

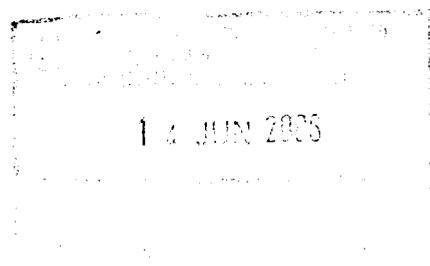
**The evaluation of a career education programme for  
black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni  
Districts of Gauteng**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Magister Artium in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University,  
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## REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual (4<sup>th</sup> edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this mini-dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology and WorkWell: The Research Unit for People, Policy and Performance, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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## SUMMARY

**Subject:** An evaluation of career education programme for black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts Of Gauteng

**Key terms:** train-the-trainer, career education programme, career guidance, career development, black learners, Ekurhuleni district, reliability, multiculturalism, post-modern career development theories, empowerment, educators, action research.

The objective of the study was to determine the impact of a train-the-trainer career education programme on educators and black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng. The context of career education in South Africa is such that learners have little exposure to career information and planning. This is a result of an education system which historically has placed little emphasis on the preparation of learners for the world of work. In the past little or no career guidance was conducted in black schools. To overcome this dilemma a train-the-trainer career education programme was developed and implemented with educators in the Ekurhuleni district.

The results showed that educators felt empowered by the programme and that it provided them with resources and information. The impact on the learners in terms of the programme was achieved by means of a pre- and post-test on the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ). A convenience sample of grade eleven learners ( $n = 51$ ) in the Ekurhuleni East district of Gauteng was taken. The results indicate that the learner's career maturity scores increased after their exposure to the programme.

This research serves as a model for the development and implementation of a train-the-trainer career education programme and demonstrates how an action-oriented research design can empower educators in the implementation of such a programme. The study also highlights the importance of providing adequate resources as part of a career education intervention in the South Africa context.

Recommendations for organisations and future research are made.

## OPSOMMING

**Onderwerp:** Die evaluering van 'n loopbaanopleidingsprogram vir swart graad elf leerders in die Ekurhuleni-distrik van Gauteng

**Sleutelterme:** fasiliteerder-opleiding, loopbaanopleidingsprogram, loopbaanvoorligting, loopbaanontwikkeling, swart leerders, Ekurhuleni distrik, betroubaarheid, multikulturaliteit, post-moderne loopbaanontwikkelingsteorieë, bemagtiging, leerfasiliteerders, aksie-navorsing.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die impak van 'n fasiliteerder-opleidingsprogram op leerfasiliteerders en graad elf leerders in die Ekurhuleni distrikte van Gauteng, te bepaal. Die konteks van loopbaanopleiding in Suid Afrika is van so 'n aard dat leerders min blootstelling aan loopbaan inligting en –beplanning het. Dit kan grootliks toegeskryf word aan 'n opvoedkundige sisteem wat histories relatief min klem op die voorbereiding van leerders vir die wêreld van werk gelê het. In die verlede is geen loopbaanopleiding in swart skole gedoen nie. Om hierdie dilemma te oorkom, is 'n fasiliteerder-opleidingsprogram ontwikkel en geïmplementeer in die Ekurhuleni-Oos distrik.

Die resultate het getoon dat leerfasiliteerders bemagtig gevoel het nadat hulle die program deurloop het en dat dit vir hulle hulpbronne en inligting gegee het. Die impak op die leerders is bepaal deur middel van 'n voor- en na-toetsing met die Loopbaanontwikkelings-vraelys (LOV). 'n Beskikbaarheidsteekproef van graad elf leerders ( $n = 51$ ) in die Ekurhuleni distrik van Gauteng is geneem. Die resultate toon aan dat die leerders se loopbaanvolwassenheid na afloop van die program toegeneem het.

Die navorsing dien as 'n model vir die ontwikkeling en implementering van 'n fasiliteerder loopbaanopleidingsprogram en demonstreer hoe 'n aksie-georiënteerde navorsingsontwerp leerfasiliteerders kan bemagtig in die implementering van so 'n program. Die studie benadruk die noodsaaklikheid daarvan om genoegsame hulpbronne as deel van 'n loopbaan-ontwikkelingsintervensie in die Suid Afrikaanse konteks te voorsien.

Aanbevelings vir organisasies en toekomstige navorsing word aan die hand gedoen.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on the impact of a career education programme on black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng. In this chapter the problem statement is discussed, research objectives are set out, the research method is explained and the division of chapters are given.

#### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Our previous education system had no means of effectively facilitating the passage of young people in their transition from school to the world of work (Fourie, 1992; Olivier, 1991). The problem was more pertinent amongst our black youth, who with some exceptions had few opportunities to receive career guidance at school. This neglect has been compounded over many years and has negatively affected the ability of young people to make appropriate career choices. The prolonged impact of this neglect is revealed in a Human Sciences Research Council report which concluded that young people leaving school are selecting study fields with very little planning or consideration being given to what they will be doing once they finish their studies (Cosser & du Toid (2002).

The new curriculum introduced in high schools in 2004 differs from the previous education syllabus in a number of respects, most notably in terms of the method of delivery, but also in terms of content. The new curriculum introduces an outcome called, “careers and career choices” as part of the learning area, “Life Orientation” (National Curriculum Statement, 2005). This new subject has ostensibly provided us with a framework for the delivery of career education to all South African schools. However there are signs that schools are not receiving resources for career education and educators are not being properly trained to implement the process (see Table 1). According to Maseko (2004), there is a danger that this new subject will be perceived as a low status subject when compared to its counterpart subjects such as maths, science and languages. This is because very little attention is being accorded in terms of empowering educators through the training and provision of resources to support career education delivery. According to Savikas, Van Esbroeck, and Herr (2005) there is a shortage of professionally trained guidance practitioners in developing countries, including South Africa. These authors suggest that countries with highly developed training

programmes share their expertise through the adoption of a train-the-trainer approach to enlarge and improve the training programmes where career counsellor training programmes are just beginning.

The adoption of western career training programmes however can lead to problems in terms of cultural validity. In South Africa for instance all career theories on which career training programmes are based are derived from studies of North American and European populations in conditions where young people have a wide scope of opportunities and a relatively smooth career path (Stead & Watson, 1999). The reality facing young people in South Africa is, however, quite different to that of North America and Europe. Most young people are desperate for work and take the first available opportunity that they encounter (Kay & Fretwell, 2003). Furthermore, young people leaving school simply do not have the minimum education requirements or money to sustain a preferred field of study. Those fortunate enough to have the right combination of subjects at the required standard will, in most cases, require financial assistance if they are to achieve their preferred career goals. Theorists admit that there is little clarity as to which theories are appropriate for South Africa's diverse populations (Stead & Watson, 2002).

Education programmes being used in South African schools up until now have to a large extent been premised on traditional theories of career development (Stead & Watson, 2002). Traditional theories of career development place an emphasis on objective quantitative measures of a learner's career development (Maree, 2001). The concept of career maturity, for instance, is an example of a traditional approach to career development which has been adapted for use in the South African context. The adaptation of an American tool to measure the career maturity young people in South Africa (Langley, 1992) called the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) has served as a framework for the conceptualisation of a number of career education programmes. Research undertaken on career maturity include: Baloyi (1996), Benjamin and Watson (1995), Bernard-Phera (2000), Freeman, (1995), Herr (2003), Langley (1999), Sibalanga (2003), Van der Merwe (1994), White (1987), Woolard (1988).

Herr (2002), for example designed a classroom based career guidance programme to enhance the career knowledge of learners, increase their self awareness in relation to careers, and ultimately to accelerate the career maturity process. The programme used both quantitative measures such as the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) and qualitative measures to

assess the effect of the programme on the students' career maturity. The results obtained from the research indicate a significant increase in the overall career maturity level of these learners. The limitation of this research, however was that it was conducted on a sample of white learners.

Benjamin and Watson (1995) on the other hand developed a classroom-based career maturity programme that targeted township youth. The programme followed an action research framework which allowed the authors greater flexibility in the process of completing the programme and also took into consideration the contextual realities of township life in determining the outcomes of the programme. Intact classes were used and the experimental group was complemented by a comparison group. The results show a significant increase in the pre and post-test career maturity scores for each of the subscales of the experimental group.

Despite the apparent success of such programmes in enhancing the career maturity of learners in South African schools there have been concerns about using traditional theories such as career maturity due to the fact that the pattern of career development of learners in South Africa is so different to that of Western countries (Watson & Stead, 2002). Theorists have been arguing for an emphasis on career development that is less prescriptive in defining the stages of personal career development using western based theories. One such approach, described as a post-modern approach, emphasises self-development and empowerment of learners through the acquisition of skills that are useful to the learner in their everyday lives (Kuit & Watson, 2005; Maree, 2001; Watson & Stead, 2002). This approach has had a major impact on education and training in South Africa, particularly on the method and style of delivery. The post-modern approach with its emphasis on life-long learning has been touted in international research as a strategy for "upskilling" the labour force in various countries (Savikas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005). This is relevant to South Africa because it addresses the practical need for skills development matched to the needs within the economy.

A further benefit is that post-modernism is consistent with the philosophy adopted in the new education curriculum (Maree & Ebersohn, 2003). This provides an ideal opportunity to develop and deliver a career education programme that falls within the public policy guidelines set by the National Department of Education. Watson and Stead (2002) supports this notion and have called for more research into the post-modern approach within the South African context.

The trend towards post-modernism is supported in international literature. For instance the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recently examined guidance policies in fourteen developed countries worldwide (Sweet, 2004). The study highlighted that one of the main drivers for changes to career guidance policies was the growing emphasis on lifelong learning, an indicator of which is the growing number of programmes that emphasise self-management skills. Countries in the North America and Europe have been conducting life skills programmes for well over a decade. In the United States for instance such programmes, have targeted black minority students with the aim of reducing drop-out rates at school. These programmes emphasise personal skills such as problem solving techniques, communication and teamwork (Spraberry & King, 1992).

A follow-up study to the OECD study was conducted by the World Bank in middle income countries including South Africa. The results of this study show how developing countries are being influenced by the trend towards post-modernism through programmes that emphasise self-management skills. The study concludes that the influence of globalisation is leading to a great deal of inter-country convergence with regards to career guidance practice (Watts & Sultana, 2004). South Africa, as part of global economy, is naturally being influenced by career education and guidance practices in line with world trends.

In November 2004, the researcher initiated a meeting with the district management responsible for the delivery of Life Orientation in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng with the intention of running a career education programme in these districts. The district management teams supported this project because of the serious shortage of career education resources to support the curriculum. Prior to conducting the programme the researcher conducted a survey with the Life Orientation educators responsible for grade eleven within the districts concerned. The survey took the form of a series of simple questions relating to educators' perceived needs in terms of resources and training for career education. Examples of such a question are: "Do you have sufficient training / resources for career education?" The results of the survey highlighted are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Results of the Perceived Needs for Resources and Training for Career Guidance in the Ekurhuleni districts (n = 104)

Questions	Total teachers	Total teachers surveyed	Total responses	Yes	No	% No
Do you have sufficient career information books guidance such as A to Z careers.	160	104	101	16	85	84%
Have you ever received training on career guidance?	160	104	101	23	78	87%

According to Table 1 it is clear that of the 160 educators surveyed, 87% have never received training on career guidance, while 84% do not have sufficient career guidance books to implement the new curriculum. Consequently, the need for testing a model of career education in Ekurhuleni District schools (against the backdrop of the new curriculum which is set to role out in all high schools in 2006) seems to be warranted.

In the literature there appears to be very little research on curriculum-based career education programmes being conducted in South Africa. The lack of research on this field is evident when one considers the considerable interest shown by the National Department of Education during the early negotiations which necessitated this study. In November 2006 the researcher was asked by the National Head for Life Orientation (General Education and Training) to make a presentation regarding the proposed career education programme to all provincial heads under his authority (Sieckle, 2006). A unique aspect of the proposed intervention is that teachers would be trained as facilitators who will be able to implement the programme in schools. Furthermore the intervention will be monitored and coordinated by the district officials of the Department of Education (DoE). The overall outcome could result in a sustainable model for career guidance delivery in other provincial districts in the country.

Consequently, the following research questions can be stated:

- What is the context of career education in South Africa?
- What career theories and career interventions are currently used in career education in South Africa?

- What would the effect of a career education programme be on educators and black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng?

## 1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

### 1.2.1 General objectives

The general objectives of this study are:

To develop and measure the impact of a career education programme on black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng.

### 1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To investigate the context of career education in South Africa.
- To investigate career development theories and interventions utilised within the South African context.
- To evaluate the impact of a career education intervention on educators and black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng.

## 1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method includes the literature review, the research design, the participants, the measuring instruments and the statistical analysis to be followed.

### 1.3.1 Literature review

The literature review focuses on career education within the South African context and more specifically on the important career theories and interventions and how these have been applied within the South African context.

### 1.3.2 Research design

According to Uzzell (1997) one of the aims of action research is to record change and its effects in a context of empowerment of the beneficiaries of the change process. Through the introduction of a career education programme the researcher precipitates a change process and records the resulting effects of this change. Action-oriented designs are often used in education and training research (Uzzell, 1997). The approach is consistent with the post-modern theory of career education in that both action research and post-modern theory share the goal of empowering the beneficiary in the process of research. In the case of this study the two beneficiaries of the programme are the educators and learners.

A common theme running throughout action research is the idea of change (Uzzell, 1997). The impact of the change process on the educators are monitored by means of a post-training self-report questionnaire immediately following the training in order to determine educator's perceptions of the programme. The impact of the change process on the learners in the classroom are determined by means of Langley's Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ). Learners are assessed before the intervention (pre-test) and the same group of learners are then assessed following the intervention after a four month period (post-test).

### 1.3.3 Participants

The two beneficiary groups, namely the educators and the learners are the participants in the study. In terms of the educators, the total population of grade eleven educators in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng ( $N = 180$ ) participate in the train-the-trainer programme and are required to complete the post-training self-report questionnaire. A post-implementation follow-up checklist is administered in the schools only once the programme is implemented. A convenience sample of educators from Ekurhuleni ( $n = 60$ ) are selected for this survey due to time and resource constraints.

With regard to the learners, a random stratified sample of learners ( $n = 120$ ) are targeted from four schools in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng, which equates to about 30 learners per school.

### 1.3.4 Measuring instruments

The measuring instruments include a post-training self report questionnaire, Langley's Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) (Langley, 1996), and a post-implementation follow-up checklist.

Educators complete a *post-training self-report questionnaire* immediately post-training. According to Goldstein and Ford (2002), immediate feedback following training interventions is an important aspect in measuring the success of training. The questionnaire is developed by experts with relevant experience in the field. Typical questions evaluate the educator's experience of the programme in a simple open-ended question-format, e.g. "What did you consider to be positive about the programme?"; "What was negative about the programme?"; "What can you suggest to improve the programme?"

The *Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ)* (Langley, Du Toit & Herbst, 1996) is an instrument used to determine the readiness of the learners to make decisions about their careers. The questionnaire examines five dimensions central to career development, namely: (1) Self-awareness (2) Decision making (3) Career information (4) Integration of information on self and the world of work (5) Career-planning. The 100 item questionnaire allocates 20 questions to each of the five components of career development. Satisfactory reliability coefficients of 0,90 have been established for the total measure (Langley, 1996). This instrument has been used by a number of South African researchers to evaluate the success of their programmes (Watson, 1995; Benjamin, Baloyi, 1995, Herr, 2003). In this study, this questionnaire provides information to the educator in order to determine individual career development areas that require further attention. By giving attention to these career awareness needs the individual's readiness to deal with the career planning requirements can be enhanced (Langley 1996).

The *post-implementation follow-up checklist* evaluates whether the programme is being implemented in schools. The questionnaire evaluates whether delivery is taking place in schools and whether the resources are being used. Furthermore, an indication of common problems experienced by the educators are provided. A post-evaluation checklist is in line with action research methods which seek to record change as a result of the intervention.

### 1.3.5 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis is carried out with the help of SPSS (SPSS Inc., 2005). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, range, skewness and kurtosis) are used to describe the characteristics of the sample. T-tests are used to evaluate the mean differences in career awareness before and after the career education intervention. Statistical significance is taken at a confidence interval of  $p = 0,01$ .

Reliability analysis is conducted using the Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The KR-21 formula is appropriate where a dichotomous or binary answer system, e.g. 1 or 0 is used and the researcher wants to obtain the most conservative estimation of the reliability of an instrument (i.e. where the proportion of test takers are considered to be equal in terms of their responses in each direction) (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

The KR-21 formula can be represented as follows:

$$r = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{Mk - M^2}{kV_t} \right)$$

where

$k$  = the number of items on the test

$M$  = the mean of the total scores

$V_t$  = the variance of the total scores

### 1.3.6 Research procedure

The research battery is compiled and ethical aspects concerning the delivery of the research discussed with participants. The test battery is administered as specified in the research design.

## 1.4 Chapter division

The chapters are presented as follows in this mini-dissertation:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: The evaluation of a career education programme for black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

## 1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, the problem statement and motivation were discussed. The general and specific objectives of this research were formulated, the method of research described, as well as the way in which the statistical analyses are performed. In Chapter 2, a research article on the career development is presented. In Chapter 3, the conclusions of the study are presented, the limitations, together with the recommendations for the organisation and future research.

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# THE EVALUATION OF A CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR BLACK GRADE ELEVEN LEARNERS IN THE EKURHULENI DISTRICTS OF GAUTENG

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to determine the impact of a train-the-trainer career education programme on educators and black grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng. A post-training self-report questionnaire showed that educators felt empowered by the programme and that it provided them with resources and information. The impact on the learners in terms of the programme was achieved by means of a pre- and post-test on the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ). A convenience sample of grade eleven learners ( $n = 51$ ) in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng was taken. The results indicate that the learners' career maturity scores increased after their exposure to the programme. This research serves as a model for the development and implementation of a train-the-trainer career education programme and demonstrates how an action-oriented research design can empower educators. The study also highlights the importance of providing adequate resources as part of a career education intervention.

## OPSOMMING

Die doelwit van hierdie studie was om die impak van 'n fasiliteerder-loopbaanopleidingsprogram op leerfasiliteerders en swart graad elf leerders in die Ekurhuleni distrikte van Gauteng te evalueer. 'n Post-opleidings self-rapporteringvraelys het getoon dat fasiliteerders bemagtig gevoel het deur die program en dat dit vir hul hulpbronne en inligting verskaf het. Die impak op die leerders in terme van die program is bepaal deur middel van die Loopbaanontwikkelings-vraelys (LOV). 'n Besikbaarheidsteekproef van graad elf leerders ( $n = 51$ ) in die Ekurhuleni-Oos distrik van Gauteng is geneem. Die resultate dui daarop dat die leerders se loopbaanvolwassenheid-tellings toeneem na voltooiing van die program. Die studie dien as model vir die ontwikkeling en implimentering van 'n fasiliteerder-loopbaanopleidingsprogram en dit dui aan hoe 'n aksie-navorsings ontwerp leerfasiliteerders kan bemagtig. Die studie benadruk ook die noodsaaklikheid daarvan om genoegsame hulpbronne as deel van die 'n loopbaanopvoedingsintervensie beskikbaar te stel.

The term 'career development' is used to describe how people choose and make choices from the many occupations that are available over the period of their lives (Brown & Brookes, 1990). Theories on career development are important because they explain how and why people choose careers. It logically follows that if we can understand what motivates people in their career paths we can understand how to motivate people in leading more productive and meaningful lives (Stead & Watson, 1999). By the same token, appropriate career theories provide us with a framework to develop career education programmes that are relevant to the needs within schools (Ackhurst & Mkhize, 1999).

South Africa has no career theories of its own. Almost all theories used in South Africa are derived from international samples in conditions where young people have a wide scope of opportunities and a relatively smooth career path. The reality facing young people in South Africa is quite different. Most are desperate for work and take the first available opportunity that they encounter (Kay & Fretwell, 2003). Furthermore, there are fewer opportunities for employment in the formal economy in developing countries such as South Africa which forces many school leavers into self-employment in the informal sector of the economy (Watts & Sultana, 2004). Those fortunate enough to have the right combination of subjects at the required standard may still require financial assistance to achieve their preferred career goals. However, this scenario does not account for the majority of South African school leavers who simply do not know what to do in terms of choosing a specific career due to a lack of career awareness and maturity. In this regard, there is a debate amongst career theorists as to the relevance of career theories underpinning career choice behaviour in South Africa. According to Stead and Watson (2002) there is currently little clarity as to which career theories are appropriate for South Africa's diverse populations.

The theoretical debate around career development in South Africa within the school context is highlighted by the difference in approach and philosophy between *career guidance* and *career education*. Ackhurst and Mkhize (1999) state that career guidance and career education are concepts that are often used interchangeably. However, career guidance is a term associated with the previous education system whereas career education better describes the developmental approach adopted within the new curriculum currently being introduced in South African schools.

Career guidance was a formal part of the previous education system and was offered mainly in white schools by a specialised career guidance teacher. Career guidance refers to the

assistance given to individuals or groups of individuals in addressing problems relating to occupational and life choices (Hiebert & Borgen, 2002). However, career guidance was never a formal part of the syllabus and therefore had a low status within schools. Furthermore, most black schools had no formal guidance period and career planning was virtually non-existent in these schools except for the support of organisations outside the confines of the education department (Benjamin & Watson, 1995). Researchers refer to the state of career guidance in the previous dispensation as having failed to effectively facilitate the transition from school to the world of work, for the majority of South African learners at least (Fourie, 1992; Olivier, 1991). The result of this neglect is evident some ten years later, with school leavers selecting study fields with very little planning or consideration of what they will be doing once they finish with their secondary schooling (Cosser & du Toid, 2002).

Career education on the other hand, implies a wider range of activities than career guidance. Whereas guidance refers to activities around individual career decision making, career education refers to the totality of experiences through which one learns and prepares for the world of work (Ackhurst & Mkhize, 1999). An important consideration in this regard is that career education is referred to within the context of the school environment as preparing learners for the world of work. Whereas career guidance in the past was conducted as a specialised non-examinable activity which took place outside the schools' curriculum by a specialised guidance counsellor, career education is now regarded as a subject that demands a firm place within the main body of the curriculum (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005). The development of life skills are regarded as an important component of career education in that it prepares learners for the world of work. Life skills include personal development such as self-awareness and decision-making skills as well as job hunting skills such as the compiling of Curriculum Vitae's and the preparation for job interviews (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005).

Career education was formally introduced as a compulsory outcome in grade seven (National Curriculum Statement, 2003). Although not referred to directly as career education, the principles underpinning career education are evidently applied within the subject content and methodology of the subject referred to as "Life Orientation" (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005). The new curriculum (2005) requires that career education become a formal part of the learning outcomes and marks a significant change in the philosophy and approach to the career development of young people. Where career guidance was previously offered mainly to learners in white schools in the previous dispensation, the new curriculum now

integrates career education as a compulsory and substantial part of the requirements for achieving a school leaving certificate. According to Ackhurst and Mkhize (1999) one of the major trends in career education is the shift from its role in the past as purely an enrichment activity to that of a core component in the curriculum. Table 1 refers to the assessment criteria for grade eleven learners.

Table 1

*Evaluation Assessment Criteria for Grade eleven Learners for the Learning Area Life Orientation, Outcome: Career and Career Choices<sup>1</sup>*

	<b>Criteria</b>
1	Describe a career in respect of study requirements and workplace activities
2	Link career choices to own personality in respect of workplace activities and environments
3	Link career choices to market demands and trends
4	Describes economic viability of chosen career
5	Rates career in respect of the above and in order of preference, motivating your preference

Despite the progress in creating a developmentally oriented career education framework for career education at a statutory level, there is currently no standardised programme for the implementation of career education in secondary schools in South Africa. The reason for this lack could partly be ascribed to the fact that career education is a brand new subject in schools. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that schools have not been allocated career resources and educators have not been formally trained on how to go about implementing career education. The situation is far worse in rural areas where learners have fewer practical resources such as career guides or workbooks (Maseko, 2004). In the current scenario, there is a growing negative perception of career education in schools as a result of teachers lack of expertise and resources (Maseko, 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> From "Grades 10 – 12 subject assessment requirements: Life Orientation", 2005, National Curriculum Statement, p. 9. Copyright 2005 by the Department of Education. Adapted with permission of the author.

## **A career education programme for South African schools**

Career education and guidance programmes have been a formal part of the school curriculum in the United States and parts of Western Europe since the 1970's (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001; Watts, 2001). Generally speaking, it is the aim of these career education programmes to develop the required knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners in order to make decisions and transitions that will determine the course of their career development (Watts, 2001).

According to the literature, career education programmes in most countries include an evaluation of interests, values, abilities and goals in preparing the student for the world of work (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001; Watts, 2001). However the emphasis differs from country to country. In the United States for instance the career programmes are conducted in close collaboration with parents (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001). In the United Kingdom, Sweden and Finland work-experience programmes are a common feature in most schools (Watts, 2001). The French favour what is known as an interventionist approach to career education and guidance (Huteau, 2001). This approach tends to move away from traditional diagnostic approaches towards a didactic approach. This consists of self-reflection, research, and stages of group work in which different points of view can be exchanged (Huteau, 2001). Common techniques used in most countries include the use of information systems that involve self-directed searches. Self-directed searches and career information resources include occupational textbooks, films, CD ROMs and the internet (Oweina & Abdo, 1999). Most of these programmes form an integral part of the educational system and is a structured part of the curriculum from kindergarten through to grade 12 (Gysbers & Lapan, 2001; Watts, 2001).

An international study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) examined guidance policies in fourteen developed countries worldwide. The study suggests that one of the main drivers for changes to career guidance policies was the growing emphasis on lifelong learning, leading to programmes that emphasised self-management skills (Sweet, 2004). A follow-up study was conducted by the World Bank in middle income countries, which included South Africa. The results highlighted the influence of globalisation leading to a great deal of inter-country convergence with regards to career guidance practice (Watts & Sultana, 2004). This would suggest that South Africa, as part of global economy, would also be influenced by career education and guidance practices in line with world trends.

These findings appear to be supported by South African researchers who point to a shift in emphasis towards career education underpinned by post-modern theories of career development (Watson & Stead, 2002; Kuit & Watson, 2005). Post-modern theory has had a major impact on the methods of education and training both locally and internationally. The new education system, with its outcomes-based emphasis, is rooted in this approach. To some extent the post-modern approach suits the South African context because it addresses the practical need for skills development matched to the needs within the economy. Furthermore, the post-modern approach with its focus on self-development and life-long learning are regarded as empowering and relevant to the South African context (Maree & Ebersohn, 2003). Life-long learning, as the name suggests, is an approach to education which allows the learner to determine his or her own career path based on his or her own unique potential and rate of development (Plant, 2004).

Despite the positive acceptance of this trend in career development circles, Watts and Sultana (2004) refer to the fact that there is a major shortage of career development practitioners qualified to deliver career education programmes, particularly in developing countries. This finding seems to be supported by observations made by this researcher in a pilot study of 160 educators in the Ekurhuleni district of the Gauteng Province. The survey indicated that 87% of all Life Orientation educators had not received training on career guidance. Watts and Sultana (2004) suggest that a train-the-trainer approach be used to increase the number of career counsellors and practitioners. Furthermore, it is suggested that the lessons learned by countries with highly developed training programmes should be incorporated in the development of programmes in developing countries such as South Africa. In the United States for instance, a formal qualification has been developed for Career Development Facilitators (CDF's). The programme was designed to provide those involved in career development practice a standard qualification and to ensure that those facilitating the career development process possess the knowledge and skills needed (Schmidli, 2001). Included in their role are skills in the assessment of interests, aptitudes and personalities, counselling skills for clients in career transition strategies, as well as job placement skills (Schmidli, 2001).

The adoption of international career training programmes does not account for the cultural differences with populations in developing countries. Career training programmes in South Africa for instance tend to be based on theories derived from studies of North American and European populations in conditions where young people have a wide scope of opportunities

and a relatively smooth career path (Stead & Watson, 1999). Ackhurst and Mkhize (1999) suggest that the design of a career education programme should be underpinned by both theoretical considerations and the contextual realities facing learners in a particular country. Furthermore, the design of career programmes should consider the relationship between theoretical considerations and the broader educational curriculum of the country.

According to the literature, career guidance programmes developed for South African schools have mainly been based on the application of the career maturity concept of Donald Super, which emphasises the self-exploration and career planning activities of young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four (Ackhurst & Mkhize, 1999). Super emphasises that career choice is not a static process, but a gradually unfolding process over the lifespan of a person (Langley, 1999; Patton & McMahon, 2002). According to Langely (1999), Super's approach has an enduring appeal in non-western countries because individual, cultural and environmental aspects are taken into account.

A number of South African studies have focused on career maturity, including: Baloyi (1996); Benjamin and Watson (1995); Bernard-Phera (2000); Freeman, (1995); Herr (2003); Van der Merwe (1993); White (1987), and Woolard (1988). Of these studies a number have focused specifically on developing career maturity interventions aimed at raising the career maturity of the target group and measuring the change by means of the career maturity questionnaire of Langley, Du Toit, & Herbst (1996). For instance, Benjamin and Watson (1995), Herr (2002) and Woolard (1988) all used the career maturity components adapted by Langley et al. (1996) as outcome variables in their career programmes. These findings support the notion that career interventions in schools serve to enhance the career maturity of the students. Benjamin and Watson (1995) in particular highlight the total lack of career guidance in schools as a causal factor in the suppressed initial career maturity scores of the students targeted.

Ackhurst and Mkhize (1999) recommend the development and implementation of a standardised career education programme in South African schools. They argue that such a programme should consider the approval and support of statutory structures, such as the Department of Education, which include the departmental officials, district officials, the heads of schools, as well as the educators themselves. In line with these recommendations a career education programme was developed and implemented in schools of the Ekurhuleni District of Gauteng in consultation with the relevant Department of Education officials.

Consequently, the aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of career education programme on educators, as well as grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

An action-oriented design was adopted for this study by virtue of the researcher being directly engaged in empowering educators in a career education programme which could help learners to make informed career choices. According to Uzzell (1997) one of the aims of action research is to record change and its effects in a context of empowerment of the beneficiaries of the change process. Through the introduction of a career education programme the researcher precipitated a change process and recorded the resulting effects of this change. Action-oriented designs are often used in education and training research (Uzzell, 1997). The approach is consistent with the post-modern theory of career education in that both action research and post-modern theory share the goal of empowering the beneficiaries of the intervention. In the case of this study, two beneficiaries of the career education intervention programme were identified, namely educators and learners.

A common theme running through action research is the idea of change (Uzzell, 1997). The impact of the change process on the educators was monitored by means of a post-training self-report questionnaire immediately following the training in order to determine educator's perceptions of the programme. All educators who completed the training were requested to complete a questionnaire. The impact of the change process on the learners in the classroom was measured by means of Langley's Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ). Learners were assessed before the intervention (pre-test) and the same group of learners were then assessed following the intervention after a four month period (post-test). The reason for selecting this specific time period was that educators are under pressure to deliver other subject areas besides this programme. Another reason is that career education is not yet a compulsory outcome and will only become compulsory in 2007. The focus was therefore on measuring the impact of the career education intervention on the learners' knowledge of themselves in relation to the world of work and their ability to plan effectively for their future career. A final evaluation was conducted at individual schools after implementation of the career education programme. This required that a checklist of factors be evaluated i.e. completion of the required workbooks by learners as part of their self-exploration, utilisation

of the required resources, as well as problems that educators experienced in the delivery of the programme. The evaluation was conducted by a trained field worker by visiting the purposively selected schools within the budget and time constraints. The field worker was also required to collect random samples of completed career education programme resources for evaluation during the site-visits.

## **Participants**

Participants were selected from the Ekurhuleni region of Gauteng, formerly known as the East Rand of Johannesburg. The Ekurhuleni region is made up of two districts, namely East and West Ekurhuleni under the Ekurhuleni Metro Council, one of the three biggest Metropolitan councils in Gauteng.

The need for career guidance in this region was first identified by the East Rand Children's Trust, the largest sponsor of bursaries to learners on the East Rand and also one of the largest sponsors of bursaries in the country. The Trust reported that very little or no career guidance was taking place within schools of Ekurhuleni and this was evident by the poor subject choice selection in grade nine, as well as inappropriate study selections in grade twelve (J. Findlay, personal communication, September 21, 2004). The problem was also confirmed by the Department of Education regional managers in charge of Life Orientation at a combined meeting between them and the Trust in November 2004.

A sample of schools ( $N = 90$ ) were identified to take part in the study. This included all the schools in the Ekurhuleni East district (excluding ex-model C and private schools) as part of the first roll-out phase in the whole Ekurhuleni district. The region district managers stated that their educators were not yet trained to deliver career education to their learners and has received no career guidance training under the previous educational dispensation. Consequently, two beneficiary groups were identified to take part in the empirical study, namely the educators and the learners. The educators would be beneficiaries as participants in the train-the-trainer programme whereas the learner sample would be identified to evaluate the impact of the programme once the educators had been trained and had themselves delivered the programme in the classroom. Two educators per school were invited to participate in the training and a post-training self-report questionnaire were administered on the total sample of educators ( $N = 180$ ) in the Ekurhuleni East district of Gauteng. A second evaluation was conducted on the educators once they had completed the delivery of the

programme in the classroom. This was called a post-implementation follow-up checklist and was conducted on a convenience sample of educators ( $n = 53$ ).

With regards to the learners, the total population of learners from four purposively selected schools in the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng were targeted to participate in the study ( $N = 120$ ). However, responses for the pre- and post test from only three of the schools could be utilised ( $n = 51$ ) due to missing data and natural attrition. The sample could therefore be described as a convenient sample from purposefully selected schools within the Ekurhuleni districts of Gauteng.

The characteristics of the sample are given in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Characteristics of the Sample*

Item	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	46,00
	Female	54,00
Language	Sesotho	28,00
	Setswana	4,00
	Siswati	4,00
	isiXhosa	12,00
	isiZulu	40,00
	Other	12,00
School	Nyathi	50,00
	Unity	46,00
	Etwatwa	4,00

According to Table 2 the sample consisted mainly of Zulu-speaking (40,00%) females (54,00%) from the Nyathi and Unity (46,00%) schools.

### **Measuring Instruments**

The measuring instruments included a post-training self-report questionnaire, Langley's Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) (Langley et al., 1996), and a post-implementation follow-up checklist.

A *post-training self-report questionnaire* was developed for the purpose of this study and administered on educators immediately post-training. According to Goldstein and Ford

(2002) immediate feedback following training interventions is an important aspect in measuring the success of the intervention. Typical questions assessed the educators' experience of the programme in a simple open-ended format, e.g. "What did you consider as positive about the programme?", "What was negative about the programme?", "What can you suggest to improve the programme?"

The *Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ)* (Langley et al., 1996) was used to determine the readiness of the learners to make decisions about their careers. The questionnaire examines 5 dimensions central to career development, namely: (1) Self-awareness (2) Decision making (3) Career information (4) Integration of information on self and the world of work (5) Career-planning. The 100 item questionnaire allocates 20 questions to each of the five components of career development. The individual is regarded as being career mature when a total score equal to or above 70% is achieved. Satisfactory reliability coefficients of 0,90 have been established for the total measure. Subscale reliability coefficients of 0,70 or higher enhance the CDQ's reliability as a diagnostic instrument. Furthermore, the validity of the CDQ sub-scales has been empirically supported in terms of content, criterion-related and construct validity (Watson & Benjamin, 1995). An item-scale correlation of the data from a national high school sample showed that the items correlated highest on their own subscale with all correlations being highly significant (Watson & Benjamin, 1995). The instrument has been used by a number of South African researchers to evaluate the success of their programmes (Benjamin & Baloyi, 1995; Herr, 2003; Watts, 2001). An expert assessment of the appropriateness of using the CDQ for black students was conducted in 1992 using career specialist and black language teachers who confirmed suitability both in terms of language and conceptual accuracy (Watson & Benjamin, 1995).

A *post-implementation follow-up checklist* was developed for the purpose of this study to determine whether the programme was being implemented, to what extent the resources were being utilised, and to identify any problems that educators were experiencing in the implementation of the career education programme. The checklist contains checkboxes which essentially require yes / no responses to observations based on tangible evidence of implementation and utilisation of resources by the educators and learners respectively. The checklist was completed by a trained field-worker on-location. In order to provide physical proof of observations, the field worker was required to collect randomly completed career education programme resources during site-visits.

## Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS (SPSS Inc., 2005). Descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, variance) were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. T-tests were calculated to assess the impact of the career education programme in terms of the extent of career maturity change demonstrated by the learners before and after the programme. Statistical significance of differences were taken at a 99% confidence level ( $p = 0,01$ ).

Due to the dichotomous nature of the responses on the CDQ, reliability analysis was conducted using the Kuder-Richardson (KR-21) formula (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The KR-21 formula is appropriate where a dichotomous or binary answer system, e.g. 1 or 0 are used and the researcher wants to obtain the most conservative estimation of the reliability of an instrument (i.e. where the proportion of test takers are considered to be equal in terms of their responses in each direction) (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The KR-21 formula can be represented as follows:

$$r = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{Mk - M^2}{kV_t} \right)$$

where

$k$  = the number of items on the test

$M$  = the mean of the total scores

$V_t$  = the variance of the total scores

## RESULTS

Firstly, the responses of the educators exposed to the career education programme were analysed immediately after their exposure to the programme, with regard to the benefits of the programme. Almost all educators perceived the training to be a positive experience. More specifically, the most common benefits perceived by educators with regards to the training were that 20% felt that the training programme empowered them by giving them renewed confidence or by saving them time in the classroom. Furthermore, 18% indicated that the programme offered them provision of resources, while 17% felt that it provided them with information (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Thematic Summary of Responses to the Post-implementation Checklist*

Thematic Categories of Responses	Count
Having the resources / information (especially the file)	27
Informative, learned a lot	26
Empowers the educator, giving knowledge an confidence	16
Empowers the educator, making work easier or faster	14
Having the tools/methods to assess the learners	10

In the second step the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries of the programme, namely the learners in terms of their career maturity, was conducted. The descriptive statistics of the Career Development Questionnaire and the results of the pre- and post test analysis (t-tests) are given in Table 4.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics and Kuder-Richardson Coefficients of the Career Development Questionnaire*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean (t <sub>2</sub> - t <sub>1</sub> )	r <sub>kr-21</sub>
Self-Information (SI)	13,78	2,33	-0,15	-0,54	1,10	0,22
Decision Making (DM)	13,87	2,79	-0,86	0,29	1,19	0,48
Career Information (CI)	12,02	3,10	-0,55	0,08	2,74*	0,53
Integration (SI/CI)	13,49	2,62	0,06	-0,82	1,76*	0,38
Career-Planning (CP)	12,13	3,34	-0,49	-0,60	1,48	0,60
Total Score	65,21	19,98	-0,46	0,05	8,26	0,84

\*  $p \leq 0,01$  – statistically significant

Table 4 indicates that the scales are normally distributed. With regards to the internal consistency of the scales, it would seem that the subscales demonstrate acceptable internal consistencies above the 0,50 guideline for basic research, except for the Self-Information and Integration subscales. However, if one considers the overall consistency of scale, it could be regarded as highly acceptable. In terms of t-tests, the results demonstrate statistically significant differences in pre- and post-tests for the subscales of Career Information and Integration at the 99% confidence interval level.

Finally, the observations regarding the implementation of the programme were conducted. The results of the post-implementation follow-up checklist are given in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Responses to the Post-implementation Follow-up Checklist*

Criteria	Yes	No	Percentage (Yes)
Is there direct evidence to suggest that the educators have implemented the programme with their learners, i.e. learners have completed their workbooks	47	6	88
Was there evidence of the following resources being effectively used by learners:			
▪ Career File	52	1	98
▪ Careers Textbook	49	11	81
▪ Computer Programme	24	36	40

Table 5 shows that nearly 88% of the educators had actually implemented the programme, while only 12% did not. Those that had not implemented the programme stated that they did not have enough time and would still implement the programme sometime in future. In terms of different resources utilised in the career education programme, it is clear that the career file was the most popular, followed by the careers textbook. The use of the computer-based software was used least by educators, despite canvassing considerable amount of interest during the training sessions (40%). In cases where the programme was indeed utilised, its impact was fairly limited since it was loaded on only one computer which could not be accessed by all learners.

## DISCUSSION

A unique aspect of this career education programme was that it was delivered to the learners via the educators as part of a train-the-trainer model of delivery. For this reason it was important to evaluate not only the learners as beneficiaries of the programme but also the educators charged with delivery of the programme. An added advantage to this approach is that a train-the-trainer model ensures that greater numbers of learners can be reached. This is a tremendous advantage when considering the implications of the mass-based rollout of the new curriculum throughout the country at present. The train-the-trainer approach has further advantages in empowering educators in line with post-modern approaches applied within the new curriculum (Kuit & Watson, 2005).

Educators were empowered not only through the knowledge they acquired, but also through the tools and resources they received. The results of the self-report questionnaire support this view. If one considers the legacy of the past and the resulting neglect of schools there is most certainly an argument for an injection of career education materials in schools generally.

In terms of the impact of the programme on learners, the results showed improvement in career maturity levels of learners in the sample, specifically regarding career information and integration. However, these were the only statistically significant findings of all the dimensions measured. Previous studies bear similarities to the results of this study. For instance the composite pre-test score for a sample of grade elevens in Herr's (2003) study was 12,10 compared to 12,02 (career information) in this study, while the composite post-test scores were 15,20 in comparison with 15,43 (integration) in the current study. Furthermore, Watson and Benjamin (1995) reported significant differences on each of the subscales of the experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores.

The results also revealed a total score on the CDQ of 65,21% before the intervention (pre-test) which moved 8,26% higher at the post-test time. What is of interest to note here is that the career maturity of learners before the intervention was significantly below the career maturity national average (Langley et al., 1996). What this shows is schools in the Ekurhuleni Districts have been neglected in terms of career education, an aspect highlighted in the discussion on the context of career education. Though not statistically significant, the results show that the programme was able to increase the career maturity of learners to a level on par with the national average. However, it could be argued that this improvement in career maturity resulted from one intervention only, and that a greater impact could've possibly been noted if learners received career education earlier in their schooling career.

A note of caution seems appropriate if one considers the findings obtained in this study. Firstly, the sampling procedure, as well as the small size of the sample appears to temper the generalisations one could make regarding the findings. Furthermore, considering the legacy of non-career guidance in these schools in the past, completion of questionnaires such as these are still very foreign to these learners. Furthermore, this questionnaire was administered mainly in English, which is a second, third, and even fourth language for most of these learners.

The responses to the post-implementation follow-up checklist reveal that the majority of schools implemented the programme. This is despite the fact that career education in grade eleven is not yet compulsory in this country. However, the results indicate that the programme was successful in its aim of delivering the programme in a previously disadvantaged setting. However, this finding does not provide any insight in terms of the quality of delivery to learners completing the programme. For example a qualitative review of learners' work during this programme could indicate whether the learners completed their research using a variety of resources. Furthermore, it could be determined whether they were realistic in terms of their aspirations and if they indeed explored all possible alternatives.

In terms of different resources utilised in the career education programme, it is clear that the career file were the most popular, followed by the careers textbook. The computer-based software was the least used resource. In cases where the programme was indeed utilised, its impact was fairly limited since it was loaded on only one computer which could not be accessed by all learners.

Limitations of the study include sample size as well as the sampling procedure. As a result, it is not possible to generalise the results to other contexts. Future research in this context could be greatly enhanced by more advanced research designs, e.g. experimental designs in the implementation of similar programs. Also, sampling techniques that would enable generalisation of the findings, as well as adequate representation of the characteristics of a specific geographical area (e.g. random, stratified sampling procedures) would enhance the application of these findings to other areas and provinces in South Africa. Studies conducted in this manner could provide further information regarding the reliability, validity and multiculturalism of the measuring instrument used in the present study.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implications of the results are that career education should be conducted on a train-the-trainer model where educators are trained to facilitate the programme within their schools. The programme itself should be constructed and implemented in a way that is consistent with post-modern approaches, in other words the approach should empower the learner to make decisions for him / herself.

In addition to the training programme, one crucial aspect to consider in this regard is the provision of adequate resources. This stems from years of compounded neglect of career education in South African schools resulting in the need for a large injection of career resources into black schools in particular. In order to meet the needs for the training and resourcing of schools, financial assistance may be acquired from sources outside the structures of the Department of Education (DoE) which was indeed the case during the intervention in this study. The same model can be duplicated in other districts with the support of the statutory structures and the aid of private sector funding.

Career education is a specialised subject that demands special skills and competencies. There is a need to provide specialised training to Life Orientation educators on career education in South Africa, especially to those (the majority) who have been newly introduced to the subject. There is a need to provide a basic training but also to provide an advanced level of training (or even refresher-type training) in order to enhance the professional status of the field. This could for instance include accreditation of career education practitioner programmes by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Future research could for instance also consider performance at work, as well as personality variables of the educators. One could for instance argue that the success of these programmes are dependant on the quality of the programme being delivered, and secondly on personal attributes of the incumbent educator within this role. Improvements to the programme should also be considered based on feedback and follow-up reports from schools, probably by means of a qualitatively structured phenomenological approach. However an important aspect to consider in this regard is the management of educators within their role as Life Orientation facilitators. Furthermore, there are certain motivational aspects inherent in the selection and development of educators that could be examined in this regard, as well as the role of the work environment of the educator tasked with the implementation of the career education programme.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter the conclusions of the study are presented, the limitations, as well as the recommendations for organisations and future research.

#### **3.1 CONCLUSION**

The conclusions of the study are presented in terms of the three research objectives as stated in the problem statement, namely the context of career education in South Africa, the theories of career development that are currently in use in South Africa, and finally the effect of a career education programme on educators and grade eleven learners in the Ekurhuleni Districts of Gauteng.

In terms of the context of career education in South Africa, the previous education dispensation gave learners little exposure to career information and planning (Cosser & du Toid, 2002). The new curriculum serves to provide a framework for career education to all learners in South African schools starting in grade seven under the banner of the subject called Life Orientation (National Curriculum Statement, 2005). This new subject has ostensibly provided the country with a standard framework for the delivery of career education to all schools throughout the country. With the change in public policy, this research, as with other new research into career education programmes in South African schools, should consider the new philosophy and approach to career education.

If one compares the old syllabus with that of the new curriculum, in the past, career guidance, as it was known, was a non-examinable activity undertaken by a specialised guidance counselor. Career guidance took place almost exclusively in white schools and was centred on the activities of individual career decision making (Ackhurst & Mkhize, 1999). The new system of career education, on the other hand, is regarded as a holistic approach to education because it refers to the totality of experiences through which one learns and prepares for the world of work (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005). It emphasises the acquisition and development of life skills such as self-awareness, decision-making skills as well as job hunting skills (Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2005). The differences between the two approaches are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1:

*Comparison between career guidance (prior to 2005) and the current curriculum*

<b>Prior to 2005:</b>	<b>Curriculum 2005</b>
Career guidance approach.	Career education approach.
Mainly offered in white schools.	Mandatory in all schools.
Traditional approach to career development which emphasise the use of objective tests benchmarked on European and North American populations.	Post-modern approach to career development with an emphasis on empowerment through the provision of life skills.
Very few career interventions were undertaken in black schools. Most research interventions were “once-off” and ad hoc by nature: White (1987), Woolard (1988), Van der Merwe (1994), Benjamin & Watson (1995); Freeman, (1995), Baloyi (1996); Langley (1990), Bernard-Phera (2000), Herr (2002), Sibalanga (2003).	The new curriculum has mandated standardised guidelines for career education. These guidelines that specify what is to be covered in order to meet the objectives for career education at each of the different grades starting in grade 7.
Non-examinable – no mandatory requirements.	Non-examinable - but assessment & portfolio of evidence is now mandatory.

In terms of the second objective of this study, it is clear that one of dilemmas of developing a career education programme in the South African context is that there are no clear guidelines to developing a career programme based on current theory (Watson & Stead, 1999). Furthermore, there are no career theories developed for the South African context. This means that the theories we use to underpin career programmes in South Africa are derived from studies of overseas populations. South African career theorists suggest that we are at a crossroads in terms of choosing appropriate theories (Watson & Stead, 2002). For instance, in the last few years there has been a general shift from traditional approaches to career development towards a post-modern approach to career development.

The new curriculum seems to be in line with post-modern premises in that it emphasises empowerment of individuals through the acquisition of life skills. Furthermore, the literature seems to suggest that South Africa is following the international trend towards a “life-long” approach to career education. Life long learning is an attitude of mind reflective of the challenge to keep one’s skills current and to remain adaptable in our continually changing world (Plant, 2004). This type of approach does require that learners conduct their own research in order to discover for themselves the opportunities available.

Whilst this new approach may be a relevant approach for the contemporary work environment, it creates a dilemma in that learners should have access to the necessary career information resources to meaningfully conduct the career / self-exploration processes

required in the new curriculum. There is some evidence to suggest that schools in South Africa do not have sufficient career information resources. For instance in survey of 160 educators from schools in the Ekurhuleni region, most of those surveyed (84%) reported that they do not have sufficient career guidance resources to fulfil the requirements of providing career education to their learners. The situation is in contrast to developed countries such as the United States and Europe where career information resources such as occupational textbooks, films, CD ROMs and programmes provided on the internet are readily available to students in schools (Oweina & Abdo, 1999).

Similarly, developed countries such as the United States and Europe also possess a body of well trained career practitioners. Career practitioners and career counsellors serve an important role in the delivery of career education and guidance in schools, libraries, churches and community support organisations. Their role includes skills in the assessment of interests, aptitudes and personalities, as well as counselling clients in career transition strategies and job placement (Schmidli, 2001). In stark contrast to the same survey referred to earlier in schools of Ekurhuleni highlighted that 87% of those surveyed have never even received training on career guidance. Furthermore, follow-up studies in certain Ekurhuleni schools conducted in February 2006 (one year later), reveal that many of those educators who were trained on the current programme in 2005, have been replaced by new educators who have no formal training in career education (East Rand Youth Trust, 2006). The combined effects of inadequate training, poor resources, together with the high turnover of Life Orientation teachers could lead fuel current perceptions of Life Orientation as low status subject (Maseko, 2004).

The survey further suggests the need for an intervention programme which provides both the career development training for career practitioners and career information resources. As the international examples suggest there are a variety of resources that one could use for such a programme, including both paper-based and computer-based career information media. The materials used for the current research for instance were supplied by an established publisher of career education materials to schools, namely PACE Career Centre. These resources included career handbooks, career information posters, and workbooks for learners and a computer based career information software package.

The results of this study seem to highlight the need for an appropriate theoretical model suitable for the South African context. The development of a career education programme, which is in line with the changing needs of our new society, seems to be long overdue.

In terms of the third objective there is evidence that the programme worked in increasing the levels of career maturity awareness of learners. In terms of t-tests, the results demonstrate statistically significant differences in pre- and post-tests for the subscales of career information and integration at the 99% confidence interval level. These results are supported by a number of South African studies which have used the Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) to evaluate the success of their programmes (Watson & Benjamin, 1995; Herr, 2003; Watts, 2001).

It seems fair to conclude that such a career education programme could serve as a useful vehicle for improving the attitude and knowledge of learners regarding their future career. However, the findings reflect a great deal of groundwork still needs to be done before such a programme can be instituted in other parts of the country. There is a tremendous opportunity to create some kind of benchmark programme for career education in schools. However, the groundwork refers to the steps in getting the parties and resources required to impact the career education field on a larger scale.

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS**

Despite the very clear overlaps between Super's career maturity concept and the approaches within relative (post-modern) theories, there are some question marks surrounding the appropriateness of using theories based on career choice in contexts such as South Africa, where learners effectively have little choice in terms of their career (Stead & Watson, 1999). In order to combat against learners making unrealistic choices, the programme developed in the current study has built-in mechanisms that guide learners to research careers that are realistic according to the required subjects, as well as the marks that learners obtain at school.

Another limitation is the lack of psychometric information regarding the measuring instrument used in the study. The Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ) was validated on a group of Zulu speaking learners in South Africa which brings into question the construct equivalence of the measuring instrument for different language groups in this context. The fact that this could not be calculated in the present study relates to the next limitation.

The sample size was very small and the research design was of a non-probability type. Consequently, the generalization of the findings, and to some extent the validity, could be questioned even though some evidence of the use of the measuring instrument could be found in the South African literature. However, multicultural information regarding this measure seems to be lacking and is an aspect that should be investigated in future research. The selection of the sample, although not ideal, could be explained in terms of the practical realities of field work in the South African context.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations can be made for both organizations and future research:

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations for organisations**

It was the aim of this study to investigate the impact of a career education programme on learners in a specific geographic area. However, the results indicated that it was not only the programme that made the greatest impact, but the fact that educators also felt empowered by the career information resources to support them in their tasks. These aspects highlight the importance of providing career information resources to schools and not just training.

One of the positive aspects of the programme is the involvement of private enterprise in the purchase of career information resources for the schools. The East Rand Children's Trust provided over one million rand for the provision of career information resources to all schools for this project. If such a programme was indeed successful in making a difference in the lives of those learners targeted, then it could be duplicated as a model in other districts or provinces throughout South Africa. The private sector has proved itself to be a significant partner in the funding of career education projects. An injection of funds would appear to be important at the start of a career education initiative such as this because of the general lack of career information resources in schools. (The need for an injection of resources is indicated in table 2 below).

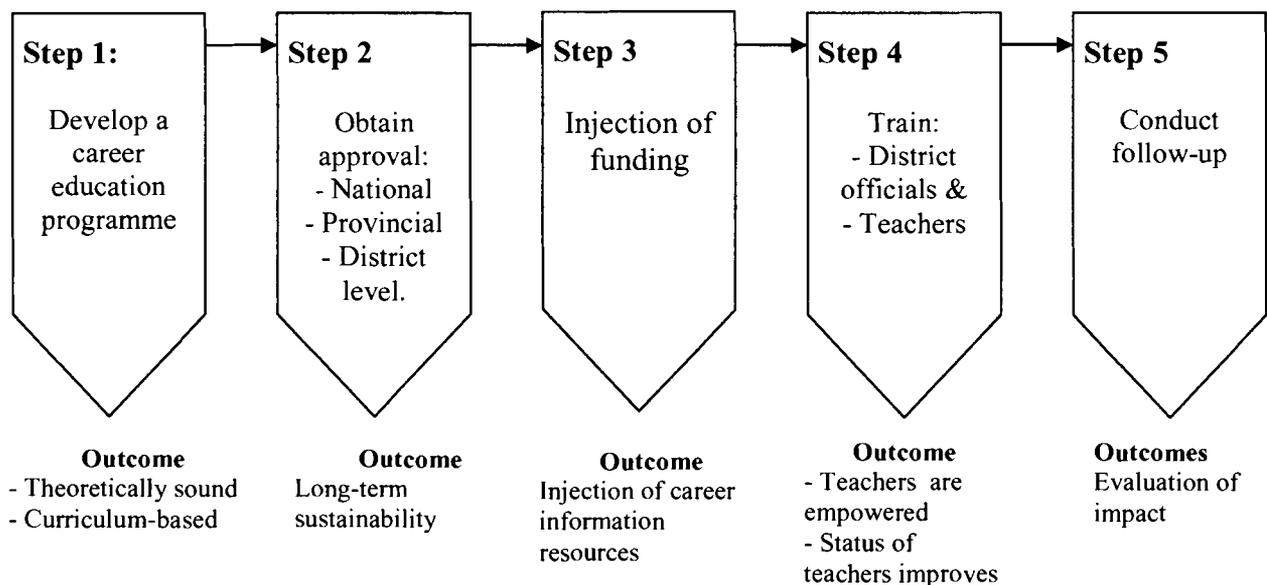
The role of the Department of Education in implementing the new curriculum has been highlighted as a positive step towards creating a sustainable programme of career education

for the country. What appears to be lacking for this project however is the commitment on the part of the Department of Education to ensure that newly trained Life Orientation teachers are kept in the positions for which they are trained. This was especially the case in the Ekurhuleni East district where a large proportion of teachers trained on the programme were subsequently replaced the following year. Policy should be reviewed in order to ensure that Life Orientation teachers not be replaced willy-nilly.

A train-the-trainer model for other regions of the country may well develop out the current programme.

Table 2

*Train-the-trainer model*



### 3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

According to Stead and Watson (1999) post-modern theories offer a contextually relevant approach to career development in South Africa. There is a need for more research into the development of theoretically sound and contextually relevant career education programmes that are consistent with the outcomes of the current curriculum.

If one considers the legacy of the past and the resulting neglect of schools, there is almost certainly an argument for an injection of career education materials in schools in general. This study, for example, benefited from sponsorships from both PACE Career Centre and the

East Rand Children's Trust who made available sufficient career resources and tools for educators.

There is a need for a more research into a standardised train-the-trainer programme for career practitioners. As is the case in other countries, like the United States, such programmes are standardised and well recognised.

The standardisation and accreditation of career education programmes in South Africa would serve the purpose of motivating educators to raise their standards of delivery and to advance the status of career education as a specialised subject in schools. Furthermore, there are few means by which teachers are able to advance their career development through practical and theoretical training. Programmes need to be developed that provide teachers and community-based practitioners an opportunity to advance their career knowledge and career facilitation skills through a recognised qualification and supporting association

The psychometric properties of the CDQ needs to be investigated in future research. It should be administered in different language settings (with enough candidates) to determine the construct equivalence and item bias for the CDQ in South Africa, preferably in different regions and/provinces in South Africa. This will conclude whether the construct of career maturity can be used equivalently for different language groups of South African learners in different provinces.

It could be argued that future research should also look into assessing the pre and post-test results of learners undergoing more than just one intervention in one grade only. The results of this study show that the programme was able to increase the career maturity of learners. Future research should be undertaken on a larger sample of learners. There would also be a need to establish the effects of gender, grade and other factors that may impact on the advancement of career maturity of learners. Furthermore, both experimental and action-research designs could greatly enhance the applicability of the findings.

More should be done to promote the use of technology-aided education, such as computers by learners as part of their career education. It may however be useful to consider follow-up studies in order to measure the longer term impact of the programme, which could highlight areas where additional support is required to educators and schools.

Despite the fact that this study provides an indication that the programme was successful in its aim of delivering a career education programme to previously disadvantaged schools, the quality of delivery of the programme to the learners could not be determined. Future research should focus on a qualitative review of learners work. For instance, a qualitative review of the learners' portfolio would reveal to what extent and what kind of research learners are conducting before making a career decision, and to what extent are these choices realistic.

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