

**The role of the Life Orientation curriculum in the  
development of social and emotional skills in  
learners to curb violence in schools.**

**By**

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the degree of**

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**Declaration**

I declare that **“The role of the Life Orientation curriculum in the development of social and emotional skills in learners to curb violence in schools”** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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*Garth P Gelderbloem*

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*Date*

### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to all the women, who became victims of their partners' callous act of violence. To all those families and friends of the victims and perpetrators of such senseless acts, I hope that my research paper will help with the establishment and development of comprehensive social and emotional learning programs in schools which could ultimately lead to the reduction of violence against women and violent crime on the whole in South Africa.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Summary**

Violence is common-place in South African schools and managing learner aggression is central to learners' academic performance and holistic development. There is empirical evidence that suggests that the school curriculum is an essential vehicle for driving the process of creating social and emotional competent individuals, capable of social cohesion and tolerance.

This evaluation research aims to evaluate whether the CAPS Life Orientation curriculum is adequately addressing social and emotional competence in learners in order to reduce violence in schools. A comprehensive literature review was conducted which revealed that Social and Emotional Learning programs are highly effective in addressing issues of violence and social problems in schools along with producing a positive school climate with high learner academic achievements.

Data collected from the Life Orientation Curriculum documents, Grades R-12, and the elite electronic interview, revealed that the Life Orientation curriculum covers most of the essential elements necessary to make an impact on the development of learners' social and emotional skills, but may lack the necessary knowledgeable teachers to facilitate such an important study area. Furthermore, not enough time and resources are allocated to Social and Emotional learning. Based on these results, recommendations are made through a 'framework to advance social and emotional learning in schools model' for the CAPS Life Orientation curriculum Grades R-12.

### **Key words:**

Social and Emotional Learning; Constructivism; School climate; School violence, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS); Life Orientation (LO); Evaluation Research design.

### **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

- CAPS – Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
- CASEL – Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
- DAP – Developmental Assets Profile
- DoBE – Department of Basic Education
- DoE – Department of Education
- EI – Emotional Intelligence
- FET – Further Education and Training
- FP – Foundation Phase
- IP – Intermediate Phase
- LO – Life Orientation
- LTS – Learner- teacher Support
- NCS – National Curriculum Statement
- NSCC – National School Climate Council
- SAFE – Sequence, Active, Focussed and Explicit
- SEL – Social and Emotional Learning
- SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related
- SP – Senior Phase
- WCED – Western Cape Education Department

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ORIENTATION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Incidents of aggression and violence in South African schools are reported in the media with disturbing regularity. It is of great concern when children become victims or even perpetrators of violence and crime. Children have become immune to violence because of the perceptions of the media and their domestic circumstances that children see violence as both an acceptable way of expression, and as a way of channelling their emotions. Violence as a social occurrence has become a popular culture among the youth, with cyber-bullying and cell phone footage of incidents of violence being commonplace in our schools as reported in the media. Apart from violence in schools being on the increase, acts of juvenile delinquency such as drug and alcohol abuse, learner dropouts and sexual promiscuity are also increasing. Fisher et al (2008) in Mynhardt, Baron, Branscombe and Byrne (2012: 22) assert that bullying is yet another challenging problem associated with school dropouts. They quote a South African study where bullying varied from 12% in Mpumalanga, and 36% in Cape Town and Durban, to as high as 61% among high school learners in Pretoria. Mention is also made from a study conducted in Cape Town involving 1 470 learners to ascertain the link between the various aspects of bullying and dropout of school, revealed that 52% of the boys and 36% of girls were involved in bullying behaviour, and that bully/victim girls were significantly more likely to drop out of school.

It would appear that children are no longer safe in schools. When children have to be concerned with issues of safety at schools in addition to learning and social issues, their academic performance suffers. According to Leoschut (2013: vol.5, [2]) one in five secondary school learners – a total of 22.2% - had experienced a form of violence while at school in the 12 months between August 2011 and August 2012. Singh and Steyn (2012: [1]) argues that the violent acts perpetrated by aggressive youths impact negatively on the ethos of the school, compromising the safety of learners and teachers and, in turn, adversely affect teaching and learning in the classroom. It follows that, without effective behaviour management, a positive and productive classroom and school environment will be impossible to achieve. According to Devine

and Cohen (2007) in Centre for Social and Emotional Education (2010: vol. 1, [1]) feeling safe in schools powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development. What role should the school curricula play in developing a safe learning environment with tolerant and compassionate learners? “In line with the provisions of the 1996 South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa 1996b), schools should play a major role in addressing learner aggression.” (Singh & Steyn 2012: [5]). Essentially, by reducing violence in schools through Social and Emotional Learning programs, a ‘ripple effect’ on violence prevention and social cohesion and tolerance can be initiated in communities.

Much research has been done on the effects of school climate on learners’ behaviour. Research done by the Centre for Social and Emotional Education in (School Climate Brief 2010: vol. 1, [1]) suggests that a positive school climate is associated with reduced aggression and violence. Another study revealed that the association between school climate and level of aggression and victimization is dependent upon each student’s feelings of connectedness to the school. Delpont (2010: 151) claims that ignoring the emotions as constitutive elements of rationality will consequently produce a narrow conception of education, and that such an education will tend to marginalise the infrastructural aspects, which are strongly linked to emotional dimensions of rationality. Peale (1998: 45) notes that our physical condition is determined very largely by our emotional condition, and our emotional life is profoundly regulated by our thought life. Garner, Mahatmya, Brown and Vesely (2014: 166) confirm that there is substantial evidence linking social emotional competence to learning outcomes, along with the noticeable increase in prevalence of children’s social emotional problems in school setting. This has prompted the creation of numerous social emotional learning (SEL) intervention programs. SEL interventions share the fundamental goal of increasing pro-social behaviour as broadly defined. The Constitution also provides the basis for curriculum transformation and development in contemporary South Africa. Delpont (2010: 155) urges South Africans to revisit their conception, not only of rationality, education and social transformation, but also of the role of schools in nurturing future citizens’ healthy emotional life.

This research attempts to make a case that social and emotional learning in schools is necessary to develop holistic, emotionally competent individuals, capable of social cohesion and tolerance leading to productive and self-fulfilled lives in contemporary South Africa. In this regard Delport (2010: 47) states that South Africans, like all world citizens, need institution to anticipate change before they occur, empathy to see the connection between unrelated events; and creativity to discover new ways of defining problems. I will therefore highlight the significance of social and emotional competence. My argument is based on the notion that by including Emotional and Social Learning programs in the school curriculum, learner social and emotional skills would improve, irrespective of cultural, ethnical or class differences. It will also improve the school climate thereby reducing the incidents of aggression in schools leading to a more tolerant society.

This issue is very close to my heart because, as a perpetrator of a senseless act of aggression due to, what I believe to be a lack of emotional competence, I feel it incumbent upon me to do the best I can to assist others in becoming socially and emotionally competent. As an educator, along with the help of the relevant stakeholders, I endeavour to provide children with life skills for them to become successful, making responsible decisions and a meaningful contribution to society. These skills include, inter alia, establishing positive relationships, managing stress and handling challenging situations ethically and constructively. In this regard, Dann (2012: 7) advocates that emotional learning involves cognitive aspects and includes new ways of thinking and acting that are more in tune with our identity—our values and beliefs and attitudes. Dann (2012: 8), adding to Delport's position, suggests that the ability to imagine the experience of other people, and the will to participate in their suffering, should be cultivated at every level. Dann goes on to state that 'Education for Transformation' should be conceived in accordance with a framework of rationality that acknowledges the emotions as cognitive and part of rationality itself. Schools are thus highly effective settings for teaching social and emotional skills. Slattery (2006: 144) expounds on this insisting that curriculum development in the postmodern era must aggressively and consistently include lessons and experiences that will ameliorate the divisions and hatred we face in the world today. Slattery (146) goes further stating

that ignorance, greed, sexism, racism, and ethnic divisions must be addressed, and issues of prejudice and violence in schools must be constantly fore-grounded in lessons.

Connel in De Wet (2007: 675) points out that there is widespread belief in some societies that it is natural for men to be violent, to rape and fight, and that this is part of the unchanging order of nature. It is generally accepted that violence is an effective social economic strategy in the competition for scarce resources in certain African rural settlements. According to Swarts (1997: 43) the use of threat, neglect and physical or symbolic violence is a way to keep the social hierarchy in place or oppose it. There must be a way to break down these traditional ways of socialization. Irrespective of cultural differences, I argue that social and emotional competence can be learned. It is my contention that we need to include social and emotional learning programs in the school curriculum in order to change children's way of thinking and behaving in order for them to become socially and emotionally competent and compassionate. "Children have to learn how to show empathy toward others, as this is crucial in later life. People with no empathy may turn out to be criminals who have no feelings for other people" (De Klerk & Le Roux 2003: 54). Even though the current school curriculum does make provision for social and emotional learning through life skills in the Life Orientation learning area, schools need to do much more in terms of focussing more resources, time and application to such programs. In the opinion of Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2009: 446) there are more schools can do to assist learners with aggression such as facilitating healthy intrapersonal relationships, mastering the art of listening, empathy, respect and acceptance, and facilitating a healthy environmental relationship by engaging in planned, thoughtful activity and managing change.

## **1.2 DELINEATION**

It is not within the scope of this study to provide insight into child psychology or theorize educational psychology concepts, but rather to look at one aspect of the psychological make-up of the child viz. social and emotional skills in the context of social behaviour and find ways to incorporate it in the school curriculum. The research is therefore not of an educational psychology or socio-education nature, but rather of

curriculum development one even though it incorporates issues of educational psychology and socio-education.

More research is needed in the field of social and emotional competencies of children in South Africa and this study intends to provide the groundwork for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and possible emotional intelligence assessments and the role these could play in the development of social and emotional competencies within children.

### **1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Many schools may be ineffective in assisting learners to develop appropriate social and emotional skills for contemporary South Africa, and as a result, schools could be the breeding grounds for violence and intolerance. The LO curriculum should be foregrounded in addressing this issue.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Main question:

What is the role of school and the Life Orientation curriculum in creating social and emotionally competent learners who have the necessary social skills to be self-fulfilled, productive and compassionate citizens?

Sub-question:

Does the current Life Orientation curriculum adequately address the issue of social and emotional competence?

### **1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

The overall aim of the study is to assess by means of an evaluation research design, the role of the LO curriculum in addressing social and emotional competencies in learners.

The objectives are:

- To determine whether social and emotional competence is adequately addressed in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum.
- To discover constructive and pragmatic ways of expanding the Personal and Social development study area in the LO curriculum.

## **1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study follows an evaluation research design which is qualitative in which the CAPS LO curriculum document will be analysed by means of an unobtrusive measurement instrument as well as an elite interview.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The main reason for undertaking this research is due to my personal experience. The study attempts to change perceptions through an evaluative positioning of current practices with regard to acquisition of social and emotional skills through the Life Orientation curriculum, so that children can take on the challenges of society with competence and confidence.

Hopefully the findings of this study could prompt education authorities to review the current school curriculum and realise the need for a more comprehensive social and emotional learning program in schools. The study could also assist curriculum developers, advisors and teachers in terms of identifying needs, evaluating school climate and social and emotional competence, planning of social and emotional leaning programs and implementing such programs. Finally, the study serves to invoke further research in social and emotional competence and school climate and how it impacts on the country's crime rate.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

### *1.8.1 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Jones, Bouffard and Weissbourd (2013: 63) describes social and emotional learning as the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

### *1.8.2 School violence*

According to Jacobs (2014: 2) the World Health Organisation defines school violence as any intentional use of physical or other force or power, threatened or actual, against

oneself, another person, or against a group, at school, that either results in or has the likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. It thus includes any intended use of psychological power or physical force with the aim to harm another physically or emotionally. It includes manipulation and coercion as well as rejection, and can take place during or outside school hours, during class times and breaks, at school-related events (sport, cultural and social), as well as while commuting to and from school.

### 1.8.3 *Constructivism*

Woolfolk (2007: 44) states that it is a theory of learning in which people learn by relating new information and skills to what they already know, actively practicing new information and skills in a supportive environment and then getting feedback on their performance.

### 1.8.4 *Life Orientation/Life Skills*

The DoBE (2010: 4) describes life Orientation as the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It addresses skills, knowledge, and values about the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity, careers and career choices. These include opportunities to engage in the development and practice of a variety of life skills to solve problems. Life Skills is a component of Life Orientation, which is central to the holistic development of learners. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners, and with the way in which these are integrated.

### 1.8.5 *School climate*

According Centre for Social and Emotional Education (2010: vol. 1 [1]) it refers to the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organisational structures of the school and all stakeholders' experiences of school life.

### 1.8.6 *Evaluation research design*

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 514) refers to it as the systematically collecting, analysing, and synthesizing of documents or previous research reports in order to address an issue, problem, or question, which prompts an evaluation study.

### 1.8.7 *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*

According to the DoBE (2010: 3) CAPS is a revision of the NCS. It was introduced in 2010 as a result of considerable criticism because of teacher overload, confusion, stress and widespread learner underperformance. Changes included the discontinuation of the use of portfolios, the reduction of learning areas in the Intermediate Phase, the strengthening of content specification, and broad learning areas changed back to subjects in which more content detail and guidelines for teachers are highlighted.

### 1.8.8 *Curriculum*

Ornstein and Hunkins (2009:6) refers to curriculum as an official selection of an interrelated set of knowledge, content, values and skills organized by the school; and the planned and unplanned educational experiences that a learner undertakes in or outside the school at any time, in a multiple context of a caring community.

## **1.9 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE STUDY**

In chapter 1 the research is formulated and clarified and the aim/purpose of the inquiry is delineated, introducing the type of design to be used. The second chapter of the dissertation provides a review of the relevant academic literature that will form the lens through which the research is performed. Chapter three provides detail of the research design. Chapter four deals with the detailed analysis of the CAPS Life Orientation Curriculum document – Grades R-12 with findings and discussions. Chapter five highlights the implications of the findings and recommendations derived from the research as to the future of social and emotional learning programs with special considerations to successfully implementing such programs, the limitations of the study and possible ways to make it work.



To reemphasize the need for some form of school violence intervention, Garner, Mahatmya, Brown and Vesely (2014: 166) state that the substantial evidence linking social emotional competence to learning outcomes, along with the noticeable increase and prevalence of children's social emotional problems in the school setting, has prompted the creation of numerous social emotional learning (SEL) intervention programs.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, the role of the school is becoming more and more important in the intellectual, physical, social, as well as emotional development of the child as children face many societal pressures and challenges that may have a negative effect on their social-emotional and academic development. This may result in an unhappy childhood and cause depression and ultimately, suicide as they reach adolescents. "Today many role models' reputations are tarnished, unethical behaviour is commonplace, and new opportunities to develop and engage in negative behaviours abound...for these reasons, social and emotional programs are perhaps more important than ever as an essential component of school reform" (Zins & Elias 2006 : 8). Delport (2010: 152) infers that vocational skills are prioritized in our education system and the message of 'better schools mean better jobs' has already been converted into an instrumental conception of education. The importance of social and emotional skills is overlooked, resulting in a distorted curriculum. Landsberg (2011: 111) supports this view in suggesting that life skill and social and emotional learning programs should be a part of a learner's personal journey of discovery. A broader framework of rationality must be found. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have proven to be very successful in the total development of the child in certain schools in the United States of America. In order to measure the effectiveness of social and emotional learning programs on the child's behaviour, the child's social and emotional competence is assessed by using certain measuring/assessment instruments. A number of different emotional intelligence assessments or tests have been developed. In the view of Dann (2012: 10) the core proposition is similar; you can develop better self-awareness, self-regulation and the ability to use your senses to enhance your health, success in relationships or to influence others. By making reference to various literature sources, I will attempt to provide evidence of the efficacy of social and emotional learning programs in terms of creating social and emotional competent learners and thereby reducing incidents of aggression in schools. To reiterate; the main objective of the study is to ascertain whether the CAPS LO curriculum is effectively addressing social and emotional skills in learners in order to

curb violence in schools. It is therefore advantageous to make social and emotional competency skills a part of the curriculum, even as part of the 'hidden' curriculum—"Learning can take place at any time: at hilarious times, stressful times, frivolous times and quiet times." (De Klerk & Le Roux 2011: 22).

The following review of literature covers:

- 2.2 The theoretical framework.
- 2.3 Constructivist theory and implications to the study
- 2.4 Components of Social and Emotional Learning programs.
- 2.5 Purpose and benefits of Social and Emotional Learning programs.
- 2.5 The influence of school climate on the learner.
- 2.6 Cultural influence on social and emotional competence.
- 2.7 The assessment of social and emotional competence.
- 2.8 A summary of the review.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Changes in school culture and school curricula do not take place in isolation, and is a complex process. All stakeholders should be on the "same page" with regard to the objective of the proposed change. A positive school climate is supportive to change and whole-school development. All stakeholders must recognize that all elements of the school are interdependent and that each one contributes toward whole-school development and the successful implementation of a new curriculum.

Before change to school curricula can be considered, a theoretical framework must be established. Theory establishes a field's framework and helps researchers and practitioners analyse and synthesize data, organise concepts and principles, suggest new ideas and speculate about the future.

For the purpose of this study, the research will be based on the postmodern education paradigm, which seeks to deconstruct imposed knowledge and challenge traditional education models. It is out of this postmodern perspective from which we derive the *Constructivist Theory*. This is a theory of learning in which people learn by relating new

information and skills to what they already know, actively practicing new information and skills in a supportive environment and then getting feedback of their performance. Here learning is seen as an organic process through which a learner continuously adopts interpretations and expectations to incorporate new experiences and maintain coherence. Woolfolk (2010: 316) states that, within a constructivist classroom, teachers elicit learners' ideas and experiences in relation to key topics, and then fashion learning situations that help learners elaborate on or restructure their current knowledge. Learners are also given frequent opportunities to engage in complex, meaningful, problem-based activities.

In SEL programs, learners will be prompted continuously to come up with solutions to various social issues. In the classroom setting learners work collaboratively and are given support to engage in task-oriented dialogue with one another. They are encouraged to make their thinking processes explicit through dialogue, writing, drawings and other means. Learners are asked to apply the knowledge they gain in diverse and authentic contexts. In this way SEL programs aim to improve on learners' Emotional Quotient (EQ). This is best achieved by engaging in real-life situations with role-playing and analysing scenarios with their peers through various methods.

When the curriculum includes SEL programs, a learner-centred approach that is problem-based, indicative of constructivism with subject integration and flexible standards, is an ideal way of teaching social and emotional competence in learners. With the emphasis on the learner, constructivism enables learners to be autobiographical and teachers acting as agents of change. Onstein and Hunkins (2009: 142) endorses this view in stating that when we learn to deal with learners' psychological requirements, when we become sensitive to what makes them want to learn, we can focus on what they need to learn— affective needs are more important than cognitive needs; the learners' needs should be central to curriculum. The authors continue, stating that an effective curriculum provides learners and teachers with experiences that foster deep understandings, sophisticated skills, appropriate attitudes, and socially constructed values.

Various theories have emerged from which a theoretical framework can be based in support of the constructivist theory to accentuate the need for social and emotional learning programs at schools. Woolfolk (2007: 24) states that Bandura's *Social Learning Theory*, with the focus on learning from others, determines that personal determinants, behavioural determinants, and environmental determinants shape human behaviour. Engler (2009: 258) reports that Bandura believes that frequent exposure to aggression and violence in the media encourage people to behave aggressively. In Bandura's theory he explores how moral disengagement permits individuals and institutions to continue inhumane behaviour. Engler (259) goes further stating that Bandura added the systematic use of modelling as a therapeutic technique of behaviour modification, and he developed strategies designed to help people improve their sense of self-efficacy and self-control.

Worchel, Cooper, Goethals and Olson (2000: 317) attest that in the social learning theory, early experiences and learning determine how an individual will express aggression. They state that physical punishment for children's misdeeds leads to increased aggression. According to the social learning theory, aggression can be decreased by the withdrawal of love or withholding of some other desired object as punishment for aggression.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's *Biological Model of Human Development* puts all the aforementioned theories into perspective in relation to the SEL programs. According to Woolfolk (2010: 67) the Biological Model of Human Development states that every person develops within a microsystem (family, friends, school activities, teachers, etc.) inside a mesosystem (the interactions among all the microsystem elements, embedded in an exosystem (social settings that affect the child, even though the child is not a direct member); all are part of the macrosystem (the larger society with its laws, customs, values, etc.) as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

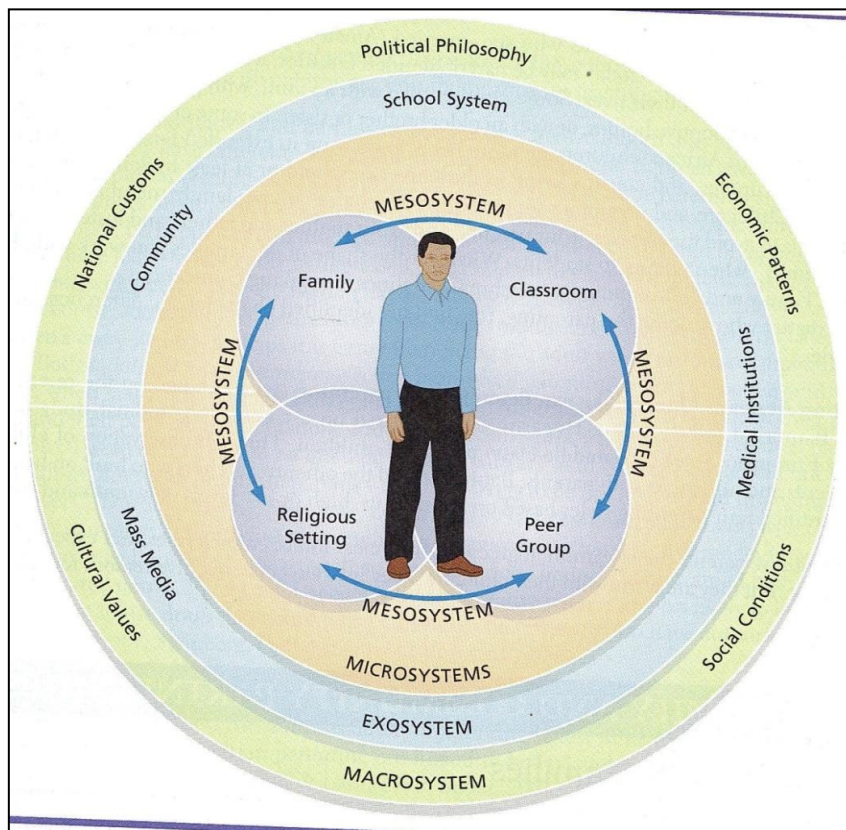


Fig. 2.1 *The Biological Model of Human Development (Woolfolk 2010: 67)*

Social competence and emotional control is affected by our environment, our family, friends and community, especially our schools have a direct influence on how we relate to others. Even the social setting with regard to the mass media, cultural values, national customs and economic patterns has a bearing on how we perceive the world and others. It is therefore the nested social and cultural context that shapes our development.

### 2.3 CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE STUDY

In a postmodern curriculum, constructivism and related personality theories enables us to place social and emotional competence, through SEL programs and positive school climate, into the appropriate context. This implies that in order to implement SEL programs in schools successfully, one needs to look at the school curriculum from a constructivist perspective. Using a constructivist approach makes SEL programs workable in that collaboration and cooperation is encouraged as a way of learning to

work with others, which enhances aspects of social and emotional competence. Woolfolk (2010: 311) concludes that many psychological theories include some kind of constructivism because these theories embrace the idea that individuals construct their own cognitive structures as they interpret the experiences in particular situations—how individuals build up certain elements of their cognitive or emotional apparatus.

#### **2.4 COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS**

Civic Enterprises (2014: 4) points out that teachers define SEL as the ability to interact or get along with others, teamwork or cooperative learning, life skills or preparing for the real world, and self-control or managing one's behaviour. The Department of Basic Education (DoBE) (2013: 8) states that the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) aims to produce learners that are able to, inter alia, collect, analyse and critically evaluate information, as well as organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively. 'Life skills' deals with the holistic development of the learner throughout childhood. It equips learners with knowledge, skills and values that assist them to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. The *Personal and Social Well-being* study area is the study of the self in relation to the environment and society and as such provides opportunities for learners to practise life skills required to make informed choices regarding personal lifestyle, health and social well-being. According to DoBE (2011: 8) Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities and equips them for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society.

De Klerk and Le Roux (2006: 13) propose that SEL programs target a combination of behaviours, cognitions and emotions. These behaviours, cognitions and emotions are developed over time and are taught most effectively within caring, supportive and well-managed learning environments. In order to foster social and emotional competence in learners, SEL programs consist of five key competencies or components as developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an organisation based in Chicago, Illinois, namely self-awareness, social

awareness, and responsible decision-making, self-management and relationship skills. Illustrated as follows:



*Fig. 2.2: Core components of Social and Emotional Learning*

These competencies or components are therefore taught, practiced and reinforced through SEL programs and encompasses the following as outlined by CASEL in Zins and Elias (2006: 3):

- a) *Self-awareness* which covers recognizing and naming one's emotions, understanding the reasons and circumstances for feeling as one does, recognizing and naming others' emotions, recognizing strengths in, and mobilizing positive feelings about self, school, family, and support networks, knowing one's needs and values, perceiving oneself accurately, believing in personal efficacy, and having a sense of spirituality.

De Klerk and Le Roux (2006: 12) provide a link to self-awareness and the skills children need to be emotionally intelligent and indicate it as follows:

- Awareness of own feelings (and the physical symptoms thereof);
- Recognition of the feelings of others—able to read social signals correctly;
- Direct expression of feelings of others, with a vocabulary of feeling words;
- A balance between thoughts and feelings and recognition of the way they influence each other;



- Sensitivity towards the thoughts and feelings of others (empathy);
- An awareness that feelings are not always expressed correctly;
- Insight into the perspectives of others (Why did he do that?);
- Flexibility (What else can I do?);
- Ability to generate alternatives for problem-solving;
- Self-knowledge and nonaggressive self-assertiveness;
- An ability to cope with difficult emotional situations in an appropriate way;
- An awareness that relationships depend on good communication;
- Knowledge that they are in control of their feelings and can choose the correct response to a given situation;
- An ability to see the consequences of their behaviour and to evaluate them;
- Positive and constructive self-talk;
- Goals and internal motivation to reach their destinies, to think constructively; to take the initiative, to reach higher levels of excellence;
- Courage to take risks and be unique;
- Endurance and resilience: to see failures as a learning process, do away with limitations, find alternatives to negative thinking, make commitment;
- A choice to be happy and to enjoy life.

Self-awareness is thus the starting point of the road to attaining social and emotional competence. Knowing oneself becomes the springboard to the other components to follow. Zins and Elias (2006: 4) further outline the components as follows:

- b) *Social awareness* involves appreciating diversity, showing respect to others, listening carefully and accurately, increasing empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings, and understanding others' perspectives, points of view, and feelings.
- c) *Self-management and organisation* includes verbalization and coping with anxiety, anger, and depression, controlling impulses, aggression, and self-destructive, anti-social behaviour, managing personal and interpersonal stress, focussing on tasks at hand, setting short and long-term goals, planning thoughtfully and thoroughly, modifying performance in the light of feedback, and working toward optimal performance.

- d) *Responsible decision-making* involves analysing situations perceptively and identifying problems clearly, exercising social decision-making and problem-solving skills, responding constructively and in a problem-solving manner to interpersonal obstacles, engaging in self-evaluation and reflection, and conducting oneself with personal, moral, and ethical responsibility.
- e) *Relationship management* includes managing emotions in relationships, harmonizing diverse feelings and viewpoints, showing sensitivity to social-emotional cues, expressing emotions effectively, communicating clearly, engaging others in social situations, building relationships, working cooperatively, exercising assertiveness, leadership and persuasion, and managing conflict, negotiation, and refusal.

## **2.5 PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF SEL PROGRAMS**

Managing learner aggression in the school system is central to learners' academic performance and holistic development. In order to manage learner aggression, it is important to understand the contributory factors and forms of learner aggression. Zins and Elias (2006: 3) declare that emotions affect how and what we learn, that caring relationships provide the foundation for lasting learning, and that important SEL skills and knowledge can be taught. Teachers are a vital component of SEL programs. Jones, Bouffard and Weissbourd (2013: 63) prove through empirical research that teachers with stronger SEL competencies have more positive relationships with students, manage their classrooms more effectively, and implement SEL programs targeted to students with greater fidelity. In addition, it is a fact that learners learn from the way teachers manage frustration, maintain control of themselves and the classroom, and handle distractions well. It is therefore the purpose of SEL programs to target a combination of behaviours, cognitions and emotions. Zins and Elias (2006: 3) validate this claim in stating that SEL is the process of acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions, developing caring and concern for others, making responsible decisions, establishing positive relationships, and handling challenging situations capably. Zins and Elias (2006: 5) also illustrate the effectiveness of evidence-based SEL curricula and programs

over a 20 to 30 year period, which shows a growing number of programs, strategies and techniques available for promoting healthy development and preventing negative outcomes. In this regard, Zins and Elias (2006: 4) state that a number of evidence-based SEL curriculum and programs are available that leads to the following positive outcomes:

- a) *Positive Attitudes*, which encompass a higher sense of self-efficacy, better sense of community and of school as caring, stronger commitment to democratic values, more positive attitude toward school and learning, improved ethical attitudes and values, higher academic motivation and educational aspirations, greater trust and respect for teachers, improved coping with school stressors, and increased understanding of consequences of behaviour.
- b) *Improved Behaviours* involving more pro-social behaviour, fewer absenteeism and suspensions, reductions in aggression, disruption and interpersonal violence, less hostility and better conflict resolution skills, more classroom participation and higher engagement, better transitions, as well as less drug, tobacco, and alcohol use and delinquent behaviour, and more involvement in positive activities.
- c) *Better Performance* including improved mathematics, language, arts and social studies skills, higher achievement test scores and no decreases in scores, more progress in phonological awareness, improved learning-to-learn skills, better problem solving and planning, and improved non-verbal reasoning.

Looking at the bigger picture with regard to the mentioned outcomes that create a well-adjusted, socially competent child who possesses emotional control in order to flourish in a progressive, transformative South Africa, SEL programs can be the catalyst needed to transform South African society and lower the incidence of violence and violent crime in South Africa.

Because SEL programs ultimately lead to the improvement in social and emotional competence, De Klerk and Le Roux (2006: 11) highlight some of the positive results of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in children in that they enjoy better physical health, score higher academically, get along better with friends, have fewer behavioural problems

and are less prone to acts of violence, experience fewer negative feelings and enjoy more positive feelings, and become more resilient.

CASEL researched the effects of a program that revealed that students who participated in SEL programs outperformed their peers academically, and in other areas. Zins and Elias (2006: 4) declare that a number of evidence-based SEL programs and curricula are available that lead to outcomes such as the prevention of substance abuse and interpersonal violence and the promotion of mental health and academic achievement. They go on by suggesting that SEL programming is to enhance the growth of all children, to help them develop healthy behaviours, and to prevent them engaging in maladaptive and unhealthy behaviour. Civic Enterprises (2014: 4) in association with Hart Research Associates, conducted a national teacher survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. The results are as follows:

- Research shows that among students from grades five through twelve, positive emotions such as hope, well-being and engagement account for 31% of the variance in students' academic success (hope is 13%, engagement 10%, and well-being 8%).
- Eight in ten teachers think SEL will have a major benefit on students' ability to stay on track and graduate and will increase standardized test scores and overall academic performance (77%). Three-quarter (75%) believe SEL will improve student academic achievement.
- Students in SEL programs enjoy, on average a 9-10 percentage point improvement in positive attitude, addressing conduct problems and reducing emotional distress, compared to student not participating in SEL programs.

The purpose of SEL programs is therefore to promote the holistic development of the child, especially social competence and emotional control. Its benefits include, *inter alia*, positive attitudes and behaviour, improved academic performance, social cohesion and improved self-esteem and self-worth.

## **2.6 THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**

“Recent research suggests that positive school climate is associated with reduced aggression and violence as well as reduced bullying behaviour” (Centre for Social and Emotional Education 2010: vol. 1, [2]). School climate refers to the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organisational structures of the school and all stakeholders’ experiences of school life. It is well documented that schools with a positive school climate produce happier learners with high academic achievement and more productive teachers. There are essential areas of focus regarding school climate. These are relationships, which includes school connectedness, teaching and learning, which includes support for learners’ safety, including rules and norms, and the institutional environment, which is the physical surroundings. When all these factors work in perfect harmony, it contributes to social cohesion and emotional competence in learners. According Centre for Social and Emotional Education (2010: vol. 1 [2]) the association between school climate and level of aggression and victimization is dependent upon each learner’s feelings of connectedness to the school. The brief also states that there is a growing body of research that suggest that school connectedness is a powerful predictor of and/or is associated with adolescent health and academic outcomes, violence prevention, learner satisfaction and conduct. Furthermore, there is evidence that points to school climate affecting learners’ self-esteem, mitigating the negative effects of self-criticism, and affect a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes.

The National School Climate Council (2007) in New York compiled the National School Climate Standards that are benchmarks to promote effective teaching, learning and comprehensive school improvement. The standards provide a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate. The framework is comprised of five standards that support effective school climate improvement efforts and includes:

1. The school community having a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.
2. The school community setting policies to promote (a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills, knowledge, dispositions and engagement, and (b) a comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage learners who have become disengaged.

3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized and supported to *inter alia*, promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of learners.
4. The school community creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
5. The school community develops meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

Because there is a positive link between school climate and social and emotional competence of learners and academic achievement, schools should strive to create a positive school climate, which involves the implementation of social and emotional learning programs. Dale-Jones (12-18 September 2014: 37) reports that the deputy director of the Catholic Institute of Education, Anne Baker, argues for Restorative Justice in schools, an approach that moves schools from punitive ways of dealing with wrong-doers to assisting them to become accountable for their actions and enabling them to put things right. According to her, this strengthens relationships among members of school communities, help schools to become places of peace that nurture learners and staff alike and build the social capital we need. De Klerk and Le Roux (2011: 21) affirm the following are the characteristics of a positive learning environment:

- a) Safe: free from any comparisons to others, abuse, manipulation, humiliation, and invalidation.
- b) Free: children have choices (with responsibilities).
- c) Respectful: of feelings and uniqueness.
- d) Supportive: the individuality, needs and talents are recognized and supported.
- e) Emotionally intelligent: feelings are validated and discussed—part of the total curriculum.
- f) Purposeful: transferable life skills are taught.
- g) Empathetic: children and teachers care for each other's feelings.
- h) Stimulating: environment to encourage the child's natural curiosity and desire to learn.

- i) Flexible: changes can be brought about frequently and easily. To be viewed as challenges.
- j) Natural: plants and water features help children relax.

The National School Climate Council (NSCC) (2007) provides sixteen indicators to support learning, positive youth development and teaching, and thirty sub indicators, which further delineate the determination of the presence or absence of a positive learning environment as mentioned above. These include, *inter alia*, policies and practices that are regularly assessed to ensure continual refinement that enhances the quality of a safe and productive learning environment. Schools gather accurate and reliable data about school climate from learners, school personnel and parents for continuous improvement and share it with the school community. Educational leaders regularly assess and monitor policies and practices and revise as necessary to determine the effectiveness of the school and learning environment. The National School Climate Centre (2012: [3]) also recommends school climate be assessed, either through the NSCC Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI) or through less formal means such as observational strategies, checklists, focus groups, etc.

When schools are able to provide the afore-mentioned learning environment for learners and teachers, the schools become havens for educational transformation and social reform creating tolerant and emotionally intelligent citizens leading productive and self-fulfilled lives in contemporary South Africa. “Studies about the implementation of character education programs suggest that the most effective ones are those incorporated into the school curriculum and developed holistically with the school community”. (Centre for Social and Emotional Education 2010: vol. 1 [3]).

## **2.7 CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

“Social emotional competence is sometimes manifested in ways that are specific to the sociocultural characteristics of the children being served” (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown & Vesely 2014: 166). Delport (2010: 29) claims that social norms are probably the most important elements of society’s influence on emotional life and that since people regard emotions as evaluative appraisals, it goes without saying that a culture’s view

about what is valuable will have a direct effect on the emotional lives of its members. Some people for instance, link anger to feelings of shame, whereas Romans link anger with pride. Nussbaum in Delpont (2010: 30) remarks that emotions are evaluative-cognitive judgments, stressing that people cultivate their emotions during their socialization with others, and that schools form a substantial part of the 'facilitating environment'. He goes further in pronouncing that the major emotion-types are genetic categories in all known societies, and that societies have different taxonomies of emotions, and the elements that distinguish one emotion from another are organized differently. Garner *et al* (2014: 167) go further in suggesting that SEL occurs in tandem with the environment in which individuals are participating. For example, for middle-income children, expectations for interactions with adults are typically aligned among home, school, and larger society; however, for working class and poor children, families' expectations for adult-child interactions tend to vary from what is expected in school and other institutions. In this way, it is critical that children's social emotional competence be viewed in light of not only the sociocultural demands of the dominant culture, but also the sociocultural expectations of their families. Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnobori (2011: 17) observe that when a teacher does not share a learner's cultural background, he or she may erroneously interpret the learner's actions as defiant or disrespectful when that may not be the case. Similarly, teachers may view learners as less socially competent when they use patterns of interaction that are predominant in their home setting but are not congruent with school norms. However, this does not mean that the teacher cannot establish common expectations that everyone in the classroom will strive to achieve. Perfect correspondence of emotions across cultures is therefore highly unlikely. People cannot be isolated from their own cultures, and that culture will inevitably be reflected in their actions. In a study conducted by De Wet (2007: 674) in Lesotho schools, it was found that sexual violence on girls in Lesotho is aggravated by the fact that male adolescents, after returning from initiation schools, showed a strong desire for sex. In another study done by Tyson and Stone (2002: 4) that investigated South African adolescents' explanations for delinquency and examining the cultural differences in these explanations, found that when adolescents were asked why they resorted to delinquent behaviour, most of them indicated that they were not taught the



differences between right and wrong at home, and schools do not teach them what they need. In addition they are not being properly supervised by their parents. What is also interesting from the study is that the influence of peers is clearly seen to be a major influence on delinquent behaviour. Because the study had a cultural element to it (differences in perception between Black and White learners), it showed that some challenges are perceived differently along cultural lines, but that there was an overlap of reasons. “The results showed that there were large differences between the Black and White learners in terms of the perceived importance of a number of the explanatory causes. Some of these differences support the hypothesis that the Black respondents would tend to use external explanations and the White respondents would use internal explanations” (Tyson & Stone 2002: 5). This indicates that delinquent behaviour is, to a certain extent, influenced by cultural values.

Worchel, Cooper, Goethals and Olson (2000: 459) theorize that individualistic cultures value the open expression of emotions and a direct approach to interpersonal relations. Emotions in individualistic cultures are often based on internal experiences and expression is open and public. Emotional expression in collective societies is generally controlled and non-obtrusive. The underlying cause of conflict in collective cultures is seen as the situation rather than the dispositions of the parties, as seen in individualistic cultures. The resolution, they claim, therefore rests in changing the situation rather than the attitudes or characteristics of the parties. Here people often resort to avoidance. The important point here is that culture helps define our schema of conflict and conflict resolution. Culture does not have a pervasive influence on people’s attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviours—culture shapes the way we view ourselves and interpret the actions of others.

## **2.8 ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

Assessment of learners’ social and emotional skills is vital in terms of ascertaining an individual’s shortcomings and progress. Firstly, the Illinois State Department of Education in the United States of America has successfully integrated SEL programs at their schools and has set SEL goals, standards, and benchmarks.

There are numerous assessment tools available. Nel (2014: 91) proposes that learning targets may be formulated by the SMART method (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related).

Functional assessment-based interventions teach learners new, socially valid behaviours that help to improve the quality of their lives both in and beyond the school setting (Refer to Appendix F for steps to conduct a functional behavioural assessment, as well as ways of determining the intervention method). Self-assessments involve setting benchmarks for the learner to apply techniques that can help them in a variety of situations, thereby acquiring social and emotional skills. Other forms of assessment tools include the Behavioural and Emotional Rating Scale, Second Edition (BERS-2) which measures the personal strengths and competencies of children and adolescents in five areas. The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), which is a survey designed to assess how youth are faring personally, and within the contexts of family, school, and community. Behaviour contracts, which are a written agreement between at least two individuals in which one or both agree to demonstrate certain behaviours, are a good option in terms of keeping learners motivated to behave in an appropriate manner as to enhance social and emotional competence. It consists of the behaviour, the reward, and the recording sheet, as indicated in Appendix E.

Functional assessment-based interventions teach learners new, socially valid behaviours that help to improve the quality of their lives both in and beyond the school setting. According to Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnobori (2011: 157) when a functional assessment is conducted, a range of descriptive and experimental tools are used to determine the antecedent conditions that prompt given target behaviour as well as the consequences that maintain the target behaviour. Descriptive procedures may include interviews with teachers, parents, and/or learners; use of rating scales such as the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) to see whether the behaviour is an acquisition or a performance deficit. Dann (2012: 10) reports that assessment gives individuals information about their own competence either through self-scoring or through 360-degree instruments. With emotional intelligence being measurable, means that emotional intelligence (EI) can be developed in individuals, which raises

the individual's EQ (the measuring unit for EI). Dann (2010: 11) also states that raising EQ is possible because emotional intelligence is learnable.

Another form of assessment that is essential is self-monitoring, which includes: choice-making; decision-making, problem solving; goal-setting; self-management and regulation; self-advocacy; self-awareness; and self-knowledge and evaluation. "Students who are able to effectively use self-management strategies such as these are more likely to experience greater academic and social success in the school setting" (Lane *et al*, 2011: 132). Self-assessments involve setting benchmarks for the learner to apply techniques that can help them in a variety of situations, thereby acquiring social and emotional skills. Lane *et al* (2011: 200) point out that self-monitoring can be structured and implemented in the following way:

Step 1: Establish prerequisite conditions in terms of problem behaviour and desired outcomes.

Step 2: Identify and operationally define behaviours.

Step 3: Design self-monitoring procedures and monitoring forms which should be age appropriate.

Step 4: Teach the learner the self-monitoring procedures.

Step 5: Monitor learner progress and reward accuracy.

Step 6: Follow-up and maintenance of target behaviour.

Lastly, Humphrey (2013: 70) provides a brief overview of assessment methods of social and emotional competence in children as indicated in Appendix H.

## **2.9 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW**

Using the Constructivist Theory and its related personality and social theories, enabled me to put the five components of SEL programs viz. Self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management and organisation, responsible decision-making and relationship management into perspective. The main aim of SEL programs is to target a combination of behaviours, cognitions and emotions. The benefits of such programs are vast and include *inter alia*, improving interpersonal skills, positive youth development and academic achievement. Furthermore, the influence of school climate on social and emotional competence of learners is well documented. A positive school

climate is seen to be associated with reduced aggression and violence as well as reduced bullying behaviour and high academic achievement. The foregoing literature thus suggests that school climate influences social and emotional competence of learners and academic achievement—although social and emotional competence is learnable in schools where there is a negative school climate, emotional control may be harder to achieve. The assessment of social and emotional skills of learners is an important part of the process in attaining social and emotional competence, and there are numerous measurement tools available to do so. The current state of academic writing pertaining to SEL suggests that there is substantial growth in research, practice and policy in the field. There is a wealth of information from various educational and social institutions. This study may not add new information to SEL, but it serves to create an awareness of such programs and the positive impact that it has on children. Lastly, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between a positive school climate and learners with social and emotional competence.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology for this study. The method used for this study aims to review and evaluate the current Life Orientation (LO) school curriculum. To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to determine whether emotional competence is adequately addressed in the LO curriculum, and to determine constructive and pragmatic ways to expand the *Personal and Social development* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in the LO curriculum. The detail of the research design, as well as a description of the methods to be used, follows.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This qualitative evaluative research design follows a formative approach for the purpose of analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of the NCS CAPS LO curriculum, specifically the *Personal and Social well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in order to reflect on the current document and propose improvements, if necessary. Accuracy standards will be followed to convey technically adequate information about the features of the curriculum. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 449) mention that these standards include context analysis, described purposes and procedures, defensible information sources, justified conclusions, and objective reporting. In order to achieve these standards, the study will use an objectives- and decision-oriented approach. An objectives-oriented approach is a way to specify goals and objectives and determining the extent to which they have been attained.

The decision-oriented approach has the purpose of collecting and analysing the data needed to make decisions that may lead to a system change. A needs assessment type of decision-oriented evaluation is ideal to compare the current status and values of the curriculum with the desired outcomes.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 451) potential benefits of evaluation studies include allowing for planning and implementing school improvements on a

systematic basis and demonstrate professional responsibility by appraising the quality of educational programs. Further, it reduces uncertainty about educational practices when experience is limited and it satisfies external agencies' requirements for reports to legitimize decisions and improve public image.

The research design that I have chosen for this study should be adequate and could prove highly effective in attaining the objectives of the research which includes determining whether social and emotional competence is adequately addressed in the LO curriculum, and to determine constructive and pragmatic ways to expand the *Personal and Social development* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in the LO curriculum.

### **3.3 METHODOLOGY**

In this section I will discuss the research instruments, the data collection procedure, the analysis of the data, as well as the limitations to the method. The *Personal and Social well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in the Life Orientation Curriculum document will be analysed in detail and will subsequently be described.

#### **3.3.1 Research Instruments**

Two research instruments are used to collect data in this study. Firstly, an unobtrusive measure will be used to analyse *the Personal and Social well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas. I formulated a research instrument for the document analysis from the 37 Guidelines for Effective Social and Emotional Learning Instruction by Elias (1997) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in Zins and Elias (2006: [2]) for the purpose of the evaluation. These guidelines describe what effective Social and Emotional instruction entails. The benefits include assessment of educational effects on learners, appraisal of quality of education, and enlightenment of policy-makers to anticipate issues, needs assessment for desired outcomes, and examining alternative strategies. A list of criteria for effective social and emotional instruction was developed as contained in Table 3.1.

The research instrument aims to reflect on the *Personal and Social well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in the LO curriculum document. Table 3.1: Assessment tool for effective social and emotional learning instruction

Criterion	Yes	To an extent	No
<b>1. Interactively teaches SEL skills for applications to daily life.</b>	✓		
<b>2. Builds connections to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices—enhances a positive school climate.</b>			
<b>3. Promotes developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.</b>			
<b>4. Leads to coordinated, integrated and unified programming linked to academic outcomes—subject integration.</b>			
<b>5. Involves school-family-community partnerships.</b>			
<b>6. Regular, thorough assessment and evaluation of learners.</b>			
<b>7. Establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success.</b>			
<b>8. Provides high-quality staff development and support.</b>			
<b>9. Teachers are qualified and competent in teaching SEL programs.</b>			
<b>10. Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL program.</b>			
<b>11. Provides opportunities to practice social and emotional skills.</b>			
<b>12. Promotes: a) Self-awareness</b>			
<b>b) Social awareness</b>			
<b>c) Self-management and organization</b>			
<b>d) Responsible decision-making</b>			
<b>e) Relationship management</b>			

The second research instrument is an interview schedule (see Appendix C). The questions are very specific and are a combination of closed and open-ended questions to elicit accurate information to analyse the document. What is required from the respondent is to give important insights into features of the curriculum and policy on practice. The respondent is also encouraged to give personal views and opinions about curriculum content, expected outcomes and implementation procedures. The feasibility and practicality of recommendations are also of importance.

### 3.3.2 Credibility of the research

The credibility of the unobtrusive measurement tool is based on well-documented Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs used in the United States. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the 37 guidelines for effective SEL instruction describe in detail what effective SEL instruction entails. The unobtrusive measuring tool thus summarizes what effective SEL programs should consist of in the context of social transformation of education. The use of the assessment tool in the evaluation of the LO Curriculum documents, is effective to meet the objectives of the study. Zins and Elias (2006: 5) state that although many research and practice issues still need to be addressed, the investigations behind SEL evaluation efforts include better study designs, use of manual and readily replicable interventions, more analysis of longitudinal data leading to a better understanding of the operation of risk and process, and improvements in knowledge of pathways and stages associated with development of maladaptive behaviour.

In order to improve the credibility and thoroughness of the research, I also used an elite interview through an e-mailed schedule. The strengths of using a schedule such as this include that it is economical; makes use of standard questions and uniform procedures, and provides time for a subject to think about his or her responses. This means that I would be able to get accurate and comprehensive answers to questions. Though in a focus group context, a study conducted by Schneider, Kerwin, Frechtling and Vivari (2002) contrasted discussions in the online and face-to-face formats. This research revealed that online interviews tend to elicit detailed viewpoints from



participants and tend to provide a more balanced impression. Online participants usually contribute short comments, which enhance the accuracy of data required.

### 3.3.3 Limitations

The limitation to using only one respondent in the interview implies that one perspective is obtained. However, the respondent has vast experience in the field of LO as he moved through the ranks of teacher to lecturer and then became the curriculum advisor for LO. The participant is the Deputy Education Specialist for LO in the Department of Education. A further limitation to using an e-mailed interview schedule is the inability to probe and clarify immediately, and the rate of response of an e-mailed questionnaire may not be desirable. However, the respondent can be contacted again to gain clarification about uncertain feedback and can be used to probe further if necessary.

### 3.3.4 Data generation

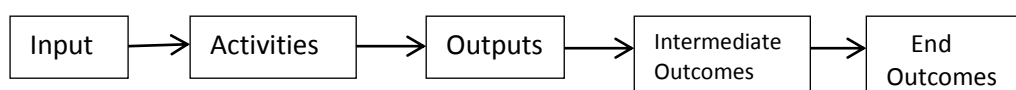
Data will be collected and analysed from the Life Skills for the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and LO for the Senior and FET Phases of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) policy documents, which includes the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6), the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) and the FET Phase (Grades 10-12). The focus of the evaluation is on the *Personal and Social Well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas. This is where social and emotional skills are taught. This will give insight in the current social and emotional learning programs on offer. The data will be categorized according to the different phases and will be assessed on the 13 criteria in the unobtrusive measuring tool. In support of the data collected from the policy documents, an interview schedule will be used to gain additional information for an adequate evaluation of SEL instruction of the *Personal and Social Well-being* and *Development of the Self in society* study areas.

The participant in the study is the deputy education specialist for Life Orientation, who will be able to add immeasurable value and insight to the study in terms of analysing

and synthesising of the curriculum. It would have been preferable to have a face-to-face interview with the expert, but as this is not possible, the next best option is that of an e-mailed interview schedule.

### 3.3.5 Data Analysis

Document analysis requires that the data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. The LO Curriculum documents that were perused and analysed included the time allocation; teaching plans; learner teacher support (LTS); content; and program of assessment. In order to provide a causal connection between the curriculum’s activities and learner outcomes, a Logic Model will be used. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010: 373) indicate that the Logic Models provide a framework or template for clearly identifying what needs to be measured at each distinct stage of the program. Logic Models function on the assumption that a logical chain of events must occur in order to reach the final result of the program, represented as follows:



The LO Curriculum document is divided into different categories or themes which I have adopted as categories for the evaluation process. Following the Logic Model, categories and subcategories have been adopted from the CASEL guideline and modified in conjunction with the requirements of the study and expected outcomes for the evaluation/analysis of the LO Curriculum document as follows:

Table 3.2: Framework for identifying categories to be evaluated

Component	Categories
<b>Input</b>	Resources to achieve desired outcomes: Allocation of notional time; learner-teacher support and teaching plans
<b>Activities</b>	Lesson content (intrinsic and extrinsic/covert learning)
<b>Outputs of Activities</b>	Program of assessment: Daily assessments and learner

	observation and monitoring
<b>Intermediate outcomes</b>	Program of assessment: Quarterly assessments including cooperative projects and assignments
<b>End outcomes</b>	Program of assessment: Annual assessments including examination to meet the NCS aims and assessment standards.

### 3.4 ETHICAL PROCEDURES

This research study complies with the ethical requirements as stipulated by the University of South Africa as indicated by the Ethical Clearance Certificate in Appendix A. The University's research ethics policy was adhered to as the study ensures that the rights and interests of the participants are protected. The study is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and the public good. The research is done in an ethical manner as an integral part of the planning and methodology of the research. It strives to preserve and promote the autonomy, quality, legitimacy and credibility of the study. Ethical clearance was obtained for the dissemination of an elite interview schedule. Informed consent was obtained from the participant, in which the purpose of the study was outlined.

The dignity, privacy and confidentiality of the participant is guaranteed, and participation is completely voluntary. In this regard, the participant was informed that he may withdraw at any appropriate time. The participant was also guaranteed that all information of the questionnaire would be disseminated accurately, without prejudice, misrepresentation or misinterpretation. Furthermore, the results of the study will be made available to the participant before submission, and that any opinions, omissions or additions would be welcomed. In this way the conduct of the research would be honest, fair and transparent. The participant was made to feel indispensable and a worthy partner in the research.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

The qualitative research design used in this study is evaluative research, using a formative method. The research instruments namely an unobtrusive measurement tool and an interview will assist me to present a comprehensive evaluation report of the *Personal and Social Well-being* and the *Development of the self in society* study areas of the CAPS LO documents. In the context of this study, this research methodology is the best way to attain the objectives of the study.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2011) report, illustrated in Nel (2014: 240) on school-based violence in South Africa states that violence is a serious worry in both primary and secondary schools, across age, gender, race and school categories. The report also states that violence takes on different forms in the context which range from mental/psychological to physical forms of violence. With this in mind, SEL has never been more necessary as a prominent part of the school curricula.

Data collected from the electronic interview and analysis of the curriculum documents is presented and discussed in this section. Table 4.1 provides details on how data is categorized and indicates the way in which the results are organized, presented and discussed.

The findings of the document analysis are discussed in conjunction with responses from the electronic interview in a question-and-answer format under specific categories and subcategories as set out in Table 4.1. The responses from the interview are verbatim and have not been edited.

Table 4.1: Organization of data analysis and reporting

<b>Theme/Component</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>
Input	Time allocation 4.2.1	Leads to subject integration
	Teaching plans 4.2.2	Interactively teach social and emotional skills for application in daily life  Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL
	Learner-Teacher	School-community partnerships.  Provision of top quality staff development and support

	Support 4.2.3	
Activities	Content 4.2.4	Promote developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.  Promote self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management and organisation, responsible decision-making and relationship management
Output of activities	Assessment program 4.2.5	Type and frequency of assessment

## 4.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section includes extracts from the Curriculum and Assessment Statement (CAPS): Life Orientation of the Department of Basic Education (2010):

### 4.2.1 Time Allocation (Grades R-12)

*Analysis:*

The breakdown of time allocation for Life Orientation (LO) per week and the time allocated specifically for the social and emotional study areas for grades R-12 appear in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Time allocation for LO in relation to social and emotional learning areas

Study Area	Grade	Time: LO - Study Area
Personal and Social Well-being	R	6hrs - 1hr
Personal and Social Well-being	1-2	6hrs - 1hr
Personal and Social Well-being	3	7hrs - 1hr
Personal and Social Well-being	4-6	4hrs - 1.5hrs

Development of the self in society	7-9	2hrs - 15min
Development of the self in society	10-12	2hrs - 15min

*Interview question:*

Do you think that enough time has been allocated to Life Skills or Life Orientation?  
Please give reasons for your answer.

Response: **The time allocation for Life Skills (PSW, PE and CA) in the intermediate phase is 4 hours and for Life Orientation are 2 hours grades 7-12. The time allocation for the subject is adequate because learners engage the subject at least twice per week.**

*Finding:*

According to the education policy, subjects other than the core fundamental subjects like Languages and Mathematics, should be offered only twice per week. In this regard, the minimum amount of time allocation for LO is regarded as adequate.

*Discussion:*

Jones and Bouffard (2012: 7) suggest that SEL programs often take the form of short lessons, implemented during one weekly half-hour long lessons with lessons often abridged or skipped due to tight schedules. It is important for a school to have a culture that promotes and encourage positive social and emotional development through social norms that may include activities to foster positive relationships, sound disciplinary procedures and intervention strategies designed to support socially and emotionally struggling learners. When one considers the severe impact South Africa's socio-economic circumstances has on children, particularly their academic performance, one can conclude that SEL programs are essential and that adequate time should be allocated to these. Time also needs to be set aside for intervention strategies and follow-up counselling. Jones and Bouffard (2012: 9) propose that because academic and SEL skills develop and operate together, efforts to promote them should be designed to promote both at the same time.

## **4.2.2 Teaching Plans**

### *4.2.2.1 The Foundation Phase*

#### *Analysis:*

The Foundation Phase's teaching plan is guided by the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS). The CAPS Life Orientation document states that the teacher should provide:

- Routine, structured and free play activities that are enjoyable and manageable;
- A range of resources for routine, structured and free play activities; and
- A well-managed, child-friendly and freely accessible environment.

(a) Interactive teaching of SEL skills for application in daily life.

One of the NCS principles promotes active and critical learning, encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote, uncritical learning. The curriculum therefore recommends the use of topics to integrate the content from different study areas wherever possible and appropriate. Teachers are also encouraged to adapt the topics so that they are suitable for their school context.

#### *Finding:*

The curriculum makes adequate provision for the application of SEL skills in daily life by giving teachers the opportunity to adapt topics and lessons to suit the school context. It may or may not be appropriately implemented by teachers and school policy.

#### *Discussion:*

Jones and Bouffard (2012: 8) state that four principles of SEL development can drive more effective school-based approaches, namely continuity and consistency; interdependency of social and emotional and academic skills; developing SEL skills in social context; and the operation of classrooms and schools as systems. However, what happens outside the school is also important. CASEL indicates that practice that takes place outside the lesson in a real-world setting has the potential to be especially powerful. Practice within the program should include role play or guided self-management techniques and it may be in the interest of schools to implement



regulations and policies that foster social and emotional skills for learners and teachers.

(b) Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL

*Analysis:*

The curriculum makes provision for a suggested order or sequence for topics. Sequencing and progression have been built into the design of the topics.

*Finding:*

There is a proper sequencing of topics related to SEL from Grades R to 3.

*Discussion:*

According to Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011: 4) there is a broad agreement that programs are likely to be effective if they use a sequenced step-by-step training approach; use active forms of learning, focus sufficient time on skill development, and have explicit learning goals. These four recommended practices form the acronym SAFE (sequence, active, focussed and explicit).

4.2.2.2 Intermediate Phase

*Analysis:*

The overview of topics for the *Personal and social well-being* study area appear in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Topics for SEL in the IP

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 6</b>
Development of the self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal strengths</li> <li>• Respect for own and others' bodies</li> <li>• Emotions: understanding a range of emotions</li> <li>• Dealing with conflict</li> <li>• Personal experience of working in a group</li> <li>• Bullying:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive self-concept formation</li> <li>• Receiving and giving feedback</li> <li>• Coping with emotions</li> <li>• Relationships with peers, older people and strangers</li> <li>• Reading skills:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive self-esteem: body image</li> <li>• Abilities, interests and potential</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Problem solving skills in conflict situations</li> <li>• Self-management skills</li> </ul>

	<p>appropriate responses to bullying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading for enjoyment</li> </ul>	<p>reading with understanding and using a dictionary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying: getting out of the bullying habit</li> <li>• Reading skills: reading with understanding and fluency</li> </ul>
Health and environmental responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dangers in and around water: home and public swimming pools, rivers and dams</li> <li>• Traffic rules relevant to road users: pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>• Personal and household hygiene</li> <li>• Dietary habits of children</li> <li>• Healthy environment and personal health: home, school and community</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS education: basic facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety measures at home and the environment</li> <li>• Water as an important basic need</li> <li>• Healthy eating for children</li> <li>• Local environmental health problems</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS education: dealing with stigma</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic first aid in different situations</li> <li>• Food hygiene</li> <li>• Communicable diseases</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS education: myths and realities</li> </ul>
Social responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Cultures and moral lessons</li> <li>• Knowledge of major religions in South Africa: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Baha'i Faith and African religion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts: discrimination, stereotype and bias</li> <li>• Child abuse</li> <li>• Dealing with violent situations</li> <li>• Issues of age and gender</li> <li>• Festivals and customs of a variety of religions in South Africa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dignity of the person in a variety of religions in South Africa</li> <li>• Cultural rites of passage</li> <li>• Caring for animals</li> <li>• Caring for people</li> <li>• Nation-building and cultural heritage</li> <li>• Gender stereotyping, sexism and abuse.</li> </ul>

(a) Interactive teaching of social and emotional skills for daily life.

*Analysis:*

In terms of the CAPS Life Orientation document, the focus of the learning should be on the development of skills through enjoyable, experiential processes, rather than on working towards highly polished products in each item. The South African Curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. Producing learners that are able to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking, work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team, organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively, collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information, communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes, use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others, and demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

(b) Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL

*Analysis:*

According to the CAPS Life Orientation document, the sequence of the topics during a term is not fixed. Consequently there may not be continuity of SEL over the three grades.

*Interview question:* Research indicates that SEL is more effective when it is presented in a grade-by-grade sequence. Are the current *Personal and Social Well-being* and *Development of the self in society* study areas in a grade-by-grade sequence?

*Response:* **Yes. The topics are overlapping from grade to grade, but are incrementally complex as learners move higher into the system.**

*Finding:*

Due to the complex nature of the study areas, topics appear to be presented in a semi-sequenced and semi-structured manner rather than a formal, fully sequenced manner.

*Discussion:*

Research indicates that SEL is more effective when it is presented in a grade-by-grade sequence. SEL research in Jones and Bouffard (2012: 6) found that the most effective

programs are those that incorporate the SAFE method, which was mentioned in the previous section (4.2.2.1). Continuity and consistency of SEL is essential to its effectiveness. According to Jones and Bouffard (2012: 8) SEL skills develop in an on-going and cumulative way from birth through adolescence. Earlier skills lay the foundation for later skills. These authors further state that SEL skills develop in on-going relational contexts. As incrementally complex as it may be, grade-by-grade sequencing may be important in attaining the desired outcomes in SEL.

#### 4.2.2.3 Senior Phase and FET

##### Analysis:

An overview of topics for *Development of the self in society* and *Health, Social and environment responsibility* for the Senior and FET Phases appear in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.4: SEL topics in LO Grades 7-9

Topic	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Development of the self in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concept: self-image</li> <li>• changes in boys and girls: puberty</li> <li>• peer pressure</li> <li>• concepts: personal diet and nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concepts: self-concept formation and self-motivation</li> <li>• concept: sexuality</li> <li>• relationships and friendships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• goal-setting skills: personal lifestyle choices</li> <li>• sexual behaviour and sexual health</li> <li>• challenging situations: depression, grief; loss; trauma; crises</li> </ul>
Health, social and environmental responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substance abuse</li> <li>• concept: environmental health</li> <li>• common diseases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social factors that contribute to substance abuse</li> <li>• environmental health issues</li> <li>• decision-making about health and safety issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concept: volunteerism</li> <li>• health and safety issues related to violence</li> </ul>

Table 4.5: SEL topics in LO Grades 10-12

Topics	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Development of the self in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness, self-esteem and self-development</li> <li>• Power, power relations and gender roles</li> <li>• Value of participation in exercise programmes</li> <li>• Life roles: nature and responsibilities</li> <li>• Changes towards adulthood</li> <li>• Decision-making regarding sexuality</li> <li>• Recreation and emotional health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and achieve life goals: problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Relationships and their influence on well-being</li> <li>• Healthy lifestyle choices: decision-making skills</li> <li>• Role of nutrition in health and physical activities</li> <li>• Gender roles and their effects on health and wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life skills required to adapt to change as part of on-going healthy lifestyle choices</li> <li>• Stress management</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Human factors that cause ill-health</li> <li>• Action plan for lifelong participation in physical activity.</li> </ul>
Social and environmental responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contemporary social issues that impact negatively on local and global communities</li> <li>• Social skills and responsibilities to participate in civic life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental issues that cause ill-health</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Participation in a community service addressing an environmental issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environments and services which promote safe and healthy living</li> <li>• Responsibilities of various levels of government</li> <li>• A personal mission Statement for life</li> </ul>

(a) Interactive teaching of social and emotional skills for daily life.

*Analysis:*

As with the Intermediate Phase, the South African Curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. Producing learners that are able to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking, work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team, organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively, collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate

information, communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes, use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others, and demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

(b) Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL

*Analysis:*

According to the CAPS Life Orientation document, and as mentioned in 4.2.2.2 the sequence of the topics to be taught during a term is not fixed and again may hamper continuity of SEL over the three grades.

*Finding:*

Due to the complex nature of the study areas, topics appear to be presented in a semi-sequenced and semi-structured manner rather than a formal, fully sequenced manner.

*Discussion:*

“SEL programs should be vertically aligned: early childhood and elementary strategies should intentionally lay the groundwork for later interventions, and middle and high school efforts should intentionally build on earlier strategies and skill” (Jones & Bouffard 2012: 6). These researchers further remark that SEL efforts should also be horizontally aligned that is intentionally connected and consistent across micro-contexts within schools. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011: 5) confirm that there is a broad agreement that programs are likely to be effective if they use a sequenced step-by-step training approach, use active forms of learning, focus sufficient time on skill development, and more complicated skills usually need to be broken down into smaller steps and sequentially mastered. SEL programs for adolescents, which the Senior and FET phases represent, is of utmost importance as adolescents struggle to come to terms with societal challenges as well as cognitive and physiological changes. Grade-by-grade sequencing is therefore essential for the implementation of an effective SEL program.

### 4.2.3 Learner-Teacher Support

#### *Analysis:*

Learner-teacher support (LTS) is essential for effective SEL instruction. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) makes workbooks available for various subjects including Life Orientation. Various standard resources for the Foundation Phase are used. There are also various LTSM options available online for teachers on the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) website.

#### (a) School-community partnerships

*Interview question:* Is the DoE open to using specialists from the community, like an educational psychologist, to present a specialized area or train staff?

*Response: **Yes, it happens at some of the schools already, but not as a practice. The department has a complement of school psychologists who work with learners on a clinical one to one basis. In rare occasions they do assist with training program for teachers in the area of their expertise.***

#### (b) Provision of top quality staff development and support.

*Interview question:* Do you think teachers are prepared, aside from their academic qualifications, to facilitate the learning transfer of social and emotional skills as covered in the curriculum?

*Response: **Some of the teachers with training background in Physical Education and Psychology have an advantage to teachers with no such back-grounds. If schools invest in appointing a good Life Orientation teacher, and adopt good Life Orientation practices, the battle for excellent teaching and learning is half won.***

#### *Finding:*

There appears to be sufficient textbooks and workbooks from which teachers can retrieve content as well as a wealth of support material on the Internet. However, it is not common practice to make use of education specialists to present certain specialized topics or provide much needed comprehensive training for teachers.

### *Discussion:*

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010: 206) reading material in the form of fiction or stories appropriate to different age levels may stimulate deeper social, emotional and moral exploration and reflection. In addition Jones and Bouffard (2012: 14) argue that it is vital for adults working in educational settings to have strong SEL skills themselves. Stress management and self-regulation programs for educators include CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) and SMART (Stress Management and Resiliency Training) should be considered for teachers. A randomized field trial of SMART found increases in teachers' mindfulness, more positive feelings about their jobs and learners, more forgiving attitudes, and increased efficacy for regulating emotions. It may be in the interest of the Department of Education to invest in training programs for teachers to deliver effective SEL programs for the *Development of the Self in Society* study area.

## **4.2.4 Content**

### *4.2.4.1 Foundation Phase*

#### *Analysis:*

The CAPS Foundation Phase curriculum states that content for the *Personal and social well-being* study area include social health, emotional health, and relationships with other people and our environment, including values and attitudes. It addresses issues relating to nutrition, diseases, safety, violence, abuse and environmental health.

Learners will develop the skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while practising the values embedded in the Constitution. Learners will also learn to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others and to show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to contribute to a democratic society.

- (a) Promotes developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction

The *National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS)* is an important reference document for planning, teaching and learning, and is a guide to promoting developmentally appropriate teaching and learning. There are important skills that



very young learners need to master and understand before they go to Grade 1 and Grade R should help them to acquire those skills. One of the most important roles of the Grade R teacher is to provide learners with an environment that is safe, clean and caring, with adequate opportunities to play and explore the world under the careful guidance of their teacher.

- (b) Promotes self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management and organisation, responsible decision-making and relationship management.

Personal and social well-being content include aspects of self-awareness through the topic “Me”, “My body”, “My family” and “Feelings”. Social awareness and relationship management and organization topics include “My community”, “Manners and responsibility”, “Everyone is special” and “People who help us”. Responsible decision-making topics include “Rights and responsibilities”, “Keeping my body safe” and “Public safety”.

*Interview question:* Is LO adequately meeting its objectives in terms of developing social and emotional competence in learners?

*Response:* ***I can safely say that where schools have a strong Life Orientation component or department, the discipline of learners are good with positive consequences for both the learner academic performance and for the schools as a whole.***

*Finding:*

The five core components of SEL, as discussed in Chapter 2, are addressed in the different topics though SEL objectives may only be met in certain schools.

*Discussion:*

CASEL (2013) suggest various SEL programs that include the four Rs (reading, writing, respect and resolution) to improve classroom quality; AI’s Pals (resilience-based prevention program); Competent Kids; Caring Community (developing cognitive-social-emotional competencies to enhance academic learning); I can problem solve (reducing

overt and relational aggression among children); MindUp (mindfulness-based education program) and Open Circle (promoting social competence in school-aged children). These programs are sequenced and are well-researched and comprehensive and could facilitate the meeting of objectives regarding development of social and emotional competence in learners. The introduction of some of these programs should be considered.

#### *4.2.4.2 Intermediate, Senior and FET Phases*

##### *Analysis:*

The content, which includes knowledge, concepts and skills contained in the NCS, has been organised in CAPS per term. A learner-centred approach is proposed to teach the content to learners.

- (a) Promotes developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction

The curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives. Content and context of each grade shows progress from simple to complex. It also encourages valuing indigenous knowledge systems with regard to the rich history and heritage of the country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution.

- (b) Promote self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management and organisation, responsible decision-making and relationship management.

All the elements of SEL indicated are met in the annual teaching plan which is divided into topics per term.

*Interview question:* What can be done to improve on the current study areas that promote social and emotional skills?

*Response:* ***Practicing....practicing... practicing...! In the FET learners could do social responsibilities activities; we referred to it as "Certification Tasks". Such learners***

***would volunteer to work at various social institutions; or doing job shadowing; or tackle community projects to improve society. Such activities enrich the social and emotional competencies of learners.***

*Finding:*

Content in the particular study areas are adequate in terms of promoting developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction and the five core components of SEL, but more could be done in practice.

*Discussion:*

CASEL recommends various SEL programs, particularly for the Intermediate Phase, like the four Rs (referred to in 4.2.4.1) that provide interactive skills lessons to develop social and emotional skills related to understanding and managing feelings, listening and developing empathy, being assertive, solving conflict creatively and non-violently, honouring diversity and standing up to bullying. It consists of 35 lessons that include infusing ideas, recommendations of books, and four Rs Activity Sheets to reinforce learner understanding. 'Competent Kids' and 'Caring Communities' are programs designed to promote life skills including family-school collaboration. The programs take learners through 35 sets of lessons from Grade R to Grade 6. These programs were evaluated for effectiveness and were shown to improve academic performance, increase positive social behaviour, reduce conduct problems and reduce emotional distress.

CASEL recommends the 'MindUP' program for the Senior Phase. It involves attentive listening, which is designed to enhance learners' self-awareness, focus attention, promote self-regulation and reduce stress. Training is not required, and MindUP offers a train-the-trainer system to support sustainability. However, teachers need to take on a responsibility too. "Teachers must reflect their own skill levels in the content area, as well as in pedagogy. This shapes the designated curriculum into a curriculum that students actually experience. Teachers exert a huge influence on what is taught and what students access. To make effective curricula choices, teachers and others who deliver instruction need to be aware of this fact and make informed, conscious

decisions about how they manage content” (Lane, Menzies, Bruhn & Crnobori 2011: 41).

## **4.2.5 Program of Assessment**

### *4.2.5.1 Foundation Phase*

#### *Analysis:*

Assessment standards for the *Personal and social well-being* study area include:

- the ability to explain relationships with members of family, school and community;
- describing your own body in a positive way;
- showing and identifying different emotions, including respect for living things;
- ability to cope with anger and disagreement;
- identification of values and morals from diverse South African cultures;
- identification of positive aspects of self;
- demonstration and discussion of emotions in various situations;
- demonstration of appropriate classroom behaviour,
- discussing the role of acceptance, giving and forgiving and sharing in healthy social relationships;
- ability to describe own abilities, interests and strengths; and
- demonstrate assertiveness appropriate to a situation.

#### (a) Type and frequency of assessments

The CAPS curriculum document states that assessment is a continuous planned process involving both formal assessment (of learning) and informal assessment (for learning). The emphasis is on observing learners in an on-going and planned way, during their daily routine, during structured and free-play activities. The purpose of assessment of Life Skills is to assess the development of concepts, skills and values that will help to prepare learners for more formal assessments during the IP. The recording and reporting of various achievement levels appear in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Achievement levels for the Foundation Phase

Rating code	Description of competence	Percentage
7	Outstanding achievement	80-100
6	Meritorious achievement	70-79
5	Substantial achievement	60-69
4	Adequate achievement	50-59
3	Moderate achievement	40-49
2	Elementary achievement	30-39
1	Not achieved	0-29

In order to assist teachers with assessments methods in LO, the National Protocol for Assessments Grades R-12 is provided.

*Finding:*

Assessment standards as laid out in the document cover all the essential elements of desired outcomes in terms of the development of social and emotional competence. However, because of the ages of the learners (being very young), emphasis is placed on learner observation as the primary method of assessment.

*Discussion:*

Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnobori (2011: 157) recommend a functional assessment in which a range of descriptive and experimental tools are used to determine the antecedent conditions that prompt given target behaviour as well as the consequences that maintain the target behaviour. Learners may also keep a journal of feelings as a form of self-assessment and monitoring.

*4.2.5.2 Intermediate Phase*

*Analysis:*

Assessment standards for the IP *Personal and Social Well-being* in which the learner

- identifies his or her own strengths and those of others, and explains how to convert less successful experiences in positive learning experiences.
- Considers and interprets the emotions of others.

- Demonstrates the ability to select and apply useful responses in conflict situations.
- Identifies personal successes and develops an action plan for continued positive self-concept formation.
- Appropriately expresses and copes with a range of emotions.
- Explores and evaluates ways of responding effectively to violent situations and contexts.
- Applies children's rights and responsibilities to a range of problem situations.
- Explains how to respond to peer pressure in different situations.
- Demonstrates compassion by caring for people and animals.
- Demonstrates peacekeeping and mediation skills in different conflict situations.
- Explains what has been learned by reflecting on an experience related to self-management skills.
- Describes and selects a range of problem-solving skills for different contexts.
- Discusses effects of gender stereotyping, sexism and abuse on personal and social relationships.

(a) Type and frequency of assessment

Daily assessments are used to continuously collect information on a learners' achievement. This is done during and after the teaching and learning process. The following assessments may be used: a short class test; a discussion; a practical demonstration; a mind map; debates; role-play; interviews; design and make; case study; oral and written presentation. An observation checklist for daily assessment tasks is also recommended. Formal assessment tasks (Table 4.7) are formally recorded for progression purposes. These include tests, examinations, practical demonstrations, projects, design and make, case studies, and assignments. Forms of assessment used should be age and development appropriate.

Table 4.7: Formal assessments for the Intermediate Phase

Task 1			Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	
Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 4 – 6		Grades 4 and 5	Grade 6
Assignment/ Design and make: 30 marks	Assignment/ Case study/ Design and make: 30 marks	Assignment/ Case study: 30 marks	Test: 30 mark	Project: 30 mark	End-of-year exams: 30 marks	End-of-year exams: 60 marks

*Interview question:* How important is assessment of learners?

**Response: As learners begin to form their opinions and world view, one can really observe the changes that learners undergo as they grow into the subject. Assessing the progress of learners is very important. It allows the teachers to make value judgments on how learners perceive the topics in Life Orientation.**

*Finding:*

There is a broad spectrum of assessment methods over the course of the year. The efficacy of the assessment with regard to achieving the assessment standards has not been determined.

*Discussion:*

There are various effective assessment tools to ascertain whether behaviour is an acquisition or a performance deficit. These assessment tools include the following: Social and Emotional Improvement System; Behavioural and Emotional Rating Scale, Second Edition (BERS-2) which measures the personal strengths and competencies of children and adolescents in five areas; and the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), which is a survey designed to assess how the youth are faring personally, and within the contexts of family, school, and community. The DAP measures eight categories in a way that is easily administered and scored. According to Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnabori (2011: 132) students who are able to effectively use self-management strategies such as these are more likely to experience greater academic and social success in the school setting. Self-assessments involve setting benchmarks for the learner to apply techniques that can help him/her in a variety of situations, thereby acquiring social and emotional skills.

4.2.5.3 Senior Phase

Analysis:

Assessment standards for the *Development of self in society* include the following:

The learner

- Explains how to counter gender stereotyping and sexism.
- Reports on the implementation of strategies to enhance own and others’ self-image through positive actions.
- Explains and evaluates own coping with emotions and own response to change.
- Shows evidence of respect for others and the ability to disagree in constructive ways.
- Demonstrates and reflects on decision-making skills.
- Critically evaluates own study skill strategies.
- Analyses and discusses factors which influence self-concept formation and self-motivation.
- Reflects on appropriate behaviour in different kinds of interpersonal relationships.
- Explains how the self will cope with depression, crisis or trauma.
- Designs and implements a personal plan for preventing and managing stress.
- Critically discusses social relationships in a variety of situations.
- Analyses and reflects on positive personal qualities in a range of contexts.
- Applies goal-setting and decision-making strategies.

The weighting of marks for the four internal formal assessment tasks for Grades 7 to 9 appear in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Weighting of marks for formal assessments in Senior Phase

<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
Task 1 Written task: 70 marks Physical Education Task (PET): 30 marks	Task 2 Mid-year examination: 70 marks PET: 30 marks	Task 3 Project: 70 marks PET: 30 marks	Task 4 End-of-year examination: 70 marks PET: 30 marks



#### 4.2.5.4 FET phase

##### Analysis:

Learner progress in LO is monitored throughout the school year and involves the following three different but related activities:

- Informal or daily assessment tasks
- Formal assessment tasks
- Optional certificate tasks.

The weighting of marks for the five internal formal assessment tasks for LO appear in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Weighting of marks for formal assessment in the FET phase  
Grades 10 and 11

<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
Task 1 Written task: 80 marks Task 5 Physical Education Task (PET): 20 marks	Task 2 Mid-year examination: 80 marks Task 5 PET: 20 marks	Task 3 Project: 80 marks Task 5 PET: 20 marks	Task 4 End-of-year examination: 80 marks Task 5 PET: 20 marks

##### Grade 12

<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Term 4</b>
Task 1 Written task: 80 marks Task 5 Physical Education Task (PET): 20 marks	Task 2 Mid-year examination: 80 marks Task 3 Project: 80 marks Task 5 PET: 40 marks	Task 4 Final examination: 80 marks Task 5 PET: 20 marks	

Formal written tasks include source-based tasks, case studies, assignments, written reports, written and oral presentations and portfolio of evidence. Moderation of formal assessment tasks for LO is an integral part of the quality assurance process. Therefore, moderation of learner performance in the five formal assessment tasks

undertaken in Grade 12 is critical to ensure that scores emanating from the total internal assessment for Life Orientation for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) are credible, reliable and valid. The four levels of moderation applicable to Life Orientation are the school, district/region, provincial and national levels.

*Finding:*

There is a broad spectrum of assessment methods over the course of the year. The efficacy of the assessment with regard to achieving the assessment standards has not been determined.

*Discussion:*

Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnobori (2011: 102) suggest the use of behaviour contracts, which is a written agreement between at least two individuals in which one or both agree to demonstrate certain behaviours. It consists of the behaviour, the reward, and the recording sheet, as indicated in Appendix E. Lane *et al* (2011: 119) also provide guidelines for writing behaviour contracts, namely identify the target behaviour(s); meet with stakeholders; discuss the learners' good and bad behaviour; write behaviour objectives/tasks; identify rewards and consequences; determine the evaluation process; and finally sign on the dotted line

Haggerty, Elgin and Woolley (2010: 42) recommend the DAP assessment tool to assess adolescents as it measures support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

In the analysis of the CAPS LO document, the findings revealed that the *Development of the Self in Society* and the *Personal and Social Well-being* study areas cover all the topics as laid out in the SEL program set by CASEL. The analysis covered all the categories and subcategories listed in the organization of data table. Furthermore, in order to get an accurate account of findings, the Deputy Education Specialist for LO

was consulted through an interview. The detailed results of the evaluation appear in Appendix D.

The next chapter will provide a summary of the work and will highlight the main findings and propose recommendations based on the research for the implementation of social and emotional learning programs, the limitations of the research and conclusions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study sought to establish the role of the school curricula in developing social and emotional skills in learners in order to curb violence in schools. Furthermore, it aimed to determine whether social and emotional competence is adequately addressed in the current LO curriculum. Each LO document for the FP, IP, SP and FET was evaluated and analysed and a collective report of findings was completed. With the assistance of the elite interview, in which the Deputy Education Specialist for LO answered important questions relating to social and emotional learning in the LO curriculum, I was able to gain much insight into issues pertaining to the main categories viz. time allocation, teaching plans, learner-teacher support, content and the program of assessment. By using an evaluative research design, the study achieved its objectives as indicated in Chapter 4.

#### **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

In this section, I will present recommendations based on the findings of the research using empirical evidence as laid out in the literature review, which could be considered as a framework to advance social emotional learning (SEL) in schools. This would be based on the SEL programs of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) based in Illinois, United States of America. SEL evolved from the 1990's and has proved to be very successful in attaining social and emotional competence in learners. It encapsulates all the relevant afore-mentioned literature and empirical research. Finally, the recommendations follow the unobtrusive assessment tool for effective social and emotional learning instruction as indicated in chapter 3.

## **5.2.1 Framework to advance SEL in schools**

### *5.2.1.1 Time Allocation*

#### *Finding:*

The minimum amount of time allocation for LO is regarded as adequate.

#### *Recommendation:*

To reiterate, Slattery (2006: 144) states that issues of prejudice and violence in schools must be constantly fore-grounded in lessons. In support of this notion, Jones and Bouffard (2012: 9) propose that because academic and SEL skills develop and operate together, efforts to promote them should be designed to promote both at the same time. This will be enforced by integrating SEL in various subjects by means of themes which leads to subject integration thereby increasing the time spent on SEL.

### *5.2.1.2 Teaching Plans*

(a) Repeated opportunities to practice new skills and behaviours within the program structure and beyond to real-life situations.

#### *Finding:*

The curriculum makes adequate provision for the application of SEL skills in daily life by giving teachers the opportunity to adapt topics and lessons to suit the school context. It may or may not be appropriately implemented by teachers and school policy.

#### *Recommendation:*

A continuum of approaches ranging from routines and daily structures, to school-wide efforts to promote respectful and supportive cultures and positive school climates, could influence learning in such a way that it may become part of the learners' way of life, which extends into society. CASEL indicates that practice within the program should include role play or guided self-management techniques and it may be in the interest of schools to implement regulations and policies that foster social and emotional skills for learners and teachers. Jones and Bouffard (2012: 13) suggest classroom and school routines and regulations should include emotional regulation and conflict resolution strategies. Tips about using the routines could be posted throughout the school. Routines include "Stop and Stay Cool", a three-stop process for staying in control of emotions, and a "Decision Tree" that learners use to guide

choices. This not only promotes a positive school climate but enables learners to practice social and emotional skills in real-life situations.

(b) Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL

*Finding:*

There is a proper sequencing of topics related to SEL from Grades R to 3. However, in the IP the sequence of the topics during a term is not fixed. Consequently there may not be continuity of SEL over the three grades. Due to the complex nature of the study areas in the SP and FET phase, topics appear to be presented in a semi-sequenced and semi-structured manner rather than a formal, fully sequenced manner.

*Recommendation:*

SEL research in Jones and Bouffard (2012: 6) found that the most effective programs are those that incorporate the SAFE method, which is sequenced activities, active forms of learning, focused on developing social skills and explicit teaching. Jones and Bouffard (2012: 8) advocate that SEL skills develop in an on-going and cumulative way from birth through adolescence in which earlier skills lay the foundation for later skills. A suggested program could be “The Caring School Community” SEL program that presents a schedule for lessons and activities to be implemented throughout the school year and is designed as a grade-by-grade sequenced program from Grade R to Grade 6. Albeit a very complex process, grade-by-grade sequencing may be important in attaining the desired outcomes in SEL, and as such should be considered in the LO curriculum.

*5.2.1.3 Learner-Teacher Support*

(a) Design and implement effective professional development systems and support.

*Finding:*

There appears to be sufficient textbooks and workbooks from which teachers can retrieve content as well as a wealth of support material on the Internet. However, it is not common practice to make use of education specialists to present certain specialized topics or provide much needed comprehensive training for teachers.

*Recommendation:*

CASEL (2013) argues that practitioners need support to enact changes in instruction that enhance learners' social and emotional development. As indicated in Chapter 4, Jones and Bouffard (2012: 14) argue that it is vital for adults working in educational settings to have strong SEL skills themselves. Stress management and self-regulation programs for educators include CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) and SMART (Stress Management and Resiliency Training). It may be in the interest of the Department of Education to invest in training programs for teachers to deliver effective SEL programs for the *Development of the Self in Society* study area.

(b) School-family-community partnerships

*Finding:*

School-family- community partnerships occur at some schools, but are not an obligatory practice. The department has a complement of school psychologists who work with learners on a clinical one-to-one basis. In rare occasions they do assist with training programs for teachers in the area of their expertise.

*Recommendation:*

There should also be integration with other subjects in explicit lessons through school-wide practices that promote collaboration between different classes and grade levels promoting learners' social and emotional competencies throughout the day; and family through homework assignments to be completed with family members, as well as community projects involving various NGO's. With regard to school partnerships, Nel (2014: 69) suggests that cooperative learning requires learners to develop social and small group skills in conjunction with their knowledge base. Appendix G could be used as a guide to teaching and learning techniques.

*5.2.1.4 Content*

*Finding:*

Content in the particular study areas are adequate in terms of promoting developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction and the five core components of SEL, but more could be done in practice.

*Recommendation:*

(a) Promotion of developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction and content, as well as contexts that promote SEL

As indicated in Chapter 4, Little and Maughan (2010: 173) reason that social-emotional competence in early childhood is multivariate, composed of skills and knowledge that are integrated across the emotional, cognitive and behavioural domains of development. Thus, the successful integration of cognitive, emotional and behavioural skills is extremely important for socially competent behaviour and peer relations. These authors state that SEL instruction should consist of explicit SEL skills instruction. Lessons should focus on teaching skills that can be broadly applied to a variety of situations such as working cooperatively with others, coping with stress, making decisions about risky behaviours, and resolving interpersonal conflict.

(b) Promote self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management and organisation, responsible decision-making and relationship management.

In Chapter 2, Zins and Elias (2006) state that SEL programs should entail the following content:

- *Self-awareness* which covers recognizing and naming one's emotions, understanding the reasons and circumstances for feeling as one does, recognizing and naming others' emotions, recognizing strengths in, and mobilizing positive feelings about self, school, family, and support networks, knowing one's needs and values, perceiving oneself accurately, believing in personal efficacy, and having a sense of spirituality.
- *Social awareness* involves appreciating diversity, showing respect to others, listening carefully and accurately, increasing empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings, and understanding others' perspectives, points of view, and feelings.
- *Self-management and organisation* includes verbalization and coping with anxiety, anger, and depression, controlling impulses, aggression, and self-destructive, antisocial behaviour, managing personal and interpersonal stress, focussing on tasks at hand, setting short and long-term goals, planning thoughtfully and thoroughly, modifying performance in the light of feedback, and working toward optimal performance.



- *Responsible decision-making* involves analysing situations perceptively and identifying problems clearly, exercising social decision-making and problem-solving skills, responding constructively and in a problem-solving manner to interpersonal obstacles, engaging in self-evaluation and reflection, and conducting oneself with personal, moral, and ethical responsibility.
- *Relationship management* includes managing emotions in relationships, harmonizing diverse feelings and viewpoints, showing sensitivity to social-emotional cues, expressing emotions effectively, communicating clearly, engaging others in social situations, building relationships, working cooperatively, exercising assertiveness, leadership and persuasion, and managing conflict, negotiation, and refusal.

A comprehensive program of the core competencies of SEL covers a myriad of social and emotional skills, and outcomes associated with it can be illustrated as follows:

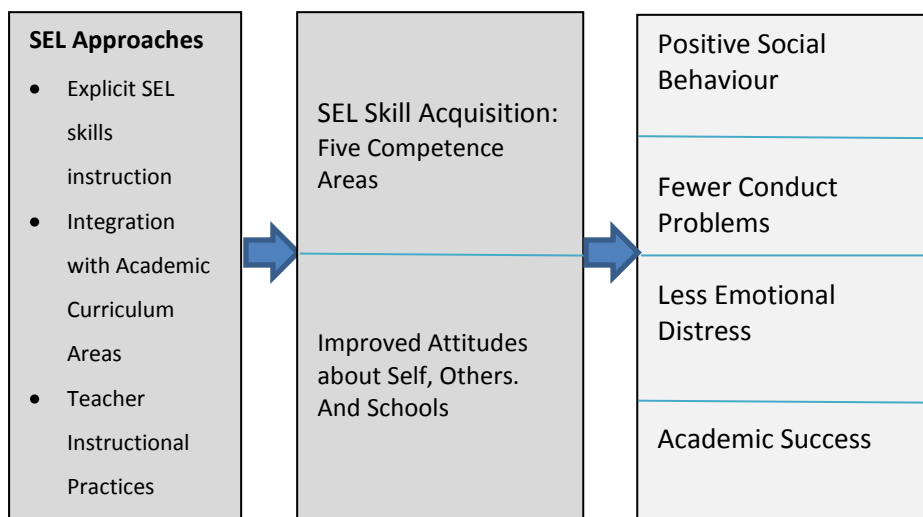


Figure. 5.1 SEL core component outcomes

#### 5.2.1.5 Develop an effective program of assessment.

##### *Finding:*

Assessment standards as laid out in the FP LO document cover all the essential elements of desired outcomes in terms of the development of social and emotional competence. However, because of the ages of the learners (being very young), emphasis is placed on learner observation as the primary method of assessment. In the IP, SP and FET, there is a broad spectrum of assessment methods over the course of

the year. The efficacy of the assessment with regard to achieving the assessment standards has not been determined.

*Recommendation:*

Nel (2014: 91) proposes that learning targets may be formulated by the SMART method (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related). The Illinois State Department of Education in the United States of America provides a SEL standard framework as a base for learner assessments indicated as follows:

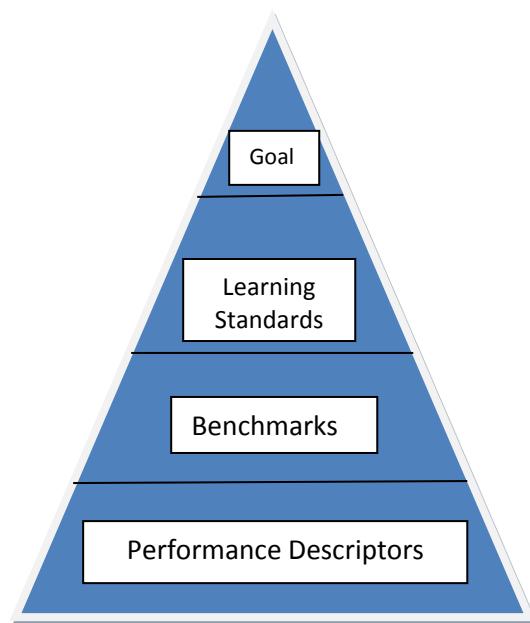


Fig. 5.2 SEL Standards Framework (Source: Illinois State Department of Education’s SEL Learning Standards 2014: [1])

The three SEL goals are broad statements that organize the knowledge and skills that comprise SEL content. Each goal has an explanation of why it is important.

The ten SEL learning standards are specific statements of the knowledge and skills within a goal that students should know and be able to do. Taken together, the standards define the learning needed to achieve the goals, but each is general enough to apply to learning across the entire range of grade-level clusters. Standards are broader learning targets used to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The benchmarks are learning targets that are more specific than standards. They specify developmentally appropriate SEL knowledge and skills for each standard at one of five grade-level clusters: early elementary (grades K-3), late elementary (grades 4-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12). The benchmarks are not designed to be all-inclusive; instead they highlight important, representative features of each standard that instruction should emphasize at each grade-cluster. Benchmarks increase in developmental sophistication and become more rigorous from one grade-level cluster to the next. In addition, the SEL benchmarks lend themselves to being taught in integrated ways across the 10 standards within each grade-level cluster.

The performance descriptors are the most specific learning targets that build upon the standards and benchmarks. They will be designed to help educators select and design curricula, classroom activities and instruction, and performance-based and other assessments aligned with the standards. Descriptors are also helpful in mapping curriculum or validating what a school or DoE has already developed and implemented. Performance descriptors offer a representative, rather than exhaustive, list of learning targets that provide greater detail of the specific SEL knowledge, reasoning, and skills highlighted in the standards.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are numerous assessment tools available. Functional assessment-based interventions teach learners new, socially valid behaviours that help to improve the quality of their lives both in and beyond the school setting. Here a range of descriptive and experimental tools are used to determine the antecedent conditions that prompt given target behaviour as well as the consequences that maintain the target behaviour. Appendix F outlines the steps to conduct a functional behavioural assessment, as well as ways of determining the intervention method. Another form of assessment, which is essential, is self-monitoring. Self-assessments involve setting benchmarks for the learner to apply techniques that can help them in a variety of situations, thereby acquiring social and emotional skills. These assessment methods could be used in conjunction with an established SEL standard framework as indicated in Fig 5.2. Behaviour contracts, which are written agreements between at least two individuals in which one or both agree to demonstrate certain behaviours, is

a good option in terms of keeping learners motivated to behave in an appropriate manner to enhance social and emotional competence. Appendix E could be used as a guide to draw up a behaviour contract.

#### *5.2.1.6 Monitor the SEL implementation process and learner outcomes.*

This is the final phase in the SEL program and an essential part of the process. This could be fulfilled by conducting regular assessments of learners and teachers to gauge the efficacy of the program.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The primary limitation to the research is due to my personal circumstances, which in itself limited my freedom to gain access to adequate resources. I was also unable to secure face-to-face interviews and had to settle for an interview schedule via electronic means. This may have denied me the opportunity to probe the respondent for additional information. However, the e-mailed interview worked out well as it gave the respondent an opportunity to think about his answers and supply it in a comprehensive and accurate format.

A further limitation was the inability to secure an interview with an educational psychologist and a school principal. Notwithstanding the fact that I may have lacked research participants, in an evaluation research, the objective is to evaluate and analyse a policy, document or curriculum. Even though having more research participants may have been more effective, the method used in the study was sufficient to meet its objectives.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In light of the limited scope of this dissertation and the afore-mentioned limitations, it merits further research. This is a qualitative study which focussed on the evaluation of the LO curriculum document in order to ascertain whether the current LO curriculum adequately develops the social and emotional skills of learners to curb violence in schools. Ideally, a mixed method approach, in which qualitative and quantitative methods are employed, is required to get statistical data on the effectiveness of the

current LO curriculum in developing social and emotional skills in learners. Input is needed from all stakeholders in education, including parents and social workers. A comparison can be made between schools of different quintiles, in terms of socio-cultural conditions that may reflect different social and emotional competencies in learners.

With regard to type of SEL programming, CASEL (2013) propose that researchers continue to clarify the short and long term benefits of SEL programs, reasons why programs produce their desired outcomes, and the parameters associated with maximum program impact for different student populations. A case can also be made for Action Research of teachers at their schools in terms of their experiences with social and emotional competencies of learners and teachers.

In conclusion, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011: 420) state that overall, research on school-based mental health and competence promotion has advanced greatly during the previous fifteen years. Although more research is needed to advance our understanding of the impact of SEL programming, it is also important to consider how social and emotional competence in children eventually impacts violent crime in society, especially with regards to violence against women and children. A well-grounded framework exists that integrates theory, research and practice of SEL that can be used to guide further research in the field.

## **5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The study met its objective which is to evaluate the CAPS LO Curriculum document, Grades R-12 in order to determine whether social and emotional competence is adequately addressed. The research highlights the purpose and benefits of Social and Emotional Learning programs as well as constructive and pragmatic ways of expanding the *Personal and social Well-being* and *Personal Development of the Self in Society* study areas in the LO curriculum.

If we are to use education as a vehicle to promote and consolidate the Constitutional values, in particular, social transformation, then our focus should shift toward a

curriculum that embraces social and emotional learning programs and practices. Delport (2010: 162) summarizes in stating that educational policies, the national school curriculum and even textbooks are still open to interpretation and need to be contextualized. Furthermore, that in present South Africa, the lack of strong, nuclear family groups, as well as the predicted increase in AIDS orphans means that schools should accept an even stronger role in respect to social and emotional development. "Education should first and foremost aim to foster compassion. Once compassion becomes part of people's interpretative framework, education will be able to enhance true social transformation" (Delport 2010: 165).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Research Ethics Clearance



## Research Ethics Clearance Certificate


This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by


**G P Gelderbloem [45295549]**

for a M Ed study entitled

**The role of school curricula in the development of social and emotional skills to  
curb school violence**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.

  
Prof KP Dzvimbo  
Executive Dean : CEDU

  
Dr M Claassens  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)

Reference number: 2014 JULY /45295549/MC

16 JULY 2014

## Appendix B: Research informed consent letter

### Letter of Informed Consent

#### **Deputy Chief Education Specialist: Life Orientation**

#### **Re: Request for participation in a study**

I am a student at Unisa, enrolled for a structured Master's degree program in education, specialising in Curriculum Studies. To fulfill the requirements of the dissertation, I need to conduct interviews with you as the Curriculum Advisor for Life Orientation.

**Title of research:** The role of school curricula in the development of social and emotional skills in learners to curb school violence.

**Purpose of the study:** the purpose of the study is two-fold namely to determine whether social and emotional competence is adequately addressed in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. In addition, the purpose is to discover constructive and pragmatic ways to expand the Personal and Social development study area in the LO curriculum. In this regard, I will be conducting an evaluation/analysis of the Personal and Social development study area in the Life Orientation Curriculum for the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, Senior Phase and FET. The interview will be structured and will be conducted by electronic means.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

Your privacy and confidentiality would be guaranteed, and your participation is completely voluntary. In this regard, you may withdraw at any appropriate time. The researcher guarantees to disseminate all information of the interview schedule accurately, without misrepresentation or misinterpretations. Furthermore, the results of the study will be made available to you before submission, and any opinions, omissions or additions would be welcomed.

Yours faithfully

Researcher: Garth P Gelderbloem  
Phone: 0224827754  
e-mail: leon.muller@dcs.gov

UNISA Supervisor: Prof JG Ferreira  
Phone: 012 4294540  
e-mail: Ferrejg@unisa.ac.za

**Undertaking:** I, \_\_\_\_\_, in the capacity of \_\_\_\_\_  
Give my consent for the participation in the aforementioned study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of respondent

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

## Appendix C: Electronic interview questions

### Electronic interview e-mail: Elite (expert)

#### Participant: Deputy Education Specialist : Life Orientation

##### Questions:

1. What is your portfolio (job description) in the department?
2. In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of the implementation of the Life Skills and Life Orientation curriculum, and why?
3. How do you think this challenge can be addressed or overcome?
4. Do you think that enough time has been allocated to Life Skills or Life Orientation?  
Please motivate.
5. On which particular theory and research is the time allocated for LO based, if at all?  
(How did the DoE come up with the time allocation?)
6. Is the LO curriculum linked to other learning areas? If so, how?
7. Additional to being taught explicitly, would you agree that, in order to get the benefit of Social and Emotional learning, it should be “taught” covertly viz. through school rules and regulations, subject integration, whole-school development projects, etc.?
8. According to research, social and emotional learning programs conducted in schools in the United States of America, are considered to be successful that not only does it reduce violence and juvenile delinquency, but also improve academic performance. Would it be possible in the light of such evidence, to devote more time and resources to such programs?
9. Would you agree that violence, in terms of bullying and incidents of aggression, and other forms of criminal behaviour, including juvenile delinquency, is becoming a big problem in South African schools?
10. Do you think that the problem may arise, in part, as a result of the socio-economic environment, as well as the lack of social and emotional skills of the learners? Please motivate.
11. Do you think that Life Orientation is adequately meeting its objectives in terms of developing social and emotional competence in learners?
12. With reference to the previous question, how important are assessment of learners?
13. Research indicates that Emotional Intelligence, which includes social and emotional competence, is learnable and therefore can be taught. The LO curriculum does make provision for the development of social and emotional skills. In your opinion, what can

be done to improve on the current study areas that promote the development of social and emotional competence in learners?

14. Do you think teachers are prepared, aside from their academic qualifications, to facilitate the learning transfer of social and emotional skills as covered in the curricula? Is the Department of Education open to using specialist, like an education psychologist to present social and emotional skills? Please elaborate.
15. Research indicates that SEL is more effective when it is presented in a grade-by-grade sequence. Are the current Personal and Social Well-being and Development of the self in society study areas in a grade-by-grade sequence?
16. Are there specific textbooks and workbooks for teachers in presenting this study area?

Appendix D: Assessment tool for effective social and emotional learning instruction

Criterion	Yes	To an extent	No
1. Interactively teaches SEL skills for applications to daily life.	✓		
2. Builds connections to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices—enhances a positive school climate.		✓	
3. Promotes developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.	✓		
4. Leads to coordinated, integrated and unified programming linked to academic outcomes—subject integration.			✓
5. Involves school-family-community partnerships.		✓	
6. Regular, thorough assessment and evaluation of learners.	✓		
7. Establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success.		✓	
8. Provides high-quality staff development and support.		✓	
9. Teachers are qualified and competent in teaching SEL programs.		✓	
10. Grade-by-grade sequence of SEL program.		✓	
11. Provides opportunities to practice social and emotional skills.		✓	
12. Promotes: a) Self-awareness	✓		
b) Social awareness	✓		
c) Self-management and organisation	✓		
d) Responsible decision-making	✓		
e) Relationship management	✓		

Appendix E: Behavioural Contract

**CONTRACT**

I, Skylar, will arrive on time to class each day. Arriving on time is defined as being inside the classroom prior to the bell ringing. Mr Smit will determine if I am on time. If I am on time, I will receive a positive behaviour support token from Mr Smit immediately upon my arrival. If I arrive on time for 5 consecutive days, I can choose 1 of 2 rewards:

1. 30 minutes of computer time on Friday
2. No homework assignments for the following week.

Daily Log: Mr Smit will circle "on time" or "late" each day

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7/10-11/10	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late
14/10-18/10	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late
21/10-25/10	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late
28/10-1/11	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late	On time Late

Bonus Clause: If I am on time for all 20 sessions above, I will earn an extra 5 positive behaviour support tokens.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Skylar's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr Smit's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Appendix F: Steps to conduct a functional behavioural assessment (Source: Lane et al, 2011)

**Behavioral Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Functional Behavioral Assessment: Determining the Intervention Method**

- Method 1: Teach the Replacement Behavior
- Method 2: Improvement Environment
- Method 3: Adjust the Contingencies
- Methods 1 and 2: Teach the Replacement Behavior and Improve the Environment


**Data to Be Collected**

Target Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

Replacement Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment Integrity: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Social Validity: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Fading and Generalization: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Program Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel and Roles: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Procedures: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Cooperative teaching and learning techniques (Source: Nel, 2014)

Technique	Application
<b>Simulations and role play</b>	Each group member assumes the role of a character, and plays that role in addressing an issue.
<b>Brainstorming</b>	Learners generate different ideas to solve problems or to discuss an appropriate topic.
<b>Fishbowls</b>	The members of one group of learners sit in a circle facing each other to discuss questions related to a topic so the rest of the class can hear the discussion. The rest of the class also receives the questions, but sits in one outer circle around the discussion group and takes notes about the discussion, observing and reflecting on what the group involved in the discussion is saying. If this technique is used frequently, different groups get a chance to sit in the middle and in the outer circle. All groups receive the same task to complete based on the discussion. Any of the aforementioned cooperative learning methods can be used to direct the task completion. Each group submits a final report for assessment.
<b>Round table (written) or round robin (oral)</b>	Groups use a single pen and a piece of paper to answer a question or set of questions. Each group member writes down one fact or answer before passing the pen and paper on to the next member, who writes the next line/fact/answer and passes it on. Learners may pass if they cannot write down anything. Learners should, however, be encouraged so that everybody in the group contributes to answering the questions, as the groups will be assessed their collective effort.
<b>Buddy system</b>	Learners are assigned a partner with whom to discuss issues. Partners discuss questions or check one another's work or share ideas.
<b>Train questions</b>	Groups are given information to study and then write a test on the information. The test is written in the group. Groups sit in lines, one member behind the other. The teacher or other groups pose a certain number of questions in oral or written format that have to be answered in the various groups. The first member in a group answers any question and passes the remaining questions on to the next person. The questions circulate among all the group members until all the questions have been answered in the time limit set for this. If the group cannot answer all the questions, it loses marks. If a group member cannot answer any of the questions, he or she may pass the test on to the next person. However, when using this technique, learners need to be aware that everybody in the group needs to be well prepared so that they will be able to answer some of the questions, as the outcome of the test will be determined by a collective effort.
<b>Telstar techniques</b>	Each group elects a spokesperson to debate an issue. All spokespersons sit in an inner circle to debate. The other members of the groups form an outer circle around the inner circle and may pass notes, suggestions or ideas from the outside of the circle on to the spokesperson representing their group.
<b>Numbered-Heads-Together</b>	Numbers are allocated to group members. The teacher asks a question, and group members decide together on a correct answer. The teacher calls on a certain number in a group to provide the correct answer

Appendix H: Methods of assessment of SEL. (Source: Humphrey, N, 2013)

Assessment Method	Description	Examples	Key strengths	Key weaknesses
Rating scales (self and informant)	A series of statements designed to reflect the constructs being measured (e.g. self-awareness)	Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) (Gresham and Elliot, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick and easy to administer</li> <li>• Information can be triangulated from multiple sources readily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be subject to response bias and error variance</li> </ul>
Direct behavioural observation	Specific behaviour of interest are observed and systematically recorded in a natural setting.	Peer interaction Observation schedule (Pellegrini and Bartini, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very objective</li> <li>• Produces rich, systematic data across a range of contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has an 'observer reactivity effect'</li> <li>• Time-consuming and expensive.</li> </ul>
Projective-expressive techniques	Use of creative methods such as drawing and storytelling, data from which is used to interpret children's social and emotional states.	Kinetic Drawing System (Knoff and Prout, 1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be more appealing to children than other methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjective and unreliable.</li> </ul>
Interviews	Discussion with an informant in which key questions related to SEL may be explored in depth.	Semi-structured Clinical Interview for Children (McConaughy and Achenbach, 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Interviewees has the opportunity to clarify understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be time-consuming</li> <li>• Difficult to garner a full range of opinions.</li> </ul>
Sociometric techniques	Information pertaining to key social constructs such as popularity and acceptance is gathered through techniques that directly involve the individuals in a given situation.	Social Inclusion Survey (Frederickson and Graham, 1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can elicit vital information about social behaviour that is difficult for adult observers to access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools can be uncomfortable with certain approaches,</li> <li>• Peer ratings and nominations can be influenced by other factors such as physical attractiveness, academic success and gender and ethnicity.</li> </ul>

