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**Curriculum Reform and Life Orientation Education
in Post-Apartheid South Africa.**

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the education reform and to introduce Life Orientation education in South Africa. The study is based on a literature review. In the study three historical periods are considered, the pre-apartheid (1652-1948), apartheid (1948-1994) and post-apartheid (1994-).

During the pre-apartheid period the Dutch settlers introduced schooling and it expanded through the involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church and missionaries from other churches and countries. Under apartheid, education was provided on the basis of racial categorisation. After the fall of apartheid, inclusive, outcomes-based and democratic education was introduced.

Education reforms, new policies and new curricula have been introduced in post-apartheid South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement was introduced in 1997 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2002. These curricula introduced Life Orientation education.

The nine years compulsory school education in South Africa is divided into three phases: Foundation Phase (Grades R[1]-3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and Senior Phase (Grades 7-9). My focus will be on the Foundation Phase. In the Foundation Phase learners attend three learning programmes, Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. Life Orientation is the main learning area within Life Skills. This study is on the social development aspect of Life Orientation, which expect learners '…to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions' (DoE[2] 2002).

The amount of time allocated for the three areas of learning was 25% each in 1997. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement of 2002, time for Life Skills remained as it was while Literacy and Numeracy increased from 25% to 40% and 35% respectively. The curricula did not give sufficient place for learners to have an influence and for parents to participate. In the classification of society the concept class is not used. Equal opportunity without racial, ethnic, gender, etc discrimination is emphasised, but schools are contributing to re-production of inequality.

Key Words: Curriculum Reform, Life Orientation & Post-Apartheid South Africa.

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[1] Reception Year
[2] Department of Education

I. Introduction

The South African education system has through the years undergone changes that are vital to understanding the present situation. Looking back to investigate what happened, how it happened and what forces played a vital role in the development and changes of the education system is an eye opener for looking at the present situation. In order to give a glimpse of this development I will first consider two historical periods: the pre-apartheid and apartheid periods. Then I will proceed to look at the post-apartheid period education reform and at the end I will consider the main part of my study, which is Life Orientation education.

In dealing with post-apartheid education reform and Life Orientation education I will use some elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992, 2001, 2003).

Pre-apartheid Education

The present South African education system has its roots in two historical periods' and two colonial powers' educational thinking. The two periods were colonialism and apartheid, and the two colonial powers were first the Dutch and then the British.

After the arrival of the European settlers in the Cape in 1652 there were not many schools, and most of the white children did not attend school. For those who attended school the main focus was on teaching them doctrine, prayers, and readings from the Bible. Very few acquired reading, writing and arithmetic skills (Christie 1986).

Pam Christie adapted a quotation from a book written by a historian called Horrell in 1970 about the first school for slaves in the Cape. This quotation is from the dairy of Van Riebeeck who was the Governor of the Cape and was written on 17 April 1658.

> Began holding school for the young slaves. To stimulate the slaves to attention while at school, and to induce them to learn the Christian prayers, they were promised each a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco, when they finish their task. (Christie 1986: 32)

Following this quotation Christie continues as follows:

> In 1663 a second school was opened. This school was attended by 12 white children, four slaves and one Khoi. It is interesting to see that these first schools were not segregated along the lines of colour. Segregation was introduced quite soon, but at this time lower class whites, slaves and Khoi often attended the same schools. (Christie 1986: 33)

The Dutch Reformed Church (Calvinists) laid the base for modern education in South Africa. The missionaries from this church provided education mainly for the local population that was converted to Christianity. This situation according to some writers created a division among the local population and contributed to the formation of one white upper class, the converts and the ordinary local population (Mandew 2000). In addition to converting the local population to Christianity, the missionaries trained people in the Western way of life, by orienting them to be disciplined workers so as to prepare them to be manual labourers on

farms or in industry. The British who occupied a large part of South Africa after 1806 challenged the school system controlled by the Dutch Reformed Church. The administration that understood the role of the missionaries wanted to control the local population through these missionaries and started to provide them with financial aid starting from 1841 (Christie 1986: 36).

The British view on education is presented as follows by Christie:

> The British authorities paid far more attention to education than the Dutch had done. They wanted to use education as a way of spreading their language and traditions in the colony – and also as a means of social control. They declared English to be the official language, and they attempted to anglicise the church, the government offices and the schools. They set up a number of schools in the British tradition, and they brought over teachers from Britain. In 1839 they set up a proper Department of Education, and also gave financial help to local schools. (Christie 1986: 34)

Resistance by the Dutch and the struggle of the British to anglicise the school system culminated a century later with an education act in 1910 that put the Dutch and English on an equal footing making schools bilingual (The Encyclopaedia of Education vol.8, 1971).

Education under apartheid

During the apartheid years from 1948 to 1994 the education system was based on racial segregation. The Bantu Education Act (1953) and the Extension of University Act (1959) for

the establishing of ethnic universities were the national laws on education for the African population. The two laws were followed by Coloured Persons Education Act (1963), Indian Education Act (1965), and the National Education Policy Act (1967) for defining the white education system (Ashley 1989).

The rational for the division of schooling in groups were explained by a government memorandum of October 1981.

> The government reaffirms that, in terms of its policy that each population group should also have its own schools, it is essential that each population group should also have its own education authority/department. (Ashley 1989: 15)

In the same book, Ashley translates an explanation about the Christian National Education (CNE), which was the educational policy of apartheid. The explanation was given by J C van Rooy, Chairman of the Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurvereniginge (FAK).

> Our Afrikaans schools must not only be mother-tongue schools; they must be in every sense of the word Christian and National schools, they must be places where our children are steeped and nourished in the Christian National spiritual culture of our nation. We want no language mixing, no cultural mixing, no religious mixing nor racial mixing. (Ashley 1989: 8)

The best education was provided for white ruling class children, while the coloured, Asians and the local population were given an education of an inferior quality. Bad infrastructure, a

large number of children per class, less qualified teachers and low resources characterised the system (Abdi 1999, Enslin 2003).

As was mentioned earlier, Bantu education was introduced by the school act in 1953 to keep the local population at a low level of education, which would only enable them to work as manual labourers (Abdi 1999). Bantu education was common for the farm schools. On different occasions persons supporting apartheid expressed their views that it was necessary to limit the education of the local population to the level that would only allow them to be employed as manual labourers (Christie 1986).

Following the 1976 student protests in Soweto the apartheid system started to realise that the exclusionary education system was not acceptable and would possibly lead to more trouble. Due to this internal trouble and international pressure against it, the government started to undertake more reforms in the 1980s (Jansen 1990).

II. The Post-Apartheid Education Reform

There are specific motives for undertaking education reform in different countries depending on the given period and specific situation. For example, in Greece local and international changes in the 1990s (Georgiadis 2007), in China the economic reform (Wang and Zhou 2000) and in Portugal the political transformations since the mid 1970s (Sousa 2000) all required education reforms; also for Hong Kong the need for an increase in the general quality of education in the 1990s (Bodycott, Coniam, Dowson and Walker 2000), for Singapore developing further its technical education and training (Yek and Penny 2006) and

for Egypt the introduction of new educational technologies (Warschauer 2003) lead to reforms; further the promoting of racial equity in the US (Lee 2001), and increasing of educational opportunities for all in Cambodia (Dy and Ninomiya 2003), etc. have lead to reforms. In Sweden in the 1990s, the need for restructuring, participatory governance, de-regulating and de-centralisation lead to reform actions (Lundgren & Forsberg, in Hoppers et al. 2007). All these examples illustrate some of the various reasons for educational reforms.

The negotiated transition from the apartheid to a democratic system made it necessary and possible for the new education system to emerge, an education system which views all citizens equally, which strives for inclusion rather than exclusion, integration rather than separation. In addition to a change in principle the administrative structure of education also changed. In the new system an educational policy declaration was given to the central government, while detailed interpretation and implementation was left to the nine newly evolved provinces.

The transition clearly declared the move from a race based education system that focused on content to an Outcome Based Education system. According to its proponents the Outcome Based Education is learner centred and tries to develop critical, investigative, creative, problem solving, communicative and future oriented citizens (South African Ministry of Education cited in Mazabow 2003).

Soudien and Baxen (1997) considered Benjamin Bloom's mastery learning, which emphasised that all learners can master their desired outcomes, as a source of Outcomes Based Education and presented their doubts about its successful implementation in the reality of today's South African. As for Jansen, Outcome Based Education is used in different parts

of the world. According to him the "competency debates" in Australia and New Zealand and the discussion on this subject in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) lead to its introduction in to the education sector in South Africa. It also changed its name from competency-based education to Outcome Based Education (Jansen 1998). Jansen believed that the less democratic nature of deciding outcomes in advance, lack of "commitment to combating racism and sexism", the focus on outcomes rather than on process, avoidance of defining contents of outcomes, lack of sufficient knowledge of what happens in schools, lack of well trained teachers and the administrative burden they are given, etc. could contribute to the failure of Outcome Based Education in South Africa (Jansen 1998).

Others view the introduction of Outcome Based Education as just a hasty movement towards something new. They primarily argue that there is no sufficient research on the objective reality of the country so as to establish whether OBE is a good preference. They even extend their criticism towards the government by saying it is pretending to create an image of basing its education on the thinking behind Western schooling and giving the impression of considering international experiences (Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani 2002).

After the fall of apartheid (beginning from 1990), in the constitution of the country education was given a vital place and different policy and curriculum documents were made official at different times. These documents focused on general education and in some of them specific emphasis was given to the values of the society. These values are presented in a document called "Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy" as being: democracy; social justice and equity; non-racism and non-sexism; ubuntu (human dignity); an open society; accountability (responsibility); the rule of law; respect and reconciliation (DoE 2001). These democratic values are supposed to be reflected in the whole educational system.

Before the system change started in 1991 a committee of heads of education departments came up with a discussion document called "A curriculum Model For Education In South Africa" (1991). In 1994 the ANC Educational Department presented a draft proposal of a policy framework. This proposal for general education provided subjects that could be included in the future curriculum saying '…Subjects in the core school curriculum will include: two or more South African languages, mathematics, science and technology, studies of society, art, music and drama, physical education, and Life skills' (ANC 1994).

At the end of 1995 the National Curriculum Development Committee (NCDC) released the first draft document, "Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training". In 1996 came another draft, according to its producers, with the comment by 'All interested parties – individuals and collective-…' (Curriculum Development Working Group 1996).

In 1997 the first post apartheid National Curriculum Statement (NCS), with the focus on eight learning areas came about. It is the first common curriculum with the aim of introducing the new approach of education and the transformed values of the society. Five years later it was reviewed to simplify the language use, to minimise categories included and to provide clearer guidelines for teachers. The result of this work is the Revised National Curriculum Statement of 2002. This is the latest curriculum still in use in South Africa.

The various documents mentioned above used different terminologies and expressions for phases in schools, the areas of learning and for the contents of Life Orientation. For example, the 1996 document used "Birth to grade 3" or "Grade R-3" for Foundation Phase, while later

documents frequently used only "Grade R-3". The nine years compulsory education was in the 1991 document divided in to Junior Primary, Senior Primary and Junior Secondary, while the 1997 and 2002 documents categorised them as Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase.

The names of subjects supposed to be given in schools also varied from document to document during the different years. The following table (lists are given in a rearranged order) shows some changes in names.

table 1 Names of "Field of study", "Subject" or "Learning Area".

Year	1991	1994	1996	1997	2002
Title	Field of Study	Subject Areas	Core Learning Area	The Eight Learning Areas	Learning Areas
	Languages	Languages	Communication, Literacy, language learning	Language, Literacy and Communication	Languages
	Mathematics	Mathematics	Numeracy and Mathematics	Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences	Mathematics
	Natural sciences	--------[3]	Physical and Natural Sciences	Natural Sciences	Natural Sciences
	Social Sciences	Studies of society	Human and Social Sciences	Human and Social sciences	Social Sciences
	Arts	Art, Music and Drama	Arts and Culture	Art and Culture	Arts and Culture
	Technology	Science and Technology	Technological Sciences	Technology	Technology
	Life style Education	*Life skills*	*Life Orientation, Person and Social Development*	*Life Orientation*	*Life Orientation*
	--------	--------	Economic and Management Sciences[4]	Economic and Management Sciences	Economic and Management Sciences

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[3] Instead of Natural Sciences, Science and Technology is proposed.
[4] This subject is absent in the documents from 1991 and 1994.

	--------	Physical Education[5]	--------	--------	--------

In the table above we can see the different use of names changing from time to time. Life Orientation was called Life Style Education, Life Skills (mainly for the early childhood phase), Life Orientation, Person and Social Development. In addition to the name change different components are included at different times. The 1991 proposal of Life Style Education for the first nine years of schooling includes, "Religious Instruction, Guidance, Economic Education, Physical Education" (Committee of Heads of Education Departments 1991).

III. The Revised National Curriculum

To be able to give an over-view of the process of the curriculum revision, I want to present a summary of an article by a South African academic who participated in this process.

> This paper explores the social construction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-9) in South Africa between 2000-2002. The author, a participant in the process, uses the experience of the insider to tell the story. The paper discusses the relationship of different lobbies, voices, and interests to the curriculum, and argues that a neat translation between interests and curriculum outcomes is not possible, but that the echoes of struggles, which take both a material and symbolic form, are evident within the final version. The paper describes the influences of a vocational lobby, environmental and history

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[5] Physical Education appears as a main subject only in the 1994 document.

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interest groups, university-based intellectuals and non-governmental

organizations, teachers' unions, and the Christian Right. It contends that there

was no neat alignment of interests; they were sometimes internally fractured and

alliances were unstable over time. (Chisholm 2005: 193)

Linda Chisholm tells us in the above summary that the Revised National Curriculum

statement is a product of a process that took two years. She indicates the struggle of different

lobbies, interest groups, organisations, unions, intellectuals and religious faiths that are

involved in an attempt to influence the curriculum. In addition to the government appointed

experts and the different groupings mentioned earlier, I wonder what other minor groupings

are involved? Are student unions involved? Did other faiths than the "Christian Right"

showed interest in this process? One more interesting question is what was the "history

interest group" advocating? Whose history did they want to be included in the curriculum?

The Revised National Curriculum Statement is compiled as a single summarised document

and also as a separate document for eight Learning Areas. In each learning area document, the

introduction part deals with the general curriculum. In the introduction the main title is

"Introducing the National Curriculum Statement", which is sub-divided into:

- Outcomes-based Education.

- Revised National Curriculum Statement: Learning Area Statements.

- Revised National Curriculum Statement: Learning Programmes.

- Time Allocations.

- Assessment.

- The Kind of Teacher that is Envisaged.

- The Kind of Learner that is Envisaged.

In dealing with this part it is important to look into the macro and micro level discourse practice, texts and intertextuality. Considering notions of social events, social practices and social structures (Fairclough 1992, 2001, 2003) will be helpful for analysing some parts of the Revised National Curriculum. In dealing with these texts I will consider both their language formations and the social activities around them.

I chose four extracts from the introduction part of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for further analysis. The extracts were chosen because of their informative value on the ideological bases of the society, their indication of who the actors are in the education system, what is expected of actors, at what level they are supposed to act, and implications of the envisaged future society.

Extract 1

'The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides the basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. The Preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to:

■ heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
■ improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
■ lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and

■ build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations' (DoE 2002:1).

The preamble of the constitution, which is presented in the Revised National Curriculum Statement, shows the importance given to its role for '… curriculum transformation and development…'. This indicates the need for the changes to be made to the old curriculum and the development of the new.

The extract shows a vision for a new democratic social structure, with the help of new social practices for achieving a better future. The indication of the text, 'heal the divisions of the past…' and 'improve the quality of life of all citizens…' gives us a picture of situations created by the old colonial and apartheid regimes of the country. The divisions indicated are referring to the apartheid's system of categorising people by the colour of their skin. As a result of apartheid the majority of citizens saw little of the economic well-being of the society and lived in poverty and therefore needed to attain a better quality of life.

- '… establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;'
- '…free the potential of each person;'
- 'lay the foundations for a democratic and open society… government is based on the will of the people… every citizen is equally protected by law…'
- 'build a united and democratic South Africa… able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations'.

The above pieces from the abstract show that the future society is based on values different from apartheid; the government is supposed to work on helping "each person" to realise its potential. The focus here is on "each person" instead of apartheid's grouping of people by the colour of their skin. It is also indicated that it is the people who elect their government and the law of the country will give protection to all citizens.

Under apartheid South Africa was divided in to homelands and different discriminative administrative units. This new policy will work towards unity. For years the country was isolated from the international community due to its apartheid policy until the 1990s when it started joining the "family of nations".

The actors indicated in these processes are each person, every citizen, people, society, and government. South Africa is presented as a context for different actions and the family of nations as a future common union to join.

In general the ideological motive is to do away with the negative apartheid and oppressive and divisive system. The focus is on forming a new egalitarian society based on equality and opportunity for all individuals.

Extract 2

'Issues such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability and challenges such as HIV/AIDS all influence the degree and way in which learners can participate in schooling. The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) adopts an inclusive

approach by specifying the minimum requirements for all learners. All the Learning Area Statements try to create an awareness of the relationship between social justices, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity. Learners are also encouraged to develop knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of this country, including the cultural, religious and ethnic components of this diversity'. (DoE 2002:2)

Some major problems facing the country including the education system are divided into "issues" and "challenges". It is said that '…poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability and … HIV/AIDS…' are considered to affect the learning process of students. The curriculum puts an emphasis on inclusion and not leaving out learners due to the different conditions indicated above.

'…try to create an awareness of the relationship between social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity…to develop knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of this country, including the cultural, religious and ethnic components of this diversity'.

The extract above indicates the attempts to be made to ensure learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities as well as the relations between different parts of these rights and responsibilities. As South Africa is characterised by diversity some people call it a "rainbow" nation. The curriculum and the education system are supposed to strive to make learners know and understand the diversity of their society, the "rainbow" nation.

Extract 3

The Kind of Teacher that is Envisaged

'All teachers and other educators are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. This Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) envisions teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. They will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators. These include being mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and Learning Area or Phase specialists'.(DoE 2002:3)

Teachers are considered in a plural form as a group in the text while learners are addressed in the singular. Teachers are expected to be '…qualified, competent, dedicated and caring'. In addition to that teachers are required to take additional roles as '…mediators, interpreters and designers… leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors… specialists'.

Some of the teacher's roles are quite difficult to understand, such as "community members" and "pastors". Being "community members" could be interpreted as persons with ample knowledge of their community and "pastors" as responsible leaders. But the general expectation is that teachers have to play an active role.

Extract 4

The Kind of Learner that is Envisaged

'The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be

inspired by these values, and who will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen'. (DoE 2002:3)

The learner's '…personal development, … ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education…' are considered important. This as indicated earlier shows a divergence from the apartheid period focus on race to the new systems focus on the individual learner.

The learner is, supposed to be '…inspired by … values, …act in the interests of a society … respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice'. In addition to the above, 'The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen'.

The learner is expected to be 'inspired by values…', 'respect…the environment…' and '...participate in society…'. They are also supposed to be shaped by the curriculum, and the '…curriculum seeks to create…' them. Even if the curriculum is supposed to create '…a critical and active citizen', in general the learner is assigned to play a less active role compared to the teacher.

There are some elements that are not visible in the documents I considered for this work.

One important element absent from the process of curriculum development through to the curriculum document is the learner's participation. Learners unions or any other learner interest groups are not mentioned in the curriculum development process. The curriculum also does not clearly indicate how learners can influence and cooperate with their teachers in their learning process.

The second important element that is not visible in the text is parent participation. Even if this could be available in other documents, it is not given sufficient place in this document.

The third element I missed in this text is the concept of class. In the second extract while the concepts of race, gender, age, etc are included, class is missing. In a society where there are clear gaps of socio-economic status, it is doubtful if only the concepts mentioned in the curriculum are sufficient to explain the reality of the society.

The South African constitution as well as the Revised National Curriculum Statement are visualising a future prosperous and egalitarian society in which the school is supposed to play the major role. But there are indications due to gaps created in the economic and social sectors that there are problems in providing equal opportunity for all learners.

The Economist in its July 15, 2006 edition reviewed the South African business companies spreading in Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe (The Economist 2006: 55-56). This is happening as a result of the lifting of the embargo on the country. The economy is doing well, but the question is, is how the situation is for the underprivileged sector of the society. The vice-chancellor of Rhodes University, Saleem Badat, was quoted in a South African newspaper in September 2007 as follows:

In a scathing attack on domestic economic and political trends, Badat said that after 13 years of democracy South Africa was still "one of the most unequal and unjust societies on earth, in terms of disparities in wealth, income, living conditions, and access and opportunities to education, social services and health care".

Quoting from the presidency's indictors mid-term review released in June, he said social grants provided for 12 million citizens and new jobs created had been "insufficient to overcome widening income inequality".

Income for the poorest 20 % of people had dropped since 1994 from 2% to 1.7 %, while income for the richest 20 % had risen from 72% to 72.5 %, he said.

A shocking 43% of south Africans lived on an income of less than R3,000 a year.

Rape and abuse of women in South Africa was a "pervasive, morbid till that destroys innumerable lives and wreaks havoc in our country"…. (The Herald September 25, 2007).

The above indicates some general difficulties of the society and also the education system. Crain Soudien, in a chapter in a book called "Changing Classes", indicates a "migrating" of learners from formerly black schools to formerly Indian and coloured schools and from these two types of schools to formerly white schools (Chisholm et al 2004: 99). But there is no

"migration" to the formerly black schools. This could be due to the location of these schools in socially difficult areas as well as the low quality of the education and poor facilities.

A comparison between the vision and the achieved implementation results shows quite a gap. The ambition of achieving economic and social justice, equality of races, gender, etc., needs further review of the implementation process.

IV. Life Orientation Education

To be able to strengthen the future democratic South Africa and to enable coexistence of a society with a lot of diversity, Life Orientation was introduced as a learning area in 1997. This is one of the main eight areas of learning introduced by the new school curriculum (Chisholm 2005). According to Edna Rooth, Life Orientation constitutes, '…what was previously known as guidance, vocational instruction, life skills education, health education, physical education, aspects of environmental education, religious instruction (now religion education) and citizenship education…'. (Rooth 2005: 11)

In the Foundation Phase of the National Curriculum Statement of 1997, the following eight expected outcomes of Life Orientation are given:

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

4. Demonstrate value and respect for human rights as reflected in Ubuntu and other similar philosophies.

5. Practice acquired life and decision-making skills.

6. Assess career and other opportunities and set goals that will enable them to make the best use of their potential and talents.

7. Demonstrate the values and attitudes necessary for a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

8. Evaluate and participate in activities that demonstrate effective human movement and development (DoE 1997 LO[6] 3-4).

These performances of the specific outcomes are checked through Assessment Criteria, Range Statements and Performance indicators.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-9) from 2002 defines this area of learning as follows:

> The Life Orientation Learning Area is central to the holistic development of learners. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners, and with the way in which these facets are interrelated. The focus is the development of self-in-society. The Learning Areas vision of individual growth is part of an effort to create a democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life. (Department of Education 2002: 4)

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[6] Life Orientation

The subject is given throughout the school system from preschool to high school. Post-apartheid South Africa has adopted a law for nine years obligatory school for children between the ages of 7-15. These school years are divided into three phases as it was mentioned earlier, "Foundation Phase (Grades R-3)", "Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6)" and "Senior Phase (Grades 7-9)". Grade R in the foundation phase is not obligatory. In the "Foundation" and "Intermediate" phases, Life Orientation education has four components: health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movements. The "Senior" phase includes one more component called, orientation to the world of work (Department of Education 2002, 2003).

In South African schools the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) provides three learning programmes: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. The learning programme Literacy focuses on learning area language, Numeracy on mathematics and Life Skills on life orientation. In addition to Life Orientation other learning areas (arts and culture, social sciences, economic and management sciences, natural sciences and technology) are integrated into Life Skills. The learning areas have specific outcomes and assessment standards. In this foundation phase the teacher is expected to go over the border of different learning programmes, learning areas and outcomes to integrate them with each other. This means while discussing numeracy the teacher can integrate it with literacy and life skills and vice-versa.

The social development aspect of the Life Orientation at the "Foundation" level expects students to understand and show commitment to their constitutional rights and responsibilities as well as understand diverse cultures and religions. But as they move to higher grades the expectations also rise. To promote tolerance, respect, good communications between learners

as citizens with diverse backgrounds are some of the expected outcomes (Department of Education 2002).

As was indicated earlier the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) considers five focus areas: health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement and orientation to the life of work (orientation to the life of work is for the senior phase). The performance of pupils in these focus areas are controlled by using learning outcomes and assessment standards.

Expectations of Social Development focus area/outcome in the Foundation Phase are summarised in the following table.

table 2 Social Development: Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Standards			
	Grade R	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Social Development The learner will be able to demonstrate an Understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.	We know this when the learner: ■ Identifies basic rights and responsibilities in the classroom.	We know this when the learner: ■ Draws up classroom rules and explains school rules and why they should be followed.	We know this when the learner: ■ Discusses children's rights and responsibilities, and participates in classroom voting.	We know this when the learner: ■ Explains leadership qualities in the school context and participates in school voting.
	■ Recognises the South African flag.	■ Identifies, draws and colours the South African flag.	■ Identifies national symbols and sings the National Anthem.	■ Explains the meaning of and sings the South African national anthem.
	■ Knows members of own family, peers and caregivers.	■ Explains relationships with members of the family, extended family, school and broader community.	■ Lists qualities of a good friend and gives reasons.	■ Discusses the role of acceptance, giving, forgiving and sharing in healthy social relationships.
	■ Listens to and retells a story with a moral value from own culture.	■ Sequences pictures of stories with a moral value from a range of South African cultures, including own culture.	■ Identifies values and morals from diverse South African cultures.	■ Tells stories of female and male role models from a variety of local cultures.
	■ Identifies and names symbols linked to own religion.	■ Matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.	■ Describes important days from diverse religions.	■ Discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions in South Africa.

In the assessment standard in Life Orientation education it is expected that the learner will gain some Knowledge, Skills and Values. From the above table I constructed another table where from different grades I sorted out the different activities into the three categories of knowledge, skills and values.

table 3 Knowledge, Skills and Values in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3).

Grades	Knowledge	Skills	Values
Foundation Phase (Grades R-3)	-Constitutional rights and responsibilities. -Diverse cultures and religions.	-Understanding -Commitment	
R	- Basic rights and responsibilities -The South African flag -Knowledge of members of own family, peers and caregivers. - Moral value from own culture. - Symbols linked to own religion.	-Identify -Recognise -Know -Listen	
1	- Classroom rules and school rules -Colours of the South African flag - Relationships with members of the family, extended family, school and broader community. - A moral value from a range of South African cultures, including own culture. - Symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.	-Draw -Identify -Explain -Sequence -Match	
2	-Children's rights and responsibilities - National symbols and the National Anthem. -Qualities of a good friend - Values and morals from diverse South African cultures.	-Discuss -Identify -Listen -Describe	-Participate in classroom voting.

	- Important days from diverse religions.		
3	-Leadership qualities in the school context - The meaning of the South African national anthem -The role of healthy social relationship - Stories of female and male role models from a variety of local cultures. - Clothing and decorations in a variety of religions in South Africa.	-Explain -Discuss -Tell	-Participate in school voting - Acceptance, giving, forgiving and sharing

The Assessment Standards indicate the expectations of gradual movement of learners from simple to more complex learning and narrower to wider coverage.

Ex. - Recognises the South African flag (R) - Identifies, draws and colours the South African flag (1) - Identifies national symbols and sings the National Anthem (2) - Explains the meaning of and sings the South African national anthem (3)

- Own family, peers, and care givers (R) – Members of family, extended family, school and broader community (1).

- Classroom (R) – School (1)

- Own religion (R) – A range of religions (1)

Life Orientation Foundation Phase
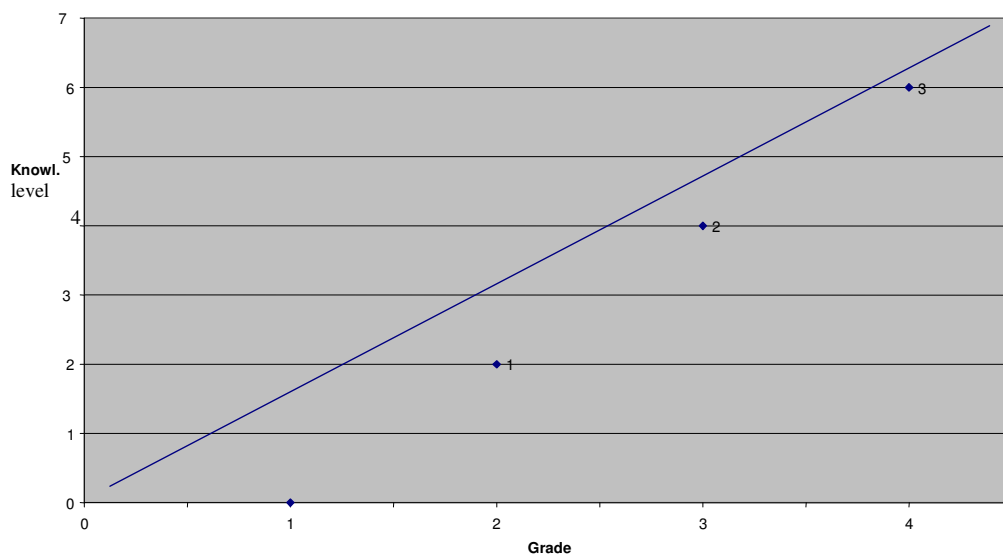
figure 1 Grades and Knowledge direction

Figure 1 shows a general logic of education, which is not unique for Life Orientation education. The increase in the grades attended corresponds with the increase in the knowledge level.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

As we can see from the historical perspectives, South Africa was during pre-apartheid and apartheid mainly a ground for various sorts of conflicts within the education sector. The conflicts were mainly between the natives and the rulers of European origin who limited the local population's level of education and quality of education. On the other hand there were conflicts between the British who wanted to impose their language and culture and the Dutch who felt theirs was loosing ground.

Some British rulers were considered more liberal than the Dutch in their view of the local population's education. But this view emanated not out of thinking about equality, but with the aim of creating less resistance to the British rule and imposing 'an influence over all the tribes'. The following statement from Collins' (1983) article can clarify these ideas of the British Cape Governor:

> …In 1854, for example, the Governor, Sir George Cathcart made the following statement to the British Colonial Secretary:

The plan I propose…is to attempt to gain an influence over all the tribes…by employing them upon public works, which will tend to open up the country; by establishing institutions for the education of their children…

…we should try to make them a part of ourselves, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue, in short, a source of strength and a wealth for this colony, such as providence designed them to be. (Collins 1983: 367)

On the other hand one of the Dutch's fear for the local population's education was the fear of the refusal of natives to be employed as manual labourers, the possible competition of educated natives with unskilled white workers, natives' possible claim for some rights, etc. (Collins 1983, Cross 1986 and Jansen 1990).

During the apartheid years people were grouped based on the colour of their skin. Whatever privilege or disadvantage a group was given or denied was based on this division. The white minorities were provided with high quality education while the black majority was destined to attend schooling that qualified them for manual labour.

Following the fall of apartheid educational changes have been taking place. If we see this in the light of Fairclough's concepts of social structure, social practice and social events (Fairclough, 2003), then the fall of apartheid allowed the emergence of democratic structure and the social practice within the education sector contributed to a new social event curriculum reform. This paper also attempted to show the context in which RNCS 2002 is produced, the interaction between actors in the process of production and on some points within the text.

The changes should be appreciated for their allowing equal opportunity for all children to attend any school without racial, ethnic, gender, etc discrimination. However, as John Pampallis described it, the education policy of the country is "pro-middle class" and produced by the middle class for the middle class (Hoppars, Gustavsson, Motala & Pampallis 2007).

Soudin and Baxten mention that competence was the major focus of the Outcomes Based education (Soudin and Baxten, 1997) and they indicated that little agreement has been reached on what competence represents in Outcomes Based education. Sten Båth after analysing the discourse of qualification and the discourse of citizenship education attaches the concept competence to the former and ability to the later. He argues that the discourse of qualification and the concept of competence, even if they could be used as hybrids to promote other progressive ideas, are basically expressions of neo liberal ideology (Båth 2006).

The Revised National Curriculum Statement's emphasis on democratic values, social justice, and constitutional rights is commendable. These components of the constitution are channelled to students through Life Orientation education. But the low achievement of South African students in tests of mathematics, sciences and reading conducted by different organisations (Lee et al 2005, Howie 2005) made time allocated for these subjects increase. In the 1997 National Curriculum Statement in the Foundation Phase, Life skills, Literacy, Numeracy and Flexible time each had 25 % of the allocated time in each Learning Programme. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement of 2002, Life skills remained with its 25%, but the 25% for flexible time was cancelled. Due to this change Literacy received 40% and Numeracy 35% of the total time.

According to Rooth (2005), in addition to less time for Life Orientation shortage of trained teachers, large classes and overuse of the transmission teaching method makes its implementation difficult. She also mentions that teachers being less acquainted with the new assessment method and lack of learning support materials contribute to further problems.

The RNCS of 2002 is handier and less detailed compared to the National Curriculum Statement of 1997. But the 2002 document could still be considered as detailed. If I could borrow Ivoor Goodson's (Goodson 1994) term I can consider the curriculum as "prescriptive", which is descriptive with detailed instruction of planning and implementation of activities.

The education policy could be considered as a policy that is well organised, which speaks for the needy learners. But I would like to reemphasize as a weakness the absence of a clear indication of the learners possible influence on the education process, the invisible role of parents in their children's learning process and absence of such an important term as class from the curriculum.

Due to the past heritage and government school law in South Africa there are today private and public schools. Due to the unfair distributive politics the previous white affluent class and the growing middle class are sending their children to well organised and well-resourced private schools. On the other hand children from the large poor families are attending schools with less trained manpower and resources. This situation is making schools grounds for the reproduction of inequalities (Harley & Wedekind in Chisholm 2005).

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