themselves because sometimes you ask a learner why have you not done this work 'no my mother was not at home' or 'no my mother or father or whoever did not allow me to go to the library' so if this guide is there then I'm just giving them the stories because they will be able to read through it then answer the questions and most of the answers are already there or discussed so it will be much easier for them to remember the lesson.*

The participants responded positively to adopting story reading as a choice technique in delivering the social issues content. One of the advantages they mentioned is that this technique can increase cultural awareness about beliefs and values that are different to one's

own. Educators can encourage open-mindedness as they challenge the learners' beliefs to align with those stipulated in CAPS. The participants indicated that educators could easily adopt the story reading technique and adapt the assessments to suit the learning outcomes.

5.4.4 Category 4: Proposed Adjustments

During the study interview, participants were asked if they had any suggestions for further improvements to the story reading technique. In response, two participants proposed adjustments to Story 1 to reflect an African centred view of the family. Commenting in this regard, the LS Lecturer raised a concern about the lack of a female figure to raise a girl child: *"I'm not too sure about having Nolwazi stay with her father… why is the mother dead and not the father? Can a man adequately teach a girl about womanhood?"* The Subject Advisor echoed the same view:

> *I know that one of the topics covered in LO is different types of families. Also, to normalize fathers being in the home and adopting a caring role is also a point of consideration… It's just that usually, from an African perspective, there is a female figure that is around.*

The LS Lecturer also proposed the use of other assessments:

> *We cannot assess the same way so you should be able to have other ways of assessing students. Some are talkers and there are learners who really don't like talking, they are doers. How about you as the teacher giving the learners the instructions and say draw what you think this situation would be… they can sing it or dance… there are so many things that Grade 7 educators can do to assess learners.*

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the study's findings in relation to the three research questions investigated. Fundamentally, this research was interested in obtaining the views and perceptions of select participants on the adequacy, relevance, and significance of the educator's guide and story reading technique proposed by this project. On the whole, the findings show that the educator's guide received a very favourable assessment from these participants, as well as their endorsement of it as a valuable tool to supplement teaching LO in the South African schools. Some of the suggestions proffered by the participants for improvement have been

noted, and further discussion of them occur in the subsequent chapter that is devoted to the sustained discussion and interpretation of these findings and the conclusions emerging from this research.

Chapter 6
Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in this chapter, and are based on the data sets delineated in Chapter 5. Some limitations of the study are also identified in this chapter. The findings are discussed in two subsections focusing on the participants perceptions of the story reading technique. Correspondingly, the participants' insights of the social issues component and teaching resources in LO are outlined. As the implementers of the curriculum, the participants in the study highlighted the instructional goals and strategies to motivate learners for effective teaching and learning. As such, they collectively support the use of the educator's guide as a tool to stimulate intellectual curiosity, promote understanding of oneself and others, enhance the learners' ability to express themselves, and engage in problem solving. Thus, the story reading technique can be used to challenge and renegotiate the learners' beliefs and attitudes to align with curricular objectives. The three objectives of this study were to explore the participants' responses regarding: (1) the social issues content and instruction in LO; (2) the influence of gender in Grade 7 learners' appreciation of the teaching of the Life of Orientation subject through the story reading technique; and (3) the use of the story reading technique when teaching social issues in the South African classroom.

6.2 Participants' Views on the Aims, Objectives, Social Issues Content, and Teaching Resources for Grade 7 Life Orientation

Participants indicated that the LO subject is typically undervalued, with ill-prepared educators and unmotivated learners. When teaching sensitive topics, educators may misrepresent information due to personal beliefs and values, which the participants described as a missed opportunity to explore alternative views and to establish and maintain social norms. Thus, the various viewpoints put forth by the participants as demonstrated in four categories from chapter 5 are discussed with regard to the requirement that LO educators reflect on and accept the curriculum before implementing it. The focus is also on the extent to which LO content, teaching techniques, and resources are relevant to impact learning. In addition, this section highlights the pervasive difficulties associated with each of the aforementioned categories.

6.2.1 Overcrowded Classrooms

According to Meier and West (2020), overcrowded classrooms influence poor performance and grade repetition. A shortage of educators, lack of school infrastructure, and many under-resourced schools increase overcrowding. The average national learner educator ration (LER) stands at 33:1 (DBE 2014). The LER in South Africa is more than double the average of 16:1 in OECD countries. Meier and West (2020) note that in some classes, the LER has been reported to be 50:1 and higher. They further identify overcrowding as one of the most prominent causes of didactical neglect in the classroom, which refers to the educator's inability to pay enough attention to each learner's educational needs. As noted by Marais (2016, p. 5), overcrowding in the classroom leads to increased disruptive behaviour and a lack of classroom discipline, which entails "lack of attention, boredom, increased noise levels, fighting and even vandalising resources." These behaviours and feelings can obstruct a learner's cognitive ability to achieve academic success. Munje et al. (2020) affirms that, due to the constant disruptions and interruptions, teaching learners in overcrowded classrooms is extremely difficult. Meier and West (2020) claim that the attitude of an educator is linked to their motivation, and they discovered that the administrative and assessment load associated with overcrowded classrooms contributes to an educator's loss in motivation and a negative attitude. Smaller class sizes, therefore, create the benefit of increased differentiated education, improved classroom management, and better educator morale. Differentiated teaching entails presenting the same material in different ways for different learning styles. Mentorship programmes and in-service training could help equip educators with the necessary tools to address challenging behaviour and discipline issues, which are frequently connected with overcrowded classrooms. Ineffective mentorship programs have been attributed to overworked educators who are overburdened with administrative and assessment responsibilities (Meier & West, 2020).

6.2.2 Lack of Educator Training

Educators require ongoing training and professional development to keep their knowledge, competency, and abilities up-to-date in order to continue motivating learners. Educators benefit from the "theory of improvement", which entails subject emphasis, active learning, coherence, duration, and group participation (Modiba & Sefotho, 2019, p. 2). Many Guidance teachers, a subject similar to LO in Kenya, lack the necessary expertise to handle career guidance. "Modern skills" such as conducting research and using search engines like Google are deemed important by Modiba and Sefotho (2019, p. 2), but computer training, career guidance, and networking skills appear be lacking in the professional development of LO educators.

However, in South Africa, educators typically attend workshops to prepare them to teach LO in its entirety. These workshops have been found to be insufficient and delayed, as Schoonen et al. (2020) state that educators typically feel that they have not received adequate training to teach in multicultural and diverse classrooms. Although some educators might have experienced social injustices, such as discrimination and poverty, they are still uncomfortable teaching learners who face such challenges. In this regard, Malatji (2016) noted that South Africa, like other developing countries, is grappling with deep disparities caused by poverty, social injustice, and a distinct split between privileged and disadvantaged groups. Uneven educational delivery, a lack of diversity education in teacher preparation, and systematic epistemicide all contribute to greater polarization, hence the need to allow educators to practice inclusion and differentiation by accommodating a variety of learning abilities and styles.

It is apparent that LO educators must be critical thinkers; and Panlumlers and Wannapiroon (2015) advocate for cooperative learning, which they view as a generic term for a variety of interactive small-group learning techniques that allow students to collaborate. When working in groups, students clarify tasks for one another, assist one another with class notes, and provide a general sense of belonging and support in the classroom. Malatji (2016) states that due to the lack of infrastructure on rural campuses, it is difficult to facilitate cooperative learning lessons. Overcrowding is also an issue in higher education institutions (HEI), making it a challenge to manage the noise level when facilitating cooperative learning. Thus, for many reasons, managing cooperative learning classrooms can be difficult for lecturers, particularly those who have not been taught how to do so. Another challenge to conducting group work or cooperative learning is domination by some students. Students who are unable to express themselves clearly or who do not feel competent speaking English may limit their participation, allowing those who are more articulate dominate the discussion. In other instances, students may use the group-work time to fight personal battles. When asked to provide examples of cooperative learning, the lecturers indicated that they were unaware of different examples of cooperative learning. Malatji (2016, p. 41) emphasizes that "Lecturers should use cooperative learning in most of their lessons in order to prepare students for cooperative world…. For successful cooperative learning, lecturers should encourage the spirit of 'Ubuntu' (respect one another) among students." Schoonen et al., (2020) concur that HEIs should reexamine the current teacher education curricula, since community knowledge and experiences are still excluded because their academic relevance is not recognised. Hence, most learners in the South African educational system are taught from a curriculum that has

little to no relevance to their immediate circumstances, primarily by teachers who lack experience with diversity and come from backgrounds dissimilar to their own. Therefore, that Jarvis and de Jager (2021) stressed the need for the pre-service LO educators to be equipped and prepared to support learners emotionally as they typically fulfil a pastoral role, more so than other educators.

6.2.3 Lack of Teaching Resources

Textbooks, whiteboards, furniture, technology, and room arrangement, which includes lighting, all facilitate interaction between educators and learners. Hardman (2008) claims that these educational tools can either hinder or enable social connection and learning. Mojapelo (2020) states that one obstacle that learners have in developing reading habits, abilities, and a reading culture is a lack of exposure to great reading materials at home and at school. The thought of locating and reviewing books might overwhelm educators as they may not want to be perceived as biased by unwittingly picking and sharing inappropriate books or stories. To help learners establish reading habits and instill a reading culture, high-quality reading materials, such as storybooks, talking books, video games, magazines, and newspapers must be procured by the DBE for distribution to all schools. From these, educators can select stories that convey positive characteristics such as joy, compassion, humour, ingenuity, and other positive aspects of human nature. Dujmović (2006) notes that learners also face violence, fear, anger and frustration and, like adults, require outlets for their emotions. Stories can serve as a positive release for these emotions to help learners deal with real-life situations. Brier and Lebbin (2004, p. 383) affirm that "stories are powerful teaching tools because of their potential to stimulate imagination of the students and engage them with the material. The short story gives meaning to abstract concepts, aids memory, makes learning fun and it is time efficient." Storybooks should be made more accessible in under-resourced schools because learners cannot fulfil their academic duties if their reading abilities are not developed. Educators can therefore utilize storytelling to encourage learners to read (Mojapelo & Shekgola, 2018).

The LS Lecturer raised concern about the children's exposure to non-educational or scholastic programs on television as she believes that, in the past, this time was used for storytelling. However, the art of teaching appears to be declining in both the classroom and the home. While TV programmes may illicit positive emotions and a joy of learning, parents should focus on creating a more stable educational environment in the home. This entails establishing a routine or schedule for telling or reading stories. The LS Lecturer views stories as a mechanism to

transport human values—looking after oneself and other people. This may include minor contributions in the household like cleaning up after oneself and helping around the house as depicted in Story 2 in the educator's guide. In the LS Lecturer's view, much of what children watch on TV is not age appropriate and may influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Parents are responsible for monitoring the programmes their children watch; the programs should be informational, educational, and nonviolent. To minimise aggressive behaviour and desensitisation to violence, parents can reinforce desirable behaviours and help children develop a positive value system by presenting alternatives to violence and risky behaviours.

6.2.4 Lack of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in school is recognized as a significant and positive factor in learners' scholastic development. Positive reciprocal relationships between families and schools contribute significantly to a child's socioemotional and cognitive development from an ecological perspective. Epstein (2001, p. 92) emphasises that children learn and develop as a result of three interconnected "spheres of influence": home, school, and community. To best satisfy the needs of the learner, these three realms must create partnerships. Unfortunately, many parents lack a basic education and are unable to support their children scholastically. This problem is most widespread among parents with limited skills in English and educational backgrounds. Singh et al. (2004) found that parents who dropped out of school frequently did so to support their families. Beyond primary school, parents' homework support is hampered by a limited education. This is exacerbated when the prevalent language at home clashes with homework in English. Hence, Singh et al. (2004) assert that economically disadvantaged and less-educated families have the lowest rates of parental involvement. They further posit that disadvantaged African parents did not comprehend their parental responsibilities in their children's education. Some parents believe that their lack of education precludes them from engaging in their children's education. Another factor contributing to parental disengagement is that where parents are illiterate or unable to communicate in English, they feel embarrassed to partake in school related matters. A parent's memories of their failure in school can be another source of embarrassment, since such parents are unlikely to return to a place that reminds them of their own shortcomings. In an effort to address this, Maluleke (2014) recommends that the School Governing Body be solely elected by parents, so that their voices are heard or well represented in the running of the school.

6.2.5 Undervalued Subject

In agreement with Jarvis and de Jager (2021), the participants in this study reported that, in many schools, there a few qualified LO educators. School principals assign LO to staff members as timetable fillers, meaning that these educators are not qualified to present this multi-disciplinary subject and often approach LO by reinforcing their opinions regarding topics such as sex before marriage/teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and so forth. In many schools, LO periods are utilized as make-up time for other subjects in the curriculum that are considered more significant. Learners may be allowed LO periods to finish their homework, for example. The use of LO time to set up school halls for parent meetings and other events reinforces the view that LO is not an important subject. It is hardly unexpected that LO has such low status even in HEIs, as this subject does not count towards admission. LO is sometimes thought to be a subject that anybody can teach and does not require specialised training. Jarvis and de Jager (2021) also confirm that the subject is neglected, and pre-service teachers are ill-prepared to teach the subject meaningfully in schools because LO is not a defined field of study or discipline in and of itself, with solid theoretical underpinnings.

The issues raised in the present study were also identified by the DoE (2008, p. 133). The ministerial committee on learner retention in the South African schooling system identified four issues that were going to be addressed by the DBE: (1) inadequate teaching skills; (2) teachers' failure to carry out professional duties; (3) poor culture of learning in schools; and (4) learner abuse by teachers. Additionally, the DBE was also going to focus on poor teaching, a lack of continuing professional development by educators, and an absence of educational monitoring for improvement of education to minimise discrepancies in schools' performance across localities. It was also noted that in some schools, educators are not executing their professional responsibilities, with some not even showing up for work. This failure results in a lack of supervision and a poor learning culture that does not meet the learners' needs.

6.2.6 Establishing and Maintaining Social Norms

The educators affirmed that establishing a relaxed environment facilitates and encourages learners to explore alternative views without judgement as educators guide learners when talking about their lived experiences. Hence, the learner-educator relationship is framed by a teaching philosophy that focusses on enhancing critical thinking and facilitating cooperation with others. The participants emphasized enforcing values such as respect and helpfulness by using positive language imbedded in politeness and cordiality. They reiterated that clear

procedures when engaging with learners minimizes interactional problems in the classroom. Fairness and consistency must prevail when addressing misbehaviour and promoting learner self-control. In other words, educators encourage learners to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours to achieve a specific goal, not only in the classroom but in their personal lives. Norms guide or direct collective and individual behaviour, providing order and predictability in social relationships. When social norms are internalized, they influence learners' attitudes and beliefs, hence external and internal pressures maintain cultural and social norms that govern interactions with the classroom (Moloi, 2019).

Ullmann-Margalit (1990) views social change as alterations to the structured social action in a particular culture, community, or society, and Servaes (2007) emphasises that behaviour change is mostly influenced by aspects of social change. This is because, social issues related to norms and values, prejudices and discrimination, hegemonies and ideologies are imbedded in cultural, political, and economic power dynamics. Hence, schools become spaces to achieve social change at micro, meso, and macro levels with educators serving as agents of change. As such, the curriculum should reflect the desired outcomes towards which the change is directed. In this regard, the DBE (development plan) notes that people who have access to education are typically better equipped to establish their identities, take charge of their lives, raise healthy families, contribute confidently to the creation of a just society, and participate effectively in local politics and governance.

The DBE (development plan) also acknowledges that education and innovation are necessary to capacitate learners with the ability to solve problems, compete internationally, and reduce inequality. Likewise, the partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework (P21), developed in the U.S., outlines 21st century competences for Grade K–12 education. The P21 Framework Definitions (2009) delineates the importance of integrating creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration in the subject content to enhance the skills necessary for social change.

6.2.6.1 Creativity and Innovation. According to Chidiac and Ajaka (2018) educators in the Foundation and Intermediate phases typically focus on receptive language skills (reading and listening), while placing less emphasis on productive language skills (speaking and writing). As learners reach the senior and further education and training phases, they struggle to form strong arguments (new ideas) or integrate prior knowledge (use ideas) to elaborate on their responses. In this regard, learners are not adequately equipped with the necessary skills at an

early age or are restricted to explore their creativity when the primary focus by educators is on right and wrong answers or a strict adherence to model answers. Hence, educators are encouraged to establish adequate opportunities and environments for creative learning for learners to organise and communicate ideas. These requirements are globally instituted for leaners to become productive and competitive members of society. As such, South Africa was 61st in the Global Creativity Index (2021) (GCI) out of 132 participating countries. The GCI is a broad-based measure of growth and development based on three sub-indices: technology, talent, and tolerance. The goal of the GCI is to determine metrics and methods that portray innovation in society.

6.2.6.1a Technology

The DBE has incorporated technology as a subject in the senior phase curriculum; however, in the midst of the Corona-virus lockdown restrictions, technology became paramount in the teaching and learning process of all subjects. Technology is fundamental for a knowledge-based economy to increase its development of inventions in software, robotics, and biotechnology. The internet is important for sharing and exchanging information and ideas to connect people, businesses, and governments. In this regard, the International Telecommunication Union (2021) notes that six countries: Mauritius, Cabo Verde, Botswana Gambia, South Africa, and the Seychelles lead the African continent. Currently, South Africa leads the continent in the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), with an ecosystem that includes technology hubs, research groups, and forums. Nevertheless, the participants in this study indicated that leaners typically do not have access to technological devices at school or in their homes as most parents are unemployed and unable to afford them. Dube (2020) confirms that most learners in rural areas lack access to internet devices in their homes. Many have never used a computer, and some do not have smart phones, that is, a mobile phone that allows connectivity to the internet and performs some of a computer's functions. Thus, e-learning typically excludes learners from rural areas. Even those who have smartphones and computers find data expensive and tend to experience network connectivity lags. This was confirmed by Ms. SK in relation to the online resource supplied with the educator's guide: "*I see the puzzles would be nice for them on the computer because it is interactive and maybe they can challenge each other so it would engage leaners, but I am going to have to print it for them because they don't have computers*." It is circumstances like these to which Dube (2020, p. 136) cautions: "Values such as social justice and the rights of rural learners should not be foregone." Nwoye (2006) states that the narratological self in the African context is a product

of discourse. Social engagement through stories informs the values that learners acquire and expect from one another.

6.2.6.1b Talent

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (2021) asserts that technological advancements have accelerated the shift from salaried employment to self-employment or independent contractors. Vaiman and Collings (2014) views global talent as high levels of human capital, central to institutional and organisational success in one's country or elsewhere. Kerr, Kerr, Özden, and Parsons (2016) further note that talented individuals contribute breakthrough innovations or scientific discoveries, guide people's behaviour through knowledge dissemination, and accelerate economic growth. Balwanz and Ngcwangu (2016) indicate that the focus on scarce skills[18] accentuates prescriptive learning and emphasises occupational-preparation. A challenge with this view is that, in South Africa, the poor quality of education in many schools proves to be a limiting factor to occupational-preparation. Balwanz and Hlatshwayo (2015, p. 143) noted that African youth typically think about education in terms of their lived experiences, "not as a decontextualised and individualised enterprise but as a social, and potentially political, activity enmeshed in the fabric of individual and familial livelihoods and community structures." Some learners live in areas with high unemployment levels or low earnings, leading to poor health and educational outcomes. Other learners do not matriculate as they drop out of school. Weybright et al. (2017) add that a lack of resources, including recreational facilities, is linked to academic disengagement and risky behaviour, such as substance use and involvement with gangs.

Having found similar results, Desai, Mercken, Ruiter, Schepers, and Reddy (2019) state that females were more likely than males to drop out of school as a result of bullying. Moreover, those who drop out of school were found to be at a higher risk for alcohol use. An association between alcohol consumption and violent behaviour indicates that cultural and social norms justify violent acts. When boys are younger, they may not engage in drug use at school; however, through hegemonic masculinity, they can emulate fear and a superior status to girls within gender relations. Sedibe and Hendricks (2021) conducted a study that confirmed that in South Africa, adolescent learners engaged in drug use. Learners whose debut was in primary

[18] Skills that are highly sought after by businesses as there aren't enough certified individuals with the necessary skill sets.

school, indicated that they felt pressured by friends and wanted to experience a new sensation. There is an increase in substance use by leaners when they reach high school. Similarly, in the current study, some of the reasons provided by learners for engaging in substance abuse include: (1) seeking higher mental functioning; (2) escaping negative thoughts and feelings; (3) coping with the transition from primary to high school if they feel alienated; or (4) having a strong desire to belong to a peer group. Despite the rising awareness of drug use in schools, Walton, Avenant, and Van Schalkwyk emphasise that peer influence is the major contributing factor to substance abuse by learners across cultures. Also, leaners who under-perform at school may engage in drug use to bolster their confidence: "Substance use amongst learners in South Africa has become a significant problem, with relationships between educators and learners being seriously challenged" (2016, p. 1).

Sedibe and Hendricks (2021) confirm that the strain between educators and learners is exacerbated by mood swings displayed by learners using intoxicating substances. They further note that drugs can change the personalities of the learners as they are no longer able to think rationally and become aggressive. The learners who use drugs may also display antisocial behaviour that include, truancy, vandalism, and breaking the law. They may also run away from home, exposing themselves to risky situations where they become vulnerable to rape and murder. Hence, Sibanda reiterates the importance of reducing inequitable distribution of social resources to foster social mobility and economic growth for previously disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, "school dropouts also impose serious constraints on national development by undermining national human capital development efforts" (2004, p. 99). When considering attempts to reduce substance abuse, a more equal education system could promote the development of self-knowledge and opportunities for learners to hone their skills and talents.

According to the Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention in the South African Schooling System (DoE, 2018), learner retention becomes increasingly problematic after Grade 9. While the dropout rate is statistically insignificant below Grade 9, it increases between Grades 10 and 12 where there is a high rate of failure, repetition, and dropout. This document further notes that dropping out is often preceded by disengagement or negative school experiences (scholastic or behavioural challenges), which often begin in primary school. Weybright et al. (2017) affirm that, in the South African context, these factors include household poverty, cost of education, a lack of interest in schooling, and previously failing a grade, or being behind in

school work. Nkosi and Pretorius (2019) further state that, although more boys drop out of school, it is girls who typically exit the schooling system due to pregnancy.

6.3 Gender Normativity Conflicts in Grade 7 Learners' Appreciation for the Teaching of LO Through the Story Reading Technique

Nsamenang states that, from an African centred view, socialisation encompasses teachings that encourage shared responsibility within the family system: "Thus, a sense of self cannot be achieved without reference to the community of other humans in terms of being interconnected and enacting one's social roles (2006, p. 295)." Children learn, from their families, the roles that they will occupy as adults. Bhana, Pillay, and Ramrathan (2021) note that within the traditional African system, power is vested in chieftaincy, adhering to strict gender and generational hierarchies. Younger men, women, and children are seen as subordinate to older men, and these norms are taught to boys and girls at an early age when they are inducted into gendered and cultural practices.

This study's findings confirm that these views are carried into the classroom, as during the debates about substance abuse, the boys typically dominated the discussion over girls. When a girl in Ms SK's class wanted to portray a male character in a skit, all the boys in the class vehemently disagreed, arguing, "*what do you know about being a boy?*" which suggests that learners have internalised social norms relating to gender roles. Initially, fellow female learners supported her views but when she continued to argue with the boys, other girls in the classroom succumbed to the pressure from the boys, advising her to drop the matter they could continue with the lesson. The educators had to reinforce social tolerance, which Zanakis et al. (2016) define as "the extent of recognition and acceptance of differences, willingness to grant equal rights, and refraining from openly intolerant attitudes." In this concept, emphasis is placed on the equal value and worth of all people. During the implementation of the story reading technique, classroom discussions pivoted on gender relations with regards to substance abuse. The educators challenged the leaners' preconceived notions about gender roles and, in so doing, compelled them to reflect on their social context.

At times, learners' attitudes do not align with the social norm. For example. many of the learners might have a protective attitude, such as "I believe that genders are equal." However, if the majority think that other learners hold a different attitude (boys are superior). This phenomenon is referred to as pluralistic ignorance, whereby most learners in the class hold

contrasting personal attitudes to societal norms (Mackie et al., 2015). LO, then, can enhance learners' self-knowledge by providing information about their individual capabilities, emotional states, and behavioural patterns. Acquiring self-knowledge is a dynamic process, one that changes to accommodate new conditions and adjust to new contexts (Weybright et al., 2017), that helps learners acquire the ability to recognize and respect individual diversity and differences between cultures, thus increasing social tolerance. The Global Creative Index includes two tolerance measures that emerged in the present study: "openness to ethnic and religious minorities and an openness to gay and lesbian people" (Florida et al, 2015, p.7).

6.3.1 Gender Equality

The promotion of the male dominance and female subordination that is privileged over other forms of gender identity not aligned with the dominant ideal may be referred to as hegemonic masculinity. Sedibe and Hendricks (2021) assert that in South Africa, hegemonic masculinity is perceived as an ideal way of being masculine associated with the quest for power and status. Girls are expected to be modest, respectful, and virtuous, which is reflected in their preparedness to "keep the peace" during classroom debates. The boys spoke confidently and freely about their experiences with alcohol, while the girls spoke in the third person or about their "*friends*" who have engaged in drinking alcohol.

Female learners also spoke about the dangers of attending events where alcohol and other substances are available. The girls elaborated on their fears that boys and men may mix drugs in the girls' drinks to rape or rob them. According to Artz and Smythe (2007, p. 13): "South Africa is notorious for being the 'rape capital of the world.'" This impression has continued as Dosekun, (2013, p. 517) asserts that: "Rape is widely said to constitute a crisis of epidemic proportions in post-apartheid South Africa." Boys use their body size and strength to engender violence, creating hierarchies between and amongst boys and girls. Bhana et al., note that "girls' fear of boys and men is not simply a reproduction of their helplessness…. Rather, girls have developed a sophisticated understanding of their vulnerability in social and cultural circumstances where male privilege and entitlement is valorised" (2021, p. 4). Their study further affirms that learners in schools located in poorer communities experience harsh aggressive masculinities and subordination of girls, whereby the use of violence of boys towards girls is influenced by sexuality, class, and gender.

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to a criminal act or harm that is perpetrated against individuals because of their biological sex or perceived gender (Oparinde & Matsha, 2021). GBV includes the following offenses: sexual, physical, verbal, psychological (emotional) abuse and sexual grooming of children. GBV may extend to femicide, which is the intentional murder of women and girls because of their sex. GBV is carried out with the intent of making the targeted individuals feel inferior or subordinate, such that the victim of a crime is blamed for the harm that they have experienced and recusing the perpetrator from full accountability of the crime. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) prohibits discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, however, the analysis of GBV published by Statistics South Africa (2020) indicates that:

- Women experience higher unemployment rates and higher levels of poverty.
- More than four in every ten young females (15–34) were unemployed, not enrolled in school or any training program.
- Women are more vulnerable to violence, and almost 50% of the assaults were committed by someone such as a close friend or acquaintance.

Nzimande (2015) affirms that girls, in South Africa, are socialised into what is considered acceptable conduct for a woman in a heterosexual relationship. This entails a different dress code for the woman based on whether she is with her husband or out in public, as per cultural expectations of a "good woman." In addition to learning the cultural expectations, boys and girls also learn that same sex relationships are taboo. Likewise, Bhana (2013, p. 116) notes: "Terrible acts of male violence and homophobia ... draw from longstanding notions of moral traditions premised upon heteropatriarchy, religion and culture and are steeped in South Africa's historical trajectories." Hence, the need for the promotion of gender tolerance[19] in schools.

6.3.2 Tolerance: LGBTI Learners

The Constitution recognises all learners as equal, where every learner should be free to express their gender identity and sexual orientation without discrimination. In addition, the Constitution recognises the right of LGBTI learners to dignity. Yet, Msbibi (2012) notes that although educators are seen as agents for changing school cultures, LGBTI leaners in South

[19] Respect for various forms of self-expression of human individuality, thereby rejecting gender stereotypes.

Africa still experience discrimination, violence, and exclusion or marginalisation from other learners and educators. Butler et al. (2003, p. 5), conducted a qualitative study on the coming out experiences of 18 South African gay and lesbian youth. The participants were identified as Black, White, Coloured, and Indian. They attended a range of schools from rural areas to private schools. The study's findings revealed that participants experienced "discrimination, isolation, and nontolerance within their high school contexts." They continued to narrate that they experienced harassment, avoidance, and rejection by peers and staff.

Francis (2012) posits that in recent years, LGBT youth still experience homophobia and transphobia at school. Sections on gender and sexuality education are largely ignored by educators who also avoid discussing diversity in the classroom. When gender and sexuality is brought up, it is typically presented in terms of "compulsory heterosexuality." Reddy (2010) affirmed that silence, secrecy, and taboos surround homosexuality, prevent open discussion and exposure. Francis (2017) adds that educators still "enforce heteronormative dress codes for the learners, which contribute to a hostile school environment, forcing many LGBT and questioning learners to leave and end their school education" (p. 364). African females who identify as lesbian in townships become targets of hate crimes, including rape and murder. In this regard, Francis (2017) believes that in schools, lessons about gender and sexuality that focus on shifting attitudes from heterosexism to tolerance and learner support would promote equal treatment of LGBTI learners. Accordingly, Msibi (2015) argues that sexuality is a fundamental structure for organizing educators' and learners' experiences within a heteronormative culture, which explains the difficulty teaching sexual diversity in higher education and to educators.

The present study confirms this view. Ms. SK's seating arrangement was such that the boys were seated on the left side of the classroom and the girls were on the right side. The educator stood at the front or walked between the two groups. She would often pose a question, asking the boys to respond first, then asking the girls for their thoughts. This demonstrates that gender and sexuality binaries are explicit in school culture. Hence, Francis (2017) calls for a more inclusive curriculum framework when teaching about gender and sexuality diversity in schools.

In this study, the Subject Advisor affirmed story reading as a technique that could be used to help teach sexuality diversity. This was demonstrated by Ms. QN when one of the female learners indicated feeling attracted to a character in the educator's guide who is also female.

Ms. QN engaged learners in a brief debate on sexuality diversity and emphasised equal rights and inclusion of all learners in social life. However, the learners were left wanting as there were no resources to provide examples or support the views on equality regarding diversity. Msibi (2015) confirms the use of media helps during classroom discussions about diversity and challenging intolerance. Ms. QN also used TV programmes to support her argument regarding sexuality, since, as Wilmot & Naidoo (2014) assert, South African LO textbooks typically endorse heteronormativity and heterosexism in relation to sexual and gender diversity. Reygan (2019) highlights that educators who are ill prepared or uncomfortable with discussing sexuality and gender diversity as well as homophobic and transphobic school spaces increase hostility and violence against LGBT learners. Hence policy implementation and inclusive teaching resources that affirm sexual and gender diversity are important. However, Mkasi (2016) cautions that current debates on homosexuality purport to speak for the voiceless, yet they only speak for the youth, whose views about freedom and rights differ significantly from those of older, more conventional groups. Traditional epistemologies are not afforded much of a place in recent arguments on same-sex relationships since they are framed in a modern discourse. In higher education, the LO lecturer highlighted the importance of challenging misconceptions among student teachers during class discussions and encouraging them to reflect on their personal attitudes to establish safe and inclusive school spaces. Similarly, Nzimande (2015) emphasises the necessity of teaching of gender and sexuality to student teachers that incorporates discussions about sex, gender, and sexuality in relation to human rights. However, Nzimande (2015) notes that the topic of homosexuality, particularly in regard to cultural behaviours, seemed to be largely absent from dialogue. Mkasi (2016), also expresses that traditional laws have been superseded by constitutional laws in response to requirements for equality for all, as indigenous African customs receive little to no attention.

6.3.3 Tolerance: Race /Ethnicity

The Constitution of South Africa (1997) affirms the freedom of religion, belief, and opinion of all citizens. Brubaker notes that ethnicity, race, and nationality need not be thought of in terms of substantial groups or entities, but instead, focus should be placed on “cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events. It means thinking of ethnicization, racialization and nationalization as political, social, cultural and psychological processes” (2002, p. 186). Ethnicity incorporates values, beliefs, practices, and language that secure a sense of belonging for everyone. The LO subject is critical in fostering acceptance of people from diverse ethnicities.

During classroom discussions, the learners in this study questioned the race of one of the characters based on behavioural patterns. Although the learner made a stereotypical comment: "*not many African fathers are like that*," Salami and Okeke (2018) confirm that among the racial groups in South Africa, African fathers have the highest rates of absenteeism and low participation in their children's socioeconomic development. In contrast, white fathers have the lowest rates of absenteeism and high participation in their children's development. Zanakis, Newburry, and Taras (2016) state that rather than ignoring this topic, as was done by the educator in the classroom, it is best to be proactive in challenging misconceptions and correcting misinformation. Mncanca et al. (2016) posits that fatherhood is complex, therefore physical availability at home, hands-on care, and provision of financial support cannot be the only measures of fathering. Absenteeism and low involvement in their children's lives is not an inherent component of African fatherhood. As such, further research is required to explore the reasons for high absenteeism and low involvement among African fathers.

Salami and Okeke (2018) highlight that financial factors, the relationship with the mother, and the father's perceptions of fatherhood contribution to their participation in child-rearing. Mncanca and Okeke (2016) also identified that searching for jobs that will enable fathers to take care of their family is one of the major reasons African fathers do not reside with their children. Clowes (2006) asserts that this notion was [is] reinforced in media platforms, such as *Drum* magazine, which initially presented African fathers in domestic situations. Then, in the 1950s, there was a shift to portraying men in the workplace devoid of wives and children. Regarding this, Salami and Okeke (2018) state that when African fathers have socioeconomic stability, they tend to participate in their children's development, even when they are not married to the mothers. Additionally, men typically learn fathering skills from their own fathers, including how to love, care, protect, and provide for their children. However, unfortunately, many African fathers did not experience positive fathering when they were boys.

6.3.4 Protective Attitudes

According to Oparinde and Matsha (2021), violence is rooted in social or cultural norms and values. Mackie, Moneti, Shakya, and Denny (2015, p. 7) state that: "A social norm is held in place by the reciprocal expectations among the people in a reference group." Bourn (2016) believes that educators are in the position to challenge social norms and undesirable behaviours by promoting a positive attitude. However, this study's participants indicated that addressing learners' psychosocial challenges is a demanding task for which they are underprepared.

Cislaghi and Heise (2018, p. 3) note that: "A harmful norm can trump one's protective attitude, resulting in compliance with a harmful practice."

Despite this realisation, the participants also recognised the educators' efforts to promote desirable behaviours had positive outcomes beyond scholastic work. Walton, Avenant, and Van Schalkwyk (2016) state that positive educator-learner relationships are characterised by warmth, active involvement, and open communication, which promote scholastic, social, and emotional competence. Educators may thus facilitate social change by unveiling the misconceptions that bind them to the harmful norm, while referencing individuals or groups who hold a protective attitude. Group identification promotes adherence to normative behaviours for acceptance by the people whose expectations matter to the leaner (reference group). Thus, educators must use reference groups or stories with which learners can identify.

The participants felt that Story 2 of the educator's guide demonstrated that educators could serve as a protective factor when affirming in the learner a sense of belonging within the school context. They also stipulated that educators can be used to challenge harmful social norms. Iser (1979) posits that when stories reflect the learners' social or philosophical backgrounds, they are afforded an opportunity to observe social regulations and how they affect other people. The learners' socio-cultural values and beliefs, which have their origins in the reader's family and community, influence their interpretation of those stories (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). When leaners are motivated by stories, a positive attitude is enhanced, whereby learners who have never questioned social norms can be challenged, hence, compelling a reaction to one's reality, and they may re-evaluate their attitudes, values, and behaviours.

However, the WHO (2009) cautions that social norms are not the sole driver of harmful practices. As such, the effectiveness of the story reading technique is usually compounded with other factors, such as one's self-concept and emotional state. This makes it challenging to isolate independent effects of the technique concerning values and behaviours. In this regard, Jefferson and Anderson (2017, p. 9) state that schools "have been the primary site for community cohesion and creative productivity and still remain perhaps the most positive force in our society. Schools are storehouses of compassion and hope." As such, a clearly defined vision and purpose rooted in collectively agreed values is necessary to make schools inclusive spaces. Hence, schools could be viewed as enabling and supportive environments where educators are non-judgemental, and learners explore their potential. With this view in mind,

the Subject Advisor emphasised shifting away from "tolerance" to embracing "acceptance," indicating greater reception and freedom for others to be themselves.

6.4 The Participants' Evaluation of the Proposed Educator's Guide and the Story Reading Technique to Teach Social Issues in the South African Classroom.

The educators' feedback entailed communicating and learning from blunders made during implementation of the story reading technique, and the feedback was used to refine the educator's guide in relation to the OECD evaluation criteria. All amendments made after implementation were reviewed and approved by the participants of this study.

6.4.1 Relevance and Coherence: Reflecting an African-centred Worldview within the CAPS Content

Implementing the story reading technique in South Africa, as noted by Meintjes and Grosser (2010, p. 367) necessitates understanding of "unique mix of cultures, embarked on a curriculum that embraces to a large degree, global knowledge and ways of thinking and doing." They further note that the problem with this view, is the expectation of all educators to be creative and facilitators of original thought; whereas, in South Africa, some educators come from a culture that may not value creativity as depicted in the curriculum. In this regard, Shao et al. (2019) agree that different implicit and explicit notions of creativity exist among individuals from various cultures and environments. People, especially those from individualist and collectivist cultures, exhibit variations in creative processes. For collectivist cultures, usefulness may be valued more than novelty, whereas, in individualist cultures, usefulness and novelty may be seen as equally important when engaging in creative activities. As such, Meintjes and Grosser (2010, p. 367) argue that "creative thinking and innovation could be seen as too individualistic for complying with the principles of Ubuntu."

The participants in this study viewed the educator's guide as creative beyond the colourful character illustrations, but also to the portrayal of the characters imaginary lives in relation to the learners' realities. They indicated feeling sadness for a character that loses a loved one is universal, and, therefore, the educator's guide does not simply focus on Africans, but communicates empathy and sparks curiosity among learners. The participants viewed the ability to tell a story that connects with people as a component of creativity. Meintjes and Grosser (2010, p. 361) on the other hand, view creative thinking in an academic context as "the ability to generate a variety of original ideas, to see different viewpoints and elaborate on

ideas". They believe that higher levels of creative thinking skills emerge if individualism is given priority, as solidarity (collectivism) results in less innovative thinking. They also argue that "divergent, independent, creative and productive thinking abilities are latent in the African culture and need to be nurtured among prospective teachers who, in turn, need to nurture creative abilities among learners at school" (Meintjes & Grosser, 2010, p. 367). In disagreement, Shao et al. (2019) state that using measures based on culture-related content and materials or culturally fair measures of creativity yields more accurate results. In this regard, Manyau et al. (2018, p. 209) assert that indigenous knowledge entails "beliefs, realities or values of indigenous people and does not exist in laboratories nor can it be found in archives; and it is not divided into sections nor taught as subjects in schools." This study's participants indicate that the educator's guide draws from indigenous knowledge. Delineating on this view, the Subject Advisor indicated: "*Although some of us may not believe in ancestors but it is the belief of many Africans… and heh, we hardly see content that reflects spirituality from a traditional African viewpoint. So, it was nice, how that was brought out in this guide. For me, it was creative to even go to that extent of aligning the spiritual component with the story and by extension, the curriculum.*"

Meintjesand Grosser (2010, p. 381) further state that: "The cognitive processes involve in creative thinking need to be developed and modelled intentionally and explicitly in all South African prospective teachers because of identified lower functioning in this regard." They believe that educators can implicitly and openly encourage learners to think creatively by modelling the behaviour, establishing environments that support creative expression, and giving learners the chance to combine or rearrange various elements into new patterns, structures, functional wholes. This view is useful when considering that LO aims to prepare learners to be productive citizens who contribute positively to society and the economy. Friere and Macedo (1987, p. 157) view literacy as "as one of the major vehicles by which 'oppressed' people are able to participate in the sociohistorical transformation of their society." Thus, stories not only enhance mechanical reading skills but re-appropriate African history and cultural practices and facilitate a critical understanding of the overarching objectives for national reconstruction. Subsequently, creativity entails the production of goods, such as books, that have social and cultural significance.

The term cultural and creative industries (CCI) refers to "industries which combine the creation, production and commercialization of creative content which are intangible and cultural in nature" (Moore, 2013, p. 744). The contents, traditional or contemporary, can be in the form of a good or a service and is typically protected by copyright. Examples include crafts and design, publishing, multimedia, and audio-visual productions. Digitisation is also a component of CCI. Shao et al., (2019) posit that in all aspects of human activity, from daily life to cutting-edge technology industries, creativity manifests itself as a building block for social harmony, sustainable human development, and scientific invention. LO aims to enhance education and bring about social, economic, political, and emotional change in the next generation of learners (Diale, 2016). As such, LO educators can aid in the development of learners who will contribute to CCIs and the industries as the idea of LO is to get the next generation of society prepared to contribute to society, in many ways, not just creatively as adult citizens. Island notes: "Students from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds need to see themselves reflected in educational materials. The sharing of cultural heritages, languages, traditions, values, and lifestyles enriches the education of all students" (2008, p. 7). Learning materials, including digital ones (e-learning materials), should foster a sense of pride in learners about their heritage and dispel stereotypes, biases, and ethnocentrism as well as teach pro-social behaviour.

Ruddell and Unrau (1994) caution that the educators' socio-cultural values and beliefs acquired through life experiences influence their attitudes toward learners. As such, socio-cultural differences in expectations between learners and educators can create an impediment to effective teaching and learning which, among other limitations, can be expressed through low participation in group discussions. To this end, Island (2008, p. 7) highlights that teaching materials should:

- increase awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity;
- create sensitivity to and respect for differences and similarities within and among groups;
- affirm and enhance self-esteem through pride in heritage;
- promote cross-cultural understanding, citizenship, and racial harmony;
- reflect and validate learners' cultural experiences.

Ruddell and Unrau (1994) state that educators need to reflect on the socio-cultural values and beliefs they hold within themselves in relation to the learners in order to enhance their sensitivity and incorporate the different values held by learners in classroom discussions. Mendoza and Reese (2001, p.17) note:

> Although the possibilities of using good multicultural literature in the classroom can be exciting, teachers can feel overwhelmed by the prospect of finding and evaluating the books. They do not want to offend anyone, nor do they want to harm any of the children they teach, but they worry they might inadvertently select and share inappropriate books.

This statement highlights the relevance of the study's educator's guide as a ready-made teaching tool that reflects an African-centred perspective. The guide can be used in the Grade 7 LO classroom, lessening the need to search for appropriate supplementary materials.

In addition to teaching resources, Omodan (2019) posits that a successful implementation of the LO curriculum is also dependent on educators' ability to use creative techniques when delivering the content in order to achieve the intended CAPS outcomes. The participants in this study agreed that story reading gives learners information about the functions and processes of written language and helps them build their concepts of story structure. Furthermore, they believe that the stories can help learners to better apply the content to real-life situations. The LO Lecturer highlighted importance of introducing the content's relevance to the context of the problem, not only for leaners, but also for student teachers. She emphasised that student teachers need to have their thinking challenged and that the story reading technique could be a fun and effective way to facilitate learning in both higher education and basic education as the stories align with the content of the CAPS.

Ms. QN elaborated that the stories add value to the teaching and learning experience as they continue from one week to the next, enabling learners to easily recall previous content. She noted that the stories provided a detailed setting, which brings familiarity to the characters and excitement to learn. She added: "*it's hard to get them excited about work but because they empathise with the main characters, they want to know how the story finishes, so they are indirectly forced to focus on the content and apply the terms that they have learnt*." Diale et al. (2014) state that a challenge in the classroom is that educators might not present the content

in an engaging and collaborative way, and thus learners may see no relevance of the content to their lives. Hence, the story reading technique proposed here connects real situations to the curriculum. Moreover, the participants indicated that educators tend to use short case studies to explore subtopics. Due to radical discontinuity between the case study and reality, the character information is quickly lost by the learners when another case study is introduced. Therefore, the participants believe that, because the stories focus on one main character, leaners are able to harmonise the subject content from one subtopic to the next. Similarly, Brock (2002, p. 70) states: “Literature involves the use of language and imagination to represent, recreate, shape and explore human experience.”

6.4.2 Effectiveness: Complimentary Components of the Educator’s Guide to the Story Reading Technique

The components of the educator’s guide (see Appendix A) were critical to evaluating effectiveness of the story reading technique.

6.4.2.1 Introduction: Title Page, Instructions, and Information Box. Ms. QN elaborated on the five elements of the cover page. All of the participants viewed the cover page as creative and visionary in communicating the goal of the educator’s guide to facilitate interactive lessons that align with LO outcomes. The participants indicated that the introduction to the educator’s guide is clear, and the information box is useful when planning the sequence of the lesson to engage learners dialogically.

6.4.2.2 Formulation of the Stories and Story Structure. The participants agreed that the stories could be useful outside the classroom as some learners do not receive guidance from home about how to respond to risky situations and peer pressure. They also noted that, although the theme of the stories is substance abuse, which the participants deemed important, the stories can be used to teach other topics as learners are already familiar with the characters. These topics can include assertiveness skills and sexuality education. The participants found the length of the stories and vocabulary to be appropriate for Grade 7. Kintsch (2004, p. 1315) cautions that: “The problem is to find texts of the right level of difficulty for each student in a classroom where there is typically a broad range of preparation and prior knowledge.” In this regard, the Subject Advisor affirmed that learners who are not proficient in English might take longer than those who are fluent when reading the stories, and educators must factor in the time to complete each task in their lesson plan.

Overall, the participants recommended presenting the same characters as the plot continues to reflect real-world examples for learners to engage with in the classroom. The characters were said to be believable and relatable to the learners, and the setting and general background of each story was deemed as clearly articulated. Participants enjoyed the rising action and climax (cliff-hanger) of each story's plot. Indicating her approval of using cliff-hangers in the stories, the LO Lecturer noted "*The learners must wait for the continuation…. I think this will create a desire in them to want more, to see what happens next because even in real life, not everything is finished in one day, so this is good*." They viewed the continuation of the plot as facilitating an emotional attachment to the characters, simulating a real-life experience, which may affect a genuine shift in attitudes. The participants also demonstrated an emotional response as they referred to the characters as though they were actual people. The LO Lecturer indicated that she felt "proud of Nolwazi," and the Subject Advisor felt "sad for Musa." These emotions can be used to create a shared experience in the classroom or establish a common ground with learners, particularly to resolve conflict.

6.4.2.3 Design and Layout of the Educator's Guide. All the participants stated the design and layout of the educator's guide is appropriate for Grade 7. They agree with Akcanca (2020) that comics aid in visualising and contextualising learning. Furthermore, the comic can be used to discuss and reduce emotional tension in the classroom as learners can relive their lives through the characters. Another point raised by the participants is similar to that of Ruddell and Unrau (1994), that the amount of text in a story is reduced when there are illustrations, which helps learners who experience difficulties reading. Linguistically, the participants felt the short story improved grammar and, emotionally, the story was viewed as promoting empathy. The participants stated that empathy builds when one looks at the illustrations in Story 2, as it becomes obvious that someone close to the main character dies. In other words, the colourful illustrations increase the learners' interest in the story and enhances their imagination. All participants found the guide to be user friendly as there are a few characters that they need to consider when planning the lesson and the components of the guide are integrated into the curriculum. For example, Weeks 1–4 correspond with CAPS and the textbooks typically used in the classroom.

6.4.2.4 Classroom Instruction. All the participants believed that the story reading technique can be used to organize lessons and enhance the educators' confidence in facilitating difficult topics. They also stated that the guide can be adapted to any teaching method or classroom instruction for LO. Ms. SK regularly adopted direct instruction in which learners mostly worked independently and emphasis was placed on whether the answers are correct or incorrect, but Ms. SK aided learners to align their responses to the "ideal" answer. In response to this teaching method, Bage (2012) adds that, without explicit instruction and guidance, learners might lack clarity and feel overwhelmed by tasks. Ms. SK stated that when learners work in groups, they tend to engage in off-topic, and it can be difficult to keep track of who is actively participating. However, her teaching method was not without peer-peer interactions as learners worked in pairs for some activities. Although learners engaged with each other, they seemed to reach conclusions independently. To ensure that all leaners have a basic understanding of the story, Ms. SK conducted the lesson following five steps: orientation, presentation, structured practice, guided practice, and independent practice (see section 3.7.1). Like Ms. QN, she discussed the story's title, pictures, names, and defined new words and terms.

Ms. QN mostly adopted the constructivist approach which, according to Galda and Beach (2001), suggests that learning is more likely to occur when learners are engaged with the tensions, conflicts, and dilemmas inherent to the shifting or competing worlds depicted in stories. In Ms. QN's classroom, learners typically worked in groups and responded to the stories by identifying concerns or issues portrayed in the text in relation to their own lives and experiences. Ruddell and Unrau (1994) explain that: "Shared meanings for a text find their grounding in the inter-subjective negotiation that occurs during discussion and the shaping of meaning." Ms. QN believed that she efficiently combined the plot of the story, the learners' personal experiences, and the subject content as she focussed on eliciting (prior) knowledge and creating cognitive dissonance. During this time, the learners questioned their pre-conceptions about themselves without discounting their sense of self.

Ms. QN probed the learners to elaborate on their answers, and after some time, the learners' responses seemed to converge. Barab and Duffy (2000) explain that this is because meaning is a constantly negotiated process that occurs in a social setting as each learner ponders the concerns and opinions of others and determines whether there are any viewpoints that they can incorporate into their own understanding of the phenomenon. Ms. QN challenged learners to provide "evidence" or "proof" to support their views. To this end, Bage (2012) adds that

learners with a low self-esteem are more likely share their ideas in small group discussions rather than with the whole class because of the fear of embarrassing oneself in front of more learners and the educator. Likewise, the participants noted that stories allow learners to position themselves from the characters' point of view. As such, leaners can voice their personal opinions and ideas using the characters as their mouthpiece. Learners may also engage in critical reflection about their assumptions regarding social structures in relation to substance abuse, thus fostering social and emotional learning.

6.4.2.5 Assessment Activities and Model Answers. The participants highlight the advantages of the assessment tasks, as without them, reading the story is ineffective because the story cannot be integrated with the subject content if the learners have not understood it. The participants further stated that an effective way of exploring the learners' understanding is through informal assessment. The process helps educators determine when the learners are ready to integrate the story with the subject content. All the assessments were viewed as appropriate for Grade 7. The participants indicated that the learners will not experience cognitive overload, but instead, the assessments aid in scaffolding the lesson. They also indicated that the assessments can be used to improve long-term recall, critical thinking, and analysis skills as learners reflect on their lives after summarising the story. The story reading technique may be used with any assessment "since the stuff of pedagogy is to present, formulate and invoke interpretations, teachers are not 'passive providers of data' but 'active agents with an interest in what appears for the record" (Bage, 2012, p. 3). The educators, as they are familiar with the subject, can select activities that can be incorporated into each lesson. In alignment with the new taxonomy of educational objectives by Marzano and Kendall (2007) the participants highlighted some of the benefits of the assessments proposed in the educator's guide:

6.4.2.5.a Retrieval, comprehension, and analysis

The participants highlighted the advantages of the assessment tasks, such as matching and fill-in the blank as helping to scaffold the lesson and minimize cognitive overload in learners. The LS Lecturer viewed these questions as "*a good build-up*" to assessing the learners understanding of each story. As noted by Kibirige and Teffo (2014), assessment entails giving learners tasks that are challenging yet attainable. Before applying new concepts and skills, educators must ensure that learners can successfully recall and analyse the theme of the stories.

The participants' responses show that dialogue between learners and educators can enhance their self-confidence when they feel as though they matter as individuals. The participants' responses show that listening to learners and accepting them as individuals with various personalities and interests is impactful. Therefore, to promote enthusiasm in story reading activities, it is essential for educators to exercise sensitivity when responding to learners. Learners believe that they can learn from the characters in stories, so how characters choose between different courses of action may impact whether learners can identify with the characters. The story reading technique can thus facilitate trust in the educator for learners to discuss some of their personal experiences in relation to the story. Learners may also be afforded an opportunity to ask questions and explore beliefs that might not have been raised if the stories were not introduced.

6.4.2.5.b Knowledge utilization: metacognitive and self-system

Educators can facilitate discussions with learners for them to ponder questions, to theorise about and reconstruct their responses in a logical sequence, and to use inductive or deductive reasoning as appropriate to the situation (Chidiac & Ajaka, 2018). As indicated by the participants in this study, the decision chart in the educator's guide encourages critical thinking—meaning applying new insights or ideas based on prior knowledge, integrating information from different viewpoints, or pondering various solutions to possible circumstances that they may face in their personal lives. Snyder and Snyder (2008, p. 96) outline six steps that educators can focus on when promoting critical thinking and problem solving: Identify, Define, Enumerate, Analyse, List, and Self-Correct (IDEALS). The educators used the decision chart to encourage learners to reflect on social structures by:

1. Identifying the problem: "What is the real question that we are facing?"
   The educators asked questions that clarify various points of view regarding substance abuse.
2. Defining the context: "What are the facts that frame this problem?"
   - Learners discussed social contexts that exacerbate or decrease engagement in substance abuse.
3. Enumerate choices: "What are plausible options?"
   - The educators and learners assessed major alternative points of view, such as going to the party, not going to the party, and delaying one's response.

4. Analysing options: “What is the best course of action?”
    - The educators and learners evaluated evidence, arguments, and beliefs. The learners discussed the advantages and disadvantages of going or not going to the party.
5. Listing reasons explicitly: “Why is this the best course of action?”
    - The learners discussed the reasons for the course of action that they chose and the educators synthesised the information and arguments.
6. Self-correcting: “Look at it again…. What did we miss?”
    - The learners interpreted the information, drew conclusions, and reflected on their choices.

To promote critical thinking and problem solving, Ms. QN engaged learners in a debate relating the decision chart presented in the educator’s guide. The participants felt it was important for educators to allow learners to view the dilemma as their own and to develop a solution. In support of this view, Land and Jonassen (2012) posit that, when engaging in classroom debate, learners develop several cognitive strategies, such as planning and integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge. They also acquire self-regulation techniques to formulate questions and inferences and examine and reorganize their thinking while developing an argument that must be articulated respectfully, hence the importance of learning to control their reactions and feelings becomes more apparent.

The participants noted that the role play allows learners to explore social issues from different points of view. The Subject Advisor elaborated by saying “…*even if its temporal, the point is the learners get to be someone else… they have to think like that person in order to act that out so maybe they can understand things from that person’s point of view even if they don’t agree*.” They also felt that role play promotes teach work and adds excitement to the topic as learners enjoy performing and watching others’ portal of the characters. Taylor et al. (2012, p. 446) add that “effective in providing information, modelling behaviour, developing learners’ inter-personal skills, and increasing their self-efficacy.”

One drawback of such discussions, as highlighted by the participants, is not having enough time for conducting the discussions. Ms. SK relayed that “too much” engagement with the learners about the stories might limit the time to complete the curricular activities. Chidiac and Ajaka (2018) also stated that some learners might be shy engaging in class discussions and

may prefer to write their answers down. Toward the end of the lesson, educators asked learners to write a summary about their favourite character. The participants indicated that this activity helps learners to synthesize meaning from the stories and classroom discussions placing the learners in a better position to express their thoughts.

6.4.3 The Impact, Efficiency, and Sustainability of the Educator's Guide and Story Reading Technique

The participants discussed their views on how the story reading technique might continue to shift negative perceptions, align the subject content to real life situations, and create shared values.

6.4.3.1 Impact of the Story Reading Technique. All the participants agreed that further development of the stories to explicitly portray all of the topics covered in the social issues component as they felt that the story reading technique could positively impact learners. Although the theme of the stories was substance abuse, much of the classroom discussions related to gender normativity. When the learners asked gender-related questions that were beyond the scope of the lesson but were elicited by the use of the story reading technique, Ms. QN engaged the learners in a discussion and challenged sexism. However, she was faced with the challenge of presenting evidence where she found none readily available in textbooks. The DBE is aware of this challenge. The Textbook Evaluation Report of the Ministerial Task Team (2018) indicates that gender non-conforming and non-heterosexual experiences are frequently rendered invisible by heteronormative representations of family, gender, and sexuality in textbooks. Consequently, though such depictions are not overtly discriminatory toward people who do not identify with heteronormativity, they may lead to feelings of exclusion.

Within the lesson's scope, both educators reported that the leaners were more excited to learn and they recalled content more quickly and accurately. A month after the learners completed Story 1, the educators asked them to recall the plot in relation to the subject content; they did so with ease. The use of the story reading technique provided an opportunity to challenge socio-cultural values and prior beliefs and knowledge, making the lesson relevant to the learners' lives and also memorable. The LS Lecturer added: "*even if they forget the content but I know they can't forget the values in the stories.*" Further impact of the story reading technique, as mentioned by the participants, is that educator-learner discussions can be used to negotiate change in undesirable social norms, at least, within the classroom setting.

6.4.3.2 Efficiency of the Educator's Guide. After viewing the webpages containing the educators guide and additional resources (see links on Table 17), the participants agreed that the story reading technique is adaptable to online learning. The participants cited the COVID-19 pandemic as demonstrating the need for technological advancements in public education to benefit all learners. The educators stipulated that while story books and other sources are available on the internet, the study's educator's guide can be directly linked to the curriculum. They noted that Grade 7 learners are unlikely to enjoy reading the textbook on their own, and, therefore, the stories can help educators focus the lesson even when delivered via an online platform. Ms. SK outlined the efficiency of the educator's guide: "*I could use the story in chucks, so I ask the learners to read the story first. Then I take parts of the story and link them to different concepts of the subject content. Then ask leaners to provide their own examples. But it would help to have the stories there in the first place*." The participants highlighted that the educator's guide can be developed to be more interactive as an online resource. The LO Lecturer noted that additions, such as an audio clip where the educator reads the story, can be presented to the learners. Alternatively, audio-assisted reading can be provided on the webpage. Educators can also use online education platforms to create assessments based on the stories or the subject content.

6.4.3.3 Sustainability of the Story Reading Technique. One of the follow up questions that was explored in this study was determining the perceptions of the education facilitators regarding their belief on the sustainability of the story reading technique proposed and validated in the study. Their basic response as reported in the last chapter showed that they have high confidence on the sustainability of the story reading teaching technique. Corroborating their perspective in this regard one can refer to the cultural-historical activity theory which can be used to demonstrate a link between the subject (educators and learners) and the object(ive) through culturally mediated human activity (teaching and learning). For this reason, the sustainability of the educator's guide and story reading technique is discussed below in relation to the seven elements of the activity theory and themes on the meaning of indigenous knowledge as highlighted by Manyau et al. (2018).

6.4.3.3a Subject: Challenging the beliefs and experiences of educators and learners

The Subject Advisor stated that although educators do not require training to use the educator's guide or implement the story reading technique, discussions about matters viewed as "taboo" by educators are critical and need to be considered always and a formal resolution on how to

go about them addressed. These discussions could be held in workshops that focus on LO topics and must recognized as difficult themes for educators to discuss because of their personal beliefs. To achieve the CAPS objectives for LO, much work needs to be done with educators before and during curriculum delivery such that educators feel supported and confident in their teaching content. The participants also noted that the story reading technique could remind educators that South Africa is multicultural, and the learners' worldview might oppose the educators. At the same time a story with a single main character facing different situations could bring a new world to light for the educator. Hence, the participants' encouraged reflective teaching. The participants also highlighted the need for all educators, especially those who teach LO, to familiarise themselves with various South African cultural beliefs and practices.

6.4.3.3b Story reading as a functional tool and a heritage

According to Ruterana (2012, p. 43) oral expression in the form of "storytelling, poems, proverbs, riddles, tongue twisters, [and] songs" is embedded in the African worldview. Today, since emphasis is placed on developing a strong reading culture, others might view storytelling as less favourable in an educational context. Yet, for Trudell (2019, p. 438): "The strength and significance of this cultural preference for the oral over the written is not simply a matter of 'an inadequate reading environment'." It is rooted in historical and cultural values and realities and must not be dismissed to impose every society with a "reading culture." This term, Trudell continued, refers to "a context in which people use text readily and habitually wherever they find it useful" (2019, p. 434). While the study's participants acknowledged the value of oral tradition, they also showed a desire to adapt these forms to written literacy and to make them electronically available. In this regard, all participants viewed the educator's guide and story reading technique as contributing to the promotion of a "reading culture" in South Africa, particularly among learners in under resourced schools and who have little access to supplementary reading materials.

6.4.3.3c Object(ive): Practical, preparatory and reality-based LO lessons

The participants agreed that the educator's guide enhances the process of active meaning-construction concerning the terminology recited in textbooks and social environments since the interaction between educators and learners are based on reality. They concurred that through the story reading technique, the learners' prior knowledge is activated, bringing forward their attitudes, values, and beliefs—a necessary step for comprehension. The educators also affirmed that learners were more motivated when the story reading technique was implemented. They

believe that this is because interpretations of the plot were discussed among peers, such that varied viewed were shared in the classroom, and the educator was not required to be the sole information source. The educators also noted that where there are differing views, the story reading technique compels learners to reflect on the class discussion; thus, retaining the lesson's ambiance and increasing learners' recall of the subject content.

6.4.3.3d Rules: Cosmology and establishing social ecology

In the context of this discussion, the term cosmology does not only refer to the study of the cosmos through astronomy and physics. It also refers to what can significantly impact culture as constructions of anthropological cosmologies (ideas about how the world functions) incorporate scientific theories to create models for activities in disciplines like psychology and politics (Campion, 2017). Thus, the arts, including literature, film, and painting, draws on cosmological constructions when developing plot or content. In line with this observation, Kanu (2013, p. 534) notes that from an African perspective, cosmology is "the underlining thought link that holds together the African value system, philosophy of life, social conduct, morality, folklores, myths, rites, rituals, norms, rules, ideas, cognitive mappings and theologies." Seen in the above perspective, it can be said that the current South African educational system gives precedent to the Constitution of South Africa and pays little attention to moral and spiritual development. Indeed, for Albertyn (2019), the Constitution strives towards an egalitarian society with a focus on equality and freedom as well as rights and social justice for all. Despite the benefits of such Constitutional emphases in a country like South Africa, there is need too for the recognition of the impact of social ecology which refers to the ways in which people interact with each other and respond to their surroundings, which in turn affects society and the environment. It is in this context that the role of the story reading technique holds some important promise assuring its sustainability.

For instance, the participants in this study indicated that stories can be used to discuss morals, mythology, folklore, rites, and rituals from various cultural views while reinforcing the values outlined in the Constitution. Corroborating this view, Troop-Gordon (2015) notes that learners interpret the classroom ecology, and educators must ensure the clarity of the rules that all learners must uphold to avoid (in)directly giving power and status to some, while reinforcing inferiority in others. In such cases, the values of equality and equity must guide educators, but participants also noted that stories are necessary for teaching values, such as those on humility and respect for nature, including the supernatural.

6.4.3.3e Community: Enhancing communal sense through traditional and local knowledge

The study participants highlighted the importance of creating a social environment or a classroom community where all learners feel a sense of belonging with a common goal of learning. Rovai (2001) distinguishes between classroom community and school community, as a professional setting with a principal, educators, and administrators. Rovai (2001, p. 34) defines a classroom community as "…a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, that they have duties and obligations to each other and to the school, and that they possess shared expectations that members' educational needs will be met through their commitment to shared goals." A classroom community is therefore centred on learners for a set time period (the duration of their registration). McMillan (1996) proposed that a community consists of four elements: spirit, trust, trade, and art. Rovai (2001) discusses these elements as applied to the classroom setting in which the story reading technique proposed and validated in this study will be applied:

- Spirit: the feeling of acceptance and belonging that comes with being a part of a group or being acknowledged as a member of a community, as well as the friendships, cohesiveness, and satisfactions that develops among learners.

- Trust: the feeling that the community is safe and that constructive feedback, such as will be expected in the use of the story reading technique will enhance learners' willingness to speak openly because they believe that community members will respond with support.

- Interaction (trade): the closeness and mutual benefit resulting from interacting with other learners. Rovai (2001) states that interaction can be task driven or socio-emotional in origin: This is an aspect of the classroom culture that is taken for granted in the institution of the story reading technique.
  - Task-driven interaction: Which refers to the completion of assigned tasks under the educator's direct control, such as question and answer sessions as demanded by the story reading technique.
  - Socio-emotional interaction: Refers to relationships among learners which are self-generated, such as exchanging empathetic messages when the story reading technique is under way.

- Learning (art): the perception that the community actively constructs knowledge, meaning, and understanding, and that the community meets its members' educational needs. Members not only identify with the group, but also internalize the group's goals and values to some extent. All these are principles that are taken for granted for the effective operation of the story reading technique.

What the present study argues is that when establishing a classroom community in which the story reading technique is a key practice, educators must be cognisant of the above elements, as a communal knowledge base is created from these shared experiences, which is constantly negotiated through interaction. From the perspectives of the two educators who took part in this study, this requires the capacity to recognize problems, to change focus to comprehend the issue, and to resolve concerns as they appear. The participants also affirmed that stories could aid in this process as the educator can reflect on the plot and how they used the interaction of the characters to relay values to learners. Commenting in this regard, Island (2008) asserts that "learners should experience 'a sense of belonging coupled with pride in their heritage'." The Subject Advisor added that teaching is not only about the content but also about fostering (professional) relationships with learners and promoting the learners' psychological safety, such that they want to engage in learning.

1. Division of Labour: Promoting creative and values-based teaching

Under this heading, all participants voiced their concerns with the lack of teaching materials accessible to learners. They felt that the DBE has the biggest role to play as far as developing supplementary materials that convey the values outlined in the CAPS in relation to the subject content. They also indicated that workshops for LO educators must tackle the prevailing beliefs that educators hold that might hinder their implementation of the curriculum. The LS Lecturer indicated that she felt that DBE officials put down educators instead of lifting them up to achieve the set objectives. She emphasized that when management adopts the *"I'm telling you to do this… with no proper guidance"* authoritarian approach, educators lose interest and thereafter read the direct content from the textbook to learners without supplementary commentary. The LS Lecturer emphasized the need for teaching materials at all of the different levels of teaching and learning: She avers:

> *You see, you can't have management sitting at the top and looking down… because where is down? The down is our children… the learners we teach. We need an education system that, true, has a bird's-eye view but they must also be levelled to get the full scale of the issues at hand. The DBE must level with the educators and leaners and we [lecturers] must level with our students but the question is how do you do this without the relevant teaching materials?*

The LS Lecturer posed this question considering the numerous viewpoints and jargon included in the narrative about values in education within the SA context. The participants stated that with the addition of more stories, the proposed and approved educators guide could serve as an official supplementary teaching resource that can be used by DBE officials, educators, lecturers, educators, learners, and parents.

2. Outcome: Holistic implementation of the curriculum

Cappy (2016, p. 125) notes that "education should encourage students to reflect on social issues so that they may become responsible citizens and leaders that uphold the value of human rights." In relation to this vision, the participants agreed that the proposed and validated educator's guide and story reading technique could be seen as promoting the 4Cs approach to pedagogy, which according to Jefferson and Anderson (2017, p. 4), entails creativity, critical reflection, communication, and collaboration. The 4Cs, according to Anderson, contribute to:

- really understanding and knowing learners and their needs.
- treating teaching and learning as a creative process.
- really understanding how learning is generated.
- developing self-regulated, self-directed autonomous learners.

One of the ways in which this outcome can be achieved through curriculum delivery is by acknowledging that "in the African context, the story is seen as a vehicle for transforming human consciousness and is, therefore, an indispensable medium for cultivating virtue and ideal values" (Nwoye, 2006, p. 134).

6.5 Contribution of the Study

The key contribution of this study lies in its development and validation of an educator's guide that can be used to teach the social issues component of the LO curriculum. Substance abuse, as per CAPS, was the central theme on which the stories revolved. The educator's guide comprises two stories with an engaging plot and a simple narrative arc: a clear beginning, middle, and end of the story. Hence each story is easy to follow from one week to the next. The characters have unique personalities, hobbies, and goals. They also have relationships with other characters that are realistic to learners.

The educator's guide was evaluated and positively validated by 5 LO facilitators who, as noted in the previous chapter, believe that learners might gain insight into how they engage in interpersonal interactions if they can identify themselves in a character and observe how that character interacts with others. Unfortunately, materials and story books that portray an African-centred perspective are scarce. Thus, the educator's guide is proposed as a teaching and learning supplementary resource. The educator's guide that was validated in the presented was used to implement the story reading technique. Two educators facilitated their LO lessons using the stories in the educator's guide. During the implementation of the story reading technique, gender normativity conflict was observed. Above and beyond the central theme of substance abuse, the story reading technique was adjudged to have aided the educators in discussing topics relating to gender nonconformity and gender equality. It is, therefore, apparent that reading stories is beneficial for more than simply entertainment as learners search for and discover some meaning by which to live, through them.

6.6 Recommendations for Improved Policy and Practice

In the light of the important findings emanating from this study, the following recommendations for improved policy and practice for the promotion of the LO curriculum are made:

1. There is need for the DBE to make provision for training in the LO subject content as well as exposure to various social environments that could aid educators to establish a social ecology that promotes supportive and caring interactions. This will help to enhance the learners' emotional development and communication skills as they work on developing their identities. Improving self-awareness is also important for educators. Educators can keep a personal journal where they document their thoughts and feelings

about the lesson in relation to their personal values, professional skills and general behaviours.

2. It is equally recommended that Higher Education Lecturers be encouraged to place more emphasis on classroom and group discussions with their students. Various forms of assessment, including oral, classroom management and, inclusive education are also important for student teachers. Where student teachers have not been physically exposed to different backgrounds, engaging with peers could enhance awareness about external factors that disrupt the learners' daily life.

3. It is also recommended that the Department of Basic Education should strengthen collaboration with universities as part of their key stakeholders to achieve a more effective basic education system.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of the study must be highlighted:

a) Location: the schools and educators that were part of the study are located only in two districts in KwaZulu-Natal. The presented educator's guide and story reading technique has not been piloted in other districts and provinces. However, it has been determined in this study that the educator's guide and story reading technique are transferable across South African classrooms.

b) Sample size: a larger sample of expert participants which would strengthen the phenomenographic analysis was not obtainable; hence the study was limited to five participants. Although the focus was on expert views, a sample comprising diverse ethnic groups and genders was sort, but only the females agreed to participate in this study.

c) Theoretical limitation: The reader response theory that served as conceptual foundation to the stories proposed and validated in this study has the negative effect of allowing much opportunity for subjective interpretation of the phenomenon. As such, the findings presented in this study should be taken as objective evaluations by the participants.

d) Methodological limitation: A mixed-method approach could have accommodated additional participants for generalizability.

6.8 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the above limitations, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. Another study is needed where selection of participants from more than two locations will be considered, and where more participants than the five used in this study will become a reality, with the inclusion of the male educator in the study sample.

2. There is need for another study in which DBE could be helped to come up with relevant children's literature that represents African centred perspective. This is necessary because as the study has revealed stories give learners the chance to explore their values "(didactic aspect)", participate in engaging learning activities (educational function), and deal with internal problems and life challenges "(psychological value)" (Pulimeno, et al., (2020, p.19).

3. There is also need for future research to be conducted with a focus on the importance of providing training in the LO subject content as well as exposure to various social environments that could aid educators to establish a social ecology that promotes supportive and caring interactions. The application of the results of such research will help to enhance the learners' emotional development and communication skills as they work on developing their identities. Improving self-awareness is also important for educators. Educators can keep a personal journal where they document their thoughts and feelings about the lesson in relation to their personal values, professional skills and general behaviours.

6.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study saw the need for the development and validation of an educator's guide that is grounded on four theoretical perspectives: The Africentric Theory of Human Motivation; the Sociocultural Theory; the Cultural Historical Activity Theory, and the Reader-Response Theory. Additional six conceptual frameworks were also employed: Narrative arc; Themes on the meaning of indigenous knowledge; Direct instruction; New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; A six-step approach to curriculum development and; the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria to justify the use of story reading in curriculum delivery.

Life Orientation facilitators were interviewed regarding their perspectives and perceptions on the grade 7 Life Orientation subject's goals, objectives, social concerns content, and teaching materials. Their perceptions and comments, as reported in the previous chapter, were totally in sync with the findings of previous studies which discussed the negative impact of overcrowded classrooms, lack of educator training in LO and, lack of supplementary teaching resources.

Although the need for challenging harmful social norms while establishing and maintaining positive ones was adjudged to be high, the responses of the participants in this study demonstrate that the importance of LO is still perceived as low among educators, learners, and parents. On the other hand, this study found that while LO aims to impart values prescribed in the constitution, it is essential that educators reinforce and sustain those values in the classroom. Also, it is significant to note that the participants deemed the complimentary components of the educator's guide to the story reading technique proposed and validated in this study to be effective for use in South African classrooms to teach social issues.

Some important frameworks relating to the conceptual components of the educator's guide developed and validated in this study deserve mention too. These are: the structural framework of the story reading technique and the multiple levels of reflexivity framework. This is in addition to the online tools that were developed, which can be used by educators in conjunction with textbooks and the validated educator's guide.

Finally, in their evaluation of all the submissions made to them in this study, the participants strongly agreed that the proposed educator's guide and the story reading technique it encompasses embraces an African centred worldview within the CAPS content for Grade 7 LO.

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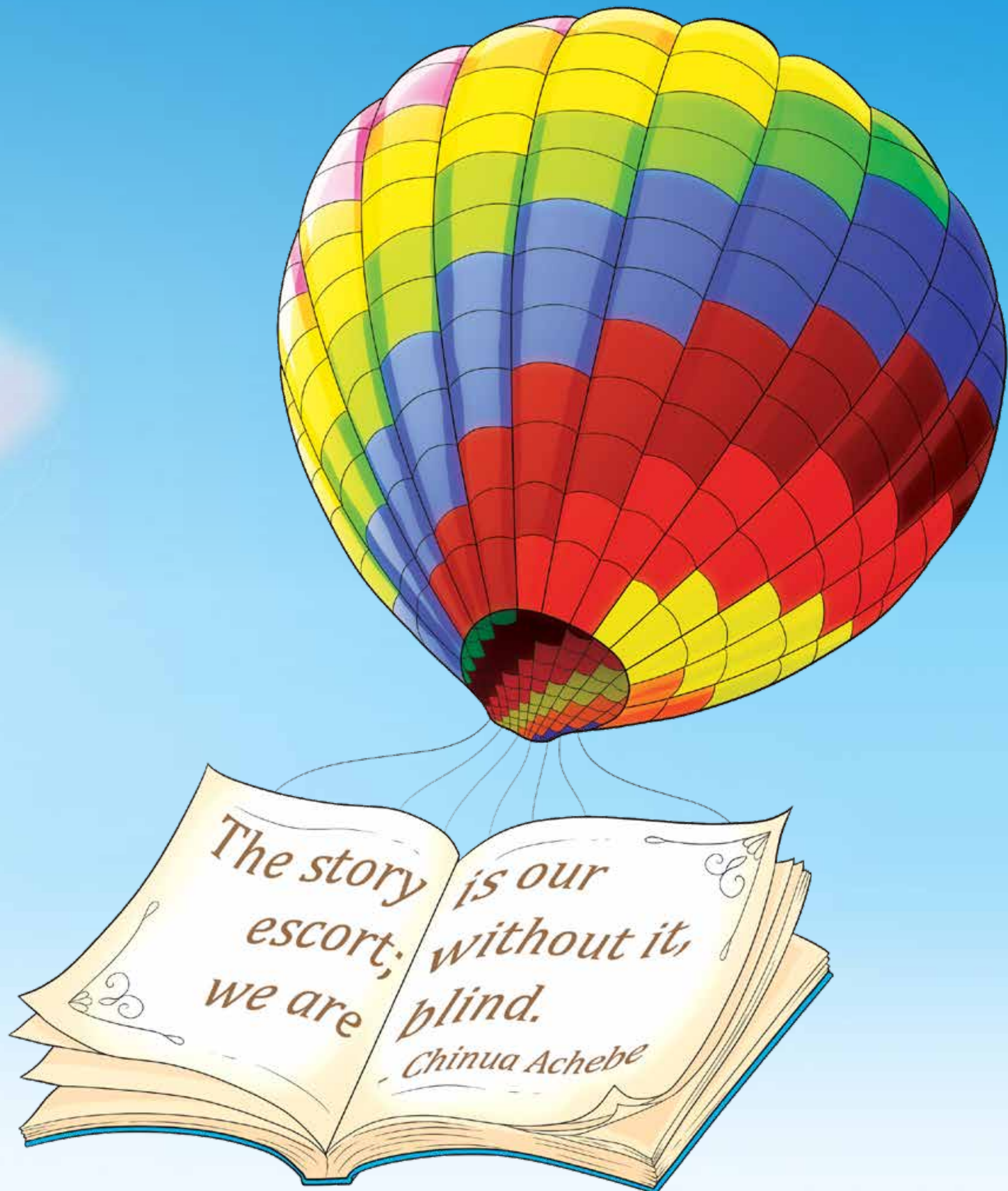
An Africentric approach to teaching social issues in the Life Orientation subject in South African schools

Grade 7



Researched and written by **Sindiswa Shezi**

Note:
Educators can use the story reading technique to introduce Life Orientation topics concerning social issues. In this educator's guide, two stories encapsulate social settings that learners can relate to when teaching about substance abuse. The stories do not replace the grade 7 content. Instead, a comprehensive introduction to the social issue is offered, weaving together various subtopics rather than viewing them as disconnected from one another.

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Educator's guide

Life Orientation: Story reading technique

Introduction

Story reading centres on an account of a true or fictitious incident designed to interest, evoke emotion in, or instruct a reader. This educator's guide consists of two stories and activities related to each story.

Note the following:

- The stories should be read out loud in class by the educator or the learners.
- Be animated, as this enhances the learners' imagination.
- Learners should silently read along with the educators.

In order to convey the intended outcome of the story, please remember to:

- have a clear focus and maintain concentration.
- make gestures that respond to the story.
- create a charismatic presence of the characters.
- use different, exaggerated character voices.
- pace yourself.
- use silence and pauses to add dramatic effect.

Story structure

Each story is subdivided into two parts.

Part 1: The first part of each story ends in a cliff-hanger[1], allowing learners to speculate about a possible ending. The learners, with the assistance of the educator, are then to complete the allocated activities.

Part 2: The second part of the story should be resumed, and the allocated task completed.

1 Cliff-hanger: A dramatic and exciting ending to an episode of a serial, leaving the audience in suspense and anxious not to miss the next episode.

Story 1: Nolwazi, trust yourself

(Peer Pressure and Substance Abuse)

Week 1 and 2

Objectives

- To illustrate possible circumstances that increase vulnerability to substance use.
- To indicate some of the negative effects of drugs.
- To demonstrate the impact of peer pressure.
- To highlight the awareness of oneself in relation to others.

Remember to

- Emphasise that we should not ridicule each other when we face hardships.
- Emphasise that illegal drugs are not safe.
- Highlight that learners have the right to say no to drugs.

Instructions

- Educator: Read the story out loud in class.
- Recap the story with the learners and read out all the questions.
- Assist learners with the completion of the allocated task:
  - Allow the learners to discuss possible answers in their groups.
  - Discuss possible answers with learners.

This story will be role played by the learners in week 3 but they need to be introduced to this task during week 2.

Preparing for role play

Explain that the learners need to role play this comic.

- Working in groups, the characters in this comic must be allocated to learners (by themselves or by the educator). Each group must role play one part of the story; either part 1 or part 2. The group that is role playing part 1 should perform first, followed by the group that is performing part 2 of the story.
- Learners may improvise.

Story 2: Musa, you are not safe!

(Child Abuse and Substance Abuse)
Week 3 and 4

Objectives

- Illustrate possible circumstances that increase vulnerability[2] to substance abuse.
- Indicate some of the negative effects[3] of alcohol.
- Highlight emotional and physical abuse.

Remember to

- Emphasise that alcohol is not for people under the age of 18 years.
- Emphasise that we should not ridicule each other when we face hardships.
- Highlight that learners can report abuse to a social worker, educator or the police.

Instructions

- Educator: Read the story out loud in class.
- Recap the story with the learners and read out all the questions.
- Assist learners in completing the allocated task:
  - Allow the learners to discuss the questions in their groups.
  - Discuss possible answers with learners.

For your information (not for teaching purposes):

Substance abuse indicators:

- Dirty/inappropriate clothing
- Unexplained bruises or burns (apparent accidents)
- Recurrent vague somatic complaints
- Fatigue
- Behavioural or emotional problems
- Changes in relationships with peers
- Distractibility or hypervigilance
- Discomfort with issues of substance abuse
- Unusual/sophisticated knowledge of drinking/drug practices

2 Vulnerability: The quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.

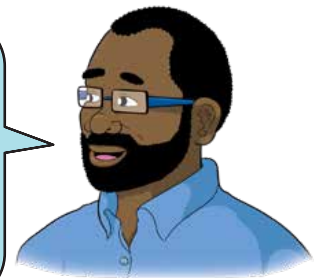
3 Effect: A change which is a result or consequence of an action or other cause.

Story 1: Part 1

Nolwazi, trust yourself

Today Nolwazi was not happy. She has been feeling sad for a few days now because she did not receive an invitation card to attend one of her classmate's birthday parties. She has been feeling like she is the odd one in the class as she only has one friend, named Lerato.

Lerato was invited to the party so Nolwazi thought that there is something wrong with her because she was not invited. She came home sobbing. Her father, with whom she stays, tried to comfort her by talking to her.



Although talking to her father helped, Nolwazi still felt a little sad. The next morning when she got to school, she greeted her friend, Lerato, as usual, and they started walking to class together while chatting.

Nolwazi thought about what Lerato was saying, and it hurt her. Knowing that there will be drugs at the party made her feel uncomfortable, but she liked Thabani and wanted to see him at the party. She decided that she does not want to be the boring one. So, she will go to the party and show them that she is a fun person.

Discussion questions

1. Name the characters in the comic.
2. Where does Nolwazi live?
3. Why is Nolwazi upset?
4. What did her father say to comfort her?
5. Do you think that Lerato is a good friend?
6. What are the characteristics of a good friend?
7. Do you think Nolwazi is boring? Why?
8. What is a crush?
9. Do you think Nolwazi should go to the party? Why?

Reflection activity

Look at the decision chart on the following page and read the options.
Consider the option you think is best and provide possible solutions to the questions.
Write down the responses to the option that you have chosen.

Decision Chart

Do you think that Nolwazi should go to the party?

Make a choice and deal with the consequences...

How can Nolwazi deal with being called "boring"?

Who can Nolwazi talk to if she feels lonely or hurt?

If Lerato does not want to be Nolwazi's friend, how can Nolwazi build new friendships?

What are the advantages of going to the party?

What are the disadvantages of going to the party?

The party is this Saturday. A decision must be made. What is your decision?

What if nobody wants to be with Nolwazi at the party because they think that she is "boring"?

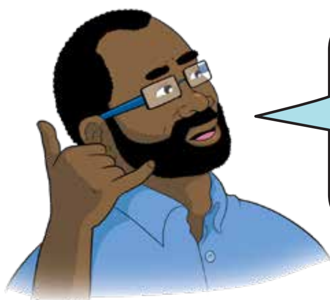
What can Nolwazi do if she does not enjoy the party?

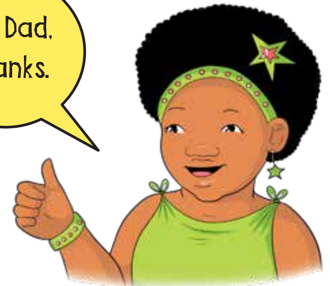
How can Nolwazi refuse drugs if she goes to the party?

Story 1: Part 2

Nolwazi, trust yourself

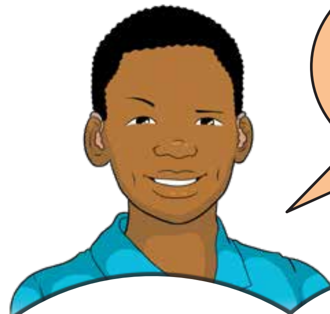
Nolwazi got home and told her father that she has been invited to the party and plans on going as it is on Saturday. She said she will go with Lerato so her father does not have to worry about transporting her. Her father was pleased to see his daughter looking happy. On the Saturday of the party, her father gave her a hug and had a chat with her.





Nolwazi got to the party and felt a little happy to see Thabani, although she ignored him and went to have a chat with Lerato.

Just then, Thabani joined the conversation.



Nolwazi did not feel comfortable with what Lerato and Thabani asked her to do. Many thoughts went through her mind.

She thought about how her life might turn out if she starts to use drugs. She thought about the people that she knows who are addicted to drugs and how miserable they are when they don't have money to buy more drugs.

She thought about the happy times she shared with her mother when she was still alive and how using drugs would upset her mother.

She thought about how using drugs might hurt her father who has always been there for her.

She thought her father is right, she will find other friends. Besides, she feels fine. She does not feel like she is boring at all.

Eventually Nolwazi gave a response.

Discussion questions

1. Whose party did Nolwazi go to?
2. What is peer pressure?
3. Who is Thabani?
4. What did Thabani ask Nolwazi to do?
5. What are the side effects of ecstasy?
6. Why did Nolwazi refuse the drugs?
7. What do you think about Nolwazi's decision to walk away from her friendship with Lerato?

Role play

The focus of the role play should be on the following:

1. Each person must know their lines.
2. Work together as a group.
3. Use props to help you get into character or set the scene.
4. Be creative/Improvise.

For your information
(not for teaching purposes):

Loss and Bereavement: symptoms of grief

- Bodily complaints (headaches, stomach aches, colds, pains
- Loss of appetite and energy
- Disruptive behaviour
- Over-dependency: needing constant reassurance
- Crying, sadness, irritability, anxiety, feelings of depression
- Mood changes
- Anger
- Cutting school/class
- Using drugs
- Irritability
- Social withdrawal

Child psychological abuse

A pattern of intentional verbal or behavioural actions or lack of actions that convey to a child the message that s/he is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value to meet someone else's needs.

Story 2: Part 1

Musa, you are not safe!

Musa is 13 years old and lives with his grandmother and Aunt in Ezinqoleni. He is a fun-loving boy who enjoys reading storybooks, drawing, and playing with clay. Musa can make any form of ornament from the clay around the yard, although he prefers to make animals. When Musa gets home from school, he washes his school uniform and fetches water from the borehole. He also chops vegetables for his grandmother to cook while his aunt is at work. Musa loves his grandmother very much and feels that his grandmother loves him too. He is thrilled to go to school even though he has to walk a long distance to get there. He does not mind the long walk because he gets to walk with his two best friends. He is even happier to come home and tell his grandmother about his time at school and all the new things that he learned there.

While sitting at the kitchen table and drinking a cup of tea together, Musa tells his grandmother: "Gogo, my favourite subject is technology because we get to learn about different types of transport. I like aeroplanes, and I want to be a pilot when I am big!" His grandmother replied, "Oh, my wonderful pilot! Will you have your own private aeroplane?" With a big grin on his face, Musa nodded yes and poured more tea for his grandmother. "Thank you for the tea, Musa, but we need to be very careful not to waste water" said his grandmother. Musa smiled and replied: "Don't worry Gogo, I will fetch more water from the borehole." When they had finished drinking tea, Musa took an empty bucket of water and washed it so he can fetch more. While he was washing the bucket of water, he heard Aunty Star greeting Gogo at the door. Gogo wanted to talk to her about saving money as Musa is getting older and will one day go to university. Aunty Star is Gogo's eldest daughter and the community leader. Gogo trusts her very much as she takes good care of her and Musa. Musa greeted Aunty Star and poured her a cup of tea so that she can relax as she was coming from work and looked very tired. Musa told his grandmother that he would be back soon and went to the borehole.

Musa took the bucket and left. On his way, he was singing: "One day, oh one day, I say I will fly an aeroplane, not just any plane- my aeroplane. My grandmother and I will be up there in the sky." When he got to the borehole, he continued to smile and sing as he placed the bucket of water on his shoulder to carry it back home so that he and his grandmother could start cooking supper. On his way back, he was greeted by people who could not help but notice how happy Musa looked. They thanked him for being such a wonderful boy who is always ready to help his grandmother.

Musa felt lucky to have a grandmother who loves him and an aunt who looks after him. He always thought that his grandmother would be there for him until he grows old, but life can be very unpredictable. When he got home, he noticed that the door was open, and his neighbours were inside the house. Aunty Star took the bucket from his shoulder and asked him to sit down. Musa could sense that something was wrong, but he sat down anyway and listened to what Aunty Star had to say. In a very shaky voice, Aunty Star said: "Musa, I have some bad news… a few minutes ago, Gogo had a heart attack… she has passed on."

Musa could not believe what he just heard! He could not talk. He could not move. He started to cry. Aunty Star hugged him and said: "Don't worry Musa, I will look after you."

Discussion questions

1. Who is the main character?
2. Where is the story taking place?
3. Who does Musa walk to school with?
4. Do you think Aunty Star will look after Musa? Why?
5. Why do you think the title of the story is: Musa, you are not safe!?

Short answer questions

Answer the questions and write the letter of the picture that corresponds to your answer.

Write the letter:

1. Why was Musa happy? ....

....

....

2. What did Musa make with clay?...

....

....

3. What did Musa do to help his grandmother?

....

....

....

4. Which subject did Musa like the most? Why?

....

....

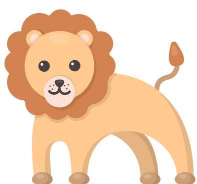
....

5. What profession does Musa aspire to be in? What does a person in this profession do?

....

....

....



A

B

C

D

E

Story 2: Part 2

Musa, you are not safe!

Gogo had paid monthly instalments for the communal burial scheme. This money was received by Aunty Star and was used to pay for the funeral. Family relatives that lived far came to the funeral, but Musa felt lonely and lost. His mother, who was Gogo's youngest daughter, passed away when he was just a little boy, and he had never met his father. He missed his grandmother very much and often wished that he were dead too. He did not know who to talk to about how he felt.

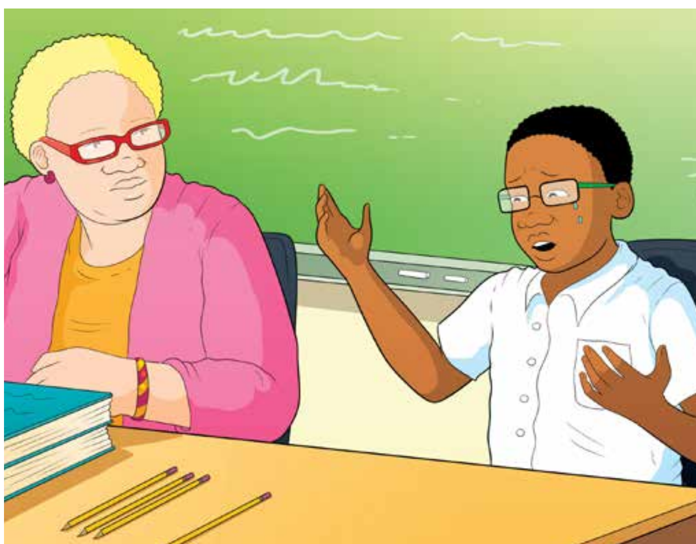
After the funeral, Musa stayed with Aunty Star. She appeared to have changed and did not like him very much.

Aunty Star commanded Musa to do all the house chores and often accused him of finishing all the food. Aunty Star sometimes said terrible things to Musa, such as that he will never be a pilot as he is a useless boy. All the things that Aunty Star said hurt Musa very much, and he did not think that anybody would believe him if he told the truth. Everyone thought that Aunty Star was a wonderful woman who is genuinely kind and was looking after him. He was afraid to tell anybody about the bad things that Aunty Star says to him because he thought everyone would think that he is an ungrateful child and Aunty Star will throw him out of the house. He felt like he had nowhere else to go.

While Musa was having all these thoughts, he remembered that after Gogo's funeral, when the relatives were gone, Aunty Star started keeping alcohol in the house. He made his way to the cupboard where Aunty Star keeps her alcohol, all the while saying to himself: "Maybe the alcohol will make me feel better. When Aunty Star drinks, she looks happy and sleeps easily. Maybe I should drink too, and my pain will go away." He did not like the taste of alcohol, but he thought to himself: "I will drink more, and I will surely feel better."

As he was drinking the alcohol, Musa felt dizzy and started to sweat a lot. He also felt like he was going to throw up, but he kept drinking because he thought that the alcohol might help him to forget about his grandmother. When Musa came back from school, he would drink alcohol. When he was drunk, he fell asleep and did not have to think about his problems. He did not do his chores anymore. This angered Aunty Star. He could not focus on his school work and did not walk with friends anymore. Aunty Star thought that Musa was disobedient and stubborn, so she often beat him.

Musa was no longer happy to go to school, and he did not do well in his school work. This worried Musa's teacher, who saw that he had bruises on his arms and looked sad all the time. The teacher asked Musa what was wrong. He started to cry and told the teacher everything that he was going through. The teacher thanked Musa for trusting her.



She also told him that he has a right to feel sad for losing his grandmother because it is a painful experience. The teacher stated that she understands that Musa was in pain, but drinking alcohol will not make him feel better. "I can explain your situation to the school counsellor, and you can talk to him because he might help you to understand your feelings," said the teacher. Musa felt a little better after talking to the teacher. He was relieved to have someone that believes him. He agreed to speak to the school counsellor so that he does not feel lonely anymore.

Discussion questions

1. Who does Musa miss the most?
2. What did Aunty Star accuse Musa of doing?
3. (a) How did this make Musa feel?

   (b) How does this make you feel?
4. Why didn't Musa tell anybody about how Aunty Star was treating him?
5. How old must you be in order to be able to buy or drink alcohol?
6. What did you learn from this story?

Writing activity

Listen to the story and fill the blank spaces in the summary below:

Aunty Star commanded Musa to do all the house ________________________ and often accused him of finishing all the food. All the things that Aunty Star said _______________ Musa very much, and he did not think that anybody would believe him if he told the truth. Musa drank alcohol because he thought his ______________________ will go away when he is drunk. When Musa was drinking he felt _____________________________ and started to ______________________ a lot. He did not do his __________________________ anymore which angered Aunty Star. He could not focus on his _______________________ _________________ and did not walk with friends anymore. Musa's teacher at school saw that he had bruises on his arms and looked __________________ all the time. The teacher asked Musa what was wrong and he started to ____________________ and told the truth.

Model answers

Story 1: Part 1

1. Nolwazi, Father, Lerato and Thabani.
2. Nolwazi lives in Umlazi.
3. Nolwazi did not receive an invitation card to attend one of her classmate's birthday parties.
4. Nolwazi's father told her that she is only in grade eight. She is still young. She is still going to meet a lot of people and make a lot of friends.
5. No. Lerato is not a good friend as she is trying to force Nolwazi into taking drugs.
6. Honesty, empathy, kindness, care, respect, and trustworthiness.
7. No. Nolwazi respects her father. She respects her body, and she also respects those around her. She used her right to say no to drugs. This does not mean that she is boring.
8. A desire to be with someone whom you find extremely attractive and extremely special. Crushes can make you feel emotions such as shyness and giddiness.
   - You cannot always choose who you have a crush on, but you can choose how you react once you figure out that you have a crush on someone.
9. Use the decision chart to guide the learners in their conception of possible outcomes.

Story 1: Part 2

Discussion Questions

1. Nolwazi went to one of her classmate's birthday parties.
2. A boy that Nolwazi has a crush on.
3. Peer pressure is a feeling that one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group to be liked or respected by them.
4. Thabani asked Nolwazi to consume ecstasy.
5. Some of the side effects of ecstasy include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, sweating, seizures, and increased body temperature.

6. She thought about the impact of drugs in her life and realised that drugs are not good. Any of the following reasons:

   - Nolwazi thought about how her life might turn out if she starts using drugs.
   - She thought about the people that she knows who are addicted to drugs and how miserable they are when they do not have money to buy more drugs.
   - She thought about the happy times she shared with her mother when she was still alive and how using drugs would upset her mother.
   - She thought about how using drugs might hurt her father who has always been there for her.
   - She thought about how her father is right, she will find other friends. Besides, she feels fine.
   - She does not feel like she is boring at all.

7. It is a good decision. *Guide the learners in their conception of possible outcomes.*

Story 1 Role play

Understanding of topic	**0 – 1** No clear understanding demonstrated.	**2 – 3** Presented the story as written with no deviation.	**4 – 5** Drew from other sources to enhance the story.
Co-operation	**0 – 1** No co-operation. Lines were not memorised.	**2 – 3** Improvisation where necessary but lines were memorised.	**4 – 5** Lines were well memorised. Each member knew their cue.
Props	**0 – 1** No props or one prop which was not effectively used.	**2 – 3** Two props. Moderate use of props	**4 – 5** Three or more props. Good use of the props.
Creativity	**0 – 1** Lack of enthusiasm and no creativity displayed.	**2 – 3** Enthusiastic and introduced new ideas	**4 – 5** Commanded attention and excellent execution.
TOTAL (20)			

Story 2: Part 1

Discussion questions

1. Musa is the main character.
2. Ezinqoleni
3. Musa walks with his two best friends to school.

Question 4 and 5: Guide the learners in their conception of possible outcomes.

Story 2: Part 1

Answer the questions and write the letter of the picture that corresponds to your answer.

	Write the letter:
1. Why was Musa happy? He was happy to go to school with his two best friends. He is even happier to come home and tell his grandmother about his time at school and all the new things that he learned	B
2. What did Musa make with clay? He can make any form of ornament he wishes from the clay he finds around the yard, but he prefers to make animals.	A
3. What did Musa do to help his grandmother? Musa used to fetch water from the borehole. He also chopped vegetables in preparation for cooking; and helped her to wash the dishes.	C
4. Which subject did Musa like the most? Why? Technology. Musa learned about different types of transport.	E
5. What profession does Musa aspire to be in? What does a person in this profession do? Musa wants to be a pilot. A pilot operates the flying controls of an aircraft.	D

Story 2: Part 2

Discussion questions

1. Musa missed his grandmother very much. Aunty Star accused him of finishing all the food.
2. (a) Musa felt hurt and afraid. *Remind learners that fear is a normal response when we do not know what to do.*

   (b) Guide the learners in reflecting their feelings. *Remind learners to be sensitive and empathetic with other people.*
3. He was afraid to tell anybody about the bad things that Aunty Star says to him because he thought that everyone will think that he is an ungrateful child and Aunty Star will throw him out of the house.
4. Guide the learners in their responses. *Reflect on the importance of supporting/helping those who have lost loved ones.*
5. You must be eighteen years to be to be able to buy or drink alcohol.
6. It is important to speak to someone if you are feeling lonely.
   It is important to tell a trusted adult if you are being abused.
   Using substances does not solve problems.

Story 2: Part 2

Listen to the story and ill the blank spaces in the summary below:

Aunty Star commanded Musa to do all the house **chores** and often accused him of finishing all the food. All the things that Aunty Star said **hurt** Musa very much, and he did not think that anybody would **believe** him if he told the truth. Musa drank alcohol because he thought his **pain** will go away when he is drunk. When Musa was drinking he felt **dizzy** and started to **sweat** a lot. He did not do his **chores** anymore, which angered Aunty Star. He could not focus on his **schoolwork** and did not walk with friends anymore. Musa's teacher at school saw that he had bruises on his arms and looked **sad** all the time. The teacher asked Musa what was wrong, and he started to **cry** and told the truth.

[10 marks]

This study was sponsored by the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences in collaboration with the South African Humanities Deans' Association (NIHSS-SAHUDA). The views expressed in this study and conclusions reached are of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NIHSS or SAHUDA.

Dedicated to all Life Orientation educators,
subject advisors, and lecturers

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule: Lecturer

1. For how long have you been teaching LS/LO to students in the school of education?

2. What are some of the issues that you believe need to be addressed when preparing student educators to teach LO?
   - How do you equip student educators to teach this subject?

3. What are some of the techniques that are used to teach social issues in LO?
   - What are your views about the social issues content for LO in Grade 7?

4. What is your view on the use of the story reading technique to teach social issues in LO?
   - What do you think are some of the advantages of this technique?
   - What do you think are some of the disadvantages of this technique?

Educator's Guide: Probing Questions

What are your views about the following:

a) The cover page of the educator's guide
b) The introduction and information sheet
c) Structure of the stories
d) Design and layout of the guide
e) Discussion questions
f) Assessment activities and model answers

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

DBE - LO Subject Advisor

1. For how long have you been a LO subject advisor?
    - In your view, what is the role of a LO subject advisor?

2. What are some of the issues that you believe need to be addressed when preparing teachers to teach LO?

3. What are some of the techniques that are used to teach social issues in LO?
    - What are your views about the social issues content for LO in Grade 7?
    - How do you equip educators to teach the social issues component of LO?

4. What is your view on the use of the story reading technique to teach social issues in LO?
    - What do you think are some of the advantages of this technique?
    - What do you think are some of the disadvantages of this technique?

Educator's Guide: Probing Questions

What are your views about the following:

a) The cover page of the educator's guide
b) The introduction and information sheet
c) Structure of the stories
d) Design and layout of the guide
e) Discussion questions
f) Assessment activities and model answers

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

LO Educator (The Initial Interview)

1. For how long have you been teaching LO?

2. What are some of the social issues that you believe need to be reflected in the LO curriculum?
   - What materials do you use when preparing for a LO lesson pertaining to social issues?

3. What are some of the techniques that are used to teach social issues in LO?
   - What do you think about the social issues content for LO in Grade 7?

4. What is your view on the use of the story reading technique to teach social issues in LO?
   - What do you think are some of the advantages of this technique?
   - What do you think are some of the disadvantages of this technique?

Educator's Guide: Probing Questions

What are your views about the following:

a) The cover page of the educator's guide
b) The introduction and information sheet
c) Structure of the stories
d) Design and layout of the guide
e) Discussion questions
f) Assessment activities and model answers

Appendix E: Observation Checklist

Sessional observation checklist
Beginning of session (pre-reading)
Educator explores the expectations of learners with regards to the story that they are going to read.
Educator explains the objectives for the story.
Educator stresses the importance of reading/listening and participation when the story is over.
Educator explains the task that the learners have to engage in after the story has been read.
Middle of session (During reading)
Educator reads the story audibly and accurately.
Educator dramatizes the story.
Educator probes and clarifies where necessary.
Educator does not ask leading questions.
Educator treats different responses with respect.
Reactions and responses to the story are explored.
End of session (post-reading)
Educator summarises what was discussed during the session and emphasises the important points.
Educator explains the homework to the learners and states when it is due.
Educator provides positive feedback to the class.
Educator asks about learners' thoughts and feelings about the story.
Educator asks for and answers any questions.

Appendix F: Reflective Exercise for Educators

Write down your thoughts with regards to the following:

Story 1

1. Do you think that the story is appropriate for Grade 7? Please explain.

____
____
____

2. What do you think about the presentation of this story? Please explain.

____
____
____

3. Highlight some of the things that you would change about today's session?

____
____
____

Story 2

1. Do you think that the story is appropriate for Grade 7? Why?

____
____
____

2. What do you think about the presentation of this story?

____
____
____

3. What are some of the things that you would change about today's session?

____
____
____

Appendix G: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

LO Educator (The Closing Interview)

1. What are your thoughts about the story reading technique?
   - Does the content reflect the CAPS curriculum? Please explain.
   - What do you think about the layout of the presented stories?
   - How did you feel when you implemented the story reading technique?

2. How would you improve the story reading technique?
   - What would you change about the content?
   - What would you change about the layout?

3. In your opinion, what was the learners' overall response to the use of the story reading technique? Please explain.

4. Would you recommend that the story reading technique be adopted by the DBE for the social issues component of the LO curriculum? Please explain.

Appendix H: Ethical Clearance

20 April 2022

Sindiswa Mbali Shezi (204010121)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear SM Shezi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0111/019D
Project title: An Africentric approach to teaching social issues in the Life Orientation learning area in grade 7 in the South African context: A study of the story reading technique
Amended title: Teaching grade 7 Life Orientation in South African schools through the story-reading technique: An African centred perspective

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 19 April 2022 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix I: Permission to Conduct Research in Schools (DBE)

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma | Tel: 033 392 1063 | Ref.:2/4/8/1825

Miss SM Shezi
17 Donald Road
Fynnland
Durban
4052

Dear Miss Shezi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"AN AFRICENTRIC APPROACH TO TEACHING SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION SUBJECT IN GRADE 7 IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT: A STUDY OF THE STORY READING TECHNIQUE",** 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 20 June 2019 to 10 January 2022.
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 Phindile Duma 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

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 20 June 2019

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • **Fax.:** +27 033 392 1203• **Email:**Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za •**Web:**www.kzneducation.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE....Twitter: @DBE_KZN....Instagram: kzn_education....Youtube:kzndoe

Appendix J: Information Letter for Lectures & Life Orientation Subject Advisors

University of KwaZulu-Natal
College of Humanities
School of Education

<u>Participant Information Sheet for Lectures & Life Orientation Subject Advisors</u>

Teaching Grade 7 Life Orientation in South African schools through the story reading technique: An African centred perspective

Description of the project

You are requested to take part in the above-named research study. Please take the time to read the following information and ask questions should you require further clarification.

The aim of the study is to explore the participants' evaluation of the use of story reading as a choice technique for conceptualising and delivering the LO curriculum in South African schools.

The study is conducted by Sindiswa Shezi, a Doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus).

Your participation

Your participation in the study will include reading two stories and partaking in a one-on-one interview based on story reading as a teaching technique. The interview will be between 45 minutes to 1hour long. The focus of the interview will be on your evaluation of the story reading technique.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- There are no incentives for participation.
- There are no foreseeable risks that could arise as a result of your participation in this study.
- In the event that you do not feel comfortable answering any question(s), you are free not to answer or to stop the interview at any point.
- There will be no consequences if you wish to withdraw from the study.
- The interview will be audio taped.
- The audio tape as well as other documents associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding.
- To receive feedback regarding your participation, you will be contacted by the researcher and sent a copy of the results to verify that the findings of the study are true.

This study will be ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee.

In the event of any problems or concerns/ questions you may contact the researcher on 076 611 9416/ 033 260 6180 or email: shezis1@ukzn.ac.za. Alternatively, you may contact the research supervisors:
Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details:
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 033 260 1438

Co-supervisor: Professor Nwoye who is located at the School of Applied Human Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details:
Email nwoye@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 03 260 5100

You may also contact the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows:

Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za,

Phone number +27312603587.

Appendix K: Information Letter for Educators

University of KwaZulu-Natal
College of Humanities
School of Education

Participant Information Sheet for Educators

Teaching Grade 7 Life Orientation in South African schools through the story reading technique: An African centred perspective

Description of the project

You are requested to take part in the above named research study. Please take the time to read the following information and ask questions should you require further clarification.

The aim of the study is to explore the participants' evaluation of the use of story reading as a choice technique for conceptualising and delivering the LO curriculum in South African schools.

The study is conducted by Sindiswa Shezi, a Doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus).

Your participation

The study will run for a duration of four weeks during which you will be requested to implement the story reading technique in a classroom setting throughout the LO period. The implementation of this technique will not deviate from the content that is prescribed by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for Grade 7 learners. After the four week period, you will be requested to participate in an individual interview which will be between 45 minutes to 1 hour. The focus of the interview will be on your evaluation of the story reading technique.

Please not the following:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- There are no incentives for participation.
- There are no foreseeable risks that could arise as a result of your participation in this study.
- In the event that you do not feel comfortable answering any question(s), you are free not to answer that question or to stop the interview at any point.
- There will be no consequences if you wish to withdraw from the study.
- The class sessions will not be audio taped.
- The individual interviews will be audio taped.
- The audio tape as well as other documents associated with the interview will be

held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding.

- To receive feedback regarding your participation, you will be contacted and sent a copy of the results to verify that the findings of the study are true.

This study will be ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee.

In the event of any problems or concerns/ questions you may contact the researcher on 076 611 9416/033 260 6180 or email: shezis1@ukzn.ac.za. Alternatively, you may contact the research supervisors:

Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details:
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za   Phone number: 033 260 1438

Co-supervisor: Professor Nwoye who is located at the School of Applied Human Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: Email nwoye@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 03 260 5100

You may also contact the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za,
Phone number +27312603587.

Appendix L: Informed Consent

University of KwaZulu-Natal
College of Humanities
School of Education

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Sindiswa Shezi (student number: 204010121) I am a Doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. The title of my research is: Teaching the Life Orientation subject in South African schools through the story reading technique. The aim of the study is to explore stakeholders evaluation of the use of story reading as a technique for conceptualising and delivering the LO curriculum in South African schools. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your perceptions on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about one hour.
- The interviews will be audio taped.
- The audio tape as well as other documents associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding.
- To receive feedback regarding your participation, you will be contacted and sent a copy of the results to verify that the findings of the study are true.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement.

Contact details:

Email: shezis1@ukzn.ac.za. Cellphone: 076 611 9416

My supervisor is Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details:
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 033 260 1438

My co-supervisor is Professor Nwoye who is located at the School of Applied Human Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: Email nwoye@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 03 260 5100

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za,
Phone number +27312603587.

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.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I hereby provide consent to audio-record my interview YES / NO

______________________________ ______________________________

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

Appendix M: Editorial Services

Editorial Services Contract

Editing Press Inc.

&

Sindiswa Shezi ('the Author')

§ 1 Service

A. Thorough Editing involves two rounds of work: (1) a rigorous review of the work's logic, organization, and whether the research supports the argumentation; and (2) a more fine-grained reading to check for the mechanical elements of language covered under General Proofreading. Within the limits of the relevant codes of academic conduct, improvements may also be made to the text's flow, style, and syntax. All changes are tracked.

Appendix N

Turnitin Similarity Index

TEACHING GRADE 7 LIFE ORIENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS THROUGH THE STORY READING TECHNIQUE: AN AFRICAN CENTRED PERSPECTIVE

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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