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

DINA EMELY MOSIA

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

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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

Your support, sacrifice, patience and encouragement have inspired me
to complete this study.
My sincere appreciation and gratitude go to the following without whose input I would not have achieved this goal:

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DECLARATION

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

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

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

______________________________________________
Dina Emely Mosia
March 2011

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