

International Journal of Education Sciences (IJES)

Received on 01. 03. 2014/12. 04. 2014

REF. NO. IJES-446

(Always refer our Reference No. for all correspondence)

Monitoring and Support Mechanisms for the Teaching of Life Orientation Curriculum in High Schools in the Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape Province of South Africa

Toyin Mary Adewumi¹ and Yinka Titilawo^{2*}

¹Faculty of Education, ²Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of Fort Hare, PB X1314, Alice 5700, South Africa

*E-mail: olayinkatemi@yahoo.co.uk

Monitoring and Support Mechanisms for the Teaching of Life Orientation Curriculum in High Schools in the Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape Province of South Africa

Toyin Mary Adewumi¹ and Yinka Titilawo^{2*}

¹Faculty of Education, ²Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of Fort Hare, PB X1314, Alice 5700, South Africa

*E-mail: olayinkatemi@yahoo.co.uk

Author for Correspondence

Toyin Mary Adewumi

Faculty of Education

University of Fort Hare

PB X1314, Alice 5700, South Africa

E-mail: toyinadewumi28@gmail.com

KEYWORDS course moderation, teacher's and learners' portfolios, support, workshop, department, education

ABSTRACT The study explored monitoring and support mechanisms in place for teaching the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. Data were collected through individual and focus group interviews held with 48 participants made of teachers, principals and learners in six high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Document analysis and classroom observation were also used to complement findings from the interviews. Data analysis was done by clustering common themes and writing stories to uncover the main issues that arose. This study revealed that all the LO teachers stated that there were some forms of support available for the schools. The findings revealed that, in some cases, principals do not monitor the teaching of LO and there are indications that the monitoring strategies currently used include course moderation, reviewing of teacher's and learners' portfolios. These mechanisms

are beneficial to the teaching of LO in terms of teaching, completion of syllabus and teacher's accountability. The study concluded that participants generally felt that the support from the Department was not adequate and so it is recommended that the current forms of support and monitoring should be supplemented with school visits by Department officials.

INTRODUCTION

Overall school administration and the co-ordination of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in the schools is regulated by the Department of Education's South African School Acts (SASA, 1996). The responsibilities of the Department of Education include: the development of curriculum for the various levels of schooling, establishing standards for material resources, facilities and equipment, allotting money for facilities, equipment, programmes and salaries; and supervising the preparation of teachers to teach subjects such as Life Orientation (LO).

Fullan (1999) states that support from departments of education is often difficult to attain. This could mean that support from principals is also difficult to get. However, in a study by Gibbons (1995), at the school level colleagues and other teachers were considered the most helpful support in implementing the curriculum by offering advice and encouragement.

Not only do schools get limited support from the Department of Education; in many schools non-examinable subjects including Life Orientation (LO) have been given a reduced time allowance, fewer resources and generally a lower profile, (Raymond, 1998). It is therefore not surprising that supporting Life Orientation (LO) in schools might be a difficult task. However, it was not clear what the situation is like in high schools in the Fort Beaufort District specifically, hence one aspect of this study attempts to assess the availability of material resources and equipment as well as monitoring and support.

The tendency to ignore Life Orientation (LO) seems to have been the most formidable obstacle to excellence (Prinsloo, 2007). Life Orientation (LO) is supposed to be given a high priority in schools. The literature argues that Life Orientation (LO) is the only subject in the school curriculum that has significant potential to promote learners' physical, social, psychological and moral development (Rooth 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007). Thus school authorities

need to create supporting mechanisms to address the many challenges facing Life Orientation (LO) in schools.

Prinsloo (2007) further explains that evaluation of teaching in classrooms can and should take many forms involving the stakeholders – teachers and principal – who have primary responsibility for the instructional programme. Thus the challenging responsibility for principals is to “provide multiple opportunities for teachers to examine their practices, to reflect on those practices, to collaborate with others as they are assessing the practices, and then empower these professionals to act on the many lessons learnt from these endeavours, as they attempt to influence teaching and learning through specific instructional leadership actions (Prinsloo, 2007: 161).

Hence school heads and district officials as the custodians of curriculum implementation have to monitor it (SASA,1996). At the school level, the school head is the chief instructional supervisor. He/she provides means for curriculum implementation through timetabling, classroom allocation, textbook allocation, syllabus and all instructional materials as well as creating a conducive atmosphere for an effective teaching and learning process, Nkomo (1995:36). Fullan (1999) argues that many good monitoring practices go unreported because of the isolation of teachers, schools, and districts from each other.

Hellinger (2003) shares the same view as Nkomo (1995) when he postulates that “monitoring involves the head looking at teachers’ weekly plans and learning objectives, and the plans teachers are working towards. These include examining samples of learners’ work, visiting classrooms, observing the implementation of teaching, learning and curricular policies, reviewing learners’ assessment information and evaluating learners, class and school levels of performance and progress.” As Zepeda (2006:103) affirms, “teaching is the primary work of teachers, and should be the basis for in-class assessment of teaching and learning for both teachers and learners.” This is important for schools if the curriculum has to be implemented according to its objectives.

Further guidelines are given by Van Deventer (2009) on the roles of the school head in guiding and monitoring Life Orientation (LO) implementation through ensuring that schemes of work, lesson plans and records of marks are prepared regularly and in accordance with the NCS. Above all, the head as an instructional leader has to monitor the actions of Life Orientation (LO)

teachers and what is happening in the schools and report on it to the district officials. However, it has to be noted that informal monitoring procedures by themselves do not produce better results, as revealed by Mortimore *et al.*, (1988), and by Odden and Marsh (1988) when they posit that all research on effective schools show that paying constant attention to students' academic, personal, and social development is essential for success. This is in line with the findings of the U.S Department of Education (2004:11) that successful school heads "analyse instruction and students' learning through regular classroom observation and provision of detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement."

Panday (2007) accepts that Life Orientation (LO) implementation has to be monitored and supported, that is it has to be supervised by school heads and district officials or inspectors. He acknowledges that the word 'supervision' is related to curriculum implementation. It is not only the manner of teaching which needs to be monitored but also the content that is actually being addressed which has to be supervised as well. The school head and heads of department provide guidance and make sure that teachers have the necessary skills and use the correct teaching methods or strategies (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Monitoring and evaluation have become an integral component of any reform process (Wilson, 1996).

Indeed, school heads' leadership support is crucial to the success of any curriculum implementation as they create a good climate as well as cordial working conditions. According to Coleman (2005), instructional leadership support is learning-centred. Its main concerns are likely to be curriculum, teaching and learning, and the monitoring of learning. Skills expected from these leaders are the ones that lead directly to the improvement of learners' performance.

Life Orientation (LO) teachers will always be willing to work in a healthy environment. If the head as an instructional leader is effective, it is likely that the Life Orientation (LO) teachers within the system will feel committed to and comfortable with the programme being implemented, as long as they are satisfied that the school will run smoothly (Van Deventer, 2009). Maslow's theory of motivation assumes that it is relatively easy to supervise individuals or teachers who are intrinsically motivated (Everard, Morris and Wilson 2004). However, these teachers need professional support to keep them in line with new developments. Nkomo (1995) shares the same view as he stresses the need for instructional supervisors such as the District Education Officers (DEOs), heads of schools and heads of departments to maintain the standard

of education as expected by the Government. The quality of these educational authorities is expected to determine the curriculum implementation process.

However, while there is a general agreement that the school head is a key person in enhancing the teaching and learning process Hoy and Clover, (1986) research shows that school heads still have limited knowledge of the Life Orientation (LO) teacher's job description (Rooth, 2005:22). However, despite the limited research to date, there is continued interest in the way heads of schools run their school activities in order to enhance quality subject teaching (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). The head of a school has a great task to monitor all the school systems, from the distribution of resources and their use to monitoring (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996). The researcher agrees with this assertion as a lack of monitoring can cause unfair distribution of resources among departments, thereby adversely affecting the implementation of a subject like Life Orientation (LO) as well as conflicts among staff members.

Research studies by Gill et al. (2000) reveal that school heads in some Sub-Saharan countries cannot take any actions against Life Orientation (LO) teachers who absent themselves or come late because of economic situations which have eroded their salaries. Some teachers spend time farming in their fields or running their business. If heads try to charge the offender, he/she may tender his/her resignation. Van Deventer confirms the problem of heavy workload in South Africa, although he cites the problem of additional sources of income as existing mainly among teachers in rural areas. "In some schools, heads find it difficult to observe their teachers due to large numbers of staff; while in rural areas the head carries a heavy load of teaching and does not have enough time to carry out effective supervision" (Madziyire et al. 1998).

The South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006), found that new and young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties. Therefore, if young Life Orientation (LO) teachers are not assisted to interpret the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum, he/she is unlikely to implement it effectively. In most Sub-Saharan countries, Life Orientation (LO) (or Life Skills) suffers from a lack of qualified personnel to monitor it as well as a shortage of management personnel with sufficient knowledge of the subject (Tiendrebeogo et al. 2003).

It is therefore of paramount importance that the school head, as an instructional leader, and the District Education Officials, occasionally undertake internal and external monitoring of

curriculum implementation in schools. Their main objective would be that of checking the achievement of goals and set standards, so as to recommend areas for improvement and identify those which need staff development or in-service programmes (Panday, 2007).

METHODS

This research was qualitative in nature and used a case study design based largely on interviews. This method was chosen on the strength of its ability to provide an in-depth and detailed account of the phenomenon under study, enabling the researcher to discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research (Denscombe, 2001). The adoption of qualitative methods in this study allowed the use of different kinds of data collection instruments to gather information, namely interviews, document analysis and observation. The researcher collected data using hand-written notes, observation, and tape-recorded interviews from all participants during official working hours. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, and all the participants were asked to review the transcripts for verification and to sign the agreement form, allowing the researcher to use the interview data.

Research instruments

Four research instruments were used during the investigation: The study used focus group and semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to solicit teachers and principals opinions on how the monitoring and support mechanisms put in place benefited teachers in teaching Life Orientation (LO). The focus was on how the school head or the deputy is supporting the teaching of LO in school and the adequacy of the support, support school get from the departmental district officials in the teaching of LO and the adequacy of support, how the school head or the deputy monitor the teaching of LO in school, how the district officials monitor the teaching of LO in school and the benefits of the monitoring strategies.

The semi-structured interview procedure first allowed the researcher to ask a series of structured questions before going deeper by using open-ended questions in order to obtain more data and allow respondents to express themselves (Borg and Gall, 1996). As a data gathering technique,

the semi-structured interview's flexibility and adaptability permitted the researcher to probe for deeper responses, follow up leads, elaborate on original responses, obtain additional and more detailed data, and clarify answers (Borg and Gall, 1996; Creswell, 2007; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1989).

Participants

A sample of twelve participants, six teachers and six principals in six high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District in the Eastern Cape was purposively selected. The Fort Beaufort District where the sample was selected was made up of six high school clusters. The six high schools selected were by means of purposive sampling within each of the six high school clusters in the district to avoid possible bias in selection – one high school from each cluster. The six schools chosen were on the basis of convenience within each cluster.

Procedures

The researcher sought permission to carry out the study from the Provincial Department of Education. Furthermore, the researcher sought permission from the principals of each school selected to arrange the dates for conducting the interviews. The researcher, although not a South African, did not find it difficult to interact with the participants. The use of English as the language of learning and teaching in high schools meant that local languages did not present a great problem for the researcher.

Findings

This study endeavoured to respond to the main research question, which sought to investigate the implementation of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum in high schools in the Fort Beaufort Education District. However, this article reports on one of the sub-questions that sought to find out how the monitoring and support mechanisms put in place benefited teachers in teaching Life Orientation (LO). The findings of the study are discussed below. In the study, teacher and principal participants are abbreviated as T1-T6 and P1-P6 respectively.

Support mechanisms available for LO teachers and the adequacy of the support

The South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) found that new young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties. Therefore, if young Life Orientation teachers are not assisted, the Life Orientation curriculum is less likely to be effectively implemented by such teachers.

This study found that trained LO teachers in the selected Fort Beaufort District had between one and five years' teaching experience. This means that these teachers had relatively little teaching experience in this learning area. Therefore, there is a particular need for consistent support in this sector (new or inexperienced teachers) for them to be able to fully implement the Life Orientation curriculum. The following are some of their comments:

The support has only been a verbal affirmation to help, but the textbooks requested have not been bought. However, the Head facilitates my meetings with parents and takes up the issues when they are beyond me. The support could be adequate if textbooks are provided. (T4)

I get nothing from the Department of Education in terms of support. The subject adviser promised to visit, but did not come. (T5)

P1: We get training, funds, and advice from the Department and subject advisers. Yes, the department is trying, but the support is not enough. Although we get what we are supposed to get as a province, but the Department can do more in the areas of funds and visitation.

P4: The training and workshops organised by the Department are just for two to three days – they are not long enough to bring about the desired results.

From the above discussion, the participant principals confirmed what the teachers said: that although schools received some forms of support from the Department, this is not adequate, especially since the schools are so poorly resourced and the communities they serve are so poor. It is thus not surprising that additional funding featured prominently in the principals' comments.

Types of support that LO teachers expect from the school or Department

LO teachers were asked about the types of support they expected to be provided by the school and the Department of Education since the majority of them responded that the support they received from the Department was inadequate.

T1: *I expect that the LO Subject Advisor ... should visit schools, interact with LO teachers and communicate his findings to the Department.*

T2 and T4 made similar points: *I would expect class visits, but the teachers' body [SADTU] does not allow this from the Department because of the previous experiences from the apartheid time. (T2)*

There should be frequent visits to the school to do on-site support and to follow up on the quality of teaching. Though, SADTU does not allow criticism of teachers, which are usually done by the Department with the wrong approach. (T4)

T5: *I would like to be trained for LO teaching and counselling so I can help the learners with the issues that are coming up in my LO class. I'd also like the Subject Advisor to visit the school and provide me with guidance for teaching LO.*

T6 thought an additional member of staff should be allocated to schools (something unheard of in such schools, yet taken for granted in affluent schools, especially in developed countries):

I think there's a need for a special teachers' officer in school who can handle problems as they come up and can also go out and liaise with social workers, the police, families and the Department, so that LO teachers won't use up teaching hours doing all this. The special teacher should be empowered to be able to access resources that can't be accessed by LO teachers for needy learners.

The major discovery from the discussions on the issue is that the respondents wanted more support in the areas of training, guidance and counselling, and regular visits to school by subject advisers. These were some of their responses – the majority of them focused on or at least mentioning, the need for more visits from subject advisors.

Monitoring Strategies for Life Orientation

“It is the direct responsibility of the principals and the District Officers that teaching and learning take place in schools” (South Africa School Act, no 27 of 1996). Information on monitoring strategies was sought from participant teachers. T1 and T4 respectively revealed that LO teaching is *not* monitored in their schools. The following are their comments:

There is no established monitoring system for LO teaching.

The school is small and the teaching staff are few. Therefore, there is no monitoring, but the Principal's monitoring is based on trust of the teacher's capacity. The onus is on me as the teacher to ensure the subject's taught effectively.

One of the participant principals (P4) confirmed what teachers T1 and T4 stated above, perhaps from a surprising point of view. He commented that:

There is no official way of monitoring the LO teacher because he is good at what he is doing. I have never had any reason to doubt his abilities.

On the other hand, T3 and T6 disclosed that:

Sometimes, the Principal does classroom visits and provides guidance.

She (the Principal) monitors through the timetable. She ensures that teachers attend classes. The Head of Department also ensures that the LO teachers do their jobs.

However, in some of the other selected high schools, there are different ways by which the principals monitor the teaching of LO. P1 and P3 respectively stated that:

Monitoring is done through HODS and subject heads – the Subject Head for LO reports to the HOD. The LO activities are monitored once in a term. The Subject Head collects LO teachers' files and passes them to the HOD, who in turn passes to the Principal – the officials moderate the documents at each level. The Subject Advisers are also involved. Class visits are done when there's need for it. Class visits are done for scoring teachers' performance – this is for the purpose of determining teacher's progression and salary increment.

I have an HOD – as the Principal, I'm the overseer. Fortnightly, the HOD reviews the learners' work.

P5 and P6 also pointed out:

I provide out-of-class support to teachers and learners. I also provide guidance to the teachers and learners. I review examination papers to ensure its (sic) quality.

It is done like all other learning areas. We do class visits, we inspect LO teachers' work through the HOD.

It was clear from the information gathered that in some cases principals do not monitor the teaching of LO. However, as it was confirmed above, the principals had been supportive in the teaching of LO.

It could also be established from the information gathered that there were different ways by which the principals monitored the teaching of LO. In some schools, monitoring is done once a term. Although this would constitute frequent intervals in terms of the official requirements of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), this is a relatively long interval considering the fact that some of these teachers are not qualified and may need consistent monitoring and support. It could be inferred from the information gathered that many of the selected schools lack adequate monitoring, since some schools do not monitor the implementation of the LO curriculum at all.

The provincial departments of education are responsible for most of the schools in South Africa. Therefore, it is not out of place to seek information from the participants on how the local Department officials monitor, and the benefits of the monitoring mechanism in the implementation of LO. Examples of how the Department monitors the teaching of LO were given as course moderation, examining teachers and learners' portfolios, but most of this activity was at a distance, and school visits seemed rare, as P1 explains:

P1: Class visiting was used as a monitoring system during the apartheid period, so it's not done now, so that it may not be seen as reinforcing the system of the past... but it is highly needed. Subject advisors' visits have positive impact on the teachers.

There's no monitoring through school visits, but through course moderation, reviewing of teacher's and learners' portfolios, which contain files of class work, learners' marks. Through this the Department is able to evaluate teachers' work. Class visiting would be ideal, but the teachers' body [SADTU] does not allow class visits from the Department." (T2)

Unsurprisingly, the principals were more inclined than the teachers to bemoan the rarity of class visits:

P2: Constant on-site visitation is required, especially for new LO educators.

Cluster meetings, however, seem to have become a beneficial substitute for individual class visits by Department officials; however, it is significant that the monitoring focus at these meetings appears to be on reviewing portfolios (i.e. monitoring work done, and teacher accountability) rather than on interacting around actual teaching. These points emerge clearly in the responses of P5, P3, and particularly T5:

We also have cluster meetings where we develop common papers – this helps the teachers to work faster. The monitoring strategies are beneficial because they help teachers to work faster. (P5)

The Department of Education never came to me, but I have been involved in cluster moderation where teachers' portfolios are reviewed. I can say the course moderation is helpful, though I do not know if I am doing the right thing with the way I am handling LO because I was not trained to teach LO. (T5)

There are subject advisors who organise meetings and workshops with LO teachers. There is common assessment implemented for all schools by the Department. It benefits LO teaching because LO teachers cannot just do their own thing. The Department ensures they keep with the standard expected of them as Government provides funds for the implementation of LO. (P3)

One result of monitoring with an emphasis on accountability and work done, rather than on engaging teachers on teaching in the classroom may be a tendency for teachers to focus on performance, and to fabricate marks:

I can't really say the monitoring strategies are beneficial, because some teachers cook up marks for learners when it's time for course moderation.(T4)

DISCUSSION

This study found that all the LO teachers stated that there were some forms of support available from their principals. In terms of the adequacy of the support provided, LO teachers were of the opinion that the support they received from their principals was adequate. However, the majority of the principals were less sure about the adequacy of the support provided by the Department of Education.

The South African study of Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) found that new young teachers required more advice, encouragement and support from their heads for the successful execution of their duties. Therefore, if young Life Orientation teachers are not assisted, the Life Orientation curriculum is less likely to be effectively implemented by such teachers. This study found that trained LO teachers in the selected Fort Beaufort District had between one and five

years' teaching experience. This means that these teachers had relatively little teaching experience in this learning area. Therefore, there is a particular need for consistent support in this sector (new or inexperienced teachers) for them to be able to fully implement the Life Orientation curriculum. Yet a concern was raised by the participant principals and teachers that many subject advisers did not come to visit schools (or could not because of resistance on the part of the leading teacher union), and had ignored LO despite some of these LO teachers not having been trained.

It was established that the support mechanisms provided by the Department of Education are in the form of funds, advice materials; information, workshops and training, and course moderation. However, the participants stated that the support from the Department of Education was not adequate. There was a concern that two of the LO teachers had not received any form of support from the Department of Education in the form of workshop/training and advice.

According to Rogan and Grayson (2003), the construct "support from outside agencies" describes the kinds of action undertaken by outside organisations such as provincial and district education offices, to influence practices, either by support or sanction, and the role of the District Education Officers (DEOs) to see that standards are maintained. They are there as quality assurance officers, to provide schools with expertise and professional development courses. In many developing countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies such as World Vision and local or international NGOs, which often provide teachers and learners with materials like teaching kits or textbooks.

Non-material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development. These involve in-service training where teachers' skills can be upgraded. This is probably one of the most visible and obvious ways in which outside agencies attempt to bring change in schools (Karsten et al. 2000). Therefore, non- support can also be regarded as a sub-construct of school capacity. To bring about change, there is also a need for outside agencies to monitor the implementation process. This is mainly the duty of the district officers. They have to inspect schools at least once in two years so as to give feedback to teachers on their performance. It is their duty to see that the Life Orientation curriculum is implemented according to policy documents.

The study also inquired into the kind of support the LO teachers *expected* from the school principals and the Department of Education. It emerged that the participant teachers wanted more support in the areas of training, counselling, guidance, advice, and regular visits to the school by subject advisors. They further stated that there should be offices for specialist teachers to help the LO teachers, who would handle learners' problems as they arose, liaising with police and the Departments of Education and Social Welfare, and visiting learners' homes. This would help LO teachers to mind their classes, reducing their burdens and enabling them to concentrate on their school work.

This study found that there is no established monitoring system in two of the selected high schools in the Fort Beaufort District. The LO teachers in these schools stated that there is no monitoring, and that the principal's monitoring is based on his/her trust of the teacher's capacity. To a certain extent, LO is being marginalised by the very people who are given the responsibility of making sure that this curriculum is fully implemented. It is the direct responsibility of the principals and the District Officers that teaching and learning take place in schools (SASA, 1996; Christiaans, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007).

However, in the other schools in this study, it was found that some kind of monitoring strategies were indeed put in place for the implementation of the LO curriculum. It was stated that monitoring is done in LO, as in all other learning areas, through the head of departments (HODS) and subject heads. It was revealed that in these schools, LO activities are monitored once a term. The subject head collects LO teachers' files and passes them to the HOD, who in turn passes them to the Principal. It was stated that sometimes class visits are done and examination papers are reviewed to ensure quality.

The Department of Education officials and school principals are supposed to visit schools and classes to monitor how LO is being implemented (SASA, 1996). In most of the selected schools in the Fort Beaufort District, this appears *not* to be the case. The Principal has a great task to monitor all the school's systems, from distribution of resources and their use, to monitoring itself (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996). Panday (2007) accepts that LO implementation has to be monitored and supported; that is, it has to be supervised by principals and district officials or inspectors. She acknowledges that the word "supervision" is closely related to curriculum implementation.

According to Panday (2007), it is not only the manner of teaching which needs to be monitored, but also the content that is actually being addressed which has to be supervised as well.

Hellinger (2002) shares the same view as Nkomo (1995) when he postulates that monitoring involves principals looking at teachers' weekly plans and learning objectives, and the plans teachers are working towards. These include examining samples of learners' work, visiting classrooms, observing the implementation of teaching, learning and curricula policies, reviewing learners' assessment information and evaluating learners, class and school levels of performance and progress. Zepeda (2006) affirms, "Teaching is the primary work of teachers, and should be the basis for in-class assessment of teaching and learning for both teachers and learners." This is important for schools if the curriculum is to be implemented according to its objectives.

The findings on how the Department of Education does go about monitoring the teaching of LO were found to be course moderation and examining teachers' and learners' portfolios. Some of the participant teachers and principals stated that the monitoring mechanism was beneficial because it helped teachers to work harder and faster to finish their work schedule so that they were not left behind by other LO teachers in their clusters.

Nevertheless, the other participants stated that these monitoring mechanisms were not beneficial as the district officials did not visit schools often, since the SADTU did not allow class visits. This is regrettable, since it emerged that some LO teachers "cooked up" marks for learners for the purpose of satisfying course moderation requirements. One of the LO teachers stated that there had not been any monitoring from the Department of Education for the past three years that she had been teaching LO; in that time, the subject advisor had never visited her.

Perhaps it is instructive to see this lack of monitoring in a more global light. In most Sub-Saharan countries, Life Orientation (or Life Skills) suffers from a lack of qualified personnel to monitor it, as well as a shortage of management personnel qualified in Life Orientation (Tiendrebeogo et al. 2003).

Maslow's theory of motivation assumes that it is relatively easy to supervise individuals or teachers who are intrinsically motivated (Everard et al, 2004). However, these LO teachers need professional support to keep them in line with new developments. Nkomo (1995) shares the same view as he stresses the need for instructional supervisors such as the District Education Officers (DEOs), principals and heads of department to maintain the standard of education

expected by the Government. The quality of these educational authorities and their monitoring is expected to determine the curriculum implementation process.

Above all, the Principal as an instructional leader has to monitor the actions of LO teachers and what is happening in the schools, and to report on this to the district officials. However, it has to be noted that informal monitoring procedures do not produce better results, as revealed by Fullan (1992). Fullan posited that all research on effective schools shows that paying constant attention to students' academic, personal, and social development is essential for success. This is in line with the findings of the U.S Department of Education (2004) that successful principals "analyse instruction and student learning through regular classroom observation, and provide detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement."

CONCLUSION

LO teachers revealed that they received support from the school and Department of Education in the form of funds, advice, materials, information, training workshops and course moderation. Class visits and other monitoring mechanisms are hardly encountered in some schools, despite the fact that LO is a compulsory learning area with its associated perceived advantages, in all the grades in South African Schools. Meanwhile, the teachers generally felt that the support they received from the Department was not adequate. It is clear that the Department of Education and school principals need to actively consider how best they can improve the standard of Life Orientation (LO) curriculum implementation by putting in place effective monitoring and support mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

District officials, subject advisors and school principals should monitor and support the Life Orientation activities in schools to observe firsthand the implementation of Life Orientation curriculum. Visits to schools should be regular, as this alone would help with monitoring and supporting the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers should be given written feedback to

help them reflect on their areas of weakness. Class visits should be encouraged to allow the monitoring and support that is needed by teachers.

REFERENCES

- Borg WR, Gall MD 1996. Educational Research: An Introduction. New York: Longman.
- Christiaans DJ 2006. Empowering teachers to implement the life orientation learning area in the senior phase of the General Education and Training Band. Unpublished M.Ed thesis. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.
- Coleman M, Earley P 2005. Leadership and Management in Education. Cultures, Change and Context. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell JW 2007. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Everard KB, Morris G, Wilson I 2004. Effective School Management (4th ed.). London: Sage Publications
- Fitz-Gibbon CT 1996. Monitoring Education: Indicators, Quality and Effectiveness London: Cassell.
- Fullan M 1999. Change forces: The sequel. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Gibbons S 1995. Curriculum implementation in elementary school physical education: A successful School/University Collaboration. *CAHPERD*, 61(4): 4-8
- Gill S, Fluitman F, Dar A 2000. Vocational education and training reform- matching skills to markets and budgets. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hellinger P 2003. "Leading Educational Change: Reflection on the Practice of Structural and Transformational Leadership". *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 33: 3.
- Hoy WK, Clover I 1986. Elementary school climate: A revision the OCDO. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 22: 93-110.
- Hoy HK, Mishel CG, 2005. Educational Administration Theory, Research Practice. New York: Macmillan.

- Madziyire NC, Makombe B, Makoni RD, Mugwagi MP 1998. Educational Leadership and Supervision Module EA3DC103 (A and B). Harare. The centre for Education University of Zimbabwe.
- Mortimore P, Sammons P, Stoll L, Ecob R, Lewis D 1988. The effects of school membership on pupils' educational outcomes. *Research Papers in Education*, 3: 3-25.
- Mortimore P, Sammons P, Stoll L, Lewis D, Ecob R 1988. *School Matters: The Junior Years*. Wells: Open Books.
- Nachmias C, Nachmias D 1989. Research methods in social sciences. London : St Martins Press Inc.
- Nkomo MG 1995. Curriculum implementation change and innovation module EA3AD303. Harare. The Centre for Distance Education University of Zimbabwe
- Odden A, Marsh D 1988. State education reform implementation: A framework for analysis. In J. Hannaway, R. Crowson (Eds.), *The politics of reforming school administration* (41-59). New York.
- Ornstein CA, Hunkins PF 2004. Curriculum: Foundations, principles and issues. (4th ed). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Panday D 2007. Teachers' perspectives on the implementation of Life Orientation as a learning area. An Article submitted in partial fulfilment for degree of Magister Educationis (Curriculum Policy, Development and Management) Faculty of Education Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
- Prinsloo E 2007. Implementation of Life Orientation programmes in the new curriculum in South African schools: Perceptions of principals and Life Orientation teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(1): 155-170.
- Raymond C 1998. Co-ordinating Physical Education across the Primary School. Book-review. Falmer Press.
- Rooth E 2005. An investigation of the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools. Unpublished PhD thesis. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape.
- Tiendrebéogo G, Meijer S, Engleberg G 2003. Africa Consultants International Technical Paper No.119.

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *The Condition of Education 2004* (NCES 2004-077). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Van Deventer K 2009. Perspectives of teachers on the implementation of Life Orientation in grades R-11 from selected Western Cape schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 29:127.
- Van der Walt JL, De Klerk J 2006. Die effektiwiteit van die Lewensoriënteringsprogram volgens 'n groep Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysers — ruimte vir verbetering? *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*, 42:175-193.
- Wilson RJ 1996. *Assessing students in the classrooms and schools*. Scarborough, Canada. Allyn and Bacon.
- Zepeda A 2006. Classroom-based assessment of teaching and learning. In J.H. Stronge (Ed) *Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice* 2nd ed. pp101-124 Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.