

CHAPTER 2

THE OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING AREA:

LIFE ORIENTATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to establish what Life Orientation in a school setting is, it is essential to have an understanding of its own origin. It is also imperative to understand Life Orientation as a phenomenon that has developed due to changes in the education system. Therefore knowledge of what Life Orientation is and how it impacts on the life of learners in a senior phase will be elucidated. Hence the focus of this chapter will be on the learning area, Life Orientation.

In the section 2.2 the background of Life Orientation as opposed to guidance is defined. In section 2.3 the learning area Life Orientation is explored. In section 2.4 the techniques and approaches needed by Life Orientation educators are described. The practical approaches exemplify what knowledge and skills Life Orientation educators should possess, thereby enabling the researcher to identify the requirements of an effective Life Orientation educator and what characteristics they should develop through teacher training programmes.

2.2 THE BACKGROUND OF LIFE ORIENTATION

Historically South African schools were involved with the subject Guidance which focused on the total development of the child and it included both service and subjects components (Syllabus Committee for Life Orientation). This subject required specialists to deal with individual needs of children. According to the National Education Policy Investigation report (1992:23), Guidance services in South Africa incorporated a number of activities aimed at the vocational and general development of students. Activities in the Guidance services included the following:

- Group Guidance which focused on career, educational, social and personal development;
- Programmes such as lifeskills;
- Psychometric testing; and
- Counselling.

In South Africa separate education for different races under the old segregation policies resulted in an equal service provision of Guidance and counselling services across the different racial groups (Dockrat 1999:44). In all these racial groups the African schools were the most neglected. Guidance services were almost non-existent in these schools (NEPI report 1992:21). In those schools which had the opportunity of such, a Guidance teacher often lacked the support of the management staff and other educators. This could have contributed to the fact that they were not offering other subjects except Guidance. Other educators complained about the workload and felt that Guidance teachers carrying an adequate workload.

The current status of Guidance has been diminished in schools. The lack of trained Guidance personnel and lack of commitment and a professional approach to Guidance has ensured that Guidance became an undervalued and underutilized subject (Dockrat 1999:46). A review committee was appointed in 1994 to review the standard of Guidance in schools. According to National Department of Education (1994:6) Guidance was accorded a new status in schools. The primary changes reflected the national trend towards a more democratic system in which there is less prescription and more decision-making at a local level (National Department of Education 1994:7).

It was emphasised that all educators offering Guidance were expected to possess a minimum qualification in Guidance so that they could exercise their expertise in that regard. The new model of guidance was phased in so that it covered the wide scope of work. Schools and communities were free to deal with those issues they considered as important in their area. A good relationship prevailed between private sectors and schools to ensure availability of community resources which were meaningfully utilised (Department of Education 1994:8). The status of Guidance was then reviewed when the new curriculum was introduced in 1998.

2.2.1 Curriculum 2005

In view of the problems stated above, Curriculum 2005 was introduced in order to redress the imbalances of the past. All South African citizens are afforded the opportunity to the same education. The role of Curriculum 2005 was to overcome the stultifying legacy of apartheid education by ensuring a deeper knowledge, values and skills base for South African citizens (Chisholm 2002:39). The challenge for the curriculum is to provide for the development of skills and competency for innovation, social development and economic growth in the 21st century.

The introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa has as its focal point of departure the intended results the learning experience (Lemmer & De Viliers 2003:99). The goal of the curriculum was to phase in the ideal of lifelong learning for all South Africans (Department of Education 1997:1). The curriculum also aimed at shifting from content-based learning to outcomes-based learning. Within Curriculum 2005 the focus on the syllabus content is replaced by a concentration on achievement in terms of desired outcomes. Spady (1994:18) defines the outcome as a demonstration of learning that occurs at the end of the lesson.

Curriculum 2005 was earmarked to train educators to be acquainted with the new concepts within the curriculum and to improve content in the classrooms. However, is used more technical terms which educators were not familiar with. The teachers voiced their concerns about lack of resources for implementation, workload and a lot of paperwork for which insufficient time was allocated (News Bulletin 2003:17). Chisholm (2000:25) adds that although Curriculum 2005 brought about a new dispensation in South African education, it occurred in conditions that did not enable it to meet either social or personal education goals. This view was supported by Asmal and James (2002:177) who state that lack of financial and human resources were constraints in the implementation of the curriculum. They also emphasise that for the Curriculum 2005 to succeed it needed a major investment in the training of teachers, the production of textbooks and other learning materials. According to Jansen & Christie (1999:81) the main problem with Curriculum 2005 was the lack of consistent coordination since teachers were not familiar with the new approach.

Within the scope of Curriculum 2005, eight learning areas were introduced as opposed to subjects. The learning areas are: (1) Languages Literacy and Communications; (2) Human and Social Sciences; (3) Mathematical Literacy, mathematics and Mathematical Sciences; (4) Technology; (5) Natural Sciences; (6) Art and Culture; (7) Economic and Management Sciences and (8) Life Orientation (Department of Education 1997:8). Life Orientation was introduced as a learning area in the new curriculum. The introduction of Life Orientation became fundamental in ensuring that all learners are treated the same and they should recognise themselves as worthwhile human beings. Learners need to accept themselves so as to work harmoniously with others.

The focus of this study is on Life Orientation, thus attention will be focussed on this learning area. The rationale for Life Orientation is fundamental in empowering learners to live meaningful lives in the society that demands rapid transformation (Department of Education 1997b:220). Life Orientation forms an integral part of education, training and development and is central to the holistic unfolding of learners, concerning their intellectual, physical, personal, social, spiritual and emotional growth and the way these facets work together (Lemmer & De Villiers 2003:99). Life Orientation is regarded as a service delivery that shows caring to learners. Learners should be viewed as unique persons who need assistance in functioning in the outside world. The scope of Life Orientation covered eight outcomes which learners should be able to master at the end of the Senior Phase.

The eight Outcomes of Life Orientation as outlined by Van der Horst (1997:62) are as follows:

Learners should be able to:

- Understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings.
- Use skills and display attitudes and values that improve relationships in the family, group and community.
- Respect the rights of people to hold personal belief and values.

- Demonstrate value respect for human rights as reflected in Ubuntu and other similar philosophies.
- Practise acquired life decision-making skills.
- Assess career and other opportunities and set goals that will enable them to make the best use of their potential and talents.
- Demonstrate the values and attitudes necessary for healthy and balanced lifestyle
- Evaluate and participate in activities that demonstrate effective human movement and development.

Due to concerns from educators about the difficulty in implementing the outcomes and insufficient training in this regard, the Minister of Education proposed for curriculum review committee to investigate on Curriculum 2005.

2.2.2 The Curriculum 2005 review

Given the problems surrounding Curriculum 2005, a review committee was proposed in November 1999 (Williamson & Lemmer 2003:138). The curriculum was reviewed in such a way that it could be implemented and understood by all teachers. It was recommended that the curriculum should reduce its features and the technical language which teachers complained about (Department of Education 2003:29). It should also cater for those schools in the rural areas which are disadvantaged. Chisholm (2000:14) notes the variation of implementation in the following areas:

- Resources (for training and information, instructional materials [textbooks, pens, exercise books and pencils] and departmental support).
- Infrastructure (classrooms, desks, electricity, toilets and photocopier).
- Conditions of teaching and learning (large classes, teacher: learner ratios, diversity of classrooms).
- Will to implement (readiness of teachers to engage with new ideas and put them into practice).

All these conditions have varied in quality impacting heavily on implementation. Moreover, time frames have been neither practical nor feasible both in training of teachers and implementation of C2005. It has been widely cited that a few days of training cannot alter the traditional methods of teaching ingrained in teachers. Chisholm (2002) asserts further that the teacher plays a very demanding role in the implementation process: teachers face inordinate pressures and demands in their everyday lives.

Without a change in attitude from the public sector and parents, teachers' motivation, morale, image and enthusiasm will be hampered. In Life Orientation eight learning outcomes are reduced to five learning outcomes and these outcomes will be discussed in paragraph 2.4.

2.3 DEFINITION OF LIFE ORIENTATION

The key to understanding the term lies in the title, Life Orientation. Life includes capacity for growth and continued change (Maree & Ebersohn 2002:228). Orientation, according to Maree and Ebersohn (2002:228), refers to an ability to adjust to circumstances such as political, social, psychological and economic aspects. Learners in this learning area are expected to cope with environmental changes and to be able to adjust to such changes through the development of skills. Life Orientation is a process-driven learning area that attempts to explore the uniqueness of the individual, the intricacy of human relationships and the interdependence of the political, social and economic facets of communities and countries (Maree & Ebersohn 2002:229).

Life Orientation is the study of the self in relation to others and the society and applies to the holistic approach (Department of Education 2001:11). Life Orientation is concerned with the personal, social, emotional and physical growth or development of learners and the way those dimensions are interrelated in life (National Curriculum Statement Grade R-2002:9). The focus of Life Orientation is the development of the self in the society and it encourages a balanced and confident learner who will contribute to a just and democratic society and improved quality of life for all.

Life Orientation guides and prepares learners for life, for its responsibilities and possibilities. This subject addresses knowledge, values, attitudes and skills about the self. It also helps the learner to be a responsible citizen who lives a healthy and productive life, who engages in social activities and loves his or her environment. Life Orientation equips learners to solve problems, make informed choices and decisions, and to take appropriate actions to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society (Kriege 2002:27).

2.4 THE SCOPE OF LIFE ORIENTATION

Life Orientation prepares learners to live meaningfully in a rapidly changing society. It addresses the issues of regeneration of morals by encouraging learners to be committed to the development of their specific communities (Coy 1999:5). Life Orientation opens channels of communication between the learner and the educator so that learners can see and understand the world better. Life Orientation makes a unique contribution to the General Education and Training band as it:

- Enables learners to make informed decisions about personal, community and environmental health.
- Enables learners to form positive social relationships, respect different world views and exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities.
- Empowers learners to achieve and extend their personal potential to contribute positively to the society, and cope with and respond to the challenges in the world.
- Promotes physical development as an integral part of social, cognitive and emotional development from early childhood to the General Education and Training band.
- Develops a positive orientation to study and the world of work and the ability to make informed decisions on further study and career (Department of Education 2001:13).

Life Orientation draws on and integrates knowledge, values, skills and processes embedded in various disciplines (Department of Education *undated*:9). In Life Orientation eight learning outcomes (as discussed in paragraph 2.2.1) have been reduced to five. The five outcomes of Life Orientation are explained in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

2.4.1 Five learning outcomes for Life Orientation

2.4.1.1 Learning outcome one: Health promotion

Learners should be able to make informed decisions regarding personal health, community health and the environment (National Department of Education 2002:5). In this regard learners should make choices regarding their personal health. The outcome addresses issues relating to nutrition, diseases including HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, safety, violence, abuse and environmental health. Issues involving risk factors such as crime, drugs, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases are important topics to be dealt with.

Health promotion is a state of complete physical, mental, social well being not merely a matter of disease (Maree & Obersohn 2002:230). By promoting all these aspects learners will grow into confident, competent and positive people. This outcome seeks to deal with the realities of peer pressure, factors influencing the realities of life and the dynamics of a relationship and a variety of roles (National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12:5).

2.4.1.2 Learning outcome two: Social development

Social development is an important key towards achieving this outcome. Learners should commit and show sensitivity to diverse cultures and belief systems (National Curriculum Statement 2002:5). Learners are taught to understand the importance of relationships. No human being is an isolated island. They should acknowledge that they belong to a family which is part of a larger society. The society comprises diverse cultures. Recognition of other cultural groups will enhance respect, tolerance, compassion and empathy of people from different backgrounds (Maree & Obersohn 2002:231).

The outcome accords learners the right to learn and grow in their own language and culture through the processes encountered in the classroom. Goduka and Swadener (1999:27) purport that this will help learners to develop into adults who value and appreciate the importance of human rights and peace. They will have learnt their responsibilities to others and to the earth. Teaching for human rights and peace can reach beyond the classroom into the community.

The concept of religion is covered in this outcome. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002:6), Religious Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society. It emphasises that individuals should realise that they are part of the broader community and they should learn to see their own identity in harmony with others.

Religious Education facilitates the exploration and discovery of meaning in life. It provides motivation for sound and moral choices and affirms the learner's religious identity and inculcates informed respect for the religious identity of others (News Bulletin 2003:29).

2.4.1.3 Learning outcome three: Personal development

It concentrates on the acquisition of life skills. Learners should acquire life skills that will make them independent, creative and critical when solving problems (Maree & Ebersohn 2002:231). Learners are expected to be committed to lifelong learning. They need to recognise themselves as unique individuals. Maree and Ebersohn (2002:231) state that learners should believe in themselves, their dignity, their worth and rights. This gives learners an opportunity to:

- Develop survival and coping skills;
- Reflect on and understand their emotional development, spiritual awareness, self-knowledge, self-concept and self-worth (National Curriculum Statement 2001:47).

2.4.1.4 Learning outcome four: Physical development and movement

This outcome highlights movement and physical development. Learners are encouraged to participate in physical education. Movement education where learners experience and examine their body as a means of creativity and recreation is enhanced. Learners should be encouraged to participate in sport so that they could enhance their talents or explore them. Rubinstein (1994:57) contents that children need exercise to feel good, to be able to concentrate and to be in a physical and emotional sound state. Sitting behind desks for long periods hinders the ability to enjoy

learning for most children. Health and fitness improve academic performance and reduce behaviour problems (Rubinstein 1994:57).

Physical education is the only curriculum subject in which students are given the opportunity to develop their physical capabilities to the full (Edwards & Fogelman 1993:75). Exercise is viewed as a basic need and it is essential for the normal development of the body. Learners should be accorded the opportunity to achieve their physical potential. Physical development in the curriculum includes:

- Fine and motor development;
- Games and sports;
- Physical growth and development;
- Recreation and play;

2.4.1.5 Learning outcome five: Orientation to the world of work

Learners are exposed to lifeskills that emphasises the world of work. Learners must feel that courses and contents are directly relevant to the true business of life and to survival outside the artificiality of the traditional school setting (Rubinstein 1994:58). As the senior phase is the exit point to the Further Education and Training Band, learners should be trained in such a way that they will be able to make right decisions in terms of career choices. Life Orientation aims not to empower but to unlock the learners' abilities, talents and potentials (Maree & Ebersohn 2002:231).

Life Orientation broadens the range of career options for learners by being relevant and responsible to employment prospects and higher education opportunities. Work is an essential aspect of living a meaningful life. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (2002:6), all learners in the General Education and Training band require a general orientation to work and further study, whether they intend to enter employment or study further. Orientation to the world of work stated in the National Curriculum Statement (2001:47) includes:

- Career information, gathering and planning skills;
- Personal evaluation skills;
- A positive attitude work and work ethics.

Educators in the senior phase are required by the curriculum to assist learners in achieving these outcomes at the end of the phase. The focus area, Life Orientation is a unique learning area in the General Education and Training Band as it covers issues that enable learners to grow into responsible individuals.

2.5 APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

As Life Orientation is a learning area in which educators need to work with learners' educational, physical, social and health related issues, it is imperative for educators to at least have the knowledge of the different relevant theories. No one approach has the complete answer nor is capable of assisting all people in all situations. Techniques on the other hand are responsive to "the mutually defined goals" (Belkin 1987:26). The approaches that will be outlined herein represent only a few of the many theoretical orientations used which can assist the Life Orientation educator to understand the Senior Phase learner better. The approaches that are covered in this study are: Behavioural approach, Client centred approach, Existential approach, Family system approach, Rational-emotive theory, Reality theory and the Outcomes-based approach.

2.5.1 Behavioural approach

The basic assumption of this approach is that behaviour is learned. Thus, it can be unlearned and new behaviour can be mastered (Milner 1980:127). Behaviourism is an approach that emphasizes the study of observable behaviour which can be investigated (Gous 2000:28). Milner (1980:127) also adds that the goal of behavioural counselling can be achieved by the use of several approaches including the operant learning process, the use of imitative learning, classical conditioning and emotional and cognitive learning.

The goal of behavioural counselling is to reduce the severity of internal inhibitory control, thus allowing the healthy patterns of behaviour to emerge (Belkin 1987:286). It is useful in that it offers variety of action oriented methods by means of which people are helped to change what they are doing and thinking. The emphasis of behaviourists is that clients become more active and can learn healthier behaviour by adhering to certain procedures. Behavioural techniques as outlined by Wiechers (2002:65-68) are:

(i) Modelling

It is the process by means of which behaviour of an individual or a group serves as a stimulus for observers to develop similar behaviour, attitudes and opinions.

(ii) Behavioural rehearsal

It teaches learners new behaviour and to try and eliminate anxiety provoking moments in every situation.

(iii) Assertive training

Children are taught different social skills which they have to master at various stages of development.

(iv) Behavioural contract

The counsellor draws up a written contract and the learners propose certain behaviour to which they and the counsellor will be bound for a given period. The contract stipulates goals that the learner must achieve to earn a certain rewards.

(v) Extinction

This implies that the situation is handled in such a way that no reinforcements occur. For an example, if a child falls down to the ground and cries, he or she will just be ignored. No extra attention should be given to behaviour that is undesirable.

(vi) Systematic desensitisation

The programme involves relaxation techniques, where the client has to relax first by doing relaxation exercises. Then the situation that causes anxiety is broken up hierarchically into steps, from the stage where some slight anxiety is manifested to the point where the child is completely overwhelmed by it.

2.5.1.1 Implications for the school

As the theory takes into consideration reinforcements and rewards, those will be able to facilitate learning in the classroom. Rewards are part of human behaviour. Every person feels good or satisfied whenever he or she receives a reward in a form of praise or token. It is in the interest of educators to understand the value of praise and positive messages and their importance in improving the learner's self-concept. Mwamwenda (1995:195) indicates that every little effort shown by learners needs to be commended. Children are likely to learn effectively when responses are rewarded in some way.

2.5.2 Client-centred approach

According to Belkin (1987:219), the client-centred approach is America's first distinctively indigenous school of therapy. The approach was born and nurtured from the work of Carl Rogers. This approach represents a set of attitudes rather than a set of techniques (Patterson 1967:226). It is based on the theory of personality that views the individual as in a process of becoming, growing and achieving worth and dignity and seeking to actualize potential (Tolbert 1982:193). The approach emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and the capacity for

growth and self-actualisation (Wilkinson & Campbell 1997:31). Corey (1996:202) also adds that the goal of the client centred approach is to provide a safe climate that is conducive to self-exploration so that clients can experience aspects of the self that were formerly distorted. The client centred premise is that everyone has an inherent tendency towards self-actualisation and a striving to develop their potential which may culminate in feelings of personal worth and self-acceptance (Wiechers 2002:60).

The client-centred approach is based on the dimension of human experience such as fulfilment, creativity and choice. The major strengths of the theory are found in the practical application of empathy, genuineness and acceptance. If the counsellor is able to portray these traits and the clients perceive and appreciate them, they will feel safe to begin to disclose aspects of self that are painful and hidden.

The goal of client-centred counselling is that of promoting greater self-acceptance in a client. The therapist approaches the client with the attitude of deep respect by accepting anything the client chooses to talk about. Wiechers (2002:59) purports that individuals have unique abilities to evaluate circumstances to choose and make decisions. It is believed that people are always engaged in a search to fulfil themselves, to actualise and to become what they want to be. Client-centred approach focuses on creating a safe environment that will allow a client to explore his or her positive traits. The following conditions are necessary for creating a conducive therapeutic climate:

Relationship building: where the counsellor listens accurately and shows respect to the client (Corey 1996:205).

Congruence and genuineness: genuineness, according to Gilliland and James (1998:117), means being transparent. The counsellor should be real and not hide behind mask. His or her caring is unconditional and no judgement should be placed on the client's feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Accurate empathic understanding: Being sensitive to the client's feelings without getting personally involved. Empathy is realized by the counsellor's ability to enter into the inner private world of the client accurately and sensitively and experience at the deepest levels what the client is feeling (Corey 1996:207).

2.5.2.1 Implications for the school

The approach stresses that teachers need to promote both in themselves and among their learners qualities of empathic understanding, acceptance and genuineness in order to create a learning climate that facilitates personal growth (Cowie and Perchereck 1994:15). This implies that educators need to create activities which will allow learners to work freely. Educators should listen to learners and encourage them to share their feelings without their interference so that they can feel free to voice their concerns. Positive regard is also to enhance positive attitude. Learners should not be praised when they have done something good only. Educators need to send positive messages to learners always so that they could feel good about themselves.

2.5.3 Existential approach

The founder of the theory is Victor Frankl who believes that people should be helped to discover the meaning of their lives and should be concerned with the problems of being rather than with problem solving. Gaining understanding about the meaning of life and taking responsibility for one's life serves to influence and inspire our development (Capuzzi & Gross 1999:157). The concern of this approach is primarily on the understanding of a client in his or her world (Cunningham & Peters 1993:320). An individual should find a way to make the society she or he lives in a better place.

The goals of the theory are choice, responsibility and growth (Capuzzi & Gross 1999:162). Whatever the choice one makes, it should be coupled with responsibility. Through increased awareness of self and experience of the world, combined with their awareness of choice and responsibility, individuals can experience their potential (Capuzzi & Gross 1999:164).

Existentialists invite clients to recognise the ways in which they are not living fully authentic lives and to make choices that will lead to their becoming what they are capable of becoming (Corey 2001:153). The theory purports that there is no escape from freedom in a sense that people can discover meaning even in their suffering.

Existentialists maintain that through their life, man is free to choose his options (Belkin 1987:55). Due to the fact that the ability to choose is fundamental to good health, the client or in this case the learner will be expected to learn what commitment and choice mean. The client is thus never seen as the a static being but rather as a complex evolving, changing, choosing, essentially lonely and unfulfilled, searching for richness and meaning in the world (Belkin 1987:241).

The three basic tasks of the existentialists as expounded by Belkin (1987:241) are:

- To help the client discover valid meaning in his or her existence.
- To help the client develop freedom to govern his or her own destiny.
- To help the client deal more effectively in his or her encounters with others.

Like with the client-centred approach, the existentialists try to understand the client from his or her own point of view by entering his or her subjective world.

2.5.3.1 Implications for the school

The idea that it puts more emphasis on each person being worthy, dignified and a free being will make it acceptable to a school situation. Learners need to feel worthy and important. If educators can adapt to this theory, they may be able to reach out to learners in a less threatening way. Each person is a shaper of his or her own destiny. Life is a reality to be experienced and enjoyed and not a symptom or a problem to be solved.

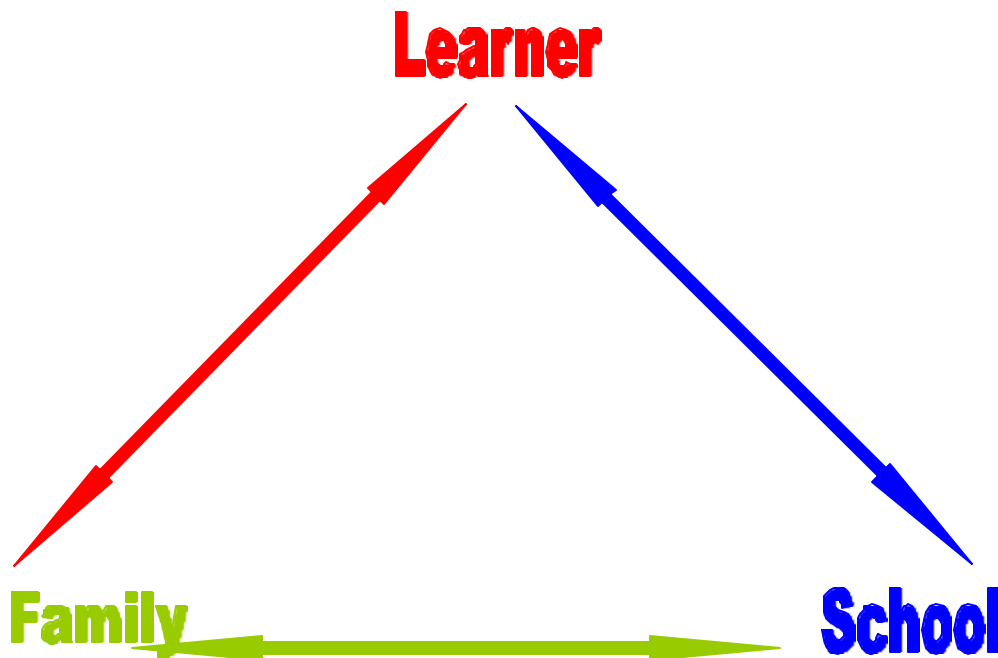
2.5.4 Family systems approach

Family systems approach base its theory on the family unit. Behaviour of a child cannot be looked at in isolation; the influence of the family plays an important role in what the child will become. The theory teaches that the unit of intervention is not the individual but the social context (Walsh & William 1997:5). They further posit that it is best not to assume that motivation comes from within the individual, but to look instead at the individual as part of the social system. To help the learner to deal with problems, it is necessary to direct the intervention briefly to the family. That will help one to understand the relationship and the interaction within the family unit.

The relationship between parents, learners, and school educators is important in ensuring that mutual understanding is reached in order to work effectively with learners. Learners should be treated as part of the family unit when at school. Understanding the learner's background will help educators to focus on their problems or causes of the problems learners' experience. Educators will not only look at the end product of behaviour but at the roots as it is intended by the systems theory. Walsh and William (1997:26) maintain that the key to changing school behavioural disorders is to interrupt the cycle of maladaptive family patterns and to avoid their re-enactment at school.

The family emotional system is important in dealing with learners' emotional problems. Triangles are used to help ease the discord in the family. If, for an example, there is a discord between mother and father, the mother can turn to the child for emotional closeness. The child in turn will turn to peers or teachers. Life Orientation educators can help learners understand how they perpetuate triangles (see figure 2.1) and how to solve ways of changing the resulting dysfunctional relationships.

Figure 2.1: The relationship within the school triangle



Strategic model

This model emphasizes that a child's behaviour is due to the problems from home. The social situation can easily exacerbate the behaviour of the child. Examples of such are natural disasters, disagreements in the family, family transitions, confusion in the family hierarchy, marital conflict, inability of family to recognise problems after the parents have divorced, disagreement concerning the child's discipline and unresolved stressful problems of an individual family member (Peeks 1992 quoted by Walsh & William, 1997:126). In trying to assist the child with her problem an educator who understands the family system approach, will try to hypothesise which problem in the child's social context is leading to his or her behaviour. After doing that, the educator works with the problem, by calling in the family and helps them to address their situation first. By solving the stresses at home, the child's behaviour can be modified (Allen, Splittgerber & Manning 1993:120). Children behave negatively whenever there is something wrong at home. It is important to look at some of the eight factors mentioned above so as to try and help learners with behavioural problem as family factors can affect them.

2.5.4.1 Implications for the school

Behaviour cannot be studied in isolation without taking into account the situation in which it occurs. Bor, Ebner-Landy, Gill and Race (2002:23) maintain that liaison between the family and the school is needed to ensure that problems are managed collaboratively. Life orientation educators are a part of a wider organisational context and should therefore focus on systems and interrelatedness in this setting. A child should be viewed as interrelated to the larger society. If a child presents a problem, this problem may involve others connected to the child that is, (family, friends and peers).

Emphasis of systems theory implies that learners are in constant contact with people and their external environment. No one is isolated or entirely protected from outside influences. When working with children, all these relationships should be kept in mind.

2.5.5 Rational-emotive theory

Albert Ellis is credited with the development of this approach (Belkin 1987:258). Its basic theory is that people are not disturbed by events but by the view they take of them or by their thinking which leads to how they feel. Ellis became convinced that it is our thoughts which form the root of human distress and unhappiness (Cowie & Pechereck 1994:42). They also maintain that if one concentrates on bad experiences of the past, it encourages irrational thinking which can lead to self-fulfilling misery. A person should therefore live in and deal with the present rather than the past.

The Rational-emotive approach does not emphasise the significance of early developmental experiences and relationships. It argues that even if our childhood experiences and upbringing determine the personalities which we adopt as adults, our feelings and behaviour should not stay with that. It emphasizes cognitive control over affective or emotional states (Belkin 1987:262). One should acknowledge that one is unique and powerful in terms of being able to shape one's behaviour and emotional reaction. Our thinking should not cloud our minds. Every

human being is a scientist of his or her own life (Cowie & Perchereck 1994:43). How a person acts and behaves in the world is through choice.

Rational thinking according to Cowie and Perchereck (1994:44), refers to those mental processes which help people to achieve what they want. This is their goal and irrational means those processes which prevent one from achieving the goal. People arrive at irrational thinking in various routes. We inculcate these irrational beliefs in our world-view for various reasons. For example, one can believe that because one was rejected as a child, everyone will reject one even though there is no proof that this is the case.

People hang on to irrational beliefs even when they are no longer appropriate. This prevents us from developing into autonomous, self-directed human beings and causes unhappiness (Cowie & Perchereck 1994:44). Rational-emotive therapy bases its goal on the following technique, the ABC model, explained by Cowie and Perchereck (1994:46):

A – Activating event (anything that leads to irrational feeling);

B – Belief;

C – Emotions or reactions.

The Life Orientation educator who adopts the rational-emotive approach will guide the child to see that there is no mystery in the life process. The educator and the learner should explore the irrational beliefs and substitute them by rational belief.

Steps underlined by Cowie and Perchereck (1994:50):

- To recognise what the belief is (for example, if a child believes that he or she is stupid or not loved, these beliefs should be recognised and changed).
- Stop acting or thinking on the basis of these beliefs.
- Substitute a new rational belief you can believe in.
- Act in the light of a new belief.

- Continue to believe in this new way even if it feels hard.
- Throughout believe that things will get better.

2.5.5.1 Implications for the school

Rational-emotive therapy can teach learners that most worthwhile goals take time to achieve. Sustained effort is a person's strength. Learners need help to learn that failure to succeed in a goal does not make them bad or worthless. The theory teaches learners that they need not be perfect to be worthwhile. We all have the right to get things wrong and we each have the right to be who we are.

2.5.6 Reality theory

Like the Rational-emotive approach, Reality theory emphasises the here and now and relies on one's logical faculties to overcome one's emotional difficulties (Belkin 1987:257). Reality theory was developed by William Glasser. Reality theory explains why and how human beings function (Capuzzi & Gross 1999:288). It stresses the clients' strengths and helps them to learn more realistic behaviour and to achieve success in the process (Corey 1996:9). Reality therapy emphasises that people have freedom, that they can make choices and that they need to consider and face the subsequent responsibilities that follow from their choices (Wiechers 2002:71).

The principle that human needs are the source of all human behaviour is fundamental in this theory. Capuzzi and Gross (1999:288) maintain that every person seeks to control and mould the world around him or her in order to fulfil his or her inner drive. Everyone should take better charge of his or her life. For one to be able to make changes, one should focus on realistic choices especially those touching human relationships. Choice theory as part of reality theory offers some ways to accomplish choices through the WDEP system.

The WDEP system according to Capuzzi and Gross (1999:288) is explained as follows:

W implies that the counsellor explores the wants of the client.

D implies that the client describes the direction of their lives as well as what they are currently doing or how they spend their time.

E indicates that the counsellor helps in the client's self-evaluation by asking questions such as "Are your current actions effective?"

P implies plan. Clients are helped to make simple and attainable action plans.

Wiechers (2002:71) purports that there are basic needs that everyone has that need to be fulfilled. The need to love and to be loved implies giving and receiving love. Secondly, there is a need for achievement or experiencing a feeling that you are worthwhile. If these two needs are not satisfied, a person experiences sorrow and suffers and those who are around him or her suffer and experience stress.

2.5.6.1 Implications for the school

Educators need to accept learners as they are but not to condone their actions. Emphasis is on the learners' behaviour as they do not have enough time to dwell into their past. Educators have to show confidence in learners and believe that they can do better. Emphasis of reality to learners is vital because it explains unrealistic behaviour to them. Educators need to teach learners better ways of satisfying their needs within the framework of reality.

2.5.7 Outcomes-based approach (OBE)

The new approach to education in South Africa, namely OBE with learner centred education as one of its cornerstone, was adopted in reaction against traditional schooling with its emphasis on information storing (Meier 2003:237). Olivier (1999:39) contends that the rationale for OBE is that of achieving outcomes within the learning programme while developing within learners the capability to think, reason, criticise, deliberate, socialise and apply knowledge within a

specific context rather than just acquiring it. The focus on outcomes is generally seen as promoting equity but taking account of differences.

The OBE approach advocates that educators have to change from being primary suppliers of knowledge to facilitators, while learners have to assume more responsibility for their learning. OBE depends on the quality of teacher knowledge, with different teaching methods and their access to learning programmes (Chisholm 2000:27). Sekao (2004:17) also agrees that OBE promotes synchrony between the educational social structure and social skills needed in the work place.

The pillar for OBE is that learner-centred approach where learners are involved in learning activities and make decisions about their learning. The focus of a learner-centred approach is that a learner has potential. Educators need to respect learners so that learners can also respect them. Educators need to create an environment that encourages a sense of acceptance where learners will be valued for their individuality in the classroom. Learners learn by means of discovery. A learner-centred approach involves learners themselves doing most of the work or talking while the educator remain in the background and acts as the facilitator for their learning (Meier 2003:231).

One of the implications of OBE is that all learners can learn. This implies that if the learner does not achieve at the end of the lesson, then the teacher and the learner should try again from a different angle (Jansen & Christie 1999:83). Learners need to move through units and text at their own speed. To help each learner efficiently to achieve mastery, teachers have to find methods that work for individual learners (Jansen & Christie 1999:83).

OBE emphasises the culture of lifelong learning. What the learner learns at school should be carried out to life's end. Learners are to be taught how to think rather than what to think. This approach will groom learners to be industrious, motivated and have an interest in their work (Longworth & Davies 1997:17). Education should be relevant to the age in which children live, and to the lives they will lead after they have left school. Longworth and Davies (1997:18) maintain that:

The learning of high-order understanding skills by children is more important than the assimilation of facts and information. Though the development of memory skills is important in educational development, the regurgitation of memorised information is no substitute for understanding, insight and knowledge nor is it a reliable indicator of intelligence.

Lifelong learning implies opportunities that develop potential in learners. The school should be a place of excitement, opportunities and enjoyment. A more individual and goal-directed approach should be identified and implemented. Lifelong learning is essential as society moves into the 21st century. The world of technology demands of learners to keep pace with what is happening in the world of work.

The role of an educator in the OBE approach is that outcomes-based education requires educators to (Olivier 1999:41):

- Impart knowledge which is inaccessible to learners.
- Provide guidance on how and where information can be obtained and the knowledge, skills and process which should be followed.
- Direct learners to capitalise on acquired knowledge, skills and processes to construct outcomes.
- To align the world of learning with the world of work.
- To propagate creativity by means of focusing on development of high order thinking, communication, decision-making, social interrelationships and self-development.

The challenge of outcomes-based education is to enable each learner to accomplish knowledge and skills as well as to master processes in a balanced fashion and to accept the challenges and opportunities of the world of the future (Olivier 1999:39).

2.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of the chapter has been to provide an overview of some principles which underlie Life Orientation as a new learning area. The scope of Life Orientation requires educators to assist learners in recognising themselves as functioning in the following fields, that is, social, personal, religious, physical and the career world and health. Chapter three will examine the role of Life Orientation educators in the Senior Phase and their contribution to the teaching of Life orientation.

