LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE (GRADES R-3):
A SURVEY IN SELECTED WESTERN CAPE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of South Africa (SA) has been in place for 11 years. Therefore it was deemed necessary to conduct an investigation into the situation of Life Orientation (LO), a new Learning Area in the NCS. As a reform, the NCS promised to improve the quality of education for all in SA. Seeing that the early childhood years are so important for the development of fundamental motor skills, the focus of this article will be on the Foundation Phase (FP [Grades R-3]) in the General Education and Training Band (GET). Since Physical Education (PE) resides within LO, the scope of the investigation is aimed at LO. The main problem was to determine the experiences of LO teachers regarding the implementation of LO and particularly the Learning Outcome, Physical Development and Movement (PDM) in the FP in selected primary schools in the Western Cape, a province in SA. Quantitative data captured by a questionnaire typifies the research design as a survey. Primary schools (N=124) were randomly selected of which 50 FP teachers (N=50) returned questionnaires. Summary statistics using frequency tables and histograms were utilised. The data were analysed by using Statistica 8.0 (STATSOFT, 2007). According to the data it seemed as if most aspects as stipulated in the NCS were attended to by FP teachers. However, the majority of FP teachers were not qualified to present PE which could impact negatively on the status of LO, and more specifically, have major consequences for the growth and development of the FP 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 FP. 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; Foundation phase; Life orientation; Physical development and movement; Teacher training.