

# Promoting spiritual well-being of children: experiences and perceptions of primary school educators

**ST Grant  
23317396**

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree *Master of Arts* in Psychology at the Potchefstroom  
Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof AW Nienaber

May 2016

**Promoting spiritual well-being of children:  
experiences and perceptions of primary school  
educators**

**ST Grant**

**23317396**

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree *Magister Artium* of *Psychology* at the Potchefstroom  
Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Dr A W Nienaber

May 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	2
<b>Summary</b>	4
<b>Opsomming</b>	6
<b>Preface</b>	8
<b>Permission letter from supervisor</b>	10
<b>Proof of language editing</b>	11
<b>Section 1:</b> Introduction (orientation and problem statement)	12
<b>Section 2:</b> Article: Promoting the spiritual well-being of children: Experiences and perceptions of primary school educators	
<b>2.1:</b> Author guidelines: <i>South African Journal of Education</i> .	34
<b>2.2:</b> Manuscript: Promoting the spiritual well- being of children: Experiences and perceptions of primary school educators	40
<b>Section 3:</b> Critical reflection	37
<b>Complete Reference List</b>	71
<b>Addendums</b>	72
• Goodwill letters from participating schools	
• Letter of permission from Eastern Cape Department of Education	

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the following persons and institutions

- Dr A.H Nienaber for her assistance, patience and perseverance.
- The staff of the Ferdinand Postma library for their assistance.
- The principals of the various schools for allowing me access to their teaching staff and to conduct my interviews.
- Each teacher who gave of their time and insight in the interviews; their willingness and warmth.
- S. Miljkovic and G. Grant for the selfless hours of proof reading and transcribing.
- My husband and son for their faith in me and endless support.
- My parents, siblings and friends for their encouragement and support.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my late mother – Tamara Imogen Bennie - whose faith in me and unfailing grace and love, sustained me through this journey, and continues to inspire me.

## Summary

### **Promoting the spiritual well-being of children: Experiences and perceptions of primary school educators**

**Keywords:** *children's spirituality, educators' experiences, health promoting schools, inclusive education, spiritual well-being, well-being*

Increasingly, spirituality and spiritual well-being (SWB) are featuring as topics for discussion and research in the fields of psychology, education, health care and social development (Karstens, 2010; Tacey, 2004). A central question in current literature and debate about spirituality is 'what does it mean'? While Zhang (2010) describes spirituality as an inherent aspect of being human, current literature tends towards describing inclusive definitions that allow for a range of spiritualities, from the existential to the religious (Egan, 2011). In this research study, the universal concept of spirituality was adopted. This concept describes spirituality as the search for meaning, relationships, connectedness, unity and transcendence which is independent of a religious framework (Jacobs, Viljoen and Van der Walt, 2012; Emmons, 1999).

Considering that the well-being of children in urban areas, world-wide, is being affected by the results of globalisation and demographic changes (Rees, Francis & Robbins, 2005), there is increasing global interest in the impact of spirituality on children's overall well-being, and specifically in the education context (Karstens, 2010). Hyde (2005) proposes that the primary school classroom is a place where appropriate spaces can be created for nurturing children's spirituality with the aim of promoting their SWB. With this in mind, the researcher asks the question, *What perceptions and experiences do educators have of promoting primary school children's spirituality and spiritual well-being?* The aim of this research was therefore to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of primary school educators regarding the promotion of children's SWB.

This research study followed the format of a qualitative design, originating from an interpretative approach, and aimed to understand the meaning that primary school educators attach to experiences of their work with children. More specifically, in order to give voice to the educators' perceptions and experiences regarding

promoting children's SBW, semi-structured interviews with primary school educators were utilized.

The results of the empirical research and the literature review indicated that there are a variety of descriptions for spirituality and that it means different things to different people. The dominant perception among the educators is that spirituality is an important aspect of life. Educators' perceptions of spirituality ranged from religious to humanistic/existentialist and can be classified as following the inclusive approach to spirituality. The educators' responses on the question about their experiences of promoting SWB centred on their relationship-building with children and their responsibility of being role-models for children. Aspects of the school curriculum as well as co-curricular programmes were identified facilitators of the process of promoting the SWB of children. In addition limited support from parents and a busy school timetable were mentioned as a challenge to the process, along with the sometimes overwhelming range of responsibilities that educators are expected to fulfil.

It is therefore concluded that primary school educators perceive themselves as being engaged in the promotion of children's SWB, along with the support of the school as a whole. In addition, educators perceive a need for improvement in the level of co-operation between parents and educators, in this process, and a possible revision of the structure of the school timetable and curriculum, to assist in their efforts to promote the SWB of children.

## Opsomming:

### **Bevordering van die spirituele welstand van kinders: ervaringe en persepsies van laerskool opvoeders**

**Sleutelwoorde:** *kinders se spiritualiteit, opvoeders se ervarings, skole wat gesondheid bevorder, inklusiewe onderwys, spirituele welstand, welstand*

Spiritualiteit en spirituele welstand word tans al meer as onderwerpe vir bespreking en navorsing in die velde van die sielkunde, onderwys, gesondheidsorg en maatskaplike ontwikkeling beskou (Karstens 2010; Tacey, 2004). 'n Sentrale vraag in die nuutste literatuur en die debat oor spiritualiteit handel oor wat dit beteken. Terwyl Zhang (2010) spiritualiteit beskryf as 'n inherente aspek van menswees, neig die huidige literatuur na die beskrywing van inklusiewe definisies wat voorsiening maak vir 'n verskeidenheid van spiritualiteite, van die eksistensiële tot die godsdienstige (Egan, 2011). In hierdie navorsingstudie, is die universele konsep van spiritualiteit aangeneem. Hierdie konsep beskryf spiritualiteit as die soeke na betekenis, verhoudings, verbondenheid, eenheid en transendensie wat onafhanklik van 'n godsdienstige raamwerk is (Emmons, 1999; Jacobs, Viljoen & Van der Walt, 2012).

In die lig daarvan dat die welstand van kinders in stedelike gebiede wêreldwyd geaffekteer word deur die resultate van globalisering en demografiese veranderinge (Rees, Francis & Robbins, 2005), is daar 'n groeiende belangstelling in die impak van spiritualiteit op kinders se algemene welstand en dan meer spesifiek binne die opvoedkundige konteks (Karstens, 2010). Hyde (2005) stel voor dat die laerskool klaskamer die plek is waar ruimte geskep kan word om kinders se spiritualiteit te kweek en sodoende hulle spirituele welstand te bevorder. Met hierdie aspek in gedagte, vra die navorser dan die vraag: *Watse persepsies en ervaringe het opvoeders oor die bevordering van laerskool kinders se spiritualiteit en spirituele welstand?* Die doel van die navorsing is dus om die persepsies en ervaringe van laerskool opvoeders oor die bevordering van kinders se spirituele welstand te ondersoek.

Die navorsing is in die vorm van 'n kwalitatiewe ontwerp wat ontstaan het uit die interpretatiewe benadering. Die doel is om die betekenis wat opvoeders heg aan hulle ervaring van werk met kinders, te begryp. Meer spesifiek word daar gepoog om 'n stem te gee aan die opvoeders se persepsies en ervaringe van die bevordering van kinders se spirituele welstand en dit is gedoen deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude.

Die resultate van die empiriese studie en die literatuurstudie het aangedui dat daar 'n verskeidenheid van beskrywings van die begrip spiritualiteit bestaan en dat dit verskillende dinge vir verskillende mense beteken. Die belangrikste persepsie onder die opvoeders was dat spiritualiteit 'n belangrike aspek van die lewe is. Opvoeders se persepsies van spiritualiteit het gewissel van godsdienslig tot humanities/eksistensiële en kon geklassifiseer word as 'n inklusiewe benadering tot spiritualiteit. Die opvoeders se response op die vraag oor hulle ervaring van die bevordering van spirituele welstand het gesentreer om verhoudings bou met die kinders en ook hulle verantwoordelikhede as rolmodelle vir die kinders. Aspekte van die skool-kurrikulum asook ander programme in die kurrikulum is geïdentifiseer as bydraend in die proses om spirituele welstand te verbeter. Beperkte ondersteuning van ouers en 'n besige skoolprogram is genoem as problematies in die proses asook die, soms, oorweldigende omvang van verantwoordelikhede waarmee opvoeders moet saamleef.

Die gevolgtrekking is dus gemaak dat laerskool opvoeders hulleself beleef as betrokke in die bevordering van kinders se spirituele welstand, met die ondersteuning van die skool as 'n geheel. Bykomend, ervaar opvoeders 'n behoefte aan meer samewerking tussen die ouers en opvoeders en 'n moontlike hersiening van skoolroosters en kurrikulums om mee te help met die bevordering van kinders se spirituele welstand.

## PREFACE

- This dissertation adheres to the article format indentified by the North-West University in rule: A 4.4.2.3
- The article (section2) within this dissertation conform to the author guidelines of the South African Journal of Education.
- The editorial style and referencing of this dissertation adhere to the guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (A.P.A. 6<sup>th</sup> edition).
- The page numbering is chronological, starting from the introduction and ending with references, thereby forming the dissertation as a unit.
- Language editing for this dissertation was done by Lee-Anne van Antwerpen.
- Translations of the Summary from English to Afrikaans was conducted by G.Grant.
- Data collection methods for the primary study were conducted in English to ensure that participants understood the questioning.
- Consent for the submission of this article concerning examination purposes in fulfilment of the degree *Magister Artium* in Psychology has been provided by the co-author and supervisor, Dr Alida Nienaber.
- Lastly, by submitting this dissertation to Turn-it-in, it was established that this dissertation falls within the norms of acceptability.

Promoting the spiritual well-being of children: Experiences and perceptions of primary school educators

Susan Grant

Alida Nienaber

North-West University, South Africa.

Corresponding author: Alida Nienaber

School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences: Psychology

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom 2520, Internal Box 206,

Email: [Alida.Nienaber@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Alida.Nienaber@nwu.ac.za)

## LETTER OF CONSENT

Permission is hereby granted for the submission by the first author, S T Grant, of the following article for examination purposes, toward the obtainment of a *Magister Artium* degree in Psychology:

*Promoting the spiritual well-being of children: Experiences and perceptions of primary school educators*

The role of the role of the co-author was as follows: Prof A W Nienaber acted as supervisor of the presented study and assisted in the peer review of this article.



Prof A W Nienaber

Supervisor

1'st Floor, Bldg 4, Ascot Office Park  
Cnr. Ascot and Conyngham Roads  
Greenacres  
6065

14 December 2015

**Invoice: Editing / Ms Sue Grant**

**1 LITERATURE REVIEW & 1 COMPLETE ARTICLE**

1 Literature Review & 1 Complete Article: 3hrs 15mins x R232 p/hr = R754

**Please transfer to the below account:**

Account number: 2215060379

Branch code: 12151704

Type: DeSIGN Save (Nedbank)

Account holder: Lee-Anne van Antwerpen

Reference: Your Name

**Regards,**

**Lee-Anne van Antwerpen**

CTI Lecturer: Communication Science

<mailto:leeanne.vanantwerpen@gmail.com>

Cell: 0834556084

## **Section 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Literature Review**

### **Promoting spiritual well-being of children: experiences and perceptions of primary school educators**

*Keywords:* child development, children's spirituality, educators' experiences, health promoting schools, inclusive education, spiritual well-being, well-being

#### **Introduction**

More schools across the western world are introducing spirituality into curricula as a means to address holistic well-being in children (Karstens, 2010) and a response to the shift in the perceptions of spirituality which has occurred within modern society; differentiating it from religion and rendering it a subject no longer too controversial for the school context.

Tacey (2004) notes that professionals in the fields of psychology, education and social work are increasingly aware of the prevalence of depression, addiction, suicide and psychological suffering in modern society, and children are not excluded from these psycho-social issues. He stresses the significance of spirituality as a response to these issues and that the spiritual life is no longer a specialist concern, restricted to those who belong to religious traditions. There is a spirituality revolution occurring world-wide, with significant new interest being shown in the reality of spirituality and its healing effects on life, health, community and well-being (Tacey, 2004).

Despite this revolution, spirituality in the field of education remains a sensitive subject within the South African context, which is compounded by the alienation experienced by many children during the apartheid era (Roux, 2006). During this time, schools promoted an exclusive, single-faith, Christian National Education with a strict religious and doctrinal focus (Roux, 2006).

Today, however, the more contemporary approach to spirituality, and the one utilised in this research study, is more inclusive to the South African and multicultural context. Jacobs, Viljoen and Van der Walt (2012) describe this universal concept of spirituality as a focus on the search for meaning, relationships, values and

transcendence which is independent of the need for a religious framework. Furthermore, Hay and Nye (2006, in De Klerk-Lutting, 2008) describe spirituality in terms of 'relational consciousness' and refer to a heightened awareness or perceptiveness to the physical world and the transcendental world. This awareness adds value and meaning to everyday experiences of relating to the world (Moriarty, 2011; Puchalski et al., 2009). Fisher (2004) describes the level or quality within these relationships as spiritual well-being; be it in relating to self, relating to others, to the environment and/or to a higher being.

Education, as a multipurpose field of knowledge and practise, assists individuals in building these relationships within their societies, whether formalised in schools or informally, as in the home environment (Winch, 2012). This translates into empowering learners with abilities, knowledge and understanding, usually through the efforts of a teacher, in order to prepare learners for life (Winch, 2012). Noddings (2015) explains that this preparation for life involves teaching learners intellectual and practical skills, morals and values, in order to be "better adults" (p.234). Abosi and Kandjii-Murangi (2004, p.3) agree and describe the preparation as passing on something that will make the learner "change for the better".

Educators who promote spirituality and the spiritual well-being of children in their care, are facilitating a variety of positive outcomes (Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuyse, 2012), or "change[s] for the better" (Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi, 2004, p3). These outcomes prepare the child for life and include development of a positive self-image, a personal life-purpose, healthy interpersonal relationships, improved academic achievements and better coping strategies for managing life's emotional, mental and physical challenges (Winch, 2012; Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuyse, 2012; Jacobs, Viljoen & van der Walt, 2012).

Considering that school is the place where learners spend most of their time during the day, schools are where systems could be put into place to ensure that children receive support for their spiritual well-being. Therefore, the current study sought to establish and document the perceptions and experiences of primary school educators in providing support for children's spiritual well-being, in public primary schools.

## **Purpose of Education**

The pervasive purpose of South Africa's *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* acknowledges the importance of preparing children for life by facilitating the development of skills and values, as evidenced in the statement of purpose in The Curriculum and Assessment Policy document of the Department of Basic Education (2011):

equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country (p.4).

In the light of this fact that the main purpose of preparing children is to ensure that they function well within their societies, Forbes (1996) describes the classroom as: a community, which is within the larger community of the school, which is within the larger community of the village, town, or city, and which is, by extension, within the larger community of humanity. How life is lived at the smallest level should reflect what is considered to be 'right living' in the largest context (p.6).

Living in the large contexts of 21<sup>st</sup>-century societies entails experiencing numerous stressors. Children across the globe face economic and social crises, natural disasters and the effects of fast-changing technologies on the way they and their families live their daily lives (Lockwood & Thomas, 2009). Adults, who have children's well-being at heart, are concerned about the unfavourable effects of the 21<sup>st</sup>- century society on urbanised children (Lockwood & Thomas, 2009).

## **Stressors faced by South African children.**

The Reverend Baroness Kathleen Richardson, Chair of the Commission on Urban Life and Faith in Wales (as cited in Rees, Francis & Robbins, 2005), includes globalisation and demographic changes in urban areas to the list of issues which affect children's well-being. The adverse effects of urban life, mentioned by Rees et al. (2005) include exposure to crime, vandalism, drug-taking, drunkenness, violence, unemployment, pollution and poverty.

Moodley, Beukes and Esterhuyse (2012) give additions to the above-mentioned stresses, stating that South African children face the task of growing up in

a society affected by change - social, cultural, political and economic. These changes contribute to stress, depression, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness - all serving to diminish the level of children's well-being (Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuysen, 2012).

Heath, Donald, Theron and Lyon's (2014:309) give further insight into the South African situation; with the declaration that "South Africa has the highest per capita of recorded HIV/AIDS cases" compared to other countries. Considering that 17.8 million children have lost one or both parents through HIV/AIDS worldwide (Heath, et al., 2014), numerous South African children have had to become the head of their homes and care for siblings and ill parents.

These statements and facts accentuate a need for investigation into different means of supporting and promoting South African children's well-being; a need supported by Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI, 2007:5) who maintain that "South Africa's strength and resilience as a country is dependent on the well-being and health of her children".

### **The Need for a Focus on Spiritual Well-being in Education Contexts**

The researcher proposes that in order for South Africa, as a country, to show evidence of resilience and strength, the resilience and strength of her children would need to be promoted. Miller (2015), a Professor of Psychology and Education, Lecturer at the Teachers College and Director of the Clinical Psychology Program at Columbia University, has identified spirituality as a source of resilience, protection and thriving, for children facing various psychosocial crises.

From her studies, Miller (2015) published scientific evidence which supported the significance of spirituality in physical and mental health. The evidence of her research and others like it, showed that a child who has a sustained spiritual engagement/relationship with a higher power and a shared spiritual engagement and spiritual identity with his/her mother, is 80% protected against experiencing major depression any time between the ages 16-26; the window of risk (Miller, 2015). Boyd-Wilson (2015) maintains that spiritual well-being derives from spirituality. Shope (2015) adds that spiritual well-being focuses more specifically on how a person's spirituality may be affecting the quality of his life. Other researchers such as Long (2008) and Akos, Briggs, Czyszczon and Eldridge (2011) add credence to the

observation that there are numerous positive outcomes of sustained spirituality. Outcomes include: greater success in school achievements, less depression, improved coping ability and healthier lifestyle choices (Long, 2008). Spiritual well-being serves as a protective factor that can assist children and young people in their defence against risk elements they can encounter, such as unplanned pregnancy and experimenting with illegal drugs, but it can also lead to thriving, even in the absence of risk factors (Akos et al., 2011). Fowler (as cited in Long, 2008) gives additional weight to this by evidencing that the encouragement of a child's spirituality is conducive to his becoming more accepting of others, more confident and more caring.

### **Well-being and Spiritual Well-being in the Education Context**

The South Australia Department of Education and Child Services acknowledge the relevance of well-being in education and have found that in order for children to engage readily with learning and to learn effectively, they need to be in an optimum state of well-being (DECS, 2007). Australia's government schools do not, however, include the term spirituality in the context of well-being; specifically if this involves focusing on religion, because it is considered inappropriate for public education to appear to support one religion over another (DECS, 2006).

Similarly, Roux (2006) states that there is no dialogue about spirituality in the South African schools context, because of its association with religion. Roux (2006) believes that the term spirituality was removed from the first drafts of the post-apartheid curriculum document (1997), also referred to as *Curriculum 2005*. The term did not reappear in the later Revised National Curriculum Statement, of 2002, because of the lack of knowledge of the meaning and opportunities spiritual development requires from teachers and in teachers' training. In the most recent South African National Curriculum, of 2011, the term 'spirituality' does also not feature. An exploration of the definition of each of the terms, 'religion' and 'spirituality', could assist in removing the negative outcomes of their association, in the schools context.

### **Defining Terms**

#### **Spirituality.**

Bone, Cullen and Loveridge (as cited in Lockwood & Thomas, 2009) state that spirituality means different things to different people. For many people, their

spirituality and faith are central to their personal and group identity and influence the ways they cope with traumatic events (Zhang, 2012). Spiritual beliefs and values can instil a sense of meaning and purpose in life (King & Benson, as cited in Akos, Briggs, Czyszczon & Eldridge, 2011).

Scholars concribe to two essential conceptions of spirituality, as noted by Moodley, Beukes and Esterhuyse (2012); firstly, spirituality is a personal expression within the framework of religion; and secondly, religion and religious expression is only a single aspect within the framework of spirituality.

For the purpose of this study and the education context, spirituality is defined as an inherent aspect of being human (Zhang, 2010), and encompasses a search for meaning, unity, connectedness, transcendence, and for the highest human potential (Emmons, 1999). This view is supported by Wagener and Malony (2006) who add that spirituality comprises of an awareness of good and evil, feelings of belonging and experiencing a sense meaning and purpose. O'Brien (1998, in DECS discussion paper 2006) also concurs with Emmons (1999) while proposing that spirituality deals with a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, as well as beliefs that are not necessarily related to a religious belief system.

Roux (2006:156) suggests that one can argue for the "consideration of a non-religious spirituality in education". She defines 'nonreligious spirituality' as that which one finds in art, in historical, traditional and indigenous contexts, in studies and enjoyment of the environment, in language, literature, music and science. All these areas of learning can contribute to helping a child make sense of their world and life experiences and feel more connected to the world (Roux, 2006).

Both Walton (cited in DECS Discussion Paper, 2006) and Fisher (cited in DECS Discussion Paper, 2006) distinguish between spirituality and religion. These authors suggest that religion focuses on beliefs and rules of faith – such as conduct, rituals, doctrine and traditions – while spirituality is a broader concept that encompasses a person's relations to self, others and the environment. In this paradigm, every person can be considered to be spiritual, not just the religious.

### **Religion.**

Religion is about communicating an individual's or group's spirituality through rituals and practises which are organised by an institution - such as a church, temple or mosque - through teachings and practises that connect individuals (Long, 2008;

Speck, Higginson & Addington-Hall, 2004). The rituals, practises, attitudes and beliefs that form part of religion, put individuals in relation not only to each other but to God or a supernatural world and provide sets of values by which individuals judge the natural or physical world (English & English, cited in Loewenthal, 2008).

### **Well-being.**

The concept 'well-being' is multidimensional as well as dynamic and changeable (Nash, 2009). It includes aspects such as a person's social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual dimensions (DECS, 2007; Seifert, 2005). In addition, well-being is a holistic and subjective state (Seifert, 2005) that one experiences when a variety of feelings are combined, such as energy, confidence, openness, calm, caring and enjoyment (Roberts, 2005 cited in DECS, 2007). Well-being, however, is not simply a feeling of happiness. Thompson and Marks (as cited in Nash, 2009) caution one to resist simplifying well-being to one feeling such as this. Well-being is therefore a more complex concept.

Goleman (as cited in DECS, 2007), helps expand on the complexity by commenting on the need for skills, abilities and understandings to be cultivated within a person in order for well-being to develop. To illustrate this, Goleman (in DECS, 2007) states that gaining the ability to understand our own emotions and using them to shape our own actions are competencies that are not only essential for our mental and emotional health, they are meta-abilities that are closely linked to school and career success.

Bradshaw, Hoelscher and Richardson (2007) assist with understanding the term 'well-being' by defining it as the fulfilment of children's rights and their achievement of abilities, skills and potential. This realisation of potential can be measured in terms of positive outcomes for the child, while deprivation points to the neglect of children's rights.

### **Spiritual well-being.**

The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975, cited in Gomez and Fisher, 2003:1976) comprehensively define *spiritual* well-being, as:

a state of being, reflecting positive feelings, behaviours, and cognitions of relationships with oneself, others, the transcendent and nature, that in turn provide the individual with a sense of identity, wholeness, satisfaction, joy, contentment, beauty,

love, respect, positive attitudes, inner peace and harmony, and purpose and direction in life.

From insights gained through his research into the spiritual well-being of children in schools, Fisher (2009) proposes that spiritual health and well-being is a state of health shown by the extent to which people live in harmony within relationships in four domains of Spiritual Well-Being (SWB). Table 1 outlines these four domains. An assessment of a child's spiritual well-being can be made, based on the quality of the connections/ relationships evident in that domain.

Table 1: Fisher's four domains of spiritual health and well-being

Personal SWB	Children's relationships with themselves
Communal SWB	Children's inter-personal relationships
Environmental	Children's relationship to the environment
Transcendental	Children's relationships to things beyond the human level

(Rees et al., 2005, p. 5)

Since school is the place where learners spend time relating to each other, their educators and their environment; schools could therefore be the places where systems are put into place which ensure that children receive support for their spiritual well-being.

### **Systems of support**

Currently, there are government policies and frameworks developed by South Africa's Departments of: Basic Education, Health and Social Development, which focus on supporting children's physical, social and cognitive well-being. These frameworks could; both individually and collectively, provide schools management teams and educators with platforms for developing children's spirituality and promoting their spiritual well-being.

### **The Health Promoting Schools Programme**

Over the last twenty years, schools across the world have been implementing 'health promoting school' programmes in response to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) shifted focus. The development of healthy 'settings' replaced

the focus on behaviour of individuals (Mūkoma & Flisher, 2004). The researcher argues that programmes addressing children's spiritual health could be included in the health promotion programmes currently being applied.

The WHO defines a health promoting school as one that constantly strengthens its capacity as a setting for promoting health and holistic educational outcomes and to be places where living, learning and working is safe and health-focused. Health promoting schools use an approach wherein the school itself initiates experiences for teaching and learning, which involve the whole school (Mūkoma & Flisher, 2004).

The researcher proposes that if spirituality is acknowledged as necessary for health promotion, the educators and school management could consider including experiences that promote spiritual development in their schools, as essential and worthy of exploration.

### **White Paper 6: Special needs and Inclusive Education**

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education (DoE), 2001) provides a framework that encourages an education and training system that is inclusive, holistic and integrated and that is intended to respond to the diverse learning needs evident in children today. A particular focus of the framework is to develop facilities and provide services to learners who experience barriers to learning and to develop mechanisms to enable the education system to accommodate all such learners.

### **Integrated School Health Policy**

South Africa has seen the introduction of the Integrated School Health Policy in 2012. This policy is the result of a joint effort between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Health (DOH) and is implemented within the DBE's Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Framework (CSTL). The purpose of the policy is to 'build on and strengthen existing school health services' (Department of Health and Department of Basic Education, 2012: 7).

### **Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Policy (CSTL)**

According to the Department of Basic Education's (2010) CSTL National Support Pack document, in addressing the need for care and support of vulnerable children in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), ministers of

education in this community, adopted the CSTL Programme in 2008. South Africa was one of six countries which adopted this programme.

Children in the SADC region are made vulnerable through the effects of poverty, HIV and AIDS, and exposure to violence, abuse and neglect (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The CSTL was designed to be a combined response, from government organisations, school management, educators, and each schools' community, to address barriers to teaching and learning, so that all educators and learners are supported in their tasks and that the school environment is a source of safety and health for all who work and learn there. CSTL offers an all-encompassing framework which can connect various care and support initiatives which schools, their support organisations and their communities are implementing. "It promotes mainstreaming or a systemic response to the care and support needs of learners (Department of Health and Department of Basic Education, 2012: 29).

Mainstreaming involves the adoption of agreed-upon values and principles; e.g. gender equality, and the integration of these into all aspects of the care and support programmes initiated by the schools and their support organisations. The researcher suggests that spirituality can be one of the values that schools and departments of education can consider for integration into care and support programmes.

There are nine priority areas which the programme has identified. Some of these areas focus on supporting the basic physical needs of the learner, namely nutrition, water and sanitation; while other areas meet the child's need for safety and curriculum support (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The area through which the *spiritual* needs of the child can be supported is the area listed as "Psychosocial Support".

### **'Life Skills' and Promoting Spiritual Well-being**

South Africa's Department of Basic Education has designed the subject, Life Skills, to provide for the well-being of the child by focusing on holistic and inclusive education; namely developing his/her cognitive, physical, social and emotional aspects (Department of Basic Education, 2011). In this study, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): Life Skills – Foundation Phase, Grades R-3 (2011), as well as the CAPS document for Life Skills: Intermediate Phase, Grade 4-6 (2011) is of importance, due to the focus on teaching aims for primary schools. The

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for Life Skills Grade 4-6 (2011)

includes the specific aims of the subject:

1) guide learners to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential; 2) teach learners to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities and to respect the rights of others; 3) guide learners to make informed and responsible decisions about their health and environment; 4) develop creative, expressive and innovative individuals; 5) develop skills such as self-awareness, problem-solving, interpersonal relations, leadership, decision-making, and effective communication; 6) provide learners with exposure to experiences and basic skills in dance, drama, music and visual arts including arts literacy and appreciation; and 7) allow learners to enjoy the health benefits of exercise and develop social skills through participation in Physical Education (p.10).

Roux (2006), Karstens (2010) and Jacobs (2012) note that the role which spirituality plays in the Life Skills subject is not clearly articulated for educators and there are no policy guidelines governing such implementation. The result is that educators do not know how to approach spiritual development in children.

### **Well-being as Part of the School Curriculum**

Two of the investigated curricula that focus on inclusive education, appear to consign the concept of well-being to the domain of a specific subject. The New Zealand National Curriculum (New Zealand Department of Education, 2007) deals with well-being in the subject, Health and Physical Education, while, as mentioned above, the South African National Curriculum (South African Department of Education, 2011) deals with well-being in the subject, Life Skills. Roux (2006) maintains that other subjects taught in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases, such as Creative Arts, Human and Social Sciences, Science and Technology, need not be excluded from the educators' means to explore and develop spiritual well-being - each subject has aspects that appeal to a person's spirituality and can lead to encouraging spiritual well-being. Roux (2006, p. 156) highlights that "art, music and the sciences contribute to the fulfilment of human nature—the spiritual well-being, the wellness of a person—which can help one to make sense of life and one's life experiences."

On further investigation of policies and curricula other than that of South Africa, the researcher found Ng's (2012) statement on the importance of spirituality being reinforced in legislation and policy directives in England and Wales. Ng (2012) notes how the United Kingdom's Education Reform Act 1988 placed spirituality in the domain of whole-school policy called SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development), causing spirituality and the other linked domains to be considered as features of each subject. Later the UK's Education (Schools) Act 1992, gave the responsibility of children's spiritual development to schools' governing bodies and increased accountability through requiring mandatory inspections by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED 2004, cited in Ng, 2012).

Through the Creative Arts section of the Life Skills curriculum, children are given opportunities to learn artistic modes of self-expression (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Roux (2006), Karstens (2010) and Jacobs (2012) note that the role which spirituality plays in the Life Skills subject is not clearly articulated for educators and there are no policy guidelines governing such implementation. The result is that educators may not be following a specific plan in their approach to spiritual development of children.

State-funded schools in England are required to "offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society" (England Department for Education, 2014). Although Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) is not a statutory subject, the PSHE Association (2015), states that English state schools are encouraged by their department of education to follow the PSHE education programme, as fulfilment of their statutory duties. Alternatively, or in addition, schools in England include the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development standard, which is woven into the whole curriculum; although aspects of this will suit certain subjects better than others (Department for Education, England, 2014).

Roux (2006) maintains that other subjects taught in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases, such as Human and Social Sciences, Science and Technology, need not be excluded from the educators' means to explore and develop spiritual well-being - each subject has aspects that appeal to a person's spirituality and can lead to encouraging spirituality. Roux (2006, p. 156) highlights that "art, music and the sciences contribute to the fulfilment of human nature—the

spiritual well-being, the wellness of a person—which can help one to make sense of life and one’s life experiences.”

Each of the curricula investigated during this study were designed to develop different skills, knowledge and values, chosen to suit the developmental stage of the child. Mueller (2010) explains that children in the Intermediate Phase (ages 9 - 12) are at a level of cognitive and emotional development that allows them to express interests in completing tasks, learning useful information and skills, and to have a sense of industry and productivity. Industry features in Erikson’s (1963, cited in McLeod, 2013) fourth stage of psychosocial development (ages 5-12). These psychosocial developmental stages are also influential in understanding the spiritual development of a child, as evidenced in Fowler’s (1981) theory of Faith Development.

### **Psychosocial and Spiritual Development of the Primary School Child**

Erik Erikson (as cited in McLeod, 2013) describes each person’s psychosocial developmental process of actively and adaptively exploring their environment, and seeking to control it. He proposed that social influences significantly shape human development and that the timing of the eight major life crises, or conflicts, which we face during our life-span, is influenced by our biological maturation, psychological needs as well as the social demands we experience at specific stages of life. The eight developmental stages are: (1) trust versus mistrust (ages 0 to 18 months); (2) autonomy versus shame and doubt (ages 18 months to 3 years); (3) initiative versus guilt (ages 3 to 5 years); (4) industry versus inferiority (ages 5 to 12 years); (5) identity versus role confusion (ages 12 to 18 years); (6) intimacy versus isolation (ages 18 to 40 years); (7) generativity versus stagnation (ages 40 to 65 years); (8) ego integrity versus despair (ages 65+years). With each conflict, particular abilities or skills, emotions, motives and behaviours develop (Shaffer, 1996). Tchombe (2011:274) suggests that the psychological and social support from the child’s parents and educators, can assist he child in being more successfully at dealing with the crisis in each stage. As a result, the child will be enabled to manage the challenges during development to promote a healthy development of the child’s ego (self”).

A caution is given by Pillay (2014), against using Erikson’s (1963) psychosocial theory without considering the cultural dynamics which affect each

stage of a child's development. Cultural norms of behaviour can affect how a child's socialisation is carried out by his family and community. Fowler (as cited in Mueller, 2010) draws a parallel between Erikson's theory and his 'Faith Development Theory'. Erikson proposes a child learns to trust or mistrust others, in his first year, while Fowler indicates that from birth to the age of 1 year, the child's spirituality develops foundations of trust, courage, hope, love and mutuality. Also, in the years 3-6, Erikson (as cited in Mueller, 2010) identifies the primary task of developing a sense of initiative – a readiness to embark on a new adventure - as opposed to a sense of guilt. Fowler, in turn, (as cited in Mueller, 2010) identifies that children (ages 3-6) show growth in their ability to use language to understand stories of faith and tell their own faith stories. According to Fowler, language and stories will affect their thinking about right and wrong, their ability to symbolise and their style of relating - to themselves, others, their environment and a transcendent other.

Tchombe (2011) agrees with this and states that at this age children are aware of moral values and are able to recognise cultural and individual differences. The guidance and support provided by teachers and parents/ guardians is therefore necessary in order to instil a primary school child's respect for moral values.

Tchombe (2011) also brings attention to the reality that, at specifically this time in their lives, children work hard at doing what they are told, doing things correctly and being responsible.

Mueller (2010) explains that children in primary school (ages 6-12) experience a transition point in their spirituality when they begin to show a capacity for logical thought and their thinking becomes less egocentric. The transition point is referred to in Fowler's 'Mythic-Literal Faith' stage (Mueller, 2010), wherein the child is able to make connections with things other than themselves.

Fowler's 'Faith Development Theory', describes children between six and twelve years of age as having a growing need to understand "how things are" (Fowler, as cited in Mueller, 2010, p.199). Andrade (2014) adds to the explanation of Fowler's theory, stating that children between approximately seven and twelve years of age have a strong belief in the concept of justice and fairness, and the spiritual concepts of right and wrong. Andrade (2014) explains that children take on stories, beliefs and observances of their faith community as their own; however, they have not consciously evaluated their values and beliefs. From this, the researcher deduces that stories and rituals can be used to assist Intermediate Phase children in

developing connections or relationships with self, others, their community and their environment and/or a higher power. Following Fisher's research, if these connections or relationships are healthy, children's spiritual well-being can develop. As argued by Pillay (2014), how a person makes connections with other people is influenced by cultural norms and practises. Educators are encouraged to recognise and value the cultures of the children in their school and this includes valuing children's expressions of their spirituality (Lockwood and Thomas, 2009; Pillay, 2014). On this topic of expression, investigations into the effects of socialisation on children's expression of their spirituality have shown that dominant cultures and discourses which children are exposed to tend to repress, obscure or overlay the natural way that children express their spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006; Tacey, 2004). Hyde (2005) encourages educators to explore ways of assisting children to express their inherent spirituality in the way that comes most naturally to them – devoid of cultural expectations.

### **Spirituality and Cultural Considerations**

Demonstrating consideration of the cultures of individuals within each school aligns with the inclusive education focus of South Africa's Department of Education. In White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), an explanation of what inclusive education includes acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether it be age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status. Lockwood and Thomas (2009) encourage educators to recognise and value the cultures of the children in their school and this includes valuing children's expressions of their spirituality.

MacMurry (1991, in De Klerk-Luttig, 2008) describes the South African concept of *Ubuntu*, as a philosophy that puts community and relationships at the centre of spirituality. Considering that this philosophy is part of the culture of people in each place of work and learning in South Africa, it could be argued that educators who are not familiar with this philosophy, would benefit from investing time into learning about the social expressions of Ubuntu. The insight gained from the investigation would assist educators in responding respectfully to people in the school environment, who follow this philosophy.

According to Masango (2006), traditional African spirituality was passed along to the modern generations beginning with African high priests/philosophers of ancient times such as Socht and Onuiphis, of Egypt. These priests taught Pythagoras, who studied in Africa for twenty-two years and taught the concept that each person has the breath of God within them, thus having 'an image of God' or a spark of life within them, placed by God, which gives them their humanness or Ubuntu. This humanness gives each person a right to be respected. People within a community will show respect for one another but even more so when the person has become an elder – has lived a long life, has shown others goodness and has shared wisdom with the younger members of the community (Masango, 2006).

For the purpose of developing relationships with the children in their classrooms, educators could prepare themselves for dealing with the diversity of cultures represented there. This could be accomplished through learning about different cultural norms of behaviour and expressions of spirituality, thereby being more equipped to show respect and more prepared for planning explorations of spirituality.

## References

- Abosi, C.O., & Kandjii-Murangi, I. (Eds.), (2004). *Education in Botswana: a reading text*. Botswana: Macmillan Botswana Publishing Co (Pty) Ltd.
- Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI), (2007). *Orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa: Problems, players and possibilities for change*. Retrieved December 5, 2015, from <http://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/old/OVC%20Phase%20One%20Report.pdf>
- Akos, P., Briggs, M.K., Czyszczon, G., & Eldridge, A. (2011). Assessing and promoting spiritual wellness as a protective factor in secondary schools. *Counselling and Values, 55*,171-184.
- Botma, Y., Greeff, M., Mulaudzi, F.M., & Wright, S.C.D. (2009). *Research in Health Sciences*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Boyd-Wilson, B.M. (2015). Are spirituality and spiritual well-being the same? Available at [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same) Accessed 22 September 2015.
- Bradshaw, J., Hoelscher, P., & Richardson, D. (2007). An index of child well-being in the European Union. *Social Indicators Research, 80*, 133–77.
- Burns, N., & Grove, S.K. (2005). *The practice of nursing research*. (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing amongst five approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage publishers.
- Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Clark Plano, V.L., & Morales A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *Counseling Psychologist, 35* (2), 236-264.
- Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) - The State of South Australia. (2006). Does spiritual wellbeing belong in education? Spiritual well-being and education discussion paper. Author: Adelaide. Retrieved from [www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44](http://www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44) Date accessed: 7 April 2014.
- Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) - The State of South Australia. (2007). DECS learner wellbeing framework for birth to year 12. Author: Adelaide. Retrieved from [www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject](http://www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject) Date accessed: 7 April 2014.
- De Klerk-Luttig, J. (2008). Spirituality in the workplace: a reality for South African teachers? *South African Journal of Education, 28*, 505-517.
- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement. Life Skills: Foundation Phase Grades R-3. Final draft*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.za/> Date accessed: 19 July 2014.

- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement: Intermediate phase Grades 4-6*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.za/>  
Date accessed: 22 May 2015.
- De Vos, A.S. (2010). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions*. (3rd ed.) pp. 333-349. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Elton-Chalcraft, S. (2002). Empty Wells: how well are we doing at spiritual well-being? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 7(3), 309-328.
- Emmons, R.A. (1999). *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality*. New York: Guilford.
- Fisher, J. (2009). Getting the balance: assessing spirituality and well-being among children and youth. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14, 273–288.
- Forbes, S. (1996, June). *Values in holistic education*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Conference on 'Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child', Roehampton Institute, London.
- Fouché, C.B., & Delpont, C.S.L. (2010). Introduction to the research process. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B Fouché, & C.L.S Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 71-85). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché, C.B. (2010). Qualitative research designs. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B., Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 267-273). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché, C.B. (2010). Writing the research proposal. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 267-273). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Friesen, S., Oelke, N.D., & White, D.E. (2012). Management of a large qualitative data set: Establishing trustworthiness of the data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(3), 244-258.
- Gay, L.R., Mills, G.E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Garamond: Edward Brothers.
- Gomez, R., & J. W. Fisher. (2003). Domains of spiritual well-being and development and validation of the spiritual well-being questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences* 35, 1975–1991.
- Greeff, M. (2010). Information collection: Interviewing. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 286-313). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Health Professions Council of South Africa. (2008). *Guidelines for good practice in health care professions: General ethical guidelines for health research. Booklet 6* [Booklet]. Pretoria: Author.
- Heath, M.A., Donald, D.R., Theron, L.C. & Lyon, L.C. (2014). AIDS in South Africa: Therapeutic interventions to strengthen resilience among orphans and vulnerable children. *School Psychology International*, 35(3), 309-337.  
doi: 10.1177/0143034314529912
- Holmes, D. (2012). *Spiritual Health Booklet*. Retrieved April 7, 2014, from [http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual\\_health\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual_health_booklet.pdf)
- Hsieh, H-F., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. doi: 10.1177/1049732305276687.
- Jacobs, A.C, Viljoen, C.T., & Van der Walt, J.L. (2012). Spiritual well-being and lifestyle choices in adolescents: A quantitative study among Afrikaans-speaking learners in the North West Province of South Africa. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Mental Health*, 24 (1), 89–98.
- Karstens, A.C. (2010). *Towards an epistemological framework for a Life Orientation programme based on spirituality* (Doctoral thesis). Available from NWU IR database, (Accession number nwuir.10394.4359)
- Lockwood, V., & Thomas, P. (2009). Nurturing the spiritual child: Compassion, connection and a sense of self. *Research in Practise Series*. Early Childhood Australia Inc.: Watson.
- Long, L. (2008). Narrative autoethnography and the promotion of spiritual well-being in teacher research and practice. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 26 (3): 187–196.
- Loewenthal, K.M. (2008). *A short introduction: Psychology of religion*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Luca, M. (2013). How many interviews are enough? Retrieved September 23, 2015, from [http://www.researchgate.net/post/How\\_many\\_interviews\\_are\\_needed\\_in\\_a\\_qualitative\\_research\\_Is\\_there\\_any\\_rule\\_or\\_popular\\_practice](http://www.researchgate.net/post/How_many_interviews_are_needed_in_a_qualitative_research_Is_there_any_rule_or_popular_practice)
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews. Retrieved on September 23, 2015, from Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 11(3), Art. 8, Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100387>.
- Mata, J. (2014). Sharing my journey and opening spaces: spirituality in the classroom. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 19 (2), 112–122.
- McLeod, S. A. (2013). Erik Erikson. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from [www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html)

- Macnab, A. (2013). The Stellenbosch consensus statement on health promoting schools. *IUHPE – Global Health Promotion* 20 (1):78-81 Retrieved from <http://ped.sagepub.com> doi: 10.1177/1757975912464252
- Miller L (2013, August 4). *Spirituality and Children* [Video file]. Available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_OCwCNeBGY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_OCwCNeBGY). Date of access: 10 September 2015.
- Ministry of Education. 2007 New Zealand National Curriculum. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/TheNationalCurriculum.aspx> Date accessed: 15 July 2014.
- Moodley, T., Beukes, R.I.B., & Esterhuysen, K.G.F. (2012). The Relationship between coping and spiritual well-being in a group of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19, 265–297.
- Moodley, T., Esterhuysen, K.G.F., & Beukes, R.B.I. (2012). Factor analysis of the spiritual well-being questionnaire using a sample of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19, 122–151.
- Moodley, T., Esterhuysen, K., & Beukes, R. (2012). The ways in which adolescents cope and their relationship to age, gender and specific religious variables. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 27(2), 10–20.9
- Moriarty, M.W. (2011). A conceptualization of children's spirituality arising out of recent research. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 16, 271–285.
- Mueller, C.R. (2010). Spirituality in children: Understanding and developing interventions. *Pediatric Nursing*, 36 (4), 197-208.
- Mukoma W & Flisher A J 2004 Evaluations of health promoting schools: a review of nine studies. *Health promotion international*, 19(3), 357-368  
doi: 10.1093/heapro/dah309
- Nash, S. (2009). Promoting young people's spiritual well-being through informal education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14(3), 235–247.
- New York State Education Department. (2015). Experience requirements. Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ctexp.html>
- New Zealand National Curriculum. (2007). <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Learning-areas/Health-and-physical-education>. Date accessed: 16 July 2014.
- New Zealand's Education Council. (n.d). Being issued full practising certificate. Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from <http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz>

- Ng, Y-L. (2012). Spiritual development in the classroom: pupils' and educators' learning reflections. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(2), 167-185.
- Noddings, N. (2015). A richer, broader view of education. *Society*, 52, 232-236.  
doi: 10.1007/s12115-015-9892-4
- Pickert, K. (2014, February 3). The art of being mindful. *TIME*, 183(4), 32-38.
- Pillay, J. (2014). Challenges educational psychologists face working with vulnerable children. In T. Corcoran (ed). *Psychology in Education: Critical Theory-Practice*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Prinsloo, E. (2007). Implementing Life Orientation programmes in the new curriculum in South African schools: perceptions of principals and life orientation teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(1), 155-170.
- Puchalski, C.M., Ferrell, B., Virani, R., Otis-Green, S., Baird, P., Bull, J., . . . Sulmasy, D. (2009). Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care: The Report of the Consensus Conference. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 12(10), 885-904.
- Rees, G., Francis, L.J., & Robbins, M. (2005). *Spiritual health and the well-being of urban young people*. The Commission on Urban Life and Faith / University of Wales, Bangor / The Children's Society.
- Roux, C. (2006). Children's spirituality in social context: a South African example. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(1), 151–163.
- Seifert, T.A. (2005). The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Centre of Inquiry. Retrieved from <http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/> Date accessed: 12 February 2014.
- Shaffer, D. R. (1996). *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and adolescence* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Shope, A. (2015). Spiritual well-being looks more specifically. Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same)
- South African Council for Educators. (2011). Criteria for registration. Retrieved on September 23, 2015, from [http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit\\_default\\_14.Registration.html](http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit_default_14.Registration.html)

- Strydom, H. (2010). Sampling and sampling methods. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp.192-204). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Strydom, H. and Delpont, CSL. (2010). Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp 327-332). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Tacey, D. (2004). *The spirituality revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality*. New York: Brunner Routledge.
- Tchombe, T.S.M. (2011). Psychosocial parameters of classroom processes. In A.B., Nsamenang, & T.M.S. Tchombe. (Eds). *Handbook of African educational theories and practices: A generative teacher education curriculum*. Bamenda: Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC). Available at <http://www.thehdrc.org>.  
Date accessed: 25 October 2015.
- The National Curriculum of the United Kingdom. 2013.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>  
Date accessed: 20 July 2014.
- UNRC (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25, 20 November 1989.
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H, & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15, 398–405.
- Wagener, L.M & Malony, H.N. (2006). Spiritual and religious pathology in childhood and adolescence. (In E. C. Roehlkepartain; P.E. King; L. Wagener & P.L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Winch, C. (2012). For philosophy of education in teacher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38 (3), 305–322.
- Zhang, K. (2012). Spirituality and early childhood special education: Exploring a 'forgotten' dimension. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(1), 39–49.

## **Section 2: Article**

### **Author Guidelines**

Guidelines for Contributors

#### **Editorial policy**

The South African Journal of Education (SAJE) publishes original research articles reporting on research that fulfils the criteria of a generally accepted research paradigm; review articles, intended for the professional scientist and which critically evaluate the research done in a specific field in education; book reviews, i.e. concise evaluations of books that have recently appeared; and letters in which criticism is given of articles that appeared in this Journal.

Indicate the relevance of the study for education research where the education system is characterised by transformation, and/or an emerging economy/development state, and/or scarce resources.

Research articles of localised content, i.e. of interest only to specific areas or specialists and which would not appeal to the broader readership of the Journal, should preferably not be submitted for consideration by the Editorial Committee.

Ethical considerations: A brief narrative account/description of ethical issues/aspects should be included in articles that report on empirical findings.

All articles will be submitted to referees (national and/or international). The consulting editors/referees will have documented expertise in the area the article addresses. When reviews are received, an editorial decision will be reached to either accept the article, reject the article, request a revision (in some cases for further peer review), or request arbitration. As a rule not more than one article per author or co-author will be accepted per year for refereeing and possible publication.

Authors bear full responsibility for the accuracy and recency of the factual content of their contributions. A signed declaration in respect of originality must accompany each manuscript.

On submission of the manuscript, the author(s) must present a written undertaking that the article has not been published or is not being presented for publication elsewhere.

Plagiarism entails the use of ideas that have been published previously and is prohibited.

Word-for-word copying of the work of others should be indicated by means of double quotation marks. When quoting, always provide the author's surname, year of publication and the page number e.g. (Brown, 1997:40-48).

Redundancy/self-plagiarism is unacceptable. It may occur in the following ways:

- 1) Authors reproduce sections of their previously published papers without quotation.
- 2) Authors create several papers slightly differing from each other, submitting it to different journals without acknowledging it (Information adapted from

Code of Ethics for the Journal of International Business Studies (n.d.). Available at [http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/author\\_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/author_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines). Accessed 20 March 2013).

In cases where redundancy is suspected, the Editor in collaboration with the Editorial Board, will investigate the matter.

Plagiarism and redundancy/self-plagiarism will be dealt with as follows:

1) With regards to papers already published - a formal notice of redundant publication will be issued to readers as part of the next edition. The Editor has the right to refuse accepting submissions of those authors for a certain period of time (Information adapted from Redundant Publication: The Editorial Policy Committee of the Council of Science Editors (n.d.). Available at [http://natajournals.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1256771128861/redundant\\_pub.pdf](http://natajournals.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1256771128861/redundant_pub.pdf). Accessed 20 March 2013).

2) In cases of major concerns authors will be denied the privilege of publishing the particular paper in the South African Journal of Education.

3) In cases of minor concern authors will be asked to rephrase the duplicated sentences.

It is expected of authors to cite materials which overlap with their work within the manuscript. Upon request of the Editor, the information should be made available where

necessary (Information adapted from Code of Ethics for the Journal of International Business Studies (n.d.). Available at [http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/author\\_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/author_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines). Accessed 20 March 2013).

The author(s) must ensure that the language in the manuscript is suitably edited and the name and address of the language editor must be supplied.

Copyright of all published material is vested in the Education Association of South Africa (EASA).

### **Page charges**

Article processing charges (APCs) – ZAR R4500 per article for South Africans and USD \$500 for international authors. Authors will be invoiced for the required charges. Total number of pages should preferably not exceed 15 pages (± 5,500 words).

### **Preparation of manuscripts**

The manuscript, including abstract, figure captions, tables, etc. should be typed on A4-size paper and the pages numbered consecutively. Manuscripts should be in Microsoft Word format.

Text should be set in **Arial** font, **12** point in size with **1.5 line spacing**. Margins should be **2.54 cm all around**.

The title should be brief (max. 15 words), followed by the author(s) name(s), affiliation(s) (Department and University), and an e-mail address for the corresponding author.

An abstract in English (approximately 190 words) must be provided, followed by up to 10 keywords, presented alphabetically.

The text of the article should be divided into unnumbered sections (e.g. Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgements, References, Appendix, in that order). Secondary headings may be used for further subdivision. Footnotes, if any, will be changed to endnotes.

Authors must observe publishing conventions and should not use terminology that can be construed as sexist or racist.

**Figures** should be clear, black/white originals, on separate pages — not embedded in the text. Grey or coloured shading must NOT be used. **Tables/figures** should be numbered consecutively, with a brief descriptive heading/caption. Information should not be duplicated in text and tables. Each table/figure must be referred to in the text by number — not 'above' or 'below'. They will be placed where possible after the first reference.

## References

References are cited in the text by the author(s) name(s) and the year of publication in brackets (Harvard method), separated by a comma, e.g. (Brown, 1997).

If several articles by the same author and from the same year are cited, the letters a, b, c, etc. should be added after the year of publication, e.g. (Brown, 1977a).

Page references in the text should follow a colon after the date, e.g. (Brown, 1997:40-48).

In works by three or more authors the surnames of all authors should be given in the first reference to such a work. In subsequent references to this work only the name of the first author is given, followed by the abbreviation et al., e.g. (Ziv et al., 1995).

If reference is made to an anonymous item in a newspaper, the name of the newspaper is given in brackets, e.g. (Daily News, 1999).

For personal communications (oral or written) identify the person and indicate in brackets that it is a personal communication, e.g. (M Smith, pers. comm.).

## List of references

Only sources cited in the text must be listed, in alphabetical order, after the article. References should be presented as indicated in the following examples. Special attention should be paid to the required punctuation.

**Journal articles:**

Johnson DW & Johnson RT 1999. Gifted students illustrate co-operative learning. *Educational Leadership*, 50:60-61.

**Books:**

Van Zyl R (ed.) 1994. *Recent advances in classroom research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

**Chapters in books:**

Dukzec S 1988. Gender issues. In D Hicks & J Brown (eds). *Education for peace*. London: Routledge.

**Unpublished theses or dissertations:**

Squelch J 1991. Teacher training for multicultural education in a multicultural society. Med dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

**Anonymous newspaper references:**

*Citizen* 1996. Education for all, 22 March.

**Electronic references:**

*Published under author's name:*

Wilson J 2000. The blame culture. *British Educational Research Journal*, 26.

Available at

<http://www.govsources/gtp%access>. Accessed 20 April 2005.

*Website references: No author:*

These references are not archival and are therefore subject to change in any way and at any time. If it is essential to present them, they should be included in a numbered endnote and not in the reference list.

**Personal communications:**

Not retrievable and not listed.

**Submission of manuscripts for publication:**

Manuscripts may be submitted electronically by e-mail or via the internet.

Manuscripts should be submitted in MS Word format.

**E-mail submissions:**

Manuscript and covering letter must be e-mailed to *Estelle.Botha@up.ac.za*

**Internet submissions:**

Website: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za>

Use the "Register as Author" link to register and submit an article. This will enable you to track the status of your article on the website.

For inquiries contact *Estelle.Botha@up.ac.za*

## **Submission Preparation Checklist**

1. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration.
2. The submission file is in Microsoft Word format.
3. All URL addresses in the text (e.g., <http://pkp.sfu.ca>) are activated and ready to click.
4. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the [Author Guidelines](#), which is found in About the Journal.
5. The text has had the authors' names removed. If an author is cited, "Author" and year are used in the bibliography and footnotes, instead of author's name, paper title, etc. The author's name has also been removed from the document's Properties, which in Microsoft Word is found in the File menu.
6. The article is approximately 5500 words or 15 pages.
7. The text was approved by a language editor.
8. Empirical data must be checked by a statistical consultant.

## **Copyright Notice**

If the article is accepted for publication, copyright of this article will be vested in the Educational Association of South Africa.

## **Privacy Statement**

The names and e-mail addresses entered in this journal site will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party.

**Promoting spiritual well-being of children:  
experiences and perceptions of primary school  
educators**

**ST Grant**

**23317396**

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree *Magister Artium* of *Psychology* at the Potchefstroom  
Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof AW Nienaber

December 2015

# **Promoting spiritual well-being of children: experiences and perceptions of primary school educators**

**Susan Grant**, School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa  
stgrant777@gmail.com

*Abstract:* Primary school educators across the globe are in a unique position to witness the effects, on children, of stressors that accompany twenty-first century urban life. Various health promoting programmes can assist school communities in their efforts to support children in developing necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage their lives and deal with stressors. Scientific studies have shown that spirituality and spiritual well-being, can be a source of healing and support for children, in their personal and academic lives. This qualitative study explored how educators' perceive and experience spirituality in the primary school context and their views on promoting children's spiritual well-being (SWB). Results indicate that many educators have an inclusive perception of spirituality; not describing it as only being concerned with religion. Educators' are actively participating in this process and consider it a valuable aspect of children's development, despite experiencing some hindrances to their efforts.

*Keywords:* child development, children's spirituality, educators' experiences, health-promoting schools, inclusive education, spiritual well-being, well-being

## **Introduction**

A shift in the perceptions of spirituality has occurred within modern society and it is no longer a subject too controversial for the school context. In differentiating it from religion, more schools across the western world are introducing spirituality into curricula as a means to address holistic well-being in children (Karstens, 2010).

Tacey (2004) notes that professionals in the fields of psychology, education and social work are increasingly aware of the prevalence of depression, addiction, suicide and psychological suffering in modern society. Children are not excluded from these psycho-social issues (Miller, 2015). Tacey (2004) stresses the significance of spirituality as a response to these issues and that the spiritual life is no longer a

specialist concern, restricted to those who belong to religious traditions. There is a spirituality revolution occurring world-wide, with significant new interest being shown in the reality of spirituality and its healing effects on life, health, community and well-being (Tacey, 2004).

Despite this revolution, spirituality in the field of education remains a sensitive subject within the South African context, which is compounded by the alienation experienced by many children during the apartheid era (Roux, 2006). During this time, schools promoted an exclusive, single-faith, doctrine-focused Christian National Education (Roux, 2006).

Today, however, the more contemporary approach to spirituality, and the one utilised in this research study, is more inclusive to the South African and multicultural context. Jacobs, Viljoen and Van der Walt (2012) and Emmons (1999) describe this universal concept of spirituality as a focus on the search for meaning, relationships, connectedness, unity and transcendence which is independent of the need for a religious framework. Zhang (2010) adds that spirituality is an inherent aspect of being human, while Hay and Nye (2006) describe spirituality in terms of 'relational consciousness' and refer to a heightened awareness or perceptiveness to the physical world and the transcendental world. This awareness adds value and meaning to everyday experiences of relating to the world (Moriarty, 2011; Puchalski et al., 2009).

Both Walton (cited in DECS Discussion Paper, 2006) and Fisher (cited in DECS Discussion Paper, 2006) distinguish between spirituality and religion. These authors suggest that religion focuses on beliefs and rules of faith – such as conduct, rituals, doctrine and traditions – while spirituality is a broader concept that encompasses a person's relations to self, others and the environment. In this paradigm, every person can be considered to be spiritual, not just the religious.

From his research into the spiritual well-being of school children Fisher (2009) developed his theory of Spiritual Well-Being which includes four domains and describes the level or quality within these domains of relationship i.e. relating to self, relating to others, to the environment and/or to a higher being.

Education, as a multipurpose field of knowledge and practise, assists individuals in building these relationships within their societies, whether formalised in schools or informally, as in the home environment (Winch, 2012). Educators who promote spirituality and the spiritual well-being of children in their care, are facilitating a variety of positive outcomes (Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuyse, 2012), or "change[s]"

for the better” (Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi, 2004). These outcomes prepare the child for life and include development of a positive self-image, a personal life-purpose, healthy interpersonal relationships, improved academic achievements and better coping strategies for managing life’s emotional, mental and physical challenges (Jacobs, Viljoen & van der Walt, 2012; Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuysen, 2012; Winch, 2012).

Considering that school is the place where learners spend most of their time during the day, schools are where systems could be put into place to ensure that children receive support for their spiritual well-being. Therefore, the current study sought to establish and document the perceptions and experiences of primary school educators in providing support for children’s spiritual well-being, in public primary schools.

## **Purpose of education**

The pervasive purpose of South Africa’s *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* acknowledges the importance of preparing children for life by facilitating development of skills and values for achieving self-fulfilment, as evidenced in the statement of purpose in The Curriculum and Assessment Policy document of the Department of Basic Education (2011). In the light of this fact that the main purpose of preparing children is to ensure that they function well within their societies, Forbes (1996:6) describes the classroom as:

a community, which is within the larger community of the school, which is within the larger community of the village, town, or city, and which is, by extension, within the larger community of humanity. How life is lived at the smallest level should reflect what is considered to be ‘right living’ in the largest context.

Living in the large contexts of 21<sup>st</sup>-century societies entails experiencing numerous stressors. Children across the globe face economic and social crises, natural disasters and the effects of fast-changing technologies on the way they and their families live their daily lives (Lockwood & Thomas, 2009).

## **Stressors faced by South African children**

The adverse effects of urban life, on people world-wide, include exposure to crime, vandalism, drug-taking, drunkenness, violence, unemployment, pollution and poverty (Rees et al., 2005). Moodley, Beukes and Esterhuysen (2012) add social,

cultural, political and economic change to the list of influencing factors on children's well-being in South Africa. These changes contribute to stress, depression, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness - all serving to diminish the level of children's well-being (Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuysen, 2012).

Heath, Donald, Theron and Lyon (2014:309) give further insight into the South African situation; with the declaration that "South Africa has the highest per capita of recorded HIV/AIDS cases" compared to other countries. Considering that 17.8 million children have lost one or both parents through HIV/AIDS worldwide (Heath et al., 2014), numerous South African children have had to become the head of their homes and care for siblings and/or ill parents (Mwomba & Pillay, 2015).

These statements and facts accentuate a need for investigation into different means of supporting and promoting South African children's well-being; a need supported by Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI, 2007:5) who maintain that "South Africa's strength and resilience as a country is dependent on the well-being and health of her children".

### **The Need for a Focus on Spiritual Well-Being in Education Contexts**

The author proposes that in order for South Africa, as a country, to show evidence of resilience and strength, the resilience and strength of her children would need to be promoted. Miller (2015) has identified spirituality as a source of resilience, protection and thriving, for children facing various psychosocial crises.

From her studies, Miller (2015) published scientific evidence which supports the significance of spirituality in physical and mental health. The evidence of her research and other studies like it, showed that a child who has a sustained spiritual engagement/relationship with a higher power and a shared spiritual engagement and spiritual identity with his/her mother, is 80% protected against experiencing major depression any time between the ages of 16-26; the window of risk (Miller, 2015).

Other researchers such as Long (2008) and Akos, Briggs, Czyszczon and Eldridge (2011) add credence to the observation that there are numerous positive outcomes of sustained spirituality, including greater success in school achievements, improved coping ability and healthier lifestyle choices (Long, 2008). Spiritual well-being serves as a protective factor that can assist children and young people in their defence against risk elements they can encounter, such as unplanned pregnancy and

experimenting with illegal drugs, but it can also lead to thriving, even in the absence of risk factors (Akos et al., 2011). Fowler (cited in Long 2008) gives additional weight to this by evidencing a tendency for children to become more accepting of others, more confident and more caring, when their spirituality is nurtured.

Boyd-Wilson (2015) maintains that spiritual well-being derives from spirituality. Shope (2015) adds that spiritual well-being focuses more specifically on how a person's spirituality may be affecting the quality of his life. Therefore, it could be argued that if spiritual well-being is promoted during the child's school experiences, his quality of life would be influenced positively. The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975, cited in Gomez and Fisher, 2003:1976) comprehensively defines *spiritual* well-being, as:

a state of being, reflecting positive feelings, behaviours, and cognitions of relationships with oneself, others, the transcendent and nature, that in turn provide the individual with a sense of identity, wholeness, satisfaction, joy, contentment, beauty, love, respect, positive attitudes, inner peace and harmony, and purpose and direction in life.

The South Australia Department of Education and Child Services acknowledge the relevance of well-being in education and have found that in order for children to engage readily with learning and to learn effectively, they need to be in an optimum state of well-being (DECS, 2007). Australia's public schools do not, however, include the term spirituality in the context of well-being; specifically if this involves focusing on religion, because it is considered inappropriate for public education to appear to support one religion over another (DECS, 2006).

Similarly, in South African public schools, the policy of inclusive education discourages favouring one religion above others and encourages the development of acceptance of people's differences (National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12, 2011). An additional reason for avoiding a focus on spirituality in the South African public schools context; Roux (2006) states, is because of its association with religion. Roux (2006) adds that the term spirituality was removed from the first drafts of the post-apartheid curriculum document (1997) and did not reappear in the later Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002). The reason being the lack of knowledge of the meaning and opportunities spiritual development requires from teachers and in teachers' training. This suggests to the author, that there is opportunity for

development of training programmes for educators, on the subject of promoting children's spirituality in the schools context.

### **Systems of support**

Currently, there are government policies and frameworks developed by South Africa's Departments of: Basic Education, Health and Social Development, which focus on supporting children's physical, social and cognitive well-being. The author proposes that, with a more informed awareness of the role which spiritual well-being plays in a child's holistic development; on the part of the above-mentioned departments, the existing frameworks could; both individually and collectively, provide schools management teams and educators with platforms for developing children's spirituality and promoting their spiritual well-being.

The current *Health Promoting Schools Programme* (Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and Department of Health (DoH, 2012) uses an approach wherein the school itself initiates experiences for teaching and learning. These experiences involve the whole school and strengthen the school's capacity to be a place where the safety and health of all adults and children living, working and learning there, is a focus (Mūkoma & Flisher, 2004). In addition, the *Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Policy* (CSTL) (Department of Education, 2011), offers an all-encompassing framework which can connect various care and support initiatives being implemented by schools, their support organisations and the wider communities within which they are situated.

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education (DoE), 2001), in turn, provides a framework that encourages an education and training system that is inclusive, holistic and integrated. A particular focus of the framework is to develop facilities and provide services to learners who experience barriers to learning. While South Africa's Department of Basic Education has developed the subject, Life Skills, to provide for the well-being of the child by focusing on holistic and inclusive education; namely developing his/her cognitive, physical, social and emotional aspects (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Roux (2006), Karstens (2010) and Jacobs (2012) note that the role which spirituality plays in the Life Skills/Life Orientation subject is not clearly articulated for educators and there are no policy guidelines governing such implementation. The result is that educators may not be following a specific plan in their approach to the

spiritual development of children. Other subjects taught in primary school, such as Human and Social Sciences, Science and Technology need not be excluded from the educators' means to explore and develop spiritual well-being - each subject has aspects that appeal to a person's spirituality (Roux, 2006).

## **Theoretical foundations**

Erik Erikson (as cited in McLeod, 2013) describes each person's psychosocial development as a process involving eight stages. A full description of these stages are not pertinent to this study, however, one stage which does have bearing on spiritual development of the primary school child, is the fourth stage – the School-Age stage. At this age (6 – 12) the child is in the Intermediate stage of school and needs to manage the conflict between Industry and Inferiority, where the psychological need to feel competent and to master new tasks, accompany the social demands of conforming to rules of social behaviour (Erikson cited in McLeod, 2013).

Tchombe (2011) recognises that children between 6 and 12 years are aware of moral values and they endeavour to do what they are told, doing things correctly and following rules set by authority figures. At this stage, there is great value in the guidance and support provided by teachers and parents/ guardians. This guidance instils children's respect for the moral values of their societies (Tchombe, 2011).

Mueller (2010) explains that children in primary school (ages 6 - 12) experience a transition point in their spirituality when they begin to show a capacity for logical thought and their thinking becomes less egocentric. The transition point is referred to in Fowler's 'Mythic-Literal Faith' stage (Mueller, 2010), wherein the child is able to make connections with things other than themselves (Fowler, as cited in Mueller, 2010:199).

Andrade (2014) adds that children between the ages of approximately 7 and 12 have a strong belief in the concept of justice and fairness, and the spiritual concepts of right and wrong. Children take on stories, beliefs and observances of their faith community as their own; however, they have not consciously evaluated their values and beliefs (Andrade, 2014). From this, the author deduces that stories and rituals can be used to assist Intermediate Phase children in developing connections or relationships with self, others, their community and their environment and/or a higher

power. Following Fisher's research, if these connections or relationships are healthy, children's spiritual well-being can develop.

As argued by Pillay (2014), how a person makes connections with other people is influenced by cultural norms and practises. Educators are encouraged to recognise and value the cultures of the children in their school and this includes valuing children's expressions of their spirituality (Lockwood and Thomas, 2009; Pillay, 2014), while Hyde (2005) encourages educators to explore ways of assisting children to express their inherent spirituality in the way that comes most naturally to them – devoid of cultural expectations.

## **Spirituality and Cultural Considerations**

Demonstrating consideration for the cultures of individuals within each school aligns with the inclusive education focus of South Africa's Department of Education. White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) gives an explanation of the focus of inclusive education, which is acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether it be age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status. An example of this would be acknowledgement of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, described by MacMurry (1991, in De Klerk-Luttig, 2008), which would be a sign of respect towards children and their families whose culture puts community and relationships at the centre of spirituality. Educators could, therefore, prepare themselves for dealing with the diversity of cultures represented in their classrooms by studying different cultural norms of behaviour and expressions of spirituality, thereby being more equipped to show respect and more prepared for planning explorations of spirituality.

The research question to be answered was thus: *What perceptions and experiences do educators have of promoting primary school children's spirituality and spiritual well-being?* Therefore, the aim of this research was to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences currently held by primary school educators regarding their promotion of children's spiritual well-being.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Design**

This research study followed the format of a qualitative design, originating from an interpretative approach, and aimed to understand the meaning that people i.e. primary school educators - attach to experiences in everyday life or phenomena (McRoy, 1995, cited in Fouché & Delport, 2010). The phenomenon of interest in this study is promoting spirituality and spiritual well-being of children in the primary school classrooms. A naturalistic paradigm was used; since the author followed a phenomenological view – subjectively exploring reality from the perspective of the persons who have had specific experiences of the phenomenon, while identifying educators' beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena (Fouché & Delport, 2010).

### **Population and sampling**

The participating individuals of this study were educators with primary school teaching experience. Nine primary schools in Port Elizabeth were approached for participation. Five schools were consenting; two independent mainstream schools, one government registered farm school, one independent school focusing on children with special learning needs and one public school. These were purposively chosen to represent urban schools; each of which serviced children from different socio-economic circumstances (upper-, middle- and lower-level working class). A non-probability purposive sampling method was used, allowing the author to select a sample of participants which contained the most characteristics of the population in focus – South African primary school educators, of any race, gender and age with at least two years of teaching experience (Strydom, 2010:202).

Twenty-five educators were interviewed; of which four were male. The majority (sixteen) of the teachers had more than fifteen years of teaching experience. The remaining nine of the participants had been teaching for between two and fifteen years. English is the home language for seventeen participants while, for the other eight participants, English is their first-additional language. Four of these eight speak Afrikaans as their home language while Xhosa is the home language for the other four.

### **Data collection**

The author involved gatekeepers, the school principals, in requesting participation of educators teaching in the grades Gr R – 7. Data collection was in the form of semi-structured interviews, suited to the exploratory type of study as the focus of this is to gain a detailed picture of the participant's perceptions of a particular topic

(Greeff, 2010). The open-ended questions allowed the author to investigate a multitude of perceptions in a defined area of interest (Greeff, 2010). Questions posed to the educator were:

- What is your understanding of the concept spirituality?
- What is your understanding of the term 'spiritual well-being'?
- What experiences have you had with children that can be considered examples of spirituality?
- How do you think children's spiritual well-being can be promoted in the classroom?

Thereafter, probing questions were asked for deeper understanding of the educators' answers, giving further clarity on their experiences and perceptions.

Directed Content Analysis was used as the method of data analysis because of its focus on text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005); the text data in this study being the transcripts of interviews with the educators and observation notes. The coding of the transcripts was preceded by the identification of key concepts as initial coding categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Theory developed from previous research on this topic such as Fisher's (2009) domains of Spiritual Well-being and Fowler's Faith Development Theory, served as an initial framework to identify coding categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

## **Ethical considerations**

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (Ethics number NWU-00337-15-S1), the Province of the Eastern Cape Education Department and the principals of the relevant schools. To protect the participants' privacy, anonymity was maintained and no names were used during the data collection.

## **Results**

The predetermined categories, generated from Fisher's (2009) Spiritual Well-Being model and Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory, proved useful in identifying which categories to group the themes of responses from participants.

Using the Directed Content method of analysis causes the possibility of informed bias to feature; challenging the naturalistic paradigm. Therefore, to improve the credibility of the results, the author enlisted the skills of a co-coder who analysed the data independent from the author's categories. Also, a consensus meeting

between the co-coder and the author, after the coding was completed, allowed for categories to be audited.

Considering that the population being reported on in this study was gathered using non-probability purposive sampling, the results cannot be considered a sample of the wider population of primary school educators in South Africa, and results from this study cannot be used as a precise indicator of the general perceptions and experiences of primary school educators.

The results of the data analysis revealed the following main categories:

- Perceptions of spirituality among educators
- Educators' perceptions of spiritual well-being
- Factors influencing the promotion of spiritual well-being in children
- Hindrances of educators' role in promoting spiritual well-being
- Educators' experiences of children's spirituality

### **Educators' perceptions of spirituality**

The responses studied in this research show a tendency among most participants to perceive spirituality a broad concept. All responses, except one, reflected a multitude of perceptions of spirituality. The exception was from a strictly religious perspective and indicated the importance which the participant places on his conception of faith.

The participants' perceptions were categorised into five different sub-categories, viz. *religion/faith*, the *mystical/transcendent*, *societal norms*, *humanist/existential* and a perception which Egan et al. (2011) refer to as "*inclusive*", meaning a combination of concepts into one expression of perception.

**Religion/Faith** Participating educators, who described spirituality in terms of religion or faith, were teaching in both public and independent Christian schools. The responses showed reference to the Christian faith, to Eastern religions and to African traditional religion. References were made to religious practises such as 'reading a Bible story', "*praying*" and "*meditation*", while one participant's perception of spirituality includes "*Chakra*", "*energies*" and "*auras*" within and around the human body.

A particular feature among their responses was the importance they placed on relationships - between the person and God, e.g. "*Spirituality for me is my relationship with God, the Father, and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; as a Christian*"; "*...it's how they connect to God at their age. How they see God as being a reality in their lives*";

and between the teacher and the child, e.g. *“If they don’t have freedom to discover, ask questions and to disagree, then you will not accomplish that nice relationship where you can actually make progress”*.

Responses referring to religion or faith, other than Christianity, were made by educators within both Christian and public schools, indicating an awareness of the diversity of the concept of spirituality, e.g. *“...it can mean different things for different children, depending on their background and home environment [...] for me personally and in this school, we focus on spirituality in a Christian sense”; “it’s a very broad term – spirituality - and will encompass a wide range of religions and a very wide range of beliefs of people, and respecting them”*.

Recognition was given to the duality of religion which many children experience when they follow traditional African practises or teachings as well as Christianity, in their homes, e.g. *“I believe spirituality refers to religion; what a learner believes [...] we have different beliefs. Like some, [...] they’re traditional believers, in our culture, that is; they believe in ancestors. And, they are also believers that believe like Christianity... [sic]”*.

Most educators who referred to religious spirituality included their perception of God as one who is instrumental in people’s lives – theirs and the children they teach e.g. *“...nothing that happens in your life is by chance. God’s intervention in your life is down to the finest detail”; “He knows where you’re going – the plan – and it’s almost like a hope”*.

**The mystical/transcendent** Educators whose perceptions centred on the mystical described spirituality as something beyond scientific explanation or intellectual reasoning and something that is not part of the physical world, e.g. *“...things that can’t necessarily be explained intellectually, or by your scientific mind, but your emotions, perhaps”; “...to me spirituality is your inner person ... it’s not necessarily related to your mind or your physical body, it’s related to the inner soul inside of you”; “it’s that part of you that’s invisible that you can’t tangibly touch”*. Many of the participants who used references to mystical spirituality, also used terms in their responses which are humanistic/existential in nature.

**Humanist/existential** For the purpose of this study, a perception of spirituality which is humanistic/existentialist in nature is one which includes reference to the purpose and meaning of life, values, personal identity or self-knowledge, holism and

aspects of relating to others. A dominant theme was the educators' awareness of their role in assisting children to identify their individual purpose in life, to experience and understand their individual value as a person, e.g. *'as a teacher, you need to encourage and motivate them to be their own person, and to take that inner soul that they have, and express themselves in a way that they feel confident to be who they actually are'*; *'It's basically just inclusivity - if you aren't allowing them to be the person that they are or tell you about their beliefs, ... the child's not going to feel very comfortable'*.

**Societal norms of behaviour** Two of the participants explicitly mentioned that they were engaged in the training of children; specifically regarding acceptable modes of personal and interpersonal behaviour; *"they find it difficult to separate truth from fantasy, or they're too scared to tell the truth 'cause they'll get into trouble, or whatever; but that's all part of training; "I'm training them and they have to realise that ... And they have to also learn [sic] to accept and that we were meant to be different... It's a life-long journey"*.

Another educator recognised the influence of society and religious teachings on what is considered acceptable behaviour, *"it depends who teaches that person, so, I don't know if it's like society that forms like – this is right and this is wrong - because each different religion and tradition has an idea [sic], but I think that everything's got that element of: Either it's right or it's wrong, and it's knowing which is which"*.

**Inclusive** The majority of educators had an inclusive perception of spirituality, which can be described as a blend of various categories of perception, including religion. One educator's response to the question on her perception of spirituality is an especially good example of the inclusive perception; *"Isn't it about achieving a harmony, or a balance? Because, we're made up of the three parts, and we shouldn't neglect that part [spirituality], so, in respecting the children's different things [sic], whether they are Muslim or Hindu or Traditional African, or whatever, the child shouldn't feel conflicted, emotionally, between what they are being taught at home and here, ... there are basic tenets that are true to every major religion – morals, if you'd like to put it that way. And, I think that certain subjects that we do at school also can bring out that spirituality; such as Art, such as Music, and so on, and just getting a well-balanced child [sic]."*

### **Educators' perceptions of spiritual well-being (SWB)**

Relationship with God featured strongly in the participants' responses, when asked about their perceptions of SWB. e.g. *"Spiritual well-being is ...the measure to which you understand God's love for you and His reality in your life. Their [children's] well-being is how much they actually relate to God...do they actually know Him and experience Him in their lives? Are they connected to Him, are they able to speak to Him and know that He's involved in every detail of their lives?"*

Other responses were more focused on the individual's state of being such as his/her level of *"emotional stability"*; and *"having a balanced life"*. One educator described it as, *"...knowing what you work towards and who you're working for"*.

### **Factors influencing the promotion of spiritual well-being in children**

Three categories of influencing factors were identified; the role of the educator, the school and the parent/s.

- **The role of the educator**

The majority of educators identified that they are role-models of correct behaviour and attitudes, such as *"tolerance"*, *"forgiveness"*, *"kindness"* and *"love"*. One educator stated, *"You've got to have grace and you've got to show mercy, otherwise they don't learn to show mercy and grace"*.

In addition, educators showed an awareness of the influence of their personal world-view on their manner of promoting spirituality and their role in laying foundations of experience and knowledge about God and about different religions. A general attitude was that educators need to encourage the children to use the experiences and knowledge gained in class, as well as their freedom to choose what they believe.

Relationship-building featured prominently in educators' descriptions of how they promoted SWB in children. The majority of educators acknowledged the value of the relationship between educator and child, in the process of learning, e.g. *"If you just teach Maths, and you do not care about them, they will not like you, and they probably will not like your subject – in any school"*; *"for me, as a teacher, the academics [sic] is almost secondary because I know if that child feels valued and they know they have worth, then the academics [sic] almost comes easier to them"*.

Four of the participants expressed the opinion that educators' own self-acceptance and *"genuineness"* or *"authenticity"*, in the school environment, can assist the children in the process of accepting themselves. These educators are also of the opinion that when children see the humanity of their educators, along with the lessons

on God's acceptance of them, they can gain a sense of their own acceptance by God; e.g. *"I'm very keen for them [children] to understand that I make mistakes and I mess up, very much like they do, but God still loves me and still accepts me... So, I think it's important for teachers to be personal; to share from our own lives"*.

- **The role of the school and the curriculum**

Schools management teams and governing bodies were identified as having the main authority to decide how spirituality is included in the school curriculum and what additional programmes the children are exposed to, which assist in promoting children's SWB.

Participants acknowledged that educators in the public schools were not to favour any one particular religion above others, due to the National Curriculum's inclusive education policy. Educators in the independent schools expressed an appreciation for the support which their principals gave to their efforts in promoting their learners' spirituality and SWB. Educators in four of the schools described the effectiveness of environmental and community-service programmes, authorised by the school management, in assisting children to become more aware of the needs of other people and living things beyond the school walls. The subject, Life Skills, was also mentioned as an avenue for exploring children's spirituality; educators could discuss life issues and give children opportunities to learn about relating and expressing their thoughts and emotions.

- **The role of parents**

The majority of educators were of the opinion that children learn about their own spirituality and religion from their parents, and that it is the parents' responsibility to provide the most nurturing of their children's SWB. In addition, educators expressed a desire to "partner with the parents" in their efforts to develop children's SWB. An additional perception was that in some instances, circumstances in the home environment hinder the children's spiritual health, e.g. *'the children that are suffering; maybe their parents are involved in drugs, alcohol, ...there are some abuses [sic], maybe they are physically abused or emotionally abused at their homes'*. Some educators were of the opinion that there are families wherein the parents are not nurturing the children's need for emotional support, e.g. *"the parents aren't giving them the time that they need"*.

### **Hindrances of educators' role in promoting spiritual well-being**

The time-restraints of the school timetable was identified as a hindrance to the educators' role in promoting children's SWB. Many educators expressed a desire to explore life issues and spirituality more; *'I would like more time with my own class to be able to ...kind of delve into all of that more than I'm able'; 'you're running from one thing to the next, and you feel like: 'If I could just stay with them.... and, connect better with them'*. One educator suggested a solution, which was to have educators teach their own class more - teaching more subjects to one class of children, rather than teaching single subjects to different classes. An additional hindrance, educators mentioned, is the lack of involvement of parents in their children's spiritual development. The structure of the school curriculum was also identified as a challenge. Educators described the current government curriculum as being knowledge-focused and therefore does not allow space for alternative ways of learning about spirituality; especially necessary for the non-academic child. Most educators indicated that they had not received training in approaches to promoting children's spiritual well-being, but from their responses, it was evident that they were actively encouraging children to explore their spirituality in various ways.

### **Educators' experiences of children's spirituality**

A general perception among educators was that the spiritual well-being of children is a process that needs time investment from parents and educators. They observed that children, who are in a stage of spiritual well-being, are more equipped to process emotionally challenging life experiences such as illness and conflict, are *'less needy'* and experience more freedom from fears; *'it just makes them more relaxed and peaceful about their worries'*.

Educators experienced that children in the Foundation Phase are receptive to learning rules of behaviour such as showing *'care'* and *'being kind'* and following religious practises such as *'morning prayer'* and reading *'Bible stories'*, while children in Grades 5 and 6 tended to be in a stage of transition between following the religious practises they are taught, and making these part of their personal way of life, *'I've experienced it over and over... at this age that they've become a little bit jaded in the sense that they hear it a lot and it's coming at them from, probably in most cases, from their parents and from school and I find that... it's almost like a form of spirituality but not a personal thing for them'*.

The Art teacher in one school experienced how the nature of the subject allows for children freedom to express their thoughts and creativity and experience spirituality in an alternative way to the cognitive methods, *“I see Art as a metaphysical plane where they can enter into...”*; *“...in the Art room it becomes an unconscious thing, and that’s a wonderful freedom to be spiritual”*.

## **Discussion**

A discussion follows, involving each dominant themes identified in the study, with specific reference to literature and theory mentioned in this article.

### **Perceptions of spirituality among educators**

Perceptions of spirituality, among the participating educators, were varied and most had an inclusive description of spirituality. Many perceive it as being observable in the form of religious practises such as praying and reading sacred texts, but include descriptors that are supportive of the universal and humanist concept of spirituality that Jacobs, Viljoen and Van der Walt (2012) and Emmons (1999) describe; focusing on a search for meaning, relationships and making connections with others, the environment and the transcendent. However, few of the educators viewed spirituality as independent of a religious framework. Therefore participants’ perceptions align more with the inclusive descriptions of spirituality which Egan et al. (2011:308) refer to; allowing for a range of spiritualities, “from the existential to the religious”.

There was an agreement with Zhang’s (2010) description of spirituality as being an inherent aspect of a person’s humanity. Most educators follow Nye’s (2009, in Minor & Grant, 2014) proposal that spirituality is a life-long process as opposed to a product, and that relationships are central to spirituality.

### **Educators’ perceptions of spiritual well-being**

Considering Fisher’s (2009) four domain model of SWB, educators in this study supported the theory that a child’s SWB can be measured by the strength of his relationship with God, with other people, and his awareness of self-worth. Despite this, few of the educators specifically suggested a connection between caring for the environment and SWB.

An agreement with Fowler’s (cited in Long 2008) statement was evident in the educators’ observations of a tendency among their school children, to be more confident and more caring. This, they believe, is made possible through the ‘training’ they provide and the role of the teacher-child relationship. This adheres with Fisher’s

(2009) four domain model, in that healthy connective relationships between adults and children are a measure of spiritual well-being; in the Communal SWB domain.

### **Factors influencing the promotion of spiritual well-being in children**

The roles of the educator, the parent and the school, in encouraging children's SWB, featured strongly in the educators' perceptions and experiences. Educators' day-to-day building of relationships with the children and guidance on rules of respectful and co-operative behaviour is perceived as a natural part of their teaching role. In fulfilling this role, the educators are providing necessary emotional and spiritual support during this School-Age stage of their psychosocial development. Here the children are negotiating the challenge between Industry and Inferiority (Erikson cited in McLeod, 2013) – experiencing joy and disappointment in the process of learning new rules and skills.

Systems in the participating schools such as environmental education, community service and biblical integration programmes, were noted as instrumental in providing a framework for planning experiences inside and outside the classroom, which promote children's SWB. Through establishing their own programmes and approaches to SWB promotion, four of the schools and specifically their educators, are fulfilling the mandate of the *Health Promoting Schools Programme (DoBE and DoH, 2012)*, wherein the school itself initiates experiences for teaching and learning.

### **Hindrances of educators' role in promoting spiritual well-being**

The busy school day programme makes demands on the physical energy and emotions of educators and children. Administrative tasks, discipline issues and children's emotional/spiritual needs compete with each other for the educator's attention. In addition, overburdened parents tend to have less time to spend with their children with the result that educators take over the responsibility of supporting the mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of children in their schools. Consequently, educators often feel overwhelmed by the demands made of them.

### **Conclusion**

From the results of this study, it is evident that the participating educators perceive spirituality and the children's spiritual well-being as pertinent to children's holistic development. Educators are promoting children's spiritual well-being through various approaches; whether formally through programmes or informally through their role-modelling and relationships with the children. In fulfilling their role, educators feel the need for greater support from parents, and suggest an adjustment to the focus and

structure of the curriculum which gives more opportunity to promote children's spiritual well-being.

## References

- Abosi CO & Kandjii-Murangi I (eds.) 2004. *Education in Botswana: a reading text*. Botswana: Macmillan Botswana Publishing Co (Pty) Ltd.
- Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI) 2007. *Orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa Problems, players and possibilities for change*. Available at [reospartners.com/wp-content/.../OVC%20Phase%20One%20Report.pdf](http://reospartners.com/wp-content/.../OVC%20Phase%20One%20Report.pdf)
- Akos P, Briggs MK, Czyszczonek G & Eldridge A 2011. Assessing and promoting spiritual wellness as a protective factor in secondary schools. *Counselling and Values*, 55,171-184.
- Botma Y, Greeff M, Mulaudzi FM & Wright SCD 2009. *Research in Health Sciences*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Boyd-Wilson BM 2015. Are spirituality and spiritual well-being the same? Available at [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same) Accessed 22 September 2015.
- Bradshaw J, Hoelscher P & Richardson D 2007. An index of child well-being in the European Union. *Social Indicators Research*, 80, 133–77.
- Burns N & Grove SK 2005. *The practice of nursing research*. (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Creswell J 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing amongst five approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> (ed.). London: Sage publishers.
- Creswell JW, Hanson WE, Clark Plano, VL & Morales A 2007. Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *Counseling Psychologist*, 35 (2): 236-264.
- Department of Basic Education 2011. Action step CSTL programme plans. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=sojwmmA%2biQQ%3d&tabid=675&mid=2517>. Accessed 12 December 2015.
- Department of Basic Education 2011. *Curriculum and assessment policy statement: Life Skills. Grades 4-6*. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/>. Accessed 22 May 2015.
- Department of Basic Education 2011. *Action step CSTL programme plans*. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=sojwmmA%2biQQ%3d&tabid=675&mid=2517>. Accessed 12 December 2015.

- Department of Basic Education and Department of Health 2012. *Integrated School Health Policy*, Pretoria.
- Department for Education – England 2014. National Curriculum for Key Stage 1-4. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>. Accessed 3 May 2015.
- Department for Education – England 2014. Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils: Supplementary information. Available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380396/Improving\\_the\\_spiritual\\_moral\\_social\\_and\\_cultural\\_SMSC\\_development\\_of\\_pupils\\_supplementary\\_information.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380396/Improving_the_spiritual_moral_social_and_cultural_SMSC_development_of_pupils_supplementary_information.pdf) . Accessed 11 December 2015.
- Department of Education and Children’s Services - The State of South Australia. (2006). *Does spiritual wellbeing belong in education?* Spiritual well-being and education discussion paper Author: Adelaide Available at [www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44](http://www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44) Accessed: 7 April 2014.
- Department of Education and Children’s Services - The State of South Australia 2007. *DECS learner wellbeing framework for birth to year 12*. Author: Adelaide. Available at [www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject](http://www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject). Accessed 7 April 2014.
- Department of Education 2001. *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education - Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printing Works. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gVFccZLi/tl=>. Accessed 3 May 2015.
- De Klerk-Luttig J 2008. Spirituality in the workplace: a reality for South African teachers? *South African Journal of Education*, 28:505-517.
- Desrosiers A, Kelley BS & Miller L 2011. Parent and peer relationships and relational spirituality in adolescents and young adults. *Psychology of religion and spirituality*, 3(1):39-54.
- De Vos AS 2010. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In AS De Vos, H. Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delport (eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions*. (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Egan R, MacLeod R, Jaye C, McGee R, Baxter J & Herbison P 2011. What is spirituality? Evidence from a New Zealand hospice study. *Mortality*, 16(4): 307– 324.
- Elton-Chalcraft S 2002. Empty Wells: how well are we doing at spiritual well-being? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 7(3):309-328.
- Emmons, R.A. (1999). *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality*. New York: Gilford.
- Fisher J 2009. Getting the balance: assessing spirituality and well-being among children and youth. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14:273– 288.
- Forbes, S. (1996, June). *Values in holistic education*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Conference on 'Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child', Roehampton Institute, London.
- Fouché CB & Delpont CSL 2010. Introduction to the research process. In AS De Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delpont (eds), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché CB 2010. Qualitative research designs. In AS De Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delpont (eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché CB 2010. Writing the research proposal. In AS De Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delpont (eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Friesen S, Oelke ND & White DE 2012. Management of a large qualitative data set: Establishing trustworthiness of the data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(3):244-258.
- Gay LR, Mills GE & Airasian P 2009. *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Garamond: Edward Brothers.
- Gomez R & JW Fisher 2003. Domains of spiritual well-being and development and validation of the spiritual well-being questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35:1975–1991.
- Greeff M 2010. Information collection: Interviewing. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché & C.S.L. Delpont (eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the*

- Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 286-313). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Hay D & Nye R 2006. *The spirit of the child*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Health Professions Council of South Africa 2008. *Guidelines for good practice in health care professions: General ethical guidelines for health research. Booklet 6* [Booklet]. Pretoria: Author.
- Heath MA, Donald DR, Theron LC & Lyon LC 2014. AIDS in South Africa: Therapeutic interventions to strengthen resilience among orphans and vulnerable children. *School Psychology International*, 35(3):309-337. doi: 10.1177/0143034314529912
- Holmes D 2012. *Spiritual Health Booklet*. Available at [http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual\\_health\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual_health_booklet.pdf) . Accessed 7 April 2014.
- Hyde B 2005. *Identifying some characteristics of children's spirituality in Australian Catholic primary schools: A study within hermeneutic phenomenology*. PhD thesis. Melbourne: Australian Catholic University.
- Hsieh H-F & Shannon SE 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9):1277-1288. doi: 10.1177/1049732305276687.
- Jacobs AC, Viljoen CT & Van der Walt JL 2012. Spiritual well-being and lifestyle choices in adolescents: A quantitative study among Afrikaans-speaking learners in the North West Province of South Africa. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Mental Health*, 24 (1): 89–98.
- Karstens AC 2010. *Towards an epistemological framework for a Life Orientation programme based on spirituality*. PhD thesis. Potchefstroom: North-West University.
- Lockwood V & Thomas P 2009. Nurturing the spiritual child: Compassion, connection and a sense of self. *Research in Practise Series*. Early Childhood Australia Inc.: Watson.
- Long L 2008. Narrative autoethnography and the promotion of spiritual well-being in teacher research and practice. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 26 (3):87-196.
- Loewenthal KM 2008. *A short introduction: Psychology of religion*. Oxford: Oneworld.

- Luca M 2013. How many interviews are enough? Available at [http://www.researchgate.net/post/How many interviews are needed in a qualitative research Is there any rule or popular practice](http://www.researchgate.net/post/How_many_interviews_are_needed_in_a_qualitative_research_Is_there_any_rule_or_popular_practice). Accessed 23 September, 2015.
- Mason M 2010. Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), Art. 8. Available from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100387>. Accessed 23 September 2015.
- Mata J 2014. Sharing my journey and opening spaces: spirituality in the classroom. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 19(2): 112–122.
- McLeod SA 2013. Erik Erikson. Available at [www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html). Accessed 20 June 2015
- Macnab A 2013. The Stellenbosch consensus statement on health promoting schools. *IUHPE–Global Health Promotion* 20 (1):78-81 Available at <http://ped.sagepub.com>  
doi: 10.1177/1757975912464252
- Miller L 2013 August 4. *Spirituality and Children* [Video file]. Available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_OCwCNeBGY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_OCwCNeBGY). Accessed 10 September 2015.
- Ministry of Education 2007. New Zealand National Curriculum. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/TheNationalCurriculum.aspx>. Accessed 15 July 2014.
- Minor CV & Grant B 2014. Promoting spiritual well-being: a quasi-experimental test of an element of Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality. *International Journal of Children's spirituality*, 19(Nos. 3–4): 213–227  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1364436X.2014.960916>
- Moodley T, Beukes RIB & Esterhuyse KGF 2012. The relationship between coping and spiritual well-being in a group of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19: 265–297.
- Moodley T, Esterhuyse KGF & Beukes RBI 2012. Factor analysis of the spiritual well-being questionnaire using a sample of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19:122–151.

- Moodley T, Esterhuyse K & Beukes R 2012. The ways in which adolescents cope and their relationship to age, gender and specific religious variables. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 27(2):10–20.9
- Moriarty MW 2011. A conceptualization of children's spirituality arising out of recent research. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 16: 271–285.
- Mueller CR 2010. Spirituality in children: Understanding and developing interventions. *Pediatric Nursing*, 36 (4):197-208.
- Mükoma W & Flisher A 2004. Evaluations of health promoting schools: a review of nine studies. *Health promotion international*, 19(3):357-368  
doi: 10.1093/heapro/dah309.
- Mwomba T & Pillay J 2015. Psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable children in public primary schools: Challenges and intervention strategies. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(3): 1-9  
doi: 10.15700/saje.v35n3a1092.
- Nash S 2009. Promoting young people's spiritual well-being through informal education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14(3): 235–247.
- New York State Education Department 2015. Experience requirements. Available at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ctexp.html> Accessed 22 September 2015
- New Zealand National Curriculum 2007. Available at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Learning-areas/Health-and-physical-education> Accessed 16 July 2014.
- New Zealand's Education Council. (n.d.). Being issued full practising certificate. Available at <http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz>. Accessed September 22 2015.
- Ng Y-L 2012. Spiritual development in the classroom: pupils' and educators' learning reflections. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(2):167-185.
- Noddings N 2015. A richer, broader view of education. *Society*, 52: 232-236.  
doi: 10.1007/s12115-015-9892-4
- Pickert K 2014. The art of being mindful. *TIME*, 183(4): 32-38.
- Pillay J 2014. Challenges educational psychologists face working with vulnerable children. In T Corcoran (ed.). *Psychology in Education: Critical Theory-Practice*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- Prinsloo E 2007. Implementing Life Orientation programmes in the new curriculum in South African schools: perceptions of principals and life orientation teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(1): 155-170.
- Personal, Social, Health and Economics Association 2015. Available at <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/content.aspx?CategoryID=1053>. Accessed 11 December 2015.
- Puchalski CM, Ferrell B, Virani R, Otis-Green S, Baird P, Bull J, . . . Sulmasy, D 2009. Improving the quality of spiritual care as a dimension of palliative care: The report of the consensus conference. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 12(10):885-904.
- Rees G, Francis LJ & Robbins M 2005. *Spiritual health and the well-being of urban young people*. The Commission on Urban Life and Faith / University of Wales, Bangor / The Children's Society.
- Roux C 2006. Children's spirituality in social context: a South African example. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(1): 151–163.
- Seifert TA 2005. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Centre of Inquiry. <http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/>. Accessed 12 February 2014.
- Shope A 2015. Spiritual well-being looks more specifically. Available at [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same) . Accessed 22 September 2015.
- South African Council for Educators 2011. Criteria for registration. Available at [http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit\\_default\\_14.Registration.html](http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit_default_14.Registration.html). Accessed 23 September 2015.
- Strydom H 2010. Sampling and sampling methods. In AS De Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delpont (eds), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Strydom H & Delpont CSL 2010. Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In AS De Vos, H Strydom, CB Fouché & CSL Delpont (eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Tacey D 2004. *The spirituality revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality*. New York: Brunner Routledge.
- Tchombe TSM 2011. Psychosocial parameters of classroom processes. In AB Nsamenang & TMS Tchombe (eds). *Handbook of African educational*

*theories and practices: A generative teacher education curriculum*. Bamenda: Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC). Available at <http://www.thehdrc.org>. Accessed 25 October 2015.

The National Curriculum of the United Kingdom. 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

Accessed: 20 July 2014.

Vaismoradi M, Turunen H & Bondas T 2013. Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15:398–405.

Wagener LM & Malony HN 2006. Spiritual and religious pathology in childhood and adolescence. (In EC Roehlkepartain, PE King, L Wagener & PL Benson (eds), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Winch C 2012. For philosophy of education in teacher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38 (3):305–322.

Zhang K 2012. Spirituality and early childhood special education: exploring a 'forgotten' dimension. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(1):39–49.

## **Section 3**

### **Critical reflection**

#### **Introduction: orientation and problem statement**

The significance of spirituality and its effect on all areas of health and well-being is generating interest on a global scale. Research into the impact of spirituality on individuals is being carried out in the fields of psychology, education and health care (Egan, 2011; Tacey, 2004), delivering a variety of qualitative and quantitative results that indicate a connection between sustained spiritual experiences and well-being (Miller, 2015). With the shift towards secularisation in society, and the trend among people to call themselves spiritual rather than religious, the conceptual connection to religion has caused spirituality to be viewed in a sensitive light (Tacey, 2004). Egan (2011) however, maintains that despite the multitude of perceptions of spirituality, ranging from the religious to the existential, the dominant perception is that spirituality 'is generally acknowledged to be the most basic and essential requirement for health' (Durie, 1985 cited in Egan, 2011).

Shope (2015) assists with clarifying the connection between spirituality and spiritual well-being, in stating that spiritual well-being focuses more specifically on how a person's spirituality may be affecting the quality of his life. Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuyse, (2012) place the discussion into the education context, with their research into the connection between spiritual well-being and adolescents' ways of coping at their stage of development. From the results of this research, they were able to conclude that educators who promote spirituality and the spiritual well-being of children in their care, are facilitating a variety of positive outcomes (Moodley, Beukes & Esterhuyse, 2012).

A review on the literature on children's spirituality revealed research into different aspects of the topic. Hay and Nye (2006) explored alternative ways that children express their spirituality, the effects of spirituality on their academic performance and ability to cope with stressors in their environment (Miller, 2015). Of particular interest to the researcher, is Mata's (2011) study of children's expressions of spirituality in the early-childhood education classroom. Also, of more particular interest to the researcher, was Mata's (2014) study of in-service teachers in early-childhood education, and their views on spirituality and its place in the classroom.

Primary school educators are in a unique position to witness the effects, on children, of stressors that accompany twenty-first century urban life. Various health promoting programmes currently exist, which can assist school communities in their efforts to support children in developing necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage their lives and deal with stressors. South African's Department of Basic Education (2012) has initiated the Integrated School Health Policy and subsequent health promoting programmes, with the aim to support schools in their task of dealing with barriers to learning and to provide healthy places for work and learning.

Spiritual well-being does not overtly feature in these programmes, yet, the researcher proposes that it could be considered a necessary part of any programme focusing on health-promotion.

The question which the researcher set out to answer is: *What perceptions and experiences do educators have of promoting primary school children's spirituality and spiritual well-being?* The aim of this research was therefore to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of primary school educators regarding the promotion of children's SWB.

## **Methodology**

This qualitative study took the form of an interpretive study of how educators perceive and experience spirituality in the primary school context and the meaning they attach to their role and the process of promoting children's spiritual well-being (SWB). Five schools in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, consented to their educators participate in the research project – three independent schools and two public schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-five primary school educators, all of whom had more than two years of teaching experience to inform their responses. Interviews were transcribed and transcriptions were coded using the directed content analysis method. Categories for the coding were gathered from existing theory and literature such as Fisher's four domain model of spiritual well-being. An independent co-coder assisted in auditing the categories for coding and her coding assisted in improving the credibility of the results.

Results indicate that many educators have an inclusive perception of spirituality; not describing it as only being concerned with religion, but that it also entails issues such as a person's individual meaning and purpose in life, values and relationships. The latter topic was a dominant theme in all responses during the interviews. Four different domains of relationships were mentioned, during the interviews – relationships between educator and child, between the child and fellow learners, between the child and God and between the child and the environment. The latter domain featured least of all, in the responses. Support for their efforts came from the school management teams and some existing programmes that are currently in place in their schools. These programmes include a biblical integration system operating in two of the independent schools, community service projects in

all the five schools and a comprehensive environment education programme that forms part of the curriculum in one of the independent schools.

In conclusion, educators' perceive themselves as are actively engaging in this process of promoting the children's SWB and consider it a valuable aspect of development in the school-aged child (ages 6-12). Most educators' responses revealed that they were experiencing some hindrances to their efforts, such as limited support from some children's parents and, at times, the overwhelming responsibilities that accompany their role as educators of children in their formative years. Educators perceive a need for improvement in the level of co-operation between parents and educators, in this process, and a possible revision of the structure of the school timetable and curriculum, to assist in their efforts to promote the SWB of children.

## References

- Abosi, C.O., & Kandjii-Murangi, I. (Eds.), (2004). *Education in Botswana: a reading text*. Botswana: Macmillan Botswana Publishing Co (Pty) Ltd.
- Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI), (2007). *Orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa: Problems, players and possibilities for change*. Retrieved December 5, 2015, from <http://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/old/OVC%20Phase%20One%20Report.pdf>
- Akos, P., Briggs, M.K., Czyszczon, G., & Eldridge, A. (2011). Assessing and promoting spiritual wellness as a protective factor in secondary schools. *Counselling and Values, 55*,171-184.
- Botma, Y., Greeff, M., Mulaudzi, F.M., & Wright, S.C.D. (2009). *Research in Health Sciences*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Boyd-Wilson, B.M. (2015). Are spirituality and spiritual well-being the same? Available at [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same) Accessed 22 September 2015.
- Bradshaw, J., Hoelscher, P., & Richardson, D. (2007). An index of child well-being in the European Union. *Social Indicators Research, 80*, 133–77.
- Burns, N., & Grove, S.K. (2005). *The practice of nursing research*. (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing amongst five approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage publishers.
- Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Clark Plano, V.L.,& Morales A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *Counseling Psychologist, 35* (2), 236-264.
- Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) - The State of South Australia. (2006). Does spiritual wellbeing belong in education? Spiritual well-being and education discussion paper. Author: Adelaide. Retrieved from [www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44](http://www.suqld.org.au/document.doc?id=44) Date accessed: 7 April 2014.
- Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) - The State of South Australia. (2007). DECS learner wellbeing framework for birth to year 12. Author: Adelaide. Retrieved from [www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject](http://www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/learnerwellbeingproject) Date accessed: 7 April 2014.
- De Klerk-Luttig, J. (2008). Spirituality in the workplace: a reality for South African teachers? *South African Journal of Education,28*, 505-517.
- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement. Life Skills: Foundation Phase Grades R-3. Final draft*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.za/> Date accessed: 19 July 2014.

- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement: Intermediate phase Grades 4-6*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.za/>  
Date accessed: 22 May 2015.
- De Vos, A.S. (2010). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions*. (3rd ed.) pp. 333-349. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Elton-Chalcraft, S. (2002). Empty Wells: how well are we doing at spiritual well-being? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 7(3), 309-328.
- Emmons, R.A. (1999). *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality*. New York: Gilford.
- Fisher, J. (2009). Getting the balance: assessing spirituality and well-being among children and youth. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14, 273–288.
- Forbes, S. (1996, June). *Values in holistic education*. Paper presented at the Third Annual Conference on 'Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child', Roehampton Institute, London.
- Fouché, C.B., & Delpont, C.S.L. (2010). Introduction to the research process. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B Fouché, & C.L.S Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 71-85). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché, C.B. (2010). Qualitative research designs. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B., Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 267-273). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fouché, C.B. (2010). Writing the research proposal. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 267-273). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Friesen, S., Oelke, N.D., & White, D.E. (2012). Management of a large qualitative data set: Establishing trustworthiness of the data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(3), 244-258.
- Gay, L.R., Mills, G.E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Garamond: Edward Brothers.
- Gomez, R., & J. W. Fisher. (2003). Domains of spiritual well-being and development and validation of the spiritual well-being questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences* 35, 1975–1991.
- Greeff, M. (2010). Information collection: Interviewing. In A.S.De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp. 286-313). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Health Professions Council of South Africa. (2008). *Guidelines for good practice in health care professions: General ethical guidelines for health research. Booklet 6* [Booklet]. Pretoria: Author.
- Heath, M.A., Donald, D.R., Theron, L.C. & Lyon, L.C. (2014). AIDS in South Africa: Therapeutic interventions to strengthen resilience among orphans and vulnerable children. *School Psychology International*, 35(3), 309-337.  
doi: 10.1177/0143034314529912
- Holmes, D. (2012). *Spiritual Health Booklet*. Retrieved April 7, 2014, from [http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual\\_health\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.spiritualengland.org.uk/files/7413/4919/1604/Spiritual_health_booklet.pdf)
- Hsieh, H-F., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. doi: 10.1177/1049732305276687.
- Jacobs, A.C, Viljoen, C.T., & Van der Walt, J.L. (2012). Spiritual well-being and lifestyle choices in adolescents: A quantitative study among Afrikaans-speaking learners in the North West Province of South Africa. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Mental Health*, 24 (1), 89–98.
- Karstens, A.C. (2010). *Towards an epistemological framework for a Life Orientation programme based on spirituality* (Doctoral thesis). Available from NWU IR database, (Accession number nwuir.10394.4359)
- Lockwood, V., & Thomas, P. (2009). Nurturing the spiritual child: Compassion, connection and a sense of self. *Research in Practise Series*. Early Childhood Australia Inc.: Watson.
- Long, L. (2008). Narrative autoethnography and the promotion of spiritual well-being in teacher research and practice. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 26 (3): 187–196.
- Loewenthal, K.M. (2008). *A short introduction: Psychology of religion*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Luca, M. (2013). How many interviews are enough? Retrieved September 23, 2015, from [http://www.researchgate.net/post/How\\_many\\_interviews\\_are\\_needed\\_in\\_a\\_qualitative\\_research\\_Is\\_there\\_any\\_rule\\_or\\_popular\\_practice](http://www.researchgate.net/post/How_many_interviews_are_needed_in_a_qualitative_research_Is_there_any_rule_or_popular_practice)
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews. Retrieved on September 23, 2015, from Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 11(3), Art. 8, Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100387>.
- Mata, J. (2011). *Children's Spirituality as Experienced and Expressed in a Kindergarten Classroom*. (Doctor in education diss.), Teachers College, Columbia University, ProQuest, UMI Dissertation Publishing.
- Mata, J. (2014). Sharing my journey and opening spaces: spirituality in the classroom. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 19 (2), 112–122.

- McLeod, S. A. (2013). Erik Erikson. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from [www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html)
- Macnab, A. (2013). The Stellenbosch consensus statement on health promoting schools. *IUHPE – Global Health Promotion* 20 (1):78-81 Retrieved from <http://ped.sagepub.com> doi: 10.1177/1757975912464252
- Miller L (2013, August 4). *Spirituality and Children* [Video file]. Available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_OCwCNeBGY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_OCwCNeBGY). Date of access: 10 September 2015.
- Ministry of Education. 2007 New Zealand National Curriculum. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/TheNationalCurriculum.aspx> Date accessed: 15 July 2014.
- Moodley, T., Beukes, R.I.B., & Esterhuysen, K.G.F. (2012). The Relationship between coping and spiritual well-being in a group of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19, 265–297.
- Moodley, T., Esterhuysen, K.G.F., & Beukes, R.B.I. (2012). Factor analysis of the spiritual well-being questionnaire using a sample of South African adolescents. *Religion & Theology*, 19, 122–151.
- Moodley, T., Esterhuysen, K., & Beukes, R. (2012). The ways in which adolescents cope and their relationship to age, gender and specific religious variables. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 27(2), 10–20.9
- Moriarty, M.W. (2011). A conceptualization of children's spirituality arising out of recent research. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 16, 271–285.
- Mueller, C.R. (2010). Spirituality in children: Understanding and developing interventions. *Pediatric Nursing*, 36 (4), 197-208.
- Mukoma W & Flisher A J 2004 Evaluations of health promoting schools: a review of nine studies. *Health promotion international*, 19(3), 357-368  
doi: 10.1093/heapro/dah309
- Nash, S. (2009). Promoting young people's spiritual well-being through informal education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 14(3), 235–247.
- New York State Education Department. (2015). Experience requirements. Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/ctexp.html>
- New Zealand National Curriculum. (2007). <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Learning-areas/Health-and-physical-education>. Date accessed: 16 July 2014.

- New Zealand's Education Council. (n.d). Being issued full practising certificate.  
Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from <http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz>
- Ng, Y-L. (2012). Spiritual development in the classroom: pupils' and educators' learning reflections. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(2), 167-185.
- Noddings, N. (2015). A richer, broader view of education. *Society*, 52, 232-236.  
doi: 10.1007/s12115-015-9892-4
- Pickert, K. (2014, February 3). The art of being mindful. *TIME*, 183(4), 32-38.
- Pillay, J. (2014). Challenges educational psychologists face working with vulnerable children. In T. Corcoran (ed). *Psychology in Education: Critical Theory-Practice*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Prinsloo, E. (2007). Implementing Life Orientation programmes in the new curriculum in South African schools: perceptions of principals and life orientation teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(1), 155-170.
- Puchalski, C.M., Ferrell, B., Virani, R., Otis-Green, S., Baird, P., Bull, J., . . . Sulmasy, D. (2009). Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care: The Report of the Consensus Conference. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 12(10), 885-904.
- Rees, G., Francis, L.J., & Robbins, M. (2005). *Spiritual health and the well-being of urban young people*. The Commission on Urban Life and Faith / University of Wales, Bangor / The Children's Society.
- Roux, C. (2006). Children's spirituality in social context: a South African example. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(1), 151–163.
- Seifert, T.A. (2005). The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Centre of Inquiry. Retrieved from <http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/> Date accessed: 12 February 2014.
- Shaffer, D. R. (1996). *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and adolescence* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Shope, A. (2015). Spiritual well-being looks more specifically. Retrieved on September 22, 2015, from [http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\\_spirituality\\_and\\_spiritual\\_well\\_being\\_the\\_same](http://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_spirituality_and_spiritual_well_being_the_same)

- South African Council for Educators. (2011). Criteria for registration. Retrieved on September 23, 2015, from [http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit\\_default\\_14.Registration.html](http://www.sace.org.za/Registration/jit_default_14.Registration.html)
- Strydom, H. (2010). Sampling and sampling methods. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp.192-204). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Strydom, H. and Delpont, CSL. (2010). Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In A.S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delpont (Eds). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Professions* (3rd ed.). (pp 327-332). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Tacey, D. (2004). *The spirituality revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality*. New York: Brunner Routledge.
- Tchombe, T.S.M. (2011). Psychosocial parameters of classroom processes. In A.B., Nsamenang, & T.M.S. Tchombe. (Eds). *Handbook of African educational theories and practices: A generative teacher education curriculum*. Bamenda: Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC). Available a <http://www.thehdrc.org>. Date accessed: 25 October 2015.
- The National Curriculum of the United Kingdom. 2013. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum> Date accessed: 20 July 2014.
- UNRC (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25, 20 November 1989.
- Wagener, L.M & Malony, H.N. (2006). Spiritual and religious pathology in childhood and adolescence. (In E. C. Roehlkepartain; P.E. King; L. Wagener & P.L. Benson (Eds.), *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Winch, C. (2012). For philosophy of education in teacher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 38 (3), 305–322.
- Zhang, K. (2012). Spirituality and early childhood special education: Exploring a 'forgotten' dimension. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 17(1), 39–49.

## **Addendums**

- Letter of Confirmation – Co-coder
- Letter of Permission – Department of Education: Eastern Cape
- Letters of Good Will
  - Elukholweni School
  - Harvest Christian School
  - Umicare School
  - Victoria Park Grey Primary School
  - Woodridge Preparatory School