

HOW SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS UNDERSTAND, RESPOND TO AND IMPLEMENT LIFE ORIENTATION

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**HOW SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS UNDERSTAND,
RESPOND TO AND IMPLEMENT LIFE ORIENTATION**

by

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*I dedicate this study to my family:
My husband Tsietsi Joseph Mosia;
my children Thabiso and Manthedi;
and my brother Dumisani Mbatha.*

*Your support, sacrifice, patience and
encouragement have inspired me
to complete this study.*

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I, Dina Emely Mosia, declare that this thesis titled:

HOW SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS UNDERSTAND,
RESPOND TO AND IMPLEMENT LIFE ORIENTATION

which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Curriculum and Instructional Design, is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution.

Dina Emely Mosia

March 2011

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Life Orientation is a new learning area in the National Curriculum Statement. The Learning area promises to improve the quality of education for all the South Africans. This study was founded upon the Structural Curriculum Theory to investigate how secondary school teachers understand, response to and implement Life Orientation. Life Orientation is a core subject area according to the Department of Education. A total number of thirty six Life Orientation teachers from five secondary schools in different circuits in Gert Sibande Region in Mpumalanga Province participated in the study. Data was collected through the focus group, individual interviews and qualitatively analysed. The results revealed that teachers are frustrated, lack knowledge, understanding, has negative response and are ignorant in implementing the subject area in schools. Teachers lack sufficient support, not sufficiently qualified, disregard the importance of the subject area, low status of the subject area, limited time allocation for the learning area. In the light of the results, recommendations are made with regard to the study on training monitoring and support of teachers. The Department of Education should increase school-based support visits and monitoring by district officials. These visits should be more intense and should include practical demonstrations of curriculum implementation. District officials must monitor progress by following-up previous visits. Heads of Department should exercise control and provide guidance with regard to curriculum implementation. Learning area teachers and the Heads of Department should be empowered by the Department of Education through scheduled workshops. Specific emphasis should be given to the interpretation and practical implementation of the learning area policy components. Heads of Department should deliberately create opportunities for Life Orientation staff to collaborate to exchange creative ideas and information that will improve teachers' understanding and interpretation of the curriculum. Schools should acknowledge the status and importance of the learning area. Life Orientation should not be disregarded and deliberately allocated to ineffective teachers or to fill up gaps in the timetable of teachers. Teaching Life Orientation should not be imposed on teachers. Higher Education Institutions should have programmes that will prepare teachers as specialists in Life Orientation as a learning area. The Department of Education and Higher Education Institutions should actively recruit students to become specialists in Life Orientation as a learning area for better implementation of Life Orientation in South African schools.



KEY WORDS

Life orientation

National curriculum statement

Life skills

Curriculum change

Teacher

Secondary school

Understand

Response

Implementation

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	Page
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION	
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 RATIONALE	3
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.4 AIMS OF THIS STUDY	5
1.5 BACKGROUND	6
1.5.1 LIFE ORIENTATION AS A COMPULSORY LEARNING AREA	6
1.5.2 PURPOSE OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	7
1.6 IMPLEMENTING OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	7
1.7 COMPLICATIONS AFFECTING THE INTENDED OUTCOMES	10
1.8 CURRICULUM CHANGE IN SCHOOLS	11
1.9 META-THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS	13
1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
1.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	13
1.11.1 TEACHER	13
1.11.2 SECONDARY SCHOOL	14
1.11.3 UNDERSTAND	14
1.11.4 RESPONSE	15
1.11.5 IMPLEMENT	15
1.11.6 LIFE ORIENTATION	16
1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	16
1.12.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM	16
1.12.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	17

	Page
1.13 DATA COLLECTION	17
1.13.1 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES.....	18
1.13.1.1 Focus group interviews.....	18
1.13.1.2 Face-to-face interviews.....	19
1.13.1.3 Field notes (Reflexivity).....	20
1.14 DATA ANALYSIS	20
1.15 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGIES	20
1.15.1 SAMPLING METHOD: PURPOSIVE SAMPLING.....	20
1.16 ETHICAL MEASURES	21
1.17 THE ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS	22
1.18 SUMMARY	23

**CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1	INTRODUCTION	24
2.2	RATIONALE FOR LIFE ORIENTATION AS A SCHOOL LEARNING AREA	25
2.3	OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION	27
2.4	SCOPE OF LIFE ORIENTATION	28
2.4.1	LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS SHOULD BE LEARNING AREA SPECIALIST	34
2.4.1.1	Teachers should understand and have knowledge of Life Orientation	34
2.4.1.2	Life Orientation teachers should be critical thinkers and reflective practitioners	35
2.4.1.3	Life Orientation teachers must be grounded in the learning area	35
2.4.2	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS)	36
2.5	POLICY AND PRACTICE	39
2.5.1	TEACHERS' ROLE IN CURRICULUM CHANGE	41
2.5.2	THE TEACHER AS A DESIGNER AND DEVELOPER OF EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION	42
2.6	TEACHERS' REACTION TO CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	43
2.6.1	RESISTANCE TO CURRICULUM CHANGE AND IMPLEMENTATION	45
2.6.2	ADOPTING CURRICULUM CHANGE	47
2.6.3	IGNORING CURRICULUM CHANGE	47
2.6.4	ADAPTING TO CURRICULUM CHANGE	47
2.7	TEACHERS' SUPPORT AND CURRICULUM CHANGE IN SCHOOLS	48
2.8	WORKLOAD OF TEACHERS	50
2.8.1	TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WORKLOAD	50
2.8.2	TEACHERS' WORKLOAD AND COLLABORATION	51
2.8.3	TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	52
2.9	TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING LIFE ORIENTATION	53
2.9.1	COMMUNICATION AND CURRICULUM CHANGE	54



	Page
2.10 SUPPORT NEEDED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW CURRICULUM	55
2.11 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING, PURPOSE, PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES CONTAINED IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULUM	55
2.12 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULA	56
2.13 THEORETICAL FARMWORK	57
2.14 "FRAMING" AS APPLIED TO THIS RESEARCH	60
2.15 LEARNING AREA IMPLEMENTATION	62
2.16 SUMMARY	64

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**CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHOD**

3.1	INTRODUCTION	66
3.2	INTERPRETATIVE NATURE OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	66
3.3	RESEARCH DESIGN	67
3.4	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGIES	68
3.4.1	SITE SELECTION	68
3.4.2	SAMPLE SIZE	68
3.4.3	PARTICIPANT SELECTION	68
3.4.4	INFORMED CONSENT	69
3.5	DATA COLLECTION	70
3.5.1	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES	70
	3.5.1.1 Focus group interviews	71
	3.5.1.2 Face-to-face interviews	72
	3.5.1.3 Field notes (reflexivity)	73
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS	74
3.7	LITERATURE CONTROL	76
3.8	ETHICAL MEASURES	76
3.9	MY ROLE AS A RESEACHER	77
3.10	QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE RESEARCH	78
3.10.1	VALIDITY	78
3.10.2	RELIABILITY	78
3.10.3	NEUTRALITY ENSURED BY THE STRATEGY OF CONFORMABILITY	78
3.10.4	DEPENDABILITY	80
3.11	SUMMARY	81

**CHAPTER 4:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHOD**

4.1	INTRODUCTION	82
4.2	ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA	83
4.3	THEMATIC DISCUSSION	85
4.3.1	THEME 1: TEACHERS FACE NUMEROUS CHALLENGES RELATING TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN SCHOOLS	85
4.3.1.1	Category 1: Teachers lack the appropriate knowledge and skills to Implement Life Orientation	85
4.3.1.2	Category 2: Teachers lack the necessary resources and support to implement Life Orientation	90
4.3.2	THEME 2: TEACHERS EXPERIENCED A RANGE OF FEELINGS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN SCHOOLS	94
4.3.2.1	Category 1: Teachers experienced frustration with the implementation if Life Orientation in schools	94
4.3.2.2	Category 2: Teachers experienced feelings of helplessness, " there is no one who is there for them"	97
4.3.2.3	Category 3: Teachers experienced the lack of confidence when implementing Life Orientation in schools	100
4.3.2.4	Category 4: Teachers experienced varying degrees of uncertainty in implementing Life Orientation	104
4.3.3	THEME 3: TEACHERS RESPOND IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO THE CHALLENGES THEY FACED WHEN IMPLEMENTING LIFE ORIENTATION IN SCHOOLS	106
4.3.3.1	Category 1: Teachers respond to the challenges they face with positive attitudes	106
4.3.3.2	Category 2: "Framing" as applied to this research	111
4.4	SUMMARY	118

**CHAPTER 5:
SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	INTRODUCTION	119
5.2	OVERVIEW	119
5.3	SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	122
5.3.1	RESEARCH QUESTION 1	122
5.3.2	RESEARCH QUESTION 2	124
5.3.3	RESEARCH QUESTION 3	128
5.3.4	RESEARCH QUESTION 4	129
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	132
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	133
5.5.1	THE IMPACT OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING ON THE TEACHING OF LIFE ORIENTATION AS A LEARNING AREA	133
5.5.2	THE STATUS OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	134
5.5.3	THE LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LIFE ORIENTATION	134
5.6	LIMITATIONS	135
5.7	METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE	136
5.8	CONCLUSION	137
	REFERENCES	139

APPENDIX A - Letter from the ethical clearance committee

APPENDIX B - Letter from the Department of Education

APPENDIX C - Application letter for permission from the Department of Education

APPENDIX D - Questions to be asked in the interviews

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1: Composition of focus group.....	71
Table 3.2: Composition of individual interviews.....	73
Table 4.1: Coding of individual interviews.....	82
Table 4.2: Coding of focus group interviews.....	83
Table 4.3: Schematic summary of identified Theme 1 and categories.....	84
Table 4.4: Schematic summary of identified Theme 2 and categories.....	84
Table 4.5: Schematic summary of identified Theme 3 and categories.....	84

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LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1: Life Orientation Content as per Department of Education.....	30
Figure 2.2: Curriculum Change responses of Teachers.....	58

---ooOoo---