CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The development and implementation of a life skills curriculum fall in the overall context of the development of education support services, namely social work, school health, specialised education, vocational and general guidance and counselling, and psychological services. The principle of service integration emphasises the need to view issues of development as interrelated. This principle necessitates an interdisciplinary/sectoral approach to curriculum development and implementation, including all of the above-mentioned education support services. The present study focuses on the role of social work, as part of education support services, in developing and implementing a life skills programme for the senior phase learner in the final year of primary school.

Life skills education and training is an expanding field of research. The reasons for the growth of life skills education and training include the following: it has a developmental and preventive emphasis; problems with living are widespread and pressures are increasing for helper accountability.

As school social work is part of the proposed model of education support services, as set out in Lazarus and Donald (1995), it has been regarded as an essential support service to education. In proposing a model for school social work in South Africa, Kotzé (1995:192) states that an interdisciplinary team approach is an important principle. What seems to be a critical issue is an overarching policy vision, an orientation to education, which would provide provision for support services and models of how these services should be structured in the school (Lazarus & Donald, 1995). Kotzé (1995:193) is of the opinion that the role of school social work in contemporary South Africa is quite clear. Because the country is in a process of transition from an unequal and racially divided society, education will be the key factor to help realise the vision of an integrated and united society.

School social work can play a pivotal role in this regard and the practice models, the traditional clinical model and the community-school model can be applied in the South African context. The community-school model focuses on problems in school-community relations and the impact of these on the school (Kotzé, 1995:193). The school cannot and does not operate in isolation from its community. From a social developmental perspective, the researcher recommends that problems (deficiency orientation) should be replaced by assets (asset-based approach) in the school-community relationship. The focus should be on the skills, competencies, strengths and development of the school and community. This relates to the ecological framework discussed in Chapter One.

School social workers frequently face the problem that they see only the problematic learners who are referred to them by other school officials. The vast number of learners and a surprisingly large number of teachers know nothing about what a school social worker does or is capable of doing. This raises the question whether learners who are academically proficient, reasonably behaved, and have acceptable attendance records should be denied social work services just because they are not referred for them. One could also argue whether such exclusion from these services is fair to their parents who are taxpayers. This is why this study was conducted, namely to develop and implement a personal and interpersonal life skills programme for Grade 7 learners in the senior phase of a traditionally African school, and to evaluate whether participation in the life skills programme would lead to personal growth (self-empowerment) and social competence and thus contribute to the optimal social functioning of children in the classroom, school, family and community (capacity building).

The field of school social work has almost universally come to use an ecological perspective as its main theoretical framework. Within this framework, school social workers view the problems or rather the assets found in the school as related to the ways that learners, parents, staff, and community members interact with one another. Solutions to problems and the development (strengthening) of assets ought, consequently, to be found in altering these interactions, rather than in seeking change in any one set of participants. The researcher supports the statement of Garvin and Tropman (1992:307): "*The school is an open living system whose members are engaged in ongoing transactions and interactions with each other and significant others in the community. Productive exchanges develop the competence*

and self-esteem necessary to promote the desired learning and growth to all persons in the school organization: pupils, parents, teachers and administrators."

According to Garvin and Tropman (1992:309), school social workers can perform four categories of tasks:

☐   Crisis resolution

☐   The solving of identified problems

☐   The development of personal and interpersonal coping skills among all groups in schools

☐   Early identification and service delivery to populations at risk (essentially an approach to prevention).

With this study, *A Life Skills Programme for learners in the senior phase: a Social Work perspective*, the researcher implemented the last two categories of school social work as stated by Garvin and Tropman (1992:309).

To summarise: as a foundation for the study, the researcher wished to focus on the role in practice of the school social worker in the education support services. The ecological perspective was used as a theoretical framework in the developmental approach (intervention) in social welfare. An ecological perspective leads the social worker to make a situational assessment which addresses the transaction of individuals with the environment. Key questions to guide the social worker in the process are the following: What conditions in the individual, in the environment and in their transaction may need development? What networks of services, what support systems, might enable the individual or group to cope, to develop skills, to form satisfactory personal and interpersonal relations and to experience some level of success in the community and family environment? The answers will depend upon individual needs, competencies and capacities. Individual survival, affiliation and achievement depend on the sum total of what individuals may be experiencing in their living situation, at school and in the community (Allen-Meares, Washington & Welsh, 1986:12)

5.2   MAJOR CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The dilemma of school social work in South Africa is that it does not have a tradition or a career structure like that in medical social work. In this respect one may face professional biases from the teaching profession and scepticism from the authorities. This problem could be addressed by creating an education orientation and environment that would not only accept new members into the educational team, but also emphasise the importance of support services in the school. This would require an integrated and interdisciplinary approach.

The researcher supports the suggestion by Kotzé (1995) that school social work should be structured in the education department operating under the administrative jurisdiction of the principals. This should not only facilitate integration into the school, but would also provide an important communication channel to the education authorities at a higher level. In this way school social work would be integrated into the school system and operate on the same basis as social work in other settings, such as medical social work in the hospital, psychiatric social work in psychiatric institutions and industrial social work in the workplace (Kotzé, 1995:194).

In this section, the major findings of the study are synthesised and presented within the framework of the research question that was generated during the conceptual phase of the study.

The study aimed at answering the following research question: How should a personal and interpersonal life skills programme be developed, implemented and evaluated to have an effect on the personal growth and social functioning of learners in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band? The Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme was developed and designed by conducting intervention research (Rothman & Thomas, 1994). With the implementation of the intervention research model the main goal of the study was attained, namely to develop and implement a personal and interpersonal life skills programme for Grade 7 learners in the senior phase of a traditionally African school, and to evaluate whether participation in the life skills programme would lead to personal growth (self-empowerment) and social competence and thus contribute to the optimal social functioning of children in the classroom, school, family and community (capacity building).

The intervention model of Rothman and Thomas (1994) was implemented and the phases and activities followed in this study through which the research question was answered, and the main goal and objectives attained:

- □ Situation analysis and project planning
    - Identifying and involving the principal, school governing board, teachers and learners at the primary school
    - Gaining entry to and co-operation from the primary school
    - Identifying the concerns of the school personnel and learners
    - Analysing the identified needs
    - Setting critical and specific outcomes for the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme
- □ Information gathering and synthesis. These refer to the activities described in Chapter 2. Life skills education and training and the following with relevance to the themes were discussed: international life skills models, the life skills curriculum and programmes for the South African school context, the practice of life skills education and training with guidelines for the facilitator (social worker) and stages in life skills education; the components of life skills education: facilitation, group work, experiential learning and continuity; and the facilitation media. The model of Edna Rooth (1997) on Life Skills Education was used as the foundation for the study and the facilitation media were implemented. In this way, one of the objectives of doing a literature study was attained, namely to review the content of the existing life skills programmes in different disciplines. A literature study was done on the learner in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band, as this was the definition of the participants in the study.
- □ The design, early development and pilot testing of the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme in Chapter 3. The preliminary intervention procedures were tested in practice on a group of eight Grade 7 learners, using the groupwork method in keeping with the ecological paradigm in the implementation of the programme.
- □ Evaluation and Advanced Development. The activities were discussed in Chapter 4: the experimental design, data collection by means of three instruments (questionnaires); data analysis; replicating the intervention under field conditions and refining the intervention.

The study also attained the following objectives:

- The Participant Pre-test and Post-test Questionnaire was designed and administered to help learners to assess (rate) their personal and interpersonal life skills before and after undergoing the programme (Chapter 4). This questionnaire was also used to determine the effectiveness of the Life Skills Programme.

  The effectiveness of the Life Skills Programme was evaluated by determining whether it –
  - contributed to the learner's self-knowledge, knowledge of feelings, thinking, actions, needs, responsibilities, feelings of self-worth, positive attitudes towards the self (enhancement of self-concept and self-reliance: personal);
  - contributed to the learner's knowledge and understanding of his/her family, school, friends, community; developed more effective communication, problem-solving and conflict management skills (empowerment) and in addition had an impact on the learner's participation in the classroom, school and community (capacity building).

  The study was designed to test the hypothesis that Grade 7 learners who participated in an intervention programme (classroom intervention) would exhibit more personal growth (personal life skills) and social competence than those who had not participated, and would therefore contribute to the optimal social functioning of the learners in the classroom, school, family and community (interpersonal life skills). The findings of the investigation indicated that improvement in the pre-test post-test questionnaire scores was highly significant (all items = p value $\leq$ 0,01). Therefore, the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme had a statistically highly significant effect on the personal and interpersonal life skills development of the Grade 7 learners in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band in this particular primary school. Therefore, through the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme, a learner's self-reliance can be fostered and personal growth and social competence promoted. The Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme is therefore a self-empowered and capacity building programme.

- Appropriate modules or themes were developed as subsets of the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme for learners attending a primary school (Chapter 3). The themes are: Developing self-awareness, self-knowledge and sensory contact (SELF); My family and me; My school, friends and me; Dating and interpersonal relationships; My community and me; Needs, rights and responsibilities; Rainbow nation, first impressions and stereotyping; Effective communication; Problem solving; Conflict resolution; Death: Grieving and growing; and Where do I go for help/counselling? (See Table 3.1 on page 82).

- The strengths and weaknesses of the programme with a view to making recommendations on improving it were determined as discussed in Chapter 4. Programme evaluation helps to identify factors inhibiting better programme performance and provides evaluators with guidelines relating to further development and adaptation of programmes (Patton, 1987; Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Programme adaptation may be necessary to narrow the gap between programme outcomes and programme impact. In this study, the data provided clear guidelines for further adaptation of the Life Skills Programme.

The participant retrospective evaluation questionnaire was formulated and administered to evaluate the Life Skills Programme. Ninety-eight per cent of the participants stated that Theme One of the programme: Developing self-awareness and self-knowledge (personality, thoughts, feelings, behaviour, capabilities, self-concept) was the most useful to them (Theme 1). These responses indicated that the overall learning outcomes of the programme were achieved. These data are congruent with the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test (see Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 on pages 95-96). Regarding Theme 5: My community and me, 93% of the learners indicated that the session was useful to them. The findings shown in Table 4.4 (on page 99) are that 85% of the learners indicated that Theme 8: Effective communication, was useful to them. As regards Themes 2 (My family and me); 3 (Me, my school and friends) and 6 (Needs, rights and responsibilities), 83% of the participants indicated that these themes or sessions were useful to them. These data are congruent with the data obtained from the participants' session-by-session evaluations and were further confirmed by the objective observer's and guidance teacher's observations and reports. These responses indicated that the overall learning outcomes of the programme were achieved.

The theme on Dating and interpersonal relationships (relations with the opposite sex) should be adapted. Only 28% of the participants had learned how to date and build relationships with the opposite sex; 42% thought they had not learned how and 30% of the participants were unsure. The data provided here are congruent with the data obtained from the Pre-test and Post-test Questionnaire and from the participants' session-by-session evaluations. More content, discussions and exercises should be added and the method of facilitation should be changed. Learners' comments and recommendations should be taken into consideration when adapting this theme in the programme.

The researcher adapted and adjusted Rooth's model of life skills education (1997), consisting of facilitation, groupwork, experiential learning and continuity, for the implementation of the programme. Table 5.1 gives an outline of each of the sessions.

TABLE 5.1   SESSION OUTLINE FOR THE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME

THEME							
Phase Organiser: Programme Organiser:							
SO = Specific outcomes							
SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8
LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES)							
RESOURCES							
ICE-BREAKER AND SENSORY ACTIVITY							
□ Sensory activity							
□ Beginning: Self-awareness: My senses: smell, hear, taste, touch and see.							
ACTIVITY – EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (PROCESS)							
DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK							
REMARKS / COMMENTS / REFLECTION							
SELFNURTURING							
RESOURCES USED FOR PREPARATION							

Various facilitation media or methods were used. Table 4.5 (on page 100) indicates that facilitation methods which used general discussions in the large group, discussions in the small or subgroups (5 to 7 learners) and pictures selected from magazines, newspapers and handouts about the theme (session), received the greatest support from nearly two-thirds (73%) of the participants. Most (70%) of the participants indicated that they also

supported the following methods or media of facilitation used during the implementation of the programme: drama; the use of clay to make objects (for example to build their own school or community); pictures and notes (worksheets) for their workbook, and making posters for the classroom. The participants indicated a lower preference for role-playing (53%) and the use of different seeds as a facilitation medium for creating pictures (55%). The reasons for this lower preference could be that learners were not emotionally ready for role playing. The seeds were an inappropriate method for the experiential learning activity, since the learners indicated in the session-by-session evaluation that seeds were food and should be planted, not be wasted on making pictures.

The programme was implemented in a large group (40 learners in the classroom), which was divided into six smaller groups consisting of five to seven learners. The researcher regarded the groupwork method as the most appropriate method as it was in keeping with the ecological paradigm. Groupwork is therefore considered a relevant and enlightening method because social workers are accustomed to working in the context of small group (8-12 participants, according to Corey & Corey 1992:319-320). Moreover in the school context it is expected that the social worker will include all learners in the classroom and the number of learners may vary from 28–50 (classroom intervention). These learners could be divided into smaller groups and the groupwork method could be implemented as illustrated in this study.

A secondary goal that this study attained although the researcher had not formulated it as such, was to give the social worker greater visibility and to make him/her and the services that can be rendered more accessible to learners, teachers and parents. This study gave the social worker (researcher) an opportunity to enter the school and classroom and to introduce herself to all learners, allowing the learners and the school personnel to see and experience more clearly what a school social worker can do.

- This study could serve as a guideline for social workers on developing, implementing and evaluating life skills programmes for children and the youth.

Life skills education is a fundamental division of the Learning Area Life Orientation. Life Orientation is fundamental in empowering learners to live meaningful lives in a society that

demands rapid transformation. It is an integral part of education, training and development. Some social workers argue that their cost-effectiveness would be far greater if they actively engaged in developmental and preventive interventions, such as life skills education and training, instead of waiting in their offices for clients who need remedial help. Life skills programmes are interventions, and interventions in turn are actions that are intended to carry out a plan for service.

The overall response to the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme in this study was positive and the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme had a statistically highly significant effect on the personal and interpersonal life skills development of the Grade 7 learners in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band in this particular primary school. Data analysis revealed that the learning outcomes of each session and of the programme as a whole, were achieved. The themes covered in the programme were relevant and helped to improve the personal and interpersonal life skills of these Grade 7 learners. The participants were comfortable with the group work (large and smaller groups) and also the media of facilitation.

Data analysis further revealed that the skills learnt during the sessions were being implemented outside the groups and the classroom setting, for example in other classroom settings and with peers, siblings, teachers and parents. It can therefore be concluded that the life skills programme has the potential to have a wider impact as it is likely that the lessons or skills learnt could be generalised and transferred to the home and to other settings in the community.

As indicated elsewhere, the researcher cannot make categorical statements about the effectiveness of the programme in broader contexts. The reliability and validity of the research would have been further enhanced if control groups had been used, if standardised questionnaires and instruments could have been administered, if feedback from the teachers and parents could have been obtained, and if the study had incorporated a longitudinal component. However, the triangulated research method adopted in this study does strongly support the positive effects of the programme and the fact that the Life Skills Programme had

a statistically highly significant effect (improvement) on the personal and interpersonal life skills development of these Grade 7 learners. This is also reflected in the participants' suggestions that the programme should be implemented on an ongoing basis at all schools.

5.3   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher should be aware of the strengths and limitations of the method/s chosen in producing valid and reliable data and how this would affect the study and the generalisations that could and could not be made from the findings. Below is a discussion of the possible limitations in the design and methodology of this particular study.

■   **Sample size**

The small sample size limits its representation of the population from which it was drawn (Marlow, 1993). This factor further limits the generalisability of the study's findings. However, as pointed out elsewhere, this was not a major concern as the development and evaluation were undertaken with a view to improving the programme's effectiveness in a particular context. It should be noted that the sample was selected in order to obtain in-depth information, and that this goal was adequately achieved in this study**.**

■   **Possible researcher bias**

As the researcher developed the programme in this study, what is referred to by Rubin and Babbie (2001: 539) as "the politics of programme evaluation" may have surfaced. This means that the researcher may have tried to design the research or to interpret its findings in ways that were likely to make the programme look good (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Being aware of this possibility, the researcher consciously maintained an objective stance and presented the data obtained from participants as accurately as possible.

■   **Participant responses**

Participants may have responded favourably to questions about the programme in an attempt to please the facilitator. The feedback from the participants and the objective observer confirmed that there was a fairly good relationship between the participants and the facilitator throughout the programme. It is therefore possible that the participants may have been

reluctant to give any negative reports about the programme. Furthermore, the participants could have responded in a certain manner, as they knew that they were participating in the study. Marlow (1993:133) refers to this as "reactive effects" which may result in a distortion of outcomes. However, it is difficult to overcome reactive effects in any research design because it is unethical to engage in research without obtaining the participants' consent (Marlow, 1993).

■ **Reliability and validity of research instruments**

The data-gathering instruments could have been limited in their capacity to obtain information that reflected the actual reality of situations during the study. In using evaluation questionnaires, differences in the interpretation of the questions may occur (Bailey, 1982; Mindel, 1993). As explained elsewhere in this study, to ensure consistency in the data gathering process, the facilitator explained and clarified each question to the participants.

■ **Limitations in the methodology**

As mentioned in Chapter 4 the study did not include a control group as a norm for judging the programme outcomes. However, as Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987) point out, the lack of a control group where programme implementation is being monitored, is not a serious problem. Furthermore, the use of the triangulation method, which encompassed multiple methods of data gathering and analysis, minimised this problem. Cross-checks between the data gathered by means of different instruments enabled the researcher to validate the information obtained.

■ **Limitations in data analysis**

It is possible that there may have been limitations on the way in which data analysis was undertaken. This in turn may have affected the conclusions reached in this study. This limitation was minimised by the fact that the researcher returned to the data several times to ensure that the discussion accurately reflected the data.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

Emanating from the findings and the conclusions drawn in this study, a few recommendations are made:

- Social work has much to offer to preventive programmes for youth and family development. The personnel implementing such programmes should be professionally trained, preferably in social work, because the broad, value-based approaches in this field of study better equip this professionals than other professionals to provide the tools and perspectives to increase personnel effectiveness. New, broader theoretical paradigms and the growing body of knowledge about effective approaches and programmes for the development of the youth provide unprecedented opportunities for social work to make a significant difference in the lives of young people.

- Education support personnel (social workers, health workers, educators and psychologists) should provide services that focus on and involve the "whole school" or place of learning and the community. In this regard, training and professional development programmes should shift their focus away from a "deficit", problem-oriented philosophy of intervention, towards one in which support services focus on assets such as strengths, competencies and development. Courses should also offer an interpretative approach to inter-sectoral work, empowerment, capacity building, diversity, human rights, community development and institution-based team building and support.

- In-service courses should be designed in a collaborative manner between the institutions and organisations that are responsible for the training and professional development of educators and education support personnel teams, such as therapists, social workers, nurses and psychologists. Such courses should contribute to the development of appropriate education support services rather than specific expertise. These courses should also focus on the sharing of critical skills, knowledge and values among team members and the utilisation of community resources, including parents and community-based organisations such as those for people with disabilities. Ongoing accredited in-service training and development in life skills education would contribute towards developing and maintaining the facilitative approach.

- Given the principles of a multidisciplinary/sectoral approach and separation and service integration it is evident that the potential range of life skills trainers is wide and varied. Central to this, though, should be the team approach which constitutes a life skills co-

119

ordinator and all the life skills trainers or educators who participate in the school's life skills programme. Every school should have a life skills co-ordinator. The team could consist of health workers, social workers and community workers, non-governmental organisation personnel, teachers, education support specialists, business enterprises, community leaders, parents and possible learners. However, the team of life skills trainers/educators would have to be co-ordinated to provide a cohesive curriculum guided by common principles.

- Interdisciplinary collaboration: School social workers should collaborate with other professionals for two basic reasons: to exchange information and to co-ordinate services. An exchange of professional information is one way of increasing knowledge in areas that may not be familiar to the social worker, and of providing the means for professionals to help one another keep abreast of new information. Collaboration provides an opportunity to combine the input from various disciplines and to exchange points of expertise. Such collaborative efforts reduce professional isolation, help to build positive working relationships, and make services more comprehensive and effective. As interventions are focused on primary prevention and are designed to maximise interdisciplinary approaches, social workers should collaborate with teachers, clergy, police, health professionals and members of other services.

- Building networks. In addressing any of the challenges discussed in this study it is critical that the social worker should see him/herself as part of a team or "network" of other people. This network may consist of colleagues in the social worker's own organisation or from other organisations; teachers, principals, members of the school governing board, parents and other members of the community; and members of the helping professions such as doctors, nurses and psychologists. The social worker should be actively involved in building networks.

- Future life skills programmes should focus firstly on asking adolescents what kind of developmental challenges they would like help with to enable them to cope with these challenges. Secondly, adolescents should be asked to spell out specifically what coping life skills they would like to practise. Including adolescents in this way would

help them to take ownership of the programme. Life skills programmes should also be presented for parents and interested community members.

● Programme evaluation should be integrated in all the programmes presented at schools. Programme evaluation measures the effectiveness of the programme and on this basis, guidelines could be provided for programme planning and decision making.

● The curriculum for life skills should be based on developmental principles so that appropriate life skills are facilitated at the appropriate life and career developmental stage, for the following reasons. Life skills education is a fundamental division of the Learning Area Life Orientation. Life Orientation empowers learners to live meaningful lives in a society that demands rapid transformation. It is an integral part of education, training and development. The accomplishment of developmental tasks depends on the learner's mastery of the coping behaviours or life skills appropriate to the current developmental stage and associated developmental tasks. There are generally certain age ranges when certain life skills are optimally learned (compare Havighurst, 1972; Hurlock, 1978). By acquiring the relevant life skills during the appropriate stage of development, the individual achieves optimal functioning.

It is recommended for future group and class intervention programmes for Grade 7 learners of the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band that –

■ as in the current study, a whole class should be selected for the Life Skills Programme as opposed to learners from different Grade 7 classes. If a whole class is selected this should, to a certain extent, increase the attendance rate. Irregular attendance at classes, learners dropping out of school and absenteeism are problems irrespective of the learning area. These problems are definitely more prevalent in some schools than in others;

■ ideally, every Grade 7 learner in a school should be part of the programme. This would also intensify the effect of the programme, as all the learners would be involved in doing the same thing. It would also be better to implement the programme thoroughly in fewer schools than to implement the programme in many schools but with a low intensity;

- each of the themes in the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme could be divided into four to six sessions. This would mean that each of the themes could be extended to become a programme consisting of four to six sessions, giving the learners more opportunity to practise the life skills;

- a larger sample representative of the population should be used, so that generalisations to the greater population could be made with greater confidence;

- long-term follow-up evaluations should be made, in order to promote positive short-term programme outcomes that would endure; and in support of this,

- long-term follow-up sessions should be scheduled in order to promote positive developmental gains;

- the personal and interpersonal effects of the intervention programme for adolescents should be evaluated in greater depth;

- the intervention programme should also be evaluated with learners of different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds;

- prior to the implementation of the programme the facilitator should make a presentation to all the staff/personnel informing them about the programme, the critical and in particular the specific outcomes. The school as a whole should support the project and give the facilitators the backing and encouragement they need. The school governing board and parents should also be informed and give their consent;

- future programmes should include more learning in a service context. The learners should conduct or perhaps get involved in a community development project in order to practise their life skills.

It is also recommended that the final phase of the intervention research model of Rothman and Thomas (1994:39-43), namely dissemination, should be implemented. After the intervention (in this study the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme) has been field tested and evaluated, it is ready to be disseminated to schools and other target audiences. The following activities make the process of dissemination and adaptation more successful:

❑ Preparing the product for dissemination: In preparing the intervention for dissemination, issues emerge such as choosing a brand name, establishing a price and setting standards for using the intervention (De Vos, 1998:339). The primary school in the current study requested that the name of the life skills programme should be the *Masingita Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme.* By establishing guidelines for using the intervention programme correctly, the researcher would provide the basis for maintaining the integrity of the product. The researcher could do this by insisting that users should be trained before the programme was implemented. A training course held over three consecutive days would be required. Programme material such as the manual, workbook for learners, evaluation forms and questionnaires would be issued to trainees only. Any educational institution that has purchased one copy of the mentioned publications may make duplicate copies for use exclusively within that institution.

❑ Identifying potential markets for the intervention. The potential adopters of the intervention programme are social workers, teachers, psychologists, health workers and community developers.

❑ Creating a demand for the intervention. Disseminators (in this case the researcher) would have to convince potential purchasers that they would really benefit from the intervention. The strategies that could be used in marketing the intervention programme include modelling and advertising, for example presenting papers at conferences and holding workshops.

❑ Encouraging appropriate adaptation for specific target groups and contexts. Elements of intervention, such as the content and format of an educational programme, could be modified or deleted and new elements added.

❑ Providing technical support for adopters. De Vos (1998: 402) states that intervention researchers and programme staff, as the innovation's designers and implementers, are the primary knowledge experts concerning the intervention. Adopters might require support personnel from the research or programme team to assist with troubleshooting or adapting the intervention to meet their specific needs. The researcher's technical support would mainly consist of the training course for social workers and the programme material, such as the training manual and workbook for learners, as well as the various questionnaires, evaluation questionnaires and other supportive resources for the use of trainees.

5.5   IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that, when further preventive programmes are developed and implemented, the evaluation component should be included to ensure that the prevention efforts have the desired effects. This is consistent with the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) which views evaluation as an ongoing process to determine the appropriateness and economic viability of social welfare programmes.

A longitudinal study is recommended to ascertain the long-term effect of the Personal and Interpersonal Life Skills Programme. In addition, studies similar to those conducted by Gentry and Benenson (1993), Schmitz (1994) and Sliedrecht (1995) which included feedback from parents and teachers on the behaviour of the participants, could be beneficial in providing further information on the effects of the programme.

Further research by multidisciplinary teams should be conducted in life skills education and training, and researchers should continue to gather and analyse data that would evaluate the effectiveness of life skills programmes.