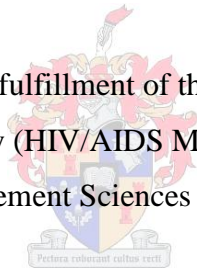


The effectiveness of life skills in addressing the needs and challenges of the youth: The case of Life Orientation in Hewu cluster secondary schools in Queenstown district of the Eastern Cape

by

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Declaration

By submitting this assignment electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: March 2013

Abstract

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the effectiveness of Life Orientation (LO) as a life skills programme in the school curriculum in meeting the needs and challenges of the youth. Learners from the ages of 16 to 24 in the Further Education Training (FET) sector that is, from grade 10 to 12 in the Hewu area Secondary School in Queenstown District were used as a case study.

Research design

A descriptive research design using a quantitative approach was used in the study.

Data collection

Data was collected from learners through questionnaires and from teachers through a focus group discussion. The learners and LO teachers from Ekuphumleni, Funda, Hewu, Nomphumelelo and Sovuke Sikhanye Secondary Schools were used as a study sample.

Findings

Almost all the learners, 90 %, found LO effective in meeting their needs and challenges. LO has helped them to resist peer pressure, saying no to negative and risky behaviour, and to cope with difficult situations like the loss of loved ones. The LO teachers as well found the programme helpful and relevant in meeting the needs and challenges of the youth. However, the LO teachers observed that although the programme was helpful and relevant, the expected attitudes and behaviour of learners contradict what the programme was offering. This disparity can be attributed to the social ills in the community, such as substance abuse, domestic violence, incest, unemployment, poverty and the negative influence of the media.

Conclusion

The finding of the study has shown that although the learners and LO teachers find the programme relevant and useful in addressing the needs and challenges of the learners,

there are so many social ills within the community that destruct and derail the learners hence creating a disparity between what is said about the programme versus the behaviour and attitude that is displayed. This disparity calls for a discourse between teachers and parents, as well as with the community leaders, pastors and other stakeholders.

Opsomming

Doel van die studie

Die doel van die studie was om die doeltreffendheid van Lewensoriëntering as 'n lewensvaardigheidsprogram in die skoolkurrikulum vir die behoeftes en uitdagings van die jeug, te bepaal. Leerders van die ouderdomme van 16 tot 24 in die Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding (VOO) sektor vanaf graad 10 tot 12 in die Hewu area Sekondêre Skool in Queenstown-distrik is gebruik as 'n gevalle studie.

Navorsingsontwerp

'n Beskrywende navorsingsontwerp met behulp van 'n kwantitatiewe benadering is gebruik in die studie.

Data-insameling

Data van leerders is deur middel van vraelyste ingesamel en van onderwysers deur middel van 'n fokusgroepbespreking. Die leerders en die LO-onderwysers van Ekuphumleni, Funda, Hewu, Nomphumelelo en Sovuke Sikhanye hoër skole is gebruik as 'n steekproefbevolking.

Resultate

Byna al die leerders, 90 % vind LOeffektief om aan hulle behoeftes en uitdagings te voldoen. LOhet gehelp om hulle groepsdruk te weerstaan, nee te sê vir negatiewe en gewaagde gedrag, en om moeilike situasies soos die verlies van geliefdes te hanteer. Die LO-onderwysers vind ook die program nuttig en relevant deurdat dit voldoen aan die behoeftes en uitdagings van die jeug. Die LO-onderwysers het egter opgemerk dat alhoewel die program nuttig en relevant is, die verwagte houdings en gedrag van leerders in teenstelling hiermee is. Hierdie teenstrydigheid kan toegeskryf word aan die maatskaplike euwels in die gemeenskap, soos dwelmmisbruik, gesinsgeweld, bloedsbande, werkloosheid, armoede en die negatiewe invloed van die media.

Gevolgtrekking

Die bevinding van die studie het getoon dat alhoewel die leerders en LO-onderwysers die program relevant en nuttig vind in die aanspreek van die behoeftes en uitdagings van die leerders, daar so baie sosiale euwels in die gemeenskap is wat die leerders

vernietig en laat ontspoor, datdat daar 'n wanverhouding tussen wat gesê is oor die program versus die gedrag en houding wat vertoon word, bestaan. Vanweë hierdie teenstrydigheid word 'n beroep gedoen vir 'n diskoers tussen onderwysers en ouers, sowel as die gemeenskapleiers, pastore en ander belanghebbendes.

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Thanks to all the people who contributed to this work one way or another, your support is highly appreciated.

Acronyms

LO	Life Orientation
FET	Further Education and Training
PET	Physical Education Training
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
LTSMs	Learning and teaching support materials
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Reaching HIV/AIDS Affected People with Integrated Development and Support	
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	
United Nations Children's Fund	
UNAIDS	United Nations Agency for HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organization
UN	United Nations
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Youth nowadays are faced with so many needs and challenges as they live in the era of diverse global challenges such as poverty, political issues, psycho-social and socio-economic circumstances, technological changes and the biggest being HIV/AIDS which will result according to Health System Trust Bulletin (2011) in 5.7 million infected with HIV by 2011 in South Africa. Therefore it is crucial to put in place effective life skills programmes to equip the youth with skills to enable them to cope with these challenges which are inevitable.

A number of studies and interventions have been made by governments across the world to address this situation that the youth is facing. Examples of such include a study carried out by UNESCO (2002) in Uganda about HIV/AIDS counseling for children and young people and a four-year life skills intervention project by United Nations (2009) on addressing HIV and substance use among the youth in four Asian countries: Cambodia, China, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

The UNESCO (2002) study revealed that the effects of HIV/AIDS on the orphaned children and youth resulted in a gradual decline in school enrolment, variable repetition trends, high drop-outs rates, absenteeism and a decline in school performance. In addition, most orphans lack parental guidance, particularly in the area of morals and correct behaviour and they suffer anxiety about their future and HIV status. They are often stressed due to discrimination and end up with mental stress or not behaving correctly.

On the other hand, the UN (2009) intervention not only provided knowledge on safeguarding the youth from high-risk situations but also made a difference for many youth to the extent of developing coping and negotiation mechanisms in various situations.

Furthermore, some countries such as Botswana and South Africa have life skills intervention programmes in their school curricula called Guidance and Counseling and Life Orientation (LO) respectively, meant to equip learners with skills that would enable them to deal with their challenges.

The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of Life Orientation, and life skills programmes in South Africa, in addressing the needs and challenges of the youth. A case study of schools in Hewu cluster Secondary schools in Queenstown District in the Eastern Cape was used.

The life orientation or life skills programme in South Africa is provided for in the school curriculum from Grade R to Grade 12. This programme aims at providing learners with life skills such as social relationships or development, physical fitness and nutrition, sexual reproductive health which includes HIV/AIDS, personal development, orientation to the world of work, substance abuse and conflict resolution (National Curriculum Statement, Life Orientation, 2003).

Life orientation is taught as a subject in schools and is allocated two hours per week in the school curriculum. Learners write examinations on LO at the end of each term. The pass mark is 40 % and it is compulsory for them to pass it as marks for the end of year determines whether or not a learner should proceed to the next grade. Generally, records show that the subject is passed well in all the schools under study. For example, the pass mark for one of the schools, Mhlotshana High School, for the last three consecutive years was 100%. It showed that learners' knowledge of the subject was very high.

The expected outcome of the programme is that learners should display positive attitudes towards the subject and put into practice the life skills they have learnt in LO to face their day to day challenges. The learners should be more assertive, more focused in their studies, and not become involved in risky behaviour that can lead them to the danger of contracting HIV/AIDS.

1.2. Justification for the study

A high percentage of HIV/AIDS prevalence among youth, alcoholism, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, having multiple partners, teenage pregnancy, poverty, transactional sex, intergenerational sex, promiscuity, low HIV testing, high rate of school drop-outs and low performance in schools are rampant problems of the youth in Hewu area.

HIV/AIDS prevalence in the Eastern Cape was 23 % in 2010, which was the third highest in the country after KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. In Hewu area which consists of 30 facilities, the prevalence was 22% of a population of 401 941. In 2010, from January to December, out of 7 854 youth below 24 years of age 1 000 of them, (318 males and 682 females) went for HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) of which 13 % tested HIV positive (District Health Information System, Lukanje sub-district). The percentage given includes mostly learners in secondary schools who fall in the age group of 15 to 21 from grade 10 to 12.

Schools in the area still experience a significant number of teenage pregnancies and most learners in the schools have at least one child (*learner mothers*). Thirteen percent of the age 15 to 24 olds testing HIV positive is an indication that the number of learners who cannot say no to sex or delay sex debut is high and the use of condoms is low. The above results also showed 31.8 % of the same age group of 15 to 24 olds who have tested for HIV, again an indication that there is a high potential of harbouring of HIV/AIDS among the youth as the percentage is low.

In addition, learners are involved in a number of risky behavioural patterns such as drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, being sexually involved with many partners and older men (*sugar daddies*) for gifts and money.

The Department of Social Development – Crime prevention unit in Whittlesea revealed that from January to June 2012 they had 24 cases of crime committed by the under 18 years old youth. These cases included murder, rape, common assault, motor vehicle theft and house breaking. The Department also had cases of youth of ages 12 to 24 who had behavioural problems due to the use of drugs. In February 2012 there were six cases, March they had five, April there were fifteen and May they had eight cases.

Furthermore, the learners seem not to care and are not serious about their studies or not so concerned about their future and life in general (Jennings, 2004). Furthermore, the overall pass rate of learners in these schools is very poor and most of the schools in the area are classified as underperforming schools by the Department of Education.

Given the reasons discussed above despite the existence of LO in the schools one would want to know if the programme is effective or not, hence the purpose of the study.

1.3. Significance of the study

The study will benefit not only Hewu cluster schools, but other schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape as the findings will be used to improve the LO programme that is taught in schools as part of the school curriculum. That will include suggestions to use methodology that is needs-oriented and is presented in a problem-solving, practical/participatory, reflective, and learner-centered approach that will enhance the recommended existing teaching methodologies. The study will go a long way in helping learners use life skills more effectively and that will help them to be more focused in their studies, avoid risky behaviour and hence contribute towards reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the area.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

- establish the views of learners concerning the effectiveness of LO with regard to meeting their needs,
- analyze the LO programme, its content, methodology and teacher training,
- identify gaps between the needs and challenges of learners and the skills provided by the LO programme and
- provide guidelines for a more effective life skills programme.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Life Skills

Life skills are defined by the United Nations Children Education Fund, UNICEF (2004) as a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills. On the other side, according to World Health Organization, WHO (1997), life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

UNICEF (2004) sees life skills as a behaviour change process that should cause a positive change in one's knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) equally. Similarly, WHO (1997) describes life skills as a behaviour change vehicle that empowers one to deal with everyday demands and challenges. The two bodies seem to agree on life skills as being a conduit of a positive observable change in knowledge, attitudes and practice that can help individuals face the needs and challenges of everyday situations.

Jennings (2006) who agrees with the WHO (1997) definition of life skills categorizes life skills as social skills which include communication, negotiation/refusal, assertiveness, interpersonal and life skills as a behaviour change vehicle that empowers one to deal with everyday demands and challenges. The two publications seem to agree on life skills as being a conduit of a positive observable change in knowledge, attitudes and practice that can help individuals face the needs and challenges of everyday situations.

Singh (2003) also defines life skills in three categories: (i) as key competencies such as, functioning in socially heterogeneous groups, acting autonomously and using tools interactively that contribute to an overall successful life and a well-functioning society, (ii) as instrumental in meeting important challenges in a wide spectrum of relevant contexts and (iii) as being relevant to all individuals. Singh sees life skills as those competences that are essential and relevant to enable every individual to function successfully under the complexity and diversity of the social, economic and cultural contexts.

UNICEF (2004) and WHO (1997) both came up with a list of ten core life skills that they believe an individual ought to obtain in order to experience a behavioural change. These include: problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness building skills, empathy and coping with stress and emotions. In addition, WHO (1997) further categorized the skills mentioned into (i) critical thinking skills/decision-making skills, (ii) interpersonal/communication skills and (iii) coping and self-management skills.

Jennings (2006) agrees with the WHO (1997) definition of life skills which categorizes life skills as (i) social skills which include communication, negotiation/refusal, assertiveness, interpersonal and cooperation skills, (ii) cognitive skills which are decision-making/problem solving skills and critical thinking skills and (iii) emotional coping skills such as managing stress, managing feelings and internal control skills like self-management and self-monitoring. The categories of life skills by both WHO (1997) and Jennings (2006) are synonymous. However, the study will use more of Jennings' category because it is more encompassing.

This study will also focus more on WHO (1997) and Singh's (2003) definitions of life skills as they see them as enabling mechanisms for youths to solve the various needs and challenges that they meet in their everyday life.

2.2 Types and content of life skills

2.2.1 Types of life skills

Life skills differ according to the challenges and needs at hand. If the challenges are economical, for example, then entrepreneurial skills, business, vocational, computer, practical and managerial skills would be relevant to the youth. As Singh (2003), puts it, activities over the life course take place in a variety of *contexts* (political process, work place, at home, in the community, or in non-formal and informal settings), and *sectors or domains* (health, environment, gender, work etc.) of human existence. It is

therefore, in the context of these different life situations that life skills need to be adapted and defined.

This study will take the side of Quane (2002) and Singh (2003), who argue that of all the different skills in a variety of contexts, the social dimensions are particularly important as they condition life itself and compel individuals to purposefully acquire skills, develop attitudes and values in order to face and master real life situations.

2.2.2. Content of life skills

The content of life skills depend on the kind of skills that are needed. In the context of life skills training and education, which is the focus of this study, life skills, according to Visser (2005) should produce individuals who are seen as consisting of multiple sub-systems such as the physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, moral and behavioral – all in close relationship and part of the whole-functioning within a family and social context. The suggestion in Visser (2005) of skills to be incorporated in training and education agree with the list of skills as classified by UNICEF (2004), WHO (1997) and Jennings (2006).

Jennings (2006) suggests that the curriculum content of life skills should include prevention and treatment of STIs, pregnancy prevention, sexual expression and orientation, adolescent behaviour, psychological development issues, problem-solving, critical thinking, interpersonal relationships, empathy and the ability to cope with stress, conflict management and assertiveness.

The RAPIDS youth life skills training manual (2007), which stands for *Reaching HIV/AIDS Affected People with Integrated Development and Support*, a programme in Africare Organization, which was designed to help in the prevention and mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS in Zambia grouped the content into (i) personal development skills which included modules such as self-awareness, having life goals, values and beliefs and leadership skills and (ii) psycho-social life skills which cover the following modules: effective decision making, effective communication, self-image/self-esteem, negotiation skills, conflict and problem solving, motivation,

relationship skills, assertiveness skills, critical thinking skills, gender issues, drugs, alcoholism and other mind altering substances, as well as HIV/AIDS.

The impression of many authors is that the content of life skills should include the skills such as categorized by WHO (1997) and Jennings (2006), that is social, cognitive and emotional.

2.3. Implementation of life skills

2.3.1 Teaching methodology

The teaching methodology recommended for teaching life skills should be interesting, innovative and should practically involve learners in order for the skills to be understood and be applicable. According to USAID (2004), for life skills programmes to effectively impact skills, teachers must move beyond lecturing and rote learning styles and use a variety of interactive methodologies. The teaching methods should include brainstorming, group facilitation, use of media and newsprint, role plays, case studies, debates or structured discussions, games, written and physical exercises, visual and performing arts (singing, dancing, drama and drawing). The teachers should also take cognizance of the development stages of youths, and use culturally relevant and gender sensitive learning activities (Jennings (2006)).

In addition, Griessel-Roux et al. (2005) suggest that the teaching methodology should make use of more visual materials, such as videos and photographs. However, Boler et al. (2004) argue that even taking and showing videos are not participatory enough, emphasizing how practical and involving a life skills programme should be in order to attract the youth's interest and retain their understanding of the skills which they have to apply in their daily lives. Boler et al. (2004) lament on the fact that teaching in most classrooms globally tends to be instructive, non-participatory, inflexible and assessment driven. They say however, that life skills education is intended to be participatory and responsive, raising questions rather than providing answers, and challenging young people and adults to find new ways of relating to one another.

Singh (2003) substantiates the participatory approach to teaching and states that life skills cannot be learned in an abstract and theoretical way. Rather it requires the individual to subject his own experience, contexts and observations about problems to creative analysis and evaluation, to collect, probe and discuss his experience where it happens in real life.

In a nutshell, the life skills teaching methodology should be participatory and reflective, practically allowing learners to interactively employ a variety of methods of learning.

2.3.2. Curriculum

If life skills are for training and education, then expectations are that they should be taught as part of the school curriculum. The challenge that exists is that the life skill curriculum is usually excluded from the proper planning and review process of the general curriculum and because of that it is given less sense of ownership. Life skills are taken as part of extra-curricular activities, such HIV/AIDS clubs which are not compulsory and though they can be participatory, are limited in scope (Boler et al. (2004)).

2.3.3 Assessment of life skills

According to UNESCO (2006) assessing the impact of life skills is difficult. Achieving life skills objectives takes time. However, not assessing the learning outcome of HIV and AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive health (SRH) education can lead to a reduction in the time allocated to the subject or the subject not taught at all. Relevant assessment, especially formative assessment can have a strong positive impact on the teaching and learning process.

The type of assessment tools recommended for assessing knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour, include closed and open-ended questions, case studies, timelines, role play/simulation, plays/poetry, observations, self-report checklists, interviews, stimulus activities and learner projects.

2.3.4. Who should teach?

It is also recommended that life skills be collaboratively taught by well-trained professionals such as teachers, counselors, social workers, health workers, psychologists and peer leaders who are competent, credible, of high status and are seen as positive role models. These professionals should be able to guide, facilitate and have respect and passion for youths, as well as being knowledgeable about the content matter UNICEF (2004).

On the other hand USAID (2004) stated that the trainers sometimes have fears although they are professionals but are uninterested to convey life skills information or are too embarrassed to handle some sensitive topics. Sometimes they might be required to impart skills that they themselves do not possess and are likely not to understand the benefits of the skills.

2.4. Needs and challenges of youth

It is evident that young people live in a complex web of social and cultural interactions, which frame their decisions and actions (Boles et al, (2004)). In addition, to the challenges such as mentioned before, HIV/AIDS is the biggest challenge in this area that leaves learners vulnerable and forces them get involved in risky behaviour. According to Whiteside et al. (2002:27), “AIDS means there are students at all levels with new special needs: orphans, children exposed to infectious diseases and emotional trauma because they live with and care for family members with HIV/AIDS, children who are discriminated against or isolated because they or their families are infected, and children in households where a parent is ill or has died, or where orphans have been taken in”.

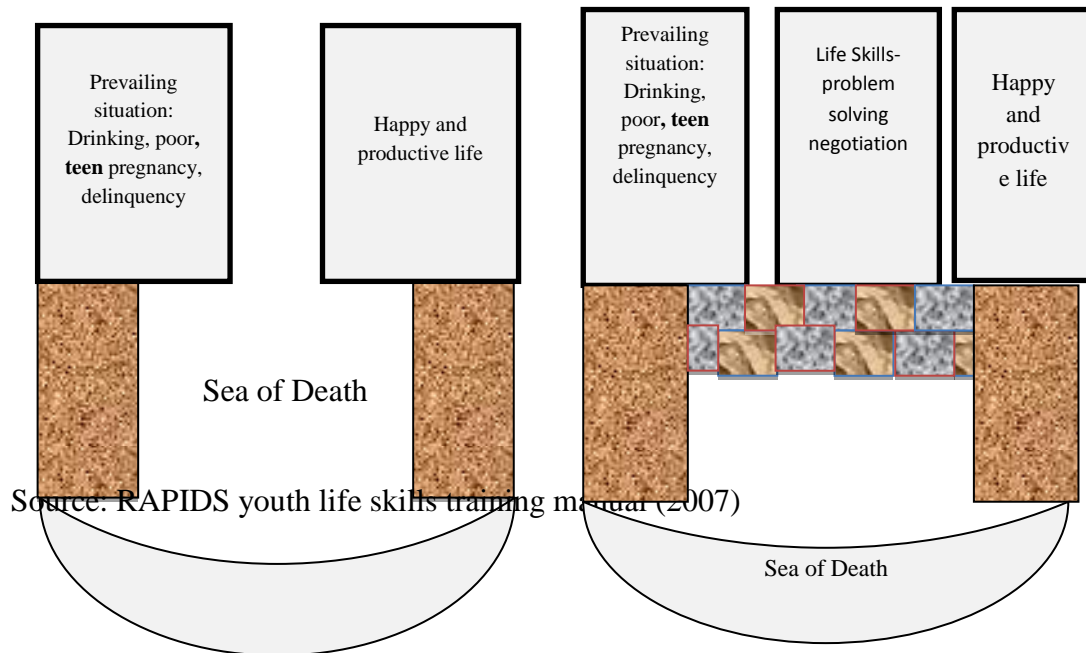
RAPIDS youth life skills training manual (2007) presents the needs and challenges of the youth in a visual way by using the Bridge Model. In the Bridge Model youth are involved in all sorts of risky behaviour, prostitution, unprotected sex, drugs, alcohol abuse, smoking, drunkenness, suicidal behaviour and all kinds of social ills on the side of the ‘sea of death’. This side of the bridge is the ‘prevailing situation’. There are all sorts of information and warnings from all sources, media, parents, schools,

peer educators but it seems it does not help change anybody. The next thing that happens is that some fall in the ‘sea of death’, *see figure 1*.

This is where there are all sorts of challenges such as HIV, AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), opportunistic diseases such as tuberculosis, alcoholism, poverty, school dropouts and eventually death. The ‘bridge’ is the life skills that form ‘building blocks’ above the ‘sea of death’. The youth who are in the ‘prevailing situation’ side when they get trained and apply these skills end up walking on the bridge and reach the other side of the bridge where they will live a ‘happy and productive life’ *see figure 2*.

Figure 1 Bridge Model without life skills

Figure 2 Bridge Model with life skills



Source: RAPIDS youth life skills training manual (2007)

Griessel-Roux et al. (2005) also noted the severity of the challenge of the youth when they said that the physical, material, intellectual, educational and psychosocial needs of the affected youth are radically undermined as they are forced to prematurely take over adult responsibilities, such as parenting and maintaining households.

It seems that Boler et al (2004) recognize the entanglement of social and cultural challenges that the youth live in. The RAPIDS Youth Life Skills Training Manual (2007) bridge model spells out the challenges in the ‘prevailing situation’ and the ‘sea of death’. In addition, Griessel-Roux et al. (2005) add that the challenges are not only

social and cultural but physical, material, intellectual, educational and psychosocial. All these explain the many needs and challenges that the youth are faced with and will be used in the context of the study.

2.5 The effective life skills in addressing needs and challenges of youth

2.5.1 The benefits of life skills

A number of benefits of life skills have been recorded by authors and journals. For example, Visser (2005) recorded the successes that were observed by various authors as follows: (i) Life skills and HIV/AIDS education programmes in Southern Africa experienced increased levels of knowledge in HIV/AIDS, more assertiveness, more positive attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS, delayed sexual activities, more condom use and fewer sexual partners. They also reported (ii) changed risky behaviour for specific HIV/AIDS life skills and (iii) a positive impact on children and adolescents for preventive life skills programmes.

Other authors also observed noticeable behavioural changes such as delaying the onset age of the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana (Botvin et al. 1995), preventing high-risk sexual behavior (O'Donnell et al., 1999; Kirby, 1994 and Schinke et al., 1981), preventing delinquency (Young et al., 1997) and improving academic performance (Elias et al., 1991) among others.

In addition, UN (2009) noted that life skills are an effective tool for empowering young people to make informed and responsible decisions about their well-being. Life skills training not only helps minimize high-risk behaviour, it also builds youth's confidence for engaging in creative problem-solving to overcome the social and economic barriers to self-development. The UN (2009) intervention project entitled "Strengthening Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behaviour" showed that the intervention made a difference for many youth to the extent of developing coping and negotiation mechanisms in various situations.

2.5.2. The effective strategies in addressing needs and challenges of the youth

Bonnell and Zizys (2005) identified the following as effective strategies in addressing needs and challenges of youth in Toronto, Canada: (i) Employ well-trained, dedicated staff or volunteers with whom youth can identify, who may have lived in a similar environment as the participants and have had similar experiences; (ii) Use positive approaches, encouraging youth to build on their strengths and improve their skills in a wide range of areas, as opposed to using programmes to target negative behaviour, such as crime or drug use.

Also (iii) Offer a variety of activities, such as sports, homework help, the arts, or community service, to attract a diverse group of participants, to reduce boredom and encourage regular attendance; (iv) Offer activities that tend to be missing from the school day, such as arts activities that have been eliminated from the traditional school curriculum; (v) Conduct direct outreach to youth, as well as their parents, through phone calls and home visits; street outreach has proven to be particularly effective for recruiting teens; youth participants are often most effective recruiters or ambassadors in a programme; hire dedicated youth outreach staff if possible;

In addition the strategies (vi) Involve youth for multiple benefits: youth can best identify what interests them and attracts them; youth can serve as outreach staff; and involvement in the planning and implementation of these programmes offer opportunities to develop leadership skills, as well as earn them some income, all of which serve to attract and provide them with tangible benefits; (vii) Offer youth the chance to be of service, rather than just to be served (for example, social activism and community service initiatives;

Furthermore the strategies (viii) Incorporate physical activities through athletics, dance, drama, camping and even building trades projects, where responsible self-care and health-promoting behaviour are a natural part of the skills to be mastered; (ix) Address barriers by booking an accessible location that is welcoming and youth-friendly with low or no fee and provide a convenient schedule; (x) Include literacy programmes, strengthening young people's motivation to read and write by linking reading and writing with explorations of identity and self, integrating literacy

activities with other activities, such as cooking and field trips to the theatre, and by fostering a sense of playfulness about reading and writing.

Similarly, UN (2009) noted some good practices on life skills training as follows:

(i) Knowing the situation before designing interventions and ongoing monitoring and follow up; (ii) Undertaking community-based interventions. This includes organizing community activities, such as exhibitions which allowed for creativity of participating youth to be displayed. This was found to have many benefits as it promoted the skills and talents of the youth and served as an incentive for the programme; (iii) Engaging youth through peer-to-peer approaches.

The approach which was used in the four countries allowed young people to be more inclined to discuss sexual behaviour and other sensitive subjects with their peers than with parents and other adults. The peer training also provided participants an opportunity and forum to discuss their concerns, fears and doubts regarding substance abuse, sexual practice matters which were never talked about for various reasons, including stigma. The practices also included (iv) Linking interventions to other initiatives and larger social environment; (v) Developing sustainability of interventions; and (vi) Engaging parents, local authorities and community leaders.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

3.1 Target population and sampling methods

A mixed method approach was used in this study. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with grades 10 to 12 learners at five selected high schools. A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with a group of Life Orientation teachers from the same schools and a document review of education policies related to life orientation was conducted.

Data for the study was collected in five schools out of 15 secondary schools in Hewu area in the Queenstown district of the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape. After obtaining permission from the Department of Education to carry out the study, the researcher used a list of 15 schools in the Hewu area to obtain a randomly selected sample of five schools. Names of individual schools were cut from the list and the piece of paper containing each school was folded and put in a box. The box was shaken thoroughly. Five people, two teachers and three learners who were found basking in the sun at break time were each asked to pick a piece of paper.

The schools chosen by the five people in that random picking process were the following: Nomphumelelo, Ekuphumleni, Funda, Sovuke Sikhanye and Hewu Secondary Schools. The researcher sought permission from principals of the chosen schools to interview their learners from grade 10 to 12 and Life Orientation teachers for these grades. The principals willingly granted permission in writing.

A systematic sampling design was used to obtain a sample of student respondents. The researcher carried out the selection process of learners in each school by choosing every fifth learner from the boys' and girls' lists in each grade. Class registers were used as they already have the lists of boys and girls in alphabetical order and their dates of birth. Twelve learners were chosen from each school, consisting of a purposeful selection of two boys and two girls from each grade. There were 60 learners altogether that were selected to participate in the research, comprising 20 learners in each grade as shown in table 1. The selection was thus randomly done and stratified (Christensen et al., (2011)).

Table 1: Sampling frame for the study

Clust er	Sampled schools and number of learners in each					Total no. of participa nts
	Ekuphuml eni Secondary	Funda Seconda ry	Hewu Seconda ry	Nomphumel elo Secondary	Sovuke Sikhany e Seconda ry	
Grade 10	4	4	4	4	4	20
Grade 11	4	4	4	4	4	20
Grade 12	4	4	4	4	4	20
Total	12	12	12	12	12	<u>60</u>

The learners who were younger than 18 years were given consent forms to give to their parents or guardians to sign and the rest of the learners signed the consent forms during the time they filled in the questionnaire. The consent forms were translated to IsiXhosa, which is the home language of the participants so that both the learners and their parents could give their consent with clear understanding of what they were consenting to.

Life orientation teachers in the five schools were invited to a focus group discussion. Two schools had each one LO teacher, one school had two teachers and the other two schools had three teachers for each grade.

3.2. Data collection

3.2.1. Questionnaire for learners

In each of the selected high schools, Ekuphumleni, Funda, Hewu and Sovuke Sikhanye, participating learners were put together as a group of 12. The learners who were younger than 18 years were given the consent form for the parents one to two

days before filling in the questionnaire. Learners aged 18 years and older were given the chance to read and ask questions before they signed the consent form. They signed the consent forms before they were given a questionnaire. The questionnaire was explained to the learners before they started writing. In Hewu one learner had absconded from school and two learners from Sovuke Sikhanye did not participate because they were absent from school.

In Nomphumelelo, it was not possible to administer the questionnaire to learners as a group at the agreed time because it was a long weekend and the school released learners earlier. The learners were given the consent form and the questionnaire to sign and answer individually. As a result of lack of follow up five learners did not bring back the questionnaire. One learner stated that his parent refused because in the consent form it was stated that it is optional to participate. There were eight spoilt items altogether leaving a sample of 52 responses. This gives a response rate of 86,7% for the student survey.

3.2.2. Focus Group Discussion with Life Orientation Teachers

Seven life orientation teachers of the ten invited for discussion turned up. Two other teachers from one of the secondary schools gave an apology because they had an emergency staff meeting that afternoon which was scheduled for the focus group discussion. The teachers sat in a horse shoe setting. The researcher gave them the consent form and went through it with them. They willingly signed the consent form to participate in the research. The researcher asked the teachers for permission to use an audio recorder and they agreed. The researcher led the discussion by reading the questions and the teachers gave their views.

3.2.3 Life Orientation Programme-The Curriculum materials

Data was also collected by analyzing the following life orientation documents or materials that are provided by the Department of Education and are used by teachers in the teaching and learning of LO.

1. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade 10 to 12 (2003). The document featured general information on the subject, the Introduction of NCS Grade 10 to 12 (general), Definition of Life Orientation, Purpose of LO and Assessment.
2. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes (2003). It includes Section 1: Guidelines for the Development of Learning Programmes; Section 2: The Life Orientation Learning Programme; Section 3: Further Education Training (FET) which features the FET learner and illustration of learning programme, work schedule and lesson plan and Section 4: Learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs): general and materials for Life Orientation.
3. The Assessment Guidelines for Life Orientation which consists of two sections; Section A: Generic assessment guidelines and Section B: Assessment guidelines for Life Orientation.

3.2.4 Pilot study

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher gave a pilot questionnaire to 20 learners at one of the schools where the researcher teaches. When analyzing the questionnaire, it became apparent that the questionnaire was difficult for the learners because it had a lot of open-ended questions which needed the learners to express themselves. The initially proposed questionnaire was therefore changed to the one discussed below in (**Appendix 1**).

3.2.5. Ethical considerations

The consent form that both parents and learners signed was written in IsiXhosa, the language spoken by the participants and their parents. The information was translated and simplified so that both parents/guardians and learners who were going to give consent would do so with a clear understanding of what the research was about. The consent form signed by the Life Orientation teachers was in English taking into consideration that teachers do understand the language fully. The following aspects were explained in the consent forms.

Risks and benefits

The researcher explained that there was no appreciable risk or discomfort that will arise from participating in the study. Questions would be posed in general terms. The risk was minimal and participants would not be asked to divulge personal information. There would be no direct benefit to learners, teachers or the secondary schools participating in this study except that they might benefit from the outcome of the research, by knowing whether Life Orientation is effective or not.

Voluntary participation

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative repercussions.

Coercion and perverse incentives

It was made clear that there were no undue incentives to them for consenting to be part of the study. Any kind of coercion and issuing of perverse incentives would be seen as a breach of ethical conduct and would be deemed unethical.

Confidentiality

It was explained in the consent forms that the information collected in questionnaires and focus group discussion surveys would be treated in a confidential manner. All the questionnaires and focus group discussions would be held in the classrooms. Data collected electronically would be stored on password-protected computers and network drives. Hard copies of questionnaires would be stored in locked cupboards of the researcher's home office when not in use for data entry or analysis and would be destroyed once analysis had been done. All audio-recordings of focus group discussions were to be destroyed as soon as the data had been captured.

No names or personal identifiers were recorded in any of the data collection tools. In reporting the results, class information was grouped with other similar types of classes, and care was taken not to report results in a way that would enable any classes to be identified and stigmatized in their views about LO in schools.

3.2.6. Limitations of the study

When collecting data, the following irregularities and limitations occurred.

i) A list of schools that were initially presented for Hewu cluster secondary schools were fifteen but it was discovered later that the actual number of schools were 21. The study took a third of the 15 schools, which amounted to five schools. The researcher decided to use 60 participants as the minimum number of participants. As a result, 12 learners were randomly chosen from each participating school. Since the study did not take one third of the target population but rather the schools, that made the sample small. A sample size of 60 participants in a survey of learners is too small and therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to other schools in the province or nationally.

In addition, the study did not use all of the 60 participants, but 52 because in one school a number of participants did not return the questionnaire. The study also intended to use ten LO teachers from participating schools given that each school has at least one teacher, but due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control only seven turned up.

ii) The original questionnaire that was meant for learners was piloted. The results of the pilot study showed that the questionnaire had a number of open-ended questions where learners were supposed to express themselves. As a result, many of them struggled to express their views and rather resorted to leaving the questions blank. The questionnaire was therefore changed to include more closed-ended questions.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Results of the cross-sectional survey with learners

4.1.1. Demographic data

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic variable	Frequency (n = 52)	Percentage (%)
Age		
14 - 15 years	0	0
16 – 17 years	16	31
18 - 19 years	25	48
20 – 21 years	9	17
22- 23 years	2	4
24 years and older	0	0
Gender		
Male	26	50
Female	26	50
Year of study		
Grade 10	14	27
Grade 11	19	36.5
Grade 12	19	36.5

Fifty two of the sixty sampled learners filled in the questionnaire giving a response rate of 86.7 %. The majority of respondents 48 % were aged 18 to19 years, followed by 31 % aged 16 to17 years, 17% aged 20 to21 years and 4 % aged 22 to23 years of age. There was an equal split of 50 % each for male and female respondents. Just over a quarter, which is 26.9 % of respondents were in grade 10 while over a third each, 36.5 % were in grade 11 or 12.

4.1.2. Factors that influence positive behaviour among youth

Table 3: Factors that influence good/positive behaviour among youth

Factors	Number (n=52)	Percentage (%)
Mother	50	96
Teachers	48	92
Grandmothers	40	77
Pastors	38	73
Father	37	71
Grandfathers	33	63
Role models	31	60
Media (TV, magazines, newspapers, radio, internet, cell phones)	18	35
Neighbours	12	23
Friends	6	12

An overwhelming 96% of the learners find their mother as the most influential with regard to positive behaviour. The other four influential factors are teachers, grandmothers, pastors and fathers at 92%, 76%, 73% and 71% respectively. This trend is an indication that the learners were looking at the most available person in their lives. Fathers come fifth and grandfathers sixth on the list. Their position in the list also suggests that their availability and support is relatively low.

4.1.3. Factors that influence negative behaviour among youth

Table 4: Factors that influence bad/negative behaviour among youth

Factors	Number	Percentage
Peer pressure	48	92
Alcohol and drugs	46	88
Poverty	40	77
Friends	40	77

Unemployment	34	65
Media (TV, magazines, newspapers, radio, internet, cell phones)	22	42
Neighbours	14	27
Father	5	10
Culture	2	4
Mother	2	4
Pastors	0	0

Approximately 92% learners reported peer pressure as a factor that influenced negative behaviour, followed by alcohol and drugs at 88% and friends and poverty at 77% each, unemployment at 65% and media at 42%.

4.1.4 Causes and consequences of negative behaviour

Table 5: Causes and consequences of negative behaviour

Factors	Number	Percentage
Smoking and drinking	47	90
School dropout	47	90
Teen pregnancies	42	81
High crime rate	39	75
Prostitution	37	71
Substance abuse	36	69
Early pregnancy	36	69
Rape increase	35	63
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	30	58
HIV infection	28	54
Having multiple sexual partners	28	54
Poverty	25	48
Having sugar daddies/mummies	24	46

The learners identified the following as the main sources of negative behaviour: smoking and drinking at 90%, school drop-out also at 90%, teenage pregnancy at 81%, increased crime at 75% and prostitution at 70%. The other factors which are

still high, above 60% include substance abuse at 69%, early pregnancy at 69% as well as an increase in rape cases at 63%. The results show that most of the factors that affect learners are not different from those identified in the report from the Department of Social Development - Crime Prevention Unit.

4.1.5. Effectiveness of Life Orientation in correcting negative behaviour

The question was aimed at getting the views of the learners as to whether Life Orientation is useful or effective in helping them curb negative behaviour. Almost every learner's response, (98%) was yes. This response from the learners, who are the recipients of the Life Orientation programme indicates that the programme is helping them to correct negative behaviour.

4.1.6 Attainment of life skills by learners

The study wanted to verify if the learners have attained certain life skills, in order to validate their response to whether or not LO is effective in helping them curb negative behaviour. The life skills that were investigated were based on the life skills as described by Jennings (2006): (i) Social skills which include communication, negotiation/refusal, assertiveness, interpersonal and cooperation skills, (ii) Cognitive skills which are decision-making/problem solving skills and critical thinking skills and (iii) Emotional coping skills such as managing stress, managing feelings and internal control skills like self-management and self-monitoring.

The responses that follow were the learners' reactions to whether or not they had attained those social, cognitive and emotional coping skills. They were asked whether they can resist peer pressure; avoid getting involved in risky behaviour as well as whether they are able to cope with the loss of their loved ones.

4.1.7 Learners' ability to resist peer pressure

The negative behaviour is usually displayed by involvement with boyfriends and peers and other factors such as the media. As such, a learner is most likely to fall victim to the negative behaviour due to peer pressure, whereas an assertive learner would resist peer pressure.

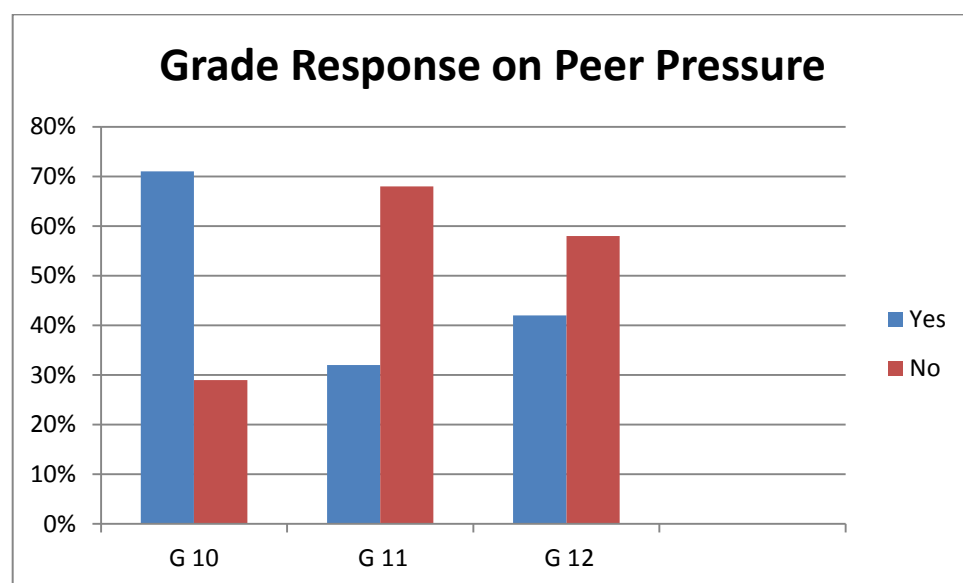
A “Yes” response meant that the learners succumbed to peer-pressure, despite the knowledge that what they are doing might have negative consequences. A “No” would mean that the learners are able to say no to negative behaviour regardless of peer pressure. In other words, the learner is assertive and does not live by the standards of other peers.

The results showed that 54% of those learners were able to resist peer pressure. This was an indication that there was something considerable that LO was imparting on the learners, helping them to be independent and be able to say no to challenges such as peer pressure.

In addition, out of the 24 learners who said “Yes”, the majority, that is 58 % were girls, and out of 28 who said “No”, 57% were boys. It means more girls are able to succumb to peer-pressure than boys.

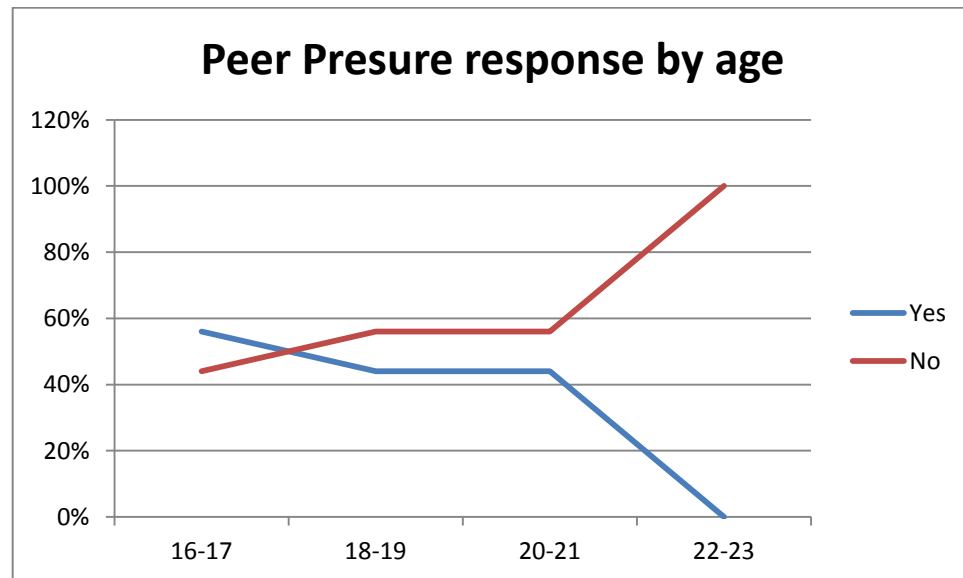
The results also showed that more Grade 10 learners are capable of yielding to peer-pressure than Grade 11 and 12. This could be due to the fact that the Grade 10 learners are relatively younger or that they have not covered more LO content than the other higher classes. Below are the results showing the grades.

Figure 3: Response on peer pressure by grade



A further investigation was done to establish the trend of the response according to age. The results were shown in the table below.

Figure 4: Response on peer pressure by age



The results show that 56% of the learners 16 to 17 years would succumb to peer-pressure than 44% of the 18 to 19 and 20 to 21 year old learners. The 22 to 23 year old learners would completely say no to peer pressure. It shows that as the learners grow older they are able to resist peer pressure than when they are younger. It is most probable that the learners who are between 16 and 17 are also in Grade 10 as indicated before, that they are the majority who would say “Yes” to negative behaviour.

4.1.8. Were learners able to resist risky behaviour?

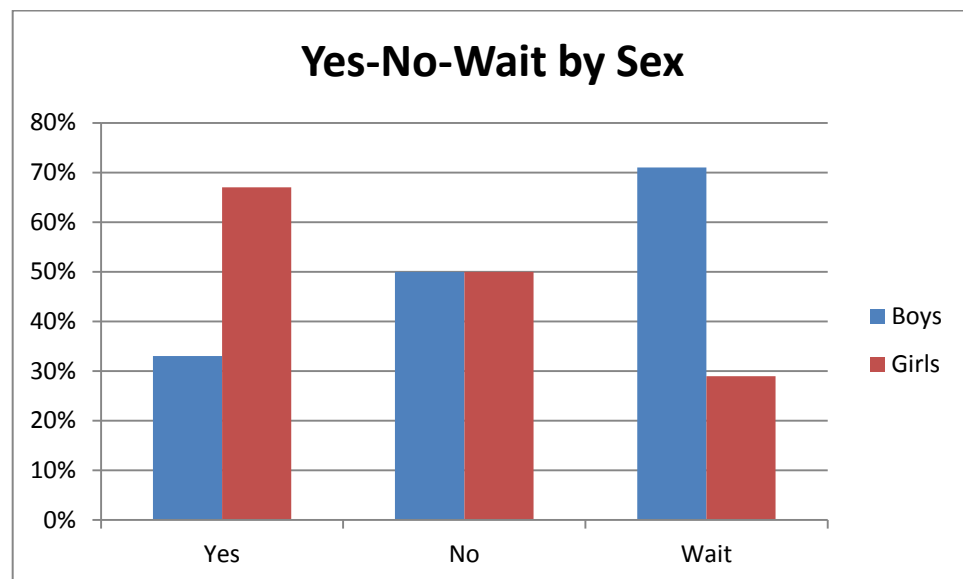
A “Yes” response meant that the learner can easily give in to risky sexual practices such as sleeping with a stranger, not using a condom or knowing the HIV status of the their sexual partner. A “No and Wait” response showed that the learner was conscious of the fact that it can be risky to get involved in sexual intercourse with a stranger, so they have to say no or wait until they were ready. Again the “No and Wait” also would indicate a delay in sexual debut.

The results suggested that 35 % of the learners were capable of making sexual decisions which were risky. On the other hand 65 % of the learners were able to make sound decisions about their sexual involvement. They might be sexually active but were able to say no or wait to a stranger or their sexual partner until they were ready. This meant that the learners were aware of the danger of sleeping with a stranger such as becoming pregnant or contracting HIV if knowing their sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.

Based on the response discussed above, the learners were able to make good decisions concerning their sexual choices. This could be attributed to psycho-social skills that they learnt in LO, such as effective decision making, communication, negotiation and assertiveness skills as noted by RAPIDS (2007).

A comparison was done on the learners' responses by sex and the results were as follows:

Figure 5: Ability of the learners to resist risky behaviour by sex



Just like in the previous observation on peer pressure, 67% of the girls are the ones who said yes to someone who wanted to have sex with them compared to 71% of the boys who said wait. The inability of girls to say no could be due to the fact that girls are on the receiving side and boys or men are the ones who usually do the proposal

and persuasion. In addition, girls are often forced into sex even when they do not like to have it. This was established by Heise et al. (1999) that over 50 % of women worldwide experience physical abuse and sexual coercion.

Furthermore, girls usually agree to have sex with the hope of benefiting from the person they have sex with in terms of gifts and money. This means girls are more at risk of not only becoming pregnant but contracting HIV.

Another comparison of responses according to age showed the following results given in the table below.

Table 6: Ability of the learners to resist risky behaviour by age

	16 – 17 (n=16)	18 – 19 (n=25)	20 – 21 (n=9)	22 -23 (n=2)
Yes	62 %	32 %	0	0
No	19 %	40 %	33 %	50 %
Wait	19 %	28 %	67 %	50 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Comparing the responses according to age revealed that, 62 % of the 16 to 17 years old said “Yes” to have sex with someone who wants to have sex with them as compared to 32 % of the ones of age of 18 to 19 who also said “Yes”. The learners above 20 years of age did not answer “Yes” but rather said “No” or “Wait”.

Once more it shows that the younger the learners, the more vulnerable and indecisive they are about their sexual choices. The results also agree with UN (2009) that adolescent girls and women are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and sexual abuse. With the widespread gender bias and gender discrimination that exist, many young women tend to suffer a low self-esteem and inability to negotiate when they find themselves in high-risk situations.

There is however, evidence that the learners are more careful to indulge in risky behaviour as the overall proportion of learners who said “No” or “Wait” was 65%. The results concur with Visser. (2005) who observed some benefits of life skills as

being more assertive, delaying sexual activities, as well as showing a change from risky behaviour for specific HIV/AIDS life skills.

4.1.9. Were learners able to cope with difficult situations they face such as death of their loved ones, relatives or friends?

The question was asked in order to check whether or not learners have acquired coping skills. Strongly disagree would mean that the learners are completely unable to cope with difficult situations and highly likely to resort to negative behaviour such as drug abuse as a coping mechanism. Disagree would mean that the learners are not able to cope with some difficult situations. Neutral would mean the respondent is not sure or there are incidences where the learners are able to cope and others where they are not able to cope. Agree and strongly agree would mean that learners have gained some emotional coping skills.

The result showed that 25% disagreed, 29 % were neutral, and 48 % agreed. This was an indication that the majority of the learners are able to cope with the loss of their loved ones which implies that they have attained some level of interpersonal, coping and self-management skills.

4.1.10 Were topics in Life Orientation good in correcting bad or negative behaviour?

The majority of the learners, (90%) indicated that the topics in the Life Orientation programme are good in correcting bad or negative behaviour. The results clearly showed that learners perceive the Life Orientation topics to be relevant in addressing their needs.

4.1.11: Which topics were learners taught in class?

The aim of the question was to establish how much content the learners have done, as well as which area or module they have covered mostly. The results were categorized into three, those who covered almost all the topics, those who covered half of the content and those who covered less than half of the content.

The results were as follows: 35 % have done almost all the topics, 15 % learners have done half the content and 50 % had covered less than half of the content. To find out how much each grade had covered, the following results were recorded:

Table 7: Topics covered by the learners

	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Almost all content covered	21 %	32 %	42 %
Half of content covered	43 %	10 %	5 %
Less than half of content covered	36 %	58 %	53 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

The results indicate that the majority of the learners in Grade 11 and 12, 58 % and 53 % respectively, had not covered half of the LO content. However, 64 % of the grade 10 learners have covered at least half of the content. Given that the Grade 11 and 12 have done LO for at least two years at Further Education Training (FET) institutions, the results could not have affected their response to the questionnaire.

4.1.12. The most preferred topics

There were five learners who did not respond to this question completely and two mentioned the modules instead of the individual topics. The information was therefore based on 45 participants.

Table 8: Topics preferred by the learners (Percentage is indicated in brackets)

	Module 1: Personal Well-being	Module 2: Citizenship education	Module 3: Recreation and Physical well-being	Module 4: Career and Career Choices
Topics	Goals, values, choices and goal planning [60%]	Social and environmental issues [17%]	Participating in programmes to promote physical fitness [0]	Understanding yourself in relation to career requirements and socio-

				economic considerations [6%]
2.	Relationships and how they change [13%]	Human rights [35%]	Participating in various sports and games [4%]	Admission and financial assistance for higher education [4%]
3.	Skills and qualities which make good of relationships [6%]	Democracy [17%]	Participant and spectator behaviour in sport [2%]	Competencies, abilities and ethics in the world of work [2%]
4.	The role of power in relationships [6%]	Values, beliefs and ethics [17%]	Participation in environmentally-responsible outdoor group activities [10%]	Study skills, styles and strategies [19%]
5.	Gender roles and stereotyping [10%]			
6.	The impact of media on values and beliefs about relationships [4%]			
7.	What is a healthy and balanced lifestyle? [11%]			
8.	Personal safety			

	[15%]			
9.	Substance abuse [21%]			
10.	Sexual behaviour and choices [13%]			
11.	Diet and healthy lifestyle [27%]			

Thirty one learners or 60% liked the topic on goals, values, choices and goal planning most. Human rights topic was preferred by 35% of the learners, followed by diet and healthy lifestyle by 27%, substance abuse by 21% and the fifth preferred topic was study skills, styles and strategies by 19%. The rest of the topics learners liked ranged from 2% to 17%.

The results show a big margin on the highest preferred topic compared to the rest of the topics. This suggests that most of the learners are desperate for direction and guidance, as well as support in all areas of their lives. As such, a topic that deals with them understanding who they are, their interests and likes, strengths and weaknesses, abilities, values and how to set priorities and plan for their lives is of great interest to them.

In addition, the other four topics that follow, go along the same trend of wanting to know and understand their rights, how to lead a healthy lifestyle, issues of substance abuse and study skills and strategies.

This trend is substantiated by UNAIDS (2007) when talking about orphaned children, that they cannot get what otherwise the parents would have given them in terms of love, parental guidance, psycho-social and social support. Their upbringing and quality of life is being compromised so topics that address their plight are more appealing to them. UNESCO (2002) also added that such children often lack parental

guidance, particularly in the area of morals and correct behaviour and they suffer anxiety about their future and HIV status.

4.1.13. Reasons for most preferred topics

The study wanted to establish the reasons why the learners liked those particular topics they chose in 4.1.12. The reasons given would serve as an emphasis of the learners' interest, as well as an expression of what helps them most.

Four of the learners did not give their responses. The responses of the rest of the learners were categorized and recorded as shown in the table below:

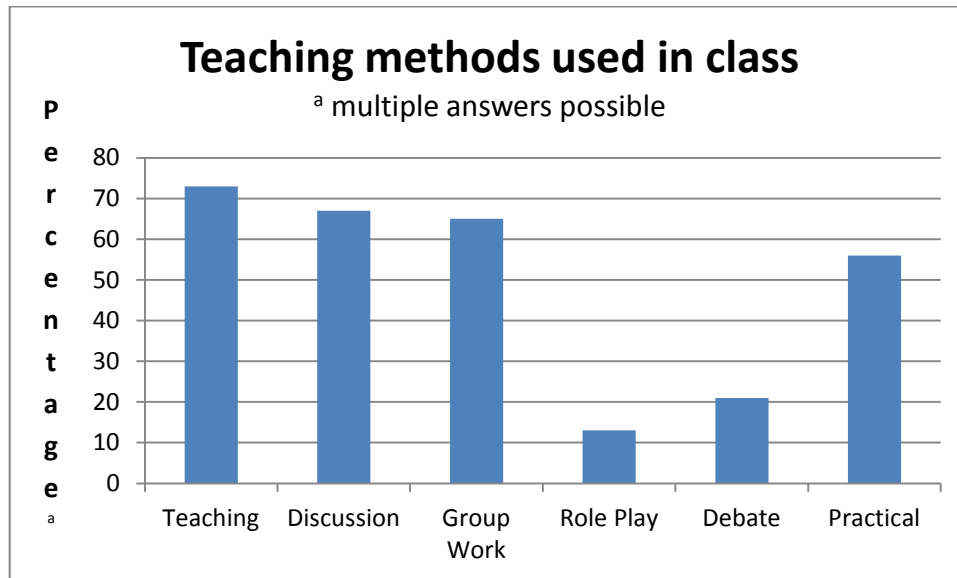
Table 9: Reasons for most preferred topics by the learners

Reasons	Number (n=48)	Percentage
As a guide, helping in setting and achieving one's goals	27	56
Well-being including safety, security, diet and lifestyle	13	27
Helping with career choices	10	21
Understanding oneself	9	19
Helping with knowing my rights	8	17
Learning about good relationship	3	6
Learning to take care of environment and surroundings	3	6
Learning from other people's experiences	3	6
Being assertive	2	4
Understanding between right and wrong	1	2

The reasons advanced for having chosen the topics tally well with the most liked topics in the previous question. For example, the most liked topic was goals, values, choices and goal planning. The reason with the highest response of 56 % was that LO act as a guide and help in setting and achieving one's goals. The ratio of the most liked topic and the reason was almost 10:9. The results confirm the trend observed in the previous observation, that the learners liked topics that showed them direction with respect to goal setting and planning. This further suggests that the learners view guidance as an important aspect of their lives.

4.1.14: Prominent Teaching Methodology used in the Teaching of LO

Figure 6: Teaching methods used in the LO classes



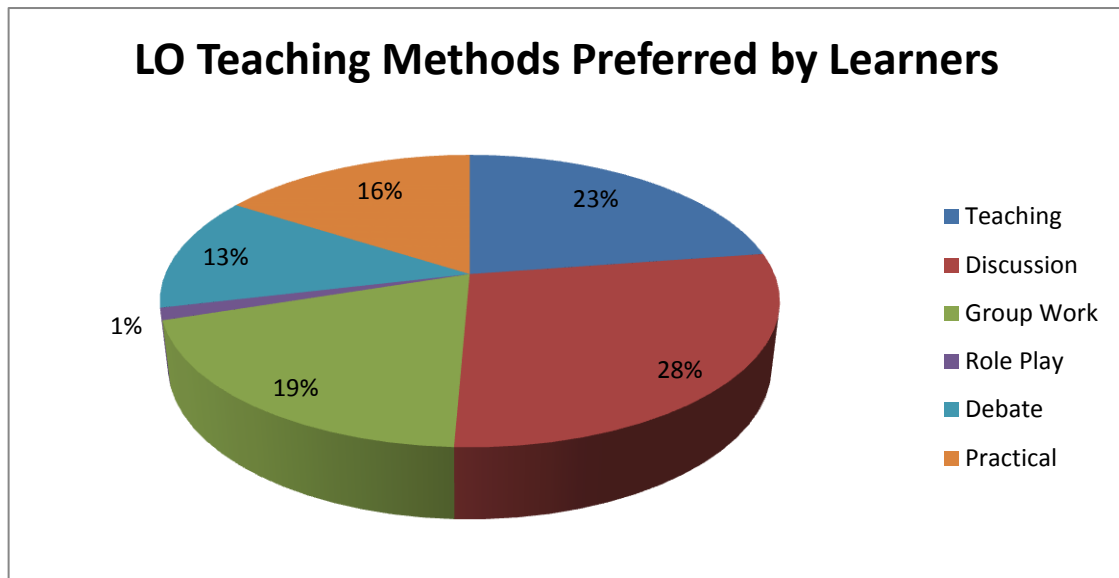
It is evident that the most common teaching methods used in LO class are teaching/lecture method (71%), discussions (68%) and group work (64%). Doing practical work was also chosen by 56 % of learners as used regularly in class. The percentage for practical could have been raised by the fact that LO has one period allocated for physical education where the learners do physical activities like exercises, games and sport. Role play and debate are the least used methods in class.

The teaching methods mainly used in class did not adequately meet with what Boler et al. (2004) and USAID (2004) recommend as the appropriate methodology for teaching LO as they are more inclined to the lecture method than the participatory ones. Therefore it is an appeal for teachers to consider using more of the participatory methods in class as it is also the requirement of NCS.

4.1.15 Which teaching methodology helped learners to learn life orientation better?

The question was intended to establish which of the methods mentioned in 4.1.14 helped the learners to learn Life Orientation better.

Figure 7: Teaching methods preferred by the learners



At least 28 % of the learners pointed out discussion as the main method that can help them to understand LO better. The teaching or lecture method still remains the second favourite as 23 % of the learners preferred it, followed by group work at 19 % and practical at 16 %. Debate at 13 % and Role play is the least favoured at 1 %.

The low choice of the role play method is a sign that learners are rarely or had never been exposed to this kind of method in the teaching and learning of LO as seen also from the results of the previous response. Otherwise it stands out that majority of the learners would prefer methods that are participatory like discussion and group work.

4.1.16. Ways of improving the teaching of Life Orientation

The learners were asked two ways of what they think how the teaching of Life Orientation could be improved. The following responses were captured and recorded as follows:

Table 10: Learners responses on how LO could be improved

Ways by which the teaching of LO can be improved	Number (n=52)	Percentage (%)
Discussion (talk, voice out, communicate)	13	25
Debate	11	21
Practical	10	19
Group and partner work	7	13
Teacher to ask questions after lessons, also give tests, class work or home work	6	12
More periods (every day)	6	12
Role play	5	10
Project or research at library and internet	4	8
Teaching	3	6
Honesty and openness of teachers	3	6
Concentration	3	6
Learners to be given a chance to read in class	2	4
Organize workshops for LO learners	1	2
Emphasis to be on study skills, social and environmental issues	1	2

According to the results, the learners suggested discussions, debate, practical, group work, as well as teacher asking questions, giving tests, class and homework ranging from 25 % to 12 % respectively, as some of the ways that the teaching of LO can be improved. About 10 % of the learners requested for more time to be given to LO and they suggested that LO be taught every day.

The teaching/lecture method alone represented 4 % of the responses, contrary to what the learners mentioned before as the topics that helped them understand LO better. That suggests that the teaching/lecture method helped the learners understand LO better because it was the most prominently used method, but for them the method was not the best preferred. The learners are basically asking for participatory methods to be employed in the teaching and learning of LO as discussed before.

It is hoped that making LO teaching participatory, responsive and practical as the learners also suggested, will attract the learners' interest and retail their understanding of the skills they learn which they have to apply in their daily lives (Boler et al., 2004).

4.2. Results of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

4.2.1 LO Teachers' perspectives on challenges learners face that influence their behaviour

Orphaned and child-headed families

When responding to the challenges the learners face that influence their behaviour, one teacher said "*Child-headed homes - whereby parents have passed on mainly due to HIV/AIDS. Children are left alone and grow up without parental guidance*". According to the LO teachers most of the learners were orphaned mainly by HIV/AIDS. Some did not have their real parents, because they work far from home. As a result, many learners headed families and others stayed with their grandparents. This challenge was raised by Griessel-Roux et al. (2005) as they mentioned that the needs of the youth are radically undermined as they are forced to prematurely take over adult responsibilities, such as parenting and maintaining households.

Lack of supervision

As a result of the learners being orphaned and staying alone or with grandparents, these learners lack parental guidance and supervision. They end up dropping out of school, getting pregnant, using drugs, smoking and drinking, and getting involved with sugar daddies and mummies as they try to seek love, money and gifts.

Substance abuse

There was too much substance abuse: alcohol, drugs, smoking at home and in the community, and even at school. One of the LO teachers said "*there is too much abuse of alcohol which the learners are exposed to at home and in the community*". Many learners especially boys witnessed and copied this substance abuse behaviour which was displayed by their peers and some teachers.

Domestic violence and incest

The learners were exposed to too much domestic violence and they were often subjected to incest. These acts in the community affected them socially.

Poverty, unemployment and social grants

Most girls have more than one child. They are sometimes forced to leave school and go to raise their children. The lack of unemployment and poverty had lured some of the girls into conceiving more children so as to benefit financially from the social grants provided by government.

Media

The media influenced learners in a negative way. For example, there were enticing adverts on alcohol that could tempt learners to drink and some programmes promote violence, the use of drugs and pornography that learners watch on television and can easily pervert them. Programmes such as Yizo-Yizo were cited as encouraging the use of drugs at school. The LO teachers also mentioned that the learners watch sexual activities (pornography) in programmes such as the one on local television on Saturdays from 11 p.m to 12 mid night.

The challenges that the teachers have observed concur with what the learners mentioned before: smoking, drinking, school drop-out, crime, prostitution, substance abuse and rape, form the list of negative behaviour rampant among them. The teachers' observation also confirms the many challenges that the youth have as mentioned by Whiteside et al. (2002) and described by RAPIDS (2007) as the 'Prevailing situation' in the Bridge Model.

4.2.2. How the challenges that the learners faced affected teaching and learning

Lack of concentration

Most learners were reported not to be paying attention in class because they were thinking of ways of how to provide for their families. Others sleep in class most of the time because they spent most of the nights with boyfriends or girlfriends.

High rate of failure

The learners are not serious with their studies; hence the general rate of failure is high.

Not doing homework

The learners hardly did homework because of lack of supervision at home. This was echoed by one of the LO teachers who said “*no homework is done as the learners spend too much time in ‘shebeens’ and taverns and as a result have no chance/time to do home work*”. Some grandparents are illiterate and hence could not help the learners.

Fighting and gangster involvement

The lack of concentration was also attributed to the learner’s engagement in gangster groups within the community. They are involved in fighting and stabbing each other with knives.

Lack of concentration, indifference to studies, not doing homework and poor performance were mentioned as some of the behaviour displayed by learners at school as a result of the challenges they face. The observations by the teachers are not different from what was found out in a research carried by UNESCO (2002) in Uganda on the effects of HIV/AIDS on orphaned children that they resulted on a decline in school enrolment, variable repetition trends, high dropouts, absenteeism and a decline in school performance.

4.2.3. Was the LO content relevant in meeting the educational development of the learners?

Relevant content and topics

According to the LO teachers, the content and the topics of LO are relevant in addressing the needs and challenges of the youth. The curriculum is well-balanced and not much is needed to be included, excluded or emphasized. The only area that needed to be emphasized was Career Guidance and choices. The learners showed little interest in making applications and only asked for help after getting their results.

Content and programme allow for freedom of expression and openness

There was an assertion that the LO programme allows for openness and freedom by learners to share their challenges with the teachers, something that they cannot do with their parents and guardians.

Disparity between the content, and attitudes and behaviour of the learners

The LO teachers' contention was that although the LO programme was relevant and helpful, practically there seemed to be very little positive change in the observed attitudes and behaviour of the learners. The learners seemed not to be putting into practice what they were taught in LO.

There seemed to be a discrepancy between the perception of the learners on the effectiveness of LO and the observed behaviour of the learners by the teachers. The contradiction calls for further study that will reconcile the two. However, despite the teachers' observation that could have created doubts about the effectiveness of LO, the teachers were insistent that LO remains helpful and essential because without it the situation with the learners could have been worse than it is at present.

4.2.4 How could the content of LO be improved in order in for it to be more relevant to the development of the learners?

The need for a common prescribed book

The main concern of the LO teachers was that individual schools use different LO text books which present and handle the content differently. The teachers suggested that it would be useful if all schools could use the same prescribed book. It was a plea from the teachers to the Department of Education to consider prescribing a suitable book for LO.

Inadequate time allocated to LO

Time allocated to Life Orientation is not enough, so teachers do not cover some important aspects of the programme. Therefore more time is needed to allow for more coverage of the content.

Teacher training

In terms of training, most LO teachers did the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in LO and were given in-service training. UNICEF (2004) recommends that life skills should be taught by professionals such as teachers who are seen as positive role models. However, Boler et al. (2004) are concerned that the training of teachers is often presented with the life skills curriculum that is new to them. In this regard Boler's (2004) recommendation is met as the LO programme is taught by professional teachers who were trained through (ACE) in Life Orientation and were also trained in-service.

4.2.5 Challenges the LO teachers have with recommended teaching methodologies

Limited time

The teachers were aware and approved of the recommended teaching methodology. Nevertheless, they said they were not able to apply some of the methods firstly because of limited time allocated to LO. The LO teachers mentioned there was some level of flexibility to expound on some topics or content that is not necessarily in the syllabus, especially on issues that concerns the learners most such as HIV/AIDS. This flexibility could also contribute to the shortage of time.

Physical education training (PET) and PET assessment

It was also noted that learners were not keen in doing physical activities mostly because they do not understand its value or importance. There is therefore a need to emphasize the importance of Module 3 on Recreation and physical well-being.

The method of assessment for PET is a challenge as well, as the teachers are supposed to assess many learners doing different physical tasks at the same time. This requires a lot of time which is not adequate. The schedule for assessing PET is also not user friendly.

Poor participation of learners in recommended teaching methodologies

The teachers challenged the learner's reluctance to participate in discussions. Due to the language barrier, teachers resorted to teaching or the lecture method. This was true considering learners' results that the most used method was teaching or the lecture method. However, the learners suggested the use of participatory methods, such as discussions, role play, debates and group work, contrary to what teachers said. The issues of inadequate time and the language barrier which limit the use of recommended methods should be addressed so that they do not become obstacles in preventing learners from enjoying and understanding LO.

4.2.6 Suggestions to improve on the teaching and learning of LO

More time needed

According to the teachers, time allocated to LO in the school curriculum, which is two hours per week, is not enough. There is no time for discussions and other participatory methods. The same sentiment was shared by the learners who even suggested that LO be taught daily. This calls for the Department of Education to consider reviewing the LO programme so that issues that might arise from the review such as inadequate time could be addressed.

Teacher-learner ratio

The LO teachers are overwhelmed by work because they are given many classes because of the perception that they have a few periods in a week, not considering the number of learners involved. This results in the teachers handling large numbers of learners, making it difficult for them when it comes to marking and to using a variety of teaching methods recommended for the subject.

Attitude towards LO as a subject

The LO teachers raised a concern that other teachers undermine them and LO as a subject. The other teachers think that the LO teachers do not have a lot of work. They mentioned that this attitude is aggravated by the way the Department of Education treats the subject when it comes to assessment. The final LO paper is written in September while other subjects have trial examinations. It is marked

locally by individual teachers whereas other subjects have November National Examinations which are marked at marking centers. The teachers suggested that LO should be treated like other subjects for it to gain its recognition and worth.

Training of LO teachers in Counseling

The teachers also expressed a need for them to be trained in counseling. They counsel learners and if they were trained they would be better equipped to help the learners improve.

Integration of LO into other learning areas

The teachers also suggested that other subject teachers should help with the integration of LO into their respective learning areas, especially by guiding learners in career paths that they should take in view of their respective subjects.

The comments given by the teachers are indisputable and should be taken seriously for the improvement of the teaching and learning of LO. Any comments that deter the effectiveness of the programme need to be taken up by the Department of Education as part of their programme review.

4.3. Analysis of the Life Orientation Programme-The Curriculum Materials

Most of the issues covered in the three LO documents analyzed are the same, like the definition of LO and Assessment. As a result, the findings were generalized as coming from the LO materials. The following issues were considered and discussed against the literature review.

(i) The LO programme (The curriculum)

The Life Orientation programme was designed and underpinned by working principles that are crucial in the aims of the South African education system. These principles include:

(a) Social Justice, which refers to one's responsibility to care for others to the common good of the society. (b) A Healthy Environment, which cannot be attained independent of people, their lifestyles and choices, their rights and social justice (c)

Human Rights and their infringement are grounded in the daily experience of people within their local environments (d) Inclusivity, which deals with a number of social justice and human right issues and also taps into the rich diversity of learners and communities for effective and meaningful decision-making and functioning for a healthy environment.

In addition to the principles, the LO programme for Further Education Training (FET) is allocated two hours per week. Integration within Learning Areas and across Learning Areas is encouraged as part of the programme. The programme includes the use of a variety of resources that teachers have to come up with when developing their programmes, such as lesson plans. The programme also assumes an inclusive approach to teaching, learning and assessment and it needs to also address any barriers that learners may experience.

Boler et al. (2004) recommend that a life skill programme meant for training and education like LO should be taught as part of the curriculum not taken as part of the extra-curricular activities. The LO programme satisfies Boler's recommendation as it is allocated two hours per week of the school curriculum. The programme is also governed by the principles that are enshrined in the aims of the country's education system.

(ii) Content

The content of LO from grade 10 to 12 consists of four modules addressing the following areas: Module 1: Personal well-being, Module 2: Citizenship education, Module 3: Recreation and physical well-being and Module 4: Career and career choices. The topics or content addressed in each module were summarized in table 8.

The modules seemly touch on all areas that are critical for the youth to be equipped on in order for them to be well-rounded individuals. They address the personal, social, physical and socio-economic issues of the individual. The content addressed is in agreement with Visser's (2005) sentiment that the context of life skills training should produce individuals who are seen as consisting of multiple sub-systems such as the physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal and behavioural – all in close relationship

and part of the whole functioning within a family and social context. The LO content is also in line with the content recommended by RAPIDS, as it includes personal development, psycho-social, physical and socio-economical issues as well.

On the other hand, the NCS does not have a module on HIV/AIDS, which means HIV/AIDS is rather addressed as a sub-topic. Given the severity of the HIV/AIDS challenge, not only in South Africa but globally, one would expect HIV/AIDS to be explored and addressed as a module on its own, as well as in relation to other modules.

In conclusion, the LO content is well-balanced and the modules cover all the aspects that authors and organizations such as Jennings (2006), WHO (1997), UNICEF (2004), Visser (2004) and the RAPIDS (2007) manual recommend as the ideal content for a life skill programme. This is supported by the purpose of LO as stated in NCS which is, to equip learners to engage in personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic, and constitutional levels to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life's opportunities.

(iii) Assessment

The LO materials state that assessment can be used for a variety of reasons such as individual growth, development and promotion. Assessment can include basement, diagnostic, formative, summative and alternative assessment. Before a teacher could administer any type of assessment he/she should consider the appropriateness of the outcome being assessed, as well as the type of activity that best suits the assessment need. The teacher can do that by asking the following questions: What concept, skill, or knowledge am I trying to assess, What should my student know, At what level should my student be performing and What type of knowledge is being assessed: reasoning, memory, or process?

The documents stipulate some of the ways/ methods/techniques in which learners can be assessed. They include the following: project work, collage, tests, research projects, assignments, investigations, surveys, debate/argument, role play, interviews,

drama, presentations, panel discussions, practical demonstrations, construction, music/songs, poetry/rhymes, story-telling, model making, sculptures/paintings, drawings/graphs, mind mapping, physical activities, posters, charts and oral presentations, to mention but a few.

The continuous assessment (CASS) is a process of gathering valid and reliable information about the performance of the learner on an on-going basis, against clearly defined criteria, using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts. The form of assessment used in the schools should cover a full range of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values (SKAV) in the learning and teaching experience. The evidence of this assessment is collected into a portfolio.

The assessment of LO tally well with the recommendation of UNESCO (2006) that it ought to assess knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour using closed and open-ended questions, case studies, timelines, role play/simulation, plays/poetry, observations, self-report checklists, interviews, stimulus activities, and learner projects.

(iv) Teaching methodology

The materials do not specify the teaching methodology or methods that need to be used but state that it is useful for the teacher to use experimental learning and teaching methods. It is not clear what those experimental methods are except that one can assume that it is referring to the participatory methods as advocated by Visser (2005). However, these participatory methods are mentioned as part of assessment methods, not as teaching methods as seen before. This might suggest that the experimental methods are not necessarily synonymous with the participatory method of the author of the LO materials.

The LO assessment materials emphasize the use of participatory methods in at the assessment level. Using these the participatory methods such as debates, role plays, research projects, music/songs, practical demonstrations, and self-report checklist in assessment is acceptable as confirmed by UNESCO (2006). Nevertheless the learners in this study suggested that it would rather be effective to them if the methods are applied at the teaching and learning level and not at the assessment level.

If the participatory methods are used more in assessment, for example, a case study, the learners might not apply their minds in the moral of the case study posed for assessment purposes, since they would just be focusing on answering the questions in order to pass. If the same case study is used for learning purposes they can take time to discuss and reflect on the moral of the case study. Therefore it would be more meaningful and interesting for the learners if the programme emphasizes the use of the participatory methods in the teaching and learning of LO than in the assessment.

(v) Teacher training

The materials do not mention anything about teacher training. However, NCS stipulates the kind of teacher envisaged in teaching LO, that he/she needs to be qualified, competent, dedicated and caring; and to fulfill the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators. Again, given that the LO teachers indicated in the study that training of teachers was done through in-service and an ACE course it can be concluded that the programme meets the criteria recommended by UNICEF (2004) and USAID (2004) that LO should be taught by professionals.

Moreover, the study recommends that other professionals in the community, practicing or retired such as social workers police officers, nurses, politicians, community and traditional leaders could help teachers and also serve as a bridge to close the gap between the community and schools. This engagement of the community could also go a long way to addressing cultural and other social ills that are happening in the community that are distracting the learners and negating the efforts of LO in schools.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Was LO effective in addressing and meeting the needs and challenges of the learners

From the study it is clear that the learners found LO effective in meeting their needs and challenges. The learners were aware of the factors and situations that negatively influence their behaviour. Peer pressure, alcohol and drugs, friends and poverty were rated the highest factors among them. Mothers, grandmothers and pastors were the highest among the factors that positively influence the learners.

The negative factors, together with the causes and consequences of negative behaviour clearly defined the needs and challenges of the youth as described by RAPIDS (2007) in the ‘prevailing situation’ of the Bridge Model, whereas factors that positively influence learners such as mothers, grandparents and pastors represent the encouraging, guiding and supporting environment that avail for the youth within the community.

It became clear that the presence of the mother figure is very important to the learners. It means those learners who do not have them would be more affected. It was also clear from the study that many learners do not have parents, they have either lost them to HIV/AIDS or they are working far, so the learners either stay alone or with grandparents. As a result, most of the learners lack parental guidance and support. This was also evident from the trend observed in the choice of topics and the reasons for choosing those topics.

Based on the above findings a research on family structure and how it affects learner behaviour and attitudes need to be carried out. We need to ask why learners see mothers and grandmothers as more influential than fathers. Where is the father figure? Perhaps even a further study on the role or absence of a father figure in the lives of the learners and how it affects the attitudes and behaviour of the learners needs to be taken up.

The study also showed that LO helped the learners to resist peer-pressure and risky behaviour, as well as cope with the loss of their loved ones. The results demonstrate a positive outcome of what a life skills programme can do as noted by the UN (2009) study and other authors such as O'Donnell et al., 1999, Kirby, 1994 and Schinke et al., 1981, that life skills training can minimize or prevent high-risk sexual behaviour among youth.

The majority of learners advocated for participatory teaching methodologies as methods of teaching that would help them understand LO better. This is not surprising since a number of authors including Singh (2003) and Boler et al. (2004) recommended participatory methods as effective in the teaching of life skills.

5.2 Identified gaps between the needs and challenges of learners and the skills provided by the LO programme

Life Orientation teachers as well found LO relevant and helpful in addressing the needs and challenges of the learners. They however observed among these challenges there are so many social ills in the community that are affecting the learners: alcoholism, incest, rape cases, murder and substance abuse, just to mention but a few. Smoking and drinking, teenage pregnancy, prostitution and crime are some of those behavioural patterns that are common among the learners as a result of what is happening in their community. Jewkes et al. (2006) stated that the rate of rape cases in South Africa accounts for 16.3 % of youth. It is clear that all these social ills that are happening in the society leave the learners vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

The LO teachers have difficulty in using role models or examples from the community because of the raging social ills. Consequently, this has led to a disparity between what LO can do and the attitude and behaviour of the learners. They noted lack of concentration, not doing homework, smoking, sleeping in class and poor performance as some of the forms of behaviour and attitudes displayed by the learners. To them it was as if the programme was not having any effect on the lives of the learners.

Based on the observation of the LO teachers, the study recommends that the Department of Education through the schools should devise ways of involving the community to address the underlying issues that could be the cause of the discrepancy, such as cultural and political issues, moral issues and the media.

A dialogue between the teachers and community leaders, traditional leaders, parents, pastors, politicians, and other stakeholders should be opened. This approach is one of the effective strategies recommended by Bonnell and Zizys (2005) and UN (2009) to offer activities that tend to be missing from the school day, such as arts activities that have been eliminated from the traditional school curriculum by engaging parents, local authorities and community leaders.

The Department of Education should also find ways of engaging parents in the teaching and learning programme of the learners. For example, teachers should be encouraged to give some topics to some members of the community such as either practicing or retired social workers, health workers, teachers, politicians and other professionals who are qualified to teach life skills as recommended by UNICEF (2004) and USAID (2004).

This would help the LO teachers who cannot address certain topics as noted by USAID (2004). It would also help to reconcile the disparity that was observed by the LO teachers as they may address some of the pertinent social and cultural issues that affect the learners in the community. The learners would see the efforts and involvement of the community in the teaching and learning of LO and develop more positive attitudes towards life.

The study again brought to light the fact that many girls get pregnant in order to get social grants. This is another area of research where it has to be established whether or not social grants encourage teenage pregnancy and contribute to irresponsible fathers so that its existence can be reviewed and recommendations given to the relevant government department.

The teachers raised the issue of inadequate time and the language barrier on the part of the learners as hindrances in using participatory methods in teaching LO. The issue of time needs to be addressed to allow for even more activities that would make the LO programme more effective such as offering a variety of activities, for example sports, homework help, the arts, or community service in order to attract a diverse group of participants, to reduce boredom and encourage regular attendance. More activities also include incorporating physical activities through athletics, dance, and drama, camping, and even building trade projects, where responsible self-care and health-promoting behaviour are a natural part of the skills to be mastered (Bonnell and Zizys, 2005).

5.3 Analysis of LO programme, content, methodology and teacher training (The LO Materials)

5.3.1 Content, methodology and teacher training

The LO programme meets the standards of the life skills programme criterion in terms of the curriculum, content, methodology, assessment, the kind of teacher as recommended by UNICEF (2004) and USAID (2004). This qualifies it to be taught in the school curriculum. It means if the LO programme implementation could be monitored and reviewed accordingly, the programme could go a long way to effectively meet the needs and challenges of in and out of school youth not only in the Hewu area, but nationally.

5.3.2 Inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the LO Materials

HIV/AIDS is not given special attention in the NCS for LO. Given the magnitude and severity of HIV/AIDS status in the country, one would expect HIV/AIDS to be treated as a Module, where it is thoroughly addressed on its own and also integrated into the other modules. Lack of emphasis on HIV/AIDS in the LO programme might be the cause of little change of attitude among the learners as observed by the teachers in the study.

On the other hand, a further study to establish how much of HIV/AIDS is addressed and or whether HIV/AIDS addressed in LO is effective enough towards the fight against HIV/AIDS can be carried out.

5.4 Suggested guidelines

It is evident that learners find LO helpful in curbing negative behaviour. It is also clear that the learners suggested teaching methodologies that are more involving and participatory to help them learn LO better. The study recommends a teaching and learning approach that would help the learning of LO to be more involving and attractive to the learners by implementing all the teaching methodologies that are participatory. The guidelines recommended involve a learner-centered and problem-solving approach to the teaching and learning of LO. The approach entails a practical, critical and reflective attitude that learners have to undertake.

The learner-centered approach means that the learners can obtain knowledge, skills and information on their own through discovery, exploration or experimentation. They can reflect and act on the information on their own. The teacher should act as a facilitator and assist the learner through the process of learning.

The problem solving approach means that the learners should be made to (i) *understand the problem*. They should be made to be part of the situation/challenge/problem, understand it properly and critically analyze it. (ii) The learners should *devise a plan*. In other words, they should find ways or strategies that they can employ towards solving the problem. (iii) They should *carry out the plan*, that is, solve the problem and (iv) they should *look back* or reflect on the problem. These steps according to Polya (1957), when applied to every situation will make one employ a number of strategies in solving any problem that will yield long lasting solutions.

The approach involves learners working as a team using participatory methods such as discussions, group work, debates, role plays, case studies and research as discussed before. This approach is also envisaged by NCS for LO as stated that NCS builds its Learning Outcomes for Grades 10 to 12 on Critical and Developmental Outcomes

which requires learners among other things to be able to (i) identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking and (ii) work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community.

A similar approach which was termed the peer-to-peer and youth-centered approach was also used by the United Nations (2009) in a study involving youths in four Asian countries, namely Cambodia, China, Philippines and Sri Lanka. The approach was found to be an effective tool to promote youth health behaviour and the intervention was reported to have made a difference for many youth to the extent of developing coping and negotiation mechanisms in various situations as already stated as the benefits of life skills.

It is hoped that if the approach is applied in the teaching and learning of LO it would make the learners understand their needs and challenges better, and come up with practical and sustainable solutions to their challenges for better and long lasting results. In addition, applying the problem solving approach will help the learners put into practice what they learnt and hence close the disparity between what is learnt and the expected outcome that has been identified in the study.

Furthermore, it has also been proven by the UN study that peer-to-peer which is similar to a learner-centered approach encourages youth to be more inclined to discuss sexual behaviour and other sensitive subjects, as well as their concerns, fears and doubts regarding substance abuse, and sexual practice matters with their peers, than with parents and other adults.

The study therefore recommends the implementation of peer education as a strategy for implementing the learner-centered approach in the teaching and learning of LO.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

The Life Orientation programme is relevant in meeting the needs and challenges of the learners. This information was obtained from the learners and confirmed by the LO teachers. The results show that Life Orientation has helped the majority of the learners to resist peer pressure, say no to risky behaviour and to cope with difficult situations like losing a loved one. However, it was evident from the study that the younger learners were more susceptible to peer-pressure than the older ones and more girls than boys would get involved in risky behaviour.

The study also showed that the most prominent teaching methodology was the teaching/lecture method and yet learners preferred participatory methods, such as discussions, group work, debates and role plays, which are recommended in the literature.

The LO teachers also found the LO programme very useful in addressing the needs and challenges of the learners. They found the content balanced and relevant. They however observed that the attitudes and behaviour that the learners display do not show that the programme is helpful.

The goals and purpose of the LO, the teaching methodology, assessment and the kind of teacher envisaged in the LO materials analyzed, satisfied the requirement of a life skills training programme and qualify the materials to be used in the school curriculum.

In conclusion, LO programme is essential as a life skills intervention programme in the school curriculum and its improvement would go a long way to empower the learners to make informed and responsible decisions in their everyday life.

6.2. Recommendations

- 1) For every programme being implemented, continuous monitoring and evaluation is inevitable. The programme has been running for almost ten years and it would be

advisable for the Department of Education to review the entire programme to find out whether it has been effective or not. Meanwhile, the Department of Education should monitor the LO programme on a regular basis to ensure that the original intention of the LO programme is being implemented as it was planned and identify gaps and challenges in the programme.

- 2) For the programme to be more effective learners need a platform for sharing their challenges with someone they can confide in and get personal guidance and advice hence the need for a teacher counsellor. The Department should train teachers in counselling and have a teacher counsellor in each school to deal with problems that learners have.
- 3) The Department should produce learner-centred, problem-solving and reflective-oriented materials. The materials should be in the form of workbooks with tasks that include participatory methods. Examples of these tasks are given by RAPIDS (2007) and Teen Active Life Orientation materials (2010).
- 4) The Department of Education should strengthen the Peer Education in schools to complement the teaching and learning of LO and provide the peer-to-peer environment which was reported to help learners to address sensitive issues that they could not raise in the presence of their parents or other adults.
- 5) The Department of Education should help teachers provide a forum for interaction and engagement of parents, local authorities and community leaders in the teaching and learning of LO. This engagement was cited in the Bonnell and Zizys (2005) Toronto, and the UN (2009) Asian studies as one of the good strategies or practices on life skills training.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for learners



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Questionnaire for learners

Name of School: -----

Grade:

10	11	12

Age group: *Tick as appropriate*

14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	24+

Sex:

Male	Female

Background of youth challenges

1. Which of the factors below do you think influence good or positive behaviour among the youth? Tick as many as you think influence good or positive behaviour.

Factors	Tick
Father	
Mother	
Neighbours	
Friends	
Pastors	
Role models	
Media (TV, magazines, newspapers, radio, internet, cell phones)	
Teachers	
Grandfathers	
Grandmothers	

2. Which of the factors below do you think influence bad or negative behaviour among the youth? Tick as many as you think influence bad or negative behaviour.

Factors	Tick
Father	
Mother	
Friends	
Neighbours	
Pastors	
Peer pressure	
Poverty	
Culture	
Alcohol and drugs	
Unemployment	
Media (TV, magazines, newspapers, radio, internet, cell phones)	

3. Which of these are caused by negative behaviour? Tick as many as you think are as a result of negative behaviour.

Factors	Tick
Teen pregnancies	

Substance abuse	
High crime rate	
HIV infection	
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	
Rape increase	
Smoking and drinking	
Poverty	
Early pregnancy	
School dropout	
Having multiple sexual partners	
Having sugar daddies/mummies	
prostitution	

Life Orientation (LO) as an intervention life skills programme

4. Do you think learning Life Orientation has helped you to correct negative behaviour.

Yes	No

5. Learners in your grade are able to say:

Yes	No

to negative behaviour such as smoking, drinking getting involved in sexual relationships and committing crime.

6. Learners in your grade are able to say:

Yes	No	Wait

to somebody who wants to have sex with them.

7. What do you think about the following statement?

Learners in your grade are able to cope with difficult situations they face in life, such as the death of their loved ones, relatives or friends.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Content and Methodology of Life Orientation

9. Are topics covered in LO good in correcting bad or negative behaviour?

Yes	No

10. Which of these topics have you been taught in class? [Tick the topics in each module]

	Module 1: Personal Well-being	Module 2: Citizenship education	Module 3: Recreation and Physical well-being	Module 4: Career and Career Choices
Topics 1.	Goals, values, choices and goal planning	Social and environmental issues	Participating in programmes to promote physical fitness	Understanding yourself in relation to career requirements and socio-economic considerations

2.	Relationships and how they change	Human rights	Participating in various sports and games	Admission and financial assistance for higher education
3.	Skills and qualities which make good of relationships	Democracy	Participant and spectator behaviour in sport	Competencies, abilities and ethics in the world of work
4.	The role of power in relationships	Values, beliefs and ethics	Participation in environmentally-responsible outdoor group activities	Study skills, styles and strategies,
5.	Gender roles and stereotyping			
6.	The impact of media on values and beliefs about relationships			

7.	What is a healthy and balanced lifestyle?			
8.	Personal safety			
9.	Substance abuse			
10.	Sexual behaviour and choices			
11.	Diet and healthy			

	lifestyle			
--	-----------	--	--	--

11. Which of these topics that you were taught did you like most? List them.

12. Give two reasons why you liked the topics most

(i) -----

 (ii) -----

12. Tick any of the methods below that are used in the teaching of Life Orientation in your class.

Method	Tick
Teaching (teacher talking most of the time)	
Discussion	
Group work	
Role play	
Debate	
Practical	

13. Which of the methods do you think helped you learn Life Orientation better?
 (Tick as many as possible)

Method	Tick
Teaching (teacher talking most of the time)	
Discussion	
Group work	
Role play	

Debate	
Practical	

14. Suggest 2 ways in which Life Orientation teaching in your class can be improved.

(i) -----

----- (ii) -----

Appendix 2: Interview guide for Focus Group Discussion



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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Background of youth challenges

1. Which challenges do you think youth/learners face that influence their behaviour?

Probe: Challenges at home, in the community and at school

2. In your view, how do the challenges/factors affect teaching and learning?

Probe: What behaviour is displayed at school or in class?

How does the behaviour of the learners impact positively or negatively on teaching and learning in general?

Life Orientation (LO) as an intervention life skills programme:

Content and methodology of LO

4. Is the current content of LO relevant in meeting the educational development of the learners? Give reasons to your answer.

Probe: Are the topics or content relevant in addressing the challenges discussed above?

Is there evidence that the programme has instilled in the learners, knowledge, attitude and skills?

What needs to be included or excluded, or emphasized?

Would the situation have been better or worse without LO?

5. Give suggestions on how to improve the content of LO in order for it to be relevant to the development of the learners.

Probe: Content what to include and exclude

Teaching and learning

Training of teachers

Assessment

Time

6. Are you happy with the current teaching methodology of LO?

Motivate your answer

Probe: Which teaching methodologies are recommended?

Which challenges are there in using the recommended teaching methodologies?

Is there flexibility in terms of time, assessment etc.

7. Suggest ways in which you can improve the teaching and learning of LO.

Thank you for participation in this research. Your contribution is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Appendix 3: Information Sheet and Consent form for Learners



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Who Am I?

Hello, I am *Nancy Emelang Opio-Ikuya* conducting a research on the effectiveness of life skills in addressing the needs and challenges of the youth in the Hewu area.

What is the purpose of the research and how will it help us?

The purpose of the research is to find out the extent to which Life Orientation as a life skill programme in the school curriculum addresses the needs and challenges of learners. The information I will collect from you will assist me to come up with strategic ways that will help to improve the LO programme.

Your participation

I am kindly asking you to participate in the research by answering a questionnaire. By answering the questionnaire, your views about the effectiveness of Life Orientation will provide me with the information to determine whether the programme is effective or not and find ways of improving it.

The questionnaire will take approximately ONE hour. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you are not being forced to take part in this study.

Confidentiality

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential. We will refer to you by a code number or by another name in any publication.

Benefits

At the present time, I do not see any risks in your participation in the research. Instead, this study will be extremely helpful to me in developing intervention strategies and means of improving LO programmes in schools. This will in turn benefit you and as the programme will be tailored to meet your needs.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch. If you have any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or

feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please call Nancy Opio-Ikuya at 073 620 995 or Prof. Geoffrey Setswe at +27-11 950 4329.

ASSENT FORM- PARTICIPANT

I hereby agree to participate in research on the effectiveness of life skills in addressing the needs and challenges of the youth in the Hewu area. I understand that my participation is free and I am not being forced in any way to do so. I understand that this research project will in the long run help improve the LO in meeting the needs and challenges of the youth. I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date

.....

Signature of Witness

.....

Date

Appendix 4: Information and Consent Form for Teachers



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STELLENBOSCHUNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**The effectiveness of life skills in addressing the needs and challenges of youth:
The case of Life Orientation in Hewu cluster secondary schools in Queenstown
District, Eastern Cape.**

You are kindly requested to participate in a research study that will be conducted by *Nancy Emelang Opio-Ikuya* as part fulfillment of her Masters of Philosophy, HIV/AIDS Management Degree, at the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your virtue of being Life Orientation educators in the participating schools in the Hewu area.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to find out the extent to which Life Orientation as a life skill programme in the school curriculum addresses the needs and challenges of learners and to align Life Orientation taught in schools with learners' needs in order to improve the programme for it to effectively address the needs and challenges of the youth.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

(i)Keep time: Once you have been notified of the date, venue and time of the focus group discussion, you are kindly requested to keep to the time. The meetings will

take place at 14:00 or 2.00 p.m. to avoid using tuition time and will end at around 16:00 or 4.00 p.m. Should you need any assistance, do not hesitate to call me in time at 073 620 9951.

(ii) Focus group discussion: You will be expected to sit in a horse shoe circle. I will do the introduction of the topic, aim and objectives of the study. You are asked to feel free to make your contributions and ask questions where you do not understand. Questions will be given and the discussion will take place.

(iii) Recording and note taking: I will be involved in taking notes of our discussions with one or two people either audio or videotaping so that I can have record of what transpired in the discussion which will be used for writing my final report. These records will be destroyed once the report is written.

(iv) Expectations during discussions: No one's answer is right or wrong. You are expected to respect the opinions of every educator. One person should talk at a time. We shall also formulate our own ground rules for ourselves before discussions so that there is minimal disturbance throughout the session.

1. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not anticipate any foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences.

2. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The study will benefit you in that you will determine the usefulness of Life Orientation life skills programme and suggest improvements that you would want to see that will benefit you and the learners. Your contributions will help learners to use these life skills effectively and hence contribute towards reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youth and that will benefit not only them but you and the rest of the community.

3. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for participating in the discussion. The researcher is depending on your kindness as participants to provide your time and efforts to answer all the questions to be discussed.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained firstly by not

asking to write your names but to identify you by the school you are representing. Secondly, the information obtained will be kept safely at the researcher's home office and computer where the information will not be given to anybody to use. Only the researcher will have a computer where the information will not be given to anybody to use. Only the researcher will have access to the data. If information is audio or videotaped as might be the case, the tapes will be erased immediately after the data had been recorded and analyzed and only the researcher will have access to the data.

5. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Nancy E. Opio-Ikuya. Cell: 073 620 9951 or 040 8421040 (work/fax.)
Residential Address: 7 Ridgeway Road, Amalinda, 5247, East London;
Email address: nancy.opioikuya@gmail.com
Study Leader: Professor Geoffrey Setswe
Telephone number +27-11 950 4329; email address: geoffrey.setswe@monash.edu

7. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

The information above was described to me, the participant by Nancy Emelang Opio-Ikuya, the researcher, in English and I am in command of this language. I was given opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction. I

hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.



Signature

11 June 2012