

PERCEPTIONS OF LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEARNING AREA IN GRADES 8 AND 9: A SURVEY IN SELECTED WESTERN CAPE HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to break the cycle aimed at maintaining social and ideological control the new South African (SA) government has established a new legal and policy framework for education and training. The result was Outcomes-based Education (OBE). As a reform OBE promised to improve the quality of education for all in SA. This article, which focuses on the Senior Phase (SP), is part of a larger study that studied Life Orientation (LO) teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LO in Grades R-11. The main problem was to determine the perceptions of LO teachers in the SP regarding the implementation of LO with specific reference to the Learning Outcome, Physical Development and Movement (PDM) in selected Western Cape high schools. Quantitative and qualitative data captured by a questionnaire typifies the research design as a survey. In the survey N=124 high schools were randomly selected of which n=30 LO teachers in the SP returned questionnaires. Summary statistics using frequency tables and histograms were utilised. The data were analysed by Statistica 8.0 (STATSOFT, 2007). For the purpose of this article no comparisons were drawn between the different grades of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Every aspect as stipulated by the NCS seemed to be in place for the presentation of LO in the SP. However, the teachers were not fully qualified to teach LO in the sense that the majority of LO teachers were not qualified in Physical Education (PE) to present PDM. Notwithstanding the status of LO, the situation holds specific implications for the growth and development of SP learners. It is recommended that the Department of Education (DoE) should take the initiative and lead in this regard to urgently provide specialist LO teachers for the SP. However, Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) should become more involved in training initiatives for prospective teachers in LO.

Key words: Outcomes-based Education; National Curriculum Statement; General Education and Training Band; Life Orientation; Physical Education; Teacher Training.

INTRODUCTION

An acute awareness of historical notions about education and race is needed to come to terms with new educational policy and laws since prejudice and mindsets have sunk deep and settled firmly in the South African psyche (Manganyi, 2001). Educational transformation in SA aims to break the cycle aimed at maintaining social and ideological control (Welton, 2001; Prinsloo, 2007). Naturally, changes in the education system deeply affected teachers (Christiaans, 2006).

The new government has established a new legal and policy framework for education and training. According to the DoE significant gains regarding the establishment of necessary implementation systems and on improving teaching are visible (DoE, 2004). However, the DoE recognises that aside from societal challenges there are specific educational problems that have to be addressed. The DoE (DoE, 2004:1) specifically states that:

To remain globally competitive, it is imperative that the system produces more young people with high levels of knowledge and skills in mathematics, science and technology.

Although the learning areas mentioned in the quote above are important in the face of globalisation they alone cannot lead to social transformation in the South African context. Although the DoE acknowledges that culture, language and values are vital to building societies with social cohesion and entrenching a commitment to culture, religious and linguistic diversity (DoE, 2004), it remains unfortunate that many South African communities are at risk. At-risk communities can be defined as communities in which poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, child and sexual abuse are social issues that reign supreme (Bock-Jonathan, 2008).

As a reform, OBE promised to improve the quality of education in SA by guaranteeing success for all by developing ownership through decentralised curriculum development, by empowering learners through a learner-centred ethos, by displacing the emphasis on content coverage by outcomes and by making schools more accountable and responsible (Jansen, 1998; Botha, 2002; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Todd & Mason, 2005). However, OBE relies on tenets that are regarded controversial (Botha, 2002) and problematic especially with reference to the status of South African schools (Jansen, 1998). Given the historical and situational constraints, the potential of OBE to enhance learning in South African schools is limited (Todd & Mason, 2005; Vambe 2005). Another concern is the widening gap between privileged and disadvantaged schools (Jansen, 1999; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Todd & Mason, 2005; Vambe, 2005). Mason (1999:140) purports that: Apartheid's legacy is both a desperately under-educated population and a schooling system lying in tatters.

Life Orientation's significance to the broader vision of education in SA is underscored by all the cardinal issues dealt within LO (Rooth, 2005). The phrase LO contains what it intends to do and that is to guide and prepare learners for life and its possibilities. The central theme of LO is life-in-society. Life Orientation concerns itself with the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity and career choices in an attempt to equip "learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society" (DoE, 2002b:4; DoE, 2008).

To face life's challenges LO needs to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet these challenges in an informed, confident and responsible way (DoE, 1997; Jansen, 1998; Botha, 2002; DoE, 2002a; DoE, 2002b; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Hendricks, 2004; Vambe, 2005; Christiaans, 2006). However, LO seems to be beset with problems and complexities that may be normative as part of the transitional period that characterises curriculum change. Nevertheless, a problem that might arise from the initial difficulties in implementing LO may be of a more serious and permanent nature (Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006).

Against this background, it was necessary to investigate the implementation of LO in the SP (Grades 8 & 9).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main problem of the study was to determine the perceptions of LO teachers in the SP regarding the implementation of LO with specific reference to the Learning Outcome, *Physical Development and Movement*, in selected Western Cape high schools.

The following sub-problems were addressed:

- To determine whether schools have qualified PE teachers at their disposal to teach PDM.
- To determine whether the LO teachers in the SP have in-service training needs.
- To determine whether schools have sufficient and suitable facilities and equipment to present PDM.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

A pilot study conducted during 2006 determined the content validity of the self-designed questionnaire used in the current study. The schools were not selected randomly for the pilot study since the researchers relied on Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Postgraduate in Education Certificate (PGCE) students to collect the data during their school visits. The data collected with the pilot study was not used in the current study.

Quantitative and qualitative data captured by the questionnaire typifies the research design of the current study as a survey.

Sample

In the current survey conducted in 2007, 124 secondary schools (Grades 8-11) were randomly selected throughout the Western Cape region. Grade 12 was not included in the current study as LO would only be introduced to Grade 12 in 2008. The official address list of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was used to ensure that the sample was representative. Of the 124 schools, 30 LO teachers in the SP returned questionnaires.

Questionnaire

The LO teachers in the SP had to complete the questionnaire that had four sections. The first related to *demographic information* which mostly focused on the school community. The main section of the questionnaire related to the *curriculum* in which various factors ranging from teaching qualifications to the NCS were covered. The third section related to *extra mural activities* with the focus on the available facilities and the sporting activities presented at the school. In the fourth section, the focus was on *general issues* related to the major problems encountered by LO teachers in the implementation of LO.

Statistical calculation

The Centre for Statistical Consultation of Stellenbosch University performed the statistical calculations. Frequency tables and histograms were used for summary statistics. The data were analysed by Statistica 8.0 (STATSOFT, 2007). In the following sections the results are presented in relation to the four sections of the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Demographic information

Although a random sample of Western Cape high schools was selected the majority of questionnaires returned came from schools that primarily served the Coloured community, followed by the White and Black communities. An equal amount of questionnaires were returned from schools in urban and rural school settings. The main religious denomination found in the schools was Christianity. The size of most schools fell in the range of 500 to 999 learners in total. The average number of learners per class ranged between 30 and 40 in Grade 8 and in Grade 9 it ranged between 40 and 50.

Curriculum information

According to the LO teachers 100% of the schools presented LO as a Learning Area and 100% of the teachers understood the principles of OBE. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the LO teachers indicated that they gained their understanding of the OBE principles through departmental in-service training sessions whereas 20% gained their knowledge of OBE through training at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the LO teachers indicated that all five the Learning Outcomes of LO were presented in the SP.

The LO teachers in the SP had to rate the importance that their schools attached to LO on a five-point Lickert type scale where 1 = least important and 5 = very important. By adding together the percentage value of 4 = important and 5 = very important, hence 30% and 37% respectively, it can be stated that 67% of the LO teachers rated LO as important (Figure 1).

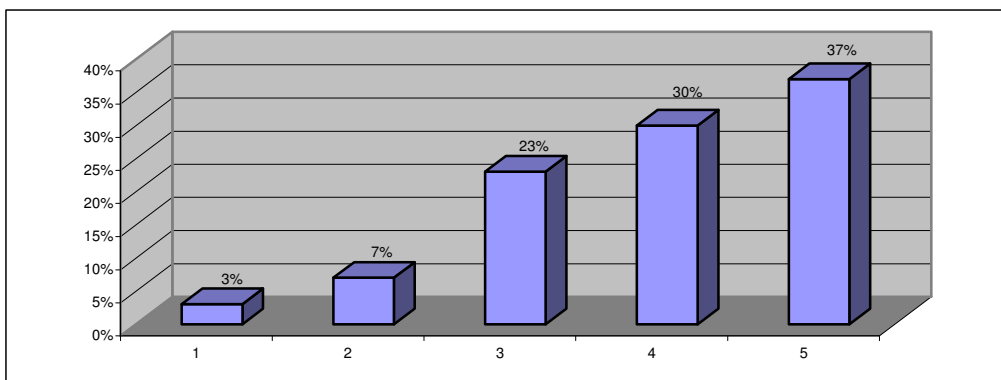


FIGURE 1: IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE SENIOR PHASE

Although 100% of the LO teachers indicated that the schools in the sample presented LO, 93% of the LO teachers indicated that they presented the Learning Outcome *Physical development and Movement* (PDM). In relation to the above-mentioned question a subsequent question was asked to determine whether the LO teachers were qualified PE teachers who could facilitate the Learning Outcome, PDM, or whether someone from “outside” was paid to facilitate it during school hours. The data indicated that 86% of the LO teachers who presented PDM in the SP were not qualified PE teachers (Figure 2). Regarding “outside” persons or organisations, 93% of the teachers indicated that they did not make use of such persons or organisations to present PDM.

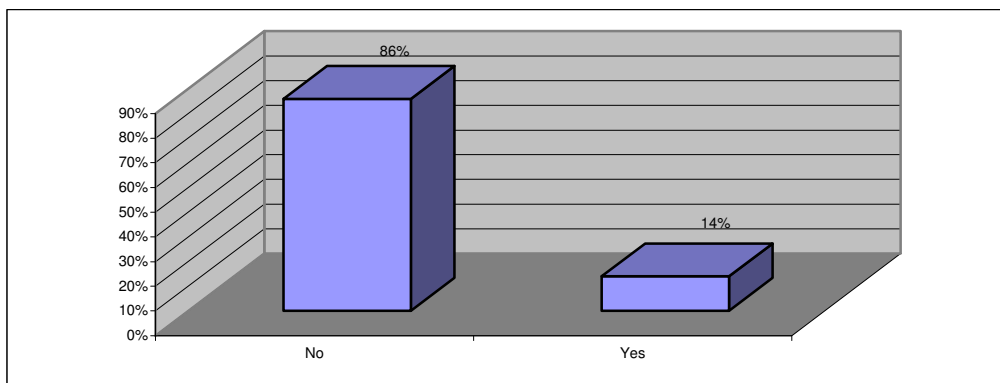


FIGURE 2: LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS QUALIFIED IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The fact that the majority of the LO teachers were not fully qualified to teach LO corresponds with the research done by Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007). By placing teachers in situations where they lack expertise or find themselves outside their league do not only created stressful situations for the teachers, but raise a number of questions for the learners. Learners are able to sense the *incompetence* of unqualified teachers and will question the value attached to LO when presented with unqualified teachers or shifted from one teacher to the next from year to year. According to Rooth (2005) and Christiaans (2006) the epistemology and skills of the teachers who teach a learning area determines the status thereof. For a new Learning Area like LO it is not an ideal situation, especially with the negative baggage of its past constituents.

Rooth (2005) found a range of proficiencies which made it difficult to determine the level of expertise of LO teachers. Although some teachers indicated that they were qualified to teach LO, it seemed that being qualified or a specialist LO teacher had different meanings for different people. Being qualified in LO ranged from attending a three-day HIV and AIDS course, or a two-hour LO workshop, to being an ex-Guidance, ex-Religion, or ex-PE teacher. A reality check, with LO being a new Learning Area within a curriculum in rapid transition, would show that it is unrealistic to expect thoroughly trained and experienced LO teachers in all schools (Rooth, 2005; Prinsloo, 2007).

If learners do not or cannot experience the importance of LO because schools attach little value to it by appointing generalist teachers, how can learners add value to it and their lives?

How can learners face the challenges that offer both problems and possibilities for successful living and learning in the 21st century? (Hendricks, 2004; Rooth, 2005; Theron & Dalzell, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007). This argument is in line with Christiaans's (2006) concern that school principles are not conducive to the successful implementation of LO and with Rooth's (2005) argument that teachers do not have the same conceptualisations of LO. The bottom line is that the importance of LO can only be brought to the fore by a teacher best suited to teach it (Prinsloo, 2007).

According to the LO teachers, integration between the different learning outcomes of LO in the SP took place in 90% of the schools. The LO teachers who indicated that they did not make use of integration had the opportunity to provide reasons in an open-ended section of the question. They stated that LO is viewed as an inferior subject and that teachers are not seeing the bigger picture yet.

In response to a question whether integration took place between LO and the different learning areas in the SP, 86% of the LO teachers indicated that it did take place. Reasons why integration did not take place between LO and the different learning areas in the SP were provided in an open-ended section of the question. The teachers commented that planning for each teacher differs and that they did not have time for it due to their heavy workloads.

The findings regarding integration within LO and between LO and other learning areas is contradictory to the finding that most of the teachers in the sample are not fully qualified in LO. It is doubtful whether these LO teachers are knowledgeable enough about the subject matter of PE to be able to integrate this subject matter with health promotion, social development, personal development and orientation to the world of work, as well as with other learning areas.

Regarding a question whether enough time was allocated to the Learning Outcome, PDM, within the framework of LO, 60% of the teachers indicated that the allocated time was sufficient (Figure 3).

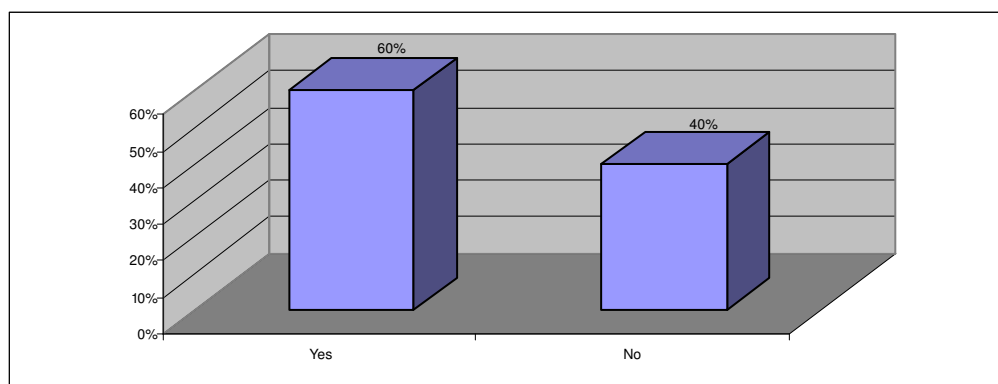


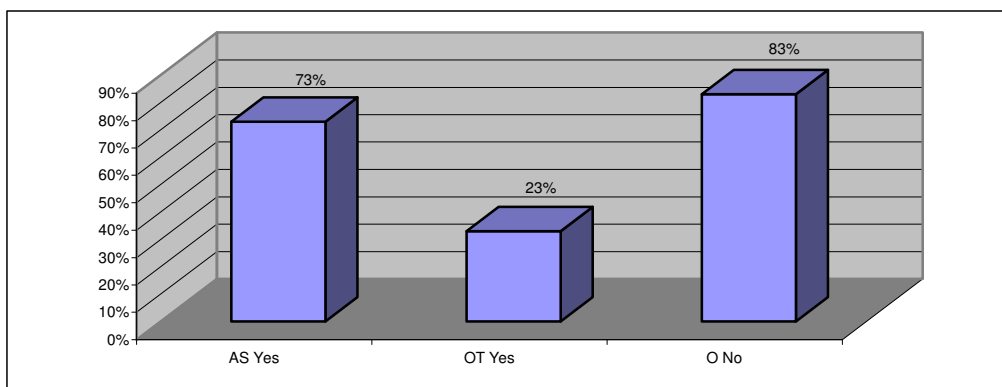
FIGURE 3: TIME ALLOCATED FOR PDM WITHIN LIFE ORIENTATION

The teachers who indicated that the time allocated to the Learning Outcome PDM was insufficient had the opportunity to provide their reasons. These teachers believed that the

periods allotted for LO were not sufficient because it only allows coverage of the theoretical work, that the time provided for physical activity was not enough and that PDM was presented with limited knowledge.

According to the NCS, 30% of the time allocated for LO per week should be set aside for PDM (DoE, 2003). This 30% roughly adds to 40 minutes per week. Regarding the time allocation for PDM within the framework of LO, most of the teachers felt that the time allocation was sufficient. However, Rooth (2005) warned that precise time allocation was not a straightforward factor to ascertain due to the diffuse definitions and understanding of what LO constitutes amongst LO teachers. From some of the comments made by LO teachers in the current study it could be deduced that PE, or PDM was presented with limited knowledge which adds to the confusion regarding sufficient time allocation for LO. The misconception regarding sufficient time on the school timetable for PDM can therefore be ascribed to the fact that the LO teachers in the SP were not knowledgeable regarding the subject matter of PE because the majority of the LO teachers were not qualified in PE. To be able to sufficiently address the growth and development of the child in experiential learning experiences 40 minutes per week is not sufficient.

According to the data, 100% of the teachers made use of themes and sub-themes for presenting the learning outcomes of LO. The teachers had to specify whether the themes or sub-themes were determined according to the assessment standards of the different learning outcomes, whether the teachers developed their own themes or sub-themes, or whether other approaches were followed. The data indicated that 73% of the teachers made use of the assessment standards to determine their themes and sub-themes, while 23% made use of their own themes and sub-themes. In the “other” category of the question 83% of the teachers indicated that they did not make use of other methods (Figure 4).



Note: AS=Assessment Standards; OT=Own Themes; O=Other

FIGURE 4: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES IN LIFE ORIENTATION

In the planning and presentation of LO, teachers did make use of themes and sub-themes that were mostly based on the assessment standards as prescribed by the NCS. The fact that LO teachers did not make use of their own themes creates the impression that once again they were either not qualified or that there was a deficiency in teacher training curricula at HEI's. Teachers should be creative and innovative in designing learning programmes that interest

learners and that are learner friendly. This tendency of LO teachers confirms that they were spoon fed during their pre-service training programmes at HEI's.

Team planning sessions for LO and the presentation thereof in the SP were a reality in 60% of the schools. In an open-ended section of the question, the LO teachers had the opportunity to provide reasons for why they did not make use of team planning sessions and to specify how they structured the team planning sessions if they did make use of them. The reasons for not making use of team planning sessions seemed to be that teachers' individually do their own planning and the lack of qualified LO teachers. The team planning sessions were structured either on a weekly, term or yearly basis. Figure 5 indicates that 61% of the LO teachers knew how to assess PDM.

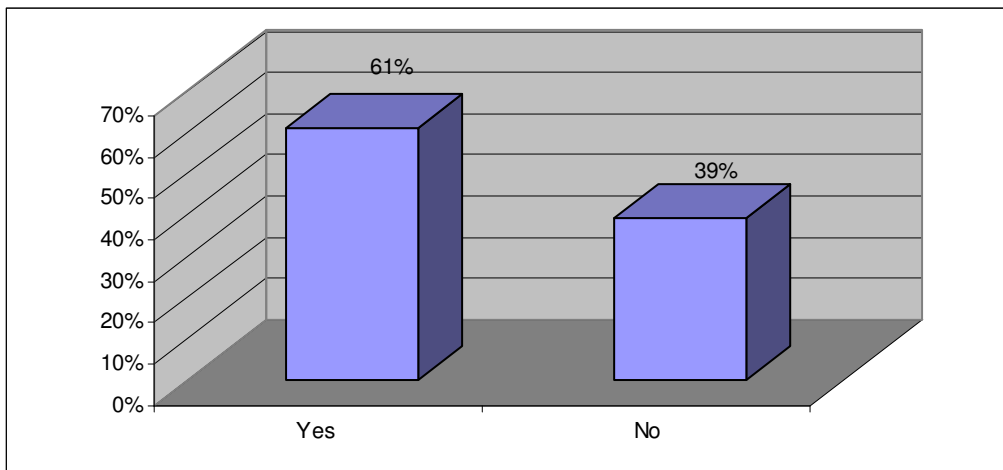
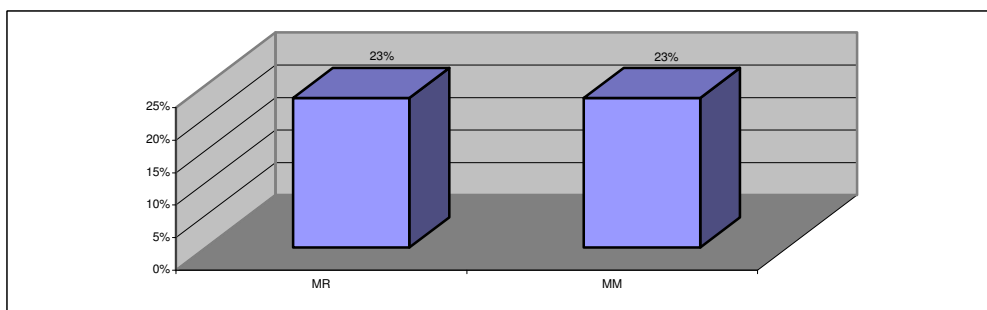


FIGURE 5: ASSESSMENT OF THE MOVEMENT CONTENT OF LIFE ORIENTATION

Regarding the development of movement rubrics and movement matrixes 23% of the LO teachers indicated in both cases that they did not know how to develop these instruments (Figure 6).



Note: MR=Movement Rubrics; MM=Movement Matrixes

FIGURE 6: ASSISTANCE NEEDED IN ASSESSMENT METHODS

Most LO teachers reported that they knew how to assess the movement content of LO and only a few teachers indicated that they did not know how to develop movement rubrics and movement matrixes. This finding is incompatible with the fact that the majority of LO teachers were not qualified in PE. It makes sense that teachers who are not knowledgeable about the subject matter of PE will not be able to assess the different movement forms. However, LO teachers might have been involved in in-service education and training courses presented by the WCED where they were trained how to assess DPM.

In response to a question whether teachers had specific guidelines on how to record and report learner achievement, the data indicated that 96% of the teachers did have such guidelines. According to the data it also seemed as if the learners were presented with feedback regarding their achievements. All the schools (100%) indicated that they provided feedback. Although this finding can be contrary to the finding that the LO teachers were not qualified in PE, these skills that relate to PDM could also have been obtained through in-service education and training programmes provided by the WCED.

Regarding resources (e.g., learning material, text books, computers) to teach LO, 71% of the LO teachers indicated that it was sufficient (Figure 7).

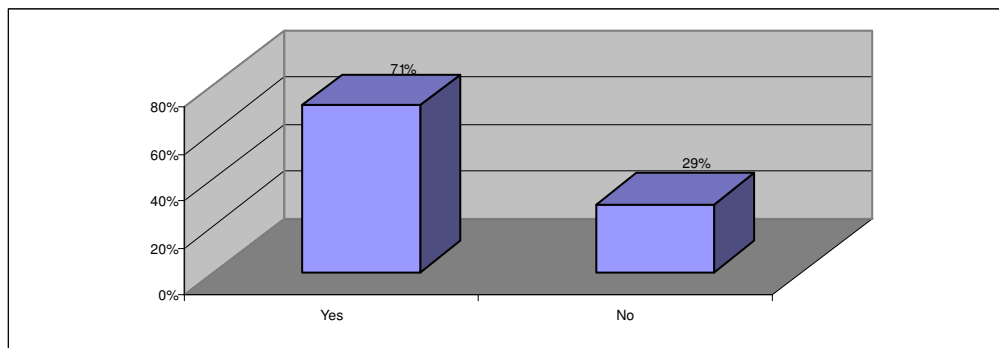


FIGURE 7: RESOURCES TO PRESENT LIFE ORIENTATION

Figure 8 indicates the resource shortcomings and needs needed to teach LO in the SP. In the “other” category the LO teachers indicated the following additional shortcomings and needs: “Insufficient apparatus for PE” and “Equipment”.

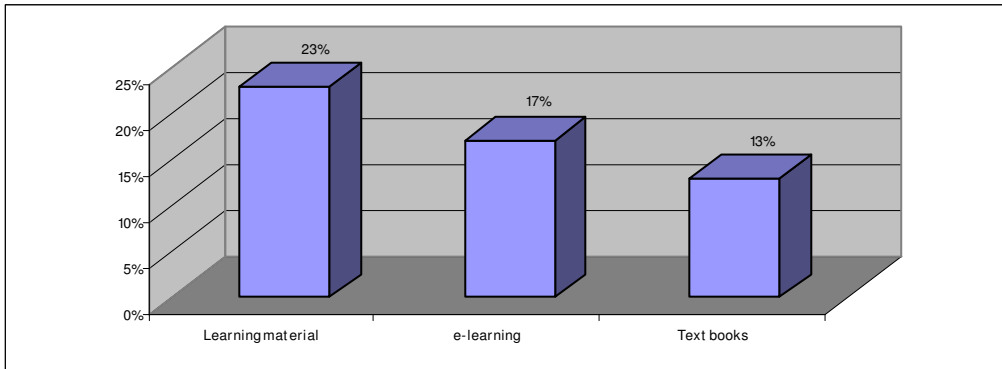


FIGURE 8: SHORTCOMINGS IN RESOURCES TO PRESENT LIFE ORIENTATION

Inclusion in the Learning Outcome PDM was a reality in 60% of the schools, as opposed to 40% who indicated that they did not provide for inclusion (Figure 9).

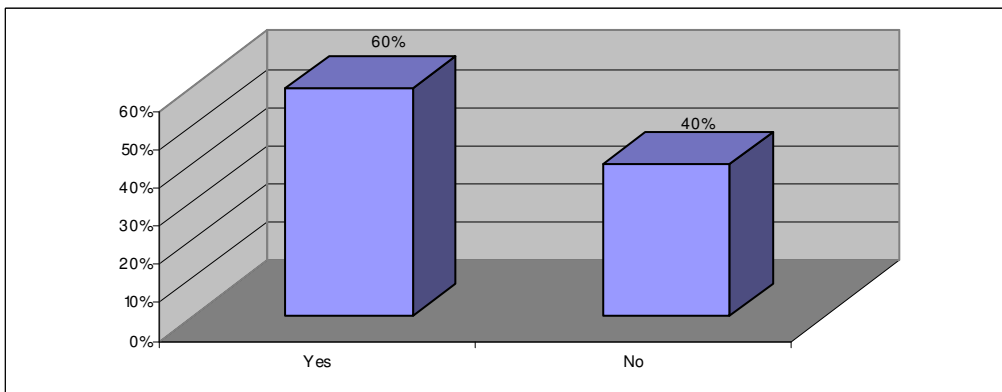


FIGURE 9: INCLUSION IN LIFE ORIENTATION

In an open-ended question, the SP teachers had to specify learners with special needs they encountered in their schools. The following "cases" were reported: "Learners with learning disabilities"; "Obesity"; "Cerebral palsy, ataxia telangiectasia"; and "Learners with physical disabilities". However, the data indicated that 90% of the schools did not employ teachers with special qualifications in the SP to assist learners with special needs in LO.

In response to a question whether LO teachers would be interested in attending an in-service training workshop to learn more about recent developments within LO, 90% reacted positively. This question referred to LO in general and not only PDM. Although this finding correlated with the fact that the majority of teachers were not qualified in PE, it is also true that by nature professional people are inquisitive and would therefore be interested in attending in-service training workshops to learn more about recent developments in LO. In an open-ended question, the teachers could indicate suitable times to attend in-service training workshops. In general, it seemed as if school day afternoons, holidays and weekends were the best times.

In the SP, 83% of the LO teachers indicated that PE, in the “old” format, was not presented in the schools. The schools (17%) who did present PE in the “old” format had to indicate in which grades the status quo was maintained (Figure 10).

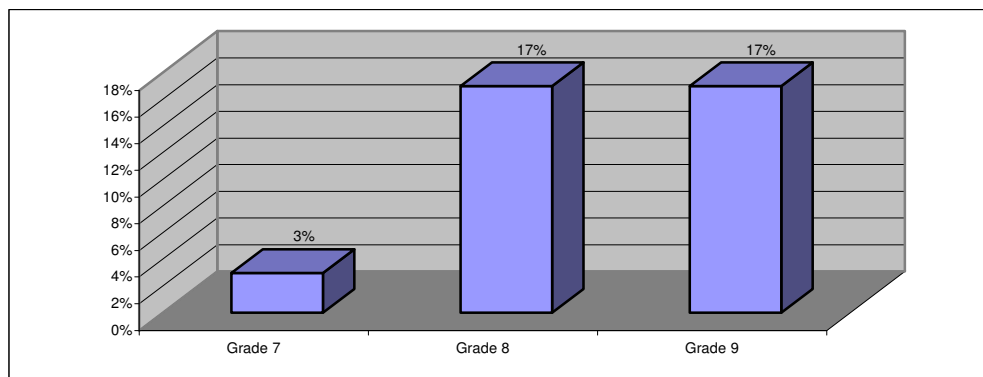


FIGURE 10: GRADES IN WHICH PHYSICAL EDUCATION WAS PRESENTED IN THE “OLD” FORMAT

In an open-ended question the teachers could state how they managed the curriculum with regards to subject matter in the schools where PE was presented in the “old” format. The responses indicated that the prescriptions of the curriculum (NCS) were followed where PE was presented in the “old” format. The LO teachers contradicted themselves because the majority of the LO teachers who indicated that PE was not presented in the “old” format anymore abide to the same curriculum (NCS) as those LO teachers who indicated that they presented PE in the “old” format. This finding again confirms that some LO teachers are not knowledgeable about PE.

Extra mural activities and facilities

In response to an open-ended question related to whether the LO teachers thought that there was a link between the presentation of regular PE classes during formal school time and sport achievement in general amongst learners, the reactions were very positive regarding the educational value of regular participation in physical activity, sport and recreation.

The LO teachers also reacted positively to an open-ended question related to whether achievement in sport was important at their schools. Although the reactions were overwhelmingly positive it must be emphasised that these teachers, although the majority were not qualified PE teachers, emphasised participation in sport and not winning.

Figure 11 contains the first five extra mural sports that were presented at the schools as reported by the LO teachers. They were athletics, rugby, netball, cricket and tennis.

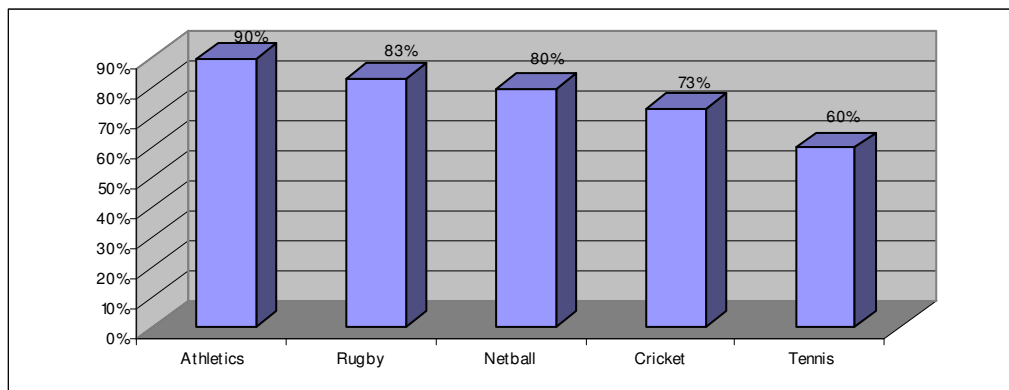


FIGURE 11: EXTRA MURAL SPORT PRESENTED AT THE SCHOOLS

In the open-ended section of the above-mentioned question the LO teachers indicated that the following extra mural activities were also presented: Table tennis; Golf; Chess; Cross country; Water polo; Triathlon; Biathlon; Pentathlon; Squash; Tug-of-war; and Darts.

In response to a question whether the schools had sufficient facilities and equipment to present PE, sport and recreation, 72% of the LO teachers reacted negatively. However, LO teachers listed the following facilities, amongst others, to present PE, sport and recreation. The first five facilities listed were a netball court, a hall, an open space outside, a rugby field and a tennis court (Figure 12).

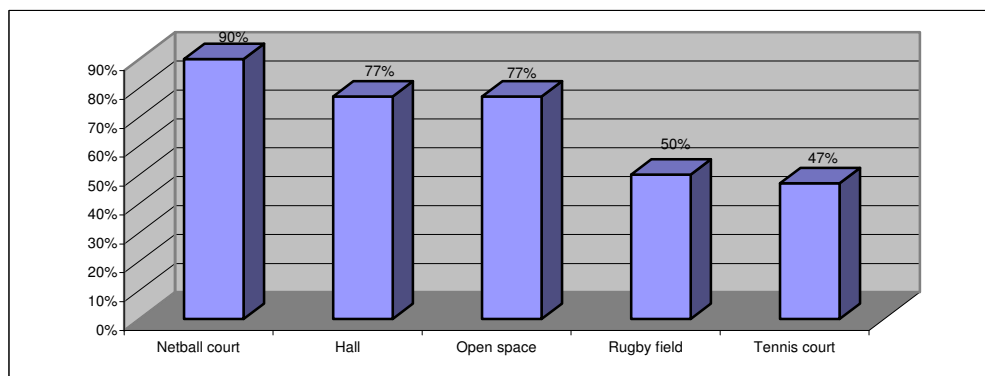


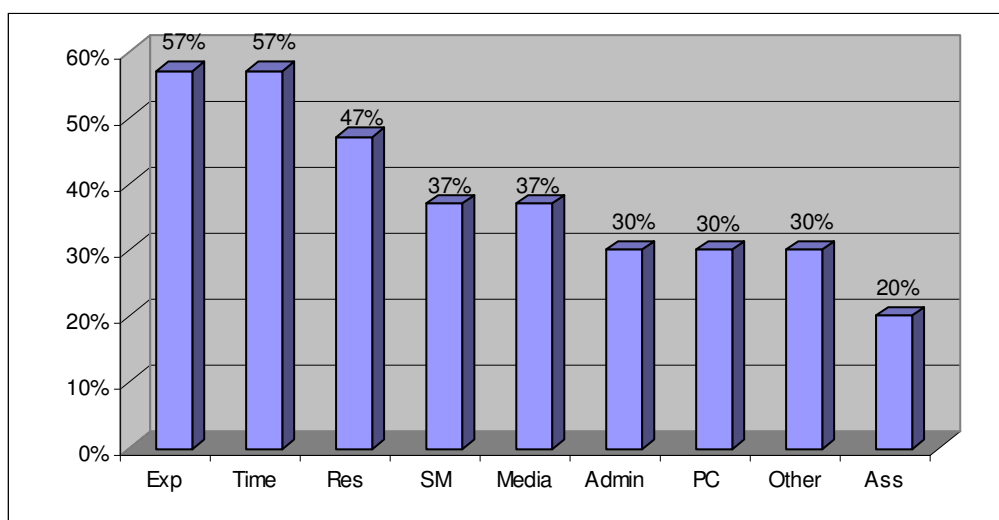
FIGURE 12: FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT THE SCHOOLS

In the open-ended section of the above-mentioned question the LO teachers indicated that their schools also had the following facilities: “Athletics equipment and athletics field and arena”; “Shooting range – currently not in use”; and “A Gymnasium”.

The response to a question related to where learners go to participate when schools did not present sports as extra mural activities, 20% of the LO teachers indicated that the learners had to fend for themselves, 13% indicated that they participated in sports at community centres, while 10% indicated that learners participated in sports at other schools.

General issues

In Figure 13 it is clear that the major problems encountered with the implementation and presentation of LO in the SP were: experts in LO (57%); time on the timetable (57%); resources (47%); subject material (37%); media (37%); administration (30%); computers (30%); and “other” (30%) (e.g., “apparatus for sport such as hurdles”; “time for assessment is not sufficient”; “Learners in Grade 8 cannot do basic movements e.g. forward roll and handstand. I would rather teach them general gymnastics with music or rhythmic gymnastics”; “We have two coaches from an outside organisation, but they are not helpful because we are on our own knowing nothing about sport. We would like to have training on sport so that we can give learners different games”) and in 20% of the schools it is assessment.



Note: Exp=Experts in LO; Time=time on the timetable; Res=Resources; SM=Subject matter; Admin=Administration; PC=Computers; Other=anything else; Ass=Assessment

FIGURE 13: PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIFE ORIENTATION

The responses to an open-ended question related to the extent that religion had impacted on participation in PDM classes and extramural sporting activities, the LO teachers made the following comments: “Very little. Only in cases of Islam children who are not allowed to participate on certain days”; and “Muslims – during Ramadaan fast, but not otherwise”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If LO is regarded as an important Learning Area in the NCS, as postulated by the DoE (DoE, 2002b), Hendricks (2004), Rooth (2005), Theron and Dalzell (2006), Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) and Prinsloo (2007), actions need to be taken to address the current situation regarding specialists to present LO. The research of Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Van der Walt and De Klerk (2006) support the fact that the state and status of a learning area depends very much on the teachers that present it and how it is managed by school management.

The introduction to this article it stated that due to the imbalances of the past most communities within SA are classified as being at-risk (Bock-Jonathan, 2008). Another concern is the widening gap between privileged and disadvantaged schools (Jansen, 1999; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Todd & Mason, 2005; Vambe, 2005). If LO aims to equip learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society as claimed by the NCS, then the at-risk nature of contemporary South African youth should be addressed (DoE, 2002b; DoE, 2003). Another factor during early adolescence is that the majority of boys and girls in this time zone are characterised by certain developmental traits and tasks unique to their gender. As with at-risk factors, physical growth and development at schools should be and can only be addressed through LO.

The following recommendations are presented:

- The DoE should immediately address the state and status of LO as a Learning Area in the GET. This is of utmost importance for the health of the youth as well as the future of school and adult sport in SA since the Learning Outcome PDM can be a “breeding-ground” for talent identification.
- The situation regarding specialist LO teachers in the SP needs to be addressed urgently and the authority responsible for education in SA, the DoE, should take the lead in this regard.
- The DoE should initiate actions regarding in-service education and training (INSET) as well as pre-service education and training (PRESET) programmes.
- The DoE should identify service providers who could assist them in this massive task.
- Higher Education Institutions could and should play a major role in these initiatives.
- Higher Education Institutions should become more involved in INSET as part of their community interaction strategy.
- Regarding the PRESET of prospective teachers, HEI’s should be more flexible regarding the undergraduate programmes that they present. In certain instances these programmes are so fixed that it is impossible for students to have the necessary modules at graduate level in order to present at least two school subjects in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education. In certain instances students who really want to teach are kept out of the profession due to this reason.
- It is not business as usual anymore. Doing PE the old way does not fit into the new educational system anymore. Regarding teacher training HEI's need to adapt.
- To have a real impact more time per week should be allocated to the Learning Outcome, PDM. Only then will learners be able to realise the benefits associated with regular exercise.

It is unfortunate to purport that the DoE does not have the capacity to deal with the situation regarding appropriately qualified teachers for LO in all the grades of the NCS alone. Various factors, such as politics and finances, could have hampered the process of training existing teachers to become specialised in teaching all the learning outcomes of LO. It must, however, be stated that at the beginning of 2008 INSET workshops were held for LO Learning Area Advisors country wide. This should be the first step in the right direction to correct the wrongs of the recent past. However, the process should be taken a step further by providing INSET for all teachers involved in LO. In this regard the following anonymous quote speaks volumes: If you can solve the education problem you do not have to do anything else. If you do not solve it nothing is going to matter all that much.

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