CHAPTER FOUR

GUIDANCE SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

A conclusion was reached in Chapter Three that graduates could be considered insufficiently competent in terms of life skills to meet the demands of the world of work. This appeared to be the case irrespective of whether graduates entered into employment in the public or private sector, or went into self-employment.

As there appears to be a growing body of literature, both nationally and internationally, calling for increased levels of life competencies and skills with regard to graduates (See Table 11 p.85), the aims of this chapter are to attempt both to address and to redress the situation via the introduction of the concept of guidance support.

Before the above can be dealt with, however, it becomes necessary to take a look at the situation with regard to the traditional role of universities, current perspectives and alternative approaches.

4.2   THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Traditionally, universities have been seen as "ivory towers divorced from the pressures of the working world to pursue knowledge, truth and beauty for its own sake" (Lund 1993:35).

The traditional function of universities has been twofold. Firstly, a university functions as an institution of higher learning and secondly, it is a place where meaningful (usually basic or applied) research is done. Universities are autonomous in character and they are not centrally controlled.

Du Plessis (1987:29), referring to the Universities Act, 61 of 1955; University of Pretoria (Private) Act 13 of 1930; and University of Stellenbosch Act, 37 of 1959, as well as the

SAPSE 115 - First Report, May 1982 (all in du Plessis 1987:29), has the following to say (under the subheading Formulation of objectives for the modern university):

"In terms of legislation for the establishment of universities in South Africa, the objective of a university, simply defined, is to supply education that secures to the postgraduate, upon successful completion of a course, a level of competence corresponding to satisfactory university standards, whereupon an acknowledging certificate is issued. In addition, the state subsidises universities, expecting in return research that will lead to the collection, processing, classification, publication and generation of new knowledge. There is a fair degree of unanimity on these two components, namely education and research, as the main objectives of a university" (du Plessis 1987:29).

In summary du Plessis (1987:30), states that universities are still subject to two traditional objectives, namely that "students are trained in the basic and fundamental truths developed through the ages, and that simultaneously research is carried out to analyse and classify existing knowledge while generating new knowledge. This remains the main objective, even for South African universities" (du Plessis 1987:30).

According to Strydom and Bitzer (1988:94-95), it is the opinion of the CUP that universities should be the leaders in teaching and research activities because the acquisition and promotion of basic knowledge must be considered to be one of their primary functions (Strydom & Bitzer 1988:94-95).

According to the Report of the Main Committee of the CUP investigation into macro-aspects of the university within the context of tertiary education in the RSA (1987:19-20), research, along with teaching, is a "primary academic function" of a university. This research can be of a basic, applied or developmental nature. The Report goes on to state that if, "by applied and development research is meant practical research, the universities then have a major role to play - indeed such research constitutes an important part of their research function" (CUP Report 1987:19-20).

TABLE 11 : EXAMPLES OF CORE SKILL REQUIREMENTS OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIAN KEY COMPETENCIES	UK (NCVQ) CORE SKILLS	US (SCANS) WORK KNOW-HOW	NZ ESSENTIAL SKILLS
* Collecting, analysing and organising information	* Comunication	* Information * Foundation : basic skills	* Information skills
* Communicating ideas and information	* Communication * Personal skills : improving own learning and performance	* Information * Foundation : basic skills	* Communication skills
* Planning and organising activities	* Personal skills : improving own learning and performance	* Resources * Foundation : personal qualities	* Self-management skills * Work and study skills
* Working with others and in teams	* Personal skills : working with others	* Interpersonal skills	* Social skills * Work and study skills
* Using maths ideas and techniques	* Numeracy : application of numbers	* Foundation : basic skills	* Numeracy skills
* Solving problems	* Problem-solving	* Foundation : thinking skills	* Problem-solving and decision-making skills
* Using technology	* Information technology	* Technology * Systems	* Information skills * Communication skills
	* Modern foreign language		

(Source : Wood & Phillips 1992:2)

For an elaboration of skills requirements in Australia see Annexure C pp. 171-172

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According to Strydom and Bitzer (1988:94-95) the view of the CUP is that occupational training should be offered by universities only with regard to the training of high-level professional people so as to provide leaders for the country in economic, technical, political, social and cultural fields. Universities should also make their specialised knowledge and skills available to the general community (Strydom & Bitzer 1988:94-95).

Conversely, du Plessis (1987:29) notes that unprecedented reactions to the traditional role of universities, traditionally regarded as being unconventional, have been seen on certain South African campuses in recent years. He maintains that new thinking is required with regard to the main objective of a university.

According to Riesman (in du Plessis 1987:29), "universities are to many students simply a place to prepare themselves for an occupation, for many professors a base for their research activities, and for society a source of knowledge and skill for sustaining the industrial machine" (in du Plessis 1987:29).

Du Plessis (1987:29) notes there is nothing new about the criticism that the private sector levels at universities with regard to the fact that graduate students often require long periods of adaptation and training before they are able to make a productive contribution to the world of work. He believes that "the last word has certainly not been spoken in this regard" and that "the key issue centres round the purpose of the modern university" (du Plessis 1987:34).

4.3 CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

The problem with the traditional approach is that it does not appear to be able to accommodate either the rapid changes taking place in society, or the demands of the new information/service age. Thus it does not seem able to produce graduates sufficiently prepared to meet the needs of the world of work. Some technikons (for example Vaal Triangle and the Port Elizabeth Technikons) and even schools (see 3.2.1 p.41), on the other hand, are already making attempts to address the above-mentioned needs via the inclusion of life skills training. This begs the question of whether or not universities can afford to fall behind. According to the opinions of some members of the academe, this writer included, the answer is, clearly, no. (See authors quoted in Chapter Three pp.40-82 and below). (For a comparison between the functions of technikons and universities, see Table 12 p.87).

TABLE 12 : A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FUNCTIONS OF TECHNIKONS AND UNIVERSITIES

TECHNIKONS	UNIVERSITIES
a) Technical courses have a practical orientation.	a) University courses have a theoretical orientation.
b) Technikons concentrate on the promotion of technological thought and creativity, and those intellectual skills that are necessary for the successful implementation of technology.	b) Universities concentrate on the development of intellectual abilities that contribute to the acquisition of new concepts, the promotion of independent critical thought, the preparation of the student for life-long self-study, and the inculcation of flexibility in the application of knowledge.
c) Training is more occupation oriented. Technikons provide people who can occupy advanced technical positions, implement various technologies and make a significant contribution to development.	c) Training has a more fundamental and scientific nature. Universties provide people for the learned professions - people who can help develop learned subjects and scientific disciplines and possibly also practise professions in the technical field.
d) Concerned with development research.	d) Concerned with basic and applied research.
e) Concentrate on technology.	e) University courses are concentrated on the development of science (in the broadest sense - including all academic activities), thus training the basic scientist and basic researcher.
f) At technikons the emphasis is more on what is immediately required for the effective use of technology in the work situation.	f) At a university a wide range of subjects is offered to the student.
g) Technikons play a leading role in training students for careers where ready skills are required.	g) Universities train the leaders and thinkers in a community, and are the leaders in the field of tertiary education at all levels.
	h) Universities are responsible for renewal in the education system in that university graduates are appointed on the staff of other tertiary institutions.
	i) Responsible for the development of the cultural life in their respective communities. Universities also have a renewal function in society as a whole.
	j) Enable students to enter high-level occupations.
	k) Primary goal is to broaden the cultural and intellectual horizons of students and to promote honest scientific thought and study among students.
	l) Generate new knowledge through research.

(Source : Sheppard 1992:76-77)

Should one take so much as a cursory look at comments being made by academics from a number of universities, it will become apparent that said academics are taking some cognizance of the above-mentioned need for skills training.

Ullyatt (1989:159), expressed the following opinion in an article entitled The management of change and the change of management in South African universities. "If we are to serve the society to which we belong and in which our students are expected to find a place for themselves, we must have a clear idea of our function in that society. We should be asking ourselves precisely what sort of service we should be offering at tertiary level"...and..."whether society's needs are being catered for by the various tertiary level institutions. If society is changing dynamically, tertiary education must at least keep up with those changes. Better still, it should be initiating many of them. If we are preparing young people for tomorrow, shouldn't we be asking what the South Africa of tomorrow will look like?" (Ullyatt 1989:159).

Ullyatt feels the above questions "assume considerable importance", because he believes that "South African universities are, in some ways, allowing themselves to become further and further removed from society and from the dynamic and complex realities of the twentieth century." In his opinion this is due in part to the "high resistance-to-change factor among academic personnel"; to the fact that a number of academics "are apprehensive about change and innovation simply because they have had no experience of managing it, or they feel they lack the skills necessary to manage it"; and to the fact that academics appear "unwilling to adopt more business-like attitudes and procedures" (Ullyatt 1989:160).

Alvin Toffler (in Ullyatt 1989:161), maintains that "what passes for education today, even in our "best" schools and colleges, is a hopeless anachronism. Parents look to education to fit their children for life in the future. Teachers warn that lack of an education will cripple a child's chances in the world of tomorrow. Government ministries, churches, the mass media - all exhort young people to stay in school, insisting that now, as never before, one's future is almost wholly dependent upon education.

"Yet for all this rhetoric about the future, our schools face backwards towards a dying system, rather than forwards to the emerging new society. Their vast energies are applied

to cranking out Industrial Men - people tooled for survival in a system that will be dead before they are" (in Ullyatt 1989:161). Tofler was writing the above in the nineteen seventies.

In response to the above, Ullyatt (1989:161), believes that, in order to avert future shock, super-industrial education systems should be created using objectives and methods found in the future and not in the past (Ullyatt 1989:161).

Speaking more specifically, Khoapa (1993:46), notes that the business community is complaining of the difficulty in recruiting literate university graduates. He states that "remedial programmes designed to compensate for lack of skills in the use of the English language, are in evidence in the corporate world"...and that..."writing as an undergraduate experience, as an exploration of both communication and style, is widely neglected" (Khoapa 1993:46).

He further notes that "scientific and technological development have so outpaced the understanding of science provided by most universities in South Africa that we have become a people unable to comprehend the technology that we invent and unable to bring under control our capacity to understand the natural world" (Khoapa 1993:46). Where the above opinion is certainly open to debate, what is of relevance here is Khoapa's awareness that an increase in skills training is necessary. This is evidenced by his comment that contemporary student populations are "less well-prepared, more vocationally-oriented, and apparently more materialistic than their immediate predecessors" (Khoapa 1993:47).

Khoapa (1993:47-48), maintains a more coherent curriculum approach is being investigated at his university (Fort Hare), including training in the following skills:

*	Thinking skills (inquiry, abstract and logical thinking, and critical analysis)
*	Literacy skills (reading, writing and speaking)
*	Numerical/scientific skills
*	Historical consciousness (complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty as intractable conditions of society)
*	Values (including self-responsibility)

* Art (including creativity, an understanding of freedom and instruments of social cohesion)
* International and multicultural experience
* Study in depth (Khoapa 1993:47-48).

With reference to the BA degree (although it is the opinion of the writer that the same may be extended to include any degree), Khoapa (1993:48) recommends that;

1. "University faculties and staff in each institution should agree upon and disseminate a statement of the knowledge, capacities and skills that students must develop prior to graduation"...(i.e. be "less grandiose about their statements of goals and far more specific about their objectives") and

2. "Liberal education requirements should be expanded and reinvigorated to ensure that curricular content is directly addressed, not only to subject matter but also to the development of capacities of analysis, problem solving, communication and synthesis; and students and staff (should) integrate knowledge from various disciplines" (Khoapa 1993:48).

In an attempt to extend and update an investigation into the image of the university carried out by the Main Committee of the CUP in 1987, Sheppard (1992:72-86) conducted a similar investigation, the aim of which was to study a number of social groupings' perceptions of and attitudes to universities as teaching and research institutions. The focus of the investigation fell on the effectiveness/efficiency and relevance of university training, and the issues included the perceptions of the respective stakeholders of the role of universities as well as the degree to which universities fulfilled this idealized role. His target groups included the general public, employers (usually canvassed via human resources managers), trade unions, professional boards and new first-year students (Sheppard 1992:72-74).

According to Sheppard's research, universities should concentrate on aspects of general development and character building of students, the development of leadership for high-level manpower, the development of intellectual skills and promotion of innovative and creative thinking, preparation of students for further training, the development of adaptability to changing professional requirements, and the development of scientific

literacy. It was further felt that universities should take the lead in research and in tertiary education in general (Sheppard 1992:81).

Apropos deficiencies in university training, respondents mentioned the following (as pertains to life competencies and skills): inadequate development of the cultural values of students, the inability of university students to apply technology satisfactorily, inadequate development of practical skills, economic literacy and that the course composition of many students is too general. On the other hand, courses covered by technikons were considered to be more relevant to the requirements of the workplace, more likely to maintain relevance and better at preparing students to adapt easily and quickly to the work situation (Sheppard 1992:82-83).

According to Sheppard (1992:72-73), all the response groups surveyed by him appeared "to press for more career-oriented training", as well as development of the ability to apply technology to enable university students to adapt more quickly to the work situation. All seemed to feel that career guidance especially needed urgent attention (Sheppard 1992:72-73).

Some of the recommendations made by Sheppard (1992:85-86) with regard to life skills training included:

* The skills already mentioned above including the need for more applied research
* The course composition of university students should be directed towards a specific field of research, or towards an occupation
* Updated research on these issues needs to be done regularly in order to determine whether or not the university is fulfilling the needs of the changing South Africa (Sheppard (1992:85-86).

On the other hand, du Plessis (in Sheppard 1992:78), believes that a university should concentrate on the pursuit of science, on people and on giving guidance to the community (in terms of refresher courses, etc.). He maintains that a university should not be reduced to a state where it merely meets practical needs - a degradation he feels is promoted by a community that believes that only bread-and-butter subjects are required for progress and security in life. According to him, the interaction between university training and an

occupation should not be seen merely in terms of occupational skills, but should also be understood in terms of academic input (du Plessis in Sheppard 1992:78).

The University of Pretoria is currently in the process of attempting to address the Thatcherite notion of "added value" as a way of producing graduates with leadership abilities and skills. To this end, it makes mention in its mission statement of the qualities it hopes to foster. The mission statement is reproduced fully below. Statements which may be considered to indicate an awareness of the need for life skills training are marked with an asterisk.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

"The University of Pretoria

- is an autonomous institution financially supported by the State as well as by the public;
- is academically and scientifically active in a comprehensive field;
- has, in terms of its origin, an Afrikaans and Christian character;
- is open to everyone who complies on academic merit with the University's admission requirements and accepts its institutional character.

The University fulfills its obligations towards its own community, the Republic of South Africa, the sub-continent of Southern Africa as well as the international scientific community by means of

- training in order to meet the demand for high level manpower;*
- the creation and dissemination of knowledge through scientific research and teaching;
- community service;*
- a balanced education.*

The University, encouraging excellence at all levels, strives towards the cultural, intellectual, and personal development of its students by

- integrating student life with academic programmes;*
- developing leadership qualities and preparing its students for responsible citizenship and meaningful participation in society.*

The University endeavours to fulfill its mission and to meet continual demands by

- consciously striving towards excellence in all spheres;

- co-operating fully with private and public sectors, other universities, scientific institutions, and the international scientific community;*

- constantly evaluating its own progress;*

- promoting its image as a dynamic, future-oriented institution"* (University of Pretoria 1993).

At the same time, the Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the University, Professor Smit, in his address at the opening of the 1993 academic year (the year of student development), acknowledged the difficulty in achieving the above when he entitled his address, "Doen ons genoeg?" (Are we doing enough?).

Professor Smit (1993:1-3), maintains that universities are currently being confronted with political and socio-economic realities which call into question their commissions, traditions, rituals and social codes as never before (Smit 1993:1-3).

According to Smit (1993:1-3), the University of Pretoria should be producing graduates able to take up future positions of leadership in the community. To this end, he emphasizes the need for increased attention to be paid to leadership development programmes which place stress on "added value". A table showing strategies for the implementation of said leadership development programmes is shown in Annexure D (See p.173) (Smit 1993:1-3).

Other attributes and skills stressed by Professor Smit include those of adaptability, innovation, ethics/work ethic, honesty and respect for others (Smit 1993:1-3).

Notwithstanding the above, it is indisputable that graduates do leave universities with competencies and skills they would not have had prior to completion of their degrees. What is of concern here, is the degree to which and the manner in which these skills are consciously and deliberately acquired. It could be argued that skills are being too narrowly employed due to a lack of metacognition and transference. At the same time, it may be equally true that there is a lack of awareness on the part of some employers at least, and

hence a lack of employment (in both senses of the word), of the skills graduates do possess.

It should be mentioned at this stage that, having identified that a need exists for training in life competencies and skills, either in terms of students or in terms of the community at large, faculties within given universities have already begun engaging in activities designed to promote life skills competence. A few examples are given below:

1   The University of South Africa offers legal assistance via a legal aid centre.

2   The University of Stellenbosch is engaged in life skills based community work in areas such as Khayelitsha and Crossroads. The University of the Witwatersrand's Melvin Freeman has launched a similar sort of project to assist disadvantaged youth in the PWV area.

3   Graduate Schools of Business, countrywide, offer a range of courses primarily in the field of business skills, entrepreneurship, and allied skills.

4   The University of the Witwatersrand includes the Business Achievement Programme (an adapted version of the widely-used Junior Achievement programmes) as as one of their Academic Support options. The course covers basic business and enterprise skills.

5   The University of Pretoria is engaged in Educare programmes and in projects dealing with life skills training in Kwandebele. The University of Fort Hare is also considering possible ways of upgrading the skills levels of educationists in their community.

6   The Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Pretoria includes knowledge of practice management and computer literacy skills as part of its courses. Other universities such as those of the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch offer similar packages.

The few above-mentioned examples serve to demonstrate that an awareness of the need for training in life competencies and skills exists. The problem, however, is that faculties and departments within universities appear to be acting discretely. No centralized co-ordination of courses, sharing of knowledge and expertise, central resource or media centres, or close co-operation to facilitate cross pollination or availability of courses/training appears to be taking place anywhere. It is the opinion of this writer that the above situation constitutes, certainly not a waste of resources and expertise, but, at the least, a limited

distribution of training that could be of benefit to both the whole student population of a given university as well as the community it serves.

Finally, an overview of an alternative approach used overseas will be given. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover in any depth the range of approaches used internationally. Consequently, the United Kingdom has been selected primarily because South African universities tend to follow British/American and European trends.

4.4 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Before going into detail with regard to the United Kingdom, brief mention will be made of the current situation in the United States of America, Canada and Western Europe.

According to van Vught (1991:3-4), the market is the most important form of co-ordination in higher education in the United States and Canada. Competition between higher education institutions is generally accepted and said institutions are organized on a basis that is to a large extent similar to private corporations.

According to Clark and Young (in van Vught 1991:3-4), there is considerable power at the top of the higher educational institutions demonstrated by the fact that "they have a corporate board or its equivalent and a true chief executive officer". Thus in these countries, governmental steering is limited and higher education institutions are expected to regulate themselves if they do not want to lose resources, students and scholars to their competitors. Simply put, there is an emphasis on market co-ordination and a high level of institutional autonomy as regards higher education systems in the United States and Canada (van Vught 1991:4).

Van Vught (1991:5-6) maintains that, in contrast to the United States and Canada, the predominant form of co-ordination in the Western European higher education systems has generally been state control. Western European higher education systems have been strictly controlled by governments for a long time: hence institutional autonomy has been limited and funding has generally been provided by the state.

With the rise to power of conservative governments in many Western European countries in the 1980s, a "so-called value-for-money approach with respect to the public sector led to the end of the more or less unconditional government funding of public higher education". In practice, this implied that public funding of higher education was increasingly becoming linked to the performance of higher education institutions, coupled to the rise of the governmental strategy of 'self-regulation' of said institutions. In other words "several governments in Western nations advocated deregulation by central ministries and increased competitiveness among the higher education institutions and, as indicated, at the same time (they) sought 'value-for-money'. Governments wanted more attention to societal needs... whilst...there was also to be greater awareness on the part of society and the public of the quality of study programmes". Simply put, the strategy of 'self-regulation' has led to increased autonomy for higher education institutions in Western Europe (van Vught 1991:5-6).

In Britain, an approach to quality assessment that is linked to a highly political process in which the drive for 'more value for less money' is the catchphrase, (refer to the rationalization process currently taking place in most South African higher education institutions), has resulted in a rather heavy emphasis being placed on performance indicators, 'ranking and competitive tendering' (van Vught 1991:6).

Nevertheless, as far back as twenty years ago, commerce, educationists and career guidance counsellors were calling for a more skills based curriculum to be employed at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) of education. (Refer Hopson & Scally 1981 and Hoyt & Shylo 1987). It should be noted that Britain has one of the poorest records of post-16 year old education or training of any country in the industrialized world (Jones 1990:5).

4.4.1 Theoretical and philosophical perspectives

According to a publication by the Educational Methods Unit of Oxford Brookes University entitled Teaching Enterprise Skills (Gibbs, Rust, Jenkins and Jaques 1993:5), concern arose in the United Kingdom (UK) during the nineteen seventies about study and learning skills: those skills which had an impact on the effectiveness and outcomes of student learning.

They included essay and laboratory report writing, using libraries, note-taking and being organized.

The awareness grew in the nineteen eighties that these skills were not only vital for effective learning but also that they had many similarities to those skills students would need after they left higher education, namely communication skills, information skills, record keeping and time and task management. During this period in the UK, these skills were referred to as transferable skills. Gibbs **et al** (1993:5) maintain that, by the nineteen nineties, these concerns had been taken up by the Conservative Party, and had materialised into a large programme, initiated by the Manpower Services Commission. Some thirty institutions and forty million pounds in funding were involved, in an attempt to re-orient higher education so that it more explicitly addressed the needs of industry and commerce. Naturally, the institutional and philosophical divide between, and division into, academic and vocational routes had also to be addressed (Jones 1990:6).

The above-mentioned authors, (Gibbs **et al** 1993:5), had the following to say about the move to enterprise education:

> "Initially there was some fairly blatant concern for entrepreneurialism and initiatives concentrated on links with industry, work placements and short courses in finance and management. This has evolved into a fairly broad concern to involve students more actively in learning and to bring aspects of the world outside academia into the ways courses are run and assessed. In particular it became widely accepted that many students were not being at all well prepared for the world of work, whether in the commercial or public sector. Students left higher education without being able to communicate effectively orally or in writing; without being able to co-operate with others; computer illiterate; lacking in autonomy; and unaware of the demands jobs would make on them. Students were said to lack enterprise and initiative" (Gibbs **et al** 1993:5).

According to Hofmeyr (1993a:1-3), the UK education system at present is becoming highly supportive of enterprise education. As the capacity of the formal sector to provide employment for the majority of workseekers shrinks - a problem exacerbated by the global recession - the formal and informal education sectors in the UK are placing increasing focus on enterprising and work-related learning experiences (Hofmeyr 1993a:1).

The central impetus driving developments is the belief that neither the traditional curriculum, nor traditional methodologies, are suited to producing school leavers and graduates equipped to create their own employment opportunities, or to meet the employee requirements of a modern economy. The impetus comes from a government increasingly concerned at the rising levels of unemployment, and an industrial sector unhappy with the type of education offered, particularly insofar as it fails to meet the growth needs of the economy.

Hofmeyr (1993a:1) maintains that what is perhaps most striking about these developments is, firstly, the level of structural complexity in the education system as it tries to redesign itself and secondly, the level of partnership between the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Employment and Education, the formal education sector, representatives from industry, training providers and the community at large. Out of the complexity has grown some confusion (at least for outsiders), while from the partnerships has grown an extensive and innovative network of enterprise educational opportunities for young people (Hofmeyr 1993a:1).

The concept of education through enterprise represents a shift away from both a purely academic, rarefied curriculum and traditional didactic methodologies.

According to Hofmeyr (1993a:1-2), from a curricular perspective, two major trends are evident. Firstly, within the formal curriculum, subjects such as Technology and Enterprise have been introduced at all levels of schooling. These provide a more specific view of the world of work than had ben the case in traditional curricula. Secondly, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), in which specific work-related skills are addressed, and National General Vocational Qualifications (NGVQs), in which generic work-related skills such as communications, computer literacy, interpersonal and other life skills are addressed, are offered as alternative curricula to the purely academic, to post-16 (year old) candidates (Hofmeyr 1993a:1-2). Naturally, it is the generic type skills which would be of relevance to university training.

Methodological shifts underpin the above-mentioned curricular changes. Experiential learning is stressed. Concomitant with the methodological shifts, is a shift in the

relationship between the school and industry at large. Partnerships are set up between local education institutions and industries.

According to Hofmeyr (1993a:2), speaking with regard to schools, 45 000 teachers per annum (or 10% of the workforce) spend time working in an industry of their choice, improving subject-specific knowledge and skills and gaining a perspective of how their own subjects are applied in industry. Simultaneously, employees from industry spend time in schools (either on a one-off lesson basis or for extended periods), teaching their areas of specialization. In addition, pupils do work experience, in which they themselves spend time in industry, gaining a perspective both on the application of knowledge and skills, and on the range of work opportunities in industry (Hofmeyr 1993a:2). (As a matter of interest, the Johannesburg College of Education is currently investigating the possibility of lecturers returning to schools for a term at a time every 5 years, in order to gain experience of the changes occurring in South African education).

Hofmeyr (1993a:2), maintains that the above-mentioned curricular, methodological and relationship changes are encouraged and financed by government and the private sector in the form of grants, secondments and institutions set up specifically to facilitate these changes. Furthermore, in keeping with work-related philosophy, assessment of NVQs and NGVQs is predominantly criterion and activity referenced. Thus assessment is largely carried out through the observation of skills, successfully demonstrated on three occasions, in three different contexts - either in the workplace, or in a workplace simulation. The assessors are training providers of all types who have qualified and have been formally certificated as assessors, by the government. Specially constituted examining bodies oversee this function (Hofmeyr 1993a:2-3).

Apropos assessment, the Director of Education at the University of Oxford, Professor Richard Pring (1990:3) maintains that a problem lies in the traditional assessment and public examination system.

> "They (examinations) often do not do justice to the many qualities and understandings of personal, community and economic values that young people have attained in the course of their studies. Assessment usually requires a product, something objective that can be scrutinized by internal and external examiners, and then graded. But this tends to devalue the more ephemeral aspects of education:

the performance; the process of learning; the practical mastery of a task; or oral communication. And yet it is precisely the ability to do and to communicate, to solve a practical problem and to assume control over one's own learning, to test out and to reject proposed solutions, to negotiate and to argue, which are equally demanding of the intelligent learner and which can often be acquired through the hard graft of a well-structured course" (Pring 1990:3).

Pring (1990:3) believes that assessments look for individual achievement, and generally cannot cope with the co-operative teamwork characteristic of many innovative courses and required by employers. Despite its supreme importance either at work or at home, teamwork thus becomes downgraded under the powerful control of public examinations (Pring 1990:3).

Finally, a new "academic" record-keeping system has also been implemented. All courses, work experience, placements, projects that a scholar does and academic assessment records are collated. Each individual has a copy of his/her record, and this becomes a valuable **curriculum vitae** tool (Hofmeyr 1993a:3). (See 2.5 p.38).

A large number of the programmes used in the UK, or adapted versions thereof, could be employed in South Africa to assist with the education of disadvantaged youth. These include those advocated by members of the Durham University Business School, Enterprise Education Unit and/or Overseas Development Group; Young Enterprise; the University of Warwick's Mini Enterprise in Schools Programme (MESP) and School Industries Curriculum Project (SCIP); the International Award Scheme and Prince's Youth Business Trust; and Trickle Up (Hofmeyr 1993a:4-9). According to an interview with Michael Rice of Procivitas, some of these organizations are already operative in Southern Africa (Rice September:1992).

Where a discussion of the above lies outside the scope of this thesis, the reason for mentioning it will become apparent later (See 4.5.2 pp.115-116).

The philosophical and theoretical backgrounds to the new approaches to education in the UK have been given. It now becomes necessary to consider the practical dynamics of implementing a system such as enterprise education. To this end, Oxford Brookes University (formerly a polytechnic but upgraded to university status in 1992) has been chosen to serve as an example. Before continuing, however, it is important to mention two factors. Firstly, the UK has elected to use the words **core skills** in preference to **life skills**. To all intents and purposes, the terms are interchangeable (Walker 1993). Secondly, the literature surveyed indicated that training in core skills is given either in modular form (i.e. compulsory, supplementary or extra-curricular modules are covered), or it is subsumed as a perspective on the general academic curriculum.

4.4.2 Practical Approaches

The information given below is taken from the Oxford Brookes University: Educational Methods Unit publication, Teaching enterprise skills (Gibbs **et al** 1993:53). It is meant as a guide for lecturers. It is presented below in an abridged form and in a series of steps in order to facilitate both expedition and ease of apprehension.

It would seem that, presently, there is in existence no definitive, prescriptive or even agreed list of what enterprise skills consist of (Gibbs **et al** 1993:5). Apparently it is up to each institution to select the content it would consider most appropriate to its particular circumstances. The list used by Oxford Brookes University is reproduced in Table 13 (p.102).

TABLE 13 : ENTERPRISE SKILLS: OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

ENTERPRISE SKILLS	EXAMPLES
Communication	writing reports, giving presentations, using media (e.g. video, posters)
Group work	leadership, chairing, co-operation, teamwork
Personal	independence, autonomy, self-assessment, self-confidence
Interpersonal	influencing, counselling, listening, interviewing, assertiveness, negotiation
Organisational	time management, project management, objective setting, project evaluation
Teaching and training	identifying learning needs, designing and running workshops, coaching, peer tutoring
Learning	reading flexibly and with purpose, note-taking flexibly and with purpose, literature search and review
Information	locating information sources, evaluating sources and data, extracting relevant information, interpretation of data, presentation of data
Financial	costing, pricing, budgeting, obtaining sponsorship and funding
Problem solving	problem analysis, creative problem-solving, decision making
Language	oral skills, use of a foreign language
Information technology	using word processing, databases, spreadsheets, graphics, desk top publishing
Entrepreneurship	taking initiatives, seizing opportunities, creativity

(Source : Gibbs et al 1993:4)

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STEP ONE:

SKILLS REVIEW

A skills review should be done by lecturers/tutorial leaders both of themselves and of their students. It may be necessary for lecturers to develop certain skills themselves before they are able to assist students with practice in skill development. Checklists can be completed for both lecturers and students.

The self review (i.e. lecturer checklist) is a simple, tabulated document listing the same skills given above with space provided for comments. Lecturers answer the following questions about themselves:

* "What are you good at?

* "What do you feel less confident about?

* "What specific skills would you like to develop for yourself?"

Space is also provided for lecturers to note conclusions about their enterprise skills.

The student skills review is slightly more complex as it is considered useful to make three judgements about the skills students have in order to identify on which areas of skills to concentrate. The questions asked are:

* "To what extent is this skill valuable to the learning of your subject?

* "To what extent is this skill valuable to students in the kinds of jobs they will go on to after they have studied your subject?

* "To what extent and to what level do your students already possess these skills?"

The table can be broken up into sections containing a list of the skills with space to record the value to study, the value to work and the current skill level.

STEP TWO:

THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

According to Gibbs **et al** (1993:9), "students do not become proficient in the use of a skill simply by being told about it, discussing it or thinking about it - they have to practise the skill. But practice, on its own, is also ineffective. It is necessary to notice what went well and not so well and to reflect on this and why it happened. It is necessary to develop an 'informal theory' or personal explanation of what is going on and what being skillful consists of. And this informal theory needs to be used to help to make decisions next time about what to do differently" (Gibbs **et al** 1993:9).

Learning skills involves a four-stage cycle of doing, reflecting, forming principles and planning. For example:

DO	Experiential exercises, actually using the skills, work placements.
REFLECT	Watching a video of yourself, discussing what happpened, using a checklist to assess the use of a skill, keeping a reflective log or diary, profiling skills.
FORMING PRINCIPLES	Listening to a lecture about a skill, reading, summarising general features from a discussion.
PLANNING	Preparing for a presentation or for team work, setting action plans, identifying priorities for skill development using a profile.

A skills development checklist can also be used to ensure efforts have not been ineffective or insufficiently comprehensive. The checklist can be used as a diagnostic medium to indicate areas in which efforts might be enhanced or to review any skill development process e.g.

Tick

☐ Do students feel the need to develop the skill?

☐ Are students given advice about using the skill?

☐ Do students get feedback on the use of the skill?

☐ Are students given examples or models of expert use of the skill?

☐ Are students given some form of initial training in using the skill?

☐ Are students given a chance to practise the use of the skill?

☐ Is the practice 'safe' for students so that they can experiment?

☐ Are students encouraged to experiment and to take risks?

☐ Is attention paid to the emotional climate in which skills are developed?

☐ Do students get the chance to use the skill in different contexts?

☐ Are students encouraged to follow a 'recipe' in using a skill, or to become flexible?

Other important questions you would want to add...

. . . .

STEP THREE:

HOW SKILLS CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC COURSES

Implementing effective skill development programmes involves four elements. These include training, demand, monitoring and assessment. Examples of ways of covering each of these elements (i.e. actual lessons) can be found in Annexure F pp.178-193.

Once again, Oxford Brookes University uses a checklist to identify which aspects of skill development are built into the way the degree programme, or Modular Course Field, or course the lecturer teaches on develops enterprise skills. Much skill development work may be implicit and informal. The checklist should enable the lecturer to identify which of the four aspects of skill development needs most attention.

STEP FOUR:

PROFILING

Profiles are summaries of learning outcomes and are often used as a way of indicating the range and quality of the skills students have acquired. There is a wide range of types of profile used for different purposes. This range includes:

* Assessment of course outcomes

* Assessment of transferable skills

* Records of achievement

* Assessment of prior learning

* Records of work-based learning

* Personal development and career orientation

An example of a performance appraisal profile used by the BA Technical Communications course at Coventry Polytechnic (in Gibbs **et al** 1993:52), to assess and record the student's learning on the work-based component of the course is given in Table 14 p.108). The prescribed learning objectives are those which the course team want all students to achieve whilst on placement and the negotiated ones are identified and described by the students and workplace assessors at the beginning of the placement and will vary from student to

student. These negotiated objectives are agreed with the visiting tutor. The system is also an example of a graded profile. Each learning objective is graded according to a set of performance standards. The total marks accrued from this assessment make up a percentage of the overall degree award (Source for all information related to Oxford Brookes University: Gibbs **et al** 1993:1-52).

An interview was held at the Johannesburg College of Education with Mr Laurie Walker, Director of the Enterprise in Higher Education Programme at Oxford Brookes University, on February 9th 1993. What follows is a transcription of comments he made during the interview.

According to Mr Walker (1993):

1   Knowledge based learning and programmes are no longer good enough as they produce learners who lack enterprise and initiative. Students themselves recognized this and began calling for skills based learning.

2   There is a vocation recession in the UK.

3   Due to the exponential growth of learning and a rapidly changing society, the skills of communication, literacy and numeracy, thinking and conceptualizing, teamwork, information technology, project management, self-initiated learning, problem-solving and, most especially, the skills of learning how to learn have become vital.

4   Methodologically-speaking, skills and knowledge must develop together in an integrated way. Learning and training are considered to be the same thing and skills competence must be integrated into general assessments.

5   There is a responsibility on the part of universities to provide graduates with the sort of training that will enable them to be employed on completion of their courses.

6   New teaching methodologies are being employed. Professional staff are being retrained via development programmes and induction programmes are available to new lecturers. All of this is resulting in tremendous interplay taking place among members of the academic staff.

7   Courses are presented in structured and sequential modular form in order to avoid repetition of introductory courses. Students may choose any combinations within given curriculum structures. A curriculum will include academic, technical, professional (as necessary) as well as core skills content. Core skills courses are certificated upon completion.

TABLE 14 : EXAMPLE OF A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROFILE: COVENTRY POLYTECHNIC

Skills	Unsatisfactory (0.0 - 1.9)	Fair (2.0 - 2.4)	Good (2.5 - 2.9)	Very Good (3.0 - 3.4)	Outstanding (3.5 - 5.0)
Social Skills Working effectively with others, individually and/or as a member of a team	Has not worked effectively with others	Has some difficulty in working with others, needs to improve	Has worked effectively with others in straight-forward situations	Has worked very effectively, even in difficult situations	Has demonstrated excellent personal skills, in a wide variety of situations
Working to Plans Using time, people and other resources effectively to deliver work on time	Has wasted time, or has not used available resources, or has refused to help	Has attempted to meet deadlines, but needs to make better use of time and/or resources	Has met deadlines, where these deadlines were not exceptionally demanding	Has consistently met deadlines, even where this involved extra effort or replanning	Has planned own work, obtained resources, and met deadlines in demanding situations
Quality of Work Producing work that is well-written/well-designed, and is fit for the required purpose	Has been badly written, numerous errors have been made, had to be redone	Work has needed extensive correction, shows only basic grasp of principles	Work has been well written, only needing a modest amount of correction	Work has been very well written, showing creativity and good design	Exceptionally high quality, showing creative and innovative flair, always accurate
Understanding Grasping complex concepts, recognising and solving problems	Slow on the up-take; has not recognised problems; inadequate technical grasp	Takes longer than usual to grasp new concepts; does not readily offer solutions to problems	Generally quick on the up-take; can analyse problems and contribute to solutions	Grasps new information well; analyses problems well and makes good suggestions	Has readily grasped complex concepts; perceptive analysis of complex problems
Learning Accepting criticism, reflecting on their own performance, using this information to raise their level of performance	Refuses to take criticism; unable to improve level of performance	Needs prompting to reflect on experiences; makes only fair use of criticism	Able to reflect on what has been learnt; and change behaviour accordingly	Actively seeking learning experiences; can improve performance from feedback	Exceptionally high ability for self reflection; excellent use of feedback

(Source : Gibbs et al 1993:52)

8	Assessment of learning outcomes takes place at the end of a course. Students must have explicit knowledge and understanding and be able to demonstrate that they can apply what they have learnt in practical situations (i.e. the focus is on doing and not just learning). Assessment involves self-assessments, peer assessments and external assessments.

9	Professional staff audit course content continually. They work very closely with students in this regard. Competence is the aim of both students and lecturers. Coherence with regard to curricula is essential as is the maintenance of both academic rigour and standards. Lecturers, however, become involved in the development of their own curricula.

10	Induction of students is essential. One cannot expect skills just to be there. One must actively teach them and provide feedback to students.

11	The profiling system is extremely important. It is supportive, it provides a reflection on learning outcomes, it acts as an assessment record for both staff and students, it indicates future needs and it facilitates action planning.

12	It is vital that close links between the university and the end employer with regard to employer needs, employability of students etc., are maintained.

13	The advantages of the system include flexibility, self-pacing, community accessibility, and the accommodation of part-time and distance learning.

14	Problems with the system include the fact that the modular system itself can be too broad and disparate resulting in a lack of depth and integration can be hard to achieve. Furthermore, a decision on the underlying concept of the university itself has to be made. This is the age-old question of whether the university should be research based or teaching based (Walker 1993).

According to Mr Bob Hale, Director of The Enterprise Centre at Edinburgh University (September 1993a), similar problems are being experienced by his university. Edinburgh concentrates on what it calls PLUS factors of which there are four. These are:

☞	"PLANNING AND MANAGING CHANGE

	problem analysis, creative thinking, strategic implementation and evaluation.

☞	LEADING AND MOTIVATING PEOPLE

	working and communicating with people individually or as groups.

☞   UTILISING RESOURCES

    effective resources within social and environmental constraints.

☞   SELF-DEVELOPMENT

    to undertake personal and professional development, career planning, and life-long learning" (Hale 1993b:1).

Having completed the above survey, it becomes necessary to mention a few points that have arisen out of the research covered thus far.

1   It has been established that graduates are insufficiently prepared in terms of life competencies and skills to meet the demands of the world of work.

2   Members of the academe, universities and other institutions of higher learning in South Africa, are taking or have taken cognizance of the above. Attempts are being made to address the problem but it would seem that, at the moment, no single institution is employing a concerted approach. Rather, various faculties and departments appear to be acting discretely.

3   It has been demonstrated via reference to the British concept of enterprise through education that it is possible to address the problem using a co-ordinated approach. It should be noted, however, that it is not the writer's intention to suggest that the British system be adopted in South Africa. Apart from any other considerations, enterprise education is based on the particular circumstances that pertain to the economic policies and conceptualization of capitalism found in Britain. Furthermore there are differences between the two countries as regards the conditions covering issues such as personal development, societal needs and social justice. On the other hand, it is perhaps possible to assume that, at this stage, a platform has been laid for the introduction of the concept of guidance support.

4.5   GUIDANCE SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

4.5.1 Rationale, definition and aims

The majority of universities in South Africa make some sort of provision for the support of students who may be experiencing academic difficulties either via bridging courses and/or academic support programmes. It could be argued, however, that in terms of the life

competencies and skills needed to cope with a rapidly changing society and to meet the demands of the world of work, all students are "disadvantaged". (See Chapters Two and Three pp.20-83).

Guidance Support was loosely defined in Chapter One (p.7) as being that support and guidance given to students which makes conscious and deliberate use of pertinent life skills training in order for self-actualization to take place with regard to each student's unique potential and to assist him with the successful practice of his future career.

What this means, in effect, is that the current educational reform process needs to address:

1   the conscious and deliberate teaching of academic curricula from a life-skills perspective

2   the notion of courses on life competencies and skills being consciously and deliberately included in academic curricula where feasible and

3   the offering to students of opportunities to take compulsory, supplementary, extra-concurrent, elective and/or extra-curricular, certificated courses in life competencies and skills.

In a document given to the writer prior to submission for publication and entitled Evaluation of academic programmes - what we have learnt in the last six years?, the then evaluator of the Wits Academic Support Programme, David Agar (1991:abstract), speaking in reference to the Academic Support Programme offered at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), which exists in a variety of forms across 8 of the 10 faculties (Agar 1991:1) and which takes the form of "extra-concurrent courses" (Slonimsky 1986:1), noted that during the last few years, a much wider audience than was originally the case has been showing interest in the potential of these programmes. "This interest, among academic and administrative staff and among private sector and community groups, has been stimulated by the increasing numbers of black students at traditionally white institutions, the growing awareness regarding the mismatch between manpower needs and manpower supply, the strengthening and entrenchment of the education crisis, as well as some major shifts which are taking place in the field of academic support itself" (Agar 1991:abstract).

Whatever the rationale for the introduction of academic support programmes, a brief glance at the aims of the Wits Programme will show that a number of skills classifiable as "life skills" are mentioned. According to Agar (1991:1), the aims of the Programme can be summarized as follows:

"The immediate aim of the ASP is to maximize academic performance in students disadvantaged by the inadequacy of previous educational opportunities. The concern is not only that these students pass their courses as well as possible, but that they become learners who are <u>critical, independent, exploratory, creative, and effective in processing, organising and communicating facts and ideas</u>.

The longer-term concerns of the ASP staff are

*   to increase the number of professionally qualified people from the disadvantaged sectors of our society;

*   <u>to contribute its experience and insights to developments in University policy and practice that are directed towards the priorities of a changing South African Society</u> (emphasis mine) (Academic Support Programme Annual report, 1987 in Agar 1991:1).

Notwithstanding the value of ASP, a number of authors appear to have become concerned about the scope of the concept in recent years. Agar (1991:26) maintains that educational support programmes in themselves are too limited. "Most educational support programmes have not been designed to impact upon the educational experiences of students"...and..."educational support has not managed to impact much on the educational or socio-economic expectations of tertiary institutions" (Agar 1991:26).

Mehl (1988:17), in an article entitled Academic support: developmental giant or academic pauper?, maintains that the status of academic support units must change. He believes that academic support units are evolving into centres which have the potential significantly to influence the development of universities and argues that academic support units need to be transformed into university **development centres** (Mehl 1988:17).

The above-mentioned authors are referring to changes which they believe need to occur within the conventional concept of academic support, although Mehl's notion of

development centres acknowledges that **all** students have to develop, "while the centres should provide the necessary support for the universities to enable the development to take place" (Mehl 1988:17).

Guidance Support, on the other hand, predicated as it is on the belief that the skills covered by ASP are insufficient to produce graduates able to cope with the demands of the world of work or to promote levels of employability and productivity, would be capable of subsuming both academic support and the concept of development centres by expanding on both.

Guidance Support could do much to address all of the above-mentioned problems. In order to do so, however, a guidance support department would need to be established. This would not need to be a daunting task if one takes into consideration resources and structures already in existence. All universities have student advice bureaux and counselling services of one kind or another in addition to the academic support previously mentioned. A wealth of experience and expertise is thus already available. It would simply be a matter of subsuming these units/departments under one central, overarching umbrella.

There would be no need to compromise the activities of these essential services. On the contrary, the aim would be to expand rather than to replace in order to improve the quality of training given to students.

Speaking more specifically, the aims of Guidance Support could be very similar to those of the Wits Academic Support Programme (see p. 112), namely:

1   to maximize future career performance in students disadvantaged by the inadequacy of previous educational training in life competencies and skills,
2   to ensure not only that students pass their courses as well as possible but that they graduate in possession of the high levels of life competencies and skills required by the world of work,
3   to increase the number of professionally qualified people able to meet the demands of the world of work, hence improving employability and productivity levels and,

4   to contribute research, experience and insights to developments in university policies and practices that are directed towards the priorities of a changing South African Society.

A look at the mission statement of America's National Center for Research in Vocational Education (in Hoyt & Shylo 1987: mission statement), might provide a clearer indication of intention with regard to the concept of Guidance Support. The statement is reproduced fully below:

THE NATIONAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Providing information for national planning and policy
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs (in Hoyt & Shylo 1987: mission statement).

Again, it is not the intention of the writer to suggest American systems should be adopted in South African universities. However, judicious reference to the above points could prove useful with regard to providing guidelines for the possible establishment of a guidance support department, should one accept the contention that universities have facilities, expertise, infrastructures and resources which are currently being underutilized.

4.5.2 Functions of Guidance Support

Below is a layout, in point form, of how Guidance Support could function within a guidance support department. It should be noted, however, that both the creation and the workings of such a department would be futile, if not impossible, without the support of the majority of academic and administrative personnel. Needless to say, any academic support, bridging course or remedial unit activities, as well as counselling or student advice services should not be jeopardized by the creation of a guidance support department. However, close ties should be maintained in order, on the one hand, to obviate any duplication and, on the other hand, to pool resources in terms of experience and expertise. Similarly, close ties should be established with faculties or departments already offering or engaged in life-skills training activities for the same reasons as those given above.

Bearing in mind the mission statement given in Hoyt and Shylo (1987) and quoted on p. 114, Guidance Support could function in the following ways. It could:

1   Assist with staff training and development with regard to teaching from a life-skills perspective;

2   Evaluate existing research (including course material) and generate new knowledge through research;

3   Design/develop and produce educational programmes, courses, modules and products including visual media based packages (e.g. video tapes, computer based learning programmes etc.);

4   Liaise with faculties and departments in order to service their needs whether within single faculties, across faculties or inter/intra departmentally, and install educational programmes and products where desired;

5   Liaise with schools in order to achieve the same purposes as those mentioned above, in order to promote life skills required by potential future graduates and in order to prevent duplication of courses;

6   Liaise between and on behalf of faculties, councils, professional boards and associations/institutes, graduates, employers and the self-employed with respect to life competency and skill needs experienced by any or all of the above;

7   Facilitate partnerships between education and the world of work;

8   Conduct courses for or on behalf of faculties or departments on an inter or extra-curricular basis where desired;

9   Assess and evaluate individual faculty/departmental needs and outcomes;

10   Become involved in assessment, evaluation and standardization of courses so as to obviate any devaluation of certification requirements or procedures;

11   Establish media centres where a variety of resources on life skills could be gathered, classified, stored, co-ordinated and made available when desired (i.e. operate information systems and services);

12   Give students opportunities to upgrade their abilities wherever (e.g. via distance learning) and whenever they choose through offering elective or extra-mural/curricular courses in life skills;

13   Offer opportunities for retraining in cases where skills have become obsolete;

14   Provide a service to the community by way of offering said courses not only to graduates/alumni, but also to anyone wishing to take them or who could benefit from them;

15   Provide information should the occasion arise for national planning and policy.

Several of the above-mentioned points require either elucidation or elaboration. Single points can be grouped into topic clusters and dealt with as follows:

1   **Points 1,4,5,6,7:** Assisting with staff training and development with regard to teaching from a life-skills perspective and liaising with all stakeholders (e.g. students, academic staff, councils, end employers or representatives of the world of work including private practitioners etc.) with regard both to this perspective and general curriculum development.

Many members of the academic staff may find the idea of teaching from a life-skills perspective intrusive, revolutionary , threatening, or not worth the bother. They may resent the concept as an extra burden on already overloaded schedules and curricula. Actually, teaching from a life-skills perspective is:

*   Based on sound educational principles. Some of the most respected educational theorists (refer Socrates, Plato, Peters, Dewey, Buber, Rogers, Piaget, Bruner, Vygotskii, Bloom and Feuerstein to name a few) have advocated this type of

teaching under various forms, names or guises. There is very little that is new about it.

Simply put, life skills teaching should result in experiential and problem-solving learning: approaches to which most of the giants of educational theory subscribe. Hofmeyr (1993a:3), referring to the changes in educational approaches in the UK ("education through enterprise"), has the following to say. "In the final analysis, the new developments are in some respects not new at all, in that they represent a philosophy well entrenched in educational theory - the belief that learning is best achieved through action. However, the new developments differ from past innovations, such as the (learner-centred) movement of the 60's, in that they are more structured, criterion referenced and work-focused than in the past" (Hofmeyr 1993a:3).

* Teaching from a life skills perspective does not have to entail any radical or drastic alterations with regard to existing curriculum content. The operative word is **perspective** i.e. it involves restructuring in terms of an approach to teaching **existing** curricula rather than a reformation of curriculum content.

* Teaching from a life skills perspective is rather easier to do than it may sound to those unaccustomed to employing this approach (See Annexure F pp.178-193).

* Teaching from a life skills perspective is not only educationally sound, but also educationally constructive. Students tend to become far more motivated to learn because they take more responsibility for solving their own learning problems and dealing with their own learning needs and outcomes. Thus they become more independent learners who are genuinely committed to engaging in learning activities in an active rather than a passive way.

* Ultimately, teaching from a life skills perspective can release time for overburdened lecturers because they assume less responsibility for student learning outcomes without in any way compromising professional accountability. Rather, the process of allowing increased (personal) responsibility to devolve on students sufficiently **skilled** to be able to "get on with the job", results, on the one hand, in a student body **empowered** in terms of life **competencies** both whilst they are students and

after graduation, and, on the other hand, in lecturers who have more time to spend on research.

The shift to teaching from a life skills perspective takes time initially but it will benefit all stakeholders in the long term. Examples of **how** to teach from a life skills perspective are given in Annexure F pp.178-193).

It should be noted, however, that commitment from at least the majority of academic staff to this approach to teaching would be necessary for it to succeed. Apropos this, the dean's role is a vital one.

Steyn (1992), in a study and workbook on Curriculum design and evaluation, mentioned that leadership with regard to curriculum implementation should come from the top. He was referring primarily to schools but his research could as readily apply to universities. The following is adapted from Steyn (1992:39-41). (See Figure 2 p.119).

It is generally accepted in the literature on curriculum implementation that the dean is and should be curriculum leader in the faculty. This leadership role has to do with implementation of designed curricula through teaching as well as formative curriculum evaluation. The dean should ensure that subject curricula are implemented in such a way that the educational goals of the university are met.

In order successfully to implement a newly designed or **adapted** curriculum, the dean needs to recognize and plan for stages in the implementation process. These stages include:
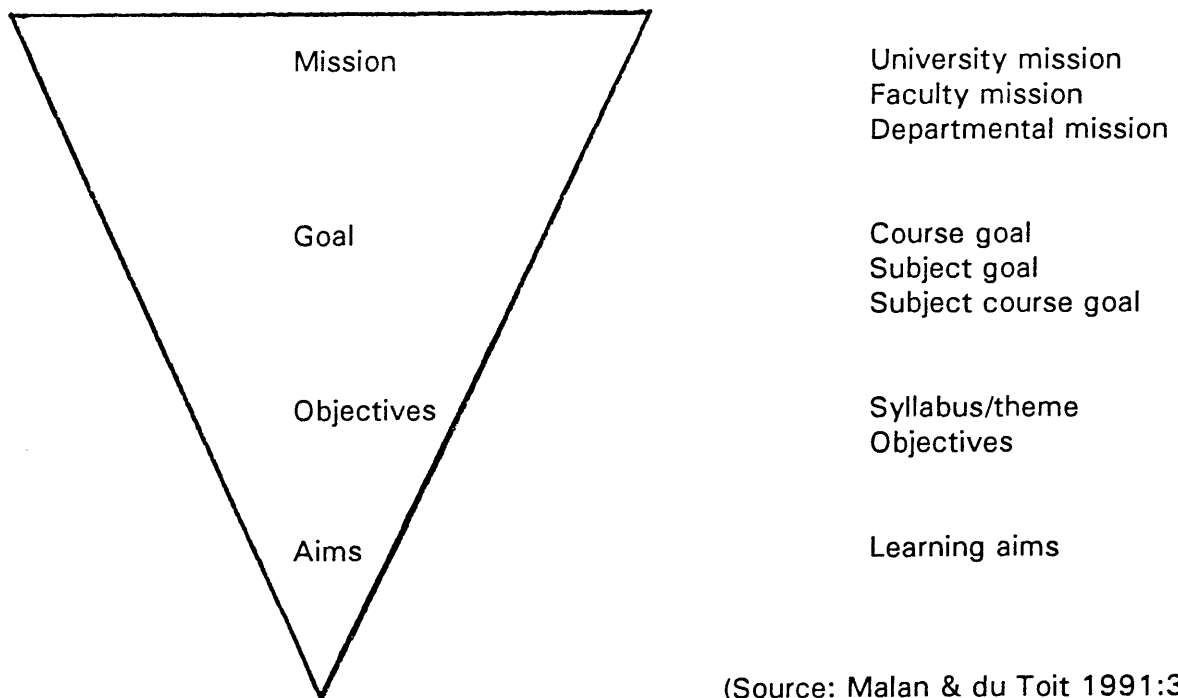
- creating a climate for change
- communicating the rationale for and managerial/organizational implications of the implementation process
- facilitating of staff development
- guiding of instructional planning (Steyn 1992:39-41).

As regards lecturers, according to Elbaz (in Steyn 1992:41), lecturer participation in curriculum development (design, implementation and evaluation) can be Socratic, Scholastic or somewhere in-between. (See Annexure E p.174).

FIGURE 2 :

EXAMPLE OF AN HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE USED FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN

LEVELS OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MISSION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF A GIVEN CURRICULUM.

Mission — University mission
Faculty mission
Departmental mission

Goal — Course goal
Subject goal
Subject course goal

Objectives — Syllabus/theme
Objectives

Aims — Learning aims

(Source: Malan & du Toit 1991:33)

Steyn maintains that "in the tertiary context (university) it is the rule more that the exception for the lecturer and curriculum developer to be the same person" (Steyn 1992:41).

Faculty based curriculum development, according to Sabar (in Steyn 1992:42-44), has both advantages and disadvantages. The movement implies that decentralized and legitimate decisions related to planning, designing, implementing and evaluation of curricula take place within the university and its community, rather than being imposed from the outside (i.e. nationally).

Advantages include:

- providing an attractive, supportive and motivating climate for lecturers to work in,
- easing of communication with regard to curricular matters,
- enhancing of professional status, growth and development,
- promotion of effective utilization of existing curricular materials,
- facilitation of an improvement in the quality of teaching,
- provision for students' views to be taken into account in curricular planning, which results in their feeling that learning is more relevant to their needs,
- emerging topics of immediate relevance can be easily integrated as the resulting curriculum is flexible,
- contributions to curriculum matters can be made by all the relevant stakeholders.

Disadvantages include:

- problems in terms of breadth and depth may arise as lecturers are not trained to be specialists in developing high quality curriculum materials. (Here a guidance support department could, where needed, play a facilitative role by liaising with the relevant specialists on behalf of lecturers),
- the heavy burden lecturers already carry which leaves them with little time for curriculum adaptation,
- the dependency on faculty initiative, human and financial resources and community support involved,
- potential lack of commitment on the part of new lecturers who may not have participated in the development of the curriculum with regard to specific changes

or innovations and who may also lack specific competencies to implement planned actions,

- the differences that exist in terms of access to resources which may endanger national goals of equality (Steyn 1992:42-43).

It could be argued that a guidance support department could facilitate finding solutions to all of the above- mentioned disadvantages/problems. Curriculum committees could be set up in order to adapt and localize curricula and curriculum materials to fit in with given needs without compromising accepted standards. Simultaneously, interaction between all stakeholders could be facilitated.

2 **Points 2,11,15:** Evaluating existing research and course material; generating or assisting with generating, collating and evaluating new research/course material; and establishing a media centre where all material or information related to life skills could be gathered and made available on request.

The above is reasonably self-explanatory. More detailed information with reference to evaluation of specific material will be given under point 4 (see p. 124).

With reference to the evaluation and collation of existing material and the generation of new research, clearly close ties would need to be maintained parochially, regionally, nationally and internationally with all parties (including those involved in human resources development) interested in the acquisition and provision of life competencies and skills. Catering to the needs of potential users would, in itself, result in the generation of new research and development. A guidance support department could assume a central role e.g. as both a facilitator and overall co-ordinator of faculty developments in this field, and as a generator, evaluator and repository of relevant material on behalf of the stakeholders.

3 **Points 3,8,12,13:** Designing, developing and producing course material in whatever form necessary and conducting courses on either inter or extra curricular/mural bases.

The material provided should (in harmony with good curriculum practice) supply users with a rationale and background information with regard to targets, goals, aims and objectives,

content, sequence and guidelines for methodological application and evaluation, and teaching/learning strategies and methods. It should also fulfill the general criteria of allowing for differentiation, relevance, continuity, balance and comprehensiveness. In terms of specific subject material, design should cover the following steps or phases: situation analysis, setting of aims, selection and classification of content and suggested guidelines for selection of teaching methods and evaluation strategies. Naturally, content should be directed at preparing students for the world of work in terms of life competencies and skills (adapted from Steyn 1992:3-25).

With reference to point 3 specifically, many courses could be directed towards self-study or self-learning e.g. computer based learning packages or self-instructional videos could be used.

In a paper entitled Increased productivity through self-instructional video at the University of Stellenbosch faculty of medicine, Walsh, Hugo, van Zijl and Groenewald (1988:143-144) maintained that the annual teaching load of physical examination techniques to large numbers of medical students, which is repetitive and time consuming, was reduced through the use of a series of self-instructional videotapes and accompanying booklets.

Walsh **et al** (1988:143) maintain that the use of video material in medical education is not new (overseas at least) and that the value of video is based upon the medium's inherent ability to present students with a diversity of learning experiences. Conradie asserts that, "no other medium can handle pre-recorded, live and broadcast programming, no other medium functions as a display, distribution and duplication device, and no other medium covers such a range of communication purposes - information, motivation, education, instruction and entertainment" (in Walsh **et al** 1988:143).

The factors which precipitated a project to improve productivity via the use of television and video material were not simply motivated by an attempt to save lecturer time but included recognition of the fact that, currently, the accent in teaching is on economy, productivity and cost-effectiveness. Silberman (in Walsh **et al** 1988:143) remarked on the shifting emphasis in education from a labour-intensive, human-dependent enterprise to a capital-intensive, technology-dependent enterprise which has led to the transfer of some

educational tasks to the burgeoning communication and information media. Similarly, Heinich (in Walsh **et al** 1988:143) stressed that lecturers need to be made aware of technological possibilities. "Teachers need to understand the critical necessity of organizing instruction so that mechanical and repetitive functions can be delegated to machines to free their time for creative and truly professional work. Technological answers should be sought...to allow teachers to devote a greater proportion of their time to the instructional needs of small groups and individuals". In this way, the lecturer can "spend less time talking and become an educational executive. This enables more attention to be given to individual student problems as well as other aspects of educational programs such as planning, management, control and research" (Heinich in Walsh **et al** 1988:143).

According to the above-mentioned authors, the particular package to which they refer was evaluated by means of the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) technique and results indicated no statistical difference between this learning strategy and the traditional (lecturer input) method. Thus, although the video package lightened the lecturers' load, the standard of tuition was not compromised in any way. However, over 240 man hours and 120 specialist hours were saved. The authors grant that there is no increase in productivity for the first year if the whole team effort is evaluated but that, when the whole team effort is viewed over the life-span of the video programmes (approximately 5 years), the benefits become readily apparent. "Moreover, the videotapes are available to students every day of the year for revision in the library or at home - which cannot be said of the specialists" (Walsh **et al** 1988:144).

The conclusions reached by Walsh **et al** (1988:144) were that the clinical lecturers' teaching load was lightened without affecting the quality of tuition, the lecturers realized that media are not peripheral but central to the concept of human reliability, and that productivity could be enhanced via the use of (visual electronic) media (Walsh **et al** 1988:144).

With regard to points 12 and 13 specifically, it is clear that the sorts of materials/packages mentioned above, could be made available to students (inclusive of distance learning, alumni and members of the community) wherever and whenever desired. Updating of material should not entail the same investment, timewise, as initial production did and would allow for retraining with reference to obsolete skills.

With regard to point 8 specifically, a guidance support department could analyze needs on an inter or intrafaculty/departmental basis, and, armed with pre-prepared material developed in conjunction with the appropriate people, could conduct the required courses. On occasion, more than one faculty could require the same or a similar course (e.g. practice management). On other occasions, more than one department within a faculty could require the same or similar courses (e.g. interpersonal communication skills or computer literacy). If compulsory courses could not be built into academic curricula due to time or any other constraints, students could take electives, supplementary or extra-concurrent courses. High fliers could take extra-curricular courses, while struggling students could come in during vacations or back after graduating to do chosen courses. If at least the majority of courses offered could be certificated, students would gain "added value" which should facilitate the finding of employment and increase productivity levels.

4   **Points 2,9,10:**   Assessment and evaluation of course material, needs, and outcomes, and standardization with regard to certification.

With regard to assessment, Steyn (1992:30-37) refers to the concepts of formative and summative evaluation of curricula (or course material). These forms of evaluation could apply to newly designed and developed courses and they will be discussed in more detail below. Other forms of evaluation could include (work-focused) observation, making use of certificated assessors and specially constituted examining bodies, profiling, action based and criterion referenced assessments. (Refer Hofmeyr, Pring and Gibbs **et al:** pp. 99-101).

Formative evaluation involves the following phases:

- the trying out and revision of existing materials and
- the gathering of evidence for or against intended outcomes i.e. in terms of judgemental data (oral and written), observational data and the results of student learning (Steyn 1992:31-36).

Summative evaluation is the kind that is conducted after implementation of a curriculum or presentation of a course. "It is an evaluation of the product and not the process of curriculum design" (Steyn 1992:30). (Refer Table 15 p.125, for an example of Steyn's model).

TABLE 15 : AN EXAMPLE OF FORMATIVE CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Development	Evaluation
Pre-development planning	* Needs assessment * Appeal studies (what aspects of curricula were favoured and liked by the students in the past?) * Context studies (what curriculum materials were used successfully in which contexts?)
Production of prototype components and in-house assembly	* Prototype evaluation (individual units of the curriculum can be tried out) * Comparison of alternatives (if more than one version of curriculum units exist)

Release of in-house version; preparation of revised edition	* Intrinsic evaluation (evaluation of formulated aims - although empirical data is not yet available)
	
	  * checklists (experts can judge different aspects of the curriculum and respond on checklist items)
	
	  * criticism (textbooks, instructional material and actual classroom situation)
	
	* Empirical evaluation
	
	  * tryout
	
	  * error analysis
	
	  * verification of structure (modular units)

Publication of revised edition, diffusion and implementation	End of formative evaluation, start implementation evaluation and quality control studies.

(Source : Lewy in Steyn 1992:37

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Clearly, both kinds of evaluation would be relevant to any attempt to introduce training in life competencies and skills. With regard to all types of assessment and evaluation mentioned above, a guidance support department could bring together the appropriate experts (academics and members of the world of work) whose specialized knowledge, experience and integrity are acknowledged by the relevant stakeholders in order to ensure acceptable levels of evaluation and standardization.

5   **Point 14:** Providing a service to the community in terms of training in life competencies and skills. (See 4.4.1 p. 100).

It should be stressed that, particularly in the economic and political climate currently prevailing in a rapidly changing South African society, the ability to provide services to the community which could benefit both them as individuals and the country's economy could be tremendously valuable. The large majority of South African people has been disadvantaged educationally. Where ASP and individual faculties and departments within universities do very valuable work in attempting to cater to the needs of students and (field specific) sectors of the community, a guidance support department could make a range of courses in life competencies and skills available to all interested parties, whether they be university graduates or not. In this way, a number of problems in terms of successful, economically viable employment could both be addressed and redressed, and the realization of personal potential could be facilitated.

There are a number of advantages, to graduates, to the university and to the community at large, which could come out of the establishment of a guidance support department. These include:

*   Graduates who enter the world of work with "added value". In the short term, the aim would be to give graduates a "competitive edge" in a time of economic recession and dwindling job opportunities. However, even in times of economic growth, South African graduates will need life competencies and skills if the country is to make any attempt to keep up with overseas trends. Furthermore, an economy such as the one currently prevailing in South Africa can no longer afford the luxury of graduates who take anything up to 2 years to become truly economically

productive. Productivity levels should be positively affected by the entrance into the world of work of graduates trained in life competencies and skills;

* The university which can produce graduates skilled enough to meet the demands of the world of work will have an "edge" over others also competing for top students and dwindling financial and human resources. At the same time, credibility and image levels should be boosted while the achievement or retention of international recognition should be facilitated;

* Universities capable of offering extra-curricular or extra-mural courses to anyone seeking training in life competencies and skills would be able to render a valuable service to the community, thereby also gaining potentially substantial community credibility. Furthermore, training in these skills would do more than assist people to meet the needs of the economy. Because many of the skills impact on personal qualities and abilities, such training would be capable of facilitating the shift to a more just and democratic society. Many of the principles of democracy (e.g. non-repression, non-judgementalism, tolerance, respect for the dignity and rights of others, freedom of speech and ideas etc.) are covered either explicitly or implicitly in life skills such as effective interpersonal communication skills, assertiveness training, problem-solving and decision making skills, conflict management skills and the like. Training in these skills would thus produce a spin off in terms of increased actualization of personal potential, increased levels of general mental health, increased tolerance levels and increased levels of political stability. Marginalized youth could also be assisted in a co-ordinated and well researched way;

* Apropos mental health levels, too few social scientists and psychologists are being adequately trained in South Africa at present to meet the needs of a country with serious social problems such as high levels of violence, breakdowns in family structures, general insecurity, marginalization, a disenchanted and poorly educated youth and the social and psychological effects of an economy in deep recession. Freud defines an adult as someone capable of love and work. A university able to assist the youth it serves to achieve Freud's definition of adulthood, could make a valuable contribution to a country's levels of mental health. Similarly, the establishment of a guidance support department should facilitate the training of

future social science graduates. It could even offer internships thus increasing the numbers of students who could be trained in the social sciences;

* In a time of rationalization, the establishment of a guidance support department could open up job opportunities so that valuable knowledge, experience and expertise would not be lost;

* Universities have all the facilities and expertise needed to undertake such a venture as guidance support. At the moment, many academics (e.g. educationists and especially psychologists) complain that private training companies run courses based on their research, run by trainers less qualified than they are, and for which a lot of money is frequently charged. A university, which after all would not have to pay for half the overheads private companies have to meet as the necessary infrastructures already exist whether used in this way or not, could offer similar courses run by highly qualified people for much less money while still earning for itself sufficient income to pay for the guidance support department. Furthermore courses designed, either by the department alone or in conjunction with individual lecturers, could be published, thereby earning royalties. In an incidental and peripheral sort of way, the highly problematic issue of educational profiteering could be addressed at the same time;

* Clearly, the community which the university serves would also benefit in ways already mentioned.

4.6   CONCLUSION

Wood and Phillips (1993:1-4), advocate the introduction of a "flexible, responsive but coherent system of general and vocational education and training", based on the following key competencies which they believe should be covered by training at 3 levels of performance in order to address problems with employment and productivity.

* "Collecting, analysing and organising information
* Communicating ideas and information
* Planning and organising activities

- Working with others and in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology" (Wood & Phillips 1993:3).

According to Wood & Phillips (1993:4), "it is not overdramatic to say that we are presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change; to make a significant difference; to renew our entire education system. The action taken now will impact significantly on our ability to compete internationally in the years to come. In addition, the consequences of decisions to be taken in the current debate (pending education forum) will strongly influence future patterns of economic and social development in this country (Wood & Phillips 1993:4).

The establishment of a guidance support department would not be without problems - perhaps similar to those experienced by Oxford Brookes University in terms of depth, coherence and integration; perhaps similar to those mentioned by Ullyatt (1989:159-164) in his article entitled The management of change and the change of management in South African universities, or by Mauer (1993:28-32), in his article entitled Liberal arts degrees, employment opportunities, and the counsellor's role. Clearly, a lot of detailed research would need to be undertaken to ascertain the viability of such a venture. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made in this Chapter to offer the concept of guidance support as a way to "take significant action", with reference to university training, in order both to address and to redress the problem of matching the skills of graduates to those required by the world of work.

In Chapter 5 a summary of this study is made and recommendations based on the reasoned exposition thereof are given.