COMPETENCE IN BASIC LIFESKILLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH CLASS

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Andrew Mabanyana and Bertha Malebogo Makapan.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 THE PROBLEM DEFINED

Throughout the years of teaching English as a second language at secondary school level, I observed that many people lack basic lifeskills. These included matriculated people, senior secondary school drop–outs, and pupils in senior secondary schools who had not completed their matric. In support of the above observation, an assertion is made that the majority of South Africans lack lifeskills (Anon, 1993: i).

This is a widespread problem because the U. S. Department of Education found that the vast majority of Americans do not have the skills to earn a living (Kaplan et al., 1993: 36). According to Pakenham (1986: 22) skill is defined as ability to do something well. Lifeskills are therefore essential in everyday life because they provide pupils with an ability to cope with the reading of material such as maps, menus, calendars, bus schedules, and the writing of CVs, signing of hire–purchase forms, filling in application forms, etc. (cf. Kalnitz & Judd, 1986; Kaplan et al., 1993: 36). It is therefore essential that syllabuses include lifeskills that focus on reading and writing in order to solve these problems.

Many pupils experience problems with reading and writing whenever they have to fill in application forms, write a curriculum vitae, read class time–tables, read an examination time–table, or find information from a library. Yorkey (1982: 95) points out that writing is a language that is intended to be read; reading and writing are therefore different ends of the same communication. Wallace (1988: 6) maintains that reading roles depend on the context, and draws a line between private and public roles: there will be kinds of reading and writing undertaken in order to maintain identity with one's society, as a consumer, motorist, etc. Thus, being able to extract relevant main ideas from a text is probably one

of the most valuable skills one can have. Lifeskills teaching can be expected of a school course in English, where reading and writing are taught as basic skills in order to make it possible for pupils to make practical use of those skills in everyday life (Kaplan et al., 1993: 36). Furthermore, marks for reading and writing work account for two–thirds of the final mark in any year (The Interim Core Syllabus English Second Language Std 8, 9 and 10, 1995: 10).

Hylands (1990: 5) argues that since the skills of reading and writing are essential prerequisites for success in today's world, citizens would as a result be expected to approach every task with a clear purpose and with the flexibility necessary to adjust reading and writing to the purpose at hand. that The teaching of specific functional skills for specific purposes implies the empowering of citizens (Anon, 1993: i). Hopson and Scally (1981: 57) regard empowerment as having the ability to identify the alternatives in any situation, to choose one on the basis of one's values, priorities, and commitments. Flexible values of educational institutions can help in breaking boundaries between classrooms and communities and give schools an opportunity to produce communities that will be ready for the outside world (cf. Hopson and Scally, 1982: 7; Rooth, 1995: 2). The teaching of lifeskills can help build confidence in pupils, make them more assertive and equip them with skills that they need in order to be successful members of the community and successful achievers in classrooms, thus making them able to cope better with everyday situations.

Skills in reading and writing are therefore essential, and quite clearly, not all young people leave school with them. Any teacher who gives priority to the skill development of his pupils rather than merely feeding them with information is obviously equipping them to do more for themselves (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 107).

This study sets out to investigate the following problems:

1. Do the Interim Core Syllabi English Second Language Std 5 – 10 make provision for the teaching of lifeskills?

2. Do Grade 11 secondary school pupils have adequate lifeskills in reading and writing?

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study are to:

* analyse the secondary school English Second Language Syllabus in order to establish whether it makes provision for the teaching of lifeskills,

* determine whether a selected group of pupils possess adequate lifeskills in certain areas of reading and writing, and

* make recommendations for the teaching of lifeskills within the English Second Language course for secondary school pupils.

1.3 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1. Literature on lifeskills in general as well as lifeskills teaching will be surveyed.

2. A lifeskills test will be administered to two classes of Grade 11 pupils that follow commerce and general streams, in the Mankweng circuit of the Pietersburg area in the Northern Province, to determine whether they possess adequate lifeskills in certain

areas of reading and writing.

1.4 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

* Chapter 2 discusses lifeskills in general as well as key factors in the teaching of lifeskills.

* Chapter 3 discusses the inclusion of lifeskills in an English course, investigates whether the syllabus makes provision for their teaching and suggests how they can be incorporated in an English course.

* Chapter 4 discusses the method of research.

* Chapter 5 analyses results of the study.

* Chapter 6 gives guidelines and practical examples of how lifeskills can be incorporated into an English lesson.

* Chapter 7 concludes the study and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATION IN LIFESKILLS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Lifeskills teaching is one of the mechanisms that can be used to solve problems that are currently facing the education system in South Africa.

The aim in this chapter is to define and classify lifeskills, discuss their importance and point out the role that schools and teachers can play in lifeskills teaching.

2.2 LIFESKILLS: A DEFINITION

The concept 'lifeskills' originated in training and educational thinking. It covers skills and competencies that an individual needs to sustain and enrich life (Pickworth, 1990: 78). The meanings of the word 'skill' include proficiency, competence and expertise in some activity. However, the essential element of any skill is the ability to make and implement a sequence of choices to obtain a desired objective (Nelson–Jones, 1991: 11).

Examples of lifeskills can be divided into four main groups: skills needed to survive and grow generally, skills needed to relate effectively to an individual, skills needed to relate effectively to others and skills needed for specific situations.

Skills needed to survive and grow generally include how to read and write, how to achieve basic numeracy, how to find information and resources, how to think and solve problems constructively, how to manage time effectively, how to make the most of the present, how

to discover one's interests, how to discover one's values and beliefs, how to set and achieve goals, how to take stock of one's life, how to discover what makes one do the things one does, and how to be positive about oneself (cf. Hopson & Scally, 1981: 68; Pickworth, 1990: 80).

Skills needed to relate effectively to an individual include how to communicate effectively, how to make, keep and end a relationship, how to give and get help, how to manage conflict and how to give and receive feedback (cf. Hopson & Scally, 1981: 68; Pickworth, 1990: 80).

Skills needed to relate effectively to others cover how to be assertive, how to influence people and systems, how to work in a group, how to express feelings constructively, how to negotiate, compromise and contract, and how to build strength in others (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 70).

Skills needed at specific situations are made up of skills needed for one's education, skills needed at work, skills needed at home, skills needed at leisure and skills needed in the community. Skills needed for one's education focus on how to discover the educational options open to an individual (e.g., how to choose a course) and how to study (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 70). Skills needed at work include how to discover the job options open to one, how to find a job, how to keep a job, how to change jobs, how to cope with unemployment, how to achieve a balance between one's job and the rest of one's life and how to retire and enjoy it. Skills needed at home cover how to choose a style of living, how to maintain a home, how to live with other people and how to be an effective parent (cf. Hopson & Scally, 1981: 71; Nelson–Jones, 1991: 11). Skills needed at leisure are how to choose between leisure options, how to maximize one's leisure opportunities and how to use one's leisure to increase one's income (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 72). Skills needed in the

community include how to be a skilled consumer, how to develop and use one's political awareness and how to use community resources (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 72).

In line with the examples given above, Pickworth (1989: 1; 1990: 77) perceives lifeskills as a large range of skills or coping behaviours that are regarded as of fundamental importance to the individual for effective functioning in the modern world; it is a known fact that society in South Africa is moving from an industrial era to an information era, which is a change characterised by an information explosion. Therefore, the key to 'our' future lies in knowledge, skills and services (Pickworth, 1989: 1). The complexity of modern life has thus highlighted these previously 'invisible' skills which make living worthwhile and allow people to live fruitful and satisfying lives (Pickworth 1990: 77 – 78). Hence, virtually any skill could be viewed as a lifeskill (Nelson–Jones 1991: 12).

Nelson–Jones (1991: 12) points out that lifeskills are processes which entail personally responsible choices and which are conducive to mental wellness, as lifeskills equip one with the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance. Personally responsible choices optimise happiness and fulfilment. Such an ability can however be developed through deliberate or unplanned practice (Collins, 1986: 79). Carson (1986: 49), however, advises that it is vitally essential that those skills associated with life should derive from social education in the widest sense. Lifeskills are not static, but are processes requiring effective sequences of choices. Since humans are choosers throughout their lives, they can never escape the need to choose among possibilities. An individual that possesses a lifeskill makes the choices involved in implementing that lifeskill. To attain their full human potential, people require a repertoire of lifeskills in a number of different areas. It is thus implicit in the choice of lifeskills that an individual assumes responsibility for acquiring, maintaining, using and developing lifeskills, and that any lifeskill involves knowledge concerning the correct choices to make.

According to Nelson–Jones (1991: 12), personal responsibility is a positive concept whereby individuals are responsible for their well–being and making their own choices. Lifeskills are self–help skills: they are competencies that enable people to help themselves. This means that they empower people.

Lifeskills therefore involve many important areas of human functioning in the accomplishment of tasks. As a consequence, they are numerous and can be acquired, modified and improved throughout a life span. Lifeskills are therefore fundamental to successful adjustment by the individual in response to life's challenges (Pickworth, 1990: 78).

In practice, skills learnt can be applied to a number of different tasks. For example, pupils who have learnt how to read a bus schedule should be able to read a train schedule or a flight schedule. Consequently, the greater the range of skills an individual possesses, the greater the range of alternatives he has (cf. Collins, 1986: 80; Pickworth, 1990: 78). Since skills are what one uses, the addition of any skill to one's behavioural repertoire makes one potentially more self–empowered (cf. Glasser, 1993: 46; Hopson & Scally, 1981: 83).

A lifeskill is any skill which enables a person to interact meaningfully and successfully with the environment and with other people; lifeskills are competencies needed for effective living and participation in communities (Rooth, 1995: 2).

In support of the above, Collins (1986: 81) asserts that people who 'know a lot' are no longer at a premium. It is people who can apply knowledge and adapt to different circumstances who emerge as the most valued members of society. Lifeskills teaching is therefore one of the effective ways of ensuring that learning outcomes become relevant to students.

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFESKILLS

Rapid changes occurring in South Africa in economic, political, social and education fields make it essential for individuals to possess a wide range of lifeskills in order for them to meet the challenges facing them (Raijmakers, 1993: 1). Lifeskills constitute indispensable knowledge rather than accessory knowledge which provides a means for perceiving and responding to life's significant events (Pickworth, 1990: 77).

As pointed out in 1.1, the lack of lifeskills amongst Americans is a widespread problem. For example, it is alleged that the vast majority of Americans in the USA do not have the skills to earn a living. They cannot do tasks such as fill out a bank–deposit slip, compute the cost of carpeting a room or translate information from a table to a graph, for example (Kaplan et al., 1993: 36).

Lifeskills teaching programmes sales data also reflect that the lack of lifeskills is a problem all over the world because the programmes are bought by people representing the total range of educational provision and are used in programmes for adults in continuing education, prisons, the armed services, New Opportunities for Women Courses, and have been adapted for some management training. They are being used in middle–schools, special education, and on University courses. They are available in Danish and Swedish, sold in Australia, New Zealand, Eire, Netherlands, Norway, France, Germany, Italy, Vatican City, Belgium and Malta (Hopson & Scally, 1982: 9).

Since the apartheid system in South Africa denied many people the opportunity to gain access to information, skills and experience necessary to develop themselves and make 'our' economy grow, learners should be encouraged to come up with new ideas and take control of their learning situations and lives (Anon, 1996: 89). Failure to develop lifeskills

frequently leads to ineffective coping with the demands of life (Pickworth, 1990: 77). Lifeskills teaching will foster personal competencies needed for people to survive and prosper in a changing South Africa (Pickworth, 1990: 18).

It is worth pointing out that lifeskills teaching was introduced to South Africa in 1984 when Lifeskills Associates in Leeds, England, sent Dr Barrie Hopson and his wife Jen to run workshops in Soweto, Durban and Port Elizabeth and a three–day conference on lifeskills in the classroom at the University of Cape Town (Lindhard, 1986: back page).

In the past, lifeskills teaching both at school and in the informal sector was systematically discouraged. Capacity–building or developing people's potential is an essential task in post–apartheid South Africa. Now that the new democratically elected government and the Reconstruction and Development Programme are realities, more attention should be paid to improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged people (Rooth, 1995: 1).

Educators suggest a switch in emphasis from an academic, subject–centred curriculum to a more practical, needs–based curriculum geared to the changing demands of the economy and society. For example, secondary school pupils should be able to fill in a bank deposit slip, read a bus schedule, make a booking with a travel agency, and so on. The focus increasingly is on developing a range of personal competencies and equipping young people to fulfil a variety of life–roles in a rapidly changing world (cf. Hopson & Scally, 1982: 7).

Lifeskills can be viewed as a means of developing in each of us the ability to be, and develop whatever is within our potential and is important to us. Given the awareness of the importance of lifeskills and skills, pupils can begin to question and choose what they want in life. With skills one can create and shape the environment (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 244). Therefore, lifeskills enable us to cope with our day–to–day problems, our needs and

obligations at work and at home. They help us to get the best out of ourselves and out of life (Blythe et al., 1979: 1).

2.4 THE CLASSIFICATION OF LIFESKILLS

Taxonomies of generic lifeskills such as those of Hopson and Scally (1981), Conger and Mullen (1981), Wood (1982), Adkins (1984), Brooks (1984) and Larson and Cook (1985) will be used to order the wide range of lifeskills.

2.4.1 The Hopson and Scally Model

Hopson and Scally use an analytic approach to categorize lifeskills into four main groups in their original model (cf. 2.2; Pickworth, 1990: 78).

According to Pickworth (1990: 78) Hopson and Scally have, however, recently revised their model of lifeskills which was originally developed in 1980. Four categories of lifeskills are identified in the revised model: learning, relating, working and playing, and developing self and others.

2.4.1.1 Skills of Learning

The skills included are literacy, numeracy, information–seeking, learning from experience, using whole–brain approaches, computer literacy and study skills (Hopson & Scally, 1986: 15). For example, learning depends on the ability to read and write, do calculations, seek information in order to study, and so on.

2.4.1.2 Skills of Relating

Making, keeping and ending relationships, communication, assertiveness, being an effective member of a group, conflict management, giving and receiving feedback, parenting and influencing are examples of skills of relating (Hopson & Scally, 1986: 15). For instance, when new relationships are made, communication and assertiveness are necessary to start and keep the relationship going. On the other hand, communication and assertiveness can also play an important role in ending a relationship. The same would apply to conflict management and giving and receiving feedback which both depend on the skills of assertiveness and communication.

2.4.1.3 Skills of Working and Playing

Career, time and money management, entrepreneurship, choosing and using leisure options, preparation for retirement, seeking and keeping a job, managing unemployment, home management, setting objectives and action planning are examples of skills of working and playing (Hopson & Scally, 1986: 15). For example, the time management skill affects the management of one's career, unemployment and the home, setting objectives and action planning, preparation for retirement, etc. If one has set objectives and an action plan, one will be able to manage one's career, money, use leisure options, the home, and so on.

2.4.1.4 Skills of Developing Self and Others

Examples of skills of developing self and others are being positive about oneself, creative problem–solving, decision–making, stress management, transition management, managing sexuality, maintaining physical well–being, making the most of the present, proactivity, managing negative emotions, discovering interests, values and skills, discovering what

makes us do things we do, developing the spiritual self, helping others and developing the political self (Hopson & Scally, 1986: 15). For instance, one can solve problems creatively if one is positive about oneself; it will be possible to make decisions if stress is managed; transition will be managed if stress is managed; proactivity stems from creative problem–solving and making the most of the present; discovering interests, values and skills leads to the helping of others, etc.

2.4.2. The Brooks Model

David Brooks, assistant professor of counselling and guidance at Syracuse University, used an empirical approach to classifying lifeskills; he classified over 300 lifeskills descriptors into four generic categories. The four categories are interpersonal communication and human relations skills, problem–solving or decision–making skills, physical fitness or health maintenance skills and identity development or purpose in lifeskills (cf. Gadza & Brooks, 1985; Gadza et al., 1987).

2.4.2.1 Interpersonal Communication and Human Relations Skills

Interpersonal communication and human relations skills are necessary for effective communication, both verbal and nonverbal. With other skills they lead to ease in establishing relationships, be it in small and large groups, community membership and participation, management of interpersonal intimacy, clear expression of ideas and opinions, etc. (Gadza et al., 1987: 305).

2.4.2.2 Problem–solving/Decision–making Skills

Problem–solving or decision–making skills are necessary for information seeking, assessment and analysis. Problem identification, solution implementation and evaluation; goal setting, systematic planning and forecasting, time management, critical thinking, conflict resolution, etc. lead to decision–making (Gadza et al., 1987: 309).

2.4.2.3 Physical Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills

Physical fitness or health maintenance skills are necessary for motor development and co–ordination, nutritional maintenance, weight control, physical fitness, athletic participation, stress management, understanding the physiological aspects of sexuality, practice of leisure activities and so on (Gadza et al., 1987: 313).

2.4.2.4 Identity Development/Purpose in Lifeskills

Identity development or purpose in lifeskills and awareness are necessary for ongoing development of personal identity, emotional awareness, self–monitoring, maintenance of self–esteem, manipulating and adapting to one's environment, developing meaning of life and clarifying morals and values (Gadza et al., 1987: 315).

Although curriculum designers have made various attempts to classify skills, there are certain skills which all students must acquire regardless of their ambition because they are fundamentally relevant to all life's tasks (Collins, 1986: 93). Filling in application forms, reading a transport schedule and reading a payslip serve as examples of such skills.

2.5 THE ACQUISITION OF LIFESKILLS

The school should help pupils acquire new skills, and systematize and develop those skills that they have acquired incidentally. Skills are, however, learnt through practice, either deliberate or unplanned (Collins, 1986: 79). For example, Yorkey (1982: 207) asserts that learning how to use a library is like learning any other skill and that requires instruction and practice. Pupils can be taught how to read a bus schedule, for example, but that should be perceived as a process of development which each person must continue for himself long after he has left formal education and training. This is in keeping with the aims of the educational process which means that a person will increasingly learn to stand on his own feet, adapt to changing circumstances, and cope with the diverse demands of life (Blythe et al., 1979: 3). Since skills demand of us to make appropriate responses to situations or to initiate change (Blythe et al., 1979: 3), as an independent adult, an individual will be expected to keep pace with the changes and developments in the world of travel in order to be able to read schedules, for example, because he will have acquired the basic lifeskill of reading a schedule.

Pickworth (1990: 82) advises that skill learning occurs in three stages: a cognitive stage in which a description of the procedure is learned, an association stage, in which a method for performing the skill is worked out and an autonomous stage during which skills learning becomes more and more rapid and automatic.

Pickworth (1990: 82) maintains that as the skill becomes more automatic, it requires less attention and an individual may lose the ability to describe the skill verbally. But feedback plays an important role in the acquisition of a skill because a skill is rapidly learned if feedback as to whether attempts are correct and how they are incorrect is given (cf. 6.6).

Mastery of a skill thus requires systematic practice and there is evidence that skills learned under variable circumstances generalize better to new situations. Form filling as a skill, for example, can be indirectly covered by the filling in of application forms for a bursary, an identity document, passport, a savings account, a credit card, library membership, and so on. After going through the exercise, pupils will realise that there are common words and exceptional ones that pertain to form filling that run through different types of application form filling. For example, name, surname, date of birth, residential address, postal address and so on. In addition, lifeskills such as banking and money management, parenting, and job seeking can be also be taught to senior pupils. In this way, the ability to generalize a skill depends on being able to practise the skill in a wide range of situations (cf. Pickworth, 1990: 82; Educational Broadcasting Plan, 1996–1997: 23).

2.6 APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF LIFESKILLS

2.6.1 The Conger and Mullen Model

In Conger and Mullen's model, a distinction is made between product objectives and process objectives (Conger & Mullen, 1981: 311).

2.6.1.1 The Product Approach

The product approach aims to achieve a certain desirable end–product. This end–product is an individual who knows certain facts, has mastered certain skills or has acquired 'appropriate' attitudes or values. It thus becomes possible to assess the competence or incompetence of a pupil. Examples include being able to write an acceptable letter of application for a job and to prepare a simple meal (Conger & Mullen, 1981: 311).

2.6.1.2 The Process Approach

Within the process approach emphasis is placed on continuous development. Goals are perceived in terms of desirable processes and potentialities such as thinking, feeling and acting used by individuals for their own purposes. Emphasis is placed on the learning process and competencies are never seen to be mastered, but are only improved (Conger & Mullen, 1981: 311).

2.6.2 The Wood Model

In his model, Wood (1982) differentiates between affective education and social skills training which are both designed to facilitate social development.

2.6.2.1 Affective Education

The objective in affective education is to experience feelings for their own sake and the focus is on thoughts, feelings and interpersonal relationships. The primary aim is the enhancement of self–concept through the expression of feelings, verbal sharing, problem–solving activities, role playing, psychodrama and sociodrama (Wood, 1982: 83).

2.6.2.2 Social Skills Training

A behavioural model which is planned systematically is used to teach individuals situationally appropriate behaviour (Wood, 1982: 212). Examples of such skills are how to make an apology, how to accept an invitation, how to take leave. Wood (1982: 212) concludes that both kinds of skills are useful in schools .

2.6.3 The Adkins Model

Adkins (1984: 48–49) developed the Structured Inquiry Learning Model according to which lifeskills programmes are developed. A lifeskills programme consists of a number of units, each of which focuses on a specific coping problem, such as how to cope effectively with a job interview. The programme is presented by specially trained facilitators in a small group of 10 to 15 pupils.

The structured inquiry learning model consists of the stimulus, evocation, objective enquiry and application stages.

The stimulus stage consists of a learning unit which begins with a short video presentation depicting a person confronting a difficult situation and making a few mistakes. The aim in the presentation is to stimulate and focus discussion (Adkins, 1984: 48).

The evocation stage lasts for about 45 minutes and it aims to help the group become aware of what it feels and already knows about the problem, and to identify further questions for investigation. A structured pattern of questions and counselling skills such as paraphrasing, reflecting feelings and summarizing to help participants identify critical issues are used by the facilitator (Adkins, 1984: 48).

Participants in the objective enquiry stage use predeveloped activities and materials to gain insight into the problem under consideration, its origins and consequences and how it can be solved. They are then left to progress at their own pace and to make their own decisions. Videos are used for modelling situations or teaching knowledge as well as for monitoring practice of behaviour that is new and providing feedback (Adkins, 1984: 49).

The application stage helps the pupil to translate his new knowledge, feelings and insight concerning the problem into behaviour. Thus role play or simulated exercises are used, and videos are used to provide feedback. Participants are then encouraged to repeat the behaviour first in simulated form and then later in real life situations to ensure mastery (Adkins, 1984: 49).

2.6.4 The Larson and Cook Model

Larson and Cook (1985: 18) reviewed systematic and influencial lifeskills teaching programmes in the fields of education and mental health and came up with the following common characteristics:

* Active participation of learners should be maintained.
* There is specific focus on behaviours and the mastery and maintenance of such behaviours.
* Programmes are based on established learning principles of modelling, observing, discriminating, reinforcing and generalizing
* Each programme reflects both didactic and experiential emphases
* The programmes should be highly structured.
* Goals should be clearly stated.
* Progress should be monitored.

All the models discussed above perceive learning as a process and also place emphasis on the end–product; a learner should be able to do something at the end of a lesson.

Role–play and simulated exercises which should be repeated in real–life situations, and the use of teaching aids are essential to the teaching and learning of lifeskills. Learners are

allowed to ask questions and pupils get feedback on their performance. Thus, active participation of learners emerges as the cornerstone in the models.

Lifeskills programmes offered consist of a number of units, each focusing on a specific coping problem (cf. 6.7) presented by specially trained facilitators (cf. 2.7.2; 6.4).

The models advocate an enhancement of the self–concept through situationally appropriate behaviour.

2.7 KEY FACTORS IN THE TEACHING OF LIFESKILLS

Although lifeskills training can be traced back to the late 1960s and has a relatively short history, it evolved from many theories and disciplines during a time when, amongst other things, a change in emphasis occurred from remedial to preventative measures and from professional exclusivity to the involvement of lay persons as helpers (Pickworth, 1990: 81).

Pickworth (1990: 77) argues that since lifeskills constitute indispensable knowledge rather than accessory knowledge, they should be systematically taught, rather than be left to be incidentally learnt.

2.7.1 The School as a Factor in the Teaching of Lifeskills

The introduction of lifeskills programmes could provide an opportunity for a school to re–evaluate its current approach and effectiveness and that will hopefully lead to an awareness of the importance of lifeskills, which is a prerequisite to development (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 88). Hopson and Scally (1981: 88) emphasise that an important first step to introducing lifeskills teaching would be for a school, college or further education institution

to undertake a clarification of its educational aims and objectives.

Since lifeskills teaching aims at developing responsibility for oneself and equipping each individual with skills that would reduce the over–dependency on others that is often as much a burden for the 'supporter' as it is for the 'supported' (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 49). According to Blythe et al. (1979: 1), an underlying aim of lifeskills training is to achieve equality of access to the widest possible range of opportunities. For example, if one would like to plan for a trip successfully, one can borrow material from the library in order to get more information about the destination, read schedules in order to find means of transport and time and make a booking when one has made a decision about a destination, dates and time(s), etc.

In addition, lifeskills training can help participants to shift the balance of their strengths and weaknesses more in the direction of strengths in order to become better choosers, since an individual is likely to possess both skills strengths and weaknesses in all lifeskills areas (Nelson–Jones, 1991: 12). Take a pupil who is good at form–filling but cannot express himself properly in an interview situation as an example. Thus, Pickworth (1990: 83) views the overall aim of teaching lifeskills as the development of a balanced self–determined person, who can solve problems creatively in everyday life.

Pupils should be helped to understand that school is real life; what they do at school and how they handle things have important implications for every aspect of life. An armoury of lifeskills would therefore be essential for adaptation and success in life (Gatherer, 1993: 16). It is therefore important for the school to acknowledge that the teaching of lifeskills can provide learners with 'handles' to use in many important areas of their lives (Nelson–Jones, 1991: 28).

The role that the school can and should play in the nurturing of lifeskills is important. The pupil should be taught lifeskills not only for future benefit, but also to enable him or her to derive maximum benefit from the educational system. Children from deprived environments should be given special attention in this regard. Lifeskills training in the curriculum should be adapted to specific community needs. As a consequence, the skills taught should be closely in keeping with real needs of life (Pickworth, 1990: 85).

If the future is to produce a variety of life–styles, all of which demand of individuals that they are competent to meet many new challenges, schools today should equip their pupils for that future (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 81). It will therefore become more important than ever to make schooling a stimulating and worthwhile experience, by providing motivation and basic equipment for individuals to undertake their own development (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 83).

A lifeskills course must therefore concern itself with experiences and activities that have relevance both now and in the future.

2.7.2 The Teacher as a Factor in the Teaching of Lifeskills

Lifeskills teaching implies that the role of the teacher will have to change and teachers themselves will have to acquire new skills to facilitate the development of lifeskills and to model such skills. Facilitation means providing the resources and structures for participants to explore, learn and develop. It entails helping a group of people to solve a problem by themselves and for themselves. Facilitation is therefore a catalyst which provides holistic growth through a structured framework (Rooth, 1995: 3). The need to convey factual information to pupils will decline; there is a greater need for the teacher, once the pupil has comprehended a body of factual knowledge, to deepen the pupil's

perception by getting him to apply the skill. Thus, the complexity and challenges of the modern world demand far more in competence from the teacher (Pickworth, 1990: 86) and if schools are to be places of real skill development they need to be staffed by people who themselves are highly skilled (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 95).

Social and economic changes that lie ahead require new teaching approaches in schools and colleges; new approaches that will not only focus on the content, but that would also involve the reappraisal of the structuring of learning experiences at the points of contact between teachers and pupils. Lifeskills teaching would require highly skilled teachers who would be able to model the kind of competence they are promoting in those that they teach (cf. Hopson & Scally, 1981: 95; Hopson & Scally, 1982: 7).

In lifeskills facilitation the development of activities that would best generate learning and involve participants directly in their growth are emphasised by using methods that are appropriate for the skills which participants wish to acquire (Rooth, 1995: 3). For example, if pupils are about to go on their first excursion at secondary school, the teacher could use the opportunity to teach lifeskills that pupils will need in the near future. Lifeskills such as 'how to draw up an itinerary' and 'how to read a bus schedule' could be taught prior to the excursion.

Lifeskills teaching is a possibility for teachers in most subjects and it would probably lend itself more easily to subjects on the timetable like English, social education, social studies, guidance, religious education (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 107). Therefore, the teacher's task is to choose contexts within these subjects which are clear and to help the student to appreciate the full implications of the context. As far as possible, skills should be taught as part of a project or enterprise which gives some meaning and purpose to the skill (Collins, 1986: 87).

Lifeskills teaching can also be offered as an optional subject, or as an element of a general studies course. Most schools and colleges have areas of the curriculum that allow pupils to opt for one or two study areas from a range. This affords the teachers an opportunity to experiment (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 108).

It is also possible to offer lifeskills learning as an extracurricular activity. This could be done by inviting some pupils to join a lifeskills group, in the same way they might join other school societies or clubs, to do their lifeskills work in their non–timetable time (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 109).

In support of the above, Raijmakers (1993: 6) declares that the inclusion of a lifeskills programme in the curriculum would mean an adoption of a pro–active approach aimed at equipping the individual with coping skills which would enable him or her to deal with developmental tasks, as well as the ever–changing world of work. A highly visible, systematic, explicit lifeskills programme will empower students with the competencies needed to successfully negotiate life's challenges both at work as well as in all other areas of the individual's life. Furthermore, this would lead to the acquisition of the skills needed to function more effectively and also to cope with the ever–present changing demands made upon the individual.

Since all young South Africans will have to work for a better future for this country, they should be taught skills that will enable them cope with life. In doing so, a major contribution to the improvement of the quality of life will be made. The country's largest resource, its human potential, must be developed not only to meet the challenge of technichal innovation, but also to provide a stable and productive labour force. Education is one of the most powerful means through which the human resource can be shaped and it can prepare people for significant roles in society. Lifeskills training can therefore play an

important part in educating youth for life (cf. Lindhard, 1986: Foreword; Pickworth, 1990: 86).

Wood (1982: 214) points out that teachers as professional servants must accept responsibilities that pertain to lifeskills teaching. It is, however, encouraging to realise that when one looks into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) one finds an extensive interlocking set of innovations which require new kinds of skill–driven resource materials and an understanding by teachers of how these materials work. These may serve to renew the content of what is taught (Moodie, 1996: 16).

Because lifeskills teaching is about growth and development for all groups that will enable pupils to become more self–empowered and in the process become more creative, innovative and committed members of the human community (Hopson & Scally, 1982: 11), teachers that promote an approach which encourages their pupils to be independent, to decide, to be responsible, and to act for themselves are contributing sizeably to individual and social well–being (Hopson & Scally, 1981: 93).

2.8 CONCLUSION

Although lifeskills teaching was introduced in South Africa only in 1984, it has not been given the attention it deserves. Since the teaching of lifeskills focuses on the application of knowledge which could ensure that pupils are able to adapt to different circumstances and enable them to make responsible choices from possibilities, it is a mechanism that can bring about happiness and fulfilment to South Africans. Lifeskills thus constitute indispensable knowledge which should be taught systematically.

Lifeskills are therefore of fundamental importance to the individual for effective functioning

in the 'modern' world, because they focus on the use of one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance.

Because schools can bring pupils, teachers and parents together, they can also play a pivotal role in the teaching of lifeskills. The teaching of lifeskills should therefore come as a concerted effort from learners, schools and homes. They can therefore be acquired, modified and improved throughout an individual's life span.

Since lifeskills are fundamentally relevant to all life's tasks, pupils will benefit from acquiring them. But because there are many lifeskills, the greater the range a pupil possesses, the more advantaged he or she will be.

The next chapter focuses on lifeskills in an English course.

CHAPTER 3

LIFESKILLS IN AN ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE COURSE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Lifeskills can be integrated in the English Second Language course on the basis of what the English Second Language syllabus prescribes.

The aim in this section is to establish whether the Interim Core Syllabi for Stds 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 make provision for the teaching of lifeskills and point out ways of integrating lifeskills in an English Second Language course.

3.2 WHY SHOULD LIFESKILLS BE INCORPORATED IN THE ENGLISH COURSE?

The role and position of English will be discussed in an attempt to establish whether English can accommodate and facilitate lifeskills teaching within the context of a South African education system. The aim in this section is to answer the question: why should lifeskills be incorporated in the English course?

About seventy five percent (75%) of the overall school population in South Africa not only learns English as a second language, but also uses it as a medium of learning. The use of English as a medium of instruction indicates that the teacher uses English as the vehicle of imparting instruction to a pupil or class (cf. Hugo, 1994: 10; Interim Core Syllabus Std 5, 6 and 7, Preamble: 1995).

In line with the above, it can be argued that the position of English in the new South

Africa has grown, in view of the fact that English is seen as a universal language. Since legislation provides for compulsory education for children of all races, it is vital that English be learnt as a second, third or even fourth language depending on the needs at a given time (Smith, 1994:1). The aim of any second language teacher is to teach language skills which can be used in life (Smith, 1994: 2).

Although English is not a native language of the indigenous inhabitants in South Africa, it plays a large part in the daily life of learners. In addition, many South Africans seem to prefer education in English for their children over home language education. Thus, English emerges as a preferred medium of communication across the Black South African elite, especially the educated and the urbanised (cf. Hugo, 1994: 10).

English has been transforming its image from that of a language of 'oppression' to that of opportunity. Many South African perceive English as the powerful instrument which can be used in international relations and communications, and a key to the world's information banks (Hugo, 1994: 10).

It is worth pointing out that the ANC policy document on education places a great deal of emphasis on the need for skill–oriented education (Hugo, 1994: 9) and perceives language as a crucial instrument for learning which must play a central role in the curriculum (Hugo, 1994: 4). The combination of language and skills emerges as one of the mechanisms that can enhance the teaching and learning of lifeskills in an English course, particularly in former DET schools.

English is also a language of access to a vast range of cultural, scientific, political and economic activities and resources, nationally and internationally. As a consequence, the ability to understand and to use English effectively is important in South Africa (The

Interim Core Syllabus Stds 5, 6 and 7 Preamble: 1995).

In other countries where English is learned as a second language, it is used as a lingua franca, medium of instruction, means of international communication; it is the language of government, commerce, industry and the mass media (Ellis & Tomlinson, 1980: 4). Thus, the many uses of English make it imperative that the teaching of lifeskills such as 'how to read a transport schedule', 'how to read a library card', 'how to fill in an application form' and 'how to read a payslip' should be included as an aspect in the teaching of language.

It is estimated that some 600 million people now use English and more than half of these are not native speakers. Thus English as a major world language, helps build relationships between people, and within societies (cf. Mawasha, 1994: 6).

The wide currency of English makes it emerge as a language that can carry the learners up the ladder of learning in lifeskills teaching. Educational resources that are available and the skill–oriented education proposed by the government boosts the likelihood of the teaching of lifeskills in an English course. Parents who seem to be choosing English as a medium of instruction for the education of their children puts more emphasis on the importance of English in daily life.

English plays a significant role within the South African education system. Since lifeskills teaching can be realised within the teaching of English as a second language, it is possible to incorporate lifeskills in an English course.

3.3 THE PRESENT ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

The present syllabus is the Interim Core Syllabus for English Second Language (English from Std 5 to Std 10). The syllabus will be analysed in order to determine whether the secondary school English Second Language syllabus makes provision for the inclusion of lifeskills.

3.3.1 Principles

The syllabus is concerned with English as a means of communication in a multilingual society (cf. The Interim Core Syllabus Stds 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 1). The language skills which pupils already possess are meant to serve as the basis for further development and should be used in communicative language teaching. The four skills ought to be integrated in purposeful activities: for example, pupils may be asked to listen in order to speak or write, or they may be asked to speak in order to clarify or show that they have comprehended something heard or read (cf. The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 1 & The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 8, 9 and 10, 1995: 2). This study endorses the principle of using language skills that pupils already possess as the basis for further development (cf. 3.5.8 – The Four Skills).

Every English lesson should therefore aim to involve the interplay of more than one skill in the performance of tasks required wherever possible (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 2). Pupils could be instructed to read (reading) a passage on 'holiday' and draw up an itinerary (writing) which will be discussed in the class (speaking).

3.3.2 Aims

The **over–riding aim** of the syllabus is communicative competence for personal, social, educational and occupational purposes. For example, if pupils acquire 'how to read a library card' as a lifeskill, it will serve their personal, social, educational and possibly occupational purposes.

Amongst other things, **general aims** include:

* to guide pupils to read with increasing comprehension and
* to develop pupils ability to write English approriate to their purposes (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 3) For instance, pupils should be able to differentiate between 'making a booking with a travel agency' and 'making a reservation at a restaurant'.

Specific aims, on the other hand, include:

* to listen to oral presentations such as lessons, talks, newscasts, interviews, etc. (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 4)
* to be able to use language when reacting to a request for information or asking for help, information etc. (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 5)
* to develop the pupils' skill of reading by exposing them to a variety of texts such as letters, advertisements, newspaper articles, reports, minutes, notices etc. (The Interim Core Syllabus Standard 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 5)
* to use an English dictionary to find the appropriate meaning of words encountered in their reading (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 6)
* not to develop the writing skill in isolation or in a decontextualised way; amongst other

things, writing skills should enable the pupils express themselves comfortably in writing activities such as the keeping of diaries, informal letters etc (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 7)

Specific aims therefore cover the four skills of listening (to lessons, newscasts, interviews, etc.), speaking (talks, asking for help, reacting to a request for help), reading (letters, advertisements, newspaper articles, notices) and writing (keeping a diary, informal letters, reports and so on).

Thus, lifeskills such as 'how to request for information', 'how to take down notes during a lesson', 'how to deliver a talk', 'how to ask for help', 'how to read advertisements', 'how to write reports and notices', and 'how to keep a diary' can be included in the English course.

3.3.3 ACTIVITIES

Teachers are encouraged to design activities in which they work towards integrating as many of these skills as possible (cf. The Interim Core Syllabus Standard 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 3; The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 8, 9 and 10, 1995: 3). For example, 'Travel' as a theme could be covered over a number of periods and include lifeskills such as 'how to fill in a bank deposit slip', 'how to read a bus schedule', 'how to make a booking with a travel agency', and 'how to draw up an itinerary' (cf. 6.7).

The ability to apply what pupils have learnt should be developed in an integrated way; pupils should be shown how language works in context and be encouraged to apply what they have learnt in a variety of situations rather than by drilling discrete items (The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 8). For instance, how to read a bus schedule as a lifeskill could be applied to reading a train or flight schedule within the

context of the 'Travel' theme mentioned above.

Examinations and tests should be designed to assess how far the stated aims of the syllabi have been attained; the examination questions should be in line with the aims of the core syllabus and the marking should also correspond with them (cf. The Interim Core Syllabus Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1995: 9; The Interim Core Syllabus, Standards 8, 9 and 10, 1995: 9).

The Interim Core English Second Language Syllabi (1995) leave sufficient scope for the inclusion of lifeskills in an English course. The specific aims in the syllabi give examples of lifeskills such as asking for directions or information, listening to interviews, the ability to use a dictionary and note taking. The four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are meant to play a pivotal role in lifeskills teaching.

The onus of interpreting the syllabus, analysing pupils' needs and the implementation of lifeskills identified thus rests on the teacher because the Interim Core Syllabi makes provision for lifeskills teaching in an English course.

3.4 HOW CAN LIFESKILLS BE INCORPORATED IN AN ENGLISH COURSE?

Since lifeskills teaching can formally be realised in a teaching–learning situation, it is important to give an overview of the teaching–learning situation.

The teaching–learning situation is influenced by factors such as the type of learners, the social and political climate, the country, the background of the learners, the teaching materials and the aims and objectives (Brumfit & Roberts, 1983: 77). For instance, in 1995 the Northern Province registered the lowest matriculation pass rate in the country: 38,6%. As a result, there were 85 000 students who had to rewrite their matriculation (Mona, June

1996: 18).

Although there are various models which describe the teaching–learning situation, Steyn's (1982) model is relevant to this study. It is a model which comprises situation analysis, selection of aims and objectives, selection and organisation of content, selection and organisation of methods and evaluation. According to Dippenaar (1993: 8), it is a model which is representative of recent models which illustrate the components of the teaching–learning situation.

Similarly, the teaching of lifeskills in an English course should be based on pupils' needs derived from situation analysis, the setting of objectives which will lead to selection of content and methods and culminate in the evaluation of what the teacher shall have taught.

3.4.1 Situation Analysis

It is generally accepted that the first step in a teaching–learning programme is situation analysis. It is regarded as the starting point of any planning, be it a year, cycle or lesson planning (Dippenaar, 1993: 9). Situation analysis takes the whole spectrum of the teaching–learning situation into account; this includes the pupil, the teacher, the environment, society, the classroom and learning matter. This analysis can be based on information gathered by means of, for example, questionnaires given to pupils, interviews with pupils and discussions with fellow teachers and researchers and be used as an opportunity to identify lifeskills that pupils lack.

Dippenaar (1993: 10) advises that the teacher should also establish the extent of diversity in the foreknowledge of the pupils, because secondary school pupils would obviously come

from different primary schools under normal circumstances. For example, Grade 8 pupils could be given a pre–test on lifeskills at the beginning of the year in order to establish their level in terms of lifeskills. Ideally, the process should be continued throughout the course to avoid endless repetition and negative feelings about the course.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 78) the teacher assumes responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs. This could be done informally and personally through one–to–one sessions with pupils or formally through administering a needs assessment instrument.

Although Van der Walt (1988: 7) regards the development of material on the basis of the particular needs manifested as a difficult matter, as needs would almost differ from pupil to pupil, he suggests that the pupils and the teacher have to agree on what is useful in their own context. By so doing, the teacher will be aiming for maximum efficiency and economy in his pupils' learning.

According to Oliva (1982: 229) the objectives of a needs analysis are to identify needs of learners not being met by the existing syllabus, and to form a basis for the interpretation and adaptation to each particular situation. Needs analysis should be seen as a continuing process which is never finished.

3.4.2. Aims and Objectives

The term 'aims' refers to broad statements about the intent of education. Aims are often written by national or state panels, commissions or policy–making groups; they express a philosophy of education as well as concepts about the social roles of schools and the needs of a children. They therefore guide schools and give educators direction (Burden & Byrd,

1994: 20).

Educators need to translate general aims into statements that will describe what schools are expected to accomplish. Such translations of general aims into more specific, subject–related terms are called specific aims (Burden & Byrd, 1994: 21). Specific aims are written as an overview or rationale, covering what the unit is about and what the students are to learn (Kellough, 1994: 233). They are therefore general statements of intent and are prepared early in course planning. Aims are useful when shared with students as advance mental organizers; the students then know what to expect and prepare mentally to learn the appropriate material (Kellough, 1994: 208).

An objective is a behaviour or ability that a learner is expected to acquire as a result of instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: 20). Objectives therefore determine the teacher's choice of activities and materials; they influence teaching procedures, even his teaching pace and ultimately determine the kind of learning that occurs in his classroom (Vieira, 1993: 10). Objectives are not intentions, but they are the actual behaviours teachers intend to cause pupils to display. Thus, objectives are what pupils do (Kellough, 1994: 208). For example, if the objective of the lesson is that, at the end of the lesson, the pupil must be able to find directions from a given map, teaching–learning activities will focus on map–reading and materials could include a compass and maps.

It is vitally important for the teacher to establish aims clearly, because the opposite result of what he or she has planned to do may mean a waste of valuable time. It is of utmost importance that everything in a class–situation has to lead somewhere; objectives make it far easier for educators to focus on important instructional outcomes (cf. Nunan, 1988: 68; Dippenaar, 1993:12). Aims and objectives are therefore at the core of teaching and render teaching cost–effective.

The aim of every lesson on lifeskills should form an integral part of the general aim of lifeskills teaching. It must be formulated in terms of the overall goal of lifeskills teaching. Since the objective of every lesson must be clearly stated, it should suggest what the pupil should be able to do as a result. For example, the pupil must be able to read a bus schedule at the end of the lesson.

3.4.3 Content

Content refers to the knowledge, concept or creative process that the teacher wishes pupils to learn. Teachers select content related to the aims and objectives. While teachers have some autonomy, they are expected to teach and deal with content that is consistent with the aims and objectives (Burden & Byrd, 1994: 56).

Content is determined by the needs of the learners and it is selected after the aims and objectives have been established. Thus content can only be selected on the grounds of its functionality to aims and objectives. However, different content can be selected to reach the same objectives. This widens the teacher's scope of operation (cf. Dippenaar, 1993: 13). Thus, content relating to lifeskills can be selected to achieve the aim of teaching lifeskills.

The type of content selected will determine the learning activities and the methodology to be implemented in a specific lesson. This is becoming important as the latest trend in language teaching is a combination of content and methodology in what is called process syllabus types (White, 1988: 94).

Cook (1983: 229) advises that the teacher has to use his own initiative, make a combination of his interpretation of the situation analysis and aims, and select his content accordingly. Thus, in lifeskills teaching, the teacher should not rely on content only but

consider the teaching–learning situation which is as important as content. Hence the emphasis is on the integration of the teaching–learning activities and content.

3.4.4 Teaching–Learning Activities

Traits such as a positive attitude towards the subject he teaches, flexibility, innovation and the use of a variety of teaching approaches are ascribed to good language teachers who can feel at ease in a wide variety of situations (cf. Van Aswegen, 1988: 172).

The relevance of the method to the aims and objectives, development of a pupil's personality as a whole, variety, continuity, relevance to life, type of content, time, circumstances, size of class, facilities that are available and the personality of the teacher are factors that will influence the selection of learning–teaching activities (Steyn, 1982: 95).

When the teacher uses methods that are appropriate for the skills participants need to acquire, learners become actively involved in learning and realise that they can take responsibility in their own learning. The teaching of lifeskills becomes a practical reality of mutual skills sharing and practice (Rooth, 1995: 3).

3.4.5 Evaluation

Evaluation refers to the methods and criteria used to determine the quality and quantity of the learning that took place, and the effectiveness of the lesson. This allows the teacher to check for pupil comprehension and progress to make revisions in the lesson before its next implementation (Kellough, 1994: 267).

The following functions of evaluation can be distinguished: it determines the amount of

learning and whether or not the teacher has to adapt his planning; it enables the teacher to evaluate and grade pupils; it can be used as a basis for requirements to pass; it creates opportunities for individual teaching and shows whether or not the subject curriculum and the scheme of work were appropriate. It ties the teaching–learning situation together and enables the teacher to determine objectives for the following lessons (Steyn, 1982: 104).

A variety of devices are available to assess pupils, such as rating scales, role–play, interviews, questionnaires, teacher observations, written reports, pupils' records, written essays, tests and written examinations. There is an integrated bond between evaluation and objectives; any device which shows evidence of the behaviour indicated in the objective, is an appropriate means of assessment (Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978: 104).

Evaluation influences the situation analysis and is part of the cyclic process of the teaching–learning situation because it points out what the pupil already knows and what not (Dippenaar, 1993: 15).

In lifeskills teaching, each topic will be evaluated in its own right, as well as in relation to the other topics (cf. Dillon, 1988: 2; 3.5.2). Evaluation will thus always be a very important aspect of lifeskills teaching as it determines if any lifeskills learning has taken place at the end of each lesson (topic). It also determines whether behavioural objectives have been reached.

3.5 The Selection of Content

It is essential to choose content which is guided by the prescribed syllabus and guidelines provided by the Department of Education. The teacher's scheme of work will therefore be based on the content selected and forms the basis for planning lessons and selection of

materials.

For the purpose of this study, the scheme of work will be taken to consist of a number of lifeskills in the form of topics, which will make up a number of lessons constituting a particular theme. In a lesson on lifeskills, there will be an interplay of the four skills, structures, vocabulary, functions, situations and tasks on the basis of the theme.

In line with the above, an overview of themes, topics, the four skills, structure, vocabulary, situation, and tasks as selected content is given below in the context of lifeskills teaching. For instance, a number of topics such as 'At the scene of an accident' (situation), 'Helping victims at the scene of an accident' (function), 'Make a telephone call to the paramedics to report an accident' (task) can be included as components of 'Accidents' as a theme.

3.5.1. Themes

A theme represents a dynamic element taking shape in an interactional process which mediates learners' interests not only with societal or curricular demands, but also with the interests and preferences of the teacher (Legutke & Thomas, 1991: 24). Theme–centred teaching acts as a model for experiential learning which supports the connection of life experiences to the curriculum. It takes into account the pupils' interests, external requirements and also the thematic preferences of the teacher. Theme–based teaching is therefore learner–centered (cf. Kellough, 1994: 70; Legutke & Thomas, 1991: 237).

Although themes evolve from needs analysis, the teacher should make sure that no theme is negative or capable of causing embarrassment (cf. Rooth, 1995: 168).

When people are actively involved in their own growth, lifeskills–based themes become a

practical reality whereby people share and practise skills (Rooth, 1995: 3). Since thematic teaching comprises units built around interdisciplinary themes rather than a single–subject, it helps pupils to bridge the disciplines and to connect school learning with real–life experiences (Kellough, 1994: 250).

3.5.2 Topics

A theme will consist of a number of topics which will be used as a springboard in lifeskills teaching; each topic will be dealt with in one lesson and a number of topics will make up a theme to be covered.

The topic–based teaching approach begins with a subject that is of relevance and of interest to the pupils and then addresses activities that will involve them in investigating the topic as an integral part of the investigation (Hudelson, 1991: 3). Because the basic reason for using topics is motivational, topics can be used in lessons on lifeskills. For example, if the aim of the teacher is to teach 'how to make a booking with a travel agency' as a lifeskill, 'a travel agency' can serve as a relevant topic in this respect. Vocabulary, structures, pictures and newspaper cuttings that are related to the topic can be used to help the pupil's imagination embellish the topic. This implies a random language exposure exercise (cf. Dippenaar, 1993: 49). Topics and activities provide the focus and content of individual units or modules. This pattern of organisation implies a task–oriented methodology, but because a general theme is present, the tasks are enveloped in a simulation related to the theme (cf. Dippenaar, 1993: 48; Yalden, 1987: 97).

3.5.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is words that are typically used when talking about a particular subject. Since vocabulary is an important aspect of language teaching it is important that vocabulary be taught in context and never as a decontextualised list of words without any function. Since vocabulary building is related to concept building, teachers should help students organize information or words according to concepts or topics. Thus vocabulary cannot be separated from a given topic and should be taught incidentally and constantly as it enhances comprehesion and plays an integral part of the teaching–learning situation in ESL (cf. Abdullah, 1993: 11; Dippenaar, 1993: 40). Similarly, vocabulary can play a significant role in lifeskills teaching. For example, if a situation such as 'At the scene of an accident' is chosen as content, vocabulary such as crash, collision, alert, alarm, ambulance, paramedics, first–aid kit, victims, on–lookers, police, tow–vehicles and journalists can be used as part of the content relevant to the topic 'A road accident'. As pupils read around a given topic, a schema of related concepts, and hence words, is built and reinforced. Relevant vocabulary may also be picked up in the normal discourse of the classroom situation and when pupils read about 'accidents'. The teacher should therefore aim at teaching as many words as possible, particularly when topics are used (cf. Abdullah, 1993: 11; Dippenaar, 1993: 39).

3.5.4 Situations

Language teaching is based on situations in order to present language and teach it in context. Because pupils are taught how to get things done, the teacher should specify exactly the situation he wants to teach and how the situation can be applied to other new situations (cf. White, 1988: 63). For example, 'At the train station', which relates to the topic 'Travel by train', may be selected as a situation and pupils can be taught how to express themselves or write in this situation. Situations are therefore very useful in the

teaching of lifeskills (cf. Dippenaar, 1993: 45).

Since a situation is a combination of all the things that are happening and all the conditions that exist at a particular place, there are three elements worth considering in any situation: the setting (where?), the participants (who?) and the relevant objects in the setting (what?) (cf. Yalden, 1983; White, 1988).

The following will serve as an illustration of the three elements that make up a situation:

Setting	:	At the train Station
Participants	:	Passengers, ticket–examiners, drivers
Relevant Objects	:	Money, train–tickets, waiting–room, train–schedule, ticket–office, cafe, toilets, post–box, railway–line, train–coaches, etc.

3.5.5 Functions

Functions focus on purposes for which language is used (cf. Nunan, 1988: 35). They depend on the purpose of the speaker or the writer (cf. Yalden, 1983: 15; Long & Crookes, 1992: 29). They therefore force the teacher to consider the value of everything they teach (cf. Wilkins, 1976: 90). An example of a function that can be used to teach lifeskills is 'asking for directions' or 'making a booking'.

Teaching lifeskills in the form of functions should be determined by the immediate and long–term needs and interests of the pupils (cf. White, 1988: 48). For example, 'making an appointment' or 'making a booking' could address both the immediate and long term needs of pupils at a given former DET secondary school if it is related to 'Travel' as a theme.

These lifeskills are best taught prior to the pupils' first excursion. Vocabulary such as 'reservation', 'accommodation', 'departure–date', 'arrival–date', 'destination', 'refreshments' and 'provision' can be combined with a function.

3.5.6 Tasks

Tasks are differentiated sequences of problem–solving activities which consist of units or framework of activity. Examples of tasks are 'the filling in of forms' based on given information, 'finding one's direction' from a given map or 'filling in a bank deposit slip from given instructions' (cf. Test, in Appendix). A task is made up of an activity and a range of appropriate tasks within the activity (cf. Nunan, 1988: 42). This can be used as content in lifeskills teaching in an English course. In lifeskills teaching pupils can be instructed to measure one another's heights, weights, calculate their ages, describe the colour of their eyes, write down their destinations, declare the amount of money they have for the trip during the process of passport form filling. The teacher may use the essential vocabulary to create a 'Department of Home Affairs office situation' by distributing specimen passport forms to pupils who will be queuing. Form–filling as a lifeskill can be practised by pupils who shall have acquired the necessary vocabulary and in a 'relevant' situation. Tasks are therefore pieces of meaning–focused work involving pupils in comprehending, producing and /or interacting in the target language (cf. Nunan, 1988: 10).

Tasks given to pupils should be based on needs identification in terms of the real–life tasks pupils need (Long & Crookes, 1992: 39). This means that the teacher should use authentic sources and select activities that are balanced, motivating and which are an application of existing and new knowledge (Nunan, 1988: 132). Real–world tasks which require pupils to behave as would be expected from them in the outside world can be selected. How tasks are sequenced and relate to one another depends on the main objective in the process of

execution (Legutke & Thomas, 1991: 167). Tasks, in this way, activate an immediate need to understand and express meaning.

Although Long and Crookes (1992: 88) point out that topics and situations tend to overlap with tasks for instance, 'doing shopping' includes catching a bus, paying a fare, or choosing purchases, the teacher should be aware that these tasks could be further broken up into subtasks such as waiting in the queue, paying for purchases, reading the cashslip, carrying items bought, and so on.

3.5.7 Structures

A grammar structure is a linguistic element such a noun, verb or preposition and the pattern in which it occurs. Since structures are essential to language teaching, a number of suggestions have been made for their use in language teaching. One way suggested is to combine situations and structures, or functions and structures as content types (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983: 104). In lifeskills teaching, structures will always run through vocabulary, situation, function, tasks and the four skills. For instance, 'Reporting an accident' as a topic can focus on structures such as: two heavy vehicles collided with a car, a backseat passenger was injured, curious on–lookers crowded the scene, paramedics rushed to the scene of the accident, and so on. Pupils' attention can be focused on relevant verbs such as 'collided', 'injured', 'crowded', and 'rushed', nouns such as 'vehicles', 'car', 'passanger', 'on–lookers', 'paramedics', 'adjectives','heavy', 'backseat' and 'curious' and prepositions such as 'at', 'opposite', 'under', 'above', 'over', 'around' and 'against' in order to equip them with the necessary vocabulary.

3.5.8 The Four Skills

No one skill should be considered more important than the other when teaching primary skills to pupils; there should be a continuous integration of all the skills. The integration should be in such a way that the skills are given a chance to develop equally, without the one being emphasized to the detriment of another (cf. Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1989: 23), because the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are as essential to getting along well in the world as food and shelter are to staying alive (Glasser, 1993: 48). It is against this background that all four skills should be used in lifeskills teaching. For example, if the teacher's aim is that pupils should acquire 'how to find information from the library' as a lifeskill, he may give pupils a task to find information from the library. The pupil may have to ask the librarian questions and read instructions from a manual (reading and talking), talk with a librarian (speaking), or even borrow books from the library by writing to the librarian. That could be combined with a situation 'At the library' as content, which will be further enhanced by 'vocabulary' and 'structures' such as library, librarian, information–counter, lending–section, interlibrary loan, author, article, periodical, etc. as content in the lesson. The four basic skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking should be brought into the teaching–learning situation and be given more or less equal importance in any general syllabus (cf. Dippenaar, 1993: 53). By so doing, the four basic skills can be used to facilitate lifeskills teaching in the English course.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Because many South Africans seem to be choosing an education in English for their children over home language education, and that it is used as a medium of instruction which the teacher uses as the vehicle by means of which he imparts instructions to a pupil from an early age, it emerges as the preferred medium of communication.

The wide currency of English and the availability of educational resources in English provides fertile ground for the incorporation of lifeskills in the English course. It emerges as a language that can carry the learner up the ladder of learning.

The ANC policy document which emphasises the need for skill–oriented education as well as the Interim Core English Second Language syllabus provides a strong basis for the teaching of lifeskills to the multitudes of the disadvantaged former DET pupils. The teaching of lifeskills in an English course will obviously enhance the learning of a substantial number of Blacks since former DET was tailored to cater for Black pupils.

Use of themes and topics allows for lifeskills to be incorporated into the English Second Language course.

The teacher will first have to analyse the situation in which pupils are, establish their needs, set aims and objectives for the course, select content and teaching learning activities, and evaluate the work after he shall have taught the lifeskills he had initially planned to teach.

Lifeskills can thus be integrated in an English course through the use of topics, vocabulary, functions, situations, tasks, the four skills and structures by using topics as the basis of a lesson which will emanate from a given theme.

The next chapter focuses on the method of research.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to give an outline of the method that was used to gather data for a study on lifeskills in an English second language course.

4.2 SUBJECTS

A group of 50 Grade 11 pupils who study general stream subjects and a group of 50 pupils who study commerce stream between the ages of 16 and 24 were used as subjects; a total of 100 pupils. The commerce stream subjects include Economics, Accounting, Business Economics, Mathematics, English, Afrikaans and a first language, whereas the general stream offers subjects such as History, Biblical Studies, Geography, English, Afrikaans and a first language. English is learnt as a second language and used as a medium of instruction at secondary schools that fall under the former DET, in the Northern Province. The 2 classes came from 2 schools in the Pietersburg area.

4.3 INSTRUMENTATION

A one–and–a–half hour lifeskills test that focused on reading a bus schedule, finding information from a library, reading a payslip, and the filling in of a bank deposit slip and terminology used in interviews was designed (see Appendix). The lifeskills which were selected are examples of lifeskills that pupils need to be able to cope with life in general. For example, human beings travel, seek information from the library for personal, social,

educational or occupational purposes, they earn a living, do transactions with a bank and go for an interview or sit in a panel of interviewers. Thus, each question was designed to test a particular lifeskill.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data collection procedure in this study can be divided into two stages: the pilot study and the test.

4.4.1 Pilot Phase

During the pilot study a group of twelve (12) general and commerce stream pupils which were randomly selected from different schools sat for the test. Each of the twelve pupils was given a special answer sheet for question five and an answer sheet for the rest of the questions. Pupils received uniform instructions on how to complete the test. The researcher invigilated the session. On the basis of the observations made during the pilot study, the test was adapted in such a way that it included a key to question 1, and provided sheets of paper for rough work which were to be distributed during the test session. The question papers were also numbered from 1 to 100.

4.4.2 The Test

Subjects were allowed to take only pens, pencils and rulers to the test room. Each subject was given a numbered question paper, scribbling paper and a special answer sheet for question five, and they were further instructed to hand in the material at the end of the test session. Pupils were allowed one–and–a–half hours to complete the test. Invigilation and marking were done by the researcher in accordance with the marking scheme (see

Appendix)

4.4.3 Analysis

A t–test was used to compare the two mean scores of the two 'streams' in order to determine the way in which the two means differed reliably from each other.

The alpha level ($p < 0,05$) refers to the probability of chance occurrence. The alpha level is used to control for a Type 1 error. The alpha level is usually set at either $p < 0, 05$ or $p < 0, 01$.

Cohen's (1977: 20–27) effect size d was used to determine if there were any practically significant differences between the mean performance of the two 'streams'. Cohen uses the following scale for the d values:

Small effect – 0,2

Medium effect – 0,5

Large effect – 0,8

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose in this chapter is to analyse results in order to establish whether the Grade 11 general and commerce stream pupils possess an adequate ability in certain lifeskills.

5.2 TEST RESULTS

Results for all the subjects are given in Table 1, the pass rate per section in Table 2 and comparison of the two streams in Table 3.

Table 1: Results on lifeskills tests for all subjects

Pupils	Average	Pass (50% + more)	Fail (49% + less)
100	41,7	28	72

Only 28% of the subjects scored 50% and above in the test. This means that 72% of the subjects failed the test. The average for the whole group is 41,7. The results indicate that most of the subjects in both the general and commerce streams performed below average in this specific test, and this indicates that they are not familiar with or have not mastered

the specific lifeskills tested.

Table 2: Pass Rate per Section for all Subjects

Test Section	Max. Possible Mark	Ave. Mark	Pass	Fail
Bus Schedule	5	0,79	3	97
Library Card	5	1,98	30	70
Salary	5	2,26	43	57
Application	5	1,43	10	90
Deposit Slip	5	2,73	58	42
Interview	5	3,32	70	30

An analysis of the sub–sections of the test (Table 2) reveals that the pupils performed best on the interview and deposit slip sections, whereas most of the pupils experienced difficulties with the bus schedule, application and library card sections.

Table 3: Comparison of the two Streams

Stream	Test					Pass					Fail				
	n	x	sd	p	d	n	x	sd	p	d	n	x	sd	p	d
General	50	39,9	11,4	*	+	12	56,3	5,8	*	++	38	34,8	6,9	-	-
Commerce	50	43,4	14,3			16	60,1	5,9			34	35,5	9,4		

Statistical Significance:

* $p < 0,05$

Practical Significance (between groups):

\+ d = 0,2 (small effect size)

++ d = 0,5 (medium effect size)

+++ d = 0,8 (large effect size)

A comparison of the two groups (Table 3) reveals that the commerce group performed marginally better than the general stream group. The average for the commerce stream sub–group (43,4%) was higher than that for the general stream (39,9%). Thus, the commerce group did better than the general stream in the test.

The results of the t–test indicated that the two streams differed statistically significantly ($p < 0,05$), with the pupils in the commerce stream performing better. This difference,

however, only revealed a small effect size (d < 0,2). The difference between the two streams was, therefore, not practically significant. The t–test also indicated that the commerce stream pupils who passed had a statistically significantly higher rate than the pupils who passed in the general stream. This difference revealed a medium effect size (cf. Table 3). A reason may be that the commerce stream pupils are more familiar with interview and deposit slip lifeskills.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The poor performance of subjects in the test on lifeskills indicates that lifeskills teaching in an English Second Language course is an area that needs attention.

The slight difference in performance between the two groups and the overall high failure rate indicate that both groups need attention in the form of lifeskills teaching. The better performance of the commerce stream in the test serves to illustrate the necessity of selecting relevant lifeskills for a group of pupils on the basis of a needs analysis (cf. 3.4.2.1).

The overall poor performance of subjects in the test on lifeskill in an English course suggests that lifeskills teaching should be given the attention it deserves (cf. chapter 3).

CHAPTER 6

GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF LIFESKILLS

6.1 Introduction

The success of teaching lifeskills in an English course will largely depend on the effort that the teacher puts into the whole question of planning and implementation of lifeskills lessons. Guidelines for the teaching of lifeskills are provided in this chapter in terms of planning, content, evaluation and feedback. Examples of lessons on lifeskills in an English course are also given.

6.2 Planning

The planning of lifeskills teaching involves the following aspects: needs analysis, deciding on the duration for a given theme, actual lesson preparation and finding relevant teaching–learning material.

6.2.1 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an initial and essential step the teacher should take in lifeskills teaching. Since pupils will have strengths and weaknesses in the field of lifeskills, the teacher's needs analysis should serve as a basis for the teaching of lifeskills and this will afford him the opportunity of identifying lifeskills that pupils lack. By so doing, relevant aims and objectives will be set, and relevant content, teaching–learning activities and methods for the course will be chosen (cf. 3.4 & 3.5).

6.2.2 Duration

A number of lessons should make up a cycle of lessons which will differ in duration from theme to theme. Lessons may be planned in such a way that one lifeskill in the form of a topic is taught in one lesson. In this way, a number of topics will make up a theme which will be covered in a cycle. This implies that different themes will be constituted by a number of different but related topics.

6.2.3 Lesson Preparation

Lesson preparation should involve the identification of pupils' needs, the setting of objectives, selections of themes and related topics, content, teaching–learning activities and the evaluation of lifeskills taught. The success of each lesson on lifeskills as well as the successful teaching of a chosen lifeskill depends entirely on the effort that the teacher puts into the preparation of his or her lessons.

6.2.4 Teaching–Learning Material

The choice of teaching–material which is relevant and interesting to the age and level of pupils is meant to facilitate pupils' acquisition of lifeskills.

Aids such as the chalk–board, audio– and video–cassettes, video–player, overhead projector, transparencies, slides, newspaper–cuttings, magazine articles, pictures, and forms related to selected themes and topics should be used by the teacher in preparation for and the presentation of lessons.

It is possible that essential aids may not be available in some schools. In that case it

becomes the responsibility of the teacher to assess the situation in which he or she operates and to improvise accordingly by adapting to the given situation.

6.3 Content

Lifeskills should be selected, and then accommodated in themes, topics, structures, vocabulary, situations, functions and tasks which involve all four skills. A hybrid content is thus recommended for the teaching of lifeskills in an English course.

6.3.1 Lifeskills

Lifeskills should be graded in accordance with the age and level of pupils. For example, lifeskills such as 'how to read a bus schedule', 'how to find information and resources', 'how to keep a diary', 'how to draw up a table', 'how to make notes', 'how to fill in a bank deposit slip' and 'how to read a library card' could be taught at Grade 8 level, whereas lifeskills such 'how to fill in application forms', 'how to manage time effectively', 'how to set and achieve goals', 'how to read a payslip', 'how to write a curriculum vitae' and 'how to draw an itinerary' could be taught at Grade 10 level. The grading of lifeskills should, however, be governed by pupils' needs.

6.3.2 Themes

A theme should serve as an umbrella that covers a number of topics in lifeskills teaching. The number of topics included in a theme will depend on identified pupils' needs and the objective of the teacher in a given lesson. Different themes should therefore be derived from the needs analysis.

6.3.3 Topics

The selection of topics related to a given theme allows the teacher to explore and expose pupils to a subject of relevance and interest. For example, 'Travel' as a theme could be tackled by focusing on topics such as 'Air Travel', 'Foreign Currency', 'The Airport in Our Province', etc. A number of topics selected make it possible for the teacher to work towards the accomplishment of a given theme by teaching lifeskills related to the selected topics over a specific period.

6.3.4 Structures

Attention should be paid to the accurate production of grammar structures which should run through all lessons in an English course. As pupils' attention is focused on selected topics, they simultaneously learn grammar structures and acquire selected lifeskills.

6.3.5 Vocabulary

Vocabulary should be taught in context and not as a list of words. The teacher should teach as many words related to a given lifeskill as possible.

6.3.6 Situations

The selection of situations is one of the mechanisms of teaching lifeskills in context. A situation takes into consideration all the things that are happening. For example, 'At a travel agency' as a situation will take diaries (a client's and an agent's), bus–schedules, train–schedules, plane–schedules, fares, available lodges and hotels at the possible destination and telephone directories into consideration in order for pupils to learn how to

make a booking with a travel agency.

6.3.7 Tasks

Tasks take the form of a problem which pupils should solve during the lesson. For example, pupils could be instructed to read three different bus schedules, choose a bus schedule and give answers orally on the basis of a comparison of the schedules or they could be instructed to read an incomplete paragraph and fill in the missing words. Thus, the carrying out of such tasks should lead towards the acquisition of a given lifeskill. The teacher should therefore give as many tasks as possible since they give pupils hands–on experience in the process of lifeskills learning (cf. 3.5.6).

6.3.8 Functions

The many tasks that pupils are given during the lesson pave the way for the appropriate use of functions. Pupils can use language functions appropriately if they have accomplished a number of well co–ordinated tasks. For example, 'drawing up an itinerary' as a function involves tasks such as reading one's diary, studying the relevant map(s), checking one's finances and studying the calendar.

6.3.9 The Four Skills

As pointed out in 3.4.3.8, the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing should serve as the bases for lifeskills teaching and learning situations in an English course. For example, the teacher will obviously introduce his subject either orally or in writing (speaking or writing), whilst pupils will be listening (listening) and could be taking down some notes (writing). Pupils may even ask questions (speaking) and the teacher may write

on the board as the lesson progresses. Pupils could be instructed to do some of the exercises and tasks in their books (writing) as the lesson progresses, depending on the plan of the lesson.

6.4 The Teacher as Facilitator

Lifeskills teaching implies that the role of the teacher will have to change; he or she should assume the role of a facilitator in order to let pupils get hands–on experience when learning lifeskills. Since pupils are taught how to get things done and learn through practice, facilitation is one of the key factors in lifeskills teaching. Lifeskills should therefore be practised in a wide range of situations because skills learnt under different circumstances generalise better to new situations (see 2.7.2).

6.5 Evaluation

Evaluation should be done towards the end of each lesson and should be reflected in the teacher's lesson plan. The teacher should check whether he or she has achieved the objective he or she has set out to achieve. The marking of the classwork by the teacher or pupils' peers at the end of each lesson should contribute towards the evaluation of a theme. The teacher should keep a record of pupils' performance in every lesson.

6.6 Feedback

Pupils should be given both positive and negative feedback about their performance in classwork and homework, as this may encourage them in their work. Feedback that is given at the end of every lesson contributes towards the completion of a cycle.

6.7 Examples of Lessons on Lifeskills

Lessons on lifeskills are given below in order demonstrate how selected topics which are related to lifeskills can be taught under a theme 'Travel'. An outline of a series of four lessons is given and then discussed.

LESSON 1

Grade: 8

Time: 35 min.

Theme: Travel

Topic: A Bank Deposit Slip

Lifeskill: How to fill in a bank deposit slip

Media: Copies of the passage, specimens of bank deposit slips, a transparency of a filled in bank deposit slip and an overhead projector

Aim: Pupils should be able to do a bank transaction.

Objective: At the end of the period pupils should be able to fill in a bank deposit slip.

Teaching–Learning

Activities: The teacher starts a discussion on the importance of saving money. Pupils are then instructed to read a given passage describing a bank client that sets out to deposit an amount of R550.00 (R350.00 in cash and a cheque for R200.00 from Dawn bank) into his or her bank account, silently. Vocabulary such as 'bank', 'branch', 'client', 'account', 'deposit', 'withdrawal', 'savings' and 'interest' is explained to the pupils. On the basis of the amount of money that the client has, pupils are instructed to fill in a sample deposit slip in pencil. The teacher fills in a bank deposit

slip in accordance with the stipulations in the passage. Pupils read the teacher's bank slip from a transparency. They are then expected to compare the bank deposit slip they have filled in with the one the teacher has filled in. Pupils are given a chance to ask questions and make comments about the activity. They then erase mistakes they have made and then fill in a blank bank deposit slips in pen after having compared the teacher's specimen with theirs.

Evaluation: The teacher instructs pupils to mark their completed slips in pencil and give a mark for each of the following: account number, branch, date, initial(s) and surname, postal address, the amount of money deposited and signature. The teacher checks the marking and records the total score for each pupil in the teacher's notebook.

Feedback: Pupils are shown a transparency of a completed bank deposit slip and the teacher discusses a bank deposit slip on the basis of the mistakes committed.

Homework: Pupils are required to write down names of banks in their area, their business hours, and to bring a deposit and a withdrawal slip from one of the banks to class.

LESSON 2

Grade: 8

Time: 35 min.

Theme: Travel

Topic: A Bus Schedule

Lifeskill: How to Read a Bus Schedule

Media: Specimens of bus schedules, a clock, maps and a chalkboard.

Aim: Pupils must be able to read transport schedules.

Objective: At the end of the period pupils must be able to read a bus schedule on their own

Teaching–Learning

Activities: The teacher opens a discussion on the public transport system in a Province's capital city. Pupils are expected to share their experiences of using public transport. Pupils are then divided into groups and three different bus schedules are handed out to pupils. Each group reads a bus schedule and passes it on to the group next to it. Each group must have gone through the three schedules at the end of the schedule–reading session. Thereafter, each group chooses a bus schedule it would like to study. Nouns such as 'timetable', 'fare', 'ticket', 'hostess', 'destination', 'departure–time', 'departure–points', 'stops', 'route', 'passengers', 'refreshments' and verbs 'board', 'depart', 'alight', 'disembark', 'enquire' 'cancel', 'arrive' appearing in the schedule are highlighted and explained in the process. Pupils are then instructed to answer questions based on reading the bus schedule which the teacher has written on the chalkboard in groups. Examples of the questions are: 'How many destinations does the

bus company reach in one week?' 'Mention the stops that the bus that travels from Pietersburg to Johannesburg on Wednesday morning makes' and 'How many hours does the bus take to reach Warmbaths?'. Corrections are done orally, with pupils providing the correct answers.

Evaluation: The teacher notes mistakes and allocates marks in his notebook as individual pupils provide answers orally. The teacher then addressess problems that he has identified when pupils gave answers.

Feedback: The teacher notes errors committed by pupils and corrects them towards the end of the lesson.

Homework: Each group must get hold of bus schedules of any two bus companies that operate in their area and study the schedules. Then, the groups should choose one bus company that they would prefer to use for their trip during the next vacation . They should write down departure–points, departure–times, stops along the road, duration of the journey from home to their destination in their homework books.

LESSON 3

Grade: 8

Time: 35 min

Theme: Travel

Topic: A Travel Agency

Lifeskill: How to make a Booking with a Travel Agency

Media: Chalkboard, overhead projector and a transparency of a print out of a booking

Aim: Pupils should be able to make bookings.

Objectives: At the end of the period pupils must be able to make a booking with a travel agency.

Teaching–Learning

Activities: The teacher leads a general discussion on bookings that people normally make in life. Incomplete statements that would normally be made by a travel agent and those that one may be expected to complete when making a booking will be on the chalkboard at the beginning of the lesson. For example, 'This booking is for _____ _____'who will be travelling from_____ to_____, on the _____ and will be back on _____, from_____ to_____. Your address is _____ and the telephone number is_____. It is _____ class'. Words which are normally used when one makes a booking are highlighted (confirmation, direct–flight, domestic–flight, international–flight, departure–hall, non–smoking area, luggage and labels). Pupils are then instructed to fill in the missing words. The teacher then draws the attention of the class to

the fact that the highlighted words can be used with prepositions in sentences in order to make them more meaningful to the reader. For example, 'Your **confimation** should reach the travel agency **by** the 20th of April', You will be **on** a **direct–flight to** Cape town', 'It is the only **domestic–flight for** the day', 'There are many **international–flights on** Saturday evenings' and 'Please do not put me on the border **of** a **non–smoking area**'. Pupils are then instructed to complete the paragraph on making a booking given on the chalkboard by filling in suitable words. Next, the teacher chooses pupils at random to read out their 'bookings'.

Evaluation: The teacher selects pupils at random to read out answers they have in their classwork books whilst he notes the mistakes committed. Pupils are then instructed to exchange their classwork books and mark their peers' work in pencil on the basis of what the teacher has filled in the completed paragraph. The teacher checks the marking and allocates marks to individual pupils in his notebook.

Feedback: The teacher shows a transparency of a print–out of a booking he once made with a popular travel agency in the area.

Homework: Pupils are each given an assignment to go and make a booking for an excursion that the class has to undertake next September with a travel agency of their own choice, and write the information gathered in their homework books.

LESSON 4

Grade: 8

Time: 35 min

Theme: Travel

Topic: An Itinerary

Lifeskill: How to Draw up an Itinerary

Media: Copies of political and physical maps of the Gauteng Province, 1997 calendars and the chalkboard

Aim: Pupils should be able to plan a trip.

Objective: At the end of the period pupils must be able to draw up an itinerary.

Teaching–Learning

Activities: The teacher opens a discussion on the importance of planning a trip. Pupils are then divided into groups of five and then instructed to study the maps and calendars the teacher has distributed. The teacher focuses pupils' attention on common nouns such as 'train–station', 'bus–stop', 'street', 'hotel', 'supermarket', 'town', 'river', 'month', 'day' and 'destination', and points out their difference from proper nouns such as 'Parkstation', 'Braamfontein', 'Rissik', 'Parktonian', 'OK Bazaar', 'Boksburg', 'Vaal', 'March' and 'Alberton' in the 1997 calendar and the map of the province. The teacher then explains what an itinerary is. Next, pupils study the maps and calendars again and then are instructed to specify places they would like to visit during the coming holiday, give suitable dates and stipulate the duration of their stay at each specific place. The itinerary drawn up is used to construct sentences such as 'I will leave Pietersburg on Friday the 14th of February, at 8:00'. 'The bus will

stop at Naboomspruit at about 10:00' and 'Passengers will be allowed a 15 minutes' break'. 'The next stop will be Johannesburg where I will alight at 12:00', 'A connecting bus from Johannesburg to Letlhabile Resort will leave at 12:30 and is scheduled to reach its destination at 13:00'. 'I shall tour the resort on the 15th and 16th at 10:00 and visit places of interest on the 17th at 9:00'. I shall visit industries on the 18th at 11:30 and go shopping on the 19th at 8:00'. 'I shall tour institutions of higher learning on the 20th from 10:00'. 'A bus from Letlhabile to Johannesburg on Fridays leaves at 13:30 and arrives in Johannesburg at 14:00 in time for the 14:15 bus to Pietersburg.' Pupils are then instructed to draw up an itinerary under three subheadings: date, destination and time. For example, pupils may come up with something like this:

ITINERARY

Date	Destination	Time
14	Johannesburg	12:00
14	Letlhabile	13:00
15	Letlhabile	10:00
16	Letlhabile	10:00
17	Places of interest	9:00
18	Industries	11:30
19	Shopping	8:00
20	Institutions	10:00
20	Johannesburg	14:00
21	Pietersburg	16:15

Evaluation: The teacher shows pupils a transparency of a drawn up itinerary whilst pupils mark their own itineraries in pencil. The teacher collects classwork books, checks the allocation of marks and the performance of pupils in general.

Feedback: The teacher gives a model itinerary on the chalkboard which is based on the 3 subheadings, date, destination and time.

Homework: Pupils should study a map of the Northern Province and identify holiday resorts together with towns which are close to the resorts. The names of resorts and what they offer should be written in their homework books.

6.8. A Discussion of the Example Lessons

All activities are based on and centred around the theme 'Travel'. The theme comprises different yet related topics such as 'A bank deposit slip' (Lesson 1), 'A bus schedule (lesson 2), Making a booking' (Lesson 3) and 'An itinerary' (lesson 4).

Lesson 1

In lesson 1 pupils are taught how to fill in a bank deposit slip as a lifeskill. In the example, nouns are highlighted as pupils learn how to fill in a bank deposit slip. For example, nouns such as 'day', 'month', 'year', 'branch', 'amount', 'drawer' and 'account–number' can be singled out and used as examples in the context of filling in a bank deposit slip. By practising how to fill in a bank deposit slip, a real–life situation is created which is in keeping with the needs of the pupils. Pupils fill in specimens of bank deposit slips, compare what they have filled in with what the teacher has filled in and make corrections where necessary towards the end of the lesson.

Lesson 2

Many pupils often travel by bus. Hence the lifeskill 'how to read a bus schedule'. As words that appear on the schedule are explained by the teacher, verbs are highlighted at the same time. For instance, **arrives**, **departs**, **boards**, **alights**, **stops**, **leaves**, and so on can be used as examples of verbs (structures) within context. The task of reading a bus schedule which is given to pupils tests whether they can read the schedule with understanding. Corrections come in the form of tasks given to pupils which are meant to afford pupils an opportunity of checking and correcting their answers based on the bus schedule that the teacher has prepared.

The lesson can be used as a stepping–stone towards lessons on agreement of subjects and verbs in number (concord as structural item) and as a basis for a lesson on opposites. For example, **a bus arrives** at 13:00 but **buses arrive** at 13:00 (concord) and arrive – depart and board – alight (opposites) etc., which are based on the topic 'A bus schedule' and the vocabulary which is used in the context of a bus schedule.

Lesson 3

The lifeskill practised in lesson 3 is how to make a booking 'at a travel agency' (situation). Pair and group work is suggested. As in the given example, there is a conversation between a would–be traveller or travellers (depending on arrangements that the teacher makes) and a travel agent. The example involves the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Prepositions (structures) are highlighted as interlocutors give and receive information on possible travel arrangements. For example, a would–be traveller can make a booking **for** the 1st **of** July 1997 **through** a travel agency, and could be advised to be **at** the airport or bus station one–and–a–half hours **before** departure–time **for** an international–flight but half–an–hour **before** the departure–time **for** a domestic–flight.

Lesson 4

Lesson 4 deals with how to draw up an itinerary as a lifeskill: the vocabulary, nouns, verbs, prepositions, together with the topics covered in periods 1, 2 and 3 can be perceived as information relevant to itinerary writing.

The teacher and pupils to a certain extent depend on the topics used in previous lessons in order to write an itinerary. Holiday plans touch on making travel arrangements (with or without the help of a travel agent), perusal of relevant schedules (cf. lesson 2), considering

one's budget (cf. lesson 1) prior to final arrangements and being familiar with the vocabulary that deals with 'travel' as a theme. For example, before one can finalise travel arrangements one would have to consider one's budget, check one's diary, possibly visit travel agencies and, depending on the nature of the trip, deposit or withdraw money.

The examples of lessons show how different lessons can contribute towards the accomplishment of a given theme in a lifeskills teaching–learning situation.

6.9 CONCLUSION

Guidelines and example lessons on the teaching of lifeskills can help the teacher prepare lessons on the teaching of lifeskills in an English course. For instance, in lesson 4, the sentences that pupils construct can be used as a launching–pad for the teaching of the future tense as a structure that go hand in hand with the drawing up of an itinerary. On the other hand, the present tense can feature in lesson 2 when pupils would be giving answers pertaining to the topic 'a bus schedule' orally.

Any good presentation requires thorough planning on the part of the teacher and it can contribute to the successful teaching and learning of lifeskills in an English Second Language course.

Before planning a lesson, the aims and objectives of a lesson on lifeskills teaching must be considered as a starting point, since the success of every lesson can only be determined if the teacher knows what he is aiming for (cf. 6.8 –'Travel' as a theme can run through a number of lessons, by means of a number of related topics). The success of each lesson depends on a well–worked out, specific and concrete plan which directs and organizes what the teacher does. Ideally, checklists based on the syllabus should be used to draw up

interesting and stimulating lessons (see 3.3).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim in this chapter is to conclude the study and make recommendations for further study. The findings of the study will be used as a springboard for the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made.

7.2 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study has come to the conclusion that the Interim Core English Second Language Syllabi make provision for the teaching of lifeskills in an English course. It has also been shown that a selected group of Grade 11 pupils do not possess adequate lifeskills in certain areas of reading and writing. It is clear that the teaching of lifeskills should be included in the English Second Language course.

Lifeskills teaching can best be dealt with at secondary school level, but should not be deferred until the last year of study at school because it is during this last year that pupils are expected to write application letters to other institutions of learning, fill in of application forms and read the Grade 12 examination time table. Hence it is proposed that lifeskills teaching be introduced at Grade 8 level after a needs analysis has been done (cf. Interim Core English Second Language Syllabus, Standard 5, 6 and 7, 1995).

It is a truism that teachers would have to be skilled in lifeskills teaching in order to be able to teach lifeskills. Lifeskills education could therefore be included in both pre–service and

in–service courses in order to fill gaps that might exist.

The study and its findings come at a time when South Africa is in the process of reviewing and restructuring her curriculum. Lifeskills teaching should therefore be viewed as a mechanism that would contribute towards the resolution of the many problems that the education system of South Africa is experiencing and is trying to find long–term solutions for.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The scope of lifeskills teaching is wider than depicted in the study. As a result, the discussion of lifeskills in the study has to be understood against the background that only a few lifeskills were selected for the study. Future research could therefore investigate lifeskills other than those selected.

Because the study focused on former DET pupils, a comparative study that would look into the teaching of lifeskills in departments of education other than the former DET might give a bird's eye–view of lifeskills teaching.

That the study focused on English as a second language implies that lifeskills teaching in English as a first language could also be explored. That could obviously be done in accordance with the syllabus prescribed for first language speakers of English.

Teachers' strengths and weaknessess in the field of lifeskills teaching could be studied as a way of strengthening the base for lifeskills teaching in an English course.

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ABSTRACT

Although lifeskills are vitally important in life, many secondary school pupils, senior secondary school drop–outs and matriculated people display a lack of lifeskills.

The aim of the study is to investigate whether the Interim Core English Syllabi make provision for the teaching of lifeskills and to find out if Grade 11 secondary school pupils possess adequate lifeskills in certain areas of reading and writing.

A lifeskills test which was made up of six selected lifeskills was designed and two groups of Grade 11 pupils who followed general and commerce streams were tested. Results showed that the pupils did not have adequate lifeskills to carry out certain reading and writing tasks.

Since the findings indicate that the Interim Core English Second Language Syllabi make provision for the teaching of lifeskills and that the teaching of lifeskills at secondary school level does not get the attention it deserves, guidelines for theme–based teaching of lifeskills and examples of lessons on lifeskills in an English Second Language course are given.

Keywords: lifeskills, teaching, pupils, syllabus, English Second Language.

OPSOMMING

Alhoewel lewensvaardighede baie belangrik in die lewe is, vertoon baie sekondêre skoolleerlinge, senior sekondêre uitvallers en persone wat reeds gematrikuleer het, 'n gebrek daaraan.

Die doel van die studie is om uit te vind of die Interim–kernsillabus vir Engels Tweedetaal lewensvaardighede insluit en of graad 11–leerlinge voldoende lewensvaardighede het in sekere areas van lees en skryf.

'n Toets in lewensvaardighede wat bestaan uit 6 lewensvaardighede is ontwerp. Twee groepe graad 11–leerlinge wat 'n algemene en 'n handelskursus volg, is getoets. Die uitslag dui aan dat hulle nie beskik oor genoeg lewensvaardighede om sekere lees– en skryftake te voltooi nie.

Omdat die Interim–kernsillabusse vir Engels voorsiening maak vir die insluiting van lewensvaardighede en bevindings toon dat dit op sekondêre skoolvlak nie die aandag kry wat dit verdien nie, word riglyne vir tema–gebaseerde onderrig van lewensvaardighede sowel as voorbeelde van lesse in lewensvaardigheid in Engels Tweedetaal gegee.

Sleutelwoorde: lewensvaardighede, onderrig, leerlinge, sillabus, Engels Tweedetaal.

APPENDIX

TEST

Time: 1 Hour 30 Min.

Instructions

1. Read the questions before you can attempt to answer them.
2. Answer all questions.
3. Question 5 must be answered on a separate sheet which will be provided.
4. Write neatly and clearly.

Question 1

Read the bus schedule below and answer questions that follow.

To Johannesburg		Mon		Tue–Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Pietersb.	Dept.	08:00	10:15	07:00	08:05	07:00	14:15
Potgiet.	Dept.	08:40	10:55	07:40	08:45	07:40	14:55
Naboomsp.	Dept.	09:30	11:45	08:30	09:35	08:30	15:35
Pretoria	Dept.	11:30	13:45	10:30	11:35	10:30	17:45
Johannesb	Arriv	12:30	14:45	11:30	12:35	11:30	18:45

From Johannesb		Mon		Tue–Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Johannesburg	Dept.	13:30	15:45	12:30	12:35	12:30	13:45
Pretoria	Dept.	14:30	16:45	13:30	13:35	13:30	14:45
Naboomsp.	Dept.	16:25	18:40	15:25	15:30	15:25	15:55
Potgiet.	Dept.	17:05	19:20	16:05	16:10	16:05	17:05
Pietersb.	Arr.	18:00	20:15	17:00	17:05	17:00	18:00

Key

Dept. : The bus departs

Arr. : The bus arrives

1.1 On Monday morning, if you miss the 8:40 bus leaving Potgietersrus for Johannesburg, how long will you have to wait for the next bus? (1)

1.2 If you want to travel by bus from Pretoria to Johannesburg on a Wednesday, at what

time will the bus leave? (1)

1.3 If a bus driver has to drive from Pietersburg to Johannesburg, and drive back to Pietersburg on a Monday, how much time does the bus driver have for rest (1)

1.4 How long does the bus take to travel from Pretoria to Pietersburg? (1)

1.5 How many minutes does a bus take to travel from Pietersburg to Potgietersrus? (1)

(5)

Question 2

Read the library card and answer questions based on the information given in the card.

206.16
S321a
Head, Steve, 1956.
The Second Coming; the last journey.
New York, Mc Donald [1978]
106p. Illus. 20cm
Includes bibliography
Library of Congress

[8-1]

2.1 Give the author's date. (1)

2.2 Is the author still living or dead? (1)

2.3 Who is the publisher of the book? (1)

2.4 What is the height of the book? (1)

2.5 What is the call number of the book? (1)

(5)

Question 3

Study the salary record and payslip, and answer questions that follow.

Department of Education

EMP. Number	Employee Name
413071	Kgoro D.T.

Paid by Bank Transfer

Bank: Freedom Bank

Account No. 9231172289

Tax Status	Marital Status	Tax Ded Dependant	Med Aid Dependant
A	M	1	3

Basic Salary CS1 Perm Staff	5920.60	
Housing Subsidy (Tax)		300.00
Head of Department Allowance		259.00
Pensior. CS1 Employee		420.00
Group Life CS1 Future Life		50.50

Medical Health–Wealth	190.10
Bond Payment: Omega Housing	700.00

Gross Earnings	Pension	Total Tax	Medical	Bond Subsidies
5920.60	420.00	1950.00	190.10	350.60

3.1 Who is the employee? (1)

3.2 How is the salary paid to the employee? (1)

3.3 What is the marital status of the employee? (1)

3.4 An employee gets a basic salary of R5920.60. Why is the net payment R2791.69? (2)

(5)

Question 4

The following words and phrases are sometimes used in application forms. Match words or phrases in column A with their meanings in column B.

A	B
4.1 Personal Recommendation	–any serious illnesses
4.2 Dependents	–brief details of an applicant's life, education, work experience, etc.
4.3 References	–the name of a person who told you about the job
4.4 Curriculum Vitae	–names of one or two people who know you well and to whom the

employer could write for a confidential report

4.5 Ailments

–any persons who rely on you for all or part of their support

(5)

Question 5

Read the paragraph below and use the information given to fill in a bank deposit slip.

The treasurer for Masa Youth Club has to deposit money that was collected during a quarterly meeting into account number 910760953. Mpho Kgase, a club member issued a Star Bank cheque for R37.00, and Pule Maru issued a Corner Bank cheque for R33.00. The rest of the members contributed a total amount of R232.12.

NB: Use the sheet that was provided to answer this question

(5)

Question 6

Check your understanding of job interviews by reading each of the statements. Answer True (T) if you agree or False (F) if you don't agree with the statement.

6.1 It is not important to be on time for an interview.

6.2 It is not a good idea to wear blue jeans to a job interview.

6.3 It is in order to smoke or chew gum during an interview.

6.4 It is acceptable to interrupt an interviewer.

6.5 You will not be asked about your matric aggregate symbol at an interview because that is private information.

(5)

TOTAL – 30 Marks.

Use this answer sheet for question 5.

Question Paper Number _____

DATE	DAY	MONTH	YEAR

	CASH, POSTAL AND MONEY ORDERS	RAND	CENTS
CHEQUES: DRAWER'S NAME	BANK AND BRANCH		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
	TOTAL		

BANK		USE	

ACCOUNT NUMBER									

DEPOSITED BY _____

Signature

MEMORANDUM

Question 1

1.1 2 Hours and 15 Minutes

1.2 10H30

1.3 1 Hour

1.4 3 Hours 30 Minutes

1.5 40 Minutes

(5)

Question 2

2.1 1956

2.2 Still living

2.3 Mc Donald

2.4 20cm

2.5 New York

(5)

Question 3

3.1 Kgaro D. T.

3.2 Through the bank

3.3 The employee is married

3.4 Deductions are R3128.91

(5)

Question 4

4.1 The name of the person who told you about the job.

4.2 Any person who relies on you for all or part of their support.

4.3 Names of one or two people who know you well and to whom the employer could write for a confidential report.

4.4 Brief details of an applicant's life, education, work experience, etc.

4.5 Any serious illnesses.

(5)

Question 5

DATE	DAY	MONTH	YEAR

	CASH, POSTAL AND ORDERS	RAND	CENTS
		232	12
CHEQUES: DRAWER'S NAME	BANK AND BRANCH		
1. Mpho Kgase	Star Setu	37	00
2. Pule Maru	Corner Ebu	33	00
3.			
4.			
	TOTAL		

BANK		**USE**	

ACCOUNT NUMBER	9	1	0	7	6	0	9	5	3

DEPOSITED BY _____

Signature

6.3 F

6.4 F

6.5 F

(5)

TOTAL=30 MARKS