CHAPTER TWO

LIFE SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Presented below (under 2.3.p.25) is the Questionnaire on Life Competencies and Skills (Life Skills Questionnaire) used by the Department of School Guidance, University of Pretoria and published by the Human Sciences Research Council. Where the questionnaire was initially constructed to ascertain the level of life-skills competence of pupils, it could easily be adapted to perform the same function with regard at least to first year tertiary students. It was employed here because the students tested were first years who, at the time of testing, had had no experience of university life other than an orientation course and who, therefore, had had no academic experience other than that gained at school level. It is felt the questionnaire could be employed as a diagnostic medium to assist University Counsellors in identifying possible problem areas experienced by students with regard to life skills in terms of

* overall areas requiring attention with regard to all undergraduate students;
* areas requiring specific attention with regard to given faculties;
* areas requiring specific attention with regard to given departments (e.g. at Colleges of Education);
* areas requiring specific attention with regard to groups of students within faculties or departments;
* areas requiring specific attention with regard to individual students within faculties or departments.

By constructing profiles, the University Counsellor could ascertain at any stage on which problem areas to concentrate assistance, and for what length of time during a given year. Testing could be done at the beginning of the year and Counsellors could then pass the relevant information on to the faculties concerned or render assistance to faculties, departments, individual lecturers or individual students as required in an attempt to ameliorate problems students or groups of students may be experiencing. Examples of group profiles indicating the degrees to which students experienced problems with the life

skills covered by the questionnaire are given later in the chapter and in Annexure A (see pp.153-169).

2.2 DEFINITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

Before presenting the questionnaire on life competencies and skills itself, a definition of a questionnaire and a description of what a questionnaire entails are needed. (The following is translated and adapted in part from the work of Noeth (1990:131-140) and in part from a RAU (1986) publication on research methodology).

2.2.1 Definition of a questionnaire

According to Odendaal **et al** (in Noeth 1990:131), a questionnaire comprises a list of questions concerning a specific subject to which answers must be provided. A questionnaire is used by researchers in order to gather required information.

Benecke and Fowler maintain the following:
(a)   "A questionnaire is not just a list of questions or a form to be filled out. It is essentially a scientific instrument for measurement and for collecting of particular kinds of data."
(b)   "Designing a good questionnaire involves the questions needed to meet the research objectives, testing them to make sure they can be asked and answered as planned, then putting them into a form to maximize the ease with which respondents and interviewers can do their jobs" (in Noeth 1990:131).

2.2.2 Types of questionnaires and questions

There are two types of questionnaires which may be employed in order to acquire desired information. These are structured and unstructured questionnaires, examples of which are as follows (Jacobs **et al**; Schuman & Presser; Fowler; all in Noeth 1990:131 : Shertzer & Stone 1980:256-257 : RAU 1986:33-36).

i)   Structured questionnaires
*   checklists
*   comparisons, ranking, and alternative placement
*   judging, verbal-numerical and attitudinal (Likert and semantic differential scales).

ii)   Unstructured questionnaires
*   open-ended questions
*   autobiographical texts
*   critical incidences

By definition, questionnaires require questions. These questions may be divided into two groups, namely the group wherein a list of acceptable answers is tendered (ie closed answers are given), and the group wherein no acceptable answers are given (open-ended questions) (Noeth 1990:132).

2.2.3 Characteristics of a good questionnaire

A good questionnaire should contain the following characteristics:

*   it should be goal directed;
*   it should be logically ordered and as simply planned as possible;
*   clear instructions must be given to the respondents as to how to complete the questionnaire. These instructions must be given separately;
*   simplicity;
*   the whole questionnaire, as well as isolated questions must be comprehensible;
*   validity: in other words the questionnaire must meet the purpose for which it was designed;
*   reliability: consistency must be demonstrated over a period of time. (With regard to the Life Skills Questionnaire, reliability can be seen as the degree to which measurements actually reflect individual differences);
*   usability: the questionnaire must be easy to administer with reference to the available time, extent, instructions, marking, potential for interpretation and the applicability of the results;

* neutrality: questionnaires must not, either as a whole or in a specific sense, create any impression that previously determined answers exist or are expected and

* it should satisfy certain ethical aspects, namely

   a) the purpose of the questionnaire and the results must be clearly stated

   b) no one may be forced to answer questions of a deeply private nature

   c) answers must be kept confidential

   d) embarrassing questions or those which might be considered to be of a negative nature must be left out (Benecke, Landman and Fowler in Noeth 1990:132-133).

2.2.4 The construction of a questionnaire

a) The goal of a questionnaire

A definitive investigation should be undertaken when one is involved in the construction of a questionnaire comprising, firstly, the establishment of the purpose underlying the compilation of the questionnaire and, secondly, a distinction being made between the purpose of the questionnaire and the purpose of the investigation. Generally speaking, the purpose of the questionnaire is simply to acquire certain information either from individuals or from a group of people. The problem lies rather with determining the purpose of the investigation, namely, why is the required information needed and how is it going to be used? Therefore only once complete clarity has been achieved should a questionnaire be constructed and the desired information acquired. Furthermore, before administering the questionnaire, respondents should be informed as to the purpose of the investigation itself (Steenkamp 1989:1).

b) The experiential world of the respondent

The experiential world of the prospective respondents rather than that of the researcher must be taken into account when constructing a questionnaire. It is essential therefore that the person constructing the questionnaire acquires a clear image of the following:

* the personal circumstances and level of literacy of the respondent
* the relationship between the required information and the attitude of the respondent towards it
* the degree to which the respondent is motivated to answer the questions
* the social environment of the respondent and its influence on him
* the meaning of the words used and the respondent's ability both to comprehend them and to express himself
* the relationship between the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the respondent (Steenkamp 1989:2).

c)   The construction of a questionnaire

According to Fowler and de Wet (in Noeth 1990:135-135) and Steenkamp (1989:52-55), the following steps should be applied when constructing a questionnaire:

* the goal of the questionnaire must be clearly described and operationalized. A preliminary description of the questionnaire is also necessary
* once operationalization of the goal has been achieved, the questions themselves must be designed in such a way as to be able to measure both said goal and the content of the questionnaire
* each question must be evaluated in terms of content validity
* once the questions under consideration for inclusion in the questionnaire have been identified, they must be subjected to a question analysis
* pretesting of the preliminary questions should now take place using a representative, "guinea pig" sample. Use should be made of the usual controlled conditions applicable to pretest situations
* once the above has been done, the reliability and validity of the final questionnaire must be determined
* instructions, methods to be used for the gathering and analysis of data, and application and interpretation of said data must be clearly set out
* application of the questionnaire
* analysis of the data (in Noeth 1990:135-136).

Obviously there are a number of other factors that have to be taken into consideration when constructing a questionnaire, such as the length thereof, the costs involved, the ordering of the questions, the degree of sensitivity involved or how personal respondents may consider the content to be, and whether or not respondents may be influenced by the belief that some of the questions they are answering are possibly loaded. (Compare Noeth 1990:137-138).

It should also be borne in mind that it is seldom possible to construct a truly objective questionnaire; which can lead to criticism of the results obtained via this method of data gathering. It is possible to avoid criticism via examination of all relevant hypotheses before construction of the questionnaire takes place, formulation of a clear statement of the aim, and via making both the complete questionnaire and results thereof available for scrutiny (Steenkamp 1989:53-55 : RAU 1986:36).

2.3   GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON LIFE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

The life-skills questionnaire used by the Department of School Guidance, University of Pretoria is reproduced fully below (Eds. Jacobs, Olivier & Gumede 1992). It should be noted that the life-skills questionnaire contains aspects of general as well as career guidance.

1   GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.1   GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1.1 *Purpose of this questionnaire*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your **competency and skills** in different fields. This knowledge will help you to identify those **competencies and skills** which may possibly cause you problems. By giving the required attention to them, you may improve them.

1.1.2 *Answering the questionnaire*

The questionnaire has 150 questions. These questions do not have a **right** or **wrong** answer. Indicate whether the statement given in each question is applicable to you or not. If your answer is **YES**, colour in **A**. If your answer is **NO**, colour in **B**.

Example

Question	Answer	
	Yes	No
I worry about my schoolwork	A	B

If you have marked **A**, it means that you worry about your schoolwork. If you have marked **B**, it means that you do not worry about your schoolwork. REMEMBER that you must answer whatever is true as far as you are concerned and not answer to please other people.

2.   INSTRUCTIONS

Mark your answers on Side **1** of the separate answer sheet.
Do not make any marks in this booklet.

2.1   GENERAL DETAILS

Use a pencil to write the following information on the appropriate answer sheet.

(a)	Area number	(g)	Sex
(b)	School number	(h)	Language
(c)	Pupil number	(i)	Age
(d)	Your SURNAME	(j)	Standard
(e)	Your INITIALS	(k)	Date of testing
(f)	Name of school		

2.2 ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer the questions on the separate answer sheet by blackening the relevant oval space which you have chosen (A or B).

TAKE CARE THAT YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION NEXT TO THE CORRESPONDING NUMBER EVERY TIME.

2.3 TIME

There is no time limit for completing this questionnaire.

Work as fast as possible without being careless.

Take care that you answer **each** question.

2.2 CHANGING ANSWERS

If you wish to change your answer, you must very carefully rub out the mark that you have already made, before marking another answer.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE

1. Do you think you are an unhappy person?
2. Are you unwilling to help keep your school grounds neat?
3. Do you think that other people have cheated you in dealings/business?
4. Will you drive a car if you do not have a licence?
5. Do you think technological development threatens your chances to find a job?
6. Do you dislike rules and regulations?
7. Do you think attending school is unnecessary?
8. Do you feel uneasy if you have to speak in front of other people, e.g. deliver a speech?
9. Do you allow yourself to be influenced by your friends?
10. Do you find it difficult to make independent decisions?
11. Are you often late for appointments?
12. Do you feel that you do not have enough friends?
13. Would you like to change certain of your personal qualities?

14. Do you need a place where you can study conveniently and undisturbed?

15. Do you have a speech or hearing defect?

16. Are you shy of members of the opposite sex?

17. Do you think it is acceptable to smoke?

18. Do you think it is wrong to exercise your body until you are tired?

19. Are you sometimes untidy with regard to your personal appearance?

20. Do you feel unhappy about your body?

21. Do you prefer working for a salary rather than having your own business?

22. Do you find it difficult to solve your problems?

23. Do you feel uncertain about the job you wish to do one day?

24. Do you have doubts about your aptitudes, interests and ideas about careers?

25. Are you in doubt about what you require of your intended job?

26. Do you sometimes experience doubts about your beliefs?

27. Are you confused by ideologies such as capitalism, communism, socialism, etc.?

28. Do you feel ignorant about political affairs?

29. Are you uncertain about the value your own culture holds?

30. Do your regard your parents merely as figures of authority?

31. Do you often feel lonely?

32. Have you damaged school property, such as school books/desks, by scribbling in or scratching on them?

33. Do you think that people discriminate against you as a person?

34. Are you impatient with other road users, e.g. pedestrians and cyclists?

35. Do you think that careers in the technological fields are inferior?

36. Do you avoid taking responsibility for others?

37. Would you like to leave school as soon as possible?

38. Do you find it difficult to get along with other people?

39. Do you feel rebellious if your parents refuse to let you have certain persons as friends?

40. Do you find that you need the assistance of adults (parents/teachers)?

41. Do you feel your life is disorderly?

42. Do you think it is impossible to plan your money matters and keep to this plan?

43. Are you unhappy with your table manners?

44. Do you think it is unnecessary to study according to a fixed programme?

45. Do you find it difficult to talk to other people?

46. Do you wonder about specific sexual questions?

47. Would you drink alcohol when you are with your friends?

48. Do you think it is unnecessary to take part in sport?

49. Are you dissatisfied with the amount and quality of the food that you eat daily?

50. Are you troubled about your body?

51. Is it more pleasant being one of the ordinary team members than being the leader/captain of the team?

52. Do you think the majority of schoolchildren find it impossible to solve their own problems?

53. Do you want assistance on how to apply for a job?

54. Do you need more information about the world of work?

55. Is salary the most important consideration in the choice of a job?

56. Do you believe that only your religious convictions are correct?

57. Are you uncertain about which particular philosophy of life you follow?

58. Do you believe that only your political convictions are correct?

59. Do you believe that cultural differences are usually the cause of friction between different groups?

60. Do you think that parents are old-fashioned as a rule and therefore hinder the social development of young people?

61. Does life make you tense?

62. Will you refuse to help at a hospital/nursery school if you do not get payment for your services?

63. Do you think that advertisers mislead people?

64. Have you ever driven a vehicle or ridden a bicycle that is not roadworthy in the street, e.g. the lights or hooter are not working?

65. Do you need more information about careers in the technological field?

66. Do you find it difficult to be a follower?

67. Do you think that post-school training has little value?

68. Are you uncertain about your real abilities and talents?

69. Would you hesitate to go against your friends' decisions?

70. Are you confused by the demands made on you by your friends and other people?

71. Do you think it is wrong to plan each day's programme thoroughly?

72. Do you think it is wrong if schoolchildren do part-time work in order to earn pocket money?

73. Are you sometimes tired mentally?

74. Do you dislike being given homework to do?

75. Are you afraid to look another person in the eyes when talking to him?

76. Would you like to attend a course in sex guidance?

77. Do you know friends who use drugs?

78. Do you spend too much time on recreation and sport?

79. Do you feel uncomfortable to attend church services?

80. Do you feel self-conscious about your body?

81. Is it wrong to risk your money on an undertaking that has a 50% chance of failing?

82. Are you afraid to make important decisions?

83. Are you afraid that you may possibly lose your job one day?

84. Do you find it difficult to make a decision about a job?

85. Would you hesitate to work in a job where you have to teach or care for other people?

86. Do you find it difficult to form an opinion on religion?

87. Do you have doubts about whether the various philosophies of life make room for religion?

88. Do you find it difficult to form an opinion on politics?

89. Do you doubt whether members of a group should adhere to their own culture at all costs?

90. Do you prefer to leave your parent's home as soon as possible and to be self-supporting?

91. Are you unhappy with yourself?

92. Have you ever behaved badly in the streets by screaming and making a noise?

93. Have you ever wondered if the death penalty is unjust?

94. Are you unsure of the meanings of most traffic signs?

95. Will you avoid following a career in a technological field?

96. Do your friends find it difficult to regard you as a leader?

97. Do you think it is more desirable to work than attend school?

98. Are you often dissatisfied with yourself?

99. Do you regard it as essential for your friends to accept you?

100. Are you uncertain about where you are going in life?

101. Are you uncertain about your career possibilities?

102. Would you buy something you badly want on credit?

103. Do you experience tension at home and/or at school?

104. Do you experience problems with your studies?

105. Do you find it difficult to talk to a person in another language?

106. Do you think a homosexual relationship is acceptable?

107. Have you ever used cigarettes/liquor/drugs?

108. Are you afraid to study so hard that you become mentally tired?

109. Do you think going to performances/shows/sports meetings is a waste of time?

110. Has anyone ever paid you a compliment on your appearance or physique?

111. Do you think your friends are better equipped for the business world than you are?

112. Do you think it is impossible to learn how to make wise decisions?

113. Are you concerned about the country's unemployment situation?

114. Are you still uncertain about what your career plan should be?

115. Do you think it is unnecessary to always want to reach the highest level in a chosen job?

116. Do you sometimes feel the need to discuss your religious doubts with someone?

117. Do you sometimes wonder whether there is only one correct philosophy of life?

118. Do you sometimes want to discuss your political uncertainty with someone?

119. Do you think that the mixing of groups causes cultural impoverishment?

120. Do you find it difficult to communicate with your parents?

121. Do you think that life is more important to other people than it is to you?

122. Are you dissatisfied because you will have to pay tax?

123. Are you unsure about your rights as a citizen?

124. Do you think that traffic officers have an inferior job?

125. Are you unsure about what technological developments hold in store for you?

126. Have you ever been discharged from a leadership position you have held?

127. Do you consider post-school training unnecessary?

128. Do you find it difficult to communicate with members of the opposite sex?

129. Do you have problems making good friends and keeping them?

130. Do you find it difficult to adjust to the changing world?

131. Do you feel that your school life is disorganized?

132. Are you worried that you will earn too little to care for yourself one day?

133. Do you feel that the demands life is making on you are too much?

134. Do you think you can do better in your school subjects than is the case at present?

135. Do you think other people easily understand when you explain something?

136. Do you avoid talking to your parents about sexual matters?

137. Do you think that smoking/drinking/taking drugs can be a good thing sometimes?

138. Do you think it is unhealthy to study hard?

139. Do you feel that you have fewer belongings than most other people you know?

140. Do you think that some physical disability may make it difficult for you to find a suitable career?

141. Are you so afraid of failure that you fail to tackle a task?

142. Would you like to learn more about ways to make better decisions?

143. Do you think a personal interview requires special preparation?

144. Do you want assistance to implement your career plan?

145. Is it wrong to choose a job which offers a great deal of free time?

146. Do you disapprove of people who adhere to religions other than your own?

147. Are you sure that your philosophy of life has already been established and will not change?

148. Do you mistrust all politicians?

149. Do you think that one culture acquires mainly the negative from another culture?

150. Do you think it unfair that children have to do tasks at home?

STOP HERE

2.4   PROCESSING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The life-skills questionnaire consists of 150 items or questions, each of the which the students answer by shading either A or B.

2.4.1 Scoring

Each A that has been marked counts one point. Each B answer counts nil. There are 30 subfields, the total possible score for each of which is 5. A score of less than 3 out of 5 (60%) in a subfield indicates a "problem" in that subfield. The subfields can be grouped into six broad fields in order to determine whether or not problems exist in any of these fields.

The maximum score obtainable in a broad field is 25 points. A score of less than 15 out of 25 (60%) indicates a "problem" in any broad field. Should a score for the whole Life Skills Questionnaire be desired, the scores for the six broad fields can simply be added together. The maximum score is 150. A score of less than 90 out of 150 (60%) indicates an overall "problem".

2.4.2 Fields of the Life Skills Questionnaire

The six broad fields of the Life Skills Questionnaire are:

A   COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

B   DEVELOPMENT OF PERSON AND SELF

C   SELF-MANAGEMENT

D   PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

E   CAREER PLANNING

F   LIFE AND WORK ORIENTATION

The 30 subfields consist of the following:

ITEMS

A1	Mental Health	1, 31, 61, 91, 121
A2	Community Responsibility	2, 32, 62, 92, 122
A3	Human Rights	3, 33, 63, 93, 123
A4	Road Safety	4, 34, 64, 94, 124
A5	Technological Development	5, 35, 65, 95, 125
B1	Leadership	6, 36, 66, 96, 126
B2	Literacy/Education	7, 37, 67, 97, 127
B3	Self-concept/self-assertion	8, 38, 68, 98, 128
B4	Peer Group Influence	9, 39, 69, 99, 129
B5	Identity Development	10, 40, 70, 100, 130

C1	Time and Self-Management	11, 41, 71, 101, 131
C2	Financial Management	12, 42, 72, 102, 132
C3	Handling Stress	13, 43, 73, 103, 133
C4	Study Methods	14, 44, 74, 104, 134
C5	Communication Skills	15, 45, 75, 105, 135

D1	Sex Guidance	16, 46, 76, 106, 136
D2	Alcohol and Drug Abuse	17, 47, 77, 107, 137
D3	Exertion and Recreation	18, 48, 78, 108, 138
D4	A Healthy Life Style	19, 49, 79, 109. 139
D5	Acceptance of One's Own Body	20, 50, 80, 110, 140

E1	Entrepreneurship (Initiative)	21, 51, 81, 111, 141
E2	Problem Solving/Decision Making	22, 52, 82, 112, 142
E3	Finding and Keeping a Job	23, 53, 83, 113, 143
E4	Career Planning and Development	24, 54, 84, 114, 144
E5	Work Values	25, 55, 85, 115, 145

F1	Religious Orientation	26, 56, 86, 116, 146
F2	Life and World Orientation	27, 57, 87, 117, 147
F3	Political Orientation	28, 58, 88, 118, 148
F4	Cultural Orientation	29, 59, 89, 119, 149
F5	Family Education	30, 60, 90, 120, 140

2.5 RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The results obtained from the questionnaire that was administered to a sample group of first year residential students at the University of Pretoria (namely, those students available on the days of testing: N 645) are represented in Tables 1 (p.35), and 2 (p.36). (Tables representing results obtained by female and male students, and graphic representations of both a comparison of the differences between the two sexes (Figure 1 p.37) and overall results obtained by all students are given in Annexure A (pp.153-169).

The following profiles are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1 :

Rank Order of Life Skills needs for a sample group of first year University of Pretoria students (N 645) at the beginning of 1993.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO NEED GUIDANCE ON:

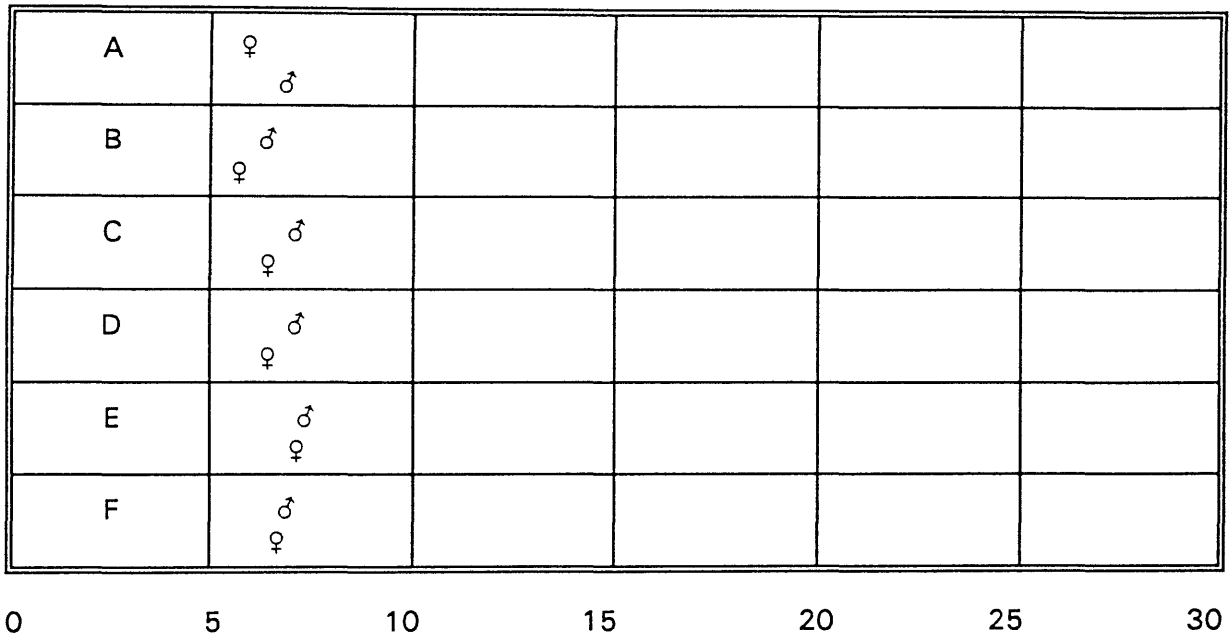| Life Skills	%	Rank	Sub-Field
Finding and Keeping Work	50.8	1	E3
Human Rights	38.6	2	A3
Study Methods	36.1	3	C4
Career Planning and Development	35.6	4	E4
Acceptance of One's Own Body	33.8	5	D5
Cultural Orientation	33.5	6	F4
Handling Stress	30.7	7	C3
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	30.7	7	D2
Political Orientation	28.7	9	F3
Road Safety	25.6	10	A4
Life and World Orientation	24.2	11	F2
Entrepreneurship	23.8	12	E1
Problem Solving/Decision Making	21.1	13	E2
Peer Group Influence	19.4	14	B4
Sex Guidance	19.2	15	D1
Religious Orientation	18.8	16	F1
Self-concept/Self-assertion	17.8	17	B3
Community Responsibility	15.3	18	A2
Identity Development	13.5	19	B5
Mental Health	12.7	20	A1
Technological Development	11.8	21	A5
Time and Self-management	11.4	22	C1
Financial Management	8.2	23	C2
Leadership	7.3	24	B1
Work Values	6.9	25	E5
Exertion and Recreation	6.7	26	D3
Family Education	6.1	27	F5
Communications Skills	5.8	28	C5
Healthy Life Style	5.4	29	D4
Literacy/Education	3.7	30	B2

TABLE 2 :

Rank Order of Life Skills needs for a sample group of first year University of Pretoria students (N645) at the beginning of 1993.

A	Mental Health	17.40
	Community Responsibility	21.75
	Human Rights	39.95
	Road Safety	34.85
	Technological Development	13.30
B	Leadership	10.85
	Literacy/Education	08.65
	Self-concept/Self-assertion	20.85
	Peer Group Influence	21.30
	Identity Development	14.40
C	Time and Self-management	12.80
	Financial Management	09.25
	Handling Stress	30.30
	Study Methods	35.60
	Communication Skills	08.60
D	Sex Guidance	22.65
	Alcohol and Drug Abuse	37.00
	Exertion and Recreation	08.90
	Healthy Life Style	10.00
	Acceptance of One's Own Body	29.10
E	Entrepreneurship	23.85
	Problem Solving/Decision Making	19.35
	Finding and Keeping Work	47.75
	Career Planning	34.36
	Work Values	10.25
F	Religious Orientation	22.40
	Life and World Orientation	23.80
	Political Orientation	27.50
	Cultural Orientation	30.25
	Family Education	09.40

FIGURE 1 :

GRAPH SHOWING A COMPARISON BETWEEN SCORES OBTAINED BY FEMALES AND MALES ON THE LIFE SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE.

A	♀ ♂					
B	♂ ♀					
C	♂ ♀					
D	♂ ♀					
E	♂ ♀					
F	♂ ♀					

0   5   10   15   20   25   30

KEY

A   =   COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

B   =   DEVELOPMENT OF PERSON AND SELF

C   =   SELF-MANAGEMENT

D   =   PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

E   =   CAREER PLANNING

F   =   LIFE AND WORLD ORIENTATION

MALES: A (32.88%), E (26.44%), F (25.96%), D (25.30%), C (24.44%), B (19.82%)

FEMALES: E (27.90%), F (19.38%), A (18.02%), C (17.98%), D (17.76%), B (10.06%)

♂   =   MALES
♀   =   FEMALES

*   Table 1 gives a profile of all students tested on the relevant days indicating results obtained within specific subfields

*   Table 2 gives a profile of all students tested on the relevant days indicating overall results obtained

Results of the questionnaire indicated that all students tested scored below acceptable levels of competence and that all of them should therefore benefit from some assistance with regard to life skills training.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, profiles and/or graphs as per the examples given in this thesis can be used to assist University Counsellors to identify problem areas in students and react accordingly with regard to providing the necessary assistance required to ameliorate the situation. Furthermore, students and their parents should be provided with the results so that they can identify and gain insight into areas of strengths and weaknesses and respond appropriately.

Apropos the above, McDonald (1993:64), speaking on behalf of Unilever as a company which he believes "is probably one of the largest employers of graduates in South Africa", feels that an onus rests on students in terms of self-development. He believes that "the whole process of career development should begin in first year", and refers to "...this thing called a "CV" that students prepare two weeks before we come to interview them!" He feels that a *curriculum vitae* should be prepared "as soon as a student goes to university", so that areas in which a student feels he might be weak or underdeveloped can be identified and appropriate remedial action taken. An evaluation and update in terms of strengths and weaknesses should be made by each student at the end of every year. However, McDonald also holds the opinion that a "problem lies in lack of communication between counselling departments;...between academics and counselling departments; and ...between counselling departments, academics, tertiary institutions and industry" (McDonald 1993:64).

2.6 CONCLUSION

Noah and Eckstein noted the following comments made by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce: "Curriculum policy should be customer orientated. It should begin

with an audit of the skill requirements which people used in their normal daily life, including their *working life*, followed by the matching of these requirements against what the schools are providing" (own italics) (in Badenhorst 1989: 415). It is the opinion of this writer that cognizance should also be taken by the universities of the above comments. The intention is not in any way to suggest that academic standards should be compromised or that the time devoted to the teaching of the academic curricula should be cut into or undermined to accommodate the teaching of life skills. Rather, it means that the possibility of teaching at least sections of the curricula from a Life Skills perspective should be explored and implemented where the potential to do so has been identified: and that universities should take cognizance of the needs of their primary, secondary and tertiary customers (e.g. the students, the State and the world of work for which they are presumably preparing the students) in an attempt to provide a means for meeting their respective needs as far as life skills are concerned (See Chapter Four pp.83-129).

The life-skills questionnaire presented in this chapter represents an example of an audit of skill requirements in terms of students. It does not presume to be definitive but it is offered both as an existing diagnostic medium and as a possible point of departure for further research.

In Chapter Three, an exposition of the situation with regard to graduates will be attempted.