

**Towards an epistemological framework
for a Life Orientation Programme
based on spirituality**

**Towards an epistemological framework
for a Life Orientation Programme
based on spirituality**

Anne Christiane Karstens

M.Ed.

(12569704)

Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Learner Support
in the Faculty of Educational Sciences, North-West University
(Potchefstroom Campus)

Supervisor: Dr. C.T.Viljoen

Potchefstroom

2010

Dedicated to
Dr. Milson D. Hailstones

Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

Proverbs 23:23

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Psalms 51:6

Thank you!

He who marries the spirit of the age today, will be a widower tomorrow.

William Inge

Acknowledgements

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

- Dr. C.T. Viljoen for his guidance, help and openness. Thank you!
- Prof. Ponti Venter and Prof. Cilas Wilders for all their advice.
- The staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library for their assistance.
- Dr. M.D. Hailstones for proof reading my thesis and his advice.
- All the principals of the various schools for allowing me to conduct the research in their schools.
- All the teachers and pupils who participated in this study.
- My parents and friends for their support and encouragement.

Abstract

KEY WORDS: spirituality / life orientation / life skills / character education / epistemology / moral education / religion / spirituality education

Spirituality is increasingly becoming a popular concept both in the media and in academic literature. One tendency is to reintegrate spirituality into education, health and other aspects of life. However there is a vast difference between the original concept of spirituality which was based on a Biblical view and many contemporary perceptions thereof. Spirituality is largely seen as being divorced from any specific religion and specific truth claims. Nevertheless it can be stated that spirituality is now seen as a universal human phenomenon.

The learning area Life Orientation was implemented in South African schools as part of Outcomes Based Education. This learning area incorporates previous subjects or topics such as career guidance, religious education, health education, physical education and civic education, and is not based on any specific religion. Based on the evidence gathered in questionnaires, discussions and observations in schools, and a close reading of available material, it seems as if there is a lack of a clear epistemological basis in Life Orientation. The learning area Life Orientation is supposed to educate healthy, responsible young people who are able to live productive lives in the new South African democracy. This learning area forms part of the global life skills movement, which in turn is a variant or alternative approach to moral and character education. Effectiveness in the learning area of Life Orientation has not yet been proven, and there is evidence that there are various problems in attaining this ideal. It is therefore suggested that a connection between spirituality as a universal human phenomenon and Life Orientation could improve the quality of Life Orientation education if it would be possible to justify this connection on epistemological grounds.

In order to give voice to both teachers and learners in terms of their views, ideas and comments on Life Orientation, questionnaires (for teachers) and focus group interviews (for learners) were utilized.

The results of both the empirical research and the literature review indicate that there are various problems in the practice of Life Orientation education. Among many teachers and learners there is a negative feeling towards LO. Furthermore it seems that LO does not succeed in accomplishing its aims. Many teachers would seem to welcome a connection with spirituality.

It is therefore concluded that a connection between spirituality and LO would be beneficial. It is possible to develop an epistemological framework where Life Orientation is grounded in spirituality, even though the all-inclusive types of post-modern conceptions of spirituality pose problems which need to be solved. It is concluded that a particularistic approach to spirituality in LO should be advocated.

Opsomming

SLEUTELWOORDE: spiritualiteit / lewensoriëntering / lewensvaardighede / karakteropvoeding / epistemologie / morele opvoeding / godsdienst / spiritualiteitopvoeding

Spiritualiteit word tans al hoe meer populêr, beide in die media en in akademiese literatuur. Daar is vandag die tendens om spiritualiteit en opvoedingswetenskappe, gesondheidswetenskappe en ander aspekte van die lewe te herintegreer. Dit is belangrik om op te merk dat daar 'n groot verskil tussen die oorspronklike konsep van spiritualiteit, wat gefundeer was op 'n Bybelse siening, en baie van die heedendaagse persepsies daarvan is. In meeste gevalle vandag word spiritualiteit gesien as iets wat geskei is van enige spesifieke godsdienst asook spesifieke aansprake op waarheid. Dit kan wel gestel word dat spiritualiteit vandag as 'n universele menslike eienskap gesien kan word.

Die leerarea Lewensoriëntering is as deel van Uitkoms Gebaseerde Onderwys geïmplementeer in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Hierdie leerarea omsluit vorige vakke of temas soos beroepsvoorligting, godsdienstonderrig, gesondheidsoopvoeding, liggaamsoopvoeding en burgerskapsopvoeding, en is op geen spesifieke godsdienst gebaseer nie. As na bewysmateriaal gekyk word wat verkry is deur middel van vraelyste, besprekings en waarnemings in skole, asook noukeurige konsultasie van beskikbare bronne, blyk dit dat daar 'n gebrek aan 'n duidelike epistemologiese basis vir Lewensoriëntering is. Die leerarea Lewensoriëntering is veronderstel om gesonde, verantwoordelike jongmense op te voed, wat in staat is om produktiewe lewens in die nuwe Suid-Afrikaanse demokrasie te lei. Hierdie leerarea vorm deel van die wêreldwye lewensvaardighede beweging, wat 'n alternatiewe benadering is tot morele- of karakteropvoeding. Dit is nog nie bewys dat Lewensoriëntering werklik effektief is nie, maar daar bestaan menige bewyse dat daar probleme rondom die bereiking van hierdie ideaal bestaan. Om hierdie rede word daar voorgestel dat as daar 'n verbintenis tussen spiritualiteit as 'n universele menslike eienskap en Lewensoriëntering gemaak word, sal die kwaliteit van Lewensoriëntering kan

verhoog word indien daar bewys kan word dat hierdie verbintenis epistemologies geregverdig is.

Vraelyste (vir onderwysers) en onderhoude (vir leerders) is gebruik om 'n stem te verleen aan beide onderwysers en leerders omtrent hulle sienings, idees en kommentaar rondom Lewensoriëntering.

Die resultate van beide, die empiriese navorsing en die literatuuroorsig, wys dat daar menigte probleme rondom die onderrig van Lewensoriëntering bestaan. Onder baie onderwysers en leerders is daar negatiewe gevoelens oor Lewensoriëntering. Bowendien blyk dit dat Lewensoriëntering nie daarin slaag om die doeleindes te bereik nie en dat baie onderwysers 'n verbintenis met spiritualiteit sou verwelkom.

Daar kan tot die gevolgtrekking gekom word dat 'n verbintenis tussen spiritualiteit en Lewensoriëntering voordelig sal wees. Dit is moontlik om 'n epistemologiese raamwerk, waar Lewensoriëntering in spiritualiteit gegrond is, te ontwikkel, alhoewel dit duidelik word dat daar probleme ondervind word met die inklusiewe en postmodernisties-gebaseerde persepsies van spiritualiteit, wat moet aangespreek word. Die gevolgtrekking word gemaak dat 'n partikularistiese benadering tot spiritualiteit in Lewensoriëntering bevorder kan word.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
SUMMARY	ii
OPSOMMING	vi

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, statement of the problem and methodology

1.1	Introduction and orientation	1
1.2	Rationale	7
1.3	Clarification of terms	8
1.3.1	Spirituality	8
1.3.2	Life skills education / life orientation	8
1.3.3	Epistemological framework	8
1.4	Statement of the research problem	8
1.5	Research aims	9
1.6	Research design and method of investigation	10
1.6.1	Literature review	10
1.6.2	Qualitative research	10
1.7	Structure of the research report	10
1.8	Conclusion	11

CHAPTER 2

Spirituality: history and contemporary developments

2.1	Introduction and orientation	12
2.2	The origin of the concept of spirituality	14
2.2.1	...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. – The Biblical perspective	14
2.2.2	God wills that we should push into His presence and live our whole life there – Spirituality within the context of the church	17
2.3	There is a level of mystery to human experience that simply cannot be penetrated by academic reflection. – The current distinction between religion and spirituality	21

2.4	Development of the dichotomy between spirituality and religion	22
2.4.1	“Memento mori!” – The Middle Ages	23
2.4.2	“Carpe diem!” – The Renaissance	24
2.4.3	It is the idea of the limitless perfectibility of the human species – The Enlightenment	27
2.4.4	All creatures drink in joy from nature’s breast – Romanticism	29
2.4.5	The positive spirit has reached the complete awareness of its own nature – Modernism and onwards	30
2.4.6	Two or more melodies sounding together – Post-modernism	33
2.5	A brief investigation into Eastern and African religions/ spiritualities as well as Christianity	36
2.5.1	Any deity is welcome, just don’t be exclusive... – Hinduism	36
2.5.2	Emptiness as the highest aim – Buddhism	40
2.5.3	Submission as a lifestyle – Islam	43
2.5.4	Appeasing the ancestors – African religion	45
2.5.5	And the truth shall set you free – Christianity	49
2.6	Contemporary conceptions of spirituality	52
2.6.1	Spirituality: new systems of thought	53
2.6.1.1	Post-modern trends	54
2.6.1.2	Feminist trends	55
2.6.1.3	Multi-religious and atheist trends	56
2.6.1.4	Eastern trends	58
2.6.1.5	Existential trends	59
2.7	The impact of spirituality on lifestyle, physical and mental health	59
2.8	A framework for evaluating different kinds of spiritualities	61
2.9	Conclusion	63

CHAPTER 3

Life skills education: history and contemporary developments

3.1	Introduction and orientation	65
3.2	The history and development of Life Skills/Orientation education	66
3.2.1	A US American perspective	67
3.3	The need for Life Skills education	73
3.3.1	Risk behaviours	74

3.3.2	Psychological deviations, depression and suicide	75
3.3.3	HIV / AIDS	75
3.3.4	The current societal climate	76
3.3.5	Some facts about post-modernism	78
3.4	The current status of Life Orientation/life skills/character/moral education	81
3.4.1	Dewey's progressivism and Kohlberg's moral development	82
3.4.2	Values clarification	84
3.4.3	Life skills	86
3.4.4	The character education movement	90
3.5	The South African situation	95
3.5.1	A brief history of moral/character/life skills education in South Africa	95
3.5.2	The National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and the Department of Education	96
3.5.3	Tertiary textbooks on teaching Life Orientation	106
3.5.4	School Life Orientation textbooks	107
3.5.5	The practice of Life Orientation	108
3.6	Spirituality education	110
3.7	Conclusion	122

CHAPTER 4

Theoretical framework, research design and methodology

4.1	Introduction and orientation	124
4.2	Theoretical framework	125
4.3	Research design	134
4.4	Research methodology	134
4.4.1	Sampling	135
4.4.2	Data collection	136
4.4.2.1	Pilot study	136
4.4.2.2	Qualitative questionnaires	136
4.4.2.3	Focus group interviews	137
4.4.2.4	Observations	138
4.4.3	Data analysis	138

4.4.4	Trustworthiness	139
4.4.5	Ethical considerations	140
4.5	Conclusion	141

CHAPTER 5

Life Orientation in practice: an empirical investigation

5.1	Introduction and orientation	142
5.2	Research design and methodology	143
5.2.1	Research design	143
5.2.2	Sampling of participants	144
5.2.3	Data collection	144
5.3	Observations during the data collection phase	145
5.4	Data analysis and interpretation of the teacher questionnaires	147
5.4.1	Definitions of basic concepts	148
5.4.1.1	Life Orientation and teacher knowledge of the LO curriculum	148
5.4.1.2	Spirituality	153
5.4.1.3	Religion	154
5.4.2	The perceived success of LO	155
5.4.3	Comments, suggestions and criticism of LO from a teacher perspective	159
5.4.4	Observations by the researcher regarding teachers' answers to questions on LO	168
5.4.5	Definitions of spirituality – teachers' views	170
5.4.6	Exploring the possible connection between LO and spirituality from a teacher perspective	170
5.4.7	The extent to which teachers feel qualified	190
5.4.8	Conclusion	191
5.5	Data analysis and interpretation of the interviews	192
5.5.1	The content of LO	192
5.5.2	Perceived enjoyment of LO	196
5.5.3	Application of LO to life	202
5.5.4	Suggestions concerning LO by the pupils	203
5.5.5	The meaning of life and LO	205
5.5.6	Conclusion regarding the conducted interviews	208

5.6	Comparison between teachers' and learners' responses	209
5.7	Limitations	210
5.8	Conclusion	211

CHAPTER 6

Spirituality and an epistemological basis for life orientation: a synthesis

6.1	Introduction and orientation	213
6.2	Emerging issues concerning LO	214
6.2.1	A seeming discrepancy between theory and praxis	215
6.2.2	Effectiveness	218
6.2.3	Basis of Life Orientation	219
6.3	Emerging issues concerning spirituality	222
6.3.1	Spirituality as a universal human phenomenon	222
6.3.2	Spirituality and religion, an uneasy connection?	223
6.3.3	Evaluation of different bases for spirituality	224
6.3.3.1	Post-modern trends	225
6.3.3.2	Feminist trends	225
6.3.3.3	Multi-religious and atheist trends	226
6.3.3.4	Eastern trends	226
6.3.3.5	Existential trends	226
6.3.3.6	Problems with contemporary trends of spirituality	227
6.3.3.7	Hindu spirituality	227
6.3.3.8	Buddhist spirituality	228
6.3.3.9	Islam spirituality	228
6.3.3.10	African traditional spirituality	228
6.3.3.11	Christian spirituality	229
6.3.3.12	Problems with religion-based spiritualities	229
6.4	Particularity versus inclusiveness	230
6.5	Particularity as approach for Life Orientation	236
6.6	Recommendations	238
6.7	Epilogue	239

Bibliography	242

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities	63
Table 5.1	Teacher knowledge of the RNCS	151
Table 5.2	Teacher definitions of spirituality	153
Table 5.3	Aspects to be included into the teaching of LO	160
Table 5.4	Aspects to be excluded from the teaching of LO	162
Table 5.5	Teacher view of the relationship between religion and spirituality	173
Table 5.6	Teachers' views on the possibility of spirituality being a basis for LO	176
Table 5.7	Motivations of teachers for spirituality being a basis for LO	178
Table 5.8	Characteristics of a foundational spirituality in LO	181
Table 5.9	Teachers' perceptions of the role of religion in LO	184
Table 5.10	Extent to which teachers feel qualified to teach LO	190
Table 5.11	Content of LO according to pupils	194
Table 5.12	Meaning/purpose of life	206
Table 2.1	Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities	224
Table 2.1b	Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities	236

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**APPENDIX B: APPROVAL FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

APPENDIX C: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

**APPENDIX E: EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES FROM QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH (QUESTIONNAIRES)**

**APPENDIX F: EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES FROM QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH (INTERVIEWS)**

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, statement of the problem and methodology

1.1 Introduction and orientation

“Ask true believers of any faith to describe the most important thing that drives their devotion, and they’ll tell you that it is not a thing at all but a sense – a feeling of a higher power far beyond us....Even among people who regard spiritual life as wishful hocus-pocus, there is a growing sense that humans may not be able to survive without it” (Kluger, 2004).

This statement demonstrates that spirituality has become an increasingly important aspect of existence, which is confirmed by various other authors (Veith, 1994; Richards & Bergin, 1998; Webster, 2004:7; Ford, Arie & Pingree, 2005). In the Western context spirituality is increasingly seen as an important component of human existence and should not be neglected within a holistic view of human psychological health. The concept of spirituality progressively finds its way into all aspects of post-modern society (Hawks, Hull, Thalman & Richins, 1995:371; Drazenovich, 2004; Ford *et al.*, 2005). It is also significant to note that within the wellness literature there are movements towards seeing spirituality as *the* core characteristic of healthy beings (Seaward, 1995:165f; Myers, Sweeney & Witmer, 2000:253).

While the Western concept of spirituality indubitably has its origin in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition (McSherry & Cash, 2004:153) it is increasingly maintained that spirituality can be practised within any religious or areligious context. Spirituality has in the process become divorced from religion. The origin of this must partly lie with Carl Jung’s psychology. He specifically stated that spirituality needs to be divorced from religion, particularly Christian religion (Benner, 1988:54ff).

The concept *spirituality* has been prominent within Western religion and the Western philosophical tradition from the beginning of the Christian era (Downey, 1997). With the advent of modernism however it was widely abandoned as unscientific and

irrelevant, especially within the field of psychology (Richards & Bergin, 1998; Delaney & DiClemente, 2005).

Spirituality has recently achieved a new status (Karstens, 2006; Richards & Bergin, 1998) and it now becomes necessary to define the concept. Even though the concept *spirituality* has become acceptable within academic debate, there is nevertheless a disparity between the pre-modern view of spirituality and the current view. In our post-modern era spirituality has become divorced from its Judeo-Christian roots and is now seen as something that anyone can achieve or practise within or without the context of organised religion (Richards & Bergin, 1998; Koenig, 2004).

There are also various Eastern traditions, which have their own tradition of spirituality, even if the term is not always used (Ellwood, 1987; Wuthnow, 1998; Jones & Hostler, 2004).

These claims would have to be investigated more critically in order to establish a valid epistemological basis for spirituality, both in academic debate and in practice. In order to be able to develop a sound epistemology, the etymology of the concept of spirituality needs to be explored. The word *spirit* originated in the Latin *spiritus*, meaning *breath*, *courage*, *vigour* or *life*, whereas the adjective *spiritual* comes from the Latin *spiritualis*, which can be translated as “of the spirit” (Ingersoll, 1994:100). The Latin furthermore is a translation of the Greek words *pneuma* for spirit and *pneumatikos* for spiritual. Within the New Testament documents the concept of *pneuma* designates aspects that are under the influence of God or are an expression of the Spirit of God, as well as the inner self of the person (Sheldrake, 1992:34; Ladd, 1993:502f). An earlier concept in this tradition is the Hebrew word *rû(a)h*, which is the Old Testament term for spirit. The root meaning thereof is “air in motion”. It implies that God’s breath - his power, however not separated from God as a person - is working in the world, which creates and sustains life. The Old Testament use of the term also implies that man has received life (breath) through the breath (life) of God (Ladd, 1993:501).

In the West and significant portions of the rest of the world, the construct *spirituality* has been influenced and shaped by contact with the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is

also evident that the term has nowadays acquired a broader, anthropological rather than theological meaning. The literature speaks of Eastern, as well as African spiritualities. Given the growing acceptance of and interest in this broader concept of spirituality, it is interesting that there appears to be no logically defensible epistemological foundation for the current usage of the term. This is compounded by the fact that no universally accepted definition of *spirituality* exists (Maher & Hunt, 1993:21; Karstens, 2006:28). This may be expected given the post-modern context.

When considering different definitions it becomes obvious that most include the following four concepts:

- meaning and purpose,
- moral and ethical values,
- relationships
- transcendence (Westgate, 1996:27; Myers *et al.*, 2000:265; Karstens, 2006:29f).

Even though spirituality has reasserted its relevance in society and its acceptance in scientific debate, there is still a great lacuna in debate and praxis within post-modern society. There is for example the absence of any coherent epistemological foundation for spirituality, to guide and control the integration of spirituality within education, specifically in the subject or learning area Life Orientation (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3ff). This will be addressed in this study. Life Orientation is a subject in the South African education system which attempts to teach children “life skills”, a set of values and traits which they need in order to develop their full “potential” within the new South Africa (Department of Education, 2002, 2003).

In South African literature the term Life Skills is sometimes used instead of Life Orientation. For grades R-3 the Department of Education uses the term Life Skills, for grades 4-12 the term Life Orientation is used (Department of Education, 2002, 2003). In Chapter 3 these terms are explained and differentiated. It is however clear that Life Orientation is seen as being part of the global life skills movement (World Health Organization, 1999:1f).

Education is one of the activities in society which deals with the enculturation of children, teaching them the knowledge, skills and values they need not only for work but also for life. Education should therefore be approached from a holistic perspective, and should be concerned about all facets of human existence. However, due to the influence of the naturalistic and scientific paradigm of the modern era and 'neutral education' movement which has dominated education in the West for the last century, spirituality, especially in the context of religion or 'faith' has been excluded from the educational debate and the classroom (Hunter, 2000). This has resulted in an acute crisis of meaning and value within the Western educational paradigm (Veith, 1994). In this context spirituality is typically viewed as a concept that would be mentioned only within the context of 'religious' education. However, if Life Orientation is approached from a holistic viewpoint it would also need to include spirituality. In practice these two concepts have not been associated very often. It is therefore evident that in the modern regime spirituality is rarely explicitly mentioned. Even though contemporary society can be identified as a post-modern society, spirituality has in essence not yet found its way back into education, which is evident in the curriculum statements of Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2002, 2003). Considering the increasingly acknowledged importance of spirituality for human well-being this is disturbing (Lindgren & Coursey, 1995:93ff; Ritt-Olson *et al.*, 2004:192ff; Lindgren & Koenig, 2004). There is a global movement which currently devotes considerable effort to developing a practice around spirituality education (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3ff).

The teaching of Life Orientation (life skills) is very prominent in national as well as international educational debate. Increasing effort is currently being devoted to the development of Life Orientation or life skills programmes especially in view of the disturbing level of risk behaviours displayed by children and adolescents (Plant & Plant, 1999:389; Magnani, MacIntyre, Karim, Brown & Hutchinson, 2005:289) and the increasing number of adolescents who struggle to find meaning in life (Kirbach, 2002).

Because of the increasing currency of the life-skills construct worldwide, it has become necessary to attempt a definition. UNICEF describes life skills as follows: "This term refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can

help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health” (UNICEF, s.a.). Plant and Plant (1999:389) describe the life skills approach as a method which focuses on a more holistic view of a child’s life, which deals with skills in the psycho/social field and includes personal and social relationships, assertiveness, decision-making, resisting advertising pressure and peer pressure, anxiety management, promoting self-esteem and developing effective communication.

Life skills education focuses on the development of skills which children and adolescents need in daily life and which can prevent them from making ‘wrong’ lifestyle choices. Even though the term *life skills* or *Life Orientation* is new it is not a recent phenomenon. Educational thinkers and policy makers throughout the history of education in the West saw the need for educating children and young people for life. In the past this was often referred to as moral education or character education (Kaestle, 1984; Hunter, 2000). In the first schools in America the moral education component was seen as a vital, aspect of education. In the West moral education in the 17th and 18th centuries was almost universally based on a Christian interpretation (Algera & Sink, 2002).

Since then many new approaches were developed, tried and rejected and old ones were adapted. In general most new approaches proved to be unsuccessful, though in some cases moderate success was achieved (Leming, 1997; Plant & Plant, 1999 Algera & Sink, 2002).

The Pan American Health Organization has developed an approach to life skills education. They list the following skills (Pan American Health Organization, 2001):

- Social or interpersonal skills: communication, negotiation/refusal skills, assertiveness, cooperation, empathy
- Cognitive skills: problem solving, understanding consequences, decision making, critical thinking, self-evaluation

- Emotional coping skills: managing stress, managing feelings, self-management and self-monitoring.

It is important to note that emphasis is placed on cognitive skills. This reflects the impact of cognitive psychology and constructivism. Researchers such as Vygotsky (Woolfolk, 1998:44ff) have argued that fostering cognitive abilities especially through language may provide a powerful tool for intervening in the lives of children. Cognitive intervention strategies to bring about changes in attributions and beliefs which lead to behaviour change have been advocated by Feuerstein (1983) and Estep (2002). Cognitive thinking skills are increasingly acknowledged to relate to the quality of life (Paul & Elder, 2005:1; Myers *et al.*, 2000:254). They are an essential tool in educating young people for life, as they provide the basis for the successful development of social and emotional skills (Egan, 2002:359). In this study cognitive skills are important especially when considering the epistemological basis of LO programmes.

It is the objective of Life Skills or Life Orientation to teach children to live healthy and productive lives. This introduces the need to explore within life skills approaches the relation between cognitive skills and spirituality, and the plausibility of using a cognitive approach to teaching spirituality. A critical evaluation of presuppositions and beliefs in relation to questions of spirituality and truth is in view here. The identification of the existence of for example blind spots and innate self-validation (Paul & Elder, 2005:6; Egan, 2002) as a vehicle for life skills education is also implied. As it is increasingly recognised that spirituality is an integral part of human existence (McGee *et al.*, 2003; Ross, 1995:458), such an approach could be promoted within Life Orientation, especially targeting younger children on a preventative basis, which is always better than intervention or remediation.

When developing the foundation for any Life Orientation programme it is important to investigate carefully the evidence of programmes that were successful and those that were unsuccessful. There are many programmes which only report meagre successes or none at all (Leming, 1993; 1997; Algera & Sink, 2002; Plant & Plant, 1999). A very plausible explanation seems to be that in most cases no philosophically well-grounded epistemological framework was constructed before developing the

programme. This is an aspect that will receive attention in this study, as most life skills programmes offer little theoretical background as a rationale for their specific approach (Kagan, 2001; Leming, 1997; Arweck & Nesbitt, 2004, Sanchez & Stewart, 2006).

As this study attempts to develop a possible epistemological framework for Life Orientation, the term *epistemology* will be briefly explained. The word epistemology has its origin in the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (word/ speech/ explanation). Epistemology can therefore be described as dealing with the origin and essential nature of knowledge (Chaffee, 2005:415; Duminy, Steyn, Dreyer, Vos & Dobie, 1998; Morris, 1999:6). It seeks to establish a framework which can be used to construct genuine and accurate understanding (Chaffee, 2005:27). A certain branch of epistemology deals especially with the relations between knowledge, truth and belief. It tries to answer the question “How do you know that what you claim to know is true?”. It deals with the matter of how true beliefs can be justified (epistemic justification) (Wood, 1998:10).

1.2 Rationale

Developing an epistemological framework for a Life Orientation approach would therefore involve finding a knowledge basis which is epistemologically sound and therefore justifies a particular approach to Life Orientation i.e that life skills are a worthwhile goal and that certain values, including rationality, can be said to be good, right and true and therefore morally binding. Given the significant negative correlation between dysfunctional behaviour and a measure of spiritual well-being observed in learners in the Senior and Further Education Phase in selected schools in the North West Province in South Africa (Karstens, 2006; Coetzee & Underhay, 2003), a plausible area of preventative intervention might be in fostering a cognitive skills approach to spirituality at the Foundation and Intermediate levels to equip and empower more learners with the psycho-social skills to prevent at-risk, self-defeating and dysfunctional behaviours. *Such an approach would benefit from a coherent meta-theory or paradigm to inform and guide actual classroom intervention practice.* In this study especial attention is given to developing an epistemological basis for a/any Life Orientation programme (as suggested by the Department of Education, or any

other Life Orientation programme used in for example private schools) based on spirituality.

1.3 Clarification of terms

1.3.1 Spirituality

In the contemporary context spirituality is a construct which includes the following aspects: belief in a power beyond oneself, hope and optimism, meaning and purpose, worship, prayer, meditation, love and compassion, moral and ethical values as well as transcendence (Myers *et al.*, 2000; Richards & Bergin, 1998; Karstens, 2006).

1.3.2 Life skills education/ life orientation

Life skills education can be described as an approach which focuses on developing the child as a holistic entity. Focus is put on psycho-social, cognitive and emotional skills, often in strong connection with values (UNICEF, s.a.; Plant & Plant, 1999).

Life Orientation is a subject taught in all grades in South Africa, which uses the life skills approach.

1.3.3 Epistemological framework

Epistemology deals with the origin and essential nature of knowledge (Duminy *et al.*, 1998). An epistemological framework will therefore provide the knowledge and truth basis for a certain phenomenon.

1.4. Statement of the research problem

The central research question which guided this research is:

How can one move towards an epistemological framework which provides the basis for a Life Orientation programme which puts a high emphasis on spirituality?

The following sub-questions can be identified:

- What is the origin and history of spirituality in the Western context and what are the contemporary developments?
- What are the main themes and trends in the history of life skills education and what are the success stories and what are the contemporary developments?
- What are the current perceptions and educational practices concerning spirituality and Life Orientation?
- Can current perceptions of spirituality be epistemologically justified?
- What could be a possible foundation for basing Life Orientation on spirituality?

1.5 Research aims

This research aimed at moving towards an epistemological framework for a Life Orientation programme which puts a high emphasis on spirituality.

The sub aims were the following:

- Investigating the origin and history of spirituality in the Western context as well as contemporary developments.
- Investigating the main themes and trends in the history of life skills education as well as identifying the success stories and contemporary developments.
- Determining what the current perceptions and educational practices are regarding Life Orientation and spirituality.
- Determining whether current perceptions of spirituality are epistemologically justifiably.
- Determining what could be a possible foundation for basing Life Orientation on spirituality.

1.6 Research design and method of investigation

1.6.1 Literature review

A review of literature served as the basis for the investigation. Information was gathered in order to gain a clearer understanding of the different concepts, especially spirituality and Life Skills/ Orientation.

A DIALOG – internet search was conducted using the different databases available at the Ferdinand Postma Library as well as search engines. Articles from various scientific journals, articles, newspapers, educational conference papers and research reports have been studied. The internet and EBSCO Host as well as Science Direct and some other data bases were used to gather information. Mainly the following keywords were used: spirituality, spiritual, life skills, life orientation, character education, moral education, values. International researchers who work within this field were contacted in order to receive information and resources from them.

1.6.2 Qualitative research

The practical part of this study was executed using a qualitative research design. Structured interviews were used as well as a qualitative questionnaire (self-administered questionnaires) so that the researcher could remain in the background (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005:168). The questionnaires were sent or given to Life Orientation teachers. These teachers were selected mainly through snowball sampling, (Gobo, 2004:449; Robson, 2003:265f).

The purpose of the practical part of this study was to determine what the current perceptions and educational practices are regarding Life Orientation and spirituality in order to make constructive suggestions as to how to bridge the two in practice.

1.7 Structure of the research report

Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation

Chapter 2: Spirituality: history and contemporary developments

Chapter 3: Life skills education: history and contemporary developments

- Chapter 4: Theoretical framework, research design and methodology
- Chapter 5: Life Orientation in practice: an empirical investigation
- Chapter 6: Spirituality and an epistemological basis for Life Orientation: a synthesis

1.8 Conclusion

After having given a brief overview over the topic of investigation and the procedures and methods involved, the next chapter is the first of the literature review and deals with spirituality and related concepts.

CHAPTER 2

Spirituality: history and contemporary developments

2.1 Introduction and orientation

“In contrast to modernism which denied the supernatural and valued reason to the point of declaring that ‘God was dead’, aspects of post-modernism are leading to an increased fascination with the supernatural and the realm of the spiritual” (Jankowski, 2002:69).

The above quote illustrates one important aspect of post-modernism. The construct ‘spirituality’ is again accepted in individual, personal and community contexts where people look for fulfilment (Burnard, 1988; Yob, 1995; Valenkamp, 2008). It is no longer regarded as unscientific as has been the case when positivism was the reigning paradigm (Richards & Bergin, 1998), but is now back in mainstream academic discussions, scientific debate and education circles. This new post-modern paradigm has permeated society and spirituality is now recognised as part of human existence once again (Westgate, 1996:26ff), as it has been for all of the pre-modern period. Though this can be seen as a positive development, the current academic discussions and debates around spirituality are new and lack clear criteria against which spirituality could be investigated and evaluated.

There are many sources, both in popular literature and in scientific research, which explore the concept and uses of spirituality, and its relation to various aspects in life including psychology, education, leadership and health (Veith, 1994; Kimes Myers, 1997; Richards & Bergin, 1998:37f; Blum, 1998; Fisher, 2001). Some guidelines do exist, yet the concept is difficult to define and no universally accepted definition exists (Maher & Hunt, 1993:21; McSherry & Cash, 2004:154;). There is a lacuna in the academic literature on the origin of the concept and its practical expression in communities. It is however frequently used and discussed within contemporary media and popular literature (Woodhead, 1993; Yob, 1995; Estanek, 2006) and the debate too often reflects uncritical mindsets and assumptions concerning the concept. Any

type of spirituality is seen as valid and positive without qualification (Groothuis, 2000:165; Re'em, 2004:213).

It is surprising that most academic research articles overlook the origin of the concept and its original applications within the Judeo-Christian religious context (Sheldrake, 1992; Ladd, 1993; King, 2002), sometimes intentionally (Estanek, 2006). In the West, the origins of the concept *spirituality* within the Judeo-Christian domain are however well attested (Sheldrake, 1992; McMinn & Hall, 2000). The first purpose of this chapter is therefore to discuss the origin of the concept of spirituality .

Spirituality was until recently seen as an integral part of religion. For this reason the development of the dichotomy between religion and science will receive particular attention. Although this discussion will centre on spirituality in the West, there are current movements concerning spirituality that make a consideration of the major Eastern religions necessary. There will also be a brief overview of traditional African spirituality. Contemporary viewpoints and applications will be discussed.

The assumption here is that it is necessary to gain a holistic picture of the development and current perceptions of spirituality in the Western context before meaningful engagement and suggestions regarding spirituality and education can be made (as is done in Chapter 6). It needs to be noted here that this discussion takes place from a realist and evidentialist perspective as is explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

The aim of this discussion is to eventually provide the grounds on which an epistemological basis for critically evaluating the contemporary spirituality phenomenon can be established. The focus will be on Western spirituality as it has been understood and practiced in the past and as it is understood and practiced in contemporary Western culture. Finally, it will be attempted to develop specific criteria in order to provide some guidelines involved in delineating a basis from which various 'spiritualities' can be evaluated.

2.2 The origin of the concept of spirituality

McSherry and Cash (2004) state that it is crucial to consider the roots of the concept. Without a clear understanding of its grounding in believing communities, the debate around the use of the concept and the investigation of the phenomenon can become meaningless. This is particularly the case with pre-Christian and Christian spirituality, which existed long before post-modern conceptions of the term developed (McMinn & Hall, 2000:252). A number of authors concur that in the West, the term has its origin within the Judeo-Christian cultural heritage (Downey, 1997:60; Haldane, 2003:12; Miller, 2005:16). In this section the origin of the term *spirituality* will be discussed.

2.2.1 “...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” – The Biblical perspective

The English word *spirituality* is a translation of the Latin word *spiritualis*. *Spirit* is a translation of *spiritus* (Sheldrake, 1992:34; Carr, 1995; Collins, 2003; Howard, 2008:15f). The Latin terms can be traced back to the Hebrew and Greek usage of the Holy Bible, the texts considered authoritative within the Christian tradition. Spirituality as espoused in the Biblical sources therefore is rooted within a historical context. Spirituality derives its meaning from its association with the phenomenon of monotheism and specifically belief in a personal God (McSherry & Cash, 2004:153), and the appropriation of the Spirit of Jesus in the life of a believer (Howard, 2008:16). As will become clearer below, this association of the concept with theism and the present debate surrounding the scientific evidence for theism, is vital for the argument for a well attested epistemological foundation for theism.

Within the Old and New Testaments God is said to be Spirit. It is His mode of existence (Ladd, 1993:505; Grudem, 1994:187; Bible, 2002:1635). Grudem (1994:188) describes God’s spirituality as follows: “God’s spirituality means that God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.”

In the Old Testament, the term which is most frequently translated as *spirit* or *spiritual* is *rû(a)h* (Ladd, 1993:500; Ping Ho, 2005:154). This term originally referred to *breath in motion*, designating God's breath that entered and became part of the human person (Carr, 1995; Wright, 2000:7; Moreland, 2001:3). However *rû(a)h* also refers to an element of personality (including the emotional and volitional life) as well as to an element of energy and power. What is important for this chapter is that this term designates the person in relation to God (Moreland, 2001:3). The word *rû(a)h* features very frequently in the book of Isaiah, where it often also designates God's Spirit, often in connection with the Spirit coming upon a person (Sanford La Sor, Hubbard & Bush, 1987:387ff). In contrast to this the term *nephesh* (which literally refers to the neck or throat) indicates human psychological existence – the 'heart' of our being – and refers to the person among other persons. It is mostly translated as *soul*, *life* or *person* which includes feelings, will, passions and mentality (Ladd, 1993:500f; Bible, 2005:968).

Concerning the New Testament usage of the concept some qualifying remarks about Greek thought are required. At the time when the New Testament was written and edited, within the first century AD (Geisler, 1999:528ff; McDowell, 1999:53) Plato's philosophy was still one of the most influential philosophies in the Greco-Roman world of the time. Plato held to a dualism of body and soul. The body was seen as a hindrance (Carr, 1995; Russell, 2005:134f; Radford, 2006:387; Wright, 2000:8;) and the soul and the spirit were considered to be on a higher level (Clark, 1994:27). It is essential to stress that the Biblical view contrasted sharply with this conception (Ridderbos, 1992:66; Wright, 1996:145; Bruce, 1997:25; Sheldrake, 2000:23). The New Testament view of human beings was always that of a unity and not as a dualistic combination of body and soul (Ziesler, 1991:10f; Grudem, 1994:483; Wright, 1996:146). When different terms are applied this only means that the writer emphasised one aspect of the whole (Sheldrake, 1992:34; Ladd, 1993:499ff; Moreland, 2001:2). There are theologies that hold to a dualism (body and soul/spirit), or even to a trichotomy (body, soul and spirit) (Grudem, 1994:472ff), following the tradition of Plato, but this was not the first century position.

The words soul (*psyche*) and spirit (*pneuma*) are used interchangeably in the New Testament (Grudem, 1994:473ff). The words *body*, *soul* and *spirit* are used in a

dualistic sense in the New Testament, but only when there is mention of death of the body, that is when the body passes away, whereas soul and spirit are still alive (Grudem, 1994:483; Moreland & Rae, 2000). In the kerygma, this dualism is however viewed as a temporary condition, anticipating the reception of a *spiritual* body. In the New Testament, human existence is always bodily existence. In the coming age those in Christ will receive a spiritual body (Ziesler, 1991:97ff). The presence of spirituality in human beings is linked to bodily existence (Champagne, 2001:82). A contemporary conception, namely that spirituality is a quality inherent in all human beings (Ingersoll, 1994:105; Chater, 2001:64; Erricker, 2001:200) has been seen as summarising the Biblical viewpoint (Grudem, 1994:472). The Biblical documents at all times define and confine spirituality within a particularistic Judeo-Christian worldview that contrasts with post-modern perceptions. In the following paragraph the New Testament use of the term spirituality will be discussed.

The New Testament term for soul (*psyche*) generally denotes primarily the breath of life, then the soul in its various meanings (Vine, 1966:54). New Testament psychology is especially rich and articulated in the writings of the apostle Paul. *Psyche* in the Pauline writings usually refers to the human being as a thinking, working and feeling person. It denotes the person as a whole, including the 'heart' and the personality (Ladd, 1993:502). *Psyche* refers to the natural and earthly life (Ridderbos, 1992:120). The term *pneuma* can be translated as wind or breath with the attributes of invisibility, immateriality and power (Vine, 1966:62). Sometimes the terms *psyche* and *pneuma* are used interchangeably (Ridderbos, 1992:120f; Ladd, 1993:502). The terms can be differentiated in the following way: Whereas *psyche* refers to the human being as being alive, striving, willing, purposeful, *pneuma* refers to the immaterial self, to the relationship with God and people (Ladd, 1993:502). In the Pauline usage all people have a spiritual capacity as is shown in 2 Corinthians 2:11 or in 1 Thess. 5:23 (Ziesler, 1991:100; Bible, 2002;) This means that all people have the capacity to enjoy fellowship with God. The reception of the promised divine *pneuma* is an integral part of the renewal of the human *pneuma* within the kerygma of the early church (Ladd, 1993:502ff; Sheldrake, 2000:23).

The term *pneuma* is also used with reference to the Holy Spirit, who comes from God (Vine, 1966:63; Schneiders, 1986:258; Wright, 1996:146; Ping Ho, 2005:154) and is

identical with God. In Paul's writings particularly, a Christian should yield to the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit, which acts through the spiritual component of the human personality (Ridderbos, 1992:67; Downey, 1997:60; Ziesler, 1991:100) and transforms the whole life of the believer (Dockery, 2000:340ff). This exemplifies that the Biblical idea of spirituality is intrinsic and never extrinsic. God the Holy Spirit is also always seen as sharing many of the attributes of the Son. In particular, He is the spirit of *truth*, i.e. in the New Testament the questions of truth and falsehood are inextricable tied to the realm of the spirit (Guthrie, 1997:111). This point will become important later on in the discussion.

Other concepts in Pauline thought are the *heart*, the *mind* and the *conscience*. It is important to note that these are not separate entities, but rather that each of these designates a part of a whole that overlaps with other parts of the whole (Ladd, 1993:517f). For example the meaning of *heart*, as man in his religious-moral quality (Ridderbos, 1992:119), and *conscience* overlap, as do *spirit* and *soul* (Ladd, 1993:517f).

Even though other New Testament passages also treat the concepts of *psyche* and *pneuma*, and they may have different emphases, they never contradict the above mentioned conceptions. There is no conflict within the New Testament texts on the meaning and usage of the terms (Ziesler, 1991).

The origin of the term *spirit* or *spirituality* has been identified and discussed. In the following discussion further developments concerning the meaning of this term will be considered and explained.

2.2.2 God wills that we should push into His presence and live our whole life there – Spirituality within the context of the church

Within the writings of the early Christian community of faith the term *spirituality* was not extensively used. The Latin word *spiritualis* was first used in the 5th century (Sheldrake, 1992:35). This does not mean that the concept did not exist; it was just not formulated as such. It was understood as life according to the Holy Spirit (Howard, 2008:16). This spiritual living was especially emphasised within a context of

asceticism and monasticism, which at that point in history acquired some extrinsic elements. Often some form of mystical connotation was also evident (Schneiders, 1986:258; Sheldrake, 1992:35; 2000:21ff; Collins, 2003). An area of communal existence which was greatly influenced by Christian spirituality / religion at this time was that of social care. Christians in general attempted to apply the teachings of the Bible practically through an asceticism that avoided material possessions in order to focus on the development of the inner life. This was not entirely world denying, and emphasised caring for the needy and sick, as well as loving your enemies, to practically demonstrate love and compassion in the communities that supported the monastic orders. By doing this, the early Christians attempted to provide a concrete embodiment of the spiritual within a harsh and superstitious age, providing spiritual meaning or a spiritual dimension for life (Narayanasamy, 1999:390f).

During the 13th century a new development in Christian thought was evident (Holt, 2005:87). Whereas previously spirituality was seen as the whole of Christian living, it came to be more narrowly defined as pertaining to the more rational aspects of life. This happened during the movement called scholasticism, which was an attempt to reunite Christian and Greek thought following the academic eclipse of the dark ages (Collins, 2003; Holt, 2005:87;). In this process a Platonic dualism, creating the two poles of spirit and matter, came into Christian thought, as did Greek philosophical categories in general (Spade, 1994:56). In this way the Pauline holistic moral sense was frequently lost from view. There was now a contrast between the spiritual, rational and the material 'non-rational' in the Platonic sense i.e. a dualism between soul/spirit and body emerged (Schneiders, 1986:258; Sheldrake, 1992:35; Downey, 1997:61f). Even though there was a change in meaning of the concept within the more academic circles, the practical side of spiritual care i.e. caring for the non-material needs, still continued, with Christians attending to the needy and providing spiritual guidance (Narayanasamy, 1999:391f).

In general it can be said that Christianity experienced a period of academic declension during the Middle Ages. There was a great difference between the clergy (those educated in the scholastic tradition of the time and therefore the 'spiritual') and the other (lay) people. During the Reformation that followed the scholastic period, Luther especially viewed this as an inaccurate interpretation of Scripture, proclaiming a

spirituality for all believers in all areas of life (Pannenberg, 1983:17; Collins, 2003; Holt, 2005:102). He also put a stronger focus on intrinsic spirituality, as found in the Biblical documents. He rejected the other-worldly asceticism of monasticism completely (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:23).

From the 17th to the 19th centuries there were continued developments concerning spirituality in the Western world, also because Christianity once again became a transcontinental religion as it moved to North and South America (Holt, 2005:116). The term spirituality itself was however seldom used (Sheldrake, 2000:24). The Protestant church was still in its infancy and had to develop its own institutional form. The Puritans and Methodists in England, the Quakers, Methodists and Evangelicals in America and the Pietists in Germany are examples of this process (Holt, 2005:118ff). In Roman Catholic France the interest in the interior life exemplified by devotion and a relationship with God was highlighted by Fénelon and Madame Guyon, even though they frequently found themselves at odds with the institutionalised church (Sheldrake, 1992:35; Holt, 2005:127f; Downey, 1997:61). In Poland on the other hand the movement was towards fostering a distinct kind of life based on human effort as well as the study of practical dogma. It still had a very strong mystical element (Collins, 2003). In general these movements emphasised that everybody could be spiritual and live 'according to the Holy Spirit' (Sheldrake, 1992:35f; Downey, 1997:61) and spirituality came to be used synonymously with devotion, piety and true religion (Howard, 2008:16), which had both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. In many cases there was an orientation towards the 'inner life', often in a mystical, experiential encounter with God, which at the same time and as a reaction against the Enlightenment emphasis on reason, often became anti-intellectual (Noll, 1995).

During this period the term *spirituality* was mostly used within the Roman Catholic traditions. Nevertheless the concept was present in other traditions, even though other terms might be employed as described above (Schneiders, 1986:260). As an example of the practical side of spirituality in the Protestant tradition of the 19th century Florence Nightingale transformed nursing as a holistic dimension with the emphasis on treating the whole person within the context of Christian spirituality (Narayanasamy, 1999:392).

Up to the 1980s, the term was still mainly used in Roman Catholic contexts. Protestant scholars and clergy were often hesitant to use the term as the Roman Catholic usage often implied an element of works righteousness and sainthood (Collins, 2003).

The term spirituality only became well-known in the English speaking world in the 20th century (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2008:7) after a translation of the French (Catholic) term *spirituel* or *spiritualité*, which referred to the whole of the Christian's progress in perfection (Howard, 2008:20).

This overview has attempted to show that the origin and development of the concept of spirituality in the West has been strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition. The origin is clearly Biblical and in historical development the concept was at all times informed by New Testament usage, either as a practical ministry or a mystical experience of the divine presence, often both. It was nevertheless a constant part of theological reflection throughout the centuries (Schneiders, 1986:261; King, 2002; Holt, 2005;), even though there is a wide diversity in theological and devotional writings on spirituality in the West. In every age there has been a new emphasis on a fresh experience of the spiritual life. What is important in this chapter is that throughout the history of the New Testament church the primary source for defining spirituality has always been the Holy Bible even though interpretations often varied (Holt, 2005:32). The focus however was always practical: either theological enquiry or the living of life according to the Holy Spirit (Downey, 1997:68ff).

In the above discussion the term *religion* has not been used, even though it was often implied. In the next section the meaning of *religion* and *spirituality* within contemporary conceptions will be explored. As is evident from the literature, the two are no longer seen as being identical, and in some cases are even seen as conflicting views which cannot be reconciled.

2.3 There is a level of mystery to human experience that simply cannot be penetrated by academic reflection – The current distinction between religion and spirituality

Spirituality is a concept which originated and developed within the Judeo-Christian tradition as was explained above. This implies that it is a strongly historical tradition (Sheldrake, 1992; Downey, 1997:60; Haldane, 2003:12). It has always been an integral part of Jewish and Christian religion, and was never dissociated from the religious context of the community. Increasingly however, particularly within the contemporary post-modern climate, the two concepts have in many contexts been divorced (Pargament, 1999; Hay, 2001:107; Scott, 2005:119; Re'em, 2004:212ff; Karstens, 2006; Watson, 2006:253). There is an ongoing debate concerning this distinction (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3f; Mercer, 2006:24). Most authors concur that the concepts of religion and spirituality overlap, but are nevertheless distinct (Westgate, 1996; Smith & Shortt, 2000:3f; Erricker, 2000:37; Benson, Roehlkepartain & Rude, 2003:209; Ritt-Olson *et al.*, 2004:193; Koenig, 2004; Hay, Reich & Utsch, 2006:46f).

Within the last few decades a concept of spirituality has developed outside an explicitly religious context (Hawks, Hull, Thalman & Richins, 1995:371; Drazenovich, 2004; Radford, 2006:386; Hodder, 2007:186; Erricker, 2007:51ff;). Spirituality is now often described as something that broke free from the restricting confines of association with formal religion, and is concerned with the 'higher' side of life in the sense that it is a search for meaning, unity, connectedness and transcendence (Pargament, 1999; Tacey, 2001:90ff; Re'em, 2004:213ff; Tacey, 2005:176f). *Spirituality* has also often become defined as essentially an individual quest whereas *religion* is considered to be more based on societal beliefs and common behaviours and rituals, thus more extrinsic (Chater, 2001:64; Egbert *et al.*, 2004:8; Lippman & Dombrowski Keith, 2006:110; Hodder, 2007:187;). There is as yet no universal agreement on this (Schweitzer, 2004:98). Benner (1988:54ff) traces this separation of spirituality from religion back to Carl Jung, the first modern psychologist who acknowledged the spiritual side of human beings, but divorced it from the context of religion, especially Christian religion. He viewed spirituality as necessary for mental health (Legere, 1984:380; Benner, 1988:54ff). In addition to divorcing spirituality from the Christian religion he also advocated some kind of

return to the pagan concept of religion (Wolin, 2004:71), thus advocating religious relativism. As religions were challenged as non-rational during the secularisation of the modern period (Wright, 2000:47; Alexander & Ben-Peretz, 2001:35), a rupture took place between spirituality and religion. Some authors see spirituality as superior, wider and all-encompassing, while others view religion as a subclass of spirituality (Westgate, 1996:27; Egan, 2001; Tacey, 2005:176f). For some spirituality can also refer to no religion at all (Chater, 2001:64; Koenig, 2004), and religion has even been conceived to be at enmity with spirituality (Tacey, 2001:93f; Erricker, 2007:52ff). On the other hand there are voices which claim that spirituality devoid of religious tradition tends to be naïve, simplistic and intellectually impoverished (Ping Ho, 2001:180; Eade, 2001:223; Tacey, 2005:182).

In the following discussion the development which led to the dichotomy between religion and spirituality will be investigated. Even though the weight of opinion supports a separation between the two, it still needs to be established whether or not the distinction as well as the contemporary conception of spirituality can be considered valid on epistemological grounds. Most of this discussion will however take place in Chapter 6.

2.4 Development of the dichotomy between spirituality and religion

In order to elucidate which factors led to the separation between *religion* and *spirituality* some remarks have to be made concerning the development of Western thought in the last few centuries, with special reference to the perception and treatment of Christianity and Christian thought.

As has been alluded to above, the concept of spirituality in the West is firmly rooted within the historical context of the Judeo-Christian religion and was an integral part thereof. Over the last few centuries, especially from the Enlightenment onwards, *religion* and the idea of theism has often been criticised and even ridiculed by Western thinkers. This will be explained in the following paragraphs.

The detailed history of the new concept of spirituality, and the critique of religion and theism within modern positivistic philosophy is far too complex and extensive to be

covered comprehensively in this chapter. Only a broad overview will, therefore, be attempted in order to show a coherent development.

2.4.1 “Memento mori!” – The Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages (AD 400 to AD 1400) (Gaarder, 1999:155f), the Roman Catholic tradition was dominant and all pervasive. There were nevertheless movements which are interpreted by some authors as paving the way for a development away from Christianity (Schaeffer, 2005:56). Scholasticism was one of the movements in medieval thought. Potgieter (2002:29) posits that scholasticism had as its aim to use human reason - especially the philosophy of Aristotle - in order to interpret the Biblical revelation better, and in general to penetrate truths revealed and inherited. To these scholars it was important to integrate the knowledge acquired by the Greeks into the knowledge as revealed in the Bible (Encarta, 2002). In this context it is essential to include the contribution of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas (1225-1274) is credited with introducing much of Aristotelian thought into Western thinking (Scott-Kakures, Castagnetto, Benson, Taschek & Hurley, 1993:87; Veith, 1994:31; Delaney & DiClemente, 2005:36).

Compared to mainstream thought in the Middle Ages, Aquinas was different in that he wanted to show that the senses, as well as reason, are reliable means of finding knowledge. Aquinas developed his natural theology not to separate nature and grace but rather to show that nature can be used to defend belief in God. Reason and the senses can be used by human beings and through it human beings can discover truth (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:100; Sproul, 2003:78ff). In his *Summa Theologica* Aquinas attempted to show that the existence of God can be rationally demonstrated to be true (Scott-Kakures *et al.*, 1993:91ff; Chaffee, 2005:386f). He also tried to disprove the theory of two (conflicting) truths which spread through the Western world under the influence of the writings of the Arabic scholar Averroës, who was basically a pantheist (Potgieter, 2002:34; Sproul, 2003:79; Delaney & DiClemente, 2005:37). Interestingly, this view of double truths is similar to post-modernism, which also allows for the validity of conflicting truths.

Under the influence of Aquinas, the scholasticism of this time had as its aim the integration of Greek thought into the interpretation of the Biblical revelation without discrediting the Biblical revelation (Encarta, 2002; Potgieter, 2002:35). In the following Renaissance era, there was a similar trend i.e. to go back to the original Greek and Hebrew sources of the New and Old Testament, which also meant going back to the Greek text of the New Testament instead of working from the Latin version (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1984:88). As a consequence of these developments it has been argued that an option was created that nature and grace could be separated, even though at this stage nature was only given a more realistic place in the whole of reality, as nature was regarded as something profane in the Middle Ages (Sproul, 2003:78ff). In the Renaissance, as will be shown in the following, this took a different turn.

2.4.2 “Carpe diem!” – The Renaissance

Whereas the Middle Ages had a very strong religious orientation, the course of Western thought changed during the Renaissance into a much more secular direction (Pearcey, 2004:101). While the Middle Ages are often described as a period of academic eclipse and intellectual poverty, with a focus in mysticism, the Renaissance was characterised as a move towards belief in reason and the senses, ultimately leading to the emergence of scientific inquiry and the modern era (Machlis & Forney, 1995:85; Gaarder, 1999:181). The perception is often created that science displaced religion in the West at this time. This is however not accurate, and the crucial role Christianity played in the development of the scientific method has been well documented. Ironically, within the post-modern climate, the *religious* nature of scientific positivism has been exposed (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994; Schaeffer, 2005;).

The Renaissance started in Italy (Russell, 2005:257) and initially provided the possibility for scientific thought by breaking down the rigid scholastic system (Schaeffer, 2005:57ff). It revived the study of Plato and other ancient authors (Veith, 1994:31; Russell, 2005:461ff). At the same time the study of nature acquired a more prominent role, a movement which had started in the Middle Ages (Schaeffer, 1990; 2005). Nature (the material world) was now seen as autonomous, thus free from the interposition of divine acts of grace (divine intervention) or the need of special

revelation to understand it rightly. This created room for Renaissance humanism, where nature (man), instead of God, became the measure of all things (Schaeffer, 1990; 2005). The effects of this development were ethical relativism (there is no absolute moral truth), psychological romanticism (humans are basically good), epistemological scepticism and spiritual naivety (there is no personal nor demonic evil). As the old moral codes of the 'Ancient regime' were dismissed during the age of revolution it gave room to increased immorality, treachery, corruption and cruelty (Gaarder, 1999:185; Russell, 2005:463) which reached shocking proportions in the 20th century.

The above discussion shows that the Renaissance represented another step in the separation between spirituality and religion. Secular humanism, and the differentiation between nature and grace, exalted human reason and experience (natural revelation) as the measure of all things instead of God and special revelation.

It must nevertheless also be acknowledged that considerable positive achievements took place during the Renaissance. The new open-mindedness in many areas of life, as well as an increased interest in nature as a whole, led to remarkable inventions and discoveries, of which the printing press is one prominent example. It had a revolutionary influence on all aspects of life (Machlis & Forney, 1995:85; Russell, 2005:261ff; Schaeffer, 1990; Encarta, 2002). The Renaissance was also the era in which the great discoveries of unexplored and unknown areas of the world was accelerated. This eventually resulted not only in new trade routes and a more global approach and view of life in general but also in an explosion of geographical knowledge. Most significantly it brought Western thought into contact with other religious and philosophical traditions (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1984:94ff).

Christianity was nevertheless still influential. The vast majority of discoveries, inventions and philosophical inquiries were still made within a Christian context and worldview. Copernicus for example saw his own theory of the earth revolving around the sun as just a specification of the created order (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:33). There are also other examples such as Thomas Upham, James McCosh and Noah Porter (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005:38f).

The Reformation itself was another fruit of the Renaissance, which provided other alternatives to the rigid scholastic division between nature and grace, opened up a new theological enquiry and access to the original texts, and paved the way for the confrontation and break with the religious authority of the time. It has been said that the Renaissance rediscovered the Greeks, whereas the Reformation rediscovered the Bible (Veith, 1994:31). The Reformation was in the first place a reaction against the abuse of authority by the Pope in all aspects of religious life and not a rejection of the authority of the Holy Bible or the truth of special revelation, nor of authority per se (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1984:112; Russell, 2005:481). It emphasised a more personal, devotional and therefore more spiritual approach to religion (Lovelace, 2000:216). As many Renaissance thinkers put the notion of God (theism) aside, or at least removed God as an interpretative principle and personal presence from the natural order, they had to look for other universals, which would provide a meaningful holistic explanation of reality. The Reformation thinkers presented a solution to this problem by returning to the belief in the absolute authority of the Bible (*sola scriptura*) (Gaarder, 1999:196). This meant that reason was also subject to the Biblical revelation (Schaeffer, 2005:79ff). This should not be taken to mean that the reformers promoted anti-intellectualism. It rather subjected the intellect under God, but within that context promoted the use of the intellect. The numerous Bible translations of this period are a monument to the use of the intellect (Schaeffer, 2005). The result of this was that the reformers had an answer to the dilemma of the Renaissance thinkers. They reunited nature and grace and had no problems between universals and particulars, as they had one unifying universal namely God (Schaeffer, 2005). It is now widely accepted that the reformation actually added impetus to the emergence of science (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994; Jeeves & Berry, 2000:20ff).

The reformation provided a tremendous amount of freedom for people and society in general as it retained the Biblical absolutes, providing the religious context for the spiritual (elect) man - hard work, honesty, thrift, vocation - which catalysed the economic revolutions of the time without however enslaving people to a system as was the case under the pre-reformation Roman Catholic church (Lovelace, 2000:215ff; Schaeffer, 2005:105, 110).

This indicates that the Reformation and the Renaissance provided different answers to the same problem. It can therefore be argued that in contrast to the Renaissance thinkers, the leading thinkers of the Reformation attempted to show that true spirituality is part of true religion.

Even though there certainly were further philosophical developments between the periods of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, only some brief remarks about the period will be made.

The seventeenth century was a time of sharp contrasts in the sense that it further promoted Renaissance humanism and at the same time supported Christianity. The mechanistic world picture also emerged at this time, which stated that the world is like a machine which doesn't need an immanent God in order to function (Gaarder, 1999:208ff).

2.4.3 It is the idea of the limitless perfectibility of the human species – The Enlightenment

The period of the Enlightenment in the 18th century gained a lot of momentum through French thinkers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau. These men wanted to promote freedom and equality for all people, based on the idea that man is actually good and only needs to learn to use his reason rightly. Education played an important role for creating a better, more humane society (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1984:178f; Gaarder, 1999:281ff). The focus was on rationality and science which was performed from an anti-spiritual stance (Wright, 2000:16; Gur-Ze'ev, 2004:228). Descartes' famous words *Cogito, ergo sum*. (I think, therefore I am.) played an important role in this matter, as the result of his search for certainty was a strong trust in human reason (Scott-Kakures *et al.*, 1993:111ff; Wright, 2000:12).

This type of thinking had started in the Renaissance and was now carried further. Man was the centre point of all moral reasoning and questions of truth, not special revelation, and it was not necessary to invoke theism or a personal God to describe and understand a mechanistic natural order. Reason became the highest good (Yates, 2001:211; Dixon, 2001:58; Pearcey, 2004). Many of the Enlightenment philosophers

still believed in a God (Jeeves & Berry, 2000:24). They were deists, meaning that most of them believed that a rational being created the world, but that he was not at all involved in His creation and that He is not personal (Veith, 1994:33; Glynn, 1997:33). Christian thought was thus increasingly marginalised and many thinkers began to refer back to the pagan religions and practices of the past (Schaeffer, 2005:122) or to the newly discovered religions of the colonies. Scientific positivism also became more and more prominent.

One of Kant's major works was his "Critique of pure reason", which was published in 1781. In this work he tried to show that neither reason (rationalism) nor the experience of the senses (empiricism), as described above, can alone constitute true knowledge. He thus tried to synthesise the two approaches and underlying philosophies (Russell, 2005; Sproul, 2003). However in his quest he did not establish any clear standard of true knowledge. He rather made the knowability for knowledge more uncertain than it had been before (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:139f). He questioned the ontological basis for the knowability of God, as he simply could not agree that there was sufficient proof for the existence of God. According to Potgieter (2002:85) Kant announced the death of God. In his other important work "Critique of practical reason" Kant argued that we have to live as if there were a God, because he claimed that without God there can be no absolute standards and no epistemological basis for right and wrong. His view of knowledge in this area is therefore purely pragmatic. However he developed a moral argument for the existence of God, which became popular in Western thought (Russell, 1957:11f). It is interesting to note that Kant postulated that a civilisation without the concept of God (theism) cannot function (Sproul, 2003). In effect however, and as a result of Kant's influence, virtue-based ethics were replaced by rational rule-based ethics (Worthington & Berry, 2005:147).

Another important work of Kant is his essay "What is Enlightenment?", which he wrote in 1784. In this he emphasised the role of reason in existence (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1984; Buckley & Erricker, 2004:178). He says that people need to mature and use their reason to get rid of what he viewed as old superstitions and prejudices. In this essay he portrays reason as the answer to human problems in the form of a

mature society. His prediction was that reason would ultimately lead to a utopian society (Kant, 1784).

In this context it becomes eminent to return to the dichotomy between nature and grace, as Kant changed this tension fundamentally by redefining it. He defined the problem as tension between freedom and nature. By eliminating enabling grace and the need for divine revelation he secularised the problem (Schaeffer, 1990; Pearcey, 2004:104), only keeping God in the argument for pragmatic purposes and not as a necessary consequence of the use of reason.

Even though there was a growing movement towards secular thinking, there were still strong beliefs in the existence of God. Descartes as well as Locke for example still believed that a God must exist (Delaney & DiClemente, 2005:38f), even though much of this thinking can be classified under deism. It is, however apparent that, ironically, the seeds for the post-modern view of science and existence were sown in the Enlightenment period (Potgieter, 2002:85).

The Enlightenment is often described as the age of reason. Nevertheless, starting with Rousseau, a new development came to the fore, namely that of Romanticism (Russell, 2005:615ff), which will be described in the following.

2.4.4 All creatures drink in joy from nature's breast – Romanticism

This movement started in the mid-eighteenth century and lasted until about the mid-nineteenth century. It first gained momentum in Germany and was characterised by an emphasis upon feelings and experience, a focus on the self, a return to nature, a new nationalism, and a nostalgic return to old practices, religions, pantheism as well as mythologies (Wright, 1996:141; Gaarder, 1999:316ff; Jeeves & Berry, 2000:24). Quinton (1994:338) describes this as a reaction against the Newtonian mechanistic picture of the world, in contrast to which the Romantics preferred to view the world in an organismic way. The movement was similar to the Renaissance in that it emphasised the importance of art and music (Goerlitz & Immisch, 1985:42; Schaeffer, 1990:27ff; Gaarder, 1999:318ff; Wright, 2000:19). Whereas the Classicists in the Enlightenment had as their aim to be more objective in their approach to art and music

the Romantics tended to see the world in terms of their own subjective experience and in the transcendental spiritual depth of the individual self (Machlis & Forney, 1995:193; Wright, 1996:142). This was also the time when a strong historicism developed. A new historical consciousness became widespread among intellectuals. Within this mindset, the particular (seen in a historical context) became more important than the view of the universal of the Enlightenment. The result was an emphasis on the subjective (Wolters, 1989:18; Wright, 2000:20).

In this context the idea of pantheism grew in importance. God was to be perceived as immanent in everything, and especially in nature. God was not seen as personal but as being everywhere. Many of the romantics believed in a kind of “life force”, which is close to the concept of deism, also rejecting a personally knowable God (Veith, 1994:36; Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994). People thus tried to create a new universal to give an epistemological basis to nature or the particulars in nature apart from divine intervention. Goethe for example equated nature with truth (Schaeffer, 2005:156ff). This movement was therefore important in providing an underpinning for the relativism of the post-modern era (Wright, 2000:20).

The Romantic movement was very much focused on feeling and experience, whereas the next period was more focused on reason as will be explained in the next section. In general, Romanticism can be viewed as a movement towards post-modernism, where truth was no longer seen as absolute, and with its emphasis on individual experience and feeling.

2.4.5 The positive spirit has reached the complete awareness of its own nature – Modernism and onwards

Hegel, who was influenced by Romanticism, developed his idea of dialectical reasoning (synthesis). Previously people had thought in terms of either or, thesis or antithesis. Hegel claimed that eternal truths do not exist and that different ideas are equally valid (Schaeffer, 1990:232f; Scott-Kakures *et al.*, 1993:329f; Goucher, Leguin & Walter, 1998:722; Gaarder, 1999:334). With regard to the concept of spirituality, it would mean that different kinds of spiritualities can co-exist.

Glynn (1997:46) states that Charles Darwin, who introduced the theory of evolution, made an important contribution in this context. As much as the theory of evolution was perceived as a challenge to Christianity, it also was a reaction against the Romantics, in that Darwin showed that nature was not as idealised as the Romantics had wanted it to be (Veith, 1994:37). God, according to Darwin, had no existence in nature. Basically this theory attempted to prove that the origin of species took place entirely through natural processes without any need for the intervention of a supernatural power (Thaxton & Pearcey, 1994:114f; Russell, 2005). God was thus not seen to be a necessary component of a rational worldview. This naturalism together with determinism, reductionism, materialism and positivism, basically claimed that ultimately science would be able to resolve all problems and provide answers to all questions. This resulted in a very optimistic, future-oriented worldview. People believed a better world was within the reach of modern man and lay in the not so distant future (Richards & Bergin, 1998:24ff; Chater, 2001; Higgs & Smith, 2003:139f; Karstens, 2006:25). Terms such as progress, modernisation and development were frequently used, and reason was considered to be the highest good of mankind (Buckley & Erricker, 2004:178). Another effect of Darwinism was that it encouraged the view that certain races, and thereby cultures, were more evolved than other races (Goucher, 1998:707).

In the area of psychology there was a similar movement, in which Freud was the driving force (Glynn, 1997:57ff). Freud attempted to explain human behaviour entirely on a naturalistic and deterministic basis, without invoking a higher cause i.e. soul or spirit (Schaeffer, 1990:232). Freud criticised religion as “the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” (Freud, 1927:30) and thus had a very negative view of religion (Coles, 1990:1f; Wright, 2000:29; Wagener & Malony, 2006:138). It was within this positivist context, where mechanistic science reduced nature to inert matter, that values were separated from what is objectively real (Holmes, 1991:12; Dixon, 2001:58).

In summary this period and its antecedents in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, can be interpreted as a search for an alternative underlying and unifying truth and certainty, in other words to construct a purely naturalistic meta-narrative, which was binding in all areas (Buckley & Erricker, 2004:179).

There was a movement away from the viability and rationality of religion, towards a much more naturalistic, evolutionary view. Life became secular (Wright, 2000:47). Nevertheless, although religion was considered passé, spirituality began to play an increasingly important role in the development of psychological thought (Miller, 2005:14). Somewhat ironically, Jung, a student of Freud, played a role here. He emphasised the role of spirituality but sharply separated it from religion (Benner, 1988:54ff). This was a novel movement, as the concepts of spirituality and religion were still used almost interchangeably in the beginning of the 20th century (Miller, 2005:12). And it is noteworthy that important psychologists such as William James and G. Stanley Hall were actively involved in establishing a psychology of religion by reducing religion to psychology (Nye, 1996:109; Wagener & Malony, 2006:138). Adler and Maslow followed in Jung's footsteps, also believing spirituality need not be Christian and that any religion can produce a variety of positive effects (Savage, 2004; Karstens, 2006:26). Another example of a contemporary and influential psychologist who embraced the concept spirituality is Viktor Frankl. He claimed that it is hardly possible to survive a holocaust if one is not able to assign meaning to life in a supernatural way. In other words, Frankl viewed man's search for meaning as inextricably linked to spirituality, which to him was an extremely important facet of human life (Frankl, 1963).

Another philosophical movement which took place in reaction to the Enlightenment was existentialism. This was a move towards non-rationalism (Schaeffer, 2005:167ff). This movement combines a wide variety of theories. However they all have as their point of departure the notion of human existence (Gaarder, 1999:417; Crowell, 2004). The existentialists believed that there is no inherent meaning in life, and there is no intrinsic essential human nature. They claimed that a uniquely defining characteristic of human existence was that existence comes before essence. Meaning has to be constructed by the individual. The individual has to make choices and define himself (Sartre, 1974:28; Scott-Kakures *et al.*, 1993:359; Crowell, 2004; Stevenson & Haberman, 2004:176ff). The individual is free to create meaning. He is not only free, but also responsible for actualising his existence and creating meaning, as no innate or fundamental access to objective knowledge of universal truth exists for the individual (Veith, 1994:37f; Goucher *et al.*, 1998:902; Gaarder, 1999:417ff). Therefore, in the

view of some existentialists, the act of choosing becomes more important and value laden than the content or action which is chosen (Sartre, 1974; Schaeffer, 1990:18).

Even though there were Christian movements within existentialism, of which Kierkegaard is one of the best-known (Stevenson & Haberman, 2004:176ff) other more mainstream forms of existentialism with their focus on self-created meaning were another step in the move away from absolute truth, special revelation and theism. It was no longer necessary to invoke God as meaning could be created individually (Schaeffer, 1990).

Another movement towards non-rationalism was the pragmatism of William James. This movement basically claimed that everything should be evaluated in the light of its practicality or usefulness (James, 1988). It implied that belief in God is good as long as it is useful. The idea of truth is thus reduced to usefulness (Scott-Kakures *et al.*, 1993:362). This inevitably undermines any epistemological foundation for truth.

2.4.6 Two or more melodies sounding together – Post-modernism

The contemporary dominant Western worldview has been termed post-modernism. The development of post-modernism can be explained by mainly two reasons. The first is that it is a logical conclusion of the philosophical development which started during the Enlightenment. The above mentioned developments of Romanticism, Darwinism and Existentialism helped to bring the Enlightenment to its logical conclusion, namely relativism (Schaeffer, 1990; Veith, 1994; Chater, 2001). It follows that there is no entity that is the final cause and thus no ultimate right and wrong. Post-modern philosophers essentially applied what Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers said, only more rigorously and to all of life. The phenomenologists were important here as they claimed that all seeing is “seeing as”. The phenomenologists emphasised the subjectivity of theories (Brockelman, 1980:27ff).

The other explanation which can be given for the development of post-modernism is the fact that people became dissatisfied with modernism, with its rationalism and scientific positivism (Higgs & Smith, 2003:140; Pearcey, 2004:114). The promised utopia never realised. Widespread genocide and warfare, including the two World

Wars as well as numerous other atrocities committed during the socialist revolutions of the 20th century, (and which according to Enlightenment thought, would have long ceased to happen), were and are still rampant and have caused a profound mistrust in modernist rationalism (Veith, 1994; Wright, 2000:13). People became disillusioned with the tenets of modernism and started looking for alternatives. A reaction against the modern idea that God is not necessary anymore, is for example seen in the growing interest nowadays in supernatural phenomena, and a new openness to and interest in spiritual matters can be observed pervading all aspects of Western society (Jankowski, 2002:69; King, 2002; Alexander, 2004:x). In general the post-modern movement as a reaction against modernism can be referred to as being similar to Romanticism in many of its basic tenets, as Romanticism was to a large extent a reaction against Enlightenment rationalism (Wright, 1996:142).

One of the most basic tenets of post-modernism is the assumption that there is no absolute truth; it puts an end to all truth claims (Chater, 2001:65). The French philosopher Lyotard (1997) described post-modernism as “incredulity to meta-narratives” (Buckely & Erricker, 2004:181). This ultimately also means that the hope of science or reason leading towards correspondence with reality (truth) needs to be given up (McDowell, 1999:613ff; Rorty, 2004:53f). Furthermore, it means that post-modern philosophers relinquish the idea of foundations and metaphysics (Santos, 2003:433; Rorty, 2004:53; Wolin, 2004:220ff). One primary self-proclaimed task of post-modernism is thus to deconstruct meta-narratives (Wright, 2000:21). Relativism, which is characteristic of post-modernism, does not attempt to engage in epistemological enquiry at all (Erricker, 2000:62). A foundation for truth is not sought, and not believed to exist. There is a “haunting emptiness and superficiality,...lack of substance and depth” (King, 2002).

A well-known post-modern philosopher, Michel Foucault (1984) took up Kant's search for freedom. Foucault's freedom however is not determined by absolutes (the idea of absolutes he considers to be catastrophic for society) but rather requires to be constantly engaged in the process of creating freedom and opposing oppression. He has coined the term *biopower*, which designates the kind of power/knowledge, which should be used to engage in working towards a more humane society. In his eyes people have to accept an ironic stance towards life: ‘Don't take yourself too seriously,

but engage in the affairs of the present' (Foucault, 1984; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1986). The human subject is also not seen as something static, but it is rather perceived as constantly changing and increasingly hybrid (Yates, 2001:210; Buckely & Erricker, 2004:181). Human beings can therefore choose their own meanings and ways of living (Buckely & Erricker, 2004:181). This is often done opportunistically and arbitrarily. Lawton (2003:282) states that the heart of post-modernism is that nothing connects and nothing follows. Unsurprisingly, Foucault espoused an ethic where he questioned whether or not acts such as rape actually are wrong (Groothuis, 2000:203). Foucault also wanted to do away with the conventional idea of truth. He claimed that "truth" is merely a disguise of "power". In the same way he does away with any kind of objective knowledge, and has disparaged intellectual inquiry (Wolin, 2004:41f).

Another important development of post-modernism, in which Jacques Derrida played the key role (Wolin, 2004:221ff), was the change in the way language was perceived. Language is no longer seen as representing reality and conveying meaning and truth, but is rather seen as being detached from the object. Absolute meaning is thus not possible (Yates, 2001:212; Wolin, 2004:221f).

The only values which are deemed important in post-modernism are thus 'tolerance' and 'freedom', a guarding against imposing any (particularly religious) values on others (Wright, 2000:22), which is in itself a contradiction, as it absolutises values.

All this indicates that post-modernism rejects a logical rational basis not by default but by conscious design. However, by stating that no absolutes exist, the movement undermines its own foundation, as it uses an absolute statement (McDowell, 1999:621).

This discussion has attempted to trace the development of Western thought concerning the concept of *religion* and *spirituality*. This background is necessary in order to evaluate the different types of spirituality later on.

The next section deals specifically with Eastern and African religions and their view of spirituality. The purpose here is to give a brief overview of these religions as they are often mentioned nowadays in connection with spirituality. At the end of the

section a brief summary will be given of Christianity as only some tenets of the Christian religion have been mentioned in previous sections of this chapter.

It has to be noted at this point that religions here are not understood to be absolute representations of truths, but that they are rather understood as worldviews/thought systems trying to explain the world. The possibility is however not ruled out either that some of these explanations correspond more to reality than others.

2.5 A brief investigation into Eastern and African religions/ spiritualities as well as Christianity

There are nowadays very inclusive trends within the conception of spirituality which call for an investigation into other religious traditions. For example Eastern spiritualities have infiltrated the West and therefore need to be considered (Ellwood, 1987). Characteristically most religions have claimed to place value on spirituality (Crompton, 1998:33f). In this investigation selected religions will therefore be considered, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam as well as the traditional African religions and Christianity. Even though there are other religions which could be investigated these were chosen as they are the ones which have the most presence in the South African context (Anon, 2010). Although there are few Buddhists in South Africa, probably around 0.1% (Nation Master, 2009), Buddhism still does exert an influence in the form of religious ideas that have infiltrated Western thought through spiritual practices such as yoga and the like.

Overall the aim of this investigation is to describe briefly the specific religion in order to evaluate it critically in the light of later on developing an epistemological framework concerning spirituality and Life Orientation.

2.5.1 Any deity is welcome, just don't be exclusive... – Hinduism

Hinduism is claimed to be the oldest religion of the world (De Beer, 1996:27; Getis *et al.*, 2000; Hanna, 2004). It is very different to the monotheistic traditions of the West. It has no founder and no definite beginning (Krüger, Lubbe & Steyn, 2004:59). It is claimed to have developed among a people called Aryans who moved into India

round about 1500 BC. Hinduism grew out of an observation of nature and life and was influenced by the existing tribal religions of the people living in India. Many of these people's ideas and practices were later on included into Hinduism (Thundy, 1985:77f; De Beer, 1996:28ff; Klostermaier, 2005:1ff). Hinduism can absorb a wide variety of new beliefs at any time as long as there is no claim to exclusiveness (De Beer, 1996:27; Getis *et al.*, 2000:267).

In general Hinduism can be described as being pantheistic. It consists of a broad category of religious beliefs (De Beer, 1996:27; Geisler, 1999:316; Tennent, 2002:37). Hindus do not have any authoritative doctrine, nor an accepted canon. There is rather a great variety of amorphous writings, which were compiled over many centuries (Eidlitz, 1957; Bass, 2004; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:60ff; Klostermaier, 2005).

The probably oldest Hindu writings are the so-called Vedas which were compiled around 1500 and 800 BC, possibly written down by Brahmin priests after a long oral tradition (De Beer, 1996:31; Bass, 2004). These texts as well as their commentaries such as the Brahmanas and the Upanishads are considered to be 'inspired' (Eidlitz, 1957:11). They however do not have the status of scripture as the Bible has for the Christian. The Vedas are seen as having always existed. They are thus not grounded in verifiable history. The authors and the time of writing are unknown (Geisler, 1999:316). Contradictions are not seen as problems as the Vedas are considered to consist of 'holy' utterances (Eidlitz, 1957; Bass, 2004). Another very important text is the Bhagavadgita, which tells the story of Arjuna and Krishna (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:70f), where Krishna reveals himself as being an incarnation of Krishna, instructing Arjuna. The main doctrine here is that true happiness is only found through acting without involvement. Furthermore the Bhagavadgita also contains instructions on the practice of three kinds of yoga (De Beer, 1996:33; Eidlitz, 1957:186). There are however many more texts of such volume that it is impossible to discuss them all. In general it can be said that the texts contain nearly every genre of literature such as philosophical treatises, folk medicine, erotic poetry, grammar tomes, devotional hymns, liturgical manuals and ethical instructions. There is a considerable amount of morally questionable material within Vedic literature, which range from

racial prejudices, rigid social hierarchies to prostitution, rape and murder (Bass, 2004). Prostitutes and thieves had their own gurus (Eidlitz, 1957:80f).

Although no generally accepted doctrine exists, there are nevertheless a few conceptions which are fairly general to Hinduism which will briefly be mentioned.

- *Atman* and *Brahman*: *Atman* deals with self-knowledge, though not in a psychological sense but much rather in a metaphysical sense. The claim is that if you know yourself you know everything, which is *Brahman* (the ultimate reality), however at the same time *Brahman* is also nothing. This knowledge is however almost unattainable (Klostermaier, 2005:89f; Eidlitz, 1957; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:73f).
- *Karma*, *samsara* and *moksha*: Hindus believe in *karma*, meaning that every act in this life will have an effect still in this life, as well as on the nature of the next life. The release from this cycle is *moksha*, meaning that existence will ‘fuse’ with *Brahman*. As long as this has not happened the soul upon death is reborn into another being (*samsara*) (De Beer, 1996:42f; Tennent, 2002:74ff; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:75f; Klostermaier, 2005:89f).
- *Maya*: This refers to a common belief that visible reality is in fact an illusion. It comes from the idea that when a person comes into existence that it forgets its essential identification and oneness with *Brahman*. The solution thus lies in realising and achieving perfect oneness with *Brahman* (De Beer, 1996:42; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:78f).
- The “one and the many” embodies the classic tension in Hindu theology. According to Tennent (2002:37ff) Hindu philosophy has always taught that one ultimate reality exists, and yet in opposition to that Hindus worship literally millions of different gods.

In the following paragraph two influential theological schools of Hinduism will be discussed.

The first, a prominent theological as well as philosophical school of Hinduism is *Advaita Vedanta*. The founder of this school is Sankara who probably lived from 788

to 820 AD. Accounts concerning his life are legendary in character (Klostermaier, 2005:106; Flood, 2006:239). His thought can be summarised as follows.

Sankara's *Advaita Vedanta* is known for its non-dualism. Sankara asserts the oneness of Brahman, also seeing God's being apart from God's doing (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:80). In order to reconcile God's oneness with human lived reality Sankara proposed the so-called *Nirguna-saguna* distinction. *Nirguna* is the level of Brahman which is beyond all predicates and attributes, whereas *saguna* denotes the lower level where people can worship a personal god called *Isvara*. All this is nevertheless in essence an illusion according to Sankara, as only Brahman is real (Geisler, 1999:316f; Tennent, 2002:40ff; Klostermaier, 2005:108ff; Flood, 2006:239ff).

The second great theological school is called *Visisadvaita Vedanta*, which was founded by Ramanuja who lived approximately from 1017 to 1137 AD. He rejected Sankara's ideas and came much closer to pantheism in that he considered everything to be Brahman. He thus rejects Sankara's conceptions of the two levels. He also has a more personal approach to God, who can show 'grace' and provide 'redemption' (Geisler, 1999:316f; Tennent, 2002:43ff; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:80; Klostermaier, 2005:117ff; Flood, 2006:243ff). The above mentioned tension "the one and the many" is exemplified in both schools of Hinduism.

Considering Hindu spirituality proves to be quite difficult as the term is often not used in the literature. However a project in Hinduism which seems to be quite general is the idea that people should transcend the world of illusion to discover the true Self, in other words to achieve *Atman* and *Brahman* as described above or to obtain spiritual release or liberation which is an identification with the all-pervading God (Geisler, 1999:317; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:75,81). The other doctrines mentioned above play an important role here as well. According to Krüger *et al.*, (2004:80f) this striving is usually linked to ethics, in that morality and spirituality are seen as being mutually dependent.

As this striving towards oneness and liberation seems to be an intrinsic endeavour, it is now necessary to look at more extrinsic forms of spirituality. However due to the immense variety of Hindu religious practice it is impossible to describe the typical

practical spirituality. Typical practice does not exist (De Beer, 1996:47). Hindus usually worship many different gods, depending on area and type of Hinduism, which involves festivals, as well as performing rituals in the home where usually a shrine plays a role (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:83ff; De Beer, 1996:46ff).

Looking at Hinduism as a whole and making a few comparative remarks it becomes obvious that Hinduism is probably only unified in its assertion that all is ultimately one, and that there should never be contradictions. It seems that this religion and its spirituality can be described as inclusive, where Christianity for example is particularistic. However in this context Ramachandra (1996:17), who criticises the concept of inclusiveness in religions will be quoted: “A religion that a priori refuses to recognise fundamental disagreements can hardly be called tolerant, for it simply refuses to respect the ‘otherness’ of the other.”

2.5.2 Emptiness as the highest aim – Buddhism

Buddhism, in contrast to Hinduism, has a founder and thus has a date when Buddhism ‘started’. Buddhism arose during a time when spiritual culture in India was at a low ebb (Prabhavananda, 1981:168).

Siddharta Gautama (c568-483) was, it is claimed, born into a wealthy and powerful family, where he was very shielded from the harsh realities of life. The story is told that one day however he came into contact with human suffering, he saw old age, disease and death. This had such a strong influence on him that he renounced his extravagant lifestyle and went into seclusion in order to find answers to the problem of human suffering (Prabhavananda, 1981:169ff; Krüger, 1996:67ff; Tennent, 2002:90; Krüger *et al.* 2004:99ff). He then claimed to have achieved illumination one day while sitting under a tree after having been attacked by the ‘Evil One’. Here he gained insight into all previous lives as well as into the origin and disappearance of all things (Krüger, 1996:68f). He claimed that he had basically discovered how to break the cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth (Tennent, 2002:90). This is also where he got his name Buddha, which means “enlightened one” (Hanna, 2004). From there he started proclaiming his newfound wisdom. It is important to realise that the Buddha’s aim was not to start a new religion. His life and efforts should rather be seen

as an intended reform movement within Hinduism, which in the end did result in a new religion (Prabhavananda, 1981:171; Getis *et al.*, 2000:268).

The Buddha's teaching can be summarised as follows: Due to *karma* all of life is trapped in the endless circle of birth and rebirth out of which four noble truths emerge:

- Life is suffering.
- Suffering is caused by craving and desires or attachment.
- The solution is to cease desiring and break attachment.
- The way to achieve this is through the eightfold path, which consists of right understanding, right intention, right speaking, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right attention, right concentration (Krüger, 1996:73f; Grow, 1996; Tennent, 2002:91f; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:109ff).

The aim then of life is to achieve *nirvana* (nothingness), to break free from this cycle of births and rebirths (Geisler, 1999:788).

An important doctrine in Buddhism is the notion of a circular causality (*pratitya-samutpada*). It entails that everything has a cause and is conditional, and at the same time that no final cause exists. The idea here is that everything in the world arises because it is linked to something else (like spokes in a wheel) (Tennent, 2002:91). A second important and related doctrine is that of *anatman* (no-soul) which denies the existence of a soul and an ultimate reality (Brahman). This is one of the areas of disagreement between Hinduism and Buddhism (Morris, 2001:236; Tennent, 2002:91f).

It is now necessary to look at further developments in Buddhism after the Buddha's death. There are two major movements which will briefly be mentioned, namely *Theravada* Buddhism and *Mahayana* Buddhism.

Theravada, which was first known as *Hinayana*, refers to a conservative school within Buddhism. It emphasises that enlightenment is an individual walk preferably as

a monk as well as the practice of devotion to the historic Buddha and his original teachings (Krüger, 1996:76; Tennent, 2002:93; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:105).

The second great branch of Hinduism, *Mahayana* arose later than *Hinayana*, and can be described as an attempt to popularise the original teachings of the Buddha. In addition, it became more important to attain perfection not in seclusion but in the tumult of daily life, which entails that anybody could become enlightened. Socially this meant that Buddhism rejected the caste system. The idea of the *Bohisvattva* (Buddha-in-the-making) became important. The concept of the Buddha was thus broadened, meaning that the Buddha came to be seen as just one manifestation of the eternal Buddha nature (Prabhavananda, 1981:193f; Krüger, 1996:75ff; Tennent, 2002:93f; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:119ff).

One very important movement which needs to receive attention is Zen-Buddhism, as it has spread widely also in Western countries. Zen-Buddhism developed out of a synthesis between Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism (Prabhavananda, 1981:193f; Ellwood, 1987:114ff). The word *Zen* refers to meditation, and explains that this type of Buddhism places a great value on meditation (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:125). Zen in general is rather difficult to understand as it claims to be no system, philosophy or religion. Its central doctrine has been described as at the same time being everything and nothing. Man is god and god is man. Everything is illusory and the aim is to achieve *nirvana* (Geisler, 1999:790f; McDowell, 1999:644ff). It has been described as deliberately denying logic and the dualism of object and subject (Geisler, 1999:788). At the same time adherents of Zen-Buddhism claim that Zen-Buddhism may only be understood in a non-dualistic way. Such reasoning however makes implicit use of dualistic thinking, by implying that a dualistic view exists. This seems to show that a dualism of subject and object appears to be inherent in reality, and that it is as a result inescapable.

There are several commonalities between Buddhism and Hinduism, both are inclusive, and both focus on inner states of the mind. Buddhist spirituality, even though usually not termed that way entails meditation, basically trying to emerge into nothingness, to move into a transcendent way of being. It is not focused on a deity, but rather on the absence thereof (Geisler, 1999:788ff).

2.5.3 Submission as a lifestyle – Islam

In contrast to the other Eastern religions Islam is a monotheistic religion (Tennent, 2002). The word “Islam” is of Arabic origin and means “to submit” or “to surrender” to the will of God (; Fellmann *et al.*, 1997:166; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:221).

Islam has a very definite beginning in what is today Saudi Arabia. It originated in the early seventh century with the prophet Muhammad. During that time the Arabs worshipped many gods and their whole moral system was very corrupt. Muhammad, seeing this became very dissatisfied and began to retreat increasingly into the mountains where he would meditate and pray (Naudé, 1996:151). It is here that he claims the angel Gabriel appeared to him, giving him revelations which he memorised as he could not read or write himself (Ankerberg & Weldon, 2005:35). After a time of doubt he came to believe that God had intended him to be the messenger to the Arab people, to bring them the message which the Jews and the Christians had already received (Naudé, 1996:150ff; Fellmann *et al.*, 1997:166; Tennent, 2002:143; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:223ff).

Muhammad then proclaimed his message, in the beginning only reaching few people and having to endure much opposition. This caused him, after the death of his wife and uncle, to move to Medina, where his message spread and became popular (Naudé, 1996:157; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:225). Two years before his death he returned to Mecca which soon converted to this new religion (Goucher *et al.*, 1998:200). After Muhammad’s death different caliphs succeeded him and it was especially under the second caliph (Umar), that Islam expanded very quickly. Eventually several dynasties followed of which the Abbasid dynasty became very significant. It was characterised by a glorious phase of development in the arts, literature, science, philosophy and especially architecture (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:225). After the collapse of the Greco-Roman world it was especially the Arabs who preserved Hellenistic culture, communicating it to Europe through Spain (Naudé, 1996:157). From the 15th century Islam started to decline and stopped spreading further. Today however, due to demographic factors Islam is the second largest religion, as well as the fastest growing religion.

Islam claims to have historical beginnings and has scriptures which are accepted as authoritative by most Muslims. Even though Muhammad is the founder of Islam, Muslims trace their history back to Abraham, who was the father of Ishmael. Islam accepts many of the Biblical figures such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, David and Jesus (Fellmann *et al.*, 1997:166; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:233). However Jesus is only seen as a prophet and never as the son of God, as the idea of God having a son, who is then also crucified, is blasphemous to Muslims (Naudé, 1996:175; Tennent, 2002:169ff). They claim that Muhammad received God's final message, given through the angel Gabriel (Naudé, 1996:163), a message which had not remained pure in Christianity and Judaism (Tennent, 2002:147).

The Quran is the most important book in Islam. It consists of the revelations Muhammad had at various stages of his life, and which was written down 25 years after his death (Tennent, 2002:144). Furthermore there is the Hadith, which are words by Muhammad written down by his scribes (Naudé, 1996:160). The Shariah, which is derived from the Quran as well as the sayings of the prophet regulate every aspect of Muslim life (Krüger *et al.*, 2004:242f).

In Islam there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular, as the whole life should be lived as a service to God (Naudé, 1996:171). In this Islam is similar to the African religions, who also integrate religion into all of life. Islam however has very specific rules. It is characterised firstly by the 5 duties, which are also called the five pillars of Islam, which everyone has to adhere to:

- Testimony (*Shahada*): Muslims have to recite "There is no god beside God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God". Upon repeating this statement a person becomes a Muslim.
- Ritual prayers (*Salat*): Five times a day a Muslim has to pray specific prayers, facing in the direction of Mecca. These prayers should be observed in a mosque but can also be recited at any other place. These prayers are intended to honour God.
- Almsgiving (*Zakat*): The zakat is an obligatory levy on property, which every Muslim is supposed to pay. Further free-will offerings are encouraged.

- Fast (*Saum*): This occurs during the month of Ramadan. No food or drink may be consumed, nor any sexual activity be engaged in between daybreak to nightfall. This is an opportunity for Muslims to detach themselves from earthly anxiety.
- Pilgrimage (*Hajj*): At least once in his lifetime a Muslim should go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he has to walk around the Kabah seven times and kiss the Black stone. A sacrifice is also made in remembrance of Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son. The pilgrimage creates a strong bond of solidarity between believers (Naudé, 1996:171; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:239; Ankerberg & Weldon, 2005:34).

Even though there is hardly any mention of Islam spirituality as such in the literature, some conclusions regarding this matter can nevertheless be drawn. Islam is rather a religion of rules and belief in a God who is not directly involved in the matters of people and religion can therefore be described as being extrinsic. Allah is clearly not a god of love as revealed in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Ankerberg & Weldon, 2005:37). There is nonetheless a group in Islam, known as Sufis, who practice meditation and who have similar elements in their religious practice as Vedantic Hinduists (Tennent, 2002:151,187). The great majority of Muslims are however Sunni (about 86%) and Shi'ites. The division between the two occurred as a result of a power struggle. They also have some differences in theology concerning the attributes of Allah (Goucher *et al.*, 1998:203f; Tennent, 2002:149), however what remains the same in these two groups are the five pillars of Islam, which emphasise extrinsic practices. Islam like Christianity is clearly a particularistic religion.

2.5.4 Appeasing the ancestors – African religion

“Africans are notoriously religious”. This quote by Mbiti (1990:1) summarises African traditional religion as a holistic view of life, where daily life and religion are intimately related. Religion or spirituality therefore pervade the African worldview, and Africans are influenced by their spirituality in all areas of life, including politics and economics (Van Binsbergen, s.a.).

African religion here exclusively refers to traditional religion. It does not refer to forms of Christianity or Islam which are also found abundantly in Africa.

In contrast to other religions, African traditional religion does not have a founder and has no sacred writings (Mbiti, 1996:16f; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:36). Also African religion does not have a specific name, its name simply refers to geographical location.

There is no one uniform African religion. Different tribes have different rituals, practices and beliefs. There is a discernable common framework, and different tribes have varying spiritual complexes which together make up the total of their religious or spiritual life (Van Binsbergen, s.a.; Mbiti, 1996:3; Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:215; Tennent, 2007:122).

Maybe the most important feature of African religion is that life is seen as holistic and according to Mbiti (1990) every facet of life is permeated by religion, a claim which is supported by other authors (Nyamiti, s.a.:1; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:35; Friedenthal & Kavanaugh, 2007:18f;). Divinity is believed to be present in all aspects of the universe (Potgieter, 2002:88). This will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs. In general African religions consists of five aspects:

- Belief in God;
- Belief in divinities;
- Belief in spirits;
- Belief in ancestors;
- The practice of magic and medicine (Oladipo, 2004:356).

African religions are referred to as animistic or superstitious or only focused on ancestor worship. Often authors describe African religions as being primitive and inferior (Mbiti, 1996:18f; Crafford, 1996:5ff; Oladipo, 2004:355). The question here is whether there is reason to perceive African religion as primitive and inferior. Probably many Africans object to this in the light of the theory of historical

development of religions, according to which African religion would today be considered underdeveloped.

According to African tradition God created the world and is still involved in it, however indirectly through spirits (Oladipo, 2004:357; Friedenthal & Kavanaugh, 2007:20). In the eyes of many Africans God is mainly good, almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is still involved in the happenings on earth. He is not a personal God (Nyamiti, s.a.:5; Oladipo, 2004:357). Nonetheless there are other views according to which God is far less involved or even hidden (*deus otiosus*) (Tennent, 2007:122). He is also not believed to be loving or holy (morally good) (Crafford, 1996:13). Knowing God and having a relationship with him is foreign to African people and therefore African ontology and spirituality is firmly anthropocentric (Mbiti, 1990:48; Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:219). Human beings are perceived as good; Africans therefore have an optimistic view of human nature (Crafford, 1996:11). Sometimes human beings are even referred to as being divine (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:219). God is basically seen to exist to help mankind and to provide for them. He is never seen as an end in Himself. Within this context it is essential to look at the concept of the community, which in the South African concept can be conceptualised as Ubuntu. In other parts of Africa this apparently universal principle is sometimes expressed as communalism (Kaphagawani, 2004:340). Ubuntu can be understood through the following expression in Xhosa “*Umntu ngumntu ngabany’ abantu*” (a person is a person through other persons). In other words the welfare of the group is considered to be more important than the welfare of the individual. Ubuntu is thus the basis for social order. Harmony in the group is of utmost importance, and disrupting this harmony is ‘sin’ (Crafford, 1996:11; Higgs & Smith, 2003:58; More, 2004:157; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:35ff; Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005:219ff; Friedenthal & Kavanaugh, 2007:19). This is also encapsulated by the fact that young black people are supposed to learn from elders, to accept the way of life handed down by tradition, and in finding their place within the community which is part of nature, they become human beings (Sanon, 1985:68f). Morality as handed down by previous generations, is often perceived to be an integral part of religion in African religions (Oladipo, 2004:361). The community derives its meaning from the past.

God may however be worshiped in various ways. As was mentioned already, worship of God or in a broader sense religion is interwoven with daily life (Mbiti, 1990). Often offerings and sacrifices are the attempt to influence God towards giving something specific. Prayers are the most common method of approaching God (Mbiti, 1996:60ff; Friedenthal & Cavanaugh, 2007:27). The spiritual realm is part of the world and is necessary for reaching God. Spirits are believed to abound in the world. There are nature spirits and human spirits with further distinctions (Mbiti, 1996:70ff; Krüger *et al.*, 2004:34). According to Mbiti (1996:81) the existence of these spirits helps people explain many mysteries which are found in existence. There are also various “specialists” such as medicine men or for examples rainmakers who are supposed to act on behalf of people and to help people by doing some kind of magic and thus interacting with the spirit world (Mbiti, 1990; Crafford, 1996:5ff; Tennent, 2007:123).

The ancestors play a very important role in the life of Africans. If people die they are regarded as living dead. Their process of dying is not yet complete and they are seen as occupying the ontological position between the spirits and men, and are also seen as intermediaries between God and men (Mbiti, 1990:69; Crafford, 1996:14; Menkiti, 2004:327; Tennent, 2007:123). Many happenings and rituals in life such as initiation rites, rituals and practices around marriage, birth and death have very specific symbolic and spiritual significance, due to the involvement of the ancestors.

The concept of the ancestors leads to the necessity of looking at the African time concept. Time in the first place is not something which passes or must be used. Time is simply a composition of events, wasting of time is not possible just as much as being late is a foreign concept (Mbiti, 1990:16; Crafford, 1996:12). Out of this it follows that time is a two-dimensional construct, with a long past, a present and no future. People basically do not look forward but rather backward. To say “I am looking forward to my own past”, would make sense for many Africans (Menkiti, 2004:325). The future is not important and can even be said not to make sense as it has not yet taken place. The idea of the end of the world, heaven or a messianic hope does not exist (Mbiti, 1990:23). Therefore God is mainly seen in terms of this (daily) life and He is supposed to provide for people on a daily basis (Nyamiti, s.a.:11).

The fact that African religion has no writings and no founder, and is in other words not a historical religion, exempts it to a great extent from the possibility of verifying truth claims. The validity of African religion cannot be rationally or logically assured and the only possibility of verification is from experience or from pragmatic consideration. For most African traditional religionists, such experiences are the sole justification for the truth of their religion together with the sanction of cultural tradition.

The spirituality of African religion can be described as both extrinsic (focusing on external or outward actions, such as rituals), and intrinsic (with a focus on internal experiences of the mind) where people for example can be seen as mediums and communicators between the living and the living dead.

In the following section a short overview will be presented of the Christian religion. Even though much of sections 2 to 4 of this chapter were based on a Christian understanding of spirituality, this has not been explicitly explained and was not grounded in a comprehensive framework of the Christian religion.

2.5.5 And the truth shall set you free – Christianity

Christianity, a monotheistic religion, arose as the historical fulfilment and continuation of Judaism. The fulfilment of the Messianic promise as given in the Old Testament stands at the heart of Christianity (Joubert, 1996:143).

Christianity had its origin in Jesus Christ who claimed to be God's Son. His purpose was to save all people who received God's grace i.e. free gift of salvation. This includes the gift of forgiveness, the gift of new life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The necessity for salvation arose as people had fallen into sin, and were from the fall onwards born in sin (Joubert, 1996:143; Ankerberg & Weldon, 2005:13; Howard, 2008:154ff). The idea of sin centres on the nature of God, and implies that within Christianity absolute standards of good and evil exist (Miller, 2005:17). Sin estranged man from God and placed him under God's wrath. Salvation from this wrath then entailed that Jesus chose to die on a cross in the place of sinners. By this act he reconciled mankind (those who accept the offering) to God Himself, so that people

could once again live in the relationship they were meant to have with God (Ankerberg & Weldon, 2005:13f). This also entails the hope that all believers will live forever (have eternal life) in God's presence i.e. heaven (Howard, 2008:236ff). Salvation as a Biblical concept is clearly historical and particularistic (Moreland & Craig, 2003:615).

The main characteristic of the Christian religion and Jesus' teaching is that of God's love (Howard, 2008:29). 'God is love' is a characteristic Christian claim. Because God loved the sinner He sent His Son. Love therefore was His chief motivation. Christians then should be characterised by displaying this same quality. This however does not mean that sin, another chief concept, would be ignored. God is also absolutely good and holy. Sin was the reason God had to come to the earth to die. Christians should therefore love God and their fellow man (Worthington & Berry, 2005:154). Authentic existence is a life of faith, that is, trusting in the faithfulness (absolute reliability and truth) of God. Through such a life of faith they can experience the fullness of God's original creative purpose for mankind, righteousness, joy and peace, centred in a personal relationship with God through Jesus the Christ. Christianity can therefore be classified as a mainly intrinsic religion, focused on the development of a love relationship with Jesus Christ, which should then overflow towards an unselfish love for other people (Joubert, 1996:144; Worthington & Berry, 2005:154; Miller, 2005:232). Certain rituals are involved in the Christian religion, but never as a prerequisite for the free gift of salvation.

After Christ's death, resurrection and ascension the Christian message spread very quickly within the Roman Empire, initially especially through the Apostle Paul (Krüger, 2004:184f; Joubert, 1996:132f). In 367AD the canon (the text of the New Testament) was finalised, which consisted of 27 books containing letters, Gospels, history and revelation (Joubert, 1996:136). The Bible is central to Christianity as it embodies God's special revelation for mankind. The historical veracity of the Biblical accounts has been verified by historical research. Both Judaism and Christianity are religions with a strong historical foundation. Some authors state that Christianity can rightly be called the religion with the strongest historical basis (McDowell, 1999:33ff; Geisler, 1999:91ff; Habermas, 2006:161ff).

The Christian Church grew, went through many changes, and many different denominations have been founded. The most significant difference exists between Roman Catholic and Protestant movements. Martin Luther was one of the theologians who wanted to reform the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century. Luther criticised what he felt were unbiblical elements in the doctrine of the day, particularly the teaching that good works are a prerequisite for salvation and the unbridled power of the Pope (Joubert, 1996:139; Krüger, 2004:202;). Eventually this movement led to the founding of Protestant churches. After this the Catholic Church also went through internal reformations (Krüger, 2004:207ff). Other historical branches of the Christian Church are the offshoot of the reformist and revivalist movements of the 17 and 1800's which lead to for example Methodism, Congregationalism and Presbyterianism and the late 1900's with the emergence of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. A common feature of these historical movements is a self-conscious attempt to re-establish a form of Christianity more true to the original pattern as found in the New Testament.

When looking at a Christian spirituality the following can be observed. The basis for a Christian spirituality is the recognition that there is a supernatural or spiritual dimension to reality, which is grounded and framed in the Biblical accounts of Creation and the Fall. In summary, the Biblical text claims that humankind was uniquely created for fellowship with God, but the disobedience of the first man Adam destroyed this possibility. The obedience of the second Adam, Jesus, the Anointed One, restored this possibility. Direct personal knowledge of and communion with God is thus central to Christianity (Miller, 2005:16; Howard, 2008:30). Biblically, the possible relationship of love between God and human beings has a central place (Howard, 2008:15, 29). Union with God the Son is essential for receiving the new life. Communication with God the Father through prayer is essential for growth in the new life. The Christian life is to be one of obedience to and being led by the God the Holy Spirit in all aspects (Howard, 2008:299ff). One of the most defining characteristics of Christian spirituality is that of love for God, which emphasises the intrinsic nature of the Christian religion. At the same time it is clear that no other religion has this basis.

In the following section, contemporary conceptions of spirituality will be investigated. The discussion will also focus on the validity of the claims made by contemporary views about spirituality. This is very different from the earlier Western understanding of the concept spirituality, in that it differs very much from its historical roots in the Christian tradition.

2.6 Contemporary conceptions of spirituality

Some authors describe spirituality as being an ‘elusive’ concept, which is very difficult to define (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3; Fisher, 2001:47; Eaude, 2001:224,229; Scott, 2005:118; Cottingham, 2005:46), especially when considered in a secular and pluralistic context (Duff, 2003:227). This is especially the case when this new spirituality is understood as a reaction against modern rationalism (Wright, 2000:2). Alexander and Carr (2006:74) posit that the reason why spirituality is difficult to define is because there is a fundamental ontological uncertainty concerning the nature, objects and referents of spiritual discourse. This results in deep ambiguities. This discourse is an attempt to identify and address the “fundamental ontological” issues and to resolve this ambiguity, or at least to move the debate forward towards some clarity. Even though in general there is no consensus concerning the term *spirituality*, and there is no accepted definition of the concept (Zinnbauer *et al.*, 1999:891ff; McSherry & Cash, 2004:154; Bursztein, 2004:65; Hodder, 2007:186), most contemporary authors include all or some of the following aspects in their definitions. The life of a spiritual person should be characterised by the following (Seaward, 1995:166; Hawks *et al.*, 1995:372; Westgate, 1996:27; Myers *et al.*, 2000:265; Wright, 2000:12; Champagne, 2001:83f; Eaude, 2001:231; Jankowski, 2002:69f; Watson, 2006:253):

- Meaning and purpose
- Moral and ethical values and beliefs
- Relationships or connectedness
- Transcendence

These four dimensions represent a tenuous consensus in the conception of spirituality. This definition is not based on the historical antecedents alluded to above. Most authors however still see spirituality as having a 'supernatural' element (Richards & Bergin, 1998; Vaughan, 1991:105). Gur-Ze'ev (2004:223) sees spirituality simply as the presence of spirit in the human soul and body.

In contrast to the modern view, atheists and/or secular humanists now value the concept of spirituality and claim to have spiritual needs (Burnard, 1988:130; Crompton, 1998:43; Wright, 2000:79; Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:475). Such a conception is completely divorced from the historical precedents discussed above, and has taken on new meaning, which was not present in the earlier usage for most of Western history.

In general spirituality seems nowadays to be seen as being inherent in human beings (Rodger, 1996; Wright, 2000:39; Scott, 2005:119; Gellel, 2007:2; Hodder, 2007:185ff), thus being a human universal (Hay, Reich & Utsch, 2006:50). Sometimes this is seen as having biological or evolutionary roots (Wright, 2000:39; Hay, 2001:106; Scarlett, 2006:28; Hay *et al.*, 2006:50). This then means that spirituality is genetically endowed and functions causally as an antecedent to religious and ethical beliefs (Hay *et al.*, 2006:51). The most common characteristic of today's conceptions of spirituality is that they are inclusive and relativistic, even though this view is not shared by all authors (King, 1996:343; Chater, 2001:64). Many of these spiritualities are privatised, meaning that while spirituality in the past was seen as being part of organised religion, this has now changed into mostly private experiences, outside of any religious or secular institution (Wright, 2000:55).

2.6.1 Spirituality: new systems of thought

A new development is clearly noticeable. New forms of spiritualities are advocated. Some of these will be discussed below. It is impossible to describe in detail all the different types and viewpoints concerning spirituality in this thesis. Certain broader trends will be described under selected headings. The different trends are often not mutually exclusive. They overlap and interrelate with each other. The following should therefore not be seen as a definitive classification.

2.6.1.1 Post-modern trends

The new concept of spirituality is deeply informed by post-modernism, and to an extent was born out of post-modernism (Semetsky, 2004:55ff). Much of today's spirituality has become reified as a commodity (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004:229). One of the basic tenets of post-modernism is its denial of absolute truth (Lyotard, 1979; Foucault, 1984; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1986). This manifests itself clearly within the areas of spirituality. It is axiomatic that there is no definition and that spirituality can mean different things all at once (King, 1996:343; Chater, 2001:64). Zinnbauer *et al.* (1999) for example name the following spiritualities: Eastern spiritualities, Native-American spiritualities, goddess spiritualities, earth-based or ecological spiritualities and so forth. Maher & Hunt (1993:21) say that it is finally in the eye of the beholder whether or not a spirituality will be accessible. The fact that Native American powwows are now routinely practised in Great Britain is an example of this (Welch, 2005:47). McSherry and Cash (2004:154ff) describe spirituality as a "cocktail" of different strengths and flavours. They posit a taxonomy of spirituality which is on the one hand theistic (belief in a supreme being) and religious (belief in God, observance of rituals) moving towards phenomenological spirituality (learning about life through living and experience) towards mystical spirituality (relationship between the transcendent, interpersonal and transpersonal). A whole spectrum of spiritualities is acceptable according to these authors. McSherry and Cash (2004:157) conclude that there are two broad types of spirituality, an older type which is based on religious and theocentric descriptors, and a newer, post-modern form which is subjective and comprises an eclectic variety of descriptors. Estanek (2006:276) on the other hand perceives the two 'strains' of spirituality. The first strain includes a higher being, the second one only sees spirituality as a common human capacity. Some authors have a more instrumental view where religion is seen as helpful but not mandatory (Radford, 2006:386).

Within post-modernism there is a great diversity of equally valid spiritualities, which are not seen as mutually exclusive (Wright, 2000:49; Nesbitt, 2001:131ff). One of the characteristics of these new spiritualities is the fact that they tend to be egalitarian, loathing any kind of particularity, hierarchy and authority (Woodhead, 1993:174; Chater, 2001:64). At the same time, these spiritualities tend to have a deep distrust of

rationality as well as 'fundamentalism'. We should be free to choose our own spirituality. This is relativism (Woodhead, 1993:175; Chater, 2001:64).

Yob (1995:106) for example uses the concept of truth as being absolute when speaking about facts, while at the same time she advocates a multi-religious spirituality, which is a contradiction within a rational approach. In general it is acceptable to locate spirituality within a specific religious context, as long as this is not absolutised. Any religion can serve as a context for spirituality (Alexander, 2004:x). Truth within the *new* spiritualities is relativistic. As postulated by Webster (2004:10) it is *not* seen as fact but as taking hidden things out of their concealment.

2.6.1.2 Feminist trends

Feminism is a growing movement (Holt, 2005:170), and within the spirituality movement there is a growing faction of feminist perspectives (Woodhead, 1993:167). These feminist spiritualities come in diverse forms, some of them attempt to remain within a Christian context, such as Joan Chittister, or Rosemary Radford Ruether. In general Christian feminists tend to be of a liberal persuasion and are often associated with forms of liberation theology (Holt, 2005:167ff). Feminist spiritualities emphasise 'freedom of conscience' or the idea of internal voices as well as egalitarian social relationships (Wuthnow, 1998:65).

The influence is evident in two ways. Many spiritualities nowadays are post-Christian, and this also informs feminism. Mary Daly and Daphne Hampson are two of the most notable post-Christian feminists, who sharply criticise Christianity mainly for its assumed patriarchy and oppression (Woodhead, 1993:167f). They suggest a feminist spirituality which focuses on connectedness and mythologies. This means that many pre-Christian and non-Christian religions are intermixed with Christian (Biblical) spirituality. Secondly these feminist spiritualities base a significant amount of their argument on their idea that the Bible devalues women. However here it has to be remembered that the status of the women in ancient Israel, Greek and Rome was very low (Bell, 1998:196ff). The Bible actually places a much higher value on women than any other culture of the day (Bohlin, 2005). Feminist spiritualities also often include

gay and lesbian spiritualities, which are often conceived of as a struggle to be free (Chater, 2000:198).

Christianity is completely discredited in the opinion of many feminist authors (Woodhead, 1993:170). These spiritualities differ from the Christian tradition in mainly three areas. It rejects that God was incarnated in Jesus, and that the Bible does convey absolute truth. This is substituted for by experience. Secondly, it rejects the Christian belief in God as being omnipotent and omniscient and disbelieves the manifestation of God in Christ Jesus. Thirdly it also rejects the idea of human sinfulness and prefers a much more positive view of human nature (Woodhead, 1993:173).

Some points need to be mentioned here in criticism. Even though these movements tend to emphasise tolerance and universality, they nevertheless have a distinct element of fundamentalism in them as they absolutise certain values or basic tenets of their belief system, such as their specific view of women. However fundamentalism is something which they strongly reject. Despite their view on truth, they tend to consider themselves to be right and no other (Woodhead, 1993:175).

To conclude, these feminist spiritualities are post-modernistic in their approach and many of them depart from and even oppose the historical Christian roots of spirituality.

2.6.1.3 Multi-religious and atheist trends

It is consistent within the canons of post-modernism to recognise all religions and spiritualities as being true or equally valid (Veith, 1994; Wright, 2000:49).

As has been mentioned, spirituality has to a large extent been divorced from institutionalised religion (Zinnbauer, 1999:899). However the new trend is to include any religious element into personal spirituality. It is for example suggested that a move needs to be made from egological (focused on combating the evil within every person) towards ecological consciousness in order to embrace a panentheistic view of the world and cosmos. The whole cosmos is seen as being immanent in God

(Woodhead, 1993:172). McSherry and Cash (2003) suggest a similar idea. They posit a taxonomy. Any spirituality should be acceptable, ranging from being theistic and religious to existential to mystical, where any religious idea can be included. In many cases spirituality is seen as a movement in which various people who share similar beliefs which are added onto their formal religion are connected (King, 1996:344; Estanek, 2006:277). This illustrates the view that any belief is acceptable and any religion is acceptable. Often there is also the conscious mixing of two religious traditions such as Christianity and for example Zen-Buddhism (Yob, 1995:110). Some (Maher & Hunt, 1993:23) go further by saying that the roots of spirituality are nowhere more clearly apparent than in the mainstream traditions of the Native Americans, who exude a spirit of universal respect for all living things. The authors consider this the same rich spiritual soil that was present among the pre-industrial European-Americans (Maher & Hunt, 1993:23). Interestingly it is even claimed that atheists and agnostics have spiritual needs, which can among others be seen as being needs for meaning (Burnard, 1988:130; Wright, 2000:79).

Within the post-modern context therefore any conception of God or spirituality is legitimate, as is the atheistic conception, or a general secular conception, while the Christian particularistic version is largely rejected (Woodhead, 1993:173; Tacey, 2001:90ff; Gearon, 2004:189). It is remarkable that in many cases spirituality has been completely divorced from its social origins and often there is no grounding in history. Even though the roots of spirituality as known in the West lie firmly embedded within the Judeo-Christian historical tradition, these roots are often rejected as being outdated or are ignored. There is also the claim that there are roots of Western spiritualities outside of the Christian tradition (Tacey, 2001:90ff; Ayman, 2004:107).

The movement which combines Eastern religions with Christianity or introduces Eastern practices and conceptions into Western concepts of spiritualities, will be discussed under the following heading, as it is a large movement on its own.

2.6.1.4 Eastern trends

As has been mentioned above a significant number of contemporary conceptions of spirituality include practices or references to the Eastern religions.

In the past 60 years the West was very much influenced by Eastern traditions and views of spirituality (Rodger, 1996:46). Already during the Romantic movement Westerners became interested in Eastern religions and spiritualities (Ellwood, 1987:11). This became more pronounced after the Second World War. Eastern religions eventually infiltrated Western society in various ways, so that there are now many established Eastern religions, some of which have become institutionalised (Chater, 2005:230). There are also other more subtler ways of influence such as theosophical and yoga groups (Ellwood, 1987). In the post war period in the West, many young people turned to these kinds of spiritualities (Tacey, 2001:89f).

More recently, there have been attempts to unite Eastern and Western spiritualities, as they are claimed to be “one world with two perspectives” (Yob, 1995:109). All religions are viewed as equal. However, to maintain this view, these authors draw heavily on Eastern religious concepts. The Chinese concept of yin and yang can be mentioned in this context. It claims that there is only one whole, with different parts, namely yin (femininity, responsiveness, cooperation) and yang (masculinity, demands, aggression, rationality). There is always, it is claimed, a move towards one and away from the other (Capra, 1984). Yob (1995:110ff) also confirms this, saying that spiritualities should be seen as being complementary. In contrast to this, Hanna and Green (2004) perceive Eastern spiritualities as being uniquely part of Eastern religions. In their article they describe the different Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam), perceiving them as a different kind of spirituality than traditionally found in the West.

It has been shown that many spiritualities include various Eastern religions, however in most cases there is ample room for the mixing of religious traditions and practices.

2.6.1.5 Existential trends

This trend is basically built on the idea that spirituality is concerned with meaning in life, and that existential philosophy also has to do with meaning in life (Webster, 2004:7). Meaning is often described as that which transcends the ego, and must therefore have transcendent sources (Estanek, 2006:276). The individual realisation of utter insignificance in a vast universe is described as the source of anxiety or 'existential angst'. This according to Radford (2006:393) is a major motivating component of people's spirituality. This existential tension or desperate search for meaning according to Radford (2006:393) gave rise to much of religious ideas and teaching. It is implied that religion did not arise objectively but as a result of a need for meaning, it is therefore according to this perspective man-made. Authors who favour this perspective and argue that spirituality is an existential phenomenon, claim that spirituality should therefore be much broader than the concept of religion, as it is then part of all human existence and not necessarily Christian (Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999:28; Webster, 2004:7).

In his framework for an existential perspective on spirituality Webster (2004:9ff) names the following elements. He firstly claims that this involves subjectivity, or a subjective view of truth, which is typically post-modern. The individual is also culturally embedded and is free to choose. The person is seen as a whole, and is responsible as a meaning-maker. It becomes obvious that this perspective focuses very much on the meaning-making side of spirituality, and at the same time has a relativistic view of truth.

Even though one could mention more trends concerning contemporary notions of spirituality, this will not be attempted here. The permutations and combinations are complex and diverse and a full discussion will require too much detail.

2.7 The impact of spirituality on lifestyle, physical and mental health

As spirituality will be considered as a basis for teaching Life Orientation it will be beneficial to consider the effects spirituality has on various aspects such as mental health, risk behaviour, attitudes, quality of life and physical health problems. Some

studies will be mentioned which report on the effect of religion concerning the above mentioned aspects, others on the effect of spirituality (Karstens, 2006:32ff). In the past decades a host of studies was conducted investigating the relationship between spirituality and mental health. A few examples will be mentioned.

McClain *et al.* (2003) found that there is a positive correlation between little or low spirituality and end-of-life-despair. Westgate (1996:32f) summarised existing studies dealing with spirituality and depression and found that in most there is a negative correlation between spirituality and depression. Chumbler (1996:229ff) found that there is a correlation between some measures of religious experience and life satisfaction. In general spirituality seems to be related to quality of life (WHOQOL SRPB Group, 2006:1487ff). Ross (1995:459) as well as Koenig (2004) report a general positive correlation between spirituality or religion and mental well-being.

Looking at 'risk' behaviours is especially important as those are the major concerns among young people (cf section 3.1). 'Risk' behaviours consist of the following aspects (Halonen & Santrock, 1996:347; DiClemente & Hansen, 1996):

- Substance abuse,
- Early sexual activity,
- Cigarette and alcohol abuse,
- Delinquency and
- Suicidal behaviour

In general Ebstye King (2004:112f) remarks that religious youths seem to have a much greater resilience against risk behaviours than their non-religious peers. It seems that there is a connection between spirituality/religion and positive adolescent development (Ebstye King & Benson, 2006:384).

A study conducted by Ritt-Olson *et al.* (2004:192ff) examined the influence of spirituality on substance abuse, and found it to be positive. Research has validated that spirituality is particularly protective in higher risk groups of adolescents. Teen Challenge (1994) also found that spirituality, in this case specifically Christian

spirituality, had an enormously positive impact on quitting drugs and alcohol abuse as well as on other risk behaviours (Teen Challenge, 2001:15ff). Likewise Koenig (2004) found in a survey of existing studies that religious/spiritual people are far more less likely to smoke than other people.

Sexual activity is a great cause for concern today among young people, especially when looking at the South African HIV/AIDS pandemic. Holder, Durant, Harris, Henderson, Obeidallah & Goodman (2000:295ff) as well as Murray, Ciarrocchi and Murray-Swank (2007:222ff) found that higher levels of spirituality are positively correlated with less voluntary sexual activity and sexual permissiveness.

Apart from studies examining the correlation between risk behaviours or mental health and spirituality there are also various studies which looked at the relationship between physical health and spirituality. In most studies a positive correlation was observed (Richards & Bergin, 1998:86ff; Koenig, 2004; Karstens 2006:39f; Ebstyne King & Benson, 2006:389; Oman & Thoresen, 2006:399ff). It is also reported that religion and spirituality have a positive effect on personal meaning, identity formation, civic engagement and altruism (Ebstyne King & Benson, 2006:390f). Robinson, Bocking, Rosser, Miner and Coleman (2002:50) suggest the following: "All populations should be challenged to reflect on their deeper values to find a way to better integrate their sexual and spiritual selves, in the expectation that this will lead to safer self-care".

There are nevertheless studies which did not find positive relations between spirituality and any of the above mentioned factors. Research suggests that the confusion regarding this is probably due to differences in definition of spirituality and religion (Karstens, 2006:42; Richards & Bergin, 1998:78ff).

2.8 A framework for evaluating different kinds of spiritualities

In order to be able to evaluate spiritualities constructively a framework was developed. It is essential to look at the differences between various perceptions of spiritualities as this can open up dialogue. When no differences are recognised dialogue collapses at the outset.

At this point a framework will be presented, a full discussion will, however, take place in Chapter 6. We can summarise by saying that with regard to spirituality, there are few authors who would dispute *that* it is, but when we raise the question as to *what* it is, we find an irreducibly complex web of viewpoints and opinions. Communities and cultures have different categories or descriptors for explaining what spirituality is. There is a multiplicity of ‘voices’ or ‘discourses’. The spirit of our post-modern times dictates that we affirm them all and celebrate diversity. This implies opting for inclusiveness over against particularity. The above discussion however alerts us to the unsustainable of this position logically and existentially. We are confronted with the problem of truth, a problem that seemingly will not go away. It is a problem because even those who would deny truth assume some sort of logical substructure to reality and existence, without which the denial of truth would be shouting in a vacuum. We are then left with the question, “How do we make sense of this multiplicity of discourse?” The above discussion seems to point to three sources of truth - logic, history and experience. When evaluating any claims as to what spirituality is, we must use these three criteria. Is it logical? Is it historical? Is it true to experience? In this sense spirituality must defer to epistemology.

When describing spiritualities or the expression of spirituality in this study, three constructs or continua seem to emerge. First, there was the very distinct difference between spiritualities based on verifiable historical events versus spiritualities that have been divorced from any historical background. McSherry and Cash (2004:154ff) describe spirituality as a “cocktail” of different strengths and flavours. They posit a taxonomy of spirituality which is on the one hand theistic (belief in a supreme being) and religious (belief in God, observance of rituals) moving towards phenomenological spirituality (learning about life through living and experience) towards mystical spirituality (relationship between the transcendent, interpersonal and transpersonal). A whole spectrum of spiritualities is acceptable according to these authors. Two axes are discernable here. Theistic versus atheistic and external observance versus internal experience. As was mentioned in section 2.6.1.1, McSherry and Cash (2004:157) describe this first continuum as based on religious and theocentric descriptors versus an eclectic variety of descriptors. This continuum would be historical versus ahistorical. As was mentioned throughout the discussion most religions can be characterised as inclusive, allowing various and often disparate elements, sometimes

including diverse deities, all as part of an ideal type of spirituality. ‘Tolerance’ in these views is one of the defining moral qualities. Historical approaches on the other hand describe spirituality in one specific way, based on a particular view of God, a specific view of reality and an absolute view of truth.

Secondly there is the continuum of extrinsic versus intrinsic spiritualities. Extrinsic spiritualities would focus on outward, communal acts or observances, as practiced in various religious communities. Intrinsic spiritualities focus on the psychological aspects of individual human beings, and characteristically these types of spiritualities are motivated intrinsically.

The following table can be used to categorise the spiritualities discussed in this chapter into the three continua (intrinsic versus extrinsic, particular versus inclusive, historical versus ahistorical). It has however to be noted that these categorisations are to be seen as some of the more salient poles within a multidimensional continuum, not as mutually exclusive criteria. They also attempt to categorise spiritualities and not religious traditions, although some degree of identification between the two is unavoidable. This means that even though Hinduism can for example be classified as extrinsic, it nevertheless has intrinsic elements.

Table 2.1 Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities

	Historical		Ahistorical	
	Particular	Inclusive	Particular	Inclusive
Intrinsic				
Extrinsic				

An evaluative discussion on these spiritualities will be attempted in chapter 6.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter it was attempted to give an overview over spirituality in general, focusing on modern conceptions as well as giving a brief history of the term as found within the Western tradition. It is well documented that the origins of this concept are

found in the Judeo-Christian historical tradition. In the West the origin of the concept of spirituality is grounded in history and cannot be extricated from its sociological antecedents.

The new conceptions about spirituality include aspects such as eastern trends, feminist perspectives, post-modern trends and the like. These are without epistemological foundation, as they intentionally divorce the origin of the term from its current usage and practice within historical communities of faith and combine it arbitrarily with many other traditions or beliefs.

Criteria for evaluating spiritualities that emerge from the discussion contrast historical and ahistorical categories, as well as external versus internal descriptors. Within the post-modern debate, however, the central issue in the discussion is the question of inclusiveness and particularity.

Further research could therefore move into this direction of looking at the epistemological foundations for these new developments.

CHAPTER 3

Life skills education: history and contemporary developments

3.1 Introduction and orientation

“By the year 2010 there will be more adolescents (ages 10-19) alive in the world than ever before...This cohort of young people can become either a gift or a burden to their countries depending on the capacity of governments, communities and families to develop the human potential of this generation” (Pan American Health Organization, 2001:5).

“Life for many young people is a painful tug of war filled with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, coaches, employers, friends and oneself. Growing up—negotiating a path between independence and reliance on others—is a tough business. It creates stress, and it can create serious depression for young people ill-equipped to cope, communicate and solve problems” (Walker, 2002).

These two quotes succinctly summarise two realities in our world today; firstly that there are great opportunities for young people, and secondly that adolescence is often viewed and experienced as a difficult time. Young people face many challenges from within and without and often do not have people or resources to rely on to guide and support them (Kirbach, 2002).

The concept of Life Skills/Orientation education is becoming important as a possible answer to the various problems and challenges facing young people (Groves & Groves, 1980; Pan American Health Organisation, 2001:5). In the new political dispensation in South Africa Life Skills/Orientation education has been introduced as a compulsory curriculum subject which pupils must complete from Grade 1 to Grade 12, and which is intended to teach pupils social and emotional skills as well as cognitive skills (Pan American Health Organization, 2001:6; Revised National Curriculum Statement, 2002).

Within educational policy worldwide Life Skills education is a relatively new term (as explained below). ‘Character education’ or ‘moral education’ and ‘religious education’ were all the antecedents and precursors of Life Skills education as is explained later in this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the current conception of Life Skills/Orientation education. This will entail investigating the need for such a subject in today’s world and especially South Africa as well as considering the history of Life Skills/Orientation education. This study will also evaluate different types of character, moral- and religious education, and includes an analysis of contemporary viewpoints and practices. This chapter will furthermore investigate the underlying epistemology of Life Skills/Orientation education in South Africa, using mainly resources from the Department of Education such as the Revised National Curriculum Statement, as well as some trade school textbooks of Life Skills/Orientation. This thorough discussion is deemed necessary in order to later on arrive at meaningful conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 6 regarding the practice and foundation of Life Orientation .

In the following section a brief overview of the historical developments regarding Life Skills/Orientation education will be given.

3.2 The history and development of Life Skills/Orientation education

While the term Life Skills or Life Orientation is a novel term, the idea of preparing people for life from a psychosocial and moral perspective is not. One only has to consider the teachings of the religions and of many schools of philosophy (McKown, 1935:72; Algera & Sink, 2002:162; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004:72; Shepard Salls, 2007:1). What has changed are the terms and the philosophical basis. What is now called Life Orientation/Skills education was earlier referred to as ‘moral’ or ‘character’ education. These latter terms have to an extent fallen out of favour in many educational and psychological discourses due to a shift in the dominant philosophy and paradigm (McCullough & Snyder, 2000:2). Sometimes the term ‘values education’ is also used (Wringe, 2007:17). There is a lack of clarity concerning terms and often concepts like ‘life skills’, ‘character education’, ‘moral

education', 'prevention programmes', 'social-emotional learning', 'moral intelligence', 'citizenship education' or 'education for democracy' refer to the same or almost the same concept (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004:74,79; Green, 2004:254) and no proper distinctions are made. For this reason a survey of past practices and policies of character and moral education is fundamental to this study.

Secondly although the focus of this investigation is primarily South African education, the history of and research on Life Orientation/Skills education in other countries (especially the US) will also be considered, as a large body of literature already exists. A brief South African history will be given in section 3.5 together with an overview of the current situation and practices.

3.2.1 A US American perspective

As most research has been conducted in the USA, this review will inevitably consist to a large part of the results of this work in the USA. Research in the USA often directs and informs global trends in this area. In the following paragraphs a historical overview on character and moral education will be discussed.

In the USA, character and moral education were already present in the first established schools (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004:72). In fact, the whole first purpose of schooling and education in general was of a religious nature (McKnown, 1935:10; Nolan, 2000:32ff; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:2ff), with no separation between church and state (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:82). Children were taught to read so they could read the Bible and become morally responsible Christians and citizens (Kaestle, 1984:101; Sadker & Sadker, 1997:267ff). All early colonial schools were church-related and therefore all instruction was explicitly Biblical (Algera & Sink, 2002:163), even to the extent of using the Bible as a text book for teaching (Shepard Salls, 2007:6). Education in the 'New World' also became known for its high ideals, aspirations and standards that were directly informed by the texts of the Old and New Testament (McKnown, 1935:73; Lowman, 1983:67ff). Even 150 years after the first settlers arrived in America in the beginning of the 17th century, school textbooks still contained 100% Judeo-Christian content and stressed Biblical narratives and themes (Mulkey, 1997:35; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:5). Up to the common school movement in

the 19th century all schools were based upon clear Christian (Protestant) thinking (McKnown, 1935:73; Kaestle, 1984:101f; Algera & Sink, 2002:163;). This implies that basically 'Life Skills' teaching was already incipiently present in the Biblical emphasis of the early schools, even though the focus and content is to a large extent different today. It is easy to show that the Life Skills promoted nowadays, which focus on aspects such as individual responsibility, respect for others, care and support for the 'disadvantaged' are implicitly and explicitly informed by the religious/Biblical education of the early pioneers.

Between 1776 (when the US achieved independence) and the early to middle 19th century there was a transition from community-based, religiously oriented schools towards schools funded by the state. These schools were more secular in orientation and this movement became known as the 'common school movement' (Mulkey, 1997:35; Algera & Sink, 2002:163). It endeavoured to bring education to all in order to create a common culture, instead of favouring only the privileged few who could afford it (Sadker & Sadker, 1997:274ff; Yu, 2004:28). The leader of this movement was Horace Mann, who believed that schooling was necessary to preserve republican institutions and to create a political community (Sweetman, 2007:216), therefore he wanted schools to be under the control of the states and not churches (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:51). This led inevitably to an increasing secularisation in schools, even though this was not Mann's intention (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:53). The common school movement however still focused on moral education with strong Biblical overtones (Shepard Salls, 2007:8) and Mann saw moral education as the primary aim of education (Badolato, 2002). People like Jefferson and Webster promoted secular education from an Enlightenment perspective, still emphasising high standards of morals, but to a greater extent separated from the Bible (Sparagana, 2002; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:10ff).

The reasons for the common school movement were diverse. Two prominent reasons were a movement towards the separation of church and state as well as the development of capitalism (Kaestle, 1984:102; Mulkey, 1997:35). In addition to this, the ethnic and religious diversity of the USA had greatly increased due to new immigrants. By the 1840s, this had led to dissatisfaction among groups such as Roman Catholics who didn't feel comfortable within the Protestant cultural habitus as

it concerned the education of their children (McKnown, 1935:73; Shepard Salls, 2007:9f).

In general it can be said that the common school movement did not do away with a Christian ethic. It rather became more pan-Protestant in its very strong teaching of morality, which consisted of good citizenship, love of country, love of God, duty to parents, habits of hard work and honesty (Hunter, 2000:40ff; Shepard Salls, 2007:8; Yu, 2004:29). More importantly however it included additional values which the young state deemed important for the building of a nation such as political and economic ideals necessary for good citizenship, notably tolerance of different cultures and beliefs and a desire for a universal inclusive morality that all could subscribe to (Kaestle, 1984:103; Algera & Sink, 2002:163; Shepard Salls, 2007:8). Educators of the 19th century still believed almost unanimously that moral education cannot be given without it being rooted in religion (Kaestle, 1984:103; Hunter, 2000:40ff). Moral education, especially focusing on good citizenship, was often seen to be more important than intellectual education, a practice which was especially emphasised by Horace Mann (Badolato, 2002; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:33ff). In other words moral education was considered to be the heart of the curriculum (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:45).

However, throughout the remainder of the 19th century as well as through the 20th century there was a clear move away from religion in schools (McKnown, 1935:73ff; Sweetman, 2007:217). This was the case because modernism gained more and more importance and became suspicious of universal objective knowledge as well as parochial customs, which led to an extrication of ethical and religious discourse in schools (Alexander & Ben-Peretz, 2001:35). Morality was now not seen to be tied to religion anymore which resulted in a moral vacuum (Wright, 2000:13; Hunter, 2000:47ff). Nevertheless the lifestyle of children was still very much influenced by good discipline and family values (McDowell & Hostetler, 1994:23). Two definite influences towards the separation of religion and morality were the social-evolutionary ideologies fostered by Darwin's theory of evolution (Lowman, 1983:230; McDowell & Hostetler, 1994:33). Venter (1992:196) states that Darwin mechanised and evolutionised ethics, thus leaving little room for religion. The second influence was Dewey's liberal influence within educational philosophy, which was

naturalistic and even Darwinian in nature (Kaestle, 1984:105; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:153; Bowers, 2005:53f). It is nevertheless necessary to state that this change was not a monolithic movement, and there were numerous Christian movements which tried to counter the increasing secularisation of the schools (Hunt & Mullins, 2005).

Within the 20th century there are three distinct periods which represent three different approaches to character or moral education as shall be explained in the following paragraphs. Furthermore two new aspects were introduced into the context of moral and character education, namely drug and sex education (Hunter, 2000:86ff). Both are sometimes addressed separately, and sometimes within the context of a more general programme.

Roughly within the first three decades of the 20th century there was a movement in American schools which emphasised the students' code of conduct based on the "Children's Morality Code" introduced by Hutchins in 1916. This movement is also referred to as the character education movement (McKnown, 1935:78; Leming, 1997:12, Yu, 2004:30; Shepard Salls, 2007:11). This code emphasised virtues such as kindness, fairness, self-control, sportsmanship, truth, duty and reliability, good workmanship, teamwork and self-reliance, but excluded all reference to absolute morality grounded in a particularistic religious paradigm (McKnown, 1935:76ff; Hunter, 2000:56). Its basis was the popular and inevitably arbitrary vote of state character education committees, as well as the opinion of social scientists (Hunter, 2000:56). Many character education programmes were developed and implemented in that time (McKnown, 1935:81ff). This approach can also be described by Socrates' statement "To know right is to do right" (Gaarder, 1999). It principally says that if children or young people are given the right information they will automatically make the right decisions. Research has however shown that this is not the case (Plant & Plant, 1999:388). Unsurprisingly therefore, the effectiveness of this approach did not prove satisfactory (Leming, 1993:63f; Mulkey, 1997:36; Algera & Sink, 2002:164). During this time there was a strong influence from behaviourism, which resulted in the character education movement being approached in a mechanical behaviouristic way (Dixon, 2001:58), focusing on external stimuli. The influences of early psychology, especially Freud, were also obvious in frequent references to "urges" or "drives" (McKnown, 1935:95).

During this time the influence of John Dewey became important. Dewey was a proponent of 'progressive education' who basically claimed that religion was not necessary for moral education. He didn't believe in the existence of a God, nor in the existence of eternal absolute truths and therefore wanted to separate education from any Christian influences (Rushdoony, 1963:144; Hunter, 2000:60). He believed, in accordance with the spirit of the times, that character could be formed in a good social environment. Dewey is often criticised for his moral relativism (Kaestle, 1984:106f; Mulkey, 1997:36). Inevitably, even distinctively Christian programmes which were implemented in schools on a voluntary basis such as the Hi-Y of the Young Men's Christian Association, became more secularised and moved away from clear Christian standards towards a more pan-Christian version, fitting more comfortably within the emergent American ideals (Hunter, 2000:101; Setran, 2005:207ff). In addition to this, another important happening at this time was the advent of very large, rather impersonal schools, where there was no close contact between parents, teachers and pupils anymore (McDowell & Hostetler, 1994:39f).

The second phase in the historical development of character education was less sociological and more rationalistic and characterised by moral dilemma discussions and values clarifications. In general most of these approaches can be described as Enlightenment models, focusing on rule-based reasoning and rational problem-solving (Worthington & Berry, 2005:147f). Moral dilemma discussions were especially influenced by Lawrence Kohlberg who applied cognitive development to moral education. He is explicitly Kantian in his framework of ethics, working from a strictly reasoning-based standpoint (Worthington & Berry, 2005:148; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:175ff). Teachers often used moral dilemma discussions to teach morality to their students (Kohlberg, 1966:1ff; Leming, 1993:62; Mulkey, 1997:36; Algera & Sink, 2002:164).

However the values clarification approach was in general more popular than the moral dilemma approach. This approach is built mainly on humanistic psychology, and was especially informed by John Dewey and Carl Rogers (Hunter, 2000:73f; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:181). This approach does not prescribe any values but rather aims to give children the tools to determine their own value preferences. The controlling agenda was to avoid any indoctrination or moralisation (Hunter, 2000:75ff), therefore

emphasising process over content (Hunter, 2000:179). This means that no value is considered to be better than any other, which was a step towards relativism (Leming, 1993:62; Mulkey, 1997:36; Algera & Sink, 2002:164). This approach falls into the category of values/decision-making approaches, which claim that, for example, drug abuse is a result of poor self-esteem, and can be solved only when self-esteem building values are provided (Plant & Plant, 1999:389). These methods however, consistently lack empirical support (Leming, 1993:65; Plant & Plant, 1999:389), and the philosophy behind this approach is open to serious criticism as it presupposes a complete neutrality towards values, a position which is impossible to maintain while still speaking about values and the success of a method (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:187).

In between the discussion on the second and third phase of character education movements a little discourse on psychology is presented which deals with the differences in terms attributed to the programmes which have already been mentioned above.

While the term *virtue*-, which is defined as any psychological process that enables a person to think and act so as to benefit both society and himself,- and to a lesser extent *character* have been in common usage in Western civilisation up to the 20th century, they have largely been dismissed for being too puritanical or Victorian by psychologists towards the end of the 20th century (McCullough & Snyder, 2000:2ff). In psychology, the terms of *virtue* and *character* have mainly been replaced by the conceptions of *personality*, *temperament* and *values*, thereby also excluding any religious reference to which character and virtue were linked, which is indicative of a time where secular psychology was favoured (Dixon, 2001:58f). This did however not come without cost, as psychology had now basically deprived itself of the possibility of offering virtue-based solutions to problems (McCullough & Snyder, 2000:5f). Recent “lists of virtues” developed for example by positive psychology don’t focus on good and bad or right and wrong, but rather on strengths and weaknesses (which is reminiscent of evolutionism), where each trait is seen independent of all others (Worthington & Berry, 2005:146ff).

The third and most current movement in character/moral education, and of which the existing practice of Life Skills/Orientation education is a part, has similarities with the

first phase in the historical development of character education in the sense that it identifies specific values which children should acquire (Algera & Sink, 2002:165; Leming, 1993:67). Part of the reason for this is a perceived decline of moral and intellectual standards in the society, and the view that schools must function as the principal custodians and teachers of character (Kaestle, 1984:108). These programmes tend to promote broad values which are acceptable to most religions and ethnic groups such as tolerance, respect and fairness. Sex education programmes for example often place sexuality within the context of human relationships and emphasise values such as dignity, respect for others, self-control and abstinence (Leming, 1993:65). Recent Life Skills programmes focusing on drug education endeavour to work from a more holistic view of the child, seeing drugs as just one threat to the child's well-being, and aiming to equip young people with a wide variety of skills necessary to cope with these situations (Plant & Plant, 1999:389). Even though many of these programmes promote specific values, few are grounded in a research-validated conceptual framework (Algera & Sink, 2002:166).

After having concluded a brief historical overview of the development of moral or character education in the United States, a section is devoted to exploring the need for life skills education.

3.3 The need for Life Skills education

In this section a rationale will be provided for the importance of Life Skills/Orientation education on the basis of perceived problems and needs. Adolescents (and also increasingly pre-adolescents) engage in behaviours which are detrimental to their health and well-being (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2001; Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2003:826; Coetzee & Underhay, 2003; Karstens, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007:155). Furthermore a demise of character has been observed in general in society (Hunter, 2000:7f).

In the following section some worrying trends in detrimental behaviours in contemporary society will be discussed which either have an impact on young people, or which young people themselves choose to engage in.

3.3.1 Risk behaviours

The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in the USA (2001) published a list of behaviours which are initiated during adolescence and which contribute to major causes of death:

- tobacco use,
- behaviour that results in injury and violence,
- alcohol and substance abuse,
- dietary and hygienic practices that cause disease,
- sedentary lifestyle and
- sexual behaviour that causes unintended pregnancy and disease.

The prevalence of these behaviours in young people is confirmed by Benson (1997:5). Among American teenagers, risk behaviour has significantly increased in the past decades, and done so more than in other First World countries (Benson, 1997:6f). Other parts of the world such as Latin America however report the same type of problems (PAHO, 2001:8ff).

In a study done in American High Schools it was reported that 1 out of 3 students report feeling unsafe at school, and 1 out of 15 students are threatened or injured with a weapon each school year (Kagan, 2001:51). In South Africa, violence among adolescents also is increasing. Coetzee and Underhay (2003:29) found that 13.85% of 16 year-olds have been threatened with guns on school grounds. Especially in South Africa there is a large cohort of young people who engage in criminal behaviour, some of which takes place at school (Rens, Van der Walt & Vreken, 2005:215; De Klerk, 2005:169) and which is sometimes even directed at teachers (George, 2007:4).

The presence and use of drugs and alcohol is another widespread problem among young people. A study done in the UK in 1997 found that 42% of 15-16 year-olds had at least one experience of illicit drug use (Plant & Plant, 1999:386). In the US the problem seems to be similarly severe (Eisen, Zellman & Murray, 2003:884). A South African study shows that 14.6% of 16 year-olds have used dagga and 13.85% were

offered drugs on school grounds. In addition, 23.44% drink alcoholic beverages on a regular basis (Coetzee & Underhay, 2003:31).

3.3.2 Psychological deviations, depression and suicide

Kirbach (2002) describes various and increasing trends among young people in Germany who engage in behaviours which can ultimately be seen as psychological disturbances, such as an addiction to lacerating their skin in order to release pressure and depression. Young people, it is claimed, have a lack of self-esteem, and are increasingly without orientation in a society which often approves of or condones deviant behaviour (Kirbach, 2002). Other psychological deviations such as phobias, obsessions and anorexia have increased rapidly (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:37). Tragically, teen suicide must also be mentioned here, as it has greatly increased (McDowell & Day, 1987:31; Verma & Sta. Maria, 2006:124). It is usually the result of depression, a loss of hope in the future, and a belief that happiness is beyond reach. Karstens (2006:89) found in a South African study that 42.5% of Grade 10 learners in former Model C schools have already experienced depression and/or have considered suicide, whereas 9.2% have actually attempted suicide. These findings are confirmed by Coetzee and Underhay (2003:29) who found that in South Africa 21.54% of 16 year-olds have considered committing suicide, of whom 12.31% have actually attempted suicide. The weight of evidence shows that there are serious problems concerning depression and psychiatric disorders which are associated with suicide (Woods, Lin, Middleman, Beckford, Chase & Durant, 1997:792).

3.3.3 HIV/AIDS

The increasing number of HIV infections in young people worldwide (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:18; McDowell & Day, 1987:31) and especially in Africans is a further area of concern. Africa as a whole accounts for 60% of all people worldwide living with AIDS, which is approximately 25.8 million people (Cloete, 2007:388). Southern Africa is the hardest hit region in the world (Jackson, 2002:8). South Africa has more people living with HIV/AIDS than any other country worldwide (UNAIDS and World Health Organization, 2007). An estimate by UNICEF (2007) asserts that there are between 18,1% of people between the ages of 15 – 49 years who are HIV

positive. To put it in another way, although South Africa has only about 1% of the world's 15-24 year olds it accounts for about 15% of all HIV infections worldwide in this age group (Magnani, *et al.*, 2005:289). Furthermore there is a great number of children aged 0-17 (1,4 million or more) who have lost either one or both parents due to AIDS (UNICEF, 2007). Many of these orphans have contracted AIDS through their mothers (WHO, 2005). The AIDS pandemic obviously has economic impact as well, as many of the adults who work become infected and need to be cared for before they die (Museveni, 1992:275f; Jackson, 2002:24).

Research suggests that promiscuity is on the increase in South Africa, as well as world-wide, which is seen as a major reason for the fast spread of AIDS (McDowell & Day, 1987:39ff; McDowell & Hostetler, 1994:55f; Nsamenang, 2002:83; Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2003:826) in spite of the fact that the vast majority of young people know about the dangers of a promiscuous lifestyle. Attitudes of African leaders, such as Y.K. Museveni, former president of Uganda, who blames socio-economic circumstances for AIDS are not conducive to finding a solution to the problem either (Museveni, 1992:267ff). Despite massive initiatives aimed at countering the spread of HIV, AIDS remains a problem in many parts of the world (Benninga, 1991:5; PAHO, 2001:10).

3.3.4 The current societal climate

De Klerk (2003:47) notes that the current state of affairs is ironical as the ethical ideals which are in theory envisaged in the new constitution of South Africa are far removed from reality. Few people would probably disagree with the fact that our global contemporary society displays a vast array of seemingly intractable problems. This trend has been referred to as a value crisis, moral laxity, moral crisis, character crisis or even spiritual crisis and the like (McDowell & Hostetler, 1994:3ff; Hunter, 2000; Algera & Sink, 2002:161; King, 2002; De Klerk, 2003:47; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:1ff, 37; Hudd, 2005:30; Rens *et al.*, 2005:215; Hahne, 2005; Wringe, 2007:3ff;). It could thus be reasonably concluded that society at large is in crisis (as has also been shown in section 3.2.) (De Klerk, 2005:170). In addition to that it can be noticed that young people are often extremely selfish in their motivations (Benson, 1997:7; Hudd, 2005:32), which can manifest in different ways. A report by the Josephson Institute of

Ethics for example found that 70% of high-school students admitted to cheating on an exam at least once in the past twelve months (Shapiro, 2000). Also, stealing is today not necessarily seen as wrong (Lawton, 2003:284). This trend however is also very much imposed on young people by the society. Self-love is widely advertised (McDowell & Day, 1987:29f).

It is however not enough to criticise the current situation without looking at possible causes or determinants, and it is certainly premature and even wrong-headed to blame solely the youth. Parents must surely carry some of the blame for the present crisis. Kirbach (2002) claims that parents simply do not assume the role of leader and role model in the family anymore, basically because they also “don’t know the way” (Kirbach, 2002) or because they prefer not to spend meaningful time with their children (Benson, 1997:9; Hahne, 2005:19f). Divorce can be mentioned here, as it can have very detrimental effects on a child’s well-being (McDowell & Day, 1987:35f). Many children are left alone in the afternoons because either one or both parents work, or they grow up with a single parent who has to work (Junge, Manglallan & Raskauskas, 2003:165; Hodder, 2007:182). Self-care has been associated with negative social and academic outcomes (Junge *et al.*, 2003:165; Hahne, 2005:17). This is however a trend which is not only perceived in families but also in society as a whole where other authoritative institutions such as schools and religious groups are refusing to offer explicit particularistic guidance in crucial areas of individual and social conduct. Young people don’t experience the society and it’s structure as helpful and supportive (Benson, 1997:13; Kirbach, 2002), they much rather have to deal with a high level of uncertainty and anxiety in many areas (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:37; Hodder, 2007:182). At this point another question can be asked: Are the above mentioned facts possibly the basis for the reason that today people talk about ‘life skills’? It seems like suddenly children need to be educated for life, where previously this education happened in the family context.

Furthermore it can be said that today’s society is characterised by consumerism and materialism. Everything in our culture has been turned into a commodity (Shapiro, 2005; Hudd, 2005:31f; Mercer, 2006:25ff). This can be demonstrated by noting the use of the term of “human capital”, which implies that money is the ultimate good (Shapiro, 2005) and is believed to ensure happiness (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:38;

Hodder, 2007:181). This in turn gains further impetus from the view that everything is just about having fun. Money can buy entertainment and every other materialistic wish people can have. Pleasure is available on demand. Fun and enjoyment, pleasure, amusement and well-being are to a great extent the most popular “values” in society today (Postman, 1985; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:38; Hahne, 2005). Technology, according to Postman (1993), has become the means of satisfying these needs and is even to blame in part for the moral crisis. In addition to this there is a strong focus on the “self” (Hodder, 2007:180), which often results in egoism. Moreover young people are presented with a wide variety of religions and spiritualities, and they have to be culturally pluralistic and even relativistic (Verma & Sta. Maria, 2006:126).

This, and the fact that many aspects of life feel very uncertain for teenagers (McDowell & Day, 1987:33) leaves behind a deep search for meaning (and as a consequence spirituality) and tends to leave the importance of values behind (Verma & Sta. Maria, 2006:124). Fortunately it is evident that people are recognising this fact and are searching for deeper ways of fulfilment by focusing, for example, on values and character, even though the question concerning which values need to be chosen remains (Benson, 1997; Kirbach, 2002; Hahne, 2005; Shapiro, 2005; Hudd, 2005:29ff).

All the above-mentioned problems are, furthermore, deeply embedded in our post-modern culture and society, which endorses moral relativism (Veith, 1994; Groothuis, 2000). This will briefly be described in the following.

3.3.5 Some facts about post-modernism

This section will highlight only some important points about post-modernism, as the topic was already dealt with at length in Chapter 2. Much of it is of importance in the context of Life Skills/Orientation education as well. Here only some trends will be identified and described.

Post-modernism is characterised by the notion that no absolute truth exists, which means that relativism has become axiomatic for Life Skills education, as this also implies that absolute values do not exist.

Many post-modernists are concerned about freedom and oppression, in other words they want to free minorities as well as language (which results in social behaviour) from oppression (Veith, 1994; Samples, 2007:225). The trend is towards levelling all cultures, even though non-Western cultures usually do not want to participate in this (Veith, 1994:144). This has a lot to do with what Lyotard calls meta-narratives. According to him the so called meta-narratives are philosophical paradigms which have once been accepted as true (Lyotard, 1979; Samples, 2007:224). A meta-narrative is for example the Enlightenment project, or Christianity or naturalism. However, as Veith (1994) states, in history, when one meta-narrative was rejected another one took its place. In other words at all times there has been one grand narrative which was at that time accepted to be true. But now Lyotard says that meta-narratives have been found to be untrue, or are not believed anymore (Blackburn, 2005:218; Samples, 2007:224; Groothuis, 2000:27). There are according to Lyotard's view only small narratives or micro-narratives which are produced in small communities (Lyotard, 1979). They may be mutually exclusive, but are nevertheless valid according to Lyotard.

It is interesting to note here that even though Lyotard rejects the notion of meta-narratives, he basically creates a new meta-narrative, namely that of post-modernism, with the assumption that only micro-narratives exist (Alexander & Ben-Peretz, 2001:36). This is in itself a contradiction and poses serious problems when considering that society and contemporary culture embraces it as being "true".

Looking at Lyotard's notion of micro-narratives it would then seem that this represents a collapse of ethics. Lyotard however presents a way of viewing justice within the post-modern context. As he believes that universals are non-existent, he locates the idea and practice within language games. He says that language rules may only be used within one phrase regimen; and not another. In other words you may not apply rules that are valid in one context to another one. This would be injustice (Lyotard, 1979; Encarta, 2002). This sounds like Derrida, who invented the term "deconstruction" and who wanted to deconstruct texts in order to reconstruct a better meaning (Olivier, 1993; Geisler, 1999:192ff).

An outflow of all this is that people can make or choose their own values which can never be binding for anyone. Truth is thus made or constructed (Anderson, 1990; Veith, 1994:16). Everything is therefore permissible, nothing is right or wrong, there is no security, and little space for a healthy development within set limits (Kirbach, 2002). In other words there is no epistemological basis on which to base interpretations of reality as post-modernists reject all foundationalism (McDowell, 1999:616; Buckely & Erricker, 2004:18ff). This has far-reaching consequences for Life Orientation, which is concerned about values and constructive behaviour of every citizen.

Another feature of this philosophical climate is the fact that in general there is a playful acceptance of surfaces and superficial style together with a celebration of the ironic which lacks deep meaningfulness (Blackburn, 2005:284f).

To conclude it can be said that post-modernism has opened the door for anything and everything as long as no absolutes and especially no one right religion is imposed. This comes in very different shapes and sizes, and this summary is by no means a complete account of the phenomenon of post-modernism. In this context the following quote by Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School (which formulated the critical theory, which is embedded in post-modernism) at the end of his life becomes curiously interesting: "Politics without theology is absurd. Everything that has to do with morals and humanness goes back to the Biblical message. And the rebellion of the youth is an unconscious desperation, behind which is an unmet desire for the religious" (Hahne, 2005:36f).

This very short excursus to post-modernism, which was dealt with in more detail in the previous chapter shows clearly that a connection between post-modernism and any kind of Life Skills/Orientation will pose a serious problem. One cannot pass the fact that post-modernism prescribes no binding values and rights or wrongs, which is impossible to carry out in practice, as no guideline can be given to children.

It has been shown in this section that there are currently a wide variety of problems, dilemmas and predicaments in contemporary society. It has also been pointed out that

young people struggle with these problems. Therefore it can be concluded that young people need guidance in life as can potentially be provided through Life Orientation.

3.4 The current status of Life Orientation/character/moral education

The Life Orientation learning area in South Africa is part of a global movement which promotes the teaching of life skills or related ideas to children in order to prepare them for life. Life Orientation is clearly identified as being part of the life skills approach (World Health Organization, 1999:1f). In the following an overview will be given which highlights some trends of contemporary thinking. It is however essential to remember that approaches other than the life skills approach are promoted and used today.

In this section various contemporary trends, ideas, opinions and practices concerning moral, character and Life Orientation/skills education will be discussed. It is a concern that evaluation of moral/character education has not been a strong feature of research (Leming, 1993:67; Emler, 1996:1118; Leming, 2000:413; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004:72ff). There is not only a lack in research concerning what type of character/moral/life skills education is effective but also how character education works (Hickey Schultz, Barr & Selman, 2001:4). As this section deals with contemporary viewpoints mainly sources more recent than 1990 will be consulted.

There are at present various different schools of thought concerning the best possible way of teaching children life skills to prepare them adequately for life (Hunter, 2000; Bohlin, 2005:2). To attempt a classification is a difficult task as many of the programmes have overlapping ideas in one area and not in another. In other words they do not fit into neat boxes. Nevertheless a classification will be attempted, based mainly on Bohlin (2005) and to a smaller extent on Hunter (2000). This classification is not seen as absolute as there are many different ways of categorising the different programmes and schools of thought.

Bohlin (2005:2f) identifies four major streams in character education:

- Dewey's progressivism as well as Kohlberg's moral development: This approach deals with logical problem-solving, moral reasoning, democracy in progress, as well as an ethics of care and community-building.
- Values clarification: The focus is here on the pupils defining their own moral values on which they should then act.
- Skills-building or life-skills: This approach tries to teach children skills which will empower them to live healthy and productive lives.
- Virtue ethics: This approach focuses on the development of sound moral and intellectual habits.

Whereas Bohlin (2005) bases her classification on clearly identifiable theoretical schools Hunter (2000) by contrast makes distinctions between what he calls the psychological regime of character education and the communitarian and neoclassical approach. In the next paragraphs both classifications will be integrated and explained, supported by various other sources. Even though some of the approaches were already mentioned above in the historical overview it is still important to mention them here again, as they are still popular in certain circles.

3.4.1 Dewey's progressivism and Kohlberg's moral development

Dewey was one of the most influential thinkers shaping the educational practice of American schools. His point of departure was a naturalistic rejection of revealed religion as well as a Darwinian-evolutionist perspective to learning and culture. He also held to an optimistic view of human nature which stood in contrast to earlier Christian approaches (Rushdoony, 1963:144; Hunter, 2000:60ff; Bowers, 2005:53f). Dewey's approach was therefore secular, humanistic, as well as pragmatic in nature (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:154; Shepard Salls, 2007:31). In his view knowledge as well as moral principles are not absolute (Yu, 2004:45; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:157). He therefore emphasised the ideal of 'democracy' (Rushdoony, 1963:150; Rusnak, 1997:129) where consensus is achieved not based on absolute values, but on personal opinion. This is still an important mark of this school of thought (Bohlin, 2005:2). To Dewey human beings were social beings (Shepard Salls, 2007:33ff). Community and democratic ideals were therefore emphasised, often using workshops and other

practical experiences in order to achieve the envisaged community (Benninga, 1991:13; Rusnak, 1997:129f). This is similar to what Noddings (2002) nowadays promotes in her ethic of caring. She claims that if people are well cared for they will care in turn, as this is a fundamental human need (Hunter, 2000:190). She also claims that reason is subservient to the passions and that these must therefore be educated (Noddings, 2002:1ff). Kohn (1997:429ff) broadly supports this approach. He claims that many “character problems” are actually really environment problems. In his view caring surroundings would make the difference, as he shares an optimistic view of human nature (Kohn, 1997:431). Dewey’s approach was also built around the idea that pupils need to be taught in such a way that it doesn’t make them unhappy. He for example did not believe that it is necessary to teach children to delay gratification in some instances (Wynne, 1991:141). An important aspect of this approach, as well as of the following ones, is that there are no universal values. John Dewey was the father of this view and his views are also still present in much of the values clarification approach which will be described later (Rusnak, 1997:130).

Very closely linked to Dewey’s progressivism is Kohlberg’s moral development theory, which is based on the idea of stages in moral reasoning and which became very influential in education. Kohlberg was a cognitive developmentalist and posited that as children grow up they pass through certain stages of moral development. His research focused on moral reasoning and how this takes place (Howard, 1991:43ff; Woolfolk, 1998:81ff; DeRoche & Williams, 2001:9ff; Yu, 2004:51; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:173ff). These stages were described as follows:

- Preconventional reasoning: This is the lowest level of moral reasoning where people are under external control and have no internalisation of moral values. They obey rules to avoid punishment and reap rewards. This level is typical for children from ages 4 to 10.
- Conventional morality: In this level people’s moral judgment is based on others’ approval, traditional values and the laws of society. This level is typically reached after age ten.
- Postconventional morality: At this stage morality is completely internalised and people make their own judgments on the principles of right and wrong,

fairness and justice. People can reach this level in adolescence or young adulthood (Woolfolk, 1998:82; Santrock, 1998:407; Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1999:551). This is the stage where action based upon universal principles is supposed to be reached (Shepard Salls, 2007:19). There are similarities between this last stage of Kohlberg's theory and the categorical imperative of Kant (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:178). It needs however to be mentioned that according to research many adults never reach this level (Fielder, Hines, Hussey & Rios, 2004). This is an important part of the evidence regarding this study.

In Kohlberg's approach the acquisition of moral rules is emphasised over the acquisition of virtues (Worthington & Berry, 2005:148; Bohlin, 2005:2). Kohlberg derided the classical approach as a "bag of virtues", which is inefficient (Hoff-Sommers, 2002:30f; Hunter, 2000:83). His approach therefore tries to engage children in moral dilemma discussions, in which their moral reasoning skills are supposed to be developed (Howard, 1991:51; Leming, 1993:64; De Roche & Williams, 2001:10). Process thus assumes a more important role than content. This approach, as well as the following (values clarification), is very much informed by Enlightenment thinking, as exemplified by the German philosopher Kant who believed action to be free when guided by reason, thus focusing on moral reasoning and not on moral content (Worthington & Berry, 2005:148ff; Baumeister, 2005:67f).

Both Dewey's progressivism and Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussions have in common that they advocate thinking at the cost of departing from objective moral truths to the conventions of a democratic society (Hunter, 2000:146f). As will be shown in the following section this also holds true for life skills as well as values clarification, which is ultimately also built on Dewey's progressivism (Rusnak, 1997:130). Both Dewey's progressivism and values clarification are often referred to as indirect approaches to character education (Benninga, 1991:8ff).

3.4.2 Values clarification

This approach to moral education, was extremely popular in the 1970s (Hoff-Sommers, 2002:31), and emphasises that teachers are not to moralise, and that pupils

are to find and establish their own values (Leming, 1993:64;1997:13; Kirschenbaum, 2000), as the proponents of this approach believe that values, which are simply psychological factors, form the central part of moral and civil life (Yu, 2004:50). No moral content was prescribed, which is the most characteristic feature of this approach. Teachers are supposed to adopt a stance of moral agnosticism (De Roche & Williams, 2001:11; Roberts, 2002:16; Bohlin, 2005:2; Wringer, 2007:36), as it was assumed that no one set of values could hold true for all people (Shepard Salls, 2007:15).

In practice pupils were guided through a seven step process to clarify their values, as will be shown in the following (Benninga, 1991:11; Hunter, 2000:75f; Kirschenbaum, 2000; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:183f):

- Step 1: Prizing and cherishing
- Step 2: Publicly affirming
- Step 3: Choosing from alternatives
- Step 4: Choosing after consideration of consequences
- Step 5: Choosing freely
- Step 6: Acting
- Step 7: Acting with a pattern, consistency and repetition.

Proponents of the values clarification approach consider this method to be very useful as it allows room for tolerance which is part of the pluralism that has come to dominate Western thought (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:186). According to Hunt & Mullins (2005) the young people constantly get conflicting messages concerning values. Therefore they should decide on their own values, and rely on their own internal guidance (Hunter, 2000:75; Roberts, 2002:49; Yu, 2004:50; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:183), become more zestful and energetic, more critical in their thinking, more consistent, and more likely to follow through with decisions (Kirschenbaum, 2000).

Values clarification claims to focus on the decision making process in order to build character, rather than on the aim or virtue to be learned (Hunter, 2000:76; DeRoche & Williams, 2001:11; Roberts, 2002:33). This sounds reminiscent of existentialism,

where Sartre emphasised the role of choice as human existence acquires its essence through the making of choices (Sartre, 1974). The shadow side of this however, can easily lead to just teaching students to calculate utilities (Bohlin, 2005:3). The ideas and values of this approach are in general built around a constructivist view of religions, where no religion is considered to be universal (Roberts, 2002:72).

Research done on the effectiveness of the values clarification approach has produced little evidence showing values clarification to be successful (Bennett, 1991:135; Leming, 1993:65). Lockwood, who wrote a review article on studies which evaluated research articles on values clarification also came to the same conclusion, namely that there is little persuasive evidence which shows values clarification to be successful (Lockwood, 1978:344f). In addition to that there has been criticism regarding the endorsement of moral relativism (Leming, 1997:14; Shepard Salls, 2007:16). The envisaged neutrality of the teachers is also seen as trying to preserve diversity for diversity's sake (Wringe, 2007:36). Some of the proponents of values clarification have notably themselves come to the conclusion that eventually the theory of values clarification undermines its own purpose by giving children the opportunity to choose values which are counterproductive, at the same time taking fundamental values for granted (Harmin, 1988:25; Kirschenbaum, 2000). Another point of criticism is that even though this model is supposed to be value free, it still implies certain values, namely for example that children are supposed to act with a pattern, consistency and repetition (step 7). Furthermore it can be asked how children are supposed to evaluate consequences without criteria as is suggested in step 4.

Despite these weak points and lack of evidence in support of this approach, a valid positive aspect can be pointed out, which is the importance of pupil participation in moral education. Pupils have to actively participate and accept values in order for character or moral education to be effective (Roberts, 2002:96). This is something the life skills approach tries to accomplish in a more practical way as is shown below.

3.4.3 Life skills

This perspective essentially focuses on inculcating *skills* in children and adolescents, which it is claimed, will lead them to leading happy and productive lives (Bohlin,

2005:2). As this approach is currently used extensively in South Africa, it will be discussed in considerable detail.

Life skills can be defined in various ways. There are certain commonalities among different definitions. All life skills approaches place a very high value on skills above virtues or values (Leming, 1993:65; Cronin, 1996:54; Plant & Plant, 1999:389; PAHO, 2001:6; Bohlin, 2005:2; Forneris, *et al.*, 2007:104). These skills refer mostly to psychosocial skills or abilities (WHO, 1999:3), even though there also is the view that any skill needed in life is included, which will lead to independent adulthood (Cronin, 1996:54).

This approach is sometimes seen as being a reaction against the previous attempts at moral or character education, such as values clarification, and is seen by many as being more holistic (Cronin, 1996:54; Plant & Plant, 1999:389). Often life skills education is seen as being able to promote resilience or as being effective in prevention, especially with regard to drugs and dangerous sexual behaviour (Plant & Plant, 1999:389; PAHO, 2001:18; 2000:33; Eisen, *et al.*, 2003:887).

The Pan-American Health Organisation (2001) describes life skills as falling into three major categories, namely:

- Social or interpersonal skills, encompassing communication, negotiation/refusal skills, assertiveness, cooperation and empathy,
- Cognitive skills including problem-solving, understanding consequences, decision-making, critical thinking skills, self-evaluation,
- Emotional coping skills such as managing stress, managing feelings, self-management, and self-monitoring (PAHO, 2001:6).

This is very similar to the definition of UNICEF, which describes life skills as follows: “This term refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward

others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health" (UNICEF, s.a.).

Junge *et al.* (2003:165) define life skills as "non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that must be learned for success in society". This definition leaves out cognitive skills, which are included by most authors. Elias and Kress (1994:62) argue for the holistic view of life skills which brings together social-cognitive, affective, behavioural and social relationship areas with critical thinking skills. Groves and Groves (1980:87) also argue for including the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain.

The origin or basis of life skills is usually not stated in the articles or documents around life skills. The PAHO (2001:12ff) lists various theories which serve as a basis to life skills, namely child and adolescent development theory, social learning theory, problem-behaviour theory, social influence theory, cognitive problem solving, multiple intelligences, the resilience and risk theory as well as the constructivist psychology theory. Plant & Plant (1999:389) also refer to the problem behaviour theory as a basis for life skills. Life skills are intended to help young people develop healthy relationships with others and themselves, their environment and society, and thus prevent them from engaging in risk-behaviours. Bohlin (2005:2) sees the origin of the approach in the social and emotional learning movement. This correlates with Hunter (2000) who refers to this as the psychological regime, where emphasis is put on self-esteem, feeling and positive thinking. A different view, which is nevertheless reconcilable with the views just mentioned, is expressed by Buthelezi, Mitchell, Moletsane, DeLange, Taylor and Stuart (2007:454) who see life skills as a human right, which therefore needs to be taught to all young people. A problem which arises at this point is the fact that the whole life skills approach seems to be built on often conflicting theories. Especially in the approach of the Pan American Health Organisation (2001:12ff) a multitude of theories are grouped together without any explanation of how they are supposed to work together. This certainly leaves serious questions regarding the epistemological validity of such an approach.

Frequently different life skills approaches are used together, specifically in drug and sex education, and in response to the AIDS pandemic (Leming, 1993:65; Griffith,

1999:95ff; PAHO, 2001:9ff; Eisen *et al.*, 2003:883ff; Magnani *et al.*, 2005:290; Buthelezi, *et al.*, 2007:445ff). The DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) programme is a good example of a programme focusing on reducing drug abuse. This programme has been very popular and is widespread in the USA as well as in the United Kingdom (Griffith, 1999:96; Hunter, 2000:93f; Eisen *et al.* 2003:884). The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide accurate information about drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and solvents,
- Teach pupils decision-making skills,
- Show them how to resist peer pressure,
- Give them alternatives to drug use and violent behaviour and to
- Build self-esteem (Griffith, 1999:98f).

It is interesting to note that the basis for this programme is not a universal right or wrong but rather a utilitarian logic, which reduces drug abuse to being harmful to the individual (Hunter, 2000:183, 93f). It is also remarkable that despite its popularity there seems to be little evidence for success of the DARE programme (Hunter, 2000:152; Eisen *et al.*, 2003:884).

Another programme called “Soul City Life Skills Programme” showed some successes in South African schools (Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2003:825ff).

At this point the term *asset* has to be mentioned as assets are sometimes seen as being part of the life skills approach (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:39ff). The idea is that children should preferably grow up in an environment where external assets are properly in place (eg. family support, a supportive religious community or adult role models), and that they need to be taught internal assets such as commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies as well as a positive identity (Search Institute, 2006; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003). This is very similar to the acquisition of skills which is envisaged by life skills programmes.

Nowadays the general trend in life skills programmes is to identify specific values, skills or even virtues which need to be taught to children and adolescents (Griffith, 1999:98f; Kagan, 2001:51f; Rens, Van der Walt & Vreken, 2005:219; De Klerk, 2005:171). This shows that the life skills approach as well as the character education approach, which will be described in the next section are sometimes not very far apart, as character education programmes also identify specific virtues which children need to be taught. Sometimes approaches classified as character education rather resemble the life skills approach (Dovre, 2007:41), or some life skills approaches have elements of the values clarification approach (Groves & Groves, 1980:84), as is also exemplified by the life skills programmes of the Pan-American Health Organisation (2001:25f) which still prefers a variant of the values clarification approach. Skills are taught, focusing to teach pupils how to think, judge, manage feelings as well as inter- and intrapersonal skills, in other words the focus is on teaching pupils how to think rather than providing clear values or standards along which lines the pupils should think, even though values are not completely excluded.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement is quite similar in its approach to the approach of the PAHO (2001), as is discussed in section 3.5.2 of this chapter. It is also hesitant to choose a specific set of values, it rather fosters the development of personal values (Department of Education, 2002). Nevertheless the approach is based on values such as respect, equality, justice and tolerance, which are embedded in the constitution (Department of Education, 2002:4ff). These are values that are implicitly presupposed by the curriculum statement.

3.4.4 The character education movement

Historically the character education movement is the youngest of the contemporary trends, gaining momentum in the 1980s (Hunt & Mullins, 2005:190; US Department of Education, 2007b:1). It is however quite similar to the character education movements in the beginning of the 20th century (Yu, 2004:55; Hunter, 2000:108), and can even be seen as a return to this movement (McElmeel, 2002:xiii). It is often understood as a reaction against the values clarification approach (Kirschenbaum, 2000). Hunter (2000:107ff) refers to this movement as a neoclassical backlash against values clarification and Kohlberg's moral reasoning, as well as moral relativism.

Another reason for the character education movement was the perceived moral decline among adolescents (Leming, 2000:413; Yu, 2004:56ff).

Characteristic of the character education movement is the fact that it aims to promote positive character development in children and young people (McElmeel, 2002:xiiiiff; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:190; US Department of Education, 2007b:3). At this point, it becomes important to introduce definitions of character. The term character refers to the emotional, intellectual and moral qualities of a person (US Department of Education, 2007a:3). Berkowitz (2002:48) defines character as “an individual’s set of psychological characteristics that affect that person’s ability and inclination to function morally”. McCullough and Snyder (2000:1) describe character as “a higher-order construct reflecting the possession of several of the component virtues”. Hunter (2000:226) postulates that implicit in the word character is a story, which entails that living for a purpose which is greater than the self, becomes the reason for character. He also provides Kierkegaard’s idea of character which refers to character as being engraved, deeply etched, graven, rarely changeable, least of all in extreme circumstances (Hunter, 2000:19). Davidson and Lickona (2007) state that character not only refers to “doing the right thing” but also aspiring to excellence in every way.

Character education has as its aim the formation of sound moral and intellectual habits (Bohlin, 2005:3) as was described above. Therefore character education programmes usually focus on core values, traits or virtues (Dovre, 2007:40). Different programmes and institutions have developed different lists of values. The Character Counts! Coalition for example, which is possibly one of the largest and best known movements in character education (Hunter, 2000:117; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:192), has identified “six pillars of character”, which are respect, caring, citizenship and civic virtue, responsibility, trustworthiness and justice and fairness (Hunter, 2000:117; Hudd, 2005:29). Many other lists have also been populated. Often a school or programme focuses on a selection of a myriad of traits or values (Leming, 1997:16ff; Dovre, 2007:40). In addition to the above mentioned traits, many lists include some of the following: integrity, compassion, cooperation, perseverance, courage, confidence, temperance, tolerance, prudence, courtesy, honesty, helpfulness, loyalty, self-respect, patriotism, diligence, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, patience, creativity, worth, dignity and hope (Leming, 1997:16ff; Hunter, 2000:117; Roberts, 2003:23;

Yu, 2004:136; Hunt & Mullins, 2005:191; Sanchez & Stewart, 2006:17; Davidson & Lickona, 2007; Dovre, 2007:40ff; Freeks, 2007:92ff). As was mentioned above, many programmes or curricula simply choose a few of these traits. The basis for this choice is often not given, and is frequently arbitrarily decided on the basis of consensus (Leming, 1997:116ff; Hunter, 2000; Dovre, 2007:40ff), which again leaves questions regarding epistemological validity.

Ultimately the origins of the character education movement can be traced back to Aristotle (Hoff-Sommers, 2000:25f; Noddings, 2002:61). The word character is of Greek origin and can be translated as “engraving” or “enduring marks” (Bennett, 1991:134; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999:5; McCullough & Snyder, 2000:4). Character education is thus supposed to promote the acquisition of virtues, which is supposed to result in an ideal mode of conduct, or to educate for rational self-control (McCullough & Snyder, 2000:3; Noddings, 2002:61; Worthington & Berry, 2005:147). Ryan and Bohlin (1999:5ff) state that “good character is about knowing the good (head), loving the good (heart) and doing the good (hand)”. This is a perspective which has also been advocated by Heenan (2007) in a character education programme for New Zealand which suggests that moral knowing and moral feeling will eventually lead to moral action. This perspective tends to agree with Aristotle as well as others who did/do not have a positive view of human nature, in other words they see children as wayward and uncivilised (Wynne, 1991:143; Hoff-Sommers, 2005:26). Some of today’s character education movements, or as Hunter describes them, neoclassical strategies also take a pessimistic view of human nature (Hunter, 2000:109). Children therefore need to be taught virtues or character traits which they will make their own after much practice (Wynne, 1991:143; Hoff-Sommers, 2005:26f). The envisaged result could be described as “knowing, desiring and doing the good” (Roberts, 2002:40).

Traditionally this whole approach to character education was based on the premise that moral truths, virtues and absolutes exist, which can be known by people (Benninga, 1991:129; Hunter, 2000:108; Roberts, 2002:39; Worthington & Berry, 2005:146). This was especially strong in the Christian tradition, which had a particularistic view of human nature (created in Yahweh’s Image as very good, but universally corrupted because of disobedience to Yahweh) and focused strongly on character education (Hoff-Sommers, 2002:26; Worthington & Berry, 2005:146). This

view was adopted by some of the character education proponents (Hunter, 2000:109, 193). Lickona called this the “natural moral law” (Hunter, 2000:115f Roberts, 2002:39ff). Lickona also emphasises the role that theistic religion can play in educating for character, as theistic religion (and especially monotheistic religion) holds that there are absolute truths, which exist independently of the knower (Lickona, 1999:26). Benninga (1991:129) calls these eternal themes, implying universality.

However upon a careful reading of the available literature it becomes obvious that this basis is in many instances no longer given or accepted. Hunt & Mullins (2005:191) refer to “core values that are universally accepted by all cultures”. Lickona (1993) suggests that core values are those which promote human rights and affirm human dignity. This shows that the existence of moral truths is not wholly accepted, and that the condition for deciding on certain core values, as practiced in a lot of programmes (Leming 1997:16ff; Dovre, 2007:40ff) is often based rather on feeling (“it feels good to do good”) (Hunter, 2000:127) or social consensus (Hunter, 2000:118; Dovre, 2007:40ff). There is also a lot of affective psychological influence in this contemporary approach, focusing primarily on self-esteem (Hunter, 2000:122ff). Some programmes focus specifically on health-, sex- or drug education (Berkowitz, 2002:46) which is often quite similar to life skills programmes (US Department of Education, 2007b:1ff).

Often character education programmes focus on community as well. This approach is similar to the first mentioned one, under paragraph 3.4.1. This is the case when the community decides on certain core values which need to be adopted (Hunter, 2000:10; 112; Noddings, 2002:61ff).

Character education has often been classified as direct teaching in character and morals, where clear morals and standards exist, teaching children moral habits and virtues (Benninga, 1991:129; Noddings, 2002:63). Even though Lickona sometimes moves a little away from this, by for example emphasising community and moral reasoning (Yu, 2004:19; Davidson & Lickona, 2007), he can still largely be identified as a proponent of direct character education. He refers to his approach as comprehensive (Lickona, 1999:23; Yu, 2004:19ff), meaning that it has to address the

three dimensions of character, namely the intellect, the affections and the will (Roberts, 2002:40). In that respect he focuses a little more on process than for example Ryan who is more concerned about specific content (Shepard Salls, 2007:23). There is also now a common view that religion should not be excluded from character education altogether, but that it can actually contribute very positively as strong religious faith has often been the motivation to very noble and unselfish acts in history (Lickona, 1999:21ff), and that the practising of a religion seems to be able to prevent risk behaviours (Holder *et al.*, 2000:295ff; Koenig, 2004; Ritt-Olson, Milam, Unger, Trinidad, Teran, Dent & Sussman, 2004:192ff; Karstens, 2006:41ff).

One of the most used strategies in the character education movement is the use of stories, be it literature or history (Vitz, 1990:709ff; Hunter, 2000:111; Noddings, 2002:62; McElmeel, 2002; Green, 2004:255; Yu, 2004:107; Bohlin, 2005:31ff; Sanchez & Stewart, 2006:14ff; Sanchez, 2007:79;). That stories are a useful way of teaching children is hardly new, it has for example always been part of the Jewish tradition (Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:26f; Alexander & Ben-Peretz, 2001:42) as well as the Christian tradition (Dixon, 2001:57). Different reasons are given for this. Noddings (2002:62) for example states that people are products as well as contributors to traditions of thinking and behaviour, in addition it anchors them in traditions and culture (Bennett, 1991:137). Furthermore it is argued that through literature or actual historical characters, children and adolescents can observe real people in real-life situations, going through struggles and often making very unselfish decisions. Children are then possibly able to identify with these characters (Bohlin, 2005:32; Sanchez & Stewart, 2006:14ff; Sanchez, 2007:79ff). The idea of role-modelling also plays a part in this approach, as well as the fact that children can realise that these stories embody timeless truths and values (Bennett, 1991:136ff; Sanchez, 2007:80). Vitz (1990:710f) adds that according to psychology mental life is divided into two areas, namely propositional thinking and narrative thinking. Using stories would therefore mean using the narrative aspect of mental life.

As with the other approaches to character/moral/life skills education, the research base concerning effectiveness is very thin, and a lot of unqualified enthusiasm exists concerning many character education programmes. Many programmes have never been evaluated, and quite a few others have shown little effect. There are however

also success stories (Leming, 1993:67ff; Leming, 1997:16ff; Hunter, 2000:153; Leming, 2000:422; Berkowitz, 2002:57f; US Department of Education, 2007b:1ff). Critics of the character education approach criticise the dogmatic approach of character education, which is often perceived as indoctrination (Yu, 2004:104).

In conclusion it needs to be mentioned that the boundary between life skills education and character education is often not clear. Often programmes which would rather fit into the life skills approach are classified as character education, as can for example be seen in Leming (1997:16ff), Dovre (2007:40ff) and Hunter (2000).

3.5 The South African situation

After having looked at the global situation regarding life skills/character/moral education the focus will now be on the South African situation. Currently life skills education is implemented in all South African schools through the learning area Life Orientation, which basically is a variant of life skills approaches as discussed above. This is however a fairly new approach and in the following paragraphs a short history of moral/character/life skills education in South Africa will be presented. Here it has to be mentioned that little current literature on this topic is available. This history is then followed by a brief overview of the learning area Life Orientation as outlined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002; 2003), after which articles regarding the current practice of Life Orientation will be considered.

3.5.1 A brief history of moral/character/life skills education in South Africa

Since shortly after the arrival of the first Dutch colonists in 1652 moral education has always been part of South African education, and has always been rooted in a Christian approach to life. Even though in 1804 schools were placed under government control, and were not the responsibility of the churches anymore, moral education remained distinctively Christian (Christian National Education (CNE)) (Potgieter, 1980:130; Institute for Reformational Studies, 1998:vf; Roux, 2006:152) until 1996 and was implemented in all schools (Lawrence, 1982:188). South Africans believed that neutral education is not possible and therefore adopted a Christian

approach, firstly because the majority of the population was Christian and secondly because the educational authorities deemed the Christian religion to be the one which best fits reality (Potgieter, 1980:131). This however does not negate the fact that there was a lot of influence from humanistic philosophy (Potgieter, 1980:130). Moral education as a school subject did not exist, it was implemented into Religious Education as well as into other subjects. It is interesting to note that spirituality did never feature in the curriculum statements of the old dispensation (prior to 1996) (Roux, 2006:152).

In general this approach to education and especially moral- and religious education attracted a lot of national and international criticism, as pupils hardly had a choice regarding their religious views. This system was often said to be indoctrinating (Lawrence, 1982:189; Roux, 2006:155).

Change came in 1996 with the National Education Policy Act and the Schools Act when Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was envisaged (Horsth mke & Kissack, 2008:277f). Education is now based to an extent on secular humanism, also incorporating new trends like post-modernism and does not give preference to any religious system at all (Institute for Reformational Studies, 1998:vff). The exact contents, especially as relating to the subject Life Orientation are described in the next section. Apart from the new curriculum there were other attempts to transform South Africa's value. One of those is the 'Race and Values in Education initiative, which articulated common values, that should be held by all South Africans (Swartz, 2006:557f).

3.5.2 The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and the Department of Education¹

Apart from the curriculum statements numerous other documents regarding Life Orientation were issued by the Department of Education. These will also be consulted in this section. The documents regarding LO at FET Colleges (vocational) will however not be considered here. Documents other than from the Department of

^{1 1} It has to be noted here that this study was conducted while the RNCS was in use.

Education will be mentioned when necessary. The aim here is not to analyse the documents of the Department of Education, but rather to give a comprehensive overview of the learning area as outlined in these documents.

Before a discussion of the Curriculum Statement is attempted, a few remarks concerning terminology must be made with regard to Life Skills and Life Orientation. For grades R to 3 (foundation phase) the learning area is called Life Skills, whereas it is called Life Orientation for Grades 4 to 12 (Department of Education, 2002:3). In the foundation phase children are only taught three subjects, namely Literacy (language), Numeracy (mathematics) and Life Skills. Life Skills in this phase consists not only strictly speaking of 'life skills', but contains all other subjects, such as biology, history, geography, art, music and the like.

According to the Department of Education (2008:7; 2008c:7) Life Orientation (Grade 4-12) draws on the core of the subjects previously known as Guidance, Family Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Religious or Bible Education, Civic Education, Health Education and Physical Education. It is also considered to be interdisciplinary as it combines knowledge, values, skills and processes which stem from disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, Political Science and Human Movement Science (Department of Education, 2008:7). Differently put, this learning area was introduced in order to help children "find ways of operating in an emerging democracy". Furthermore, social, economic and environmental issues affect the current and future health and well-being of individuals and communities alike. Within this context, learners have to be well-informed and have a sense of confidence and competence to live healthy and productive lives while contributing to the shaping of a new society (Department of Education, 2008:8). Orsmond (2002:224ff) adds another facet to the rationale for Life Orientation/Skills by calling it a 'survival kit'. He states that South Africa faces many current problems which young people are often ill-equipped to handle and therefore need to be taught appropriate skills.

Looking at the above description and considering the characteristics of the life skills movement as described above it can without doubt be stated that both Life Orientation and Life Skills are clearly part of the global life skills movement (World Health Organization, 1999:1f).

However, the term Life Orientation seems to be unique to the South African learning area. The Department of Education (2003:9; 2008c:7) defines Life Orientation as “the study of the self in relation to others”. In general the emphasis is very much put on the self (Roux, 2006:156). The focus is also more on orientation rather than on skills, or in other words the focus of the learning area is a little broader, as it can thus encompass more than only skills. However within the specifications in the Curriculum Statement for grades R to 9 there are 14 references to (life) skills (Department of Education, 2002), as well as 21 references in the Curriculum Statement for Grades 10 – 12 (Department of Education, 2003), which to an extent shows that the nature of the learning areas is fundamentally the same and will therefore be treated as the same.

It is however interesting to note that there are no documents from the Department of Education giving an explanation as to why the term “Life Orientation” was chosen to denote this specific learning area. An attempted explanation by Orsmond (2002:229) however sheds some light on the topic. He explains the term Life Orientation in an interesting way: “The concept of ‘life’ includes the capacity for growth, functional activity and continual change. It is about existence, energy, zest, vitality, soul, spirit, way of life, mortality, viability and individuality. ‘Life’ is a word that encompasses and merges the vocational, spiritual, psychological, health, belief and physical dimensions of living beings. ‘Orientation’ refers to an ability to adjust to circumstances – political, social, psychological or economic. The combination of ‘life’ and ‘orientation’ suggests that this learning area involves not only the development of learners’ insights into life knowledge, but also the development of the skills to utilise this knowledge” (Orsmond, 2002:229). This then means that Life Orientation is focused on helping pupils to function in society, in other words the attempt is to help pupils live their lives in the best possible way, no matter what the circumstances are.

The practice of Life Orientation in schools is based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The following aims are stated:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations (Department of Education, 2003:1ff: 2002:1ff).

In the Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes: Policy Guidelines for Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2003b:5) the following principles are mentioned as the underpinning of the RNCS:

- Social Justice
- Healthy Environment
- Human Rights
- Inclusivity.

These are clearly in accordance with the aims of the Constitution as mentioned above.

Outcomes-based education is the way in which this learning area is delivered. It works towards outcomes and is learner-centred and activity-based, which means that Life Orientation has to be taught or rather facilitated using many activities, often group work (Department of Education, 2002:1f; 2003:2). This indicates that there is not a strong emphasis on content and that the teacher should not be prescriptive, which therefore appears to be similar to the values clarification approach.

The life skills approach is often seen as a way of preventing the kinds of problems which were mentioned in section 3.3. The life skills approach was fuelled to an extent by the AIDS pandemic, as stakeholders realised that action needed to be taken in order to stop the rapid spread of the pandemic (Magnani, *et.al.*, 2005:290). It does however not seem that much has been achieved in this area.

In general the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) of the learning area Life Orientation gives the following purpose for the teaching of Life Orientation in Grades R to 9:

“The Life Orientation Learning Area aims to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. Learners will develop the skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while practising the values embedded in the Constitution. They will learn to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others and to show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to build a democratic society. The Life Orientation Learning Area will enable learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment. Learners will be encouraged to acquire and practise life skills that will assist them to respond to challenges and to play an active and responsible role in the economy and in society” (Department of Education, 2002).

The purpose of Life Orientation Grades 10 to 12 is portrayed as follows:

“Life Orientation equips learners to engage on personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to make the most of life’s opportunities. It enables learners to know how to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others, and to value diversity, health and well-being. Life Orientation promotes knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that prepare learners to respond effectively to the challenges that confront them as well as the challenges they will have to deal with as adults, and to play a meaningful role in society and the economy” (Department of Education, 2003:9).

Even though the descriptions concerning the purpose of LO use positive descriptors it becomes clear that part of the aim is to educate young people in such a way that they don’t engage in risky and unhealthy behaviours. The learning area of Life Orientation also needs to be seen in the light of socio-political change. Racism, prejudice, crime and environmental problems are still serious problems in South Africa (Department of

Education, 2003b:19). Furthermore there are the challenges of socio-economic development, globalisation, technological advancement and cultural diversity, as well as the adaptation to a democracy (Department of Education, 2008c:8). The Learning Programme Guidelines for LO Gr10-12 (Department of Education, 2008c:11) add that the involvement of FET learners in civic and human rights issues also becomes more profound. “Personal decisions and viewpoints or values regarding social and moral issues become crucial. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on areas such as self-awareness and self-esteem, emotional literacy, social competency, moral behaviour and life skills” (Department of Education, 2008c:11). Here it becomes clear that this approach has a lot in common with what Hunter (2000) calls the psychological regime, as was discussed in section 3.4.1.

In all of this there is a high emphasis on human rights (Department of Education, 2008c:10). A quote from the Teacher’s Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes Policy Guidelines in LO (2003b:23) illustrates this well: “The main thrust of Life Orientation is to enhance the *self-in-society*. Instilling Human Rights and promoting environmental and social justice issues will therefore always form the core.” The document “Values and Human Rights in the Curriculum” (Department of Education, s.a.) elaborates on the necessity of including human rights into every learning area and in general making it a strong focus point for the whole curriculum.

After the purpose and background have been discussed it becomes necessary to look at the learning outcomes as they are stated in the Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002), which are based on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (Department of Education, 2003b:20). The learning outcomes for Grades R – 9 are described as follows:

- Learning Outcome 1: Health Promotion
The learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.
- Learning Outcome 2: Social Development
The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.

- Learning Outcome 3: Personal Development
The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.
- Learning Outcome 4: Physical Development and Movement
The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in activities that promote movement and physical development.
- Learning Outcome 5: Orientation to the World of Work
The learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices (Department of Education, 2002:7).

The foundation and intermediate phase covers only learning outcomes 1 to 4, whereas the senior phase (Grades 7 – 9) includes all five outcomes.

The learning outcomes for the FET-band (Further Education and Training band – Grades 10–12) differ from the afore mentioned ones, even though they are still quite similar (Department of Education, 2003):

- Learning Outcome 1: Personal Well-being
The learner is able to achieve and maintain personal well-being.
- Learning Outcome 2: Citizenship Education
The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and to enhance social justice and environmentally sustainable living.
- Learning Outcome 3: Recreation and Physical Well-being
The learner is able to explore and engage responsibly in recreation and physical activities, to promote well-being.
- Learning Outcome 4: Career and Career Choices
The learner is able to demonstrate self-knowledge and the ability to make informed decisions regarding further study, career fields and career pathing (Department of Education, 2003:12f).

Assessment plays an important role in Life Orientation and OBE in general. Life Orientation, which should be taught holistically, is to use assessment techniques which are practical. It is also prescribed that all learning outcomes should be assessed (Department of Education, s.a.:3). Assessment should be integral to the learning activities and should be done on a continuous basis (Department of Education, 2008b:1f).

In general it can be said that the focus is not so much on character or moral development as on the development of certain 'skills' which are necessary in today's changing society. It was mentioned under section 3.1 that the basis for moral and character education was in the beginning of a religious nature. It becomes clearly evident that the basis for Life Orientation is no longer religion. Religion in Life Orientation is usually discussed only to raise awareness of different belief systems and worldviews (Department of Education, 2003:11). Religion Education is therefore only important in the sense of equipping learners to be open to all religions and worldviews, as no one is considered to be better than any other, which clearly reflects a post-modern view of religion. According to the Department of Education (2002:6) the raising of such an awareness in learners, can foster important civic responsibilities. The terms "spiritual" or "spirituality" do not appear even once in the Curriculum Statement for Grades R – 9 (Department of Education, 2002), but it does feature 16 times in the Curriculum Statement for Grades 10 – 12 (Department of Education, 2003), which however does not mean that spirituality is assigned an important position in LO. There is in general little emphasis on spirituality, probably due to an uneasiness about the concept. Neither are teachers trained to deal with spirituality (Roux, 2006:153; 155f; 160).

It also has to be mentioned that even though the importance of values is mentioned, emphasis is put on the development of skills such as communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills (Department of Education, 2002). It is interesting to note that specific values are rarely mentioned, there are only references to democratic values as well as equality, human dignity and social justice (Department of Education, 2002:1,3,5; Department of Education, 2003:1,5) as well as to values embedded in the Constitution (Department of Education, 2002:4; Department of Education, 2003:4,11,13f,25,29; 2008c). The Curriculum Statement states that transformation of

values of the learners is envisaged (Department of Education, 2003:10; Department of Education, 2008:10f), however it does not state which values need to be transformed into what, even though indigenous knowledge systems are proposed to be the transforming agents (Department of Education, 2008:10f). It is also mentioned that learners need to clarify their own values (Department of Education, 2003:13,14,17,27,30), which is reminiscent of values clarification as described in section 3.4.2 of this chapter. At one point reference to specific values is made namely: respect for self and others, self-control, loyalty in a relationship, right to privacy, right to protect oneself, right to say 'No', taking responsibility for own actions (Department of Education, 2003:24). In general it can be said that a lot of emphasis is put on attitudes, values, beliefs and knowledge in both Curriculum Statements and other documents from the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2002; 2003; 2008; 2008b; 2008c). However there is a particular emphasis on personal values, as well as the ability to identify them.

As spirituality has a lot of contact points with religion, the National Policy on Religion Education needs to be considered here. This policy document was put forward by the Department of Education in 2003. The document basically says that the purpose of religion education is to promote knowledge about and respect for other religions different from ones own. This implies that religion has been reduced to a purely human phenomenon or human experience. It is acknowledged that South Africa does not have a state religion, however South Africa is not a secular state either. Therefore a co-operative model is chosen, which at the same time acknowledges the principle of separation and the possibility of creative interaction between religion and the state, and it especially values the contribution religion can make to education (Department of Education, 2003:2ff). These claims are affirmed by the "Manifesto on values, education and democracy" (2001:32), which will be discussed in the next paragraph. The Department of Education (2003:6) suggests that in this endeavour of teaching about the different religions the following values should always serve as a basis: citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Apart from inter-curricular integration this is especially supposed to occur in the Learning Area Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2003:10). An important purpose

religion education aims to achieve is that of moral regeneration (Department of Education, 2003:13).

Another document which can be considered important here is the “Manifesto on values, education and democracy” which was also published by the Department of Education. This document emphasises six qualities that South African schools should propagate. They are equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour (Department of Education, 2001:6). This document also asserts that the core goal of education is to “free the potential” which will be achieved if the above mentioned values are imparted (Department of Education, 2001:9). However this should not be achieved through imposition but rather through debate and discussion, as these are already values in themselves (Department of Education, 2001:9f, 18). Furthermore the document reasserts the fundamental values of the constitution, which are democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, ubuntu (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of the law, respect, as well as reconciliation (Department of Education, 2001:12ff). The word “spiritual” is only mentioned three times within the document mainly referring to religion and is given no important standing at all in this debate. It becomes clear that most mandatory values refer to equality, reconciliation as well as restitution for the past, apart from the notion that values can be chosen and debated. The rest of the document basically attempts to give guidelines as to how these values can be achieved in the classroom, however stating that at present there are great discrepancies between theory and practice (Department of Education, 2001:8). It is noteworthy that even though the document talks a lot about important values, there are hardly any practical suggestions as to how teachers should implement these (Green, 2004:255).

Pillay and Mestry (2005) also perceive a discrepancy between theory and practical implementation. They suggest that values and ethics, which according to them are never neutral, be holistically integrated into all areas of the curriculum for all ages, using a variety of strategies (Pillay & Mestry, 2005).

In general it can be concluded that the learning area of Life Orientation, together with all other learning areas, is based on secular humanism and favours post-modern tendencies (Institute for Reformational Studies, 1998:v).

Having discussed the official documents from the Department of Education it now also becomes important to look at the textbooks for Life Orientation in order to portray a broader picture of the state of Life Orientation education in South Africa. In the following some selected textbooks used in South African schools will be analysed concerning their content, especially looking at content which relates to spirituality.

3.5.3 Tertiary textbooks on teaching Life Orientation

“Religion in Life Orientation” (Steyn, 2004) is a tertiary textbook which is very relevant to the whole debate on religion and Life Orientation.

This book provides a multi-religion guide for the foundation phase in Life Skills. It basically seeks to provide resources and suggested activities for the teacher when teaching about different religions. It is based on the following assumptions:

- Children need to learn to live in harmony with children different to themselves. They need to develop tolerance and respect.
- Religion in this book is seen as a human phenomenon, so the approach is empirical (religious behaviour) and not dogmatic (divine revelation).
- Religion education in public schools is thus an educational activity, not a religious one (focusing on information and experience) (Steyn, 2004).

The book is organised around the following themes: myself, family, community, worship, food, festivals and clothes (Steyn, 2004). Each section then gives information on the practices in different religions. For example in the section about food reference is made to special foods for Easter (Christianity), Ramadan (Islam) as well as the Seder meal (Judaism), prayers offered in the different religions for food, as well as food laws in various religions (Steyn, 2004:83ff).

To summarise the underlying purpose of this book it can be said that the author considers all religions to be equal in worth. Therefore the best educational aim is to teach children as much as possible about these religions in order to cultivate attitudes of respect, tolerance and appreciation. However it becomes very clear that truth

claims and the credibility of the different religions are not at all taken into account, which could certainly be considered a very important weakness in the approach of this book.

The book “Life skills: my journey, my destiny”, which is edited by Elmarie van Heerden (2005), focuses on skills adult learners in higher education should acquire, in order to be able to function effectively in society. Life skills are thus considered to be very important even beyond the bounds of primary and secondary education. The book deals with topics such as setting goals, time management, coping with diversity and change, interpersonal relationships, healthy living, substance abuse, creativity, critical and analytical thinking, listening skills, basic helping skills, work ethics and other similar topics (Van Heerden, 2005). The approach here is, as the title suggests, very much on practical skills, even though some self-reflection is included. Spirituality is also not mentioned. The approach of this book stands in contrast for example with the character education approach, which focuses much more on internal virtues of people, which should lead to good behaviour.

Another book which should be considered in this context is “Life skills and career counselling”, edited by Kobus Maree and Liesel Ebersöhn (2002). This book also has a very practical orientation, linking career counselling to life skills, as well as giving a rationale for the need for life skills, for example looking at HIV/AIDS. The focus is again on practical skills, knowing how to do things, how to cope and how to act in certain situations. Some prominent topics are entrepreneurial skills, life skills in the classroom, study and learning skills, career assessment skills, facilitation skills, work and mental health as well as life skills in a multicultural society (Maree & Ebersöhn, 2002). In this book there is no reference to spirituality or religion.

3.5.4 School Life Orientation textbooks

In this section the themes in some Life Orientation and Life Skills (Foundation Phase) textbooks will be considered. It is important to note that this will not be a comprehensive analysis and should not be understood as such. The purpose is only to present a general idea about the themes and topics covered in the textbooks used in schools.

The three Foundation Phase grades will be looked at together, as they cover a lot of similar topics. Life Skills in the Foundation Phase covers all former subject areas which are not covered in Numeracy and Literacy, including subjects such as Geography, History, Biology, Science, Art and Music.

The general topics covering these subjects are topics such as living safely, insects, water, money, our world, people I meet, work, farms, transport, shops, health, houses, animals, my environment, my school, foods, national days, the weather, my body, our earth and the like (Beck & Russell, 1998; Mostert & Hartop, 1998; Gous, Molapo, Molapo & Badenhorst, 1999; Knowles & Siegruhn, 1999; Haines & Mentz, 2002; Flanagan, Norton, Vergnani & Nhlapo, 2003). Apart from that the books cover issues of building self-esteem, children's rights, peer pressure, identity and relationships. It is interesting to note that the approach used is very close to positive psychology or the "psychological regime" (Hunter, 2000), meaning that children are taught to appreciate themselves and to focus on their positive characteristics (Flanagan, Mostert & Hartop, 1998; Beck & Russell, 1998; Gous, Molapo, Molapo & Badenhorst, 1999; Knowles & Siegruhn, 1999; Haines & Mentz, 2002; Norton, Vergnani & Nhlapo, 2003).

In the Intermediate Phase the topics change in the sense that the topics from Learning Areas such as Social Sciences or Arts and Culture are no longer included. Topics around self-esteem, motivation and relationships are repeated. AIDS and sex education are introduced at this level. Often the same themes are presented in different grades. The theoretical basis is still very strongly positive psychology (Norton & Dawson, 1999; Carstens, Staples, Vercueil & Wolmarans, 2004).

This concludes the section on Life Orientation as well as its related constructs. Having considered the theoretical aspects of Life Orientation it is now indispensable to scrutinise the practical implementation of LO.

3.5.5 The practice of Life Orientation

In this section one research article in particular will be considered, as part of the research was quite similar to the research done in this study. In addition to that hardly any research has been done regarding the assessment of effectiveness of Life

Orientation. The aim of the study done by Prinsloo (2007), was to determine and understand the experiences and perspectives of various principals and LO teachers (Prinsloo, 2007:155f). The responses of the teachers could be grouped into three categories:

- Training of teachers: Many of the teachers felt that they had too little training, and that the people doing the training are not able to provide adequate training, often due to a lack of knowledge in practical matters.
- Effect of the teaching of LO: Most teachers felt that the effect of the LO teaching was not lasting, that it lasted only while pupils were on the school-grounds, or in general still in school. However after that all positive effects were largely eliminated (Prinsloo, 2007:165). This raises the question whether LO possibly fails to change the values and beliefs in learners permanently, so that they will be resilient in difficult situations. The author however mentions one teacher who strongly believed in changing the value system of learners. He did this from an expressly Christian perspective, and seems to have been very successful in changing learner's behaviours by changing their value system (Prinsloo, 2007:166).
- Other problems: Teachers in the study mentioned other problems such as lack of discipline in the schools. Teachers also testified that they often failed to understand learners, and they said that their classes are often too big (Prinsloo, 2007:166f).

Principals in this study complained of lack of parental involvement, the bad influence of the community, difficulties with policies of the Department of Education as well as a lack of a value system in learners and often teachers as well. In other words the principals said that their teachers cannot serve as role-models to the pupils (Prinsloo, 2007:161ff). The importance of teachers being role-models is also mentioned by other South African authors, together with the observation that teachers often do not measure up to this (Green, 2004:255; Horsthemke & Kissack, 2008:277ff).

In Chapter 6 the connection between theory and praxis of LO will be discussed in more detail. In the remainder of this chapter a fairly new development will be considered, which is related to the purpose of this study.

3.6 Spirituality education

Spirituality *education* is a new concept, or a novel connection of two very old concepts, *spirituality* and *education*. After the surge in research on religion especially in the latter part of the 20th century (which was mainly done from an anthropological and psychological perspective) considerable interest arose in spirituality (Carr, 1995; Gearon, 2004:190; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:69; Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:474f). The interest in spiritual or spirituality education has emerged mainly within the last two or three decades (Wright, 2000:36). The significance of spirituality education is that it focuses on the developing child. An important book in this regard was written by Robert Coles in 1990, with the title *The spiritual life of children*, in which he describes lots of conversations he has had with children concerning their spirituality and religion. After the launching of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* in the United Kingdom in 1996, interest grew and since 2000 there have been various international conferences on children's spirituality (Alexander, 2004:vii; Gearon, 2004:191; Ota & Erricker, 2005:1; Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:477). Three recently published books basically present the contributions to these conferences. It is interesting that many voices came from the United Kingdom, where spirituality has been recognised as being of crucial importance and where spirituality education is mandatory in the public schools (Wright, 2000:65ff; Stonehouse, 2001:28). Numerous contributions to research have also come from Jewish scholars. There have been other important publications such as *The Spirit Of The Child* (1998) by Hay and Nye as well as the *Handbook Of Spiritual Development In Childhood And Adolescence* (2006). Recently two articles discussing the relationship between spirituality and education were published in a South African journal, which shows that academics in South Africa are becoming aware of the need for including spirituality in education (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2008:1ff; Valenkamp, 2008:323ff). There is now a very broad discourse in academic circles concerning education and spirituality, encompassing very different opinions and viewpoints concerning the matter (Ebstyne King, 2004:112; Gearon, 2004:190f). Alexander (2004:viii) sees the new interest in

spirituality as an effort to recapture the transcendent purpose in schooling. Ratcliff and Nye (2006:473) posit that children's spirituality has been developed from two angles, firstly from the idea of an inherent spirituality and secondly from the religious concept research, often using Piagetian type stage constructs. This division is probably the same Wright (2000:37) makes. He states that Descartes' division between mind and matter gave rise to two ways of seeing religious language, namely as a cognitive description of objective reality and as an affective expression of subjective experience (Wright, 2000:37). Radford (2006:288) here mentions the danger of dualism as suggested by Descartes, which comes to the fore when people realise their beliefs and understandings are trapped inside their head. Wright (2000:40ff) further explains that current research was fuelled by the realisation that spirituality is something people and – especially – children experience in daily life. Furthermore it seems that a collapse of the Christian consensus in education in Great Britain gave rise to the establishment of spiritual education (Wright, 2000:65ff; Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:475), which by some authors is seen as divorced from religion (Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:475).

Even though the relation between spirituality and education is a novel construct, it is placed in the context of this chapter because there are many connections with concepts discussed in this chapter so far. Some of the trends discussed below have already been discussed in Chapter 2. This section however draws its material solely from educational sources which focus on children's spirituality, whereas Chapter 2 gave a more general overview of spirituality.

Spirituality is often seen as bringing together or being an integral part of morality, emotional literacy, language and citizenship (Carr, 1995; Erricker, 2001:200; Bosacki, 2001:159; Buckley & Erricker, 2004:172ff; Alexander, 2004:viii; Alexander & Carr, 2006:76f), or as encompassing the philosophical, ethical, moral and religious side of human beings (Prentice, 1996:329; Cottingham, 2005:45ff). Furthermore, as research has shown, there are people who say that their morality is structured by their faith, which means that moral reasoning is or should be imbued with spiritual and religious considerations (Walker & Reimer, 2006:225f; Radford, 2006:390). Benson, Roehlkepartain and Rude (2003:205) see religion and spirituality to be inherent in various psychological processes. Within a religious context it can be difficult to

separate religious and moral teachings (McLaughlin, 2004:26). According to Alexander and Carr (2006:77) a person of 'spirit' could be described as having qualities of character, such as self-control, fortitude, resilience, persistence, steadfastness and hope. Erricker (2004:158) connects spirituality to values, and advises that spirituality should identify and promote specific values especially within the educational context. Hodder (2007:179ff) goes as far as to say that spirituality could be a foundation for schooling in Australia.

Wright (2000:10) gives a different perspective when he says that there is a shift from morality to spirituality. The reason he gives is that "humanity finds itself driven to the very edge of civilisation and is forced to address the question of ultimate meaning, purpose and nature of life" (Wright, 2000:10). This would then mean that spirituality is a desperate search for meaning, of a more existential nature which will be discussed later in more detail.

In the following it now becomes necessary to look at children's spirituality, as well as the spiritual development of children, as it is often described in different ways and with different emphases than a more general or 'adult' spirituality.

One of the foundations for children's spirituality seems to be the notion that all children are inherently spiritual (Hart, 2006:163; Scarlett, 2006:28), also implying that spirituality is something real and not just a human construct (Radford, 2006:392; Hay *et al.*, 2006:53), as religions sometimes tend to be perceived. It can also be described as a 'turning inwards' (Wright, 1996:139). Some authors see children as seekers (Coles, 1990:xvi; Yob, 1995:105; Benson, Roehlkeparteijn & Rude, 2003:205). Sometimes however the basis for this is seen to be in the idea that spiritual awareness is a biological phenomenon which was a product of evolution due to its survival value (Hay, 1999).

Often a holistic view on human beings is adopted when discussing spirituality (Bosacki, 2002:55). There are certain characteristics that feature repeatedly when surveying literature on children's spirituality, and often children's spirituality is defined or described along those lines. It is necessary to mention that there certainly are various overlaps between these characteristics and there certainly are other ways

of describing them. The following however seem to be the most mentioned themes or categories:

- Relational consciousness is often seen as the core of children's spirituality (Hay & Nye, 1998:113ff; Hay, 1999). Based on this idea are the three constructs of awareness-sensing, mystery-sensing and value-sensing (Ratcliff & May, 2004:9; Scott, 2005:95). Relational consciousness goes together with connectedness with others or with a need to belong and connect with other people (Wallace, 2000:42ff; 2001:86; Morris, 2001:235; Bosacki, 2002:56; Templeton & Eccles, 2006:256; Champagne, Hart, 2006:172). Bradford (1995:35) describes spirituality as "a positive pattern of engagement with ourselves and our family, with God and our faith community, with our day-to-day activities and our involvement with others in the wider world".
- Wonder and awe are concepts that are described very often (Ping Ho, 2001:172; Stonehouse, 2001:39; Scott, 2005:102; Hart, 2006:165). Reference is here made twice to Kant's famous words "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me" (Rodger, 1996:45; Ping Ho, 2001:172). Interestingly wonder and awe are hardly ever described in literature on adult/general spirituality (cf. Chapter 2).
- A sense of awareness or consciousness, of the larger picture, (that there is more than can be immediately perceived), as well as of the mystery of life is often described (Crompton, 1998:48ff; Champagne, 2001:84f; Hay, 2001:108; Duff, 2003:229; Scarlett, 2006:28; Ebstyne King & Benson, 2006:384).
- A search for meaning, values and purpose can often be detected already in children as they are able to ask deep and difficult questions (Crompton, 1998:44; Chater, 2001:63f; Hart, 2006:168; Valenkamp, 2008:337).
- Spiritual experiences which are related by children are often described by researchers (Crompton, 1998:47ff; Champagne, 2001:76ff; Scarlett, 2006:28f).
- It is interesting that sometimes wisdom is mentioned. Children are able to demonstrate wisdom (Hart, 2006:170ff; Scarlett, 2006:28; Frendo, 2007:15).
- Hope is often seen as an integral part of spirituality, sometimes as an aim of fostering spirituality (Rodger, 1996:49; Wright, 2000:40; Mullino Moore, 2004:89; Schweitzer, 2004:98).

- In many contexts there is of course reference to specific religious experiences and practices in which children experience spirituality (Stonehouse, 2001:32f; Hart, 2006:163ff).

It is noteworthy that there are even constructs such as spiritual intelligence which is defined as “the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment” (Emmons, 2000:59).

In the beginning spiritual development was at least partly approached from the stances of developmental stage theorists such as Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson and especially James Fowler who did research on religious development (Stonehouse, 2001:28; Hay *et al.*, 2006:49). Currently the focus has moved away from a stage theory understanding of spiritual development towards an empirical understanding thereof (Hay *et al.*, 2006:50f). It is difficult to give a universal definition of spiritual development, partly due to the ambiguity of the term (Benson, 2006:484f) and the dangers of both uniformity (imposed by a premature consensus) as well as fragmentation (which makes it difficult to compare studies) need to be guarded against (Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:477). Furthermore very little research has been done on spiritual development from the side of developmental psychology (Haight, 2004:108).

A working definition which is suggested by Benson, Roehlkepartain and Rude (2003:105f) will be adopted here: “Spiritual development is the process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred. It is the developmental “engine” that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs and practices.”

There is however also the notion that one shouldn't talk at all of spiritual development, as development implies a progression from incomplete towards more complete or from not so good to better. It implies some kind of progression in the Piagetian sense, which should be avoided when looking at spirituality (Rodger, 1996:53; Eade, 2001:229).

In whatever way spiritual development is treated, one aspect which influences this view is the view or perception of the child. This has to do with the view of human nature. In addition there are basic views of children in different religions, and there is a specific view of the child which comes to the fore in much of the research being done on children's spirituality. This section is intended more as a brief overview as a comprehensive overview would entail a much longer analysis. Published material by researchers of Jewish origin and the traditional Jewish view of children will be discussed first, followed by a discussion on a Christian view of children.

In order to put the Jewish view of the child into proper perspective, a quote concerning the view of children in Ancient Greece will be given. In general the view of children in Ancient Greece was negative as they were perceived to be irrational, morally incompetent and physically weak (Dixon, 2001:49). Fildes (1986:21) describes the approach to child-rearing in Sparta, which was endorsed by Plato: "As soon as children are born they will be taken in charge by officers....these officers will also superintend the nursing of the children. They will bring the mothers to the crèche when their breasts are full while taking every precaution that no mother shall know her own child".

This approach, sounding extremely cruel today, strongly contrasted with the view of the Jews. In Judaism as in Christianity children were and are believed to be a blessing and of great value and worth to the family (Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:23; Mullino Moore, 2004:88f; Ratcliff & May, 2004:10). They were to be instructed by their parents, which was considered to be of utmost importance. The inherent spiritual life of children has always been recognised (Dixon, 2001:49f; Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:22ff; Frendo, 2007:12). Often children were at the centre of Jewish festivals, as this was valued as a powerful way of learning. The teaching of children was also always related to practical life, which means that experience played an important role (Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:25; Frendo, 2007:13). In general religious life can provide children with a strong sense of belonging (Ebstyne King & Benson, 2006:387).

The Christian view of children is also extremely positive in the sense that a child is valued and is even used as an example as in Mark 10:15 and Matthew 18:3: "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never

enter it” (Mullino Moore, 2001:90ff; Dixon, 2001:50; Bible, 2002:1546; Scarlett, 2006:28). As was - and still is - the case with Jewish children, Christian children were very much part of family life and the Christian community, never being seen as inferior or unwanted (Dixon, 2001:50ff).

Overall it can be said that Judaism and Christianity have a negative view of human nature, in the sense that people and children have an ‘evil heart’. However Christianity offers the radical gifts of grace, forgiveness and recreation, which is able to deal with the ‘evil heart’ (Dixon, 2001:59) by providing a new heart. Actually the moral demands of Jesus presuppose a changed nature through the acceptance of grace and forgiveness (Burbules, 2004:13). In contrast to this, the modern conception is either that people are neutral, neither bad nor good intrinsically (Prentice, 1996:329) or they are seen as being good, having become bad through the influence of society (Wright, 2000:127). This idea of the inherent goodness of children can be traced back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a French Romantic, who promoted the cultivation of the child’s autonomy as a means to preserve the natural goodness of children, which was a position which squarely opposes the Christian view (Wright, 2000:126; Dixon, 2001:53). In order to come back to the contemporary view on children and spirituality it can be said that the great value of the child and his or her spirituality is an area of overlap between Christianity and contemporary views. The Christian idea that people are evil at heart and need to be made good is however much less present in contemporary perceptions and descriptions.

Children today are mainly seen as being capable of having spiritual experiences (Crompton, 1998:54; Hart, 2006:163); can be seen as seekers or pilgrims (Coles, 1990:303ff; Benson *et al.*, 2003:205) and are often even seen as examples. Whereas the child within the Jewish and Christian context is seen as needing guidance (Frendo, 2007:15), it almost seems that many educators and researchers today see themselves as onlookers, or even learners when observing children’s spirituality (Chater, 2001:64). According to Erricker (2001:200) children should be given room to make their own interpretation and judgments concerning their spirituality. Spirituality should, as has been and will be further explained, be promoted in children and adolescents. This has of course to do with the changed view of people and reality as espoused in post-modern thinking (Erricker, 2001:201).

Here it is interesting to look at an educational credo, developed by David Purpel, which is stated in *Reflections on the moral and spiritual crisis in education* (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004), which clearly has spiritual undertones as well as post-modern tendencies:

We choose, celebrate and affirm these principles:

1. *We recognise the wonder, mystery and awe that surrounds our life and that beckons us to contemplate, examine and make meaning of it and our part in it...*
2. *We renew our faith in the capacity to celebrate diversity and difference while working to create a world of harmony, peace and justice...*
3. *We renew our faith in the human impulse to seek to create a world of justice, compassion, love and joy and in the human capacity to create such a world...*
4. *We reaffirm our commitment to the joys of community, the profundity of compassion, and the power of interdependence...*
5. *We affirm the central importance of nourishing a consciousness of moral outrage and social responsibility... (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:203ff).*

Probably the most controversial issue regarding spirituality education is its relation to religion. It seems that religion and spirituality have a very uneasy relationship in this discourse in education (Yob, 1995:114; Hay, 1999; Smith & Shortt, 2000:3ff). Viewpoints vary greatly, even though there is some kind of general consensus in the form of favouring a post-modern understanding of spirituality. Much of the discussion is informed by post-modern values such as relativism and the idea that all types of religions and spiritualities are equal. This discussion as well as the question around truth in this context will however be presented in Chapter 6, as much has been said about post-modernism already. This present discussion is based on the discussion in Chapter 2 concerning the dichotomy between religion and spirituality.

Opinions vary from an attempt to separate religion from spirituality completely to exclusivist stances where one religion is seen and promoted as the sole way of properly talking about spirituality (Wright, 2000:14). There also are viewpoints where

religion and spirituality are almost seen as the same thing (Schweitzer, 2004:98). The former viewpoint for example stresses that a broad approach is necessary so that secular ways of experiencing and conceptualising spirituality can be accepted (Erricker, 2000:51; Gearon, 2004:189). In considering these two positions Wright's work (Wright, 2000:70ff) becomes important, as he suggests a categorisation of inclusive and exclusive (particularistic) spirituality. An evaluation of the two will be attempted in Chapter 6. The inclusive position seems to be grounded in the fact that spirituality is a universal human awareness, which is not limited to one religion (Erricker, 2000:51; Scott, 2001:119; Hay *et al.*, 2006:50), as Coles (1990) tries to show in his book, recording countless conversations he has had with children from different religious as well as atheist or agnostic backgrounds. It is furthermore based on the post-modern view namely, that there are no objective truth claims, and therefore anybody can choose his or her preferred view of spirituality (Erricker, 2000:59; Purpel & McLaurin, 2004:233ff). The Romantic movement had an influence here, when it, especially through Schleiermacher, conceded that religion is just simply based on feeling in the sense of awareness and perception (Schweitzer, 2004:98; Hay *et al.*, 2006:50).

Hay *et al.* (2006:53) mention dark aspects of religion, which should be guarded against. Religion is sometimes seen as a) strengthening superstition and hindering science and the spirit of truth seeking, b) being an antimoral force and c) stifling emotional life. Wright (2000:84), summarising different voices in this discourse mentions the view that any specific religious tradition is able to create a vacuum wherein children can potentially become vulnerable to indoctrination. This is the reason why some authors want to separate religion and spirituality completely (cf. Chapter 2) (Scott, 2001:119; Erricker, 2007:51). Erricker (2007:51ff) is one of the most outspoken authors in favour of separating religion and spirituality. He sees religion as rendering faith "impotent and emasculated by virtue of its imprisonment within the systematic constructions of metaphysics" (Erricker, 2007:55). He, as well as his wife, wants to divorce spirituality from any kind of epistemological foundation (Erricker, 2001:199) and blames Christianity for playing a role in emphasising the importance of epistemological thinking in the West (Erricker, 2000:1). Wright (2000:26f) however warns against the discarding of religion as religion is a crucial dimension of spirituality. Furthermore religion is an inevitable dimension of

schooling where education was often understood as cultural transmission, which can be called indoctrination, and does however not have to be seen as negative (Wright, 2000:114). William James described religion as a desire for ‘something more’ (Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006:216), almost giving it the meaning of spirituality as discussed above. Tacey (2005:176) suggests that religion is needed, however not in the old way, where spirituality was seen as residing inside religion. He sees spirituality as welling up from “our post-modern and post-religious society” and is therefore promoting some kind of secular spirituality, nevertheless acknowledging the fact that a spiritual language is needed, wherein religion can play a role (Tacey, 2005:176, 182). This implies that children need to develop personally accepted ‘truths’, wherein religions can play a role (Hay *et al.*, 2006:47). This can be done by accepting any religious discourse available to the child, sometimes reverting to the mystical, as no religion is seen to be better than another, where all can lead to some kind of truth (Yob, 1995:110; Duff, 2003:227ff; Re’em, 2004:219). This might entail perceiving God to be in every person (Tacey, 2001:97). A good example of this inclusivism is the Bahá’í religion, which is a very young religion and lacks any historical and epistemological foundation, but which is however seen as a valid way of expressing spirituality (Ayman, 2004:106ff). Sometimes religiosity is described as being identified with inner needs as opposed to religious institutions (Bursztein, 2004:65).

It is important to consider the learners’ opinions, who often value their religious tradition and assign importance to it. Furthermore parents often want their children to be brought up in a specific religious tradition (Dixon, 2001:549f; De Souza, 2005:13). Therefore it would be unethical to force pupils to adopt a different view of spirituality. Pike (2005:195) for example wants to promote Bible reading as a way of fostering spiritual growth, and has done research to show the validity of his suggestion. There are numerous voices which state the need for a more specific kind of religion tied to spirituality, often the Christian one (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3ff).

It seems that teachers as well see the need for some kind of spirituality education (Fisher, 2001:53f). Often the connection between spirituality and education is conceived as the necessity of promoting any one or all of the above mentioned characteristics of spirituality (Rodger, 1996:61; Bosacki, 2001:163ff). Ayman

(2004:109) mentions that people need to understand meaning and purpose and need to be taught to appreciate spiritual values.

One approach to linking education and spirituality lies in seeing spirituality as part of holistic education, where spiritual development is seen as necessary for moral or cognitive development. It should be integral to every area of the curriculum (Rodger, 1996:57ff; Bosacki, 2002:55ff). Rowling (1996:329) describes this process as spiritualisation, which is the 'glue' of holistic education. Erricker (2000:59) feels very strongly about a post-modern approach to spirituality education which should be approached without reference to any epistemological stance, as he considers this to be too foundationalist. Wright (2000:133) suggests a model of critical spiritual education, of which the heart is a search for ultimate meaning and truth. He suggests critical spiritual education after he has surveyed inclusive (of which Erricker is a proponent) and exclusive models of spirituality. Exclusive models base spirituality on one kind of religion and inclusive models are open to any idea of spirituality, as it is seen as a universal manifestation (Wright, 2000:70ff). This is also recognised by Alexander and Carr (2006:75), who talk about confessional and phenomenological spiritual education. Critical spiritual education as proposed by Wright attempts to negotiate an impasse between exclusive and inclusive models where traditional ways of experiencing spirituality are acknowledged and engaged with, without becoming exclusive about any of them (Wright, 2000:95ff; Radford, 2006:394).

Concerning methods many different opinions exist. Some suggest spiritual role-modeling (Oman & Thoresen, 2003:149ff). Another view expressed is that spirituality cannot be taught, that only ideal conditions can be created for spiritual development (Duff, 2003:235), or that a spiritual climate at the school is necessary (Bosacki, 2001:162).

Even though there are great differences in this debate, there seems to be one common denominator to all camps who promote children's spirituality. Researchers and educationists from all positions agree on the importance of the narrative in teaching spirituality (Crompton, 1998:217ff; Scott, 2001:118ff; Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:28ff; Yates, 2001:209; Burbules, 2004:13; Ratcliff & May, 2004:13; Trousdale, 2004:130;

Bekerman, 2004:200; Cottingham, 2005:45; Radford, 2006:395; Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006:219; Frendo, 2007:9ff; Erricker, 2007:59).

It appears that religions and stories have been inseparable (Crompton, 1998:217). Both Judaism and Christianity, as well as other religions have made use of narratives as well as proverbs in teaching spirituality (Eisenberg Sasso, 2001:27; Yates, 2001:209; Burbules, 2004:10). Stories or literature or the relating of experiences can be seen as a universal way of communicating when spirituality is seen as a universal human experience (Scott, 2001:120). This is especially useful with children (Crompton, 1998:218). Stories can be used to explain or make meaning, where cognition and emotion can be integrated more intensely (Crompton, 1998:224; Cottingham, 2005:45; Johnson & Boyatzis, 2006:219). It can be used to develop the attitudes espoused in the characters of the narrative (Burbules, 2004:13f; Radford, 2006:395). An autobiographical example of this is given by Trousedale (2004:130). It describes the effect the narration of her father's experience had on her : "...Oh, I thought. That's who we are. We're people who pay our debts. We're people who honour the trust other people have placed in us. And we do that before we attend to our own wants and needs. No amount of preaching or sermonising could have made that truth, that principle more deeply implanted in my soul. A story did it." Cottingham (2005:45ff) sees the use of narratives in fostering spirituality as especially useful when studying history. He mentions three areas which can foster spirituality – "cognitive conflict, a community of ethical enquiry fostering reflexive empathy and the development of a language of discourse" (Cottingham, 2005:49). It also is important to learn to empathise, which he calls a "foundation stone of a civilised and emotionally literate society" (Cottingham, 2005:50).

Sometimes children's spirituality or spirituality education is linked with human rights or children's rights (Crompton, 1948:48; Gearon, 2001:143; 2004:188).

In concluding it can be mentioned that the movement around spirituality education has eventually also to do with the realisation that economic success is not the chief end in life, as material goods are not the way to ensure happiness (Rowling, 1996:337; Ayman, 2004:108), even though there also is the opinion that the new spiritualities have already been turned into a commodity (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004:229f).

This concludes the section on spirituality education. The discussion will be taken further in the last chapter, where the possibility of connecting spirituality or spirituality education with the current practice of Life Orientation in South African schools will be explored.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter an overview of Life Orientation and its related concepts such as character-, moral-, religious- and spirituality education was given. It has become clear that education has, to an extent, always dealt with these concepts. Every era has developed new ideas and concepts, rejecting the previous models. Throughout the decades and centuries there has been debate and development.

In general it can be said that the most important points which came to the fore in this chapter are to an extent the same as the ones raised in Chapter 2:

- Today's views around Life Orientation and in other countries moral or character education are very much influenced by the post-modern climate which permeates all of society. The question is whether or not the claims made by post-modernism regarding absolute truth can be upheld when applying to LO.
- Also informed by post-modernism is the debate around exclusive and inclusive spiritualities or inclusive and particularistic views of religion as discussed in Chapter 2. It seems to be crucial to come to some sort of constructive understanding regarding these matters.
- The question here is whether or not the post-modern paradigm can justify and adequately be the foundation for a relativistic view of ethics and thus Life Orientation. Is it really possible to work from some kind of 'theory melting pot' as seems to be the case with LO and other contemporary programmes?
- Looking at the practical side of LO it needs to be seen whether this model really is able and fit to address the problems in South Africa. Does theory meet practice? This discussion will be continued in Chapter 5, where the empirical part of this study is discussed.

- After having established in this chapter that the debates around Life Orientation and spirituality are similar as they are both influenced by post-modernism, the very crucial question of whether or not spirituality and LO could be linked, or more specifically whether it is possible to establish an epistemological framework for LO, which is at least to an extent built on spirituality? Certainly it can be mentioned that spirituality seems to be recognised as a universal human phenomenon, which would point towards the possibility that spirituality could possibly be a basis for LO.
- In some countries spirituality education has been implemented into the curriculum. Lessons can be learned here when considering spirituality as a basis for Life Orientation.

The next chapter is somewhat of an interlude as it discusses the methodologies used in this research.

CHAPTER 4

Theoretical framework, research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction and orientation

The aim of this chapter is to describe the theoretical framework, design and methodology used in this research. It has to be mentioned at the outset however that the remarks made about certain theories and paradigms are, however, not considered to be complete, they often merely illustrate the point being made in this chapter.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:4) research is the systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested. There are basically three common ways in which researchers perceive their work as being distinctive:

- It adopts a characteristic theoretical stance
- It pursues a characteristic research question or problem
- It adopts a characteristic method (Gough, 2002:2).

Before the more technical and procedural aspects will be discussed, it is important to offer a theoretical basis for the whole research. It is widely accepted that assumptions play an important role in the whole research endeavour (Swann & Pratt, 2003:3) on which theoretical frameworks are based. Merriam (2006:23) compares the place of a theoretical framework to the foundation which needs to be laid before construction of a new building can begin. This implies that the foundation must be solid and stable, so that the building and therefore in this case the research may be well supported, which is a mark of good research (Anderson, 2007:57).

4.2 Theoretical framework

The empirical part of this research was conducted using a qualitative research design. When considering theoretical frameworks in qualitative research, it becomes clear that there are various viewpoints with regard to the importance of theory for method. They vary from the idea that theory is nearly invisible, to the idea that theory is all important when doing qualitative research (Anfara & Mertz, 2006:xxff).. In the following paragraphs the different theories on which qualitative research is commonly built are considered and critically evaluated in order to formulate a theoretical background to this particular study.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005:196) the following distinctions can be made in qualitative research, namely positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism as well as participatory research. Maykut and Morehouse (1995:3ff) on the other hand perceive mainly two different paradigms within which research can be conducted, namely the positivist and the phenomenological paradigm. This clearly shows that there is no overall agreement on a fixed number of paradigms which is illustrated by Pring (2000:89) who states that “any map could have been drawn differently, making further distinctions and blurring others”.

In order to understand the idea of qualitative research better it is essential also to consider the nature of quantitative research, which is often seen as being opposed to qualitative research (Scott, 2005:634). In general quantitative research aims at time- and context-free generalisations and is usually associated with positivism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:14), a term which is often seen very negatively today (Pring, 2000:44). In the view of Pring this means that researchers should eliminate their biases, remain emotionally detached and uninvolved with the objects of study, and test or empirically justify their stated hypotheses in order to arrive at absolute truths (Pring, 2000:43ff). A completely ‘neutral’ account of ‘objective reality’, or a view from purportedly nowhere is the aim of quantitative research. This in turn however requires that one admits the possibility of a view from somewhere (Alexander, 2006:206).

Qualitative research, on the other hand bases its methods usually on the view that multiple-constructed realities abound and that generalisations can only be made in contexts. This view of reality is actualised in constructivism, idealism, relativism, humanism, hermeneutics and post-modernism (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Pring, 2000:43ff). This means that there is a movement away from a correspondence view of truth, as research is now seen to be value-bound, where subject and object are no more perceived as separate entities (Pring, 2000:47; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:14). A basis for this philosophy can be found in Hegel who revived Platonic and Aristotelian transcendentalism, and saw knowledge as being contextual, subjective and particular (Alexander, 2006:210).

Another philosopher who could be credited with building part of the basis of qualitative research is Heidegger who argues that the subject and object must be mutually engaged and not be considered as two different entities (Bruce, 1997:51). Heidegger criticises the position the subject (man) has awarded himself over the centuries, namely that of an absolute Archimedean point (Palmer, 1969:144) and insists that 'objectivity' can never be achieved in such a way. However in his solution, namely the engagement of the subject with the object, the same flaw can be detected. Heidegger, like the promoters of the positivist tradition, still makes man the final arbiter, the reference point in deciding on truth. The only difference is that the latter do so in holding to a correspondence view of truth, whereas Heidegger does it by holding to the idea that truth needs to be uncovered and is relative. It means that man is the one who decides what needs to be uncovered and how this has to be done, whereas positivism decided on what corresponds to what. Even though much more can be said about the philosophical differences between different research paradigms it becomes important now to look at a way of resolving this issue.

There are arguments against a polarisation of research paradigms into quantitative and qualitative or positivist and post-modern approaches, as there can be a danger in drawing too sharp a line of distinction between the two methods or approaches (Pratt & Swann, 1999:7). In many cases distinctions within the so-called paradigms are as significant as the distinctions between them (Pring, 2000:43ff). Oakley (2000:26f) mentions that the positivist paradigm prefers quantitative methods whereas the interpretivist paradigm prefers qualitative research, which are however not seen as

absolutes. Various philosophers have shown that the material world has both qualitative and quantitative characteristics, and not one that can solely be associated with objectivity and the other with subjectivity (Ercikan & Roth, 2006:14f).

A possible solution to the paradigm wars would thus be to drop the language of qualitative and quantitative or positivist and post-modern approaches altogether and to rather dissolve the two (Oakley, 2000:303; Pring, 2000:43ff). Pratt and Swann (1999:7) suggest that this could be done by adopting a realist approach which avoids the two epistemological poles of relativism and positivism. Alexander (2006:212ff) suggests transcendental pragmatism which means that a transcendent view from somewhere (higher ideals that govern human activities) needs to be achieved.

Another answer could probably lie in rather considering the two research paradigms as methods or techniques and not so much as mutually exclusive paradigms, which is advocated by Swann and Pratt (2003:4) as well as Pratt (2003:52). This then means that quantitative and qualitative methods can be used in any paradigm.

In the case of this study qualitative research is not based on the typical philosophy usually associated with qualitative research. The qualitative research methodology is rather seen as being suitable for the purposes of this research, which may, however, be understood also to fit into another philosophical paradigm, as will be explained further down.

Maykut and Morehouse (1995:3f) state that mainly four questions have to be asked when deciding on or defending a paradigm:

- What is the nature of the world? What is evidence? What counts as evidence? (ontology).
- What is the relationship between the knower and the known? What is the nature of knowledge? (epistemology).
- Are causal links between bits of information possible? (logic).
- What is research for? (teleological).

Guba and Lincoln (2005:193) mention among others ontology, epistemology as well as methodology as most important items when comparing the different research paradigms. Before explaining the philosophy behind this research it is necessary to elucidate why a post-modern paradigm was not deemed fit to serve as a basis in this research. The following is only a brief critique of the post-modern paradigm and doesn't claim to be complete, as it is impossible to deal with all the different aspects of this paradigm.

When referring to paradigms it is of utmost importance to consider the work of Thomas Kuhn, a historian of science, who caught the attention of the academia when he claimed that the development of science is not progressive but rather advances through paradigm shifts in which the existing assumptions about reality are challenged and changed (Kuhn, 1970; Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:51f; Sokal & Bricmont, 1998:72ff; Smith & Hodgkinson, 2005:917). This idea has now been widely accepted, and makes room for qualitative research within the scientific community as part of a new paradigm (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995:10). Basically the entire concept of paradigm shifts as presented by Kuhn (1970) has two consequences namely, firstly that a paradigm is not based rigorously on indubitable facts and secondly that every paradigm has underlying beliefs which are at one time salient and at another time not. Even though Kuhn was one of the thinkers who through his ideas provided a platform for relativism (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998:71) it can be argued at this juncture that the paradigm which serves as the basis for qualitative research may not be seen as displacing the paradigm which promotes quantitative study in an absolute sense as the underlying beliefs of this paradigm should not be seen as facts.

Sokal and Bricmont (1998:72ff) caution against Kuhn's explanations. They state that it would be wrong to relativise the whole of research practice, just because paradigms often change (and not always for irrational reasons). The question that arises here is the following: Is there at all any logical link between paradigms and methodology? The post-modern paradigm is however used to promote a certain type of methodology.

Relativism is promoted to the exclusion of other paradigms, which on the one hand is what Sokal and Bricmont (1998:72ff) warn against and which on the other hand

ignores Kuhn's (1970) explanations on the subjectivity of research paradigms. Relativism claims that no standard of truth and knowledge can be seen as absolute (Seale, 2004:411; Smith & Hodkinson, 2005:921ff) and can be seen as being part of post-modernism. Post-modernism as summarised by researcher Elizabeth Atkinson (2003:36) has the following characteristics:

- Resistance towards certainty and resolution;
- Rejection of fixed notions of reality, knowledge or method;
- Acceptance of complexity, lack of clarity and multiplicity;
- Acknowledgement of subjectivity, contradiction and irony;
- Irreverence for traditions of philosophy or morality;
- Deliberate intent to unsettle assumptions and presuppositions;
- Refusal to accept boundaries or hierarchies in ways of thinking;
- Disruption of binaries which define things as either/or.

It is sometimes even claimed that with the demise of the positivist paradigm and the advent of the post-modern paradigm it is not possible anymore to speak of epistemological foundations at all (Smith & Hodkinson, 2005:915f). Instead epistemic relativism is advocated (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998:183). Both claims are supported by the above list by Atkinson (2003:36).

The idea of equally valid paradigms, which by definition is relativism, is also flawed as it means that no standard or statement can ever be presented as absolute (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998:71ff). Of course the post-modernist does not believe in objectivity as it does supposedly not exist (Bailey, 1999:31), however it seems that the post-modernist believes this to be an objective truth. All these strong statements of post-modernists that certain things or conditions do not exist anymore undermine their whole theory and therefore raise great doubts regarding the validity of the post-modern approach.

In addition to that, it does not mean that there is no truth or knowledge of reality at all only because people are always influenced by theories and ways of thinking. Authors like Smith and Hodkinson (2005) claim that science always functions within

paradigms, as was shown by Kuhn (1970), which by definition are not absolute. This then led people to advocating a relativistic or post-modern paradigm to the exclusion of all other paradigms. However by this logic the post-modern paradigm is also a paradigm and therefore not absolute. They should rather advocate this paradigm as a paradigm among other possible paradigms. However it seems as if they want to position themselves outside of any paradigm by claiming that the paradigm that 'all paradigms are not absolute' is true, and should be promoted above all others. In other words they claim that all paradigms are equal which by definition means that in effect they absolutise this "equality" paradigm. Relativism can therefore be seen as being self-refuting as the statement that everything is relative is a non-relative statement (Geisler, 1999:745; McDowell, 1999:592f).

The way Rorty (1985:6) addressed this problem, namely by saying that relativism is not a theory of knowledge does not resolve the predicament, as relativism is treated and employed everywhere as a theory of knowledge. Simply giving it another name does not solve the problem. Harvey Siegel (2006:3ff) addresses a similar problem namely that of epistemological diversity. According to him epistemological relativism, like relativism, is self-defeating, as in the end it nullifies any attempt to make valid statements (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998; Siegel, 2006:10). In other words if everything is subjective, or if everything occurs within social, historical and cultural situations, which are seen to be subjective, then no distinction between what is and what is not, between right and wrong, is possible (Veith, 1994; Bailey, 1999:35; Geisler, 1999:501). This is a point also made by Sokal and Bricmont (1998:209) who state that if all discourses are merely 'stories' or 'narratives' and none can claim validity over another it becomes possible to claim that for example strong racist or sexist prejudices are just as valid as anti-racist or anti-sexist viewpoints. In general it can be said that a lot of post-modern relativism can only be described as banal and absurd, especially when applied to itself (Sokal & Bricmont, 1998; Bailey, 1999:33).

Coming to a conclusion on the issues around relativism it appears from the discussion that relativists who claim to be open to different viewpoints being equally valid, in fact superimpose their epistemology on all other views, namely that we can never know for certain. Lyotard (1984) described the post-modern stance by saying that it is a loss of faith in the grand meta-narrative. He like others tends to develop theories

which they claim are valid, but on which they always superimpose their epistemology to the exclusion of all others (Phillips, 1995:11; Henze, 2006:273f; Siegel, 2006:3ff) even if they do not call it an epistemology as was already shown above. This also holds true for pluralism. Pluralism automatically subscribes to some kind of exclusivism, which is exactly what pluralism wants to avoid, namely that nothing apart from pluralism really exists (Seeman, 2007:121).

In this respect it is interesting to look at the work of Rudolf Carnap (1946; 1950). He claimed that in the end the foundation for all knowledge must be experience. Therefore the theories and bodies of knowledge which are developed should ultimately be reducible to basic statements (Pring, 2000:91).

Logical thinking and the sense experience, which in the Enlightenment were conceptualised as Rationalism and Empiricism, are not outdated. Any reasoning resulting in decisions, be it philosophical or revolving around daily matters, no matter how relativistic in nature it may be, uses logic and rational thinking as well as the senses (Sokal & Bricmont, 1997:91f; Morris, 1999). The problem with seeing theories as the basis of reasoning seems to be that the senses as well as rational thinking are not seen as foundational to theories anymore. However people still construct theories as a response to observation and experience which always involves the senses and logical thinking, even though not all thinking is rational. If the senses and logical thinking become the basis for theories then it becomes potentially possible to bracket theories and beliefs in order to arrive at knowledge and truth. The senses and the ability to think logically has a built-in reality check, which means that every human being accepts certain things as being absolutely true, for example that when you cross the street despite a coming car, that you will get hurt. People also believe that they have to eat and if they don't for a number of weeks, that they will die. Many other examples can be used, however the point has been made that the senses (even though it is not denied that wrong conclusions can be made) and the ability to think logically should form the basis for theories. This then makes it possible for people to bracket their beliefs and try to look at the evidence of things without superimposing their belief system, holding to a knowability concept of truth, which if removed means that "a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness", as it removes the necessary concept of humility in philosophical and scientific endeavour (Russell,

2005:737). This discussion should however not be understood as an attempt to resort back to logical positivism, with its a priori denial of the supernatural and its grounding in a naturalistic worldview. The aim was rather to point out the serious problems of many underpinnings of qualitative research as grounded in a post-modern philosophy.

After having criticised the post-modern approach to science it is nevertheless necessary to point out a very positive point of the post-modern stance, namely the fact that unpredictability and uncertainty can now be recognised as being part of the research situation (Atkinson, 2003:39).

In the following the theoretical stance of this research project will be explained. It is vital to note here that it is not necessary to adopt one clear-cut position, but that there is room for the interweaving of viewpoints as well as the incorporation of multiple perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:197, 201), provided this is logically possible.. The main perspectives this study adopts are those of realism and evidentialism as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Realism simply refers to the perception that there is a real world or reality outside of the minds of human beings (Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:210f; Pratt & Swann, 1999:7; Geisler, 1999:634f). Even though this is not inherent in all versions of realism (Swann, 1999:17) it is here claimed that we as human beings can know reality at least to an extent (House, 1991:3; Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994:210f; Geisler, 1999:634f). More formally put realism claims about a subject matter S that (a) S really exists, (b) that this existence is independent of human beings, their mind or language, (c) that the statements made about S are not reducible to other kinds of statements, (d) that statements made in S have truth conditions, which are made true or false by facts in the world and (e) that human beings can know S (Blackburn, 2005:309). The realist approach also claims the validity of first principles, which are precepts that are undeniable or reducible to the undeniable. In other words, it is impossible to deny them without using them (Geisler, 1999:635). In addition to this, a correspondence view of truth is favoured (Swann, 1999:18; Blackburn, 2005:81). It also appears that reality is structured that way (Conee, 2004:22). In their practical everyday lives human beings at all times function according to realism. This kind of realism

advocated here does however consider and acknowledge the fact that our understanding of the world is not always hundred percent correct. Presuppositions, and ways of looking at reality do play a powerful role, as the social world simply is a complicated construct (House, 1991:6; Porter, 2007:84ff), however this does not lead to the idea that we cannot know anything for certain (Swann, 1999:18f). It is in this context that Porter (2007:79ff) attempts to assert the validity of realism in qualitative research. He opts for judging the methodological approaches themselves in order to know whether practice can be based on findings. He suggests criteria used by Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long & Barnes (2003), which are the following:

- Transparency: is the process of knowledge generation open to outside scrutiny?
- Accuracy: are the claims made based on relevant and appropriate information?
- Purposivity: are the methods used fit for the purpose?
- Utility: are the knowledge claims appropriate to the needs of the practitioner?
- Propriety: has the research been conducted ethically and legally?
- Accessibility: is the research presented in a style that is accessible to the practitioner?
- Specificity: does the knowledge generated reach source-specific standards?

The research as described in Chapter 5 was conducted on the basis of these questions and each question could be answered in the positive.

A brief account needs to be given of the nature of evidentialism, without becoming too technical, as the concept can get rather complex (Conee & Feldman, 2004). Evidentialism basically means that no proposition is rational to believe unless it is either self-evident, evident to the senses, or is sufficiently supported by evidence from propositions of either of these categories (Morris, 1999:71). Often experience is included here (Steup, 2005). The main claim of traditional evidentialism is the Evidentialist principle: "It is irrational for anyone, anywhere, to believe anything without sufficient evidence" (Morris, 1999:71). Even though evidentialism has received a lot of criticism, it seems that its validity has been effectively defended by various authors (Conee & Feldman, 2004; Shah, 2005).

If some readers might feel that the main thesis of this study has been pre-empted they have to bear in mind that an evidentialistic approach or perspective requires that “evidences” are presented in the various parts leading towards the main thesis of this study as explained in Chapter 6.

4.3 Research design

As has already been mentioned, a qualitative approach was used in this research project. This is the case because of methodological reasons and not philosophical reasons. Another reason is that qualitative research “integrates deeply with everyday life” (Holliday, 2002: 24), in this case the practice of Life Orientation.

As has been explicated in the previous chapters there is no well developed epistemological basis for Life Orientation. Moreover the subject Life Orientation is a relatively new concept and as a result thereof little research has been done in this area. Qualitative research is often used when the research theme has not yet received much attention in academic circles (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The focus is therefore more explorative (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995:43). In this specific study the empirical investigation will examine the perceptions of both learners and especially teachers concerning Life Orientation practice. This serves as a situation analysis so that finally the literature review and the empirical investigation can be bridged so that from that position suggestions for an epistemological framework as well as for the improvement of the practice of Life Orientation can be made. As the nature of the study did not fit with any other specific qualitative design a basic qualitative study design was used, as described by Merriam (2009:22ff), who also uses the argument that no consensus exists on the different designs concerning qualitative research (Merriam, 2009:21f).

4.4 Research methodology

A questionnaire for Life Orientation teachers was used (see Appendix C), which examined the teachers’ understanding of Life Orientation, spirituality and the possible connection between the two within the school setting. Secondly 18 groups of pupils were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the phenomenon. The main focus was however on the questionnaires given to the teachers.

4.4.1 Sampling

Sampling plays an important role in any research. In qualitative research there are mainly four different strategies of sampling which are non-probability strategies (Gobo, 2004:435ff). The sampling strategy used in this research is mainly snowball sampling, which implies picking some subjects who feature the necessary characteristics, and through their recommendations other subjects are identified (Robson, 2003:265f; Gobo, 2004:449; Anderson & Arseault, 2007:124; Creswell, 2008:217). However in addition to this method, 'maximum variation' was also used, meaning that diverse subjects were selected (Anderson & Arsenault, 2007:124; Creswell, 2008:214), especially considering demographic aspects, which entailed making sure that teachers were selected from different ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Practically this simply means that Life Orientation teachers or principals were identified, who were then given the questionnaire. Being a Life Orientation teacher was therefore the most important criteria used to identify respondents. The teachers were asked to distribute the questionnaire to other Life Orientation teachers in their schools or other schools. Variation was achieved by selecting schools / teachers from different ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds.

In the case of the interviews with the pupils convenience sampling is used. It means identifying the most convenient persons to act as respondents (Robson, 2003:265). Pupils were selected from public schools in the North West province of South Africa which were easily accessible to the researcher.

It was not considered necessary to draw up profiles of the different schools, as this study does not aim to compare responses from different schools. The aim was to get general information concerning the practice of Life Orientation from a wide variety of schools. Altogether pupils from 8 different schools participated in focus group interviews.

4.4.2 Data collection

Following an initial pilot study data was collected in two ways. In qualitative research in general the potential sources of data are only limited by the researcher's open-mindedness and creativity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:158). The researcher in qualitative research in general plays a much more central role in the data collection process (Anderson & Arsenault, 2007:123).

4.4.2.1 Pilot study

A preliminary questionnaire was designed by the researcher, which was then given to various Life Orientation teachers as well as other researchers. The involved persons were asked to comment on the questionnaire regarding practicality, feasibility, comprehensiveness and appropriateness. Their criticism and suggestions were then taken into account by changing the questionnaire accordingly.

In addition to that High School pupils were asked a few questions relating to Life Orientation, so that the interviews would be able to be conducted in the best possible and effective manner.

4.4.2.2 Qualitative questionnaires

The primary method of data collection in this research was the use of qualitative questionnaires (see Appendix C). Such a questionnaire is exploratory, open-ended and asks in-depth questions (Johnson & Turner, 2003:303) which suited the exploratory nature of this research project well.

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- A) General information
- B) Definitions
- C) Life Orientation
- D) Spirituality

In section A teachers were required to give some general information. The purpose of section B was to determine what kind of definitions teachers give of the central concepts of this study. In section C teachers were questioned concerning their views on LO. Section D established the viewpoints of teachers regarding spirituality as well as a possible connection between spirituality and LO. This section was concluded by a question on the felt qualification of teachers to teach LO.

About 200 Life Orientation educators were given the questionnaire, which was either handed to the teachers as a hard copy or via e-mail. It was considered important to investigate the current situation in order to develop an epistemological basis as will be attempted in Chapter 6. The fact that questionnaires were used enabled the participants to freely write down their often lengthy answers in their own time.

Most of the questions asked in the questionnaire were open-ended, so that the respondent would clearly feel invited to write down his or her views. Most questions were opinion/value questions which tap into beliefs which are mainly cognitive in nature (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995:88ff). Furthermore the aim was for respondents to provide the researcher with vicarious experiences (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995:91).

Even though there is little references to qualitative questionnaires in the literature, this method does not violate the methodologies commonly used in qualitative research. It could be typified as a more formal sort of written assignment, which is common in qualitative research. Creswell (2008:227) however mentions open-ended questions on questionnaires as well as e-mail interviews. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to look for overlapping themes in the answers of the respondents (Creswell, 2008:228).

4.4.2.3 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews are becoming more and more of an accepted practice among researchers (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004:65ff). There are various advantages to focus group interviews, such as the fact that the amount and range of data are increased by collecting from several people at the same time and the fact that quality control occurs

as the participants talk together and stimulate each other (Robson, 2003:284f). Such interviews are often very spontaneous (Johnson & Turner, 2003:308). Focus group interviews were considered to be suitable for this study firstly because pupils tend to be shy when approached alone; putting them in groups is more likely to make them feel comfortable so that they will feel free to speak. Secondly, focus group interviews leave room for discussion, which suits the explorative nature of this study.

Focus group interviews were conducted with 18 groups of 2-9 pupils in order to find out how they view Life Orientation education. (Most groups consisted of no more than 4 learners. The group with 9 participants was an exception). It was believed that the learners would talk more freely when groups are not too big. The interviews were conducted with learners from the Southern region of the North West Province in South Africa. The specific aim was to investigate the perception of the learners' regarding Life Orientation. These focus group interviews are regarded more as a check for the questionnaires, and not as a primary source for data collection.

It is essential to ensure participation and to guide participants without forcing them to respond (Puchta & Potter, 2004:52). The participants were invited to share their viewpoints regarding Life Orientation practice in schools. Pupils were given equal opportunity to participate in the discussion, and it was ensured that they did not discriminate against each other.

4.4.2.4 Observations

Use was made of observations, while being at the schools, either to conduct focus group interviews or to distribute and collect the questionnaires from the teachers or principals.

4.4.3 Data analysis

In qualitative research it is important to see data analysis as an early and ongoing process. The approach should be to understand as much as possible about the phenomenon with a minimum of interpretation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995:123ff). Creswell (1998) describes the process of data analysis in four steps:

- Organisation: filing, creating a computer database, breaking large units into smaller ones.
- Perusal: getting an overall “sense” of the data, jotting down preliminary interpretations.
- Classification: grouping the data into categories or themes, finding meanings in the data.
- Synthesis: offering hypothesis or propositions, constructing tables, diagrams and hierarchies.

These steps were followed in this research. More specifically, the interviews were transcribed as soon as possible whereas the questionnaires were also fed into the computer. The computer programme Atlas.Ti was used, which is a programme designed to make the process of qualitative data analysis much easier than when done manually and allowing for the building of networks. Basically Atlas.ti enables researchers to “think in a visible way” (Konopásek, 2008). Thoughts, mental operations and categories can be stored, easily retrieved, put into categories and linked (Konopásek, 2008). The data was mostly analysed question by question, unless there were thematic overlaps in the questions or answers. Themes were identified for every question/aspect.

4.4.4 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research it is important to ensure trustworthiness. According to Shenton (2004:64ff) four criteria need to be addressed. In the following these will be briefly explained, and it will be addressed how each of the criteria was adhered to in this study.

- Credibility: If this criteria is met it means that the findings of the study are as congruent with reality as possible. In this study use was made of triangulation. The research findings of the focus group interviews, the questionnaires as well as the literature study were triangulated. Furthermore the researcher became familiar with the culture of participating organisations before the data collection process started. In addition to that debriefing between the

researcher and superiors took place regularly, as well as discussions with other professionals in the field (Shenton, 2004:64ff; Guba, 1981).

- **Transferability:** The question here is to what extent the findings of this particular study are able to be transferred to another situation. The contextual field of the study has been described (Shenton, 2004:69ff; Guba, 1981). It is however obvious that findings cannot be generalised in all aspects for the whole of South Africa, however this study can show certain obvious trends in South African Life Orientation practice. Generalisations to other countries are obviously only possible to a small extent.
- **Dependability:** Here it has to be ensured that if this study were repeated with the same participants and the same methods similar results would be achieved. In order to ascertain this as far as possible the researcher described the data collection and analysis process in some detail (Shenton, 2004: 71f).
- **Confirmability:** This criteria is met if it can be shown that the study is as objective as possible. This was achieved here by quoting extensively from the responses of the subjects in order to show that findings were based on the collected data and not on the presuppositions of the researcher. The audit trail or transcriptions of the data are available from the researcher at request (Shenton, 2004:72).

4.4.5 Ethical considerations

In any research project it is important to ensure that the project is conducted according to high ethical standards. This in summary means that any risks or disadvantages for participants should be avoided and eliminated (Anderson, 2007:18). The following rules formulated by Mitchell and Jolley (2004:24) were adhered to in this research.

- Participants should volunteer to be in the study.
- Participants should be given a general idea of what will happen to them if they choose to be in the study.
- Participants should be told that they can withdraw from the study at any point.
- Investigators should keep all answers confidential.

- Investigators should inform the participants of the purpose of the study.
- Investigators should make sure that all people working for them behave ethically.
- Researchers should get approval from appropriate committees.

Limitations are discussed at the end of Chapter 5.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the research design and methodology has been explained and described. Furthermore the underlying philosophical research paradigm has been elucidated.

This chapter is now followed by Chapter 5 which describes and interprets the findings of the empirical research.

CHAPTER 5

Life Orientation in practice: an empirical investigation

5.1 Introduction and orientation

"I basically just see LO as a waste of time, 'cause there, you don't learn anything from it." (I10)

"Yes, I enjoy LO, 'cause there's lots of fun activities." (I2)

Both of the above answers were given by South African high school learners when asked whether or not they like Life Orientation. These two quotes provide a summary of the current debate around Life Orientation. Many people see it very positively with great potential, others see it as very negative. This holds true for teachers, learners as well as researchers.

Life Orientation is a new learning area which was implemented as part of the new education system called Outcomes Based Education which was envisaged in 1996 with the National Education Policy Act and the Schools Act (Horsthemke & Kissack, 2008:277f). It forms part of the life skills faction, which is popular today in many countries and is often used by for example the World Health Organisation (World Health Organisation, 1999; Pan-American Health Organisation, 2000; 2001).

Life Orientation replaces subjects such as Guidance, Family Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Religious or Bible Education, Civic Education, Health Education and Physical Education (Department of Education, 2008:7; 2008c:7) and is supposed to develop and engage learners in personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural and socio-economic areas, so that they can achieve their full potential in the new democracy of South Africa (Department of Education, 2003:9; 2002). This learning area is furthermore supposed to promote social justice, human rights, inclusiveness as well as a healthy environment (Department of Education, 2003b:5).

Even though Life Orientation sounds promising in theory it seems that there are many problems in the practical implementation thereof and it can be doubted that LO is always effective (Prinsloo, 2007:155ff). The aim of this empirical investigation is to shed light on the practice of Life Orientation as perceived by teachers as well as learners, in order to make recommendations and to suggest a coalition between Life Orientation and spirituality.

Spirituality was also part of the investigation, as it is posited that an association between Life Orientation and spirituality could be beneficial for the practice of LO. The literature clearly shows that spirituality has positive effects on young people (Halonen & Santrock, 1996:154; Holder *et al.*, 2000:295ff; Ritt-Olson *et al.*, 2004:192ff).

In the remainder of this chapter the empirical findings will be presented, analysed and interpreted. This will be done in five sections. The first section will briefly describe the data collection process which is followed by a presentation of some observations made during the data collection process. The third section will present and interpret the findings in the questionnaires given to teachers, in the fourth section the interviews conducted with learners will be considered, and finally in the last section the responses of the teachers will be related to the responses of the learners.

5.2 Research design and methodology

As an in-depth description of both research design and methodology was presented in Chapter 4, only a summary will be given here.

5.2.1 Research design

Due to the nature of the research topic a qualitative design was chosen. This is the case because there is little research on the theoretical framework of LO as well as on the implementation and validation of Life Orientation. In addition, even though in many countries spirituality is now seen as necessary in education (Alexander, 2004:vii; Gearon, 2004:191; Ota & Erricker, 2005:1; Ratcliff & Nye, 2006:477) little of this is practiced in South Africa. Few, if any, research programmes have

investigated the relation between Life Orientation and spirituality. Most research has been explorative in nature. Usually a qualitative research design is used in such a case (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:43; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Quantitative research which focuses more on theory testing has proved unsuitable as there are as yet no theories in this area which could be tested.

5.2.2 Sampling of participants

Two sets of participants had to be selected in this study. Teachers had to fill in a qualitative questionnaire (open-ended questions) whereas learners had to be selected for interviews.

For the questionnaires mainly snowballing was used, which meant identifying various subjects who could complete the questionnaire and asking them to pass them on to others. Purposive sampling was also used in order to ensure that voices were heard from various cultures and backgrounds.

Concerning the interviews convenience sampling was used, which means selecting respondents from easy to access schools in the North West province of South Africa (Robson, 2003:265). All racial groups except coloureds were represented. Eighteen focus group interviews (with 2 to 9 learners present) were conducted until data saturation was achieved.

5.2.3 Data collection

As has already been mentioned two different sets of data were collected. Firstly a qualitative questionnaire (see Appendix C) was collected among teachers, which looked at the practice of LO from a teacher's perspective. It also considered the perceptions of the teachers concerning spirituality and the possible connection thereof with Life Orientation. Unfortunately the response rate was very low. About 40 questionnaires were handed out which were never returned. Likewise, about 40 e-mails were sent to principals of schools requesting them to pass the questionnaires on to their LO teachers, who could return the questionnaires electronically. None of those questionnaires were returned. All in all 59 questionnaires were returned. The

questionnaires were analysed using software (Atlas.ti) designed for the analysis of qualitative data.

Data among learners were collected by conducting 18 focus group interviews with two to nine participants per group. Except for three interviews, all learners were high school learners. The aim was to get an understanding of the perception of LO among learners in general.

5.3 Observations during the data collection phase

The following remarks, some anecdotal in nature, concern the observations made during the process of data collection (the distribution and collection of the questionnaires as well as the interviews at the different schools with groups of learners).

Most questionnaires (see Appendix C) were handed out in the Southern region of the North West province, however through snowballing (as explained in Chapter 4, section 4.4.1 as well as above) the researcher also received questionnaires from all the other provinces except the three Cape provinces (Eastern-, Western- and Northern Cape). This makes the findings more generalisable, as no major differences were found from respondents in the different provinces.

In general it proved to be very difficult to get respondents for the questionnaires, as will be explained in the following sections. Snowballing was used and was successful to an extent. This however proved to be limited as there are usually only few teachers (sometimes only one or two) per school who teach Life Orientation.

Another challenge was that often the teachers didn't return the questionnaires, complaining that they simply did not have the time to complete it, as they already have to perform many administrative tasks. However a sufficient number of questionnaires were obtained in this manner from former white schools.

It was also attempted to find respondents via the internet. Internet school directories were consulted and various schools were contacted (around 40). The principal (when

details were available, he was addressed by name) received a short e-mail explaining the purpose and background to the study and was then asked to forward the attached questionnaire to the LO teachers at his school, who could complete the questionnaire electronically. They were provided with an e-mail address to return the questionnaire. However there was not a single questionnaire which was returned in this manner. This seems to show that principals are either not very interested in the debate and possible improvement of Life Orientation or that they are so busy that they simply do not get time to pass these questionnaires on. Nevertheless it also has to be taken into account that some of the principals might have passed the e-mail on to the LO teachers, and that the teachers might have been either too busy or not interested in completing the questionnaire. But whatever the reason was it indicated that there is a problem. If teachers and principals are too busy to fill in a questionnaire, this could mean that they are overloaded with work. If on the other hand teachers are not interested in completing the questionnaire, this also reveals something about their attitude concerning teaching which could be interpreted as negative or disinterested.

In order to obtain questionnaires from formerly exclusively black schools the researcher went into township schools (schools in the area of town where only blacks used to live under the apartheid regime) in the Potchefstroom area to ask the principals to forward the questionnaires to the Life Orientation teachers after explaining the purpose and background to the study. Even though most principals stated that they were willing to help, they often didn't abide by their words. After the researcher had made an appointment to come and collect the completed questionnaires, they usually were not ready, which made it necessary to come back several times (at one school five times), which proved to be rather time-consuming and frustrating. There was one principal who was almost hostile to the idea of asking his teachers to complete the questionnaires. He felt that he and his teachers had enough to work on already, and did not want them to take on any more (in his point of view unnecessary work).

In general it seemed that teachers found the questionnaire difficult to understand and often sections were not answered at all. In one instance the principal, himself also being a Life Orientation teacher, asked one of the LO teachers in Setswana to please bring her questionnaire so that he could copy it (instead of filling it in himself). This

incident happened while the researcher and an assistant, who understands Setswana, were in the principal's office. At another school the LO teachers were asking the other teachers in the staff room for the "right" answers.

There were however many teachers from all the different schools who completed all questions of the questionnaire. In total 59 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher.

Some interesting observations could also be made while conducting the interviews with the learners. As no specific grade was chosen for this investigation learners from different grades were interviewed. Interviews were conducted at only one primary school, the rest were interviews with high school students. The reason for this is that the researcher found that the primary school children were clearly struggling to answer the questions appropriately. They in general gave very short answers and had to be strongly encouraged to speak. They especially had problems with answering the last question, concerning the meaning of life. In contrast to that most high school students were willing to state and explain their viewpoints regarding LO, even though they had to be assured that they were free to express their own opinion and not to try and say what they think the researcher wants to hear. There were however also interviews where the response of the pupils was poor, some also had problems thinking about the meaning of life. In one instant an interview was conducted with high school learners who had just finished smoking dagga (cannabis) on the school grounds. This observation was made by the teacher. These boys were a little dazed and did not give meaningful answers. This can certainly serve as an indication of the seriousness of the problems at high schools (cf. Coetzee & Underhay, 2003). In general it seemed that many of the black students gave answers which they thought the researcher wanted to hear in spite of the researcher's attempts to prevent this problem.

5.4 Data analysis and interpretation of the teacher questionnaires

In the following sections the data from the teacher-questionnaires will be analysed and interpreted. Often this process is divided into two separate sections, namely analysis and after that interpretation. Here it was chosen to combine the two sections.

The data has been analysed in much detail and a separation of analysis and interpretation would inevitably lead to a lot of repetitions. In this discussion the relevant literature available on Life Orientation and related matters is consulted. However it needs to be remarked that there is a lacuna in research on this topic, as a result of which few sources could be used for triangulation. This lack of available research on LO is one of the reasons why this research was conducted.

Atlas.ti was used to analyse and categorise the data from the questionnaires. The full questionnaire is attached in Appendix C. Usually the analysis and discussion of results was done question by question, however in some cases themes which occurred throughout different questions were identified and discussed as a whole.

Three remarks need to be made regarding the presentation of results:

1. Quotes: When a response of a teacher is quoted the language has not been edited, as this would change the data.
2. When the number of respondents in a table does not add up to 59, this is due to the fact that in many cases teachers did not answer all questions.
3. The themes identified (and as often presented in a table) were always ranked according to frequency even though the numbers might be small. Often this is due to the fact that teachers did not answer the whole questionnaire.

5.4.1 Definitions of basic concepts

In Section B of the questionnaire the teachers were requested to write down their own definitions of the central basic concepts of this study, namely *Life Orientation*, *spirituality* and *religion*.

5.4.1.1 Life Orientation and teacher knowledge of the LO curriculum

Here the descriptions of Life Orientation written down by the teachers will be discussed. Integrated into this discussion are the results of question 4, which dealt with the themes to be taught in LO prescribed by the Department of Education. Question 1a was the following:

How would you describe Life Orientation?

When considering the responses to Question 1a it emerged that the attempted definitions by the teachers could be grouped into four categories, namely definitions which resemble the definitions of the Department of Education, free definitions, vague definitions and definitions which are insufficient in capturing the essence of Life Orientation teaching. Each of these definitions is discussed below:

- Department: These definitions encapsulated aspects of the definition given by the Department of Education in the curriculum statements. The Department of Education describes LO as follows: “The Life Orientation Learning Area is central to the holistic development of learners. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners, and with the way in which these facets are interrelated. The focus is the development of self-in-society. The Learning Area’s vision of individual growth is part of an effort to create a democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life” (Department of Education, 2002:4). Out of 59 teachers 13 teachers gave a definition that resembled the whole or part of the definition of the Department of Education. This shows that these teachers are at least to an extent familiar with the National Curriculum Statement. An example of such a definition is the following:

“Is a subject that orientates learners about life that is social, physical, spiritual, psychological and emotional. Learners are able to understand themselves and others, and also able to become citizens of South Africa.” (R42)

- Free: Teachers who gave a free definition mostly showed that they understood the purpose of Life Orientation, and were able to make their own definitions, indicating that Life Orientation can potentially influence learners profoundly. Ten teachers gave a free definition, such as:

“Leerarea met ‘n verskil omdat elkeen se uniekheid saak maak en jou denke aangespreek word, jou eie en ander s’n. Hier kan denke beïnvloed word” (Learning area with a difference, as everybody’s uniqueness is important and because your way of thinking is addressed, yours and others. Thinking can be influenced here.) (R26)

- Vague: Responses placed in this category were characterised by vagueness and ambiguity. Other teachers in this category gave a very broad definition. Altogether the responses of 22 teachers were placed in this category. Example:

“Some lesson which guide, direct us about a particular thing in order to achieve something and help us to deal with our daily life”. (R22)

It becomes evident that teachers in this category had trouble understanding the nature of LO. Their answers reflect uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding LO, which probably results in a lower quality of teaching.

- Insufficient: Responses in this category focused on one or more aspects of LO, without giving a sufficient general definition. The answers of 13 teachers were categorised here. Example:

“Life orientation helps learners to be able to know different culture and the origin of those cultures”. (R20)

This quote evokes some concern. Even though culture is a topic mentioned in the curriculum, this is undoubtedly not the main focus. Certainly the origin of cultures is not dealt with in LO. This teacher shows evidence of having a warped idea about LO.

Altogether there were 35 out of 59 teachers who did not give a proper definition of Life Orientation, which is a serious matter of concern. The competence of LO teachers was further evaluated through question four, which will be discussed here, as it is very much linked to what has been described. Question 4 reads as follows:

What do you think are the most prominent themes covered in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) of Life Orientation?

The aim of this question was to see whether or not LO teachers are able to name the most prominent themes of LO, in order to get an indication of their familiarity with the themes in the curriculum. The most prominent themes/outcomes spelled out in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 are personal well-being, citizenship education, recreation and physical activity as well as careers and career choices. (Department of Education, 2003:10ff). For Grades R-9 the outcomes are the following: health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement as well as orientation to the world of work (Department of Education, 2002:4ff). The responses of the teachers to this question were categorised into three groups. The first group consists of those who could mention at least three of the outcomes, or other very prominent themes, the second group consists of those who mentioned only one or two of the outcomes or some of the main themes. The last group consists of those who are clearly not familiar with the Curriculum Statement. The responses are summarised in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1 Teacher knowledge of the RNCS

Category	Number of teachers
Teachers who know the RNCS	25 (43%)
Teachers who have limited knowledge of the RNCS	20 (35%)
Teachers who clearly have very little knowledge of the RNCS	13 (22%)

It is alarming to notice that only 43% of the respondents were able to give a suitable and sufficient summary of the most prominent themes of Life Orientation, and that there were 22% of respondents who have no adequate knowledge of LO. The middle group however also raises concerns, as respondents in this group knew only half or even less of the prominent themes or outcomes. It is interesting that Van Deventer (2009:131) found in a study among LO teachers that 99% of teachers claim to

understand the principles of LO. This however does not prove that teachers really know the content and principles of LO, it could just be part of an unwarranted overconfident attitude of teachers.

Some teachers revealed negative attitudes towards LO in this question as is shown in the following example:

“Soos met baie LO-onderwysers is dit nie my hoofvak wat ek onderrig - Ek doen geen voorbereiding/samestelling van LO nie - dus is hierdie nie aan my bekend.” (As is the case with many LO teachers, this is not the main subject I am teaching – I do no preparation/compilation of LO – this is therefore not known to me.) (R10)

Even though this teacher’s negative feelings are not commendable he/she mentions a crucial issue within the practice of LO: Often teachers are obligated to teach LO even though they have little knowledge of the subject, a finding which is conformed by Van Deventer (2009:128) and Prinsloo (2007:164f).

In general the responses to questions 1a and 4 reveal that there is a serious problem regarding teacher competence and morale concerning the teaching and implementation of LO.

Before discussing the following question a short reference will be made to spirituality in this context. Considering the nature of this study it is noteworthy that only four teachers when giving a definition of Life Orientation referred to a spiritual aspect. There were however nine definitions including references to values. The lack of references to spirituality clearly shows that Life Orientation in practice appears not to be concerned with the development of the spiritual dimension. An example of a definition which includes a reference to the spiritual follows:

“Life Orientation is the study of the self in relation to others and to society because it applies a holistic approach to the personal, emotional, spiritual, physical growth and development of learners.” (R48)

In this definition the human being is conceptualised as a holistic being which means that spirituality is seen as an integral part of the human being.

5.4.1.2 Spirituality

Question 1b was asked as follows:

How would you describe spirituality?

In the following sections the definitions of spirituality which the teachers proposed, will be considered. The following table shows the different categories into which the teachers' answers could be grouped. These specific categories were identified on the basis of the responses of the teachers. They specifically refer to how teachers see spirituality, not how they see children's spirituality. There are six categories which featured repeatedly (five or more times).

Table 5.2 Teacher definitions of spirituality

Category	Frequency
Religion	18
Supernatural power	11
Ethics, morals, values	9
Inner being or soul	7
Religious relativism or diversity	5
Unseen reality	5

It is striking that many teachers associate spirituality with religion, which indicates that in the minds of many, religion and spirituality are either seen as the same or as concepts which are intimately linked. Generally it becomes clear that there is an overlap with the (mostly academic) definitions proposed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study (cf. Roehlkepartain & Rude, 2003:209; Ritt-Olson *et al.*, 2004:193). The following definition by a respondent summarises many of the aspects which were given in those chapters, especially the agreement among educational researchers that

spirituality is an inherent characteristic of human beings (cf. Ratcliff and Nye 2006:473; Hart, 2006:163):

“Spirituality is in my opinion the fact that there is an unseen, reality beyond the material of what one can perceive with the senses. It is the knowledge of a God and the human yearning and response to this longing.” (R6)

5.4.1.2 Religion

The last description asked was the following (question 1c):

How would you describe religion?

Considering the way teachers define religion illustrates very well that spirituality is often seen as superior to religion as was explained in chapters 2 and 3 (cf. Egbert *et al.*, 2004:8; Hodder, 2007:187). In the questionnaires there were 20 references to religion as being a belief system, or a set of beliefs:

“It is the way of life that is attached to certain belief, cultural values and customs”. (R16)

In addition to that there were 4 references to rules or rituals such as the following:

“Godsdiens is ‘n tradisionele - beoefening van rituele sonder verhouding” (Religion is a traditional practice of rituals without relationship). (R29)

This definition of religion portrays a rather negative view. Religion as a relationship on the other hand was only mentioned four times. This indicates that religion is often understood as something static and formalistic, something people have to conform to or which they are obligated to believe, which is confirmed by Hodder (2007:187). Nevertheless there were four teachers who show that religion can be seen as something very personal, alive and fulfilling. The following two definitions given by teachers illustrate this effectively:

“Religion is in my opinion the set of beliefs that dictate actions and form a lifestyle based on this knowledge of an unseen God or power. It can be vastly personal and be experienced as a relationship between a god and a human being, or it can be a set of rules that dictates actions only. Religion is something a person voluntarily chooses to believe in or not.” (R6)

“For some it is an expression of their spirituality (within an organised context which is generally linked to an expression of own culture as well). It is often also a way of overcoming/dealing with the problem of guilt. For me it is a way of living which finds its origin in a personal relationship with a living Saviour.” (R30)

In general it can be said that the definitions for religion vary greatly and that there is little consensus. Having investigated the definitions of Life Orientation, spirituality and religion it now becomes necessary to look at teachers’ views on the success or effectiveness of LO as it is important to determine whether or not the theory of the RNCS is reflected in practice in the schools.

5.4.2 The perceived success of LO

In order to examine the success of LO from a teacher perspective the following questions were asked:

Question 2:

What do you think do learners really learn in Life Orientation?

Question 3:

Give your opinion on whether or not you think the pupils really benefit from the subject Life Orientation in their personal lives.

The aim of these questions was to do a reality check. Life Orientation can sound very positive in theory as conceptualised in the Curriculum Statements. These two questions however were supposed to provide some insights into the actual success of LO. However the answers these two questions yielded proved to be unsatisfactory.

One reason for this is probably the fact that the questions did not require the teachers to provide evidence which would qualify their statements. The questions were intended to get teachers to reflect on what learners learn in actuality not potentiality. It seems that most teachers answered according to what they thought learners should learn. It therefore appears that there is a discrepancy between what teachers think their students learn and what they learn in actuality. Often it seems like the teachers give the "right" answer, however their answer might not correspond with reality. There are therefore seemingly very positive views regarding LO. Numerous positive answers were given without qualifying the statements or giving evidence for the success of LO. Teachers might therefore be under some kind of illusion regarding LO. Probably the question should have evaluated this aspect in a better way. Nevertheless it can be observed that "unqualified positive" responses come mainly from the schools which are located in the townships. This optimism could to be the same type of optimism which is found in a study by Van Deventer (2009:131) where 99% of teachers claim to be familiar with the principles of LO. This study however shows that many teachers are not even able to list the main themes covered in the RNCS (cf. section 5.4.1.1). Prinsloo (2007:165) found that many teachers feel that the success of LO is very limited.

Altogether there were only four teachers who presented concrete examples of how learners were really helped in LO. The following is the most positive example thereof:

- *“They really do benefit - you can actually see the change of behaviour due to new knowledge received.*
- *Their eagerness to ‘know’ the ‘truth’ (facts) and change how they used to perceive certain things is always evident.*
- *You are able to witness how they blossom as their self-esteem and worth is acknowledged and they will always strive to do better.*
- *It’s also rewarding to see your learners reach outward not inward when incidents abound (They reach out to others on the same way) but they also recognise their limitation but thus does not hamper them from giving a helping hand.” (52)*

Many other teachers made “unqualified” statements like the following:

“Yes, I do think they benefit as they learn a lot about life skills and how to handle the life problems that come their way as they grow up.” (R17)

There were only three teachers who claimed that learners do not or are not able to apply LO to their lives. One example follows:

“I think most pupils absorb the knowledge or “know hows” but do not benefit due to a lack of personalising and applying the knowledge.” (R15)

It is interesting to note that five teachers claimed that whether or not the learners learn depends on the teacher, or the teacher’s attitude, showing that at least some teachers take their responsibility to teach learners in a meaningful way, seriously. An example illustrates this:

“Yes, under the guidance of a wise/competent teacher.” (R30)

Furthermore there were those teachers who represent the opinion that learning in LO depends on the attitude of the learners themselves. One of the teachers put emphasis on both learner and teacher attitude, which is consistent with research done on the effectiveness of learning (Woolfolk, 1998:508ff):

“Once again this depends largely on both the teacher and the learners. If the teacher really wishes to orientate learners to life and living and believes in what they are doing together, the benefit to personal life can be enormous. It is a marvellous opportunity for exposing the learners to so many things they need to learn and for addressing issues right at the core of learners’ hearts. I also think that there can only be a true benefit if a teacher is allowed to try and get to the learners’ hearts – to identify the very specific needs of a particular group being taught and then to address it by allowing them to express themselves without threat and by leading them into solutions for their problems – not by solving any

problems for the learners themselves, or by simply helping them to understand themselves, but by teaching them how they should live.” (R6)

This teacher does more than answering the question. She also gives a complete method on how to teach LO. A practical example of a teacher who made it his responsibility to influence learners is given by Prinsloo (2007:166). She describes a teacher who based his LO approach on Christian principles, and achieved remarkable change in learners.

There were also teachers who had very negative attitudes about the subject. Some revealed their true feelings in answers to other questions. If that was the case those responses (even when given in response to a question other than 2 or 3) are discussed here, as it is of cardinal importance when discussing the actual success of LO. The following statements were encountered:

“A collection of things for which we don’t have time.” (in answer to question 2) (R47)

“Ek is nie opgelei vir die vak nie, ek het elke oomblik daarvan gehaat.” (I am not trained for the subject, and I hated every moment thereof). (R5)

It is clear that these teachers will not be able to contribute to the success of LO in any positive way. It seems to be the case that many teachers are forced to teach LO against their wish, which is confirmed by Van Deventer (2009:128). In personal interviews with teachers it became clear that at various schools LO is seen as a necessary evil, obliging teachers to each teach one class of LO, even though these teachers know very little about LO, are not trained and are not interested in properly teaching it.

The rest of the statements concerning LO, which raise concern or give criticisms will be discussed later, as they deal with more specific aspects of LO.

5.4.3 Comments, suggestions and criticism of LO from a teacher perspective

After the perceived success of LO from a teacher perspective has been discussed the focus will now turn to comments, suggestions and criticisms regarding LO. The teachers were asked various questions which called for an open and free answer. They were able to mention anything they liked, disliked or would like to change concerning LO. The first question regarding this topic was the following:

What do you like in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

Unfortunately most respondents did not answer by writing a paragraph, but rather just wrote down a few points. Only those points which were brought up by more than two teachers will be mentioned in this discussion.

There were five teachers who regarded the fact that many pictures were included in the textbooks as positive. Also five teachers mentioned that they found the questions, examples or exercises in the textbooks useful. Another five teachers indicated that they liked the idea of personal development and in one case holistic development of the learners. Three teachers regarded the physical exercise part of LO as very positive.

This topic is not very conclusive because many teachers either did not write elaborate answers or mentioned only a few points. This could mean that in general teachers do not feel very positive about the subject. Because of the lack of conclusive answers this topic will not be discussed any further.

It is now indispensable to scrutinise the criticisms as well as ideas for change in the LO Curriculum Statement as mentioned by the teachers. This is a significant component of the questionnaire as the teachers were able to make suggestions coming from practical experience. The views of the teachers are not considered often enough in policy documents and curriculum statements. The criticisms and suggestions of the teachers were taken from various questions, however mostly from questions 2 and 3 (as mentioned above in section 5.4.2) and questions 5 and 7 which read as follows:

What would you like to include/exclude in the Life Orientation Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

What do you dislike in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

The following table lists the aspects teachers would like to include in the practice of Life Orientation as well as the amount of times this was mentioned. Aspects only mentioned by one teacher were disregarded.

Table 5.3 Aspects to be included into the teaching of LO

Aspect to be included into LO	Frequency (number of teachers who mentioned this)
Teacher help	7
Assign more time to LO	7
Virtues	5
More physical exercise activities	4
Outside experts	3
Religion	3
Extra skills (needlework)	3
Career guidance	3
Portfolio ideas	2
Spirituality	2

Those categories which were mentioned often will be discussed. The first category of “teacher help”, is a rather broad category. Here teachers point out ways the work could be made easier for them in a practical manner. General problems with textbooks are mentioned and suggestions for more in depth knowledge, methodological help, help with assessment and the like are made.

An equal amount of teachers suggest that there need to be more periods in the timetable assigned to LO, in order to get all the work done as the following quotes exemplify:

"I would like to include the provision for more periods. Life orientation is one of the subjects where learners become themselves in totality. They can talk and participate in different topics during classes." (R38)

"But time / periods are so few that learners are unable to go deep about their topic and as/while they enjoy talking the bell rings and they become frustrated as well as the teacher." (R39)

It seems that the teachers who want to have more periods maintain a more positive perception about LO. Teachers who want to have more virtue-based teaching also seem to see potential in the teaching of LO. Prinsloo (2007:161) points out that according to teachers many learners display a lack of good values, which would confirm the need to teach values as teachers in this study mentioned:

"There are many (VERY important) skills they leave out e.g. loyalty, endurance, self-discipline, being trustworthy. These things as a foundation bring forth other life skills in a natural way." (R50)

"Include wisdom demonstrated by stories/narratives from the past + good traditions of affluent groups/nations and from the Bible." (R51)

In addition to this there were three teachers who mentioned the possible involvement of outside experts, who have more knowledge of certain topics and can relate from their experience, and could therefore really be an asset to LO.

Three teachers suggest that religion be taught as a part of Life Orientation, one of those advocates an integrated Biblical view (cf. Institute for Reformational Studies, 1998). There are however only two teachers who refer specifically to spirituality:

"I believe that learners need to be orientated towards life freely and based on the spiritual foundation of their choice." (R6)

"Ek sou meer "spiritualiteit" wou sien in die lesse. Baie onderwysers voel egter nie gemaklik met onderwerp nie." (I would like to see more

spirituality in the lessons. However many teachers do not feel comfortable with the subject). (R11)

The first respondent would like to base the whole of Life Orientation on spirituality (cf. Hodder, 2007:179ff), whereas the second respondent would like to include spirituality into the lessons. This respondent however remarks that many teachers would not feel comfortable with this idea, possibly due to the ambiguity of the concept.

This then concludes the questions around what teachers would like to add to the practice of LO. In the following the focus will be on what the teachers would like to exclude from LO.

Table 5.4 mentions two aspects teachers would like to exclude from LO. Again only those aspects which were mentioned more than once will be listed here. Many teachers (45) did not mention aspects they would wish to exclude, which constitutes the reason for the fact that only two aspects are mentioned here.

Table 5.4 Aspects to be excluded from the teaching of LO

Aspect to be excluded from LO	Frequency (number of teachers who mentioned this)
Sex education	6
Repetition of material	2

There were six teachers who mentioned that topics around sex education should be excluded or minimised. Some feel that sex education or information about abortion is provided too early, others feel that the approach used when educating about AIDS should be changed completely. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The only other aspect pointed out more than once by teachers is the unnecessary repetition of material in the various grades. This was also a point of concern mentioned in a study among Grade 9 LO learners by Theron and Dalzell (2006:408).

However the fact that only a couple of teachers named things which according to them should be excluded leaves a few question marks: Is it because they really think that nothing should be excluded or are they not inclined or willing to think critically about this matter?

In the following some topics will be discussed which are perceived as problematic by teachers. This is based on some of the above mentioned questions but particularly on question 7:

What do you dislike in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

One of the problems which was frequently mentioned by teachers is the physical exercise (PE) part of LO. Five teachers point out that they either do not feel adequately trained to teach the PE part or do not feel excited about it. One teacher wants to exclude the PE part altogether. Two teachers however suggest that the PE part of LO should be taught by experts. In contrast to this there were three teachers who suggest that more time should be spent on PE. Van Deventer (2009:134) confirms these findings, based on a study which also found that most teachers are not qualified to teach PE.

Evaluating this matter, it seems that the greatest need here is to let experts (trained teachers) teach the PE part as teachers who possibly do very well teaching the other contents of LO, are not able to teach the PE part well, partly because they are not qualified to do so and partly because they are not interested.

Another aspect which was identified as a problem area is sex education as well as related concepts such as AIDS and abortion. It is perceived by teachers to be a very dominant topic in LO. In question 4 where teachers had to name the most prominent themes of LO thirteen teachers mentioned sex education or related concepts such as AIDS. The number would have probably been even higher had the questionnaire specifically stated that they should not list the four learning outcomes as many of them did, and refer instead to topics covered in the RNCS. There were six teachers who wanted to exclude the whole or part of sex education or related concepts as was already mentioned above. Teachers seem to dislike the strong emphasis on sex

education, or possibly the specific content and indirectly the presuppositions underlying sex education in LO as the following two examples demonstrate:

“Geslagsopvoeding en VIGS word in party handboeke heeltemaal oordoen en in volle detail bespreek wat ek voel laerskool kinders nog nie ryp is voor nie. Benadering ten opsigte van geslagsopvoeding moet openlik maar op die kind se vlak aan hulle gegee word. Die teken van geslagsdele en wys hoe kondome opgesit word is heeltemaal onnodig. Ek voel seks word in ons kinders se kele afgedruk.” (Sex education and AIDS is very much overemphasised and discussed in detail in some of the textbooks, for which I think primary school children are not ready. The approach concerning sex education should be open, but should be done at the level of the child. The drawing of sex organs and demonstrating how condoms are used is completely unnecessary. I feel that sex is forced onto our children.) (R8)

“Exclude: Aids (the people who formulate these textbooks have NO IDEA what the real cultural issues are that need to be addressed with regard to Aids and abstinence).” (R50)

In addition there is one teacher who doubts the effectiveness of sex education as the following quote reveals:

“I would like to see learners taking what they taught in LO very serious eg. we teach them every day to take responsibility of their bodies and make right decisions but it seems like we LO teachers are not doing enough because teenage pregnancy is very high in school.” (R49)

Another teacher supported the idea of more sex education in schools, probably due to the same reasons:

“There has to be a section or an area which deals thoroughly with sexuality education from lower grades.” (R44)

This obviously stands in contrast with other teachers who, as was mentioned already, feel that too much of sex education is done already. It is possible that the teachers who want to increase sex education believe that even more sex education should be done in schools in order to lower the teen pregnancy rates and should at the same time discourage promiscuity. The issues around sex education and AIDS probably have to be seriously considered by the Department of Education, in order to maximise effectiveness of LO. No South African literature on this subject was available except a study done by Theron and Dalzell (2006), who mention that Grade 9 learners would like to acquire skills which empower them to cope with HIV/AIDS.

Another problem area, which was pointed out by various teachers is the possibility that LO does not achieve its aims as stated in the Curriculum Statement which is also mentioned by Prinsloo (2007:161ff). Eight teachers state this specifically by saying that learners do not really learn in LO, and some claim that application is a problem, and is thus not guaranteed:

“Al leer hulle die “korrekte” in LO, beteken dit geensins dat hul wel daarvolgens leef nie.” (Even if they learn the “correct” in LO, this does not mean that they live according to it.) (R1)

“At present most learners do not learn anything they consider meaningful in life orientation. This would include the whole spectrum on what they learn in personal well-being, career guidance, individuals and society and physical recreation. What I personally think most learners learn in Life Orientation is that it is a useless subject, wasting their time and that some set of silly geniuses in authority decided that they needed to learn about self-image, drugs and AIDS and that it is all an empty farce and not applicable to life.” (R6)

In addition to this three teachers mention that little learning takes place in LO due to the fact that it was not an examination subject until the end of 2008 or that the marks are not taken into account in the calculations for the Matric average.

“In our school it is not taken seriously, reason being is non-examination subject in Grade 12.” (R38)

It needs to be mentioned that as of 2009 LO is an examination subject, which seems to be a step into the right direction (cf. Department of Education, 2009).

Three teachers believe that learners get bored in LO:

“...maar as gevolg van aanhoudende herhaling van werk vanaf gr.10-12 verloor hul belangstelling.” (...but as a result of continuous repetition of the work from gr 10-12, they loose interest). (R59)

There are even teachers who feel that LO serves no real purpose and should be either changed or excluded from the curriculum altogether.

“Personally, I think that it is a waste of time. Bring back useful subjects that got squashed into Life Orientation.” (R47)

The issues around effectiveness will be discussed further in the following chapter and the focus will now be on another area of concern.

Many LO teachers (10%) experience assessment as a problem, which is brought up six times. It seems that teachers find it very difficult to assess the outcomes of LO in general as is shown here:

“Al die assesserings met kruisverwysings, wat voorgeskryf word is nutteloos, sowel as assesseringsopname in leerder skrifte.”(All the assessments with cross references, which are prescribed, are useless, as well as assessment inventories in learners’ books). (R29)

The following teacher suggested that these points should be included in LO:

“1. Specific tasks and ways to assess pupils in a simple way

2. *The knowledge and application and assessment in an ordered way – specific skills they must or can (choice) concentrate on.*” (R15)

Another teachers feels that learners do benefit by LO, however he/she admits that this is difficult to measure.

“They do benefit. Although it is difficult to measure directly the learners are equipped with decision making skills, information and options.” (R53)

All these quotes indicate that assessment is a problem. Van Deventer (2009:134) asserts that assessment is a problematic area in LO regarding the physical exercise component. The problems regarding assessment add to the difficulties of measuring the general success of LO. Even though learners can pass exams, it is still another question whether or not they apply what they have learned to their lives. Certainly it also needs to be considered that some of the content of LO is problematic, which, for example, became clear when looking at sex education. This should be a serious matter of concern to the Education Department.

Another problem which bothers teachers is class size. Four teachers mentioned that the classes are too big, and that this hinders the success of LO:

“Kleiner groepe sou die vak meer effektief maak, dan sou sekere doelwitte moontlik gewees het, soos bv ‘n raadgevende rol vir leerders, ‘n oor om te luister.” (Smaller groups would make the subject more effective, certain aims would then be possible, for example an advisory role for learners, or an ear to listen to learners). (R10)

Three teachers mention that the administration around the subject is problematic, as it takes too much time:

“... the administration and other activities prevents one from preparing and keeping up the expectations of the subject (“rondslomp”).” (R15)

“Ek is so besig om admin in plek te kry, portefeulje leer te organiseer, die fisiese gedeelte by te hou dat daar nie regtig tyd is vir rustige gesels sinder druk nie. Atmosfeer te besig.” (I am so busy to get the admin into place, to organise portfolios, to keep up with the physical part, that there isn’t really time for talking with the learners without pressure. Atmosphere too busy.) (R11)

5.4.4 Observations by the researcher regarding teacher’s answers to questions on LO

Another matter which comes to the fore when analysing the questionnaires deserves attention. It seems as if there are various teachers who are either poorly trained and/or uncommitted concerning the subject Life Orientation. It is a cause for pause and a concern that there were teachers who were not able, or chose not to answer questions 5-7. (5: What would you like to include/exclude in the Life Orientation Curriculum Statement and textbooks? 6: What do you like in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)? 7: What do you dislike in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)?) There were for example 9 teachers (15%) who chose not to suggest a single aspect which should be included or excluded in LO (in question 5). Likewise there were 13 teachers (22%) who did not mention one single aspect concerning what they disliked regarding the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (question 7).

Even though a teacher might like LO, it still appears strange if he/she does not mention a single critical point or suggestion for the improvement of LO or a point of disagreement. This could mean that teachers are not motivated or committed to teaching LO. However the greater concern is that teachers are possibly either not able to think critically about the matter themselves, or do not take the time to do so.

In answer to the questions around perceived effectiveness of LO some teachers answered in the following ways, which is certainly a cause for concern. The teachers’ English proficiency is very weak and there seems to be a lack of training as well:

“Communication among different society and to obey each and everyone origin.” (R20)

“Significance of body part the anger management.” (R41)

“Youth benefit because this need a lot of research think for themselves and write their own imaginations.” (R18)

One teacher gave the following definition of spirituality:

“As a state of being concerned with spiritual matters that are devoted to spiritual things.” (R17)

This statement says absolutely nothing, it is rather evidence of circular reasoning. The three above statements are almost nonsensical.

The teachers, whose responses are quoted here seem to have a limited understanding of the concept and purpose of LO. In addition to that they display insufficient English writing skills. This raises concern, as it follows that they will not be able to teach their learners proper writing skills. There are many more examples in the questionnaires of poor writing skills. Often teachers made serious syntax and orthographic mistakes in their answers. The question which emerges here is: How does this state of affairs inform the cognitive thinking skills of the teachers? In Chapter 1 (section 1.1) it was mentioned that cognitive thinking skills play an important role in life skills education. If however teachers lack skills, how can they be imparted to learners? This is of course not a matter that concerns only LO but the whole school system.

Having discussed the emergent issues and concerns around the practice of Life Orientation as pointed out by teachers, the focus will now shift to matters of spirituality. This eventually also includes the question whether teachers see a possible connection between spirituality and Life Orientation.

5.4.5 Definitions of spirituality – teachers' views

In the questionnaire the teachers were provided with the following definition of spirituality: *"Spirituality is a concept which includes the following aspects: belief in a power beyond oneself, hope and optimism, meaning and purpose, worship, prayer, meditation, love and compassion, moral and ethical values as well as transcendence."* This definition is certainly a modern definition and includes the aspects which were mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.6. Most respondents (78%) agree with this definition of spirituality. Some add a component or differ on one of the points included in the definition, but there are only two respondents who completely disagree with the definition or state that he/she does not believe in spirituality or that he/she is opposed to the concept. It seems that people in general are familiar with the concept and often have an opinion about it. However what is also interesting is that 13 respondents (22%) made a connection between spirituality and religion in question 9 (Do you agree with this definition (of spirituality)? Why or why not?). The questionnaire did not imply this. This finding suggests that in the minds of many people spirituality and religion are linked, which is also evident in the academic literature (Smith & Shortt, 2000:3f; Erricker, 2000:37).

5.4.6 Exploring the possible connection between LO and spirituality from a teacher perspective

This next section deals with the possible connection between LO and spirituality. This also includes questions on religion and other possible bases for LO. Questions were asked which gave teachers the opportunity to articulate their own views and opinions regarding this matter. It needs to be observed here that in general little research on LO has been conducted in South Africa. Virtually no sources are available which explore the connection between LO and spirituality. This results in fewer sources being mentioned here for triangulation.

The first question that was asked was the following:

Do you think there could be a relationship between spirituality and Life Orientation? Motivate.

Interestingly, the vast majority of teachers think that there is or should be a relationship between spirituality and Life Orientation. 47 out of 59 teachers (80%) agreed to this, whereas five teachers (8%) were against it. Of those five, two suggested that there should rather be a relationship between LO and religion. The remaining seven teachers either gave inconclusive answers or did not answer the question. This indicates that in contrast to the Revised National Curriculum Statement, where spirituality is hardly mentioned (cf. Chapter 3 section 5.2), teachers think that some measure of spirituality should be included in the teaching of Life Orientation. In their motivations as to why they think there could or could not be a relationship between LO and spirituality ten teachers referred to religion, which shows that they perceive a link between the concepts of religion and spirituality. Two examples are presented here:

“Yes. Because learners are taught about different religions and taught that they are diverse with regard to former school and home backgrounds, religions, capabilities, they are taught to respect each other.” (R45)

“Yes. Because there are topics in life orientation that touches on issues of faith and religions like Christianity, Judaism, African cultural and traditional religion, Muslim etc.” (R16)

This confirms the findings in Chapter 2 which highlighted the often difficult and unclear relationship between spirituality and religion as was explained in Chapter 2 (section 2.3).

Furthermore when explaining why there could be a relationship between LO and spirituality teachers referred to the role spirituality can play in teaching hope and a positive outlook on life (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5).

What was remarkable is that five teachers (8%) stated that spirituality should be some kind of foundation or basis for LO, or in other words that spirituality can or does provide the basis (or part of a basis) for our lives:

“Yes! How can you want to orientate a child in life without foundation? You must stand and build on something otherwise it’s just like building on sand, it won’t stand. Without the spiritual aspect there’s no ground for right and wrong, ethics or moral values and these are the things they try to teach children.” (R50)

“I don’t believe it is possible to teach in any meaningful way if the importance of spirituality is not recognised. It is our view of spirituality which informs how we interpret reality.” (R30)

“Yes. Previously in the old system there was Guidance and Religious education. The two had positive influence in building the valuing system of a person. If you offer LO it will be groundless without spiritual base.” (R53)

These teachers thus see spirituality as a basis on which LO can rest. This is noteworthy as the question asked did not suggest such an idea. (Only question 12 suggested such an idea to the teachers). This shows that these teachers out of their own believe that it is necessary to base Life Orientation on spirituality. No research has as yet been conducted in South Africa regarding a possible connection between spirituality and Life Orientation. Nevertheless, these findings are supported by the spirituality education movement which is thriving in various countries (Wright, 2000:36; Ebstyne King, 2004:112; Gearon, 2004:190f). Hodder (2007:179ff) suggests that spirituality should be a foundation in Australian schools.

The next question then referred more specifically to religion and spirituality:

Do you think there is a relationship between spirituality and religion? Motivate.

The vast majority (see table 5.5) of respondents (78%) stated that there is a relationship between spirituality and religion. Six teachers did not answer the question, and only four stated that there is no relationship between spirituality and religion. In the following the viewpoints of the teachers regarding the nature of the relationship between religion and spirituality will be summarised in a table, which will be followed by quotes from the teachers' answers (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3). The categories in Table 5.5 are explained below.

Table 5.5 Teacher view of the relationship between religion and spirituality

View of religion and spirituality	Number of respondents
Spirituality – religion	10
Spirituality = religion	10
Spirituality → religion	15
Religion → spirituality	11

“Spirituality – religion”, refers to responses which only affirm the idea that there is a relationship between the two concepts, without clarifying what this relationship could possibly look like:

“Yes. Spirituality and religion can never be separated.” (R21)

The category “spirituality = religion” refers to all responses which regarded religion and spirituality as more or less the same construct:

“Yes there is. Spirituality nurture good behaviour and religion practise norms and values of a particular denomination. Love and passion is common in both. Moral ethics is common in both.” (R37)

“Yes spirituality and religion are one and the same thing. Learners are taught about morals and different ethnic groups.” (R20)

The category “spirituality → religion” refers to responses which perceived spirituality as the “bigger” concept, where spirituality contains religion, or spirituality comes before religion, such as is exemplified in the following responses:

“Yes, there would definitely be some kind of relationship because in order to profess that one belongs to a particular religion, one needs to be aware of spirituality and acknowledge its existence. It is, however, possible to be aware of spirituality without belonging to a classified, specific religion as religion can be a set of rules, more than anything else. I would suggest that when one applies spirituality to oneself and acknowledges that there is a spiritual reality, one forms a simple kind of religion for oneself, though you might not call it a religion.” (R6)

“Ja, selfs al sou jy in geen god glo → is dit jou raamwerk van spiritualiteit en beoefening daarvan. Die mens is ‘n spirituele wese en kan nie ontsnap daarvan nie.” (Yes, even if you would not believe in a god → it is your frame of reference of spirituality and the practice thereof. Man is a spiritual being and cannot escape this.) (R59)

“Yes. Religion is people’s different ways of finding or expressing what they believe is their ‘meaning’ in life. So religion is the expression of their spiritual convictions.” (R30)

It is noteworthy that 25% of respondents perceived religion as a subcategory of spirituality, as this coincides with the contemporary perception of the relationship between these two concepts, even though religion is often seen as more negative (Westgate, 1996:27; Egan, 2001). At the same time this is the Biblical concept too, where spirituality is seen as an inherent human characteristic, out of which religion should flow (Grudem, 1994:472; cf. Chapter 2, section 2.1).

The last category “religion → spirituality” designates responses which see religion as the “bigger” concept. Here spirituality is conceived of as dependent on religion, or is seen as a subcategory of religion:

“Ja, want sonder Godsdiens is daar nie spiritualiteit” (Yes, because without religion there is no spirituality.) (R14)

“Yes. The principle of a person spiritually are influenced by the religion. Eg. If a person believes in ancestors and attend apostolic church then that person spiritual will believe in dreams burning sacrifices, visiting the graves to ask for luck. But religiously if a person is a Christian a (born again one) then he only believes in Jesus as the only mediator, saviour and spiritual will only follow the practices of a born again Christian.” (R40)

There was however one response which was categorised in each of the last two categories, as it seemed that this teacher sees religion as a necessity for spirituality as well as vice versa:

“Yes. For one to believe in certain religion you need first to be spiritually involved and have faith in that particular religion.” (R16)

Furthermore there were two types of responses which were not categorised. They did either not fit into any one of the categories, or they revealed a high level of confusion concerning the concepts of spirituality and religion such as the following two examples:

“I find it difficult to define religion and spirituality without identifying with a type of religion eg. Christian spirituality or Christian religion and the two words need to be more description.” (R15)

“Yes. Because as you worship your spirit is uplifted. One can find the meaning of life and its goodness.” (R57)

When considering the answers to this question it becomes evident that there is little consensus among teachers as to what the relationship between religion and spirituality is. Even though most responses (78%) could be categorised, various respondents

reveal an underlying confusion concerning the two concepts. This is not surprising, as there is also no universal agreement in the academic literature (Schweitzer, 2004:98).

The next question essentially captures the central question of this study and is therefore very important. The teachers were asked if spirituality could possibly serve as a basis for Life Orientation.

Do you think spirituality could possibly even serve as a basis/foundation for Life Orientation?

a) Why or why not?

b) How would you describe the characteristics of such a spirituality?

Before going into an in depth analysis, the result to the question is summarised in the table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Teachers' views on the possibility of spirituality being a basis for LO

Spirituality a basis for Life Orientation?	Number of respondents
No	19
Yes	33
Yes and no	3
No answer	4

It becomes clear that the majority of teachers (56%) agree that spirituality can serve as a basis for Life Orientation.

Of those 19 teachers (32%) who did not agree that spirituality could be a foundation for LO, eleven (19%) stated that spirituality should not serve as a foundation for LO as people have different beliefs. This argument reflects the idea that our beliefs are closely related to our spirituality. In some cases reference is made to religion, which shows that teachers believe that religion is inextricably linked to spirituality and cannot be taught on neutral grounds (affirming the equal validity of any religion).

These teachers therefore consider religious or belief neutrality more important than the teaching of spirituality according to a specific belief system. They affirm religious or cultural relativism in their answers, which is a very popular paradigm in contemporary society as was explained in Chapter 3, section 3.5. Some examples follow:

“The manifest principle of Life Orientation is non-judgmental approach. Should you bring a value system in LO lessons it will be awkward since you are value laden.” (R53)

“Godsdiens bepaal die spiritualiteit waaraan ek glo. Daar is verskeie godsdiensleerders dus verskeie spiritualiteite.” (Religion determines the spirituality in which I believe. There are different religions, thus different spiritualities.) (R2)

“‘n Onderwyser kan nie leerders lei op hierdie gebied, want die onderwyser is deel van ‘n sekere verwysingsraamwerk - wat nie noodwendig saamstem/ooreenstem met die van die leerder se huis opset.” (A teacher cannot guide learners in this area, as the teacher is part of a certain frame of reference – which does not necessarily agree with the learners’ home setup.) (R10)

Three teachers did not agree on basing LO on spirituality, as they claim that LO has to do with diverse subject matters and not exclusively with spirituality:

“Die lewe is ook nie net spiritueel nie, slegs gedeeltelik. Praktiese ondervinding en opleiding.” (Neither is life only spiritual, only partly. Practical experience and training.) (R1)

“Spirituality is not a foundation for Life Orientation, but forms part of Life Orientation education. It is one of the issues that are discussed in Life Orientation. Life Orientation itself, is more concerned about educating learners about issues that affects their daily lives, of which spirituality is part of that, but not the foundation.” (R16)

One possible reason for this result is that these teachers do not understand the position that spirituality provides a basis, not implying that every topic discussed in LO needs to have a direct reference to spirituality. A basis or foundation is often not visible and is certainly not to be discussed in every lesson.

The reasons advanced by the participants, who felt that spirituality could or should be a basis for spirituality, can be summarised in the following table:

Table 5.7 Motivations of teachers for spirituality being a basis for LO

Motivation for spirituality as basis for LO	Number of respondents
Spirituality is foundational to life	9
Spirituality has good effects	8
Spirituality is equal to Christianity	6
Spirituality provides moral standards	2
Spirituality is the purpose of LO	2
Spirituality can promote religious relativism	2

Nine teachers (15%) suggested that spirituality can be seen as a foundational element to life out of which for example morals are developed, or as a stance from which a teacher can work, as the responses will show.

"It must. How can you want to orientate a child in life without foundation? You must stand and build on something otherwise it's just like building on sand, it won't stand. Without the spiritual aspect there's no ground for right and wrong, ethics or moral values and these are the things they try to teach children." (R50)

"Spirituality are formed from the day we were born. We at school just have to built on your way of life." (R33)

Eight teachers (14%) claim that spirituality can serve as a foundation for LO because spirituality will have a good effect on children's lives and actions, it for example will result in a morality of care. In contrast to the previous reasons given which were

ontological in nature, the reasons provided here could be described as being more pragmatic:

"This will help the learners to understand and appreciate each other better, and accept each one for who he or she is. It will make them understand that as individuals we have a right to choose and believe in what works for us. This will also guide them by shaping their behaviour towards the environment as it will make them appreciate all life (even the insects) and their behaviour towards the non-living like appreciate that water and the atmosphere gives us life thus need to sustain it rather than harm it." (R45)

"Because if you have love, passion your personal being will be well cared. You will care for your society and know how to live with others. You will be aware of your health, aware of diseases and how to prevent them. You will look after your physical live and live a holy life." (R19)

Six teachers (10%) considered Christianity as a reason for building LO on the foundation of spirituality. Some claim that Christian spirituality is foundational to life and living, and should thus be the basis. Others believe that Christianity, or a Christian approach to LO can provide a way of fostering resilience in children (cf, Prinsloo, 2007:166):

"Right from grade R - senior phase. That is where we should give our children a good foundation of Christianity because when they move to higher grade that is where they learn about different religion and when they have a good foundation of Christianity they wont make a wrong choice and they wont be influenced by other children." (R38)

"Because their is nothing or anything we can do without God's power."
(R23)

The other three categories were mentioned by two teachers (3%) each. An example will be given of each:

Spirituality provides moral standards (this could have been classified under “good effects”, however these teachers put emphasis on the basis for moral values.):

“With the degenerations of morals among the youth. They need to be reminded of morals, values and ethics every time.” (R43)

Two teachers identified the contents or aims of spirituality as being identical to the purpose of LO:

“Dit dek +- alles waaroor LO gaan.” (It covers +- everything LO is about.) (R28)

Another two teachers envisage spirituality as being able to promote religious relativism or pluralism, which is certainly in the core of contemporary academic discourse (cf. Wolin, 2004:71).

“’n Spesifieke geloof is reeds uitgesluit uit die leerplan - verskillende gelowe word aan leerders bekend gemaak en of hulle ’n spesifieke geloof aanhang is van geen belang vir die skool nie.” (A specific religion is already excluded from the curriculum – different religions are presented to the learners, and if they are part of a specific religion is of no consequence to the school.) (R3)

It is interesting that these teachers view spirituality as a possible vehicle of teaching or promoting religious pluralism. In contrast to this there were ten teachers (17%) who disagreed with the possibility of spirituality being a foundation for LO, claiming that spirituality implies that one set of beliefs or one religion would be favoured. This again demonstrates that the topic around particularity and inclusiveness remains contentious (cf. Hunter, 2000).

After having considered proposed reasons for making spirituality a basis for Life Orientation, the second part of question 12, deals with the particularities of such a spirituality as suggested by the teachers. Some teachers, disagreeing on spirituality as a possible basis for LO, incongruously still answered the second question, where they

were supposed to give a description of a type of spirituality they think could serve as a basis for LO. However as this results in a contradiction, these answers were not considered here.

Table 5.8 encapsulates the different characteristics teachers would want to assign to a spirituality that is foundational to Life Orientation. Some answers had to be classified into two categories. It also has to be pointed out that some teachers, even though they support the use of spirituality to be a foundation did not specify any characteristics of this spirituality, which explains the small number of respondents.

Table 5.8 Characteristics of a foundational spirituality in LO

Characteristics of spirituality	Number of respondents
Certain values and/or norms	10
Christianity	9
Openness to define own life view/ relativism	4
Vision/purpose	2
Tolerance	2
Truth	2

Ten teachers (17%) believed that specific norms and values should be characteristic of a spirituality being the foundation for LO. Of these ten teachers most (8) mentioned only values, norms or morals. According to the definition of spirituality given on the questionnaire, this only encompasses a quarter of the aspects spirituality consists of. This might indicate that many teachers have not fully grasped the concept of spirituality. In the following examples are given:

“Consistent, to be open, friendly, serve as an example.” (R46)

“Behave according to the norms and standards of the community. Live respectfully. Act responsible.” (R33)

There were nine teachers (15%) who wanted to see Christianity or an aspect of Christianity as a main characteristic of spirituality. This shows that they conceptualise religion and spirituality as being related or identical:

“Kenmerke is baie breed gestel. Dit gaan oor 'n verhouding met jou Skepper, 'n lewe wat in alle opsigte aan Hom gewy is en waar dit ten volle uitgeleef word volgens die woord van God.” (Characteristics are very broad. It is about a relationship with your Creator, a life which is dedicated to him in all aspects, and which is lived fully according to the word of God.) (R29)

“If first learners know that God is almighty and everybody is created in his image.” (R39)

Four teachers (7%) suggested that spirituality should provide room for a learner's own way of defining and committing to such a spirituality, or that it should be based on learners' own views of spirituality. This is clearly relativistic in its stance. It also is reminiscent of the values clarification approach as described in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2 (cf. Roberts, 2002:72; Hunt, 2005:186). Only four teachers point this out:

“It should be characterized by an openness in approach, with no legalism at all. Learners should be able to use this spirituality embedded in education to define for themselves what they believe and how they apply what they believe to life.” (R6)

“Will know what you can believe (a power beyond yourself); you will have reason for doing/choosing or not choosing in your value system.” (R15)

Three teachers (5%) referred to vision or purpose being important as a characteristic of spirituality:

“...knowing that your life has a purpose beyond mere chance and hard work, etc.” (R30)

“Visie met insig: hy moet sy betekenis op aarde vervul...” (Vision with insight: he needs to fulfil his meaning on earth...) (R11)

Two teachers (3%) claimed that tolerance should be a very important characteristic of this spirituality (cf. Wright, 2000:22) which seems to be similar to one of the previous categories, namely relativism, where learners should be encouraged to choose their own views.

“Acceptance and respect of other religions.” (R49)

Two teachers suggested truth or absolutes as a characteristic:

“It would have to be based on a universally admitted source of truth, such as the Bible, if learners profess to be Christian.” (R6)

These answers indicate that there is little agreement among teachers concerning this matter, which again reflects the nature of the academic discourse at present (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3 and Chapter 3, section 3.6).

Closely connected to this is the subsequent question in the questionnaire which reads,

What in your opinion should be the role of religion in Life Orientation?

Various viewpoints were presented by the teachers, and often lengthy answers were written, which demonstrates that this topic was of special interest to many teachers. Firstly Table 5.9 is presented, which summarises how teachers view religion within the context of Life Orientation. Again teachers would often express more than one view.

Table 5.9 Teachers' perceptions of the role of religion in LO

Role of religion in Life Orientation	Number of respondents
Teach tolerance, promote pluralism, give a choice	18
Teach morals and positive behaviour	16
Should play no role	8
Religion should be foundation	7
Should be Christian religion	6
Should be any specific religion	4

The first category indicates that many teachers (31%) have embraced religious pluralism (cf. Chapter 2, section 6.1.3). This is a worldwide trend (Hunt, 2005:186), and is also promoted by the Curriculum Statement (2002, 2003) as well as the South African Constitution (1996). This category encompasses views where teachers feel that learners must make an informed choice concerning the religion they want to belong to. Furthermore 'respect' and 'tolerance' towards other religions is promoted by these teachers.

"Learners need to know of the different religions eg Buddhism, Hinduism, Jewish religion. They are free to choose which religion they want to perform. Religious beliefs cannot be forced onto learners." (R9)

"Life Orientation role should be to show learners that in life there are different religion and religion is a choice. They should also learn to respect the religion of others. They should also know the different rituals of different religion." (R38)

"Op hierdie stadium word daar 'n vergelyking tussen verskillende godsdienste getref wat saamgevat word as UBUNTU. Alle godsdienste is gelyk volgens die tekste. Daar word slegs 'n maatskaplike gewete gekweek. Ons mag nie een godsdiens bokant ander stel. Een groot spieël het gebreek en kleiner stukkies gebreek." (At this stage there is a comparison being made between different religions, which is summarised

as UBUNTU. According to the texts all religions are equal. Only a social conscience is instilled. We may not elevate one religion above another. One big mirror broke into smaller pieces.) (R11)

This last respondent understood that pluralism is advocated in the teaching practice of LO, but clearly has a limited understanding of “ubuntu”, which is strongly advocated in South African society (cf. Mnyaka & Mothlabi, 2005).

Another 16 teachers (27%) stated that the role of religion in Life Orientation is to teach learners morals or other desirable traits. According to these opinions religion can exert a positive influence on learners, which is also documented in the literature (Ebstyne King 2004:112f; Ebstyne King & Benson, 2006:384):

“Love and compassion because our learners have anger and are facing lives whereby doesn’t care for one another, there are more killings and destructions. With religion learners will be able to love and to care of one another. Fightings in the schools and in the community will decrease.” (R57)

“Religion must provide a code of conduct of which learners must live by. A religion is part of lifestyle. It must provide positive aspects in one’s life.” (R44)

The next group of opinions is unique in that these teachers wanted religion to play no role at all in LO. They implied that this might come at the cost of sacrificing diversity and pluralism, and they stated that religious education is the parents’ task:

“No. Because as individuals we are not from same religions. It is easier if a class / schools have one religion but as much as it is important to respect and accommodate other religions it best if this does not become the role in Life Orientation to avoid discrimination of religion.” (R42)

“Because of our differences in believes / religion I think it shouldn’t have a primary influence in the subject because if that is the case then learners (others) will feel offended by other religions.” (R40)

In contrast to this the next group of arguments (12% of teachers), suggests that religion be the foundation to LO, or should at least provide part of a foundation. This is not surprising as religion has been the foundation for moral education in the West for centuries and is still advocated today by religious groups (cf. Kaestle, 198; Algera & Sink, 2002; Roberts, 2002):

“Bogenoemde moet ‘n prominente rol speel. Alle opvoeding het ‘n spesifieke lyn wat gevolg moet word tov godsdiens onderrig. Die kennis van die Woord en toepassing daarvan. Daarsonder is opvoeding onmoontlik.” (The above mentioned must play a prominent role. All education has a specific line, which needs to be followed with regards to religion education. The knowledge of the Word and the application thereof. Without this, education is impossible.) (R29)

“As an “organised” way of expressing spirituality it should inform the worldview through which LO is taught.” (R30)

Six teachers (10%) favoured Christianity as the religion that is promoted in LO, or the religion on which LO should be based:

“Life Orientation is not Sunday School but it should be based in a Biblical worldview and many references to Biblical material should be included.” (R51)

“My own view is that Christianity is the answer and that it should play a foundational role in LO, spreading and influencing every aspect of it.” (R50)

In contrast to this view there were four teachers (7%) who stated that a specific religion should be chosen based on consensus, which would then be the basis for the teaching practice of LO.

“As die skool kan besluit - ons hang ‘n sekere godsdiens aan en bied slegs dit aan - kan dit bly.” (If the school can decide – we adhere to a certain religion and only offer this – then it can stay.) (R28)

These examples and explanations have presented the specific opinions around religion and Life Orientation. Throughout this analysis it came to the fore that there are a few teachers who reveal an ambiguity or tension regarding this matter. The tension is about inclusiveness versus particularity. These teachers recognise the tension between a specific religion’s truth claim (particularity) and the demand for acceptance of all religious beliefs as equally valid (inclusiveness). It appears that many of them are thinking about this conflict, some have come to a conclusion, others are struggling to find an answer. The following, sometimes lengthy examples reveal this struggle. This topic is presented here in some length, because this represents one of the most crucial issues regarding this study.

“Ek voel dat die rol wat godsdiens tans speel ‘n mens gemakliker maak ten opsigte van ander godsdienste, maar hierdie is ook ‘n gevaarlike terrein om op te beweeg, want ek as Christen voel nie gemaklik daarmee om leerders blootstelling te gee aan ander gelowe wat ek weet nie die waarheid is nie, voordat ek ‘n onderwyser is, is ek ‘n dissipel van Christus en om ander gelowe “te verkondig” is teen my geloof.” (I feel that the role which religion currently plays makes you more comfortable concerning other religions, but this is also a dangerous area to move on, because I as a Christian do not feel comfortable to expose learners to other faiths, which I know are not the truth, before being a teacher, I am a disciple of Christ, and to “preach” other faiths is against my faith). (R59)

“Dit is ‘n baie sensitiewe saak en daar bestaan baie uiteenlopende sienings rakende die saak! Sommige Christen-ouers wil byvoorbeeld geensins hê dat hul kinders enige kennis van ander godsdienste moet

inwin nie, byvoorbeeld Islam, Boeddhisme, en so voort al word daar gepoog om dit heel objektief aan te bied. Die teenoorgestelde is ook waar, byvoorbeeld Moslems teenoor Christendom. Die gevaar is dat blootstelling aan 'n vreemde godsdiens leerders kan prikkel om nadere ondersoek te doen en so die pad heel byster kan raak. Soms is dit bloot nuuskierigheid, maar leerders kan as gevolg van groepsdruk eie tradisionele beginsels prysgee. My vraag altyd: Was hy/sy ooit werklik in sy hart oortuig van 'n beginsel / godsdiens of is dit bloot oorlewering / tradisie / opvoeding?? Dit is vir my baie belangrik dat kinders opgevoed en gelei moet word om self oortuig te wees van 'n saak. Dit begin egter primêr in die ouerhuis en die skool en LO is slegs 'n verlenging daarvan.”

(This is a very sensitive issue, and there are many diverging opinions concerning this matter. Some Christian parents for example do not want their children to acquire any knowledge of other religions, such as for example Islam, Buddhism and so forth, even though it is attempted to present it quite objectively. The opposite is also true, for example Muslims towards Christianity. The danger is that exposure to other religions can incite learners to find out more, and like this they can really loose their way. Sometimes it is only curiosity, but as a result of peer pressure learners can give up their own traditional principles. My question always: Was he/she ever really convinced of a principle/religion, or is it only custom /the handing over of tradition / education?? To me it is very important that children are educated and led to be convinced themselves of a matter. However this primarily begins in the home and the school and LO are only an extension thereof.) (R1)

“In order to make spirituality effective and truly meaningful, it is given a description and an outline according to specific patterns. It is then called a religion with a more or less shared agreement on what exactly the idea of spirituality should contain and how one should apply these beliefs to life. If one teaches on a basis of spirituality, it would be only deeply meaningful if a common belief is shared and this would make a specific religion necessary. If this is not the case, Life Orientation once again just becomes interesting and, a case of, “Oh, I see this is what you believe, I

don't necessarily agree with you, but that is alright. There are some basic things that apply to all of us, etc..." One needs to agree about values and how one should live to at least some extent and be able to share in this and investigate how to apply this to life and how to live as your heart and mind and spirit together dictate. One would of necessity need a common basic religion to make this effectively possible." (R6)

The first teacher saw Christianity as the only acceptable truth, and was therefore uncomfortable with religious pluralism. The next quote exemplifies the struggle of this specific teacher. She is not quite sure whether exposing learners to different religions is advisable, according to her it could be a dangerous enterprise, as children might choose another religion. She considers only one religion to be true and wouldn't want a child to choose another one. Yet she sees that a "forced" religion has little value if it is divorced from any type of conviction. The last teacher describes the problems of inclusiveness. She believes that an inclusive approach to LO results in nothing more than transferring knowledge. She sees the necessity for particularity, where certain values and as a result behaviour patterns become binding. This topic, constituting one of the key issues in this study will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

The final question in this section requests the teachers to suggest a possible foundation for LO:

What according to your opinion could be the basis for Life Orientation and why do you say so?

After the teachers had been asked questions regarding specific suggestions, this last question provided them with the opportunity to freely express their opinion concerning the foundation of Life Orientation. It again appears that most teachers did not really understand the question. Many of them provided a list of themes which should be discussed, rather than giving a basis. Only two teachers referred to human rights as a possible basis, despite the fact that human rights constitute one of the current bases of LO. Seven teachers (12%) proposed the Christian religion as basis for LO, and seven proposed 'religion in general' as a basis. One mentioned Christianity

as the ideal basis, then religion in general as a second option. Only two teachers referred to spirituality here. There were two teachers who suggest a completely different approach, stating that the basis is the teacher. One teacher claimed that the LO teacher should use his discretion in order to determine what the children need and then he/she should build the subject on a basis of spirituality. It is doubtful whether most teachers would be prepared to do this. Many teachers do not like the subject as was shown above (section 5.4.2). A significant number of teachers are not or do not feel qualified to teach the subject. This leads over to the last question, which concerns the extent to which teachers feel qualified to teach LO.

5.4.7 The extent to which teachers feel qualified

In order to find out how many teachers feel qualified to teach LO the following question was asked:

To what extent do you feel qualified to teach Life Orientation?

Table 5.10 below provides an overview of the extent teachers feel qualified to teach LO:

Table 5.10 Extent to which teachers feel qualified to teach LO

Extent	Number of teachers
Well or sufficiently qualified	27
Moderately qualified or unsure	5
Insufficiently qualified	9

Only 41 of 59 (69%) teachers answered this question. Less than 50% of all teachers claim that they feel qualified to teach LO. The finding that many teachers are not or do not feel qualified is confirmed by Van Deventer (2009:140) and Prinsloo (2007:164f). Furthermore there might be teachers who feel they are qualified, but in practice this might prove untrue. In this study fourteen teachers feel either only partially qualified or rather unqualified as the following examples show:

“Selfs om hierdie vraelys te voltooi, is vir my moeilik. Ek het nooit enige formele opleiding in LO ontvang nie. Ek laat my dikwels ly deur my eie

gevoelens of waardestelsel.” (Even to complete this questionnaire is difficult for me. I have never had any formal training in LO. I often let myself be led by my own feelings or value system.) (R7)

“Not at all!” (R47)

“Just good but not excellent. I still need training and so do other staff. I still lack potential of handling and approaching sensitive issues in the classroom.” (R40)

5.4.8 Conclusion

In order to come to a conclusion concerning the questionnaires of the teachers, it remains to make some general comments, which flow from the observations and interpretations as presented in this section. First of all there seem to be some cause for concern regarding the practice of LO. This is summarised in the following points:

- There is no way of showing that learners benefit from the teaching of LO or not. It appears doubtful that the envisaged outcomes of the RNCS are achieved at all. Here the research by Prinsloo (2007) can be considered, which was described in detail in Chapter 3 section 3.5.5. Her findings and the findings of the current study seem to have much in common.
- Sex education and related topics such as AIDS and abortion, as well as physical exercise are areas of contention and are perceived by many teachers as a threat.
- Many teachers do not feel qualified or are not qualified to teach the subject. Some teachers seem not to be able to reflect critically on the practice of LO. In addition to that various teachers have developed a resistance towards this subject.

Concerning spirituality, religion and Life Orientation, the following aspects can be mentioned:

- Most teachers agree that spirituality could serve as a basis for LO, or that LO should touch on aspects of spirituality, even though the responses revealed that many teachers have an ambiguous understanding of spirituality.
- The majority of teachers sees a connection between religion and spirituality. There are various viewpoints concerning the nature and purpose of spirituality, the concept seems to be unclear in the minds of a number of teachers.
- Many teachers feel that religion, and in most cases Christianity should play an important role in LO.
- The conflict between inclusiveness (of any religion, culture, viewpoint) and particularity (choosing one viewpoint as being morally and epistemologically binding) comes to the fore.

5.5 Data analysis and interpretation of the interviews with learners

After having considered the opinions and viewpoints of teachers concerning LO it is essential to now reflect on the views of pupils regarding LO. In order to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of LO, it is indispensable to let the pupils voice their experiences, feelings and thoughts about LO, a point which is also made by Theron and Dalzell (2006). This study by Theron and Dalzell (2006) is the only other study which was concerned about the opinions of learners. In the following section the interviews conducted with the pupils are discussed. Five basic questions were asked in the interviews. The questions asked in the interview are included in Appendix D. The responses of the learners will thus be discussed under five headings, namely the content of LO, perceived enjoyment of LO, application of LO to life, suggestions concerning LO by pupils and the meaning of life and LO.

5.5.1 The content of LO

The question which was aimed at determining the content of LO as perceived by the pupils was the following: “What do you learn in LO?” This question attempted to encourage the learners to talk about LO. They were supposed to name the topics they cover in class. This for example can show whether according to the pupils certain topics were repeated often. The aim also was to see whether pupils would mention

topics or contents from all four or five learning outcomes as stated in the Curriculum Statement.

The responses of the pupils are summarised in Table 5.11. Their answers to the question were placed into various categories (first column). They were ordered according to frequency (the number of times this topic was mentioned - second column). The third column designates in how many interviews the specific topic was mentioned. If the numbers in the middle two columns are not the same, this means that there was more than one child in at least one interview who mentioned the specific topic. In the last column the categories are matched with one of the four Learning Outcomes of LO. As the Learning Outcomes differ slightly in the FET phase (four Learning Outcomes) and the intermediate phase (five Learning Outcomes), they have been summarised. The Learning Outcomes Health Promotion and Personal Well-being have been combined, as it has been done in the FET phase. This table is followed by a discussion of the different categories.

Table 5.11 Content of LO according to pupils

Category	Frequency	Frequency in interviews	Learning Outcome
Life in general	12	11	-
Rights	8	6	Social development
AIDS/STDs	7	7	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Physical activity/exercise	7	7	Physical well-being
Religions/cultures	6	6	Social development
Sex	6	6	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Alcohol	5	4	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Career Guidance	5	3	Career choices
Teenage pregnancy	4	3	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Peer pressure/friends	4	4	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Diet	4	4	Physical well-being
Abuse	3	3	Health promotion/ personal well-being Citizenship/ social development
Body care	3	3	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Diseases	3	2	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Drugs	3	3	Health promotion/ personal well-being
Nothing	3	3	-
Communication	3	3	Citizenship/ social development
Relationships	3	3	Citizenship/ social development/ Health promotion/ personal well-being

Except for two of the categories ('life in general' and 'nothing'), all other categories mention an aspect or topic covered in LO. There was however no category which was mentioned by pupils in the majority (above 50%) of interviews. A possible explanation here is that the pupils probably mentioned topics which they had recently

learned, which have been repeated the most or which made the biggest impression on them. Not all of them would necessarily reflect back in order to remember all the topics they had already covered in LO. However it is also possible that often certain topics are not covered in LO classes.

The category with the highest frequency was called 'life in general', and does not mention a specific topic or aspect. These answers were very vague or tried to give a summary of LO. The following are examples from this category:

"So basically LO teaches us about life, things that happen in our lives, and stuff like that." (I6)

"Goed soos hoe ons, uhm, dink ons, byvoorbeeld sal optree wanneer sekere aspekte van die lewe jou tref." (Stuff like how we, uhm, think, for example what we would do if certain aspects of life strike you.) (I9)

The answers in this category usually give a broad and correct, but ill defined idea of Life Orientation.

The second category that did not give a specific topic was called 'nothing'. Three pupils in three different interviews claimed that they basically learn nothing in LO. In one interview a pupil said:

"Oh, to be precise, we learned nothing." (I4)

His classmate then qualified the statement more and added:

"Things we learned, were things that we knew ourselves. Its just that they were just confirming it. Some of it, like, they just came up with their own theories. But I don't think it helped us a lot." (I4)

These examples show that some learners think LO is a waste of time, as nothing new is learned. This also became clear in other interviews, where pupils said that they hardly do any work at all. It raises concern that some pupils claim that LO serves no

purpose at all. This can be compared with results from Theron and Dalzell (2006) who found that Grade 9 learners indicated that the content taught in LO does in many instances not correspond with their expressed needs.

The next categories indicated in Table 5.11 all deal with a specific aspect of LO, as discussed here:

The topic which was mentioned most often was the one of 'rights'. Interestingly only two pupils mentioned rights in connection with responsibilities. It therefore appears that human rights play a very important role in learners' minds, while responsibilities seem to be divorced from rights in the minds of pupils. With the current discipline problems in schools this often poses a problem for teachers.

Even though AIDS/STDs, sex, teenage pregnancies as well as abuse (in two of the three responses) were put into different categories, they could however be summarised into one called sexual health. If understood as one category, this category was mentioned in ten interviews.

When considering the frequency of the Learning Outcomes it is very clear that Health Promotion/ personal well-being features the most often (ten times), compared to Social well-being (five times), Physical well-being (two times) and Career choices (once). The question therefore can be asked whether the teaching in LO is in congruence with the theory as explained in the Curriculum Statement (cf. Chapter 3, section 5.2).

The other categories will not be discussed further as the pupils generally did not answer in full sentences, but were rather listing different topics, without detailed description. The question discussed in the following endeavoured to measure the extent to which pupils like or enjoy LO.

5.5.2 Perceived enjoyment of LO

The following question was asked: "Do you enjoy the subject? Do you in general feel positive or negative about it? Why?" This is a question which can potentially reveal

the true feelings of learners concerning LO. It was however complicated by the fact that the pupils seemed to want to tell the researcher what they thought she would like to hear. It appeared that the pupils thought they had to be positive. In some interviews they were very positive in the beginning, however later on in the interview it became evident that many actually have a problem with LO, as will be shown later. A number of learners tried to sound positive, while actually making clear that they consider the subject a waste of time. In general it was difficult to come to conclusive findings in this matter. The learners from the township schools were more positive about LO than the pupils from other schools. The three interviews done in three grade 7 classes all showed that the pupils liked LO (with one exception). They were positive without giving proper reasons as to why they said so. In general they were not very communicative and were very shy.

Many of the pupils in the township schools were positive. Some say LO teaches them skills which they otherwise don't learn:

"Uh, because it tell us about life and how to protect ourselves from some diseases." (I15)

"All I can say about LO is that all the things that they say, LO teaches us different kind of behaviours of different kinds of peoples. So that if a persons does this, you must do this in order not to hurt them. We learn about understanding other peoples feelings." (I16)

One aspect concerning pupils from township schools emerged clearly. Even though learners are positive about the subject it is not evident that the pupils apply what they learn to their lives, which is a concern also mentioned by Prinsloo (2007:165f). In one interview a girl stated that many learners do not like LO because they are engaging in the risk behaviours they are advised not to be involved in. In the following interview that was conducted (at the same school) all of the pupils claimed that they liked LO, but many of them gave the impression that they were actually the ones engaging in risk behaviours. Here it has to be taken into account that Africans tend to stand together as a group trying to please the other person in authority (in this case the researcher) (cf. Friedenthal & Kavanaugh, 2007:19) and therefore not telling the

truth. When pupils were asked if their peers liked the subject they usually stated that there are those who dislike LO. In at least three interviews the pupils said it was the majority who did not like the subject. This supports the possibility that many pupils did not reveal their true perceptions about the learning area.

One respondent said that he liked LO because of the fun activities. Even though this appears positive, fun activities do not guarantee that any real learning is taking place.

In the following the negative responses regarding LO will be discussed briefly. There were about five pupils who claimed that the teaching is done very poorly. Some complain that hardly any teaching takes place, while others say the teacher is very boring:

“Uhm, mam, honestly it depends on what we are doing for the day. Honestly, most of the time a lot of the teachers aren’t even so enthusiastic about this subject. From them talking so boring, and everything just not clicking, mam...and then all of that together just makes you negative about the subject. That’s all I have to say.” (I2)

“...hy sal soos sê doen aktiwiteite, hy sal vir jou sê kyk na daai goed en dan doen julle vir my ‘n taak of so iets, hy behandel glad nie dit in die klas nie.” (...he will say, do activities, he will tell you, look at that stuff, and then you do an assignment or something like that, but he doesn’t deal with it in class.) (I7)

“...wat my ook bietjie pla is, daar kan geen orde in ons LO klas gehandhaaf word nie.” (...what also disturbs me a little is that no order can be maintained in the LO class.) (I9)

These examples confirm that there is a problem regarding the teaching of LO.

In addition to this there are those pupils who say that LO to them is a waste of time. This kind of response came mainly from former Model-C schools. Many pupils say that they hardly learn anything:

“Dit voel vir my soos ‘n groot nonsens, want, dit voel vir my dit is eintlik vir kinders ingestel wat in rural areas bly wat nie rerig heeltemal presies weet hoe om op te tree nie en beseft daar is ander verskillende mense as hulle nie, van higiëne weet en so nie. Dit is eintelik net vir my ‘n klomp onnodige nonsens, want ons leer nie veel nie.” (To me this feels like a lot of nonsense, because it seems to me that this subject is just instituted for children who live in rural areas who don’t really know how to behave, and who don’t know there are people who are different from them, who don’t know about hygiene and so on. For me it is actually a lot of unnecessary nonsense, because we don’t learn much.) (I7)

“I basically just see it as a waste of time, ‘cause the, you don’t learn anything from it. I think I used to be an innocent little girl before we took LO, it just expose you to the evils of the world.” (I10)

Here it can be mentioned that a few pupils (in two interviews) stated that their parents teach them the skills and knowledge covered in LO while it seems that pupils from township schools disagree; there LO is more acceptable as the parents don’t seem to teach the children about basic matters of life (cf. Prinsloo, 2007:162):

“Alright I’ll go first, I really don’t like the subject ‘cause I, believe that LO or life skills is something that your parents can teach you, if you don’t have parents then I suppose it would benefit you a lot, but since I do have parents I think I learn more from them than from...” (I10)

“Uhm, ek sou sê dit voel vir my half asof LO, net ingesit is om, om die ouers se plek te vervul in die kind se lewe.” (Uhm, I would say it feels to me as if LO was just put in to fill the parents’ place in the child’s life.) (I7)

Then there is quite a big group of pupils who seem to like the subject for various reasons which do not have to do with the content or method of teaching LO. In one interview the pupils were mostly positive about LO until the end when asked if they would like to add something. One pupil said “It sucks”. When asked why he makes contradictory statements, another pupil explained that the pupil making the statement

liked LO because he can chat with the girls in class. This then again raises some questions concerning the teaching, if the learners are allowed to visit in class.

Then there were those pupils who were positive about LO, repeatedly however they were unable to even give a reason.

“Me mam, I do like LO - a lot, mam. Last year I used to pass LO flying colours, this year..... but it's positive.” (I5)

In one of the cases where an unqualified positive response was given, the pupils had just finished smoking dagga:

“Yes, mam... I like LO. LO is a good subject.” (I1)

The fact that children are smoking dagga on school grounds is alarming. And it certainly is a contradiction that those pupils claimed to like LO and yet smoked dagga. This can count as evidence that LO is not effective in helping pupils change (cf. Prinsloo, 2007:161, 165).

Finally there is a number of pupils (in four interviews) who feel positive (to an extent) about LO, simply because it is a period where they can relax, do homework, or where they simply have a free period:

“I do enjoy it, because most of the time you've got a free period. We go outside and we play...” (I2)

“You can always do your homework in there. It's like a flexi-period.” (I3)

“Jy kan sit en eet en daar sal niks gedoen word nie. Jou huiswerk doen wat jy die volgende periode moet klaar he of...” (You can sit and eat and nothing will be done. Doing your homework which needs to be finished the next period, or...) (I9)

This matter raises concern as well. It seems to be quite common that LO is not taken seriously by teachers and as a result it is not seen as crucial by learners either.

After the negative responses have been discussed the positive responses are considered now. Thirteen pupils said that they like LO because it teaches them something in general. However when examining them a little closer, the answers are not very conclusive:

"Like for instance it's positive because of the positive skills they teach us." (I2)

"Because....uuhh...Cause you learn things, you learn new things." (I4)

"Because we learn about many things, so that we can understand things." (I12)

These statements say very little. Others learners would say they feel positive about it because of a specific aspect they are taught:

"Yes, mam, I do enjoy it because they make you that life is easy, it can solve your problems, like when you have a problem outside the school yard, maybe with your friends. Like to follow responsibilities rather than to follow friends. Yes mam. Something like that, mam." (I6)

"Firstly, I didn't know how to deal with stress, and uhm, I didn't know how to use my rights, I used to think like when my parents yell at me... my parents have to obey their rights. And they told me how to use my rights." (I14)

"I like it because they tell you about your life. To be free and not to have sex, when you're still young." (I11)

Coming to a conclusion regarding this matter it is evident that this question provided no clear answers. There was no single topic which was mentioned a lot. Results

indicate that some pupils seem to appreciate LO, whereas others view it as a “waste of time”. Teaching practice seems to be a problem as in many cases the subject is not taken seriously by pupils and teachers (cf. Prinsloo, 2007:161, 163; Van Deventer, 2009:128).

5.5.3 Application of LO to life

The third question of the interview examined whether or not pupils found LO to be applicable to their daily lives, or in other words: “Does LO help you in daily living?” In many ways this question was similar to the previous one. Quite a few of the pupils said that they find it applicable for the same reasons that they liked it.

The only aspect on applicability which was mentioned four times was that of exercise:

“It keeps you in exercise, mam. It keeps you in good shape during the day, mam. It keeps you healthy. And stuff like that.” (I2)

“Like, mam, for instance, exercise, mam. To stay in shape.” (I6)

It is evident that a number of pupils saw the physical exercise component of LO as positive. All other responses that were given regarding applicability did not occur often. Two examples of those are the following:

“Honestly what I’ve learned most about LO, is how to eat, your diet skills: what to eat and what not to eat.” (I2)

“Ek sou sê, in ‘n mate miskien so ‘n bietjie, omdat ons soos wat ons hierdie jaar gedoen het met die, met ‘n loopbaan beplanning, het dit meer, jou denkwysie net vergroot om te kyk watter moontlike areas is daar wat jy kan gaan studeer.” (I would say in a way a bit maybe, because what we were doing this year, with career guidance, it enlarged your thinking to see what possibilities of study there are.) (I7)

The results show that what was mentioned as positive was career guidance and physical exercise. Theron and Dalzell (2006:401) also found that learners place a high value on the importance of career guidance. In general many pupils from the township schools were more positive about the value and applicability of LO than pupils in former Model-C schools. The reason for this could possibly be that they don't receive this type of instruction from their parents, whereas the other pupils do.

The next question provided the pupils with an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements concerning LO.

5.5.4 Suggestions concerning LO by the pupils

The fourth question of the interview was the following: "If you could decide on topics and activities in LO what would you do?" Even though this question overlaps to an extent with some of the others it will be discussed here. This question was supposed to encourage the learners to say what they feel should be the content and practice in LO. Pupils often experience that they do not have a choice concerning this matter. Four pupils said they would keep it as it is. There were few things mentioned by a majority of pupils. In five interviews pupils suggested that more physical activities should be done in LO:

"Mam, maybe things like more activities outside. Because most of the children today, they just sit in front of the TV and play computer and all these things, but maybe more activities outside will help." (I2)

Pupils might just suggest more physical exercise simply because they don't like the theoretical part of the subject. Another topic which was mentioned by five pupils is that LO should be taken more seriously:

"En ek sou sê dat die vak behandel moet word soos wiskunde en wetenskap, dat dit rêrig meer intensief behandel word en dat die onderwysers dit ernstig sal opneem, want die houding van die onderwysers moet ook positief wees." (And I would say that the subject should be

treated like maths and science, that it is treated more intensively and that the teachers take it seriously, because the attitude of the teachers must also be positive.) (I7)

"They take LO as just a free period or just to sit there. I want it to be recognized in the whole SA so that you can do something that you like in LO." (I16)

Pupils in seven interviews suggested that LO should be more realistic as well as be taken more seriously. Even though only mentioned explicitly seven times it featured in other interviews, not as a suggestion, but as remarks for example about the lack of 'real issues' or about the perception that the way of teaching is too far removed from reality and should be improved:

"Honestly, they should study the youth of today, mam. And start realising what our interests are, mam, and start to talk to us about our life and what we do." (I2)

"What they're teaching us now, isn't really relevant to anything." (I3)

"What I'd say about LO is that I would like the government to make the subject a recognizable subject. 'Cause like many schools they don't do LO." (I16)

In four interviews pupils mentioned the topic of sex education. Some feel that there is too much focus on this topic:

"Ya, and they don't have to take us through every step of doing the thing wrong. They can just tell us in general, like don't do rape, and this is why. Instead we have to learn about every type of rape there is, and all that stuff... it's really bad, mam." (I3)

"If I was the teacher I would exclude sexual topics, because there are those learners who don't feel good if you talk about it." (I15)

Other suggestions made by pupils concerning the improvement of LO were for example: help with getting a licence, talk more about spiritual/religious things, talk about emotions and learn manners. Some pupils mention topics which they think the teacher should talk about. Other pupils mention the same topic as one they are taught about in LO in question 1. These are: rights, resilience, preparing for the future, respect. This raises the question whether some teachers maybe don't cover all prescribed topics.

5.5.5 The meaning of life and LO

This question which proved to be the hardest question for most of the pupils reads as follows: "What do you think gives meaning to life? And is this addressed by LO?" The purpose of this question was to approach the concept of spirituality. It was assumed that most pupils would have trouble understanding the concept of spirituality, therefore one important aspect of spirituality was chosen for discussion. Meaning or purpose of life has a lot to do with spirituality (Pargament, 1999; Tacey, 2001:90ff) and is something pupils would be able to relate to. The question was therefore supposed to assess whether according to pupils LO addresses issues around the meaning of life or not, in other words whether or not LO deals with some of the fundamental questions in life. Surprisingly many pupils were not able to understand what 'meaning or purpose in life' really is. They had trouble understanding the concept, which would probably imply that they have not thought about meaning-related issues a lot, which could in turn be a worrisome trend. The grade 7 learners of three of the interviews were practically unable to understand the concept, even with repeated explanation of the researchers, also in their mother tongue. Pupils from the township schools had greater trouble understanding the concept than pupils from former Model-C schools.

There are some interesting categories concerning meaning of life. Some featured repeatedly and are summarised in Table 5.12. Then there were others which were just mentioned once, twice or three times. Those will not be discussed any further. In some interviews the responses were rather inconclusive and could therefore not be discussed. An example of an interview where basically only one point was mentioned is the following:

- R: OK, what do you guys think gives meaning to life? What is the purpose of life? And does LO address that purpose of life?
- L2: Yes mam... the purpose of life, mam.
- L1: I don't understand the question.
- R: OK, first tell me - what is the meaning of life for you?
- L2: For me, mam... I think life is nothing without education. You have to be educated. You have to be educated in order to have a bright future in life and stuff.. you see, mam.
- L1: Nice one, nice one..... Life, mam... is something that.... eish...
- L3: Mam, I think life is... to live life the way you feel is right, mam.
- R: OK, and does LO talk about that meaning of life? That which you think is the meaning of life?
- L2: A lot, mam. Everything about LO is about life, especially the positive things.
- L1: ... yes mam... (I5)

What the excerpt of this interview does show is that many pupils are confused and struggle to define what the meaning of life is. However, it has to be taken into account that these pupils were those who had just finished smoking dagga.

The following table summarises the most frequent responses:

Table 5.12 Meaning/purpose of life

Category	Frequency
Religion	9
Impact	6
Success	5
Enjoyment	4

The category featuring the most often is religion:

“Ek sou sê, christenskap gee doel en rigting aan die lewe, want jy weet wat jy op aarde eintlik moet doen en ek dink nie dit word effektief in LO aangespreek nie.” (I would say that Christianity gives meaning and direction to life, because you know what you are actually supposed to do on earth and I don't think that this is addressed effectively in LO.) (I7)

This shows that there are a considerable number of pupils who believe that religion gives meaning to life. For this study this is of special interest because of the possible connection between LO and spirituality. As was explained in previous chapters, religion and spirituality are related and often overlap.

The next category which was mentioned six times is 'impact'. Pupils feel that in order to lead a meaningful life they need to have some kind of impact on people or society, or they need to be something, which is a recognised psychological need (Crabb, 1987: 113ff):

"I want to be a police man....It is to protect people from crime. To help the community." (I18)

"According to me I am a dreamer, so if I think I don't think here, I think forward. As in I wonder in eight years time, how the world will be, how people will be living, houses, the community which people are living in, I think of all those things. So right now I know I can't make that difference so I have to go to school and learn, so in the future I can make an image of what the world can be like." (I17)

The following category is the one of 'success'. Many pupils feel that they have to be successful in life:

"Mam, the meaning of life is to be successful, and I don't really think LO takes you there." (I2)

"Let's see, something that makes life important for me is that I want to see myself somewhere, maybe there is something that stops me, or something that disturbs me, then I want to overcome it and go on." (I15)

Four pupils mention 'enjoyment' as the meaning-giving aspect in their lives:

"What gives meaning to life, is enjoying basically." (I4)

"Enjoying it." (I1)

When looking at whether or not the pupils think that LO addresses the meaning of life, the following becomes obvious. In six interviews the pupils said that they think LO does address the meaning of life, however only in two cases did they give reasons, the one being that it helps with career choices, the second one being that it helps you plan your future. In three of the interviews the pupils were inconclusive about this matter. Many said directly that it does not help at all. In the following a few examples will be given of each:

"Mam, the meaning of life is to be successful, and I don't really think LO takes you there." (I2)

"I think the meaning of life, is to get what you want out of life, and school is supposed to be like training you in order to achieve what you want out of life.. you see? And in LO they're supposed to give us the basics, to give us the tools that we could use, and stuff like that. So, all in all I don't think that they're giving us the necessary tools that we could use. They're only ... like.. confirming theories we already know - as I already said. So I think they should focus on getting us prepared for life in general." (I4)

"Onder geen omstandighede nie." (Under no circumstances.) (I9)

In general it can be stated that this question was not always understood by pupils. It however shows two things. Firstly, it seems that many pupils do not think deeply about matters relating to the meaning of life, and secondly that most pupils do not think that LO helps with the meaning of life.

5.5.6 Conclusion regarding the conducted interviews

To come to a conclusion regarding the interviews done with the pupils, the following can be observed here:

- Generally there are various viewpoints regarding LO. It seems that most pupils don't regard LO as very important and meaningful. Often it is not taken serious, and sometimes pupils like it because it is more or less like a free period. Especially learners from former Model-C schools tended to make negative remarks concerning LO throughout the interviews.
- There seems to be the perception of the learners that LO focuses a lot on health promotion and personal well-being, such as AIDS and related topics. It appears that pupils feel these topics are "overtaught".
- It was interesting that pupils had trouble understanding the last question, which can be interpreted as follows: If pupils struggle to talk about the meaning of life this might indicate that they haven't thought about it a lot. This is alarming as acquiring a meaning in life, or something to live for is important (cf. Chapter 3, section 5).

5.6 Comparison between teachers' and learners' responses

Due to the fact that the questions asked in the interviews and the questions in the questionnaires were not the same a comparison is only possible in part. However what became very obvious is that there are many problems perceived both by learners and teachers:

- There were both teachers and learners who perceive LO as being negative. In both groups there were perceptions about LO being a waste of time, not achieving its purpose, teaching wrong values, or values from a wrong perspective. Both groups mention poor teaching quality. Many teachers do not attempt to teach at a high level, or display lack of knowledge regarding LO.
- There were however pupils and teachers, in both groups mostly from township schools, who were positive. The optimism on the part of the teachers was however difficult to conceptualise as they could hardly give any evidence for their perceived success of LO. Many pupils seemed to be positive and said that they learn things in LO that they hadn't known before. In general it can however be concluded that LO seems not to be successful in reaching its aims as outlined in the RNCS (cf. Prinsloo, 2007).

- Regarding sex education, AIDS and related topics there appears to be an agreement at least to an extent between teachers and learners. In both groups there were individuals who mentioned that too much focus is put on sex education. Some pupils complained that they learned things they hadn't wanted to know (eg. what kinds of different rapes there are). The same concern is found in some of the teachers' responses.
- Both teachers and learners complained that LO is not taken serious enough, in that it for example is not an exam subject (cf. Van Deventer, 2009). However here it can be stated that this has been changed by the Department of Education (2009).
- Even though not addressed directly, both teachers and learners (at least a significant number) display a lack of cognitive thinking skills. This became evident in many of the teachers' answers as described in section 5.4.4. Also the fact that many teachers didn't answer many of the questions (some mentioned that they found it too difficult), could point to this lack of cognitive thinking skills. The fact that many learners were not able to answer the question concerning the meaning of life, could also point to the same phenomenon.

Generally there were quite a few topics which were only covered in either the questionnaire or the interviews, the opinions of the respondents can therefore not be discussed in a comparative way.

5.7 Limitations

After having conducted this study the following limitations came to the fore:

- Due to the fact that this study is qualitative in nature the number of respondents was considerably small, and caution needs to be taken when making generalisations.
- As was described in section 5.3 a vast amount of questionnaires were never returned, which limited the number of questionnaires to 59.

- It appears that many teachers did not complete the questionnaire in full as they found it too difficult to understand. Had the questions been better explained the results might have been richer.
- Language can also be mentioned here, as about half of the teachers had to answer the questionnaire in their second language. Had the questionnaires been in their mother tongue, they might have found it easier to answer the questions.
- A weakness in the questionnaire was that it did not ask teachers to give reasons or evidence why they think the learners benefit from LO.
- In various cases it appeared that learners (especially from township schools) did not answer truthfully, but rather tried to please the researcher. This means that results could have been slightly different, had this hurdle been overcome in some way.

5.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to listen to the voices of those who are practically involved in the teaching and learning of LO. Their views and experiences are of utmost importance, as they should be the reality check whether or not LO is effective. Teachers and learners had the opportunity to pronounce their impressions, opinions and feelings. The following aspects were found in the interviews and questionnaires:

- The questionnaires indicated that LO might not be as successful as it should be according to the RNCS. Theory and practice seem to be two different matters. The same was found when considering the interviews with the learners. Many learners are negative about LO and in many cases little learning seems to take place.
- Sex education and related topics such as AIDS and abortion are areas of strong disagreement. Many teachers and pupils feel that too much sex education is provided.
- A significant number of teachers are not qualified or do not feel qualified to teach LO. A lot of bad teaching practice is the result coupled with little interest in LO both from the side of teachers and learners.

- Spirituality is a controversial topic, even though most teachers would agree to its implementation and integration into LO. Often religion is considered important for the teaching of LO.
- Eventually it seems that the conflict seems to focus on the tension between particularity and inclusiveness of morals and spirituality.
- There appears to be a lack of cognitive thinking skills in both teachers and learners.

In the following chapter all the findings from Chapters 2, 3 and 5 will be integrated and discussed under specific headings. That is the place where conclusions will be reached and recommendations are made towards defining an epistemological framework for a LO programme based on spirituality.

CHAPTER 6

Spirituality and an epistemological basis for Life Orientation: a synthesis

6.1 Introduction and orientation

The purpose of this final chapter is to arrive at a synthesis of the different aspects of this study, especially as presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 5, and in doing that to present guidelines and recommendations regarding an epistemology for Life Orientation that is grounded in spirituality and which at the same time is grounded in a philosophically coherent and existentially relevant framework.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the phenomena of both spirituality and Life Orientation in South Africa against the background of theories, trends and practices in the larger international community in order to explore whether spirituality, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, could be incorporated into an *epistemological approach* to Life Orientation curriculum design and pedagogy. In order to do this it was necessary to investigate the principles and practice of Life Orientation (LO) in a sample of South African schools to ascertain the opinions and understand the experiences of teachers and pupils. Finally, it is crucial that this research remains praxis-orientated i.e. that the findings of this research translate into meaningful and practicable pedagogy.

This chapter will be structured as follows: The need for an epistemology for LO and related concepts identified in the literature survey and indicated by the results of the qualitative research will be revisited. This will be done by integrating the findings from Chapters 2, 3 and 5, and discussing relevant topics or themes which emerged in the qualitative study. An argument will be made from the premise derived in Chapter 2 that within the post-modern context spirituality is once again a universally acknowledged phenomenon intrinsic to existential human existence. In view of this, it is proposed that spirituality education might provide a much needed corrective in the largely ineffective 'psychological regime' (cf. Hunter, 2000:81ff) dominating the

life skills and character education movements. A critical look at the reigning wisdom and orthodoxy of the 'psychological regime' enshrined in shibboleths such as 'self esteem', 'tolerance' and 'inclusivity' is also called for. Rather than flattening out the differences, we need to understand them and enter into dialogue. Such a dialogue presupposes an epistemology. The argument presented here therefore moves towards proposing and outlining an epistemology that will incorporate the findings of research on spirituality. This is an essential prerequisite for the integration of Life Orientation (LO) and spirituality. From the literature survey it emerged that many of the fundamental issues regarding both the concepts of spirituality and Life Orientation are the same. Therefore the argument will be presented in an integrated manner.

The alternative approach to the 'psychological regime' which is posited here is essentially evidentialistic rather than a priori in nature as was described in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). Basically the endeavour of the evidentialistic approach can be summarised by the following question: Where does the evidence lead? This question is relevant in academic research regarding LO, spirituality and in the synthesis of spirituality education. It is equally relevant in mapping a way forward within an approach that seeks not to establish one universal inclusive paradigm, and in the process evacuate the different positions of all 'real' truth except one, i.e. that there is no truth. On the contrary, we need to recognise and understand the differences and the personal and social consequences the differences imply. We need to recognise and evaluate the metaphysical 'god terms' and authoritative 'truth statements' that lay claim to our allegiance.

6.2 Emerging issues concerning LO

When attempting to move towards a novel approach in LO the current approach needs to be evaluated and carefully considered. This has been done in this study. At the outset of this chapter some important findings regarding the teaching of LO in selected South African schools are discussed. Three important results were obtained. Firstly, there is an apparent discrepancy between theory and practice. Secondly, some confusion and uncertainty around the perceived effectiveness of Life Orientation was evident. Thirdly, issues regarding an adequate source or practicable basis for the practice of LO emerged as a critical component of what may be seen as a crisis in Life

Orientation teaching in South Africa. This is then followed by a discussion of the findings of the literature survey around spirituality, which will lead towards an integrated discussion of both.

6.2.1 A seeming discrepancy between theory and praxis

The first result which emerges quite clearly when considering the documents published by the Department of Education regarding LO and the information derived from the interviews with the pupils in Chapter 5 (section 5.5) and in the questionnaires from the teachers (section 5.4) on the practical exigencies in LO instruction as encountered in the actual schools is the fact that there seems to be a consistently observed discrepancy between theory and practice.

The Curriculum Statement clearly envisions a learner who will acquire actual skills, attitudes, knowledge and values in this learning area to be able to develop his or her full potential in a holistic manner also with the aim of making 'good' decisions regarding his or her own health and the environment. This learning area is also specifically intended to help pupils to face and cope with problems such as drug abuse, AIDS, peer pressure and STDs as well as societal issues and problems such as career choices, work ethic, productivity, crime and corruption. The assessment standards in the Curriculum Statement state that pupils are expected to be able to solve or at least manage these problems in constructive ways. This implies a recognisable level of critical cognitive ability on the part of not only learners but also teachers. It is interesting here to consider the kind of teacher Outcomes Based Education in general envisages: "All teachers and other educators are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. This Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) envisions teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. They will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators. These include being mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and Learning Area or Phase specialists." (Department of Education, 2002:3). This paragraph also appears in the Curriculum

Statement for Grades 9-12. Considering the results of this research the reality in the classroom is far removed from this ideal. Many teachers:

- Dislike the subject, and are for this reason not being “mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials”, much less are they functioning as “leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and Learning Area or Phase specialists”.
- Are not adequately qualified to teach LO, and in general do not have the envisaged level of competency including a very low English proficiency.
- Are neither “dedicated” nor “caring” in their professional practice.
- Do not have the professional competencies and qualities described above (e.g. researchers, pastors, leaders) (cf. Chapter 5; Prinsloo, 2007).

It is a concern that most of the teachers interviewed in this study would then not measure up to the departmental criteria to qualify to teach LO. Many comments made in the interviews by learners on bad teaching practice show this to be true (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.5. Teachers often have little interest in the subject or the learners, and therefore do not provide meaningful guidance for the pupils in LO. Considering the envisaged quality of teacher as quoted above from the Department of Education (2002:3), it is strikingly evident that the ideological framework of this document bears little correspondence, and is frequently out of touch with, the complex reality of what actually happens in schools. Taking into account these realities at schools, only a very small minority of schools and teachers would meet the prescribed criteria. This would inevitably have a very negative influence on the teaching of LO. This finding is supported by another study done in South Africa by Prinsloo (2007:161ff), who also reported that teachers fall short of many qualities a LO teacher should have.

The ideals concerning the envisaged learners as described in the Curriculum Statement seem to be just as divorced from the type of learners that actually emerge from the results of this research. The envisaged learner as mentioned in the Curriculum Statement from Grades R-9 (2003:3) is described as follows: “The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but

also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learner that is envisaged is one who will be inspired by these values, and who will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.”

Listening to the pupils in the interviews as well as judging from observations in schools, it becomes clear that the authors seem to be overly optimistic and simplistically dismiss some of the debilitating realities in schools and among young people in general. Most learners simply do not identify with these qualities mentioned, and LO instruction does not seem to be even moderately effective in changing learners in even some of these ways (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4 & 5.5; Prinsloo, 2007). This also became clear when listening to the attitudes of pupils towards the subject LO. Few regard LO positively. This of course is only partly the cause for the ineffectiveness of the subject because in many schools the teaching of LO is below basic standards of authentic practice (cf. Chapter 5; Prinsloo, 2007). It is interesting that in general there were two aspects of LO which were perceived as positive by learners - most learners liked the physical exercise part as well as career guidance. However it is also clear that neither of these aspects constitute the core of LO teaching in the departmental documentation.

An important finding of this research, and a major concern within the context of the stated goals and objectives of LO, is that LO as a subject does not effect any meaningful change in the attitudes and behaviours of the pupils. Many pupils feel that they learn nothing new, while others continue to engage in risk behaviours in spite of LO. There is no evidence in this research that providing young people with information or theoretical skills will change their behaviour.

The finding that LO is often not taken seriously by either teachers or pupils certainly contributes to this state of affairs. It is well attested in the interviews that pupils often see LO as a ‘free’ period, or a time where they can socialise with their friends (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.5.2). Very little measurable written seat-work is done. Teachers

feel negative because they often were obliged to teach LO. The result is that they spend little or no time preparing for LO. The negative attitude of many teachers impacts the quality of teaching the learners receive. Teachers usually do not qualify as the envisaged role models for a subject like LO. Furthermore, teachers feel overwhelmed by the quantity of administrative work they are expected to complete, and this places further stress on the teaching situation, which necessarily issues in below standard teaching practice (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4 & 5.5). Lack of appropriate accountability and authentic assessments emerged as another area of concern – because LO is not an examination subject, learners and teachers tend to see it as less important. Where teachers are competent and motivated, it was noted that they are heavily indebted to the ideals and practices endorsed by the ‘psychological regime’ (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.3). This alone, in the light of the findings of research on the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the psychological regime, would clearly militate against the teachers best intentions.

The context obtaining in schools as described above clearly undermines the purpose of LO, and militates against its effectiveness. What is most alarming is the finding that the governing psychological paradigm underlying LO as attested in the literature may even contribute to its ineffectiveness. This is a cause for concern. The results of this research indicate that the way LO is conceived and implemented may in fact contribute to the ineffectiveness observed in this study. This will be explained below.

6.2.2 Effectiveness

Even though the perceived ineffectiveness of LO has already been partly discussed under the previous heading, a few remarks need to be made here.

Although this study did not measure effectiveness of LO directly in terms of lifestyle change, several points can be highlighted nevertheless:

- Teachers were not very sure whether learners really benefited from LO. When asked what learners learn in LO, teachers often named the contents of the subject. Few teachers were confident that learners really did learn the contents. Only two teachers claimed that it is evident that learners learned something.

Many other teachers seem to think that learners learn in LO, but are not able to produce any evidence. Prinsloo (2007:161ff) confirms the findings that often very little learning takes place in LO.

- Many learners were negative about LO, not believing that it serves any purpose. It needs to be mentioned that learners from township schools tended to be more positive about LO than learners from former Model-C schools. On the other hand, it was observed that many learners gave a positive report about LO, but then continue to engage in risk behaviour. An example is the group who had very positive opinions about LO, and yet they had just finished smoking dagga (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4).
- As was the case with the values clarification programme in the USA in the seventies, where enthusiasm reached phenomenal levels, little research has been done to establish the effectiveness of the dominant Life Orientation approach (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2; Chapter 5, section 5.4.2). There simply is no convincing evidence in the literature to show that Life Orientation provides the envisaged results. The findings and perceptions in the literature that LO is not effective is confirmed by this research project.

While speaking about success and effectiveness it is indispensable to consider that this implies standards. This will be discussed at the end of the following section. Furthermore, when discussing the ineffectiveness of LO, it certainly becomes important to ask why LO is ineffective. In the light of this question it is useful to consider the current epistemological basis of LO.

6.2.3 Basis of Life Orientation

Every educational system has a philosophical basis. Without investigating the philosophical foundation for Outcomes Based Education, it will here suffice to consider the core values and theoretical underpinnings of the Life Orientation documents as issued by the Department of Education and as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.2.

As was mentioned in Chapter 3 Life Orientation is part of the global life skills movement. This movement is often characterised by a theoretical approach which appeals to many different theories and bases practice on these theories, namely: child and adolescent development theory, social learning theory, problem-behaviour theory, social influence theory, cognitive problem solving, multiple intelligences, the resilience and risk theory as well as the constructivist psychology theory (cf. chapter 3, section 3.4.3). When investigating these theories it becomes clear that some of them are only partially compatible. A well defined epistemological basis seem to be lacking in the Departmental Life Orientation documents. The most basic values or concepts mentioned repeatedly in the documents by the Department of Education are the following: democracy, human rights, social justice (which are emphasised in the Constitution), inclusivity, equity and equality. This discloses a strong focus on 'rights' (social justice for examples includes the idea of rights). Though responsibilities are also mentioned, these don't receive the same emphasis as rights. A few points emerge from this:

- None of these values or concepts mentioned are based upon an epistemological framework. These values are frequently considered to be self-explanatory or self-evident. They are supposed to form the absolute basis of Life Orientation without any justification for their validity. This should raise questions of due caution. Furthermore, inclusivity is strongly emphasised, together with affirming tolerance and freedom of religion, speech, and opinion (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.2). Importantly, the fact that these values are considered to be absolute cannot be reconciled with the idea of inclusivity or tolerance as operationalised within the psychological regime. Both tolerance and inclusivity imply an approach which does not allow for deeming some values 'truer' than others. Both imply that no absolute value or standard is set, (even if it be tolerance) because it would discriminate against those who do not agree.
- It was mentioned that all the most popular approaches to Life Orientation place an all-controlling emphasis on the rights of the self-determining individual. The self (individual) needs to have rights, and his/her rights need to be protected. This emphasis on self-esteem is also evident in the Curriculum

Statements, where “Self in relation to others” is one of the Learning Outcomes (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.2). This clearly can be classified as the ‘psychological regime’ (cf. chapter 3, section 3.4.3). The purpose thus is to protect the self and boost the self-esteem. It is important to make clear the point of this argument. A healthy measure of care for self should be encouraged. This is to be welcomed, but it seems as if the Curriculum Statement focuses much more on the self than on others. Whereas other approaches emphasise certain virtues or values (cf. chapter 3, section 3.4.4) the self seems to be the most important aspect in this approach. It is possible to draw a connection with the values clarification approach here. Values clarification emphasises individual choice, the choice of the self, which is absolutised. What limited research there is available on the success of this approach has indicated a negative finding. The question must therefore be faced: Is Life Orientation with its strong focus on self able to succeed in educating healthy and responsible pupils?

- Another very strong emphasis in the Curriculum Statement is the strong focus on outward change. Transformation is envisaged, but more of the structures of society than of the internal structures of the thinking, acting individual. Much is said about the need to change circumstances (social, economic and environmental). Even though such change is desirable, it seems as if people are viewed exhaustively and without remainder as victims of circumstances over which they have little or no control. People as freely choosing agents have been lost sight of. While environmental antecedents to behaviour are acknowledged, a strong argument could be made that internal change will also result in outward change. The question that this research leads us to is then, “What are the structures of the internal antecedents to behaviour *that need to change?*” It is at this point in the argument that the central importance of spirituality and truth emerges. The emphasis in the Curriculum Statement is certainly *not* on changing the belief and value system of the learners, but rather on providing information, protecting the self-esteem and changing circumstances.

To conclude this section it can be said that the lack of a coherent and scientifically accountable epistemological basis of LO becomes evident. This has also become

evident in the empirical research. Teachers claim that it is necessary to have a foundation for LO (cf. chapter 5, section 5.4.5).

An important point needs to be made. When looking at questions of effectiveness and the discrepancy between practice and theory, a key issue emerges: All of these presuppose a standard. Though questions of absolute truth are often considered *passé* in contemporary post-modern society, it still seems to emerge as a basic unchangeable aspect of reality. How can one talk about success without deciding on absolutes and without defining what it is that children are supposed to achieve? Any measurement presupposes a set standard against which the measurement is made. Even talking about bad teacher quality, as discussed in chapter 5, only makes sense if there is a general standard against which to measure quality. To sum this section up, it can be stated that the logical imperatives of the present debate in the literature drives one to settle for an epistemology upon which practice is based and by which it can be evaluated.

6.3 Emerging issues concerning spirituality

When considering the review of the literature as well as the empirical findings, certain matters regarding spirituality arise which need to be addressed.

6.3.1 Spirituality as a universal human phenomenon

There seems to be a consensus in academic circles today that spirituality can be perceived as a universal human phenomenon (cf. Wright, 2000:70ff; Scott, 2001:120). It is considered axiomatic that every human being longs for spiritual fulfilment. People look for purpose in life, they strive towards connectedness, and desire a relationship with a higher being. People quest for meaning and purpose. People want to have certain values. That spirituality has re-emerged in academic discourse following an eclipse during the modern regime of scientific positivism, and is deemed more and more important by academics and professionals as explained in Chapter 2, seems to validate the above claim. What is however different in the post-modern understanding of spirituality is its separation from religion. This does not mean that spirituality is completely divorced from religion, but it means that the contemporary

post-modern understanding does not presuppose religion as an indispensable basis for spirituality. The post-modern idea is that anybody can be spiritual within or without the context of organised religion, as spirituality is deemed to be an inherent human characteristic (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3). Similar results came to the fore in the empirical investigation. Most teachers regard spirituality as important and think it would be beneficial to include spirituality into LO (Chapter 5, section 5.4.6). This is supported by research done on children's spirituality so much so that there is a movement (especially in the United Kingdom and Israel) which strives towards integrating spirituality education into the curriculum (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.6).

As has been documented in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) the Biblical view is that spirituality is a universal human phenomenon. Even though not always labelled as such, other religions would agree that there is something like spirituality inherent in human beings. The idea that spirituality is a universal human phenomenon is therefore hardly new. The question which arises here is the following: Given the fact that spirituality is a universal human phenomenon, does this mean that this capacity can be filled by any belief system, with or without religion? In other words: Is the flattening tendency of inclusiveness regarding spirituality existentially relevant and epistemologically viable? Before this question is addressed, the connection between religion and spirituality will be revisited.

6.3.2 Spirituality and religion, an uneasy connection?

As was discussed in Chapter 2 (sections 2.3 and 2.4) as well as in Chapter 5 (section 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.1.3) there is in general a dichotomy between religion and spirituality. In contemporary society the two are often perceived as distinct concepts though overlapping. Religion is in general seen as more negative, limited, particularistic, focused on outward standards of behaviour, whereas spirituality is seen as more positive, all-inclusive and more focused on inward aspects, which are divorced from any rules. Even though not all teachers agreed on this (some were still very positive towards religion, especially Christianity, although not seeing it as focused on outward behaviours, but rather as a living relationship) (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.6), the inclusive trend regarding spirituality and religion as described here became obvious. Even people who claim to be part of a specific religion often adopt inclusive opinions

when talking about spirituality. The question here is whether justice is done to religions by dismissing their unique claims so casually as not fitting into the post-modern paradigm of spirituality.

Whenever people talk about spirituality, reference is made to different types of spiritualities. Even though it is a universal human phenomenon, people base their view on some kind of epistemology. Often this is entrenched in a religion, but not always. As was anticipated in Chapter 2 (section 2.8) it becomes crucial to evaluate the epistemological bases different spiritualities are built on.

6.3.3 Evaluation of different bases for spirituality

The basic question in this section is the following: Given the fact that spirituality is a universal human phenomenon, is it now epistemologically justifiable to choose any spirituality from the vast array of possible spiritualities according to personal or cultural taste? In the following the various trends and types of spiritualities will be examined.

In this study various types of spirituality have been discussed (cf. Chapter 2). There are firstly those which are based on a specific religion, and secondly there are the contemporary conceptions, which only see spirituality as a human capacity, which can be expressed in any way, not involving a higher being (Estanek, 2006:276). The table introduced in Chapter 2 (section 2.8) will be depicted here again, as it will now be used to evaluate different bases for spiritualities using the criteria in the table.

Table 2.1 Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities

	Historical		Ahistorical	
	Particular	Inclusive	Particular	Inclusive
Intrinsic				
Extrinsic				

The contemporary spiritualities will be considered first. They will be discussed in the order as they have been mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.6.1). All of those, as will

become plainly visible, are very much related in essence, as they share similar philosophical underpinnings.

6.3.3.1 Post-modern trends

Much has already been said about post-modern spiritualities, and it has become clear that the main characteristic is probably inclusiveness. This inclusiveness is not based on any historical basis but rather developed out of the post-modern mindset, devaluing any absolute truth value (cf. Semetsky, 2004:55ff). Post-modern spiritualities can therefore be both intrinsic or extrinsic, even though most would probably be intrinsic, meaning that they would focus on individual experience. However the most important point is that such spiritualities have no basis except the contemporary notion that spirituality needs to be liberated from the bonds of logical positivism and particularity and that it should therefore be open to any interpretation. The lack of historical grounding and a coherent epistemology justifying this belief is lacking and reveals clearly that this perception of spirituality contains many possibly insurmountable philosophical problems (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.1).

6.3.3.2 Feminist trends

Even though feminist spiritualities or trends are often grounded in post-modernism, there are distinct differences. Firstly feminist spiritualities often developed out of a reaction against Christianity with its perceived focus on the dominance of men, therefore in many cases deliberately ignoring historical context, or re-interpreting it in order to correspond to the idea of feminism. In addition to that, it seems that feminist spirituality is at least partly inclusive, encompassing gay and lesbian spiritualities. However, it would strongly reject spiritualities that would for example be perceived as patriarchal, which renders it partly particularistic. Regarding intrinsic or extrinsic elements of spirituality, it can be postulated that both are present as there is a high emphasis on experience. Some branches of feminism focus on the reinstatement of old mythologies which predated Christianity in the West and for this reason are considered more authentic (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.2).

It can therefore be said that feminist spiritualities seem to have little more epistemological credentials than post-modern trends. There is no proper historical basis. Particularism in feminist spiritualities is based on a preferred collection of acceptable values and is not grounded in a desire to be truthful to external realities. It is based on certain presuppositions.

6.3.3.3 Multi-religious and atheist trends

Multi-religious and atheist trends of spirituality are embedded in post-modernism. Here it becomes evident again that a historical basis is rejected in favour of the idea that any religion or atheist perception and promotion of spirituality is legitimate and desirable (cf. Tacey, 2001:90ff; Gearon, 2004:189). Often pre-Christian religions, which lack a historical and evidential basis are seen as superior and as being able to provide a framework for the spiritual. As is the case with post-modern trends, multi-religious and atheist spiritualities are focused on experience and are by definition inclusive, although only as long as no included belief-system makes claims to particularity (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.3).

6.3.3.4 Eastern trends

Eastern trends of spirituality focus on the inclusion of elements from Eastern religions (mainly Buddhism and Hinduism) into Western concepts of spirituality. Again this is grounded in a post-modern understanding of the world, where the inclusion of different ideas of spirituality is desirable. Eastern notions of spirituality are thought to enhance Western ideas of spirituality, not on the basis of history, but rather on the basis of anticipated intrinsic experiences (cf. Yob, 1995:109). This also lacks a proper epistemological basis (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.4).

6.3.3.5 Existential trends

As all other trends described above, existential trends in spirituality are also embedded in a post-modern framework. It is believed that spiritualities are not grounded in a historical framework. Instead they seem to have arisen as a result of a universal human need to find meaning in life (cf. Webster, 2004:7). The focus here is

therefore intrinsic experience. Inclusiveness is once again implied. The argument for existential spirituality thus rests solely on the perception of a universal human need for meaning and purpose. However a 'leap of faith' is advocated as no evidence is presented as to why this need can justify any possible expression and view of spirituality (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.5).

6.3.3.6 Problems with contemporary trends of spirituality

It becomes evident that all contemporary trends of spirituality, which are all to an extent grounded in post-modernism, reveal philosophical challenges when it comes to epistemological foundations. None of them can present any clear reason based on history or historical evidence why this specific trend or concept of spirituality should be advocated. All of them are based on popular notions of the relative nature of truth which is highly problematic philosophically. This has been touched upon already in Chapter 2 and will be discussed also in section 6.4. As was also remarked when considering a basis for Life Orientation, what emerges again is the question of truth as something which cannot be sidestepped.

In the following paragraphs the different religions will be investigated in the same way as these contemporary trends in spiritualities have been considered. Whereas many of these trends in contemporary views of spirituality seem very arbitrary, there is at least in some cases more of an epistemological basis on which the following spiritualities are based on.

6.3.3.7 Hindu spirituality

One of the most defining characteristics of Hinduism is its inclusiveness. As was explained in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.1) Hinduism accepts many gods, and there is no claim to exclusiveness. There is no discernable historical basis for Hindu spirituality. The different recognised texts or scriptures of Hinduism are said to have existed always and it is difficult to find any verifiable historical events in them. Furthermore there are various rituals to be observed, pointing to an extrinsic type of spirituality (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.1).

6.3.3.8 Buddhist spirituality

Even though Buddhism has a definite even if historically shadowy founder there is little historical evidence available within the Buddhist texts to verify any truth claims made. Historical events, other than the life of Buddha, are generally not very important within the faith. Buddhist spirituality very much focuses on intrinsic experience (cf. Krüger *et al.*, 2004:125) and tends to be generally inclusive. Zen-Buddhism, which is the form of Buddhism that has mostly influenced the West, is self-consciously illogical, denying any absolutes and opposites, as everything is considered to be one (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.2).

6.3.3.9 Islam spirituality

Compared to other spiritualities Islamic spirituality probably has the strongest focus on extrinsic observance of rituals, therefore having few intrinsic elements. It is grounded historically, more so than the other spiritualities discussed up to this point. The life of Muhammad is well-documented. Also in contrast to the other spiritualities Islamic spirituality is strongly particularistic, and would claim that there is only one right and true way worship, to such an extent that holy war is advocated against “unbelievers” (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.3).

6.3.3.10 African traditional spirituality

Spirituality in African traditional religions focuses mainly on placating the deceased ancestors. This involves many rituals. Experience can be classified as mainly extrinsic. Looking at a historical record there is virtually no written record except the scant testimonies of the colonial period. Even though there are oral traditions it still means that we can probably conclude that African traditional religion is not sufficiently historically grounded. Although somewhat syncretistic, African traditional spirituality can be described as particularistic (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.4).

6.3.3.11 Christian spirituality

When considering Christian spirituality it becomes clear that there is a very definite historical basis available (cf, Geisler, 1999:91ff; Habermas, 2006:161ff). The Biblical texts are self-consciously grounded in history and therefore can be tested against historical evidence. The practice of Christian spirituality focuses on intrinsic experience, a relationship with God. However, this relationship is possible only through the historical life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. These are important extrinsic elements. However, biblical Christianity always warns against an empty externalism. “True worshippers” must worship “in spirit and in truth.” Like Islam, Christianity is particularistic, calling for the ‘repentance’ of all, and that at the end of the age, “every tongue will confess” that Jesus the Christ is the one true God (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.5).

6.3.3.12 Problems with religion-based spiritualities

When considering the different religious traditions which inform the expressions of spirituality it becomes clear that providing a sound epistemological basis receives little attention. If an epistemological foundation is not given then it is difficult to justify or even validate a spirituality. The problem is very much the same as was encountered when looking at LO. If a proper basis is not given, it becomes difficult to know which values to teach and how to teach those values as binding on our belief and behaviour.

The following section therefore deals with the questions of absolutes. The discussion will centre on the question whether any moral standard can be chosen in a specific cultural context, depending only on the preference of that specific culture. The same question arises when discussing spirituality and religion. Is it possible to be inclusive without violating basic philosophical tenets? Is this position philosophically and logically tenable? This following section therefore focuses on both aspects, LO and related concepts as well as spirituality and religion.

6.4 Particularity versus inclusiveness

This question regarding particularity versus inclusiveness is emerging as a distinct conundrum in the often heated debate around character education in general and emerges specifically in the results of this research. In the post-modern context in which the whole Life Orientation endeavour is conceived and practiced, it continues to be a most controversial issue arousing strong opinions on all sides. The question here is basically: Should one type of religion/ spirituality/ value system be taught particularistically as a claim to truth and creedally as a claim to our allegiance in public schools or should an approach be preferred which treats all viewpoints as being equally true and equally false, thus advocating none, and eventually leaving the 'choice' to the learner? The same question can be asked about spirituality: Can and should one type of spirituality be promoted as the correct or right one to the exclusion of others, or should a general spirituality be advocated? It seems however that arguing for particularity in this post modern climate would be condemned from the outset, as it would imply that certain religions/spiritualities are considered better than others, a position popularly portrayed as 'intolerance'. In today's post-modern times this position is considered one of the primary sources for psychological stresses such as anxiety, guilt and fear, and more generally for "oppression" and social injustice. Ironically, such 'intolerance' is not tolerated within the canons of the post-modern world-view. However, in view of the need that emerged from this study for a more existentially relevant and intellectually coherent approach to Life Orientation, this issue needs to be investigated - should LO be driven by particularity or inclusiveness?

The following quote from one of the teachers (from the questionnaires) very much exemplifies this struggle around particularity and inclusiveness. This quote already appears in Chapter 5, however due to its high relevance it will be quoted again:

"Dit is 'n baie sensitiewe saak en daar bestaan baie uiteenlopende sienings rakende die saak! Sommige Christen-ouers wil byvoorbeeld geensins hê dat hul kinders enige kennis van ander godsdienste moet inwin nie, byvoorbeeld Islam, Boeddisme, en so voort al word daar gepoog om dit heel objektief aan te bied. Die teenoorgestelde is ook waar, byvoorbeeld Moslems teenoor Christendom. Die gevaar is dat

blootstelling aan 'n vreemde godsdiens leerders kan prikkel om nadere ondersoek te doen en so die pad heel byster kan raak. Soms is dit bloot nuuskierigheid, maar leerders kan as gevolg van groepsdruk eie tradisionele beginsels prysgee. My vraag altyd: Was hy/sy ooit werklik in sy hart oortuig van 'n beginsel / godsdiens of is dit bloot oorlewering / tradisie / opvoeding?? Dit is vir my baie belangrik dat kinders opgevoed en gelei moet word om self oortuig te wees van 'n saak. Dit begin egter primêr in die ouerhuis en die skool en LO is slegs 'n verlenging daarvan.”

(This is a very sensitive issue, and there are many diverging opinions concerning this matter. Some Christian parents for example do not want their children to acquire any knowledge of other religions, such as for example Islam, Buddhism and so forth, even though it is attempted to present it quite objectively. The opposite is also true, for example Muslims towards Christianity. The danger is that exposure to other religions can incite learners to find out more, and like this they can really loose their way. Sometimes it is only curiosity, but as a result of peer pressure learners can give up their own traditional principles. My question always: Was he/she ever really convinced of a principle/religion, or is it only custom /the handing over of tradition / education?? To me it is very important that children are educated and led to be convinced themselves of a matter. However this primarily begins in the home and the school and LO are only an extension thereof.) (R1)

This teacher recognises the tension between particularity and inclusiveness. She realises that there are various viewpoints, however she seems to believe that one religion is right, or more right than others, which would mean that she believes in particularity. She wants to shield children from other influences, thus not exposing them to inclusiveness, where all religions are seen as equal. She then however questions the value of a person's religion if it has not been purposefully chosen and asserts that it is maybe necessary to expose pupils to different religions. This teacher has probably not resolved the matter for herself, whether she would prefer to advocate particularity or inclusiveness. The question that comes to the fore here is that of truth. This is possibly the core issue particularity and inclusiveness of morals, LO, spirituality and religion is all about. If one religion is seen to be true it means that

particularity is the only option. However if all religions are seen to be equally true then truth is usually seen as relative and not absolute. Providing guidance to young people in such a context is problematic without reinstating some form of standard, whether it be a religion, a political ideology or a metaphysical ideal (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4.6; Chapter 3, section 3.3.5).

The arguments for inclusiveness today are complex and many. Some of these were already mentioned throughout this study. In general inclusiveness provides room for all viewpoints, religions, spiritualities and moral orientations, and is therefore promoted as anti-discriminatory. This is deemed a cardinal virtue of the prevailing value system, extremely important it is believed in today's society, where tolerance is promoted as one of the most important values. All pupils are supposed to acquire this value. The aim of tolerance it is claimed, is that it can usher in an 'open' society in which all people accept each other without prejudices, where no one religion or cultural practice is judged as being wrong. The focus should thus be on principles which are accepted by all people and can thus be declared as binding. The morality that results from this is therefore very broad and not specific. This attempt to inclusiveness should then lead to reconciliation, which is seen as a crucial objective in South African society. Unity should emerge in this society characterised by equality, freedom and acceptance. Furthermore critical thinking is encouraged where pupils should evaluate different viewpoints and religions themselves and then decide to which one they want to commit (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4 & 3.5.2).

These are in a nutshell all the important reasons for inclusiveness. The question is whether these reasons are sufficient to warrant the promotion of inclusiveness as is suggested by the Department of Education. In the following paragraph a number of points which suggest some problems with inclusiveness will be mentioned.

First of all it has to be highlighted that the whole inclusiveness idea was inspired by post-modernism with its denial of absolute truth. This has already been mentioned repeatedly. The statement that there is no absolute truth is logically self-defeating, as an absolute statement is made, rejecting any statement with truth-value. This is a basic flaw in the whole theory of post-modernism, and to date it has not been resolved. It also means that from a post-modern view post-modernism can only be

seen as another “arbitrary social construction”, as the only arbiter for truth is the sole perspective of an autonomous vacillating individual (Tennent, 2002:242). If post-modernism could be shown to be true, it would destroy its own main thesis (McCallum, 1996:53). Also it seems that post-modernism is accepted and hailed as the way to a better society simply on a presuppositionalist basis. (Even though presuppositionalism is a system used in Christian apologetics, referring to the a priori acceptance of the Christian worldview, in many cases without a need for evidences (Geisler, 1999:607), it can be referred to here). This means that post-modernism is accepted as a presupposition or prerequisite. This presupposition is not deemed to be open to criticism, simply because it is unquestioningly accepted as a given. According to the proponents of post-modernism it is ‘taboo’ to ask for an evidential basis for the uncritical acceptance of post-modern claims.

Therefore, the idea of truth remains central in the debate. It does not appear philosophically or academically possible to dispose of the question of truth, as it seems to be inherent in the nature of things. It is not possible to deny that most things are either/or. This is patently true for the physical world (either a mushroom is poisonous or it is not). However, as has been argued above, there are sound reasons to maintain that it also holds for moral statements. It cannot be wrong and not wrong at the same time to steal a car. To claim that there is no absolute truth is logically untenable and simply at odds with daily experience. Some argue that while this might be true for the physical world, social realities are far more complex and cannot be reduced to simple truth-statements. While acknowledging that social realities are complex, it does not warrant the dismissal of any attempts to establish truth. It is precisely because social issues *are* grounded in historical contexts and communities of practice and beliefs that the question cannot be avoided. Of course, it is true that there are for example different cultures which have different practices, and sometimes none of these practices seems to be more right than another. For example there is no right way of greeting. Shaking hands or kissing when greeting someone is neither inherently right nor wrong. However, few people would disagree that female circumcision or rape are great evils. Nonetheless, according to the idea that there is no absolute truth, and therefore no absolute right or wrong, this statement cannot be made. According to the idea of inclusiveness female circumcision or as it is more truthfully called, female genital mutilation, as well as rape, cannot be condemned as

being wrong. This is the “problem” with inclusiveness (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3.5 & 3.4.2; Chapter, section 2.4.6).

It is claimed that a set of values should be chosen which suits all people, cultures and religions. However, what is to be done if there is a group of people who believe in the need to practice female circumcision? Or what is to be done with people who stubbornly advocate that only their religion or ideology or philosophical claim is right, in other words who do not have a high value for tolerance at all? If no truth statement is made then circumcising females is both right and wrong which is a contradiction. If a truth statement is made a group of people is discriminated against, which is inherently wrong in the canons of inclusiveness. Here something needs to be added concerning the value of tolerance. The whole idea of inclusiveness can only work if all people subscribe to the idea that tolerance is the highest value in a given society. The logical consequence would then be that people who do not see tolerance as the highest value will become the objects of social pressure to conform to the “majority view” or be discriminated against. Within the idea and philosophy of inclusiveness there is however no basis for the claim that tolerance is or must be the highest value. It can thus be considered as being arbitrarily chosen and could according to the idea that no absolute truth exists be replaced by any other value. In short, for tolerance to be accepted as an ideal value, a coherent justification is needed to explain why it is ideal (cf. Sokal & Bricmont, 1998:50ff; Geisler, 1999:501f).

Furthermore it must be noted that most cultures and religions make absolute truth claims (even though this does not warrant an uncritical acceptance of these truth claims as actually being true). Adherents of these cultures and religions do not agree with the idea that all religions are ultimately the same. Religions make particular truth claims which often contradict each other and are as a result mutually exclusive. Few Muslims would agree with inclusiveness, neither would most Christians. Many Hindus would probably agree with the *idea* of inclusiveness to an extent, as long as they can keep all their gods in place in practice - in other words as long as no one compromises their position that there *are* millions of gods and not only one (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5).

What is connected with this above argument is that the values which are promoted in societies which strive to be inclusive have only a theoretical basis. Historically all values which were at any given time promoted were rooted in some kind of religion or culture which made absolute truth claims (cf. Chapter 3, section, 3.2). Nowadays these truth claims are dismissed, and therefore little basis is available for stating why inclusiveness is good or right. In other words until recently any right or wrong was built on an answer as to *why* something is right or wrong. For example it was wrong to steal because God said so. Today's values as promoted by inclusiveness cannot adequately answer these why questions, which is certainly a drawback, as all people, especially learners, ask why questions. An inclusive approach to morality ultimately reduces morality to insignificant platitudes which are not able to provide meaning in the lives of learners (cf. Hunter, 2000:213). The challenges of teaching values in such a climate are insurmountable, a fact that has not been lost on the teacher and learner in the classroom, who - rightly it would appear - ridicule the 'orthodox' underlying approach to Life Orientation (cf. Hunter, 2000:210).

Finally, one needs to consider the track record of character education initiatives. Values clarification, which was a very popular way of teaching children morality in the 1960s, has failed. Even though it was promoted internationally, received hundreds of millions in financial support and was used extensively, research has shown that it was unsuccessful. This approach, as was explained in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.2), allows children to choose their own values. The emphasis was on choosing and implementing any value the child chose. It is clear that there was eventually no way of telling a child who, for example, wanted to choose the value of dishonesty, that this is wrong.

In conclusion, it can be said that an argument was made for the need of particularity on the basis of the evidence which was presented in this chapter as well as Chapters 2, 3 and 5. It does not seem possible to develop a sound epistemological basis for an approach to LO based on spirituality which is inclusive. This poses a serious problem. What is to be done with a country like South Africa which is religiously and culturally diverse?

6.5 Particularity as approach for Life Orientation

After having come to the conclusion that an inclusive approach to LO and spirituality poses too many insurmountable epistemological problems it remains to be discussed what this particularity should look like.

It was established that Life Orientation education in South Africa, though very necessary, has many inherent problems. It was argued that a main component of the solution should lie in the area of accepting absolutes. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1, moral or character education has always been at least influenced, but in the most cases been determined by, religion. Also, spirituality has always been based on religion and has never existed apart from religion (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4). Both spirituality and moral education have been divorced from religion only for about a century. In the light of the described moral crisis in Chapter 3, section 3.3.4 the weight of evidence indicates that the social experiments of either modernism or post-modernism have not been successful.

As spirituality is recognised as a universal human phenomenon, it seems plausible to develop an epistemological framework for Life Orientation which is based on spirituality. In the light of the evidence presented in this study it appears reasonable to look to religion as a basis for this spirituality which in turn needs to inform Life Orientation practice. It seems that only if a commitment to specific truths is made can LO eventually be successful. The question that follows is: Which kind of spirituality should provide the basis (epistemological framework) for the teaching of LO? From the above discussion, it is argued that the weight of evidence would point to a historical, particularistic approach with both intrinsic and extrinsic elements as indicated in Table 2.1b:

Table 2.1b Possible categorisation of expressions of spiritualities

	Historical		Ahistorical	
	Particular	Inclusive	Particular	Inclusive
Intrinsic				
Extrinsic				

This is necessary if it is to support the demands of a coherent epistemology that can carry the weight of any truth claims and provide the answers to the why questions (cf. Hunter, 2000:211ff). This is clearly limited to the strongly theistic, and more specifically the monotheistic, religious traditions. It is predicted further that learners within a theistic tradition would tend to make decisions within the framework of a religious authority such as God or scripture and the teachings and traditions of the community. Children functioning within this moral paradigm tend to base their actions on what God or scripture says is right (cf. Hunter, 2000:157ff). It is only such a paradigm that could provide the normative assumptions, the god-terms and the creedal statements that claim – even constrain – our allegiance. It is only such a position that would empower learners to make a particular decision to act or not to act, not only when it is, but maybe even more crucially, when it is not in their own self interest. This is the essence of character education – that the individual chooses to subject their own self-interest to the demands of a higher authority or “presiding presence”. It remains for further research to establish the validity of this prediction in terms of lifestyle choices and prevalence of risk behaviour among learners at schools, and to what extent a LO programme based upon these categories would be effective in changing negative behaviour and reinforcing positive behaviour.

However due to the fact that adherence to a religion is at all times voluntary it is important to leave room for inclusive approaches. The basis for this is the simple assumption that people must have the right to choose their own religion, and the fact that people will never agree on which religion is the best. Therefore particularity could be implemented in the sense that different communities have the freedom to decide on a spirituality which should be the basis for LO teaching as was suggested by one of the teachers who completed the questionnaire:

“I believe that learners need to be orientated towards life freely and based on the spiritual foundation of their choice.” (R6)

This would then mean that different communities could decide on a type of spirituality on which to base their LO teaching, which can then provide the anchor and a stable reference point for the teaching of morals and life skills. Just as language,

policy allows schools to decide what the main language should be, so they could decide on the main religious focus.

However, it has been demonstrated above that contemporary conceptions of spirituality appear to be without proper epistemological basis, which raises contentious issue like the rightness or wrongness of for example female circumcision as alluded to above. Some central government policy statement may therefore be necessary to affirm that justice, equality and the like are important, that murder, rape and fraud are wrong, but the schools are then free to provide the reasons for the different values. This leaves the different religions as options and some unresolved philosophical problems, but it does provide the particularistic context needed for LO.

6.6 Recommendations

Considering the different aspects of this study certain points emerge which can serve as recommendations for policy makers (Department of Education) or educators who wish to (further) enhance or develop Life Orientation or similar programmes. These recommendations are made in a summarised form. They include broad general recommendations and more specific recommendations for the daily practice of Life Orientation:

- The weaknesses of Life Orientation practice need to be seriously considered. This includes ineffectiveness, negative attitudes by both learners and teachers as well as the fact that the theory of the RNCS and practice are far removed from each other.
- The fact that no sufficient epistemological basis of LO is provided in the documents of the Department of Education needs serious attention.
- Spirituality should be taken serious as a phenomenon and should be integrated into education practice in general and Life Orientation teaching in particular.
- Epistemological and moral relativism is to be avoided when looking for approaches to Life Orientation programmes, due to their serious philosophical problems as well as the evident lack of research showing the effectiveness of approaches based on this philosophy.

- It is advised that an epistemological framework for Life Orientation which is based on spirituality is informed by particularity, a strong historical basis as well as both extrinsic and intrinsic elements of spirituality.
- Principals need to consider implementing strategies which can change the negative attitudes many teachers have towards LO.
- LO teachers need to take responsibility for LO, in other words they need to start taking the learning area seriously, thereby instilling in the pupils an appreciation for LO.
- Life Orientation should become an exam subject already in Primary School.
- Pupils' opinions should be taken into account when deciding on themes (it became clear that for example HIV/AIDS receives too much attention, and causes a negative attitude in the pupils).
- LO teachers should not be forced to teach the Physical Education part of LO, if they have not had any training regarding PE.

6.7 Epilogue

Having now finished a project which stretched over four years causes some thoughts to come to the fore. Firstly it is evident that more research is needed, especially in the area of testing the effectiveness of Life Orientation and other similar programmes. In South Africa it is also indispensable to devote more studies investigating the connection between spirituality and Life Orientation. The implementation of strategies combining these two elements is advisable, which at the same time needs to be monitored by researchers. Secondly it is clear that even though an in-depth literature review has been presented, that much more could have been said. Certain areas of investigation were considered only very briefly, and certainly justice could not have been done in all cases to all investigated phenomena. The fact that this study was explorative in nature by definition implies that not all areas have received sufficient attention. Furthermore it needs to be acknowledged that a researcher's stance can never be fully objective, and that personal preference does play a role. A stance which recognises the need for some kind of academic humility is therefore adopted.

In this chapter it was attempted to come to a conclusion regarding this study. The main findings were summarised and developed further so as to provide possibilities and opportunities to consider a different approach to Life Orientation education, which has its basis in a particularistic approach to spirituality. Being well aware of the social climate which is not very likely to condone such an approach, it has nevertheless been shown that such an approach is heavily based on a strong evidential basis. Letting communities or schools decide on a particularistic approach is therefore certainly a viable option. It would go beyond the scope of this study to present a proper and in-depth evaluation of the credibility of all possible religions that can serve as the foundation for Life Orientation education. What will however be presented in short in this epilogue is a demonstration of evidence for the epistemological validity of basing the teaching of LO teaching on the Christian religion. This is done here in the face of overwhelming evidence for Christianity (Schaeffer, 1990; Geisler, 1999; McDowell, 1999; Strobel, 2007), as well as due to the fact that the majority of South Africans (80%) confesses to be Christians (Anon, 2010).

Looking at the evidence of this study it appears that a Christian approach to spirituality seems to be able to provide a sound epistemological basis for LO as was demonstrated in earlier sections of this chapter. It seems that well designed research reports exist demonstrating that a specifically Christian approach to moral education and education in general seems to achieve the desired results. Hunter (2000:157ff) in a study involving over 5000 learners found that those who have a theistic (in this study mainly Christian or Jewish young people) worldview fared much better concerning moral choices than young people with other worldviews (humanist, utilitarian, conventionalist or expressivist). These choices included attitudes towards, stealing and cheating, underage drinking, premarital sex, lying as well as suicide. Lickona (1999:26) confirms the important role of theistic religion in this context. A study done in Malawi showed that church-based programmes of sex education, which designate sexuality as a gift from God which is therefore something positive and precious, which needs to be well guarded, seem to provide a very positive alternative to secular programmes (Bertrand-Dansereau, 2009:20ff).

Much has been said about the necessity for a verifiable historical basis for spiritualities. Considering this in the light of the evidence for the historical veracity of Christianity it becomes evident that a Christian spirituality is epistemologically justified. The historical accuracy of both the Old and New Testaments are well-documented (McDowell, 1999:33ff; Habermas, 2006:161ff; Geisler, 1999:531).

Furthermore it can be argued that the Christian religion provides a coherent system or worldview, which is able to answer the most important and basic questions of human beings, such as the question concerning the meaning of life, the problem of evil, the problem of guilt, questions regarding life and death, as well as man's search for relationship (Zacharias, 2006:302ff; Samples, 2007:265ff).

Even though this section is certainly not intended to provide a complete apologetic of the Christian religion, it is intended to stimulate an interest and thus further research in the possibility that this religion might be able to provide real answers to the issues addressed and discussed in this study. As worshippers of the Christian religion are required to worship in "spirit *and* in truth" it might be that answers lie in this spirituality which is founded on a sound epistemological basis (truth).

Bibliography

ADLER, J. & WINGERT, P. 1992. Hey, I'm terrific! *Newsweek*, 119(7). Available: Academic Search Premier. Date of access: 23 Nov. 2007.

ALEXANDER, H.A. 2006. A view from somewhere: explaining the paradigms of educational research. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 40(2):205-221.

ALEXANDER, H.A. & BEN-PERETZ, M. 2001. Towards a pedagogy of the sacred: transcendence, ethics, and the curriculum. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences*. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 34-47.)

ALEXANDER, H.A. 2004. Preface. (In Alexander, H.A. ed. *Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. vii-xiii.)

ALEXANDER, H.A. & CARR, D. 2006. Philosophical issues in spiritual education and development. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebsteyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 73-91.)

ALEXANDER, H.A. 2006. A view from somewhere: explaining the paradigms of educational research. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 40(2):205-221.

ALGERA, H.F. & SINK, C.A. 2002. Another look at character education in Christian schools. *Journal of research on Christian education*, 11(2):161-181.

ANDERSON, G. & ARSENAULT, N. 2007. Qualitative research. (In Anderson, G. ed. *Fundamentals of educational research*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. p. 119 – 135.)

ANDERSON, G. 2007. *Fundamentals of educational research*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

ANDERSON, W.T. 1990. Reality isn't what it used to be: theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic and other wonders of the post-modern world. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

ANFARA, V.A. & MERTZ, N.T. 2006. Introduction. (*In* Anfara, V.A. & Mertz, N.T., *eds*. Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. xiii – xxxii.)

ANKERBERG, J. & WELDON, J. 2005. The facts on world religions. Eugene: Christian Art Publishers.

ANON. 2010. South Africa: fast facts. www.southafrica.info Date of access: 10 August 2010.

ARWECK, E. & NESBITT, E. 2004. 'Living values: an educational program' – from initiative to uptake. *British journal of religious education*, 26(2):133-149.

ATKINSON, E. 2003. The postmodern prism: fracturing certainty in educational research. (*In* Swann, J. & Pratt, J. *eds*. Educational research in practice: making sense of methodology. London: Continuum. p. 35-50.)

AYMAN, I. 2004. Children's spirituality: a Bahá'í perspective. (*In* Alexander, H.A. *ed*. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 105-111.)

BADOLATO, R. 2002. The Educational Theory of Horace Mann. <http://www.newfoundations.com> Date of access: 20 Oct. 2009.

BAILEY, R. 1999. The abdication of reason: postmodern attacks upon science and reason. (*In* Swann, J. & Pratt, J. *eds*. Improving education: realist approaches to method and research. London: Cassell. p. 30-38.)

BASS, A. 2004. An investigation of Hindu Scripture. <http://www.apologeticspress.org> Date of access: 8 Sep. 2006.

BAUMEISTER, R.F. 2005. Self and volition. (*In* Miller, W.R. & Delaney, H.D., eds. Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: human nature, motivation and change. Wahsington DC: American Psychological Association. p. 57-72.)

BECK, C. & RUSSELL, E. 1998. Ontdek jou wêreld: suksesvolle lewensvaardighede. Kaapstad: Oxford University Press.

BEKERMAN, Z. 2004. Acts of courage: reshaping traditions in Palestinian-Jewish school ceremonies. (*In* Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 198-211.)

BELL, A.A. 1998. Exploring the New Testament world: an illustrated guide to the world of Jesus and the first Christians. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

BENNER, D.G. 1988. Psychotherapy and the spiritual quest. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

BENNETT, W.J. 1991. Moral literacy and the formation of character. (*In* Benninga, J.S. ed. Moral, character and civic education in the elementary school. New York: Teachers College Press. p. 131-138.)

BENNINGA, J.S. 1991. Moral and character education in the elementary school: an introduction. (*In* Benninga, J.S. ed. Moral, character and civic education in the elementary school. New York: Teachers College Press. p. 3-20.)

BENNINGA, J.S. 1991. The character education or direct approach to moral education. (*In* Benninga, J.S. ed. Moral, character and civic education in the elementary school. New York: Teachers College Press. p. 129-130.)

BENSON, P.L. 1997. All kids are our kids: what communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.

- BENSON, P.L., ROEHLKEPARTEIN, E.C. & RUDE, S.P. 2003. Spiritual development in childhood and adolescence: toward a field of enquiry. *Applied developmental science*, 7(3):203-213.
- BENSON, P.L. 2006. The science of child and adolescent spiritual development: definitional, theoretical and field-building challenges. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebsteyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 484-497.)
- BERKOWITZ, M.W. 2002. The science of character education. (In Damon, W., ed., Bringing in a new era in character education. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press. p. 43-64).
- BERKOWITZ, M.W. & BIER, M.C. 2004. Research-based character education. *Annals of the American Academy of political and social science*, 591(1):72-85. Available: Jstor. Date of access: 5 May 2008.
- BERTRAND-DANSEREAU, A. 2009. HIV prevention with young people in Malawi: paralyses and potentials in sexual education – a summary. Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal.
- BIBLE. 2002. New International Version: Study Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- BIBLE, 2005. NIV Archaeological Study Bible: an illustrated walk through Biblical history and culture. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- BLACKBURN, S. 2005. Oxford dictionary of philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BLUM, R.W.M. 1998. Healthy youth development as a model for youth health promotion. *Journal of adolescent health*, 22(5):368-375.

BOHLIN, K.E. 2005. Teaching character education through literature: awakening the moral imagination in secondary classrooms. London: The Falmer Press.

BOHLIN, S. 2005. Christianity: the best thing that ever happened to women. www.probe.org. Date of access: 24 Oct. 2006.

BOSACKI, S.L. 2001. 'Theory of mind' or 'theory of the soul?' The role spirituality in children's understanding of minds and emotions. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences*. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 156-169.)

BOSACKI, S.L. 2002. Spirituality and self in pre-adolescents: implications for a connected curriculum. *Journal of beliefs and values*, 23(1):55-67.

BOTTON, K., KING, C. & VENUGOPAL, J. 1997. Educating for spirituality. *Christian education journal*, 1(1):33-48.

BOWERS, C.A. 2005. The false promises of constructivist theories of learning. New York: Peter Lang.

BRADFORD, J. 1995. Caring for the whole child: a holistic approach to spirituality. London: Children's Society.

BROCKELMAN, P.T. 1980. Existential phenomenology and the world of ordinary experience: an introduction. Lanham: University Press of America.

BRUCE, F.F. 1997. The history of New Testament study. (In Marshall, I.H., ed. *New Testament interpretation*. Kent: Paternoster Press. p.21-59.)

BUCKLEY, J. & ERRICKER, J. 2004. Citizenship education in the postmodern moment. (In Alexander, H.A. ed. *Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 172-187.)

BURBULES, N.C. 2004. Jesus as teacher. (*In* Alexander, H.A. *ed.* Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 7-20.)

BURNARD, P. 1988. The spiritual needs of atheists. *The professional nurse*, 4(3):130-132.

BURSZTEIN, A. 2004. Leibowitz on spirituality as existential childishness. (*In* Alexander, H.A. *ed.* Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 65-78.)

BUTHELEZI, T., MITCHELL, C., MOLETSANE, R., DE LANGE, N., TAYLOR, M. & STUART, J. 2007. Youth voices about sex and AIDS: implications for life skills education through the 'Learning Together' project in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *International journal of inclusive education*, 11(4):445-459.

CAPRA, F. 1984. The turning point: science, society and the rising culture. New York: Simon & Schuster.

CARNAP, R. 1946. Theory and prediction in science. *Science (New series)*, 104(2710):520-521.

CARNAP, R. 1950. Empiricism, semantics and ontology. *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 4. Available: DiText. Date of access: 6 Nov. 2009.

CARR, D. 1995. Towards a distinctive conception of spiritual education. *Oxford review of education*, 21(1). Available: Academic Search Premier. Date of access: 2 Mar. 2009.

CARSTENS, M., STAPLES, H., VERCUEIL, P. & WOLMARANS, A. 2004. *Kollig op lewensoriëntering. Graad 5 Leerdersboek*. Sandton: Heinemann.

CHAFFEE, J. 2005. The philosopher's way: thinking critically about profound ideas. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall.

CHAMPAGNE, E. 2001. Listening to...listening for...: a theological reflection on spirituality in early childhood. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education : cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 76-87.)

CHATER, M.F.T. 2000. Spirituality as struggle: poetics, experience and the place of the spiritual in educational encounter. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 5(2):193-201.

CHATER, M. 2001. Children, doorposts and hearts: How can and should the religious traditions respond to spirituality in a postmodern setting? (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 63-75.)

CHATER, M. 2005. Teacher's values and spiritualities: from private to public. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 216-230.)

CHUMBLER, N.R. 1996. An empirical test of a theory of factors affecting life satisfaction: understanding the role of religious experience. *Journal of psychology and theology*, 24(3):220-232.

CLARK, S.R.L. 1994. Ancient philosophy. (In Kenny, A., ed. *The Oxford illustrated history of Western philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.1-53.)

CLOETE, M. 2007. The colour of AIDS. *South African journal of philosophy*, 26(4):388-402.

COETZEE, M. & UNDERHAY, C. 2003. Gesondheidsrisikogedrag by adolessente van verskillende ouderdomme. *S.A. tydskrif vir navorsing in sport, liggaamlike opvoedkunde en ontspanning*, 25(2):27-36.

- COLES, R. 1990. *The spiritual life of children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- COLLINS, K.J. 2003. What is spirituality? Historical and methodological considerations. Wesley Center online.
http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojml/31-35/31-1-04.htm Date of access: 12 Apr. 2007.
- CONEE, E. & FELDMAN, R. 2004. *Evidentialism: essays in epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- CONSTITUTION. *see* SOUTH AFRICA. 1996.
- COTTINGHAM, M. 2005. Developing spirituality through the use of literature in history education. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 10(1):45-60.
- CRABB, L. 1987. *Understanding people: deep longings for relationship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- CRAFFORD, D. 1996. African traditional religions. (*In* Meiring, P. *ed.* *A world of religions: a South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers. p. 1-26.)
- CRESWELL, J.W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- CRESWELL, J.W. 2008. *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- CROMPTON, M. 1998. *Children, spirituality, religion and social work*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- CRONIN, M.E. 1996. Life Skills Curricula for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of learning disabilities*, 29(1):53-68.

CROWELL, S. 2004. Existentialism. (*In* Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).
<http://plato.stanford.edu> Date of access: 2 Oct. 2008.

DAVIDSON, M. & LICKONA, T. 2007. Smart & good. *Independent school*, 66(2).
Available: Academic Search Premier. Date of access: 5 May 2008.

DE BEER, P. 1996. Hinduism: one of the oldest religions of the world. (*In* Meiring, P. *ed.* A world of religions: a South African perspective. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers. p. 27-66.)

DE KLERK, J. 2003. Die kompleksiteit van morele opvoeding in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, 44(1&2):47-60.

DE KLERK, J. 2005. Karakteropvoeding in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. *Koers*, 70(2):169-188.

DE SOUZA, M. 2005. Spirituality and religiosity in Catholic and Coptic Orthodox schools: implications for religious school communities. (*In* Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 8-22.)

DE VOS, A.S., STRYDOM, H., FOUICHE, C.B. & DELPORT, C.S.L. 2005. Research at grassroot levels for the social sciences and human service professions. 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

DELANEY, HD. & DICLEMENTE, C.C. 2005. Psychology's roots: a brief history of the influence of Judeo-Christian perspectives. (*In* Miller, W.R. & Delaney, H.D., *eds.* Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: human nature, motivation and change. Wahsington DC: American Psychological Association. p. 31-54.)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. *see* SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education.

- DE ROCHE, E.F. & WILLIAMS, M.M. 2001. Educating hearts and minds: a comprehensive character education framework. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- DICLEMENTE, R.J. & HANSEN, W.B. 1996. Handbook of adolescent health risk behaviour. New York: Plenum Press.
- DIXON, C.K. 2001. Who nurtured the child? Without attachment there can be no intimacy. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 48-62.)
- DOCKERY, D.S. 2000. An outline of Paul's view of the spiritual life: foundation for an evangelical spirituality. (In Collins, K.J. ed. Exploring Christian spirituality: an ecumenical reader. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 339-352.)
- DOVRE, P.J. 2007. From Aristotle to Angelou: best practices in character education. *Education next*, 7(2):38-45.
- DOWNEY, M. 1997. Understanding Christian spirituality. Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- DRAZENOVICH, G. 2004. Towards a phenomenologically grounded understanding of Christian spirituality in theology. *Quodlibet: online journal of Christian theology*, 6(3). <http://www.quodlibet.net/savage-spirituality.shtml> Date of access: 16 Mar. 2005.
- DREYFUS, H.L. & RABINOW, P. 1986. What is maturity? Habermas and Foucault on "What is enlightenment?" (In D.C.Hoy, ed.: Foucault: a critical reader. Chicago: Chicago University Press).
- DUFF, L. 2003. Spiritual development and education: a contemplative view. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 8(3):227-237.

DUMINY, P.A., STEYN, P.D.G., DREYER, H.J., VOS, A.J. & DOBIE, B.A. 1998. Education for the student teacher 3. Parow: Maskew Miller Longman.

EAUDE, T. 2001. Searching for the spirit. (*In* Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 220-233.)

EBERSÖHN, L. & ELOFF, I. 2003. Life skills & assets. Pretoria: Van Schaik's Publishers.

EBSTYNE KING, P. 2004. Communities of character: religion in the moral development of American and Korean youth. (*In* Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 112-129.)

EBSTYNE KING, P. & BENSON, P.L. 2006. Spiritual Development and Adolescent Well-Being and Thriving. (*In* Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 384-398.)

EGAN, G. 2002. The skilled helper: a problem-management and opportunity-development approach to helping. 7th ed. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.

EGAN, R. 2001. How does spiritual well-being fit into health promoting schools. Health promoting schools' conference September, 2001 in Dunedin, New Zealand. <http://www.hps.org.nz/conf01/spiritual.pdf> Date of access: 2 Mar. 2005.

EGBERT, N., MICKLEY, J. & COELING, H. 2004. A review and application of social scientific measures of religiosity and spirituality: assessing a missing component in health communication research. *Health communication* 16(1):7-27.

EIDLITZ, W. 1957. Der Glaube und die heiligen Schriften der Inder. Freiburg: Walter Verlag.

- EISEN, M., ZELLMAN, G.L. & MURRAY, D.M. 2003. Evaluating the Lions-Quest "Skills for adolescence" drug education program second-year behaviour outcomes. *Addictive behaviours*, 28(5):883-897. Available: Science Direct.
- EISENBERG SASSO, S. 2001. When your children ask: a Jewish theology of childhood. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 22-33.)
- ELIAS, M.J. & KRESS, J.S. 1994. Social decision-making and life skills development: a critical thinking approach to health promotion in the middle school. *Journal of school health*, 64(2):62-66.
- ELLWOOD, R.S. 1987. *Eastern spirituality in America*. New York: Paulist Press.
- EMLER, N. 1996. How can we decide whether moral education works? *Journal of moral education*, 25(1):117-126.
- EMMONS, R.A. 2000. Spirituality and intelligence: problems and prospects. *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 10(1):57-64.
- ENCARTA. 2002. Scholasticism. (In Microsoft Encarta '02.) [CD].
- ERCIKAN, K. & ROTH, W.M. 2006. What good is polarizing research into qualitative and quantitative? *Educational researcher*, 35(5):14-23.
- ERRICKER, C. 2000. Relativism, postmodernism and the spirit of educational enquiry. London: Routledge Falmer.
- ERRICKER, C. 2007. Children's spirituality and postmodern faith. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 12(1):51-60.

ERRICKER, J. 2001. The notion of citizenship in education. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century.* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 198-206.)

ESTANEK, S.M. 2006. Redefining spirituality: a new discourse. *College student journal*, 40(2):270-281.

ESTEP, J.R. 2002. Spiritual formation as social: toward a Vygotskyan developmental perspective. *Religious education*, 97(1):141-164.

FELLMANN, J., GETIS, A. & GETIS, J. 1997. *Human geography: landscapes of human activities.* 5th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

FEUERSTEIN, R. 1983. *Instrumental enrichment: an intervention program for cognitive modifiability.* Baltimore: University Park Press.

FIELDER, J., HINES, J., HUSSEY, T. & RIOS, A. 2004. An analysis of moral development in adolescents.
<http://www.dept.lamar.edu/lustudentjnl/Current%20Edition/An%20Analysis%20of%20Moral%20Development%20in%20Adolescents.pdf> Date of access: 15 Mar. 2005.

FILDES, V. 1986. *Breast, bottles and babies: a history of infant feeding.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

FINN, C.E. 1990. Narcissus goes to school. *Commentary*, 89(6):40-45. Available: EBSCOHost.

FISHER, J. 2001. The nature of spiritual well-being and the curriculum: some educator's views. *Journal of Christian education*, 44(1):39-45.

FLANAGAN, W., MOSTERT, J. & HARTOP, S. 1998. *This is life skills. Teacher's book. Grade 1.* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

FLOOD, G. 2006. An introduction to Hinduism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FORD, P., ARIE, S. & PINGREE, G. 2005. In a secular ocean, waves of spirituality. *Christian science monitor*, 97(62). Available: Academic Search Elite. Date of access: 13 Mar. 2005.

FORNERIS, T., DANISH, S.J. & SCOTT, D.L. 2007. Setting goals, solving problems, and seeking social support: developing adolescents abilities through a life skills program. *Adolescence*, 42(165):103-114.

FOUCAULT, M. 1984. What is enlightenment? (In P.Rabinow, *ed.*: The Foucault reader. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).

FRANKL, V. 1963. Man's search for meaning. Boston: Beacon Press.

FREEKS, F.E. 2007. 'n Karakterbouprogram vir vêrdere onderwys en opleidingskolleges. Potchefstroom: NWU. (Thesis – D.Phil.) 297p.

FREND, A.J. 2007. 'Come and see': an existential approach to received wisdom. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 12(1):9-16.

FREUD, S. 1927. The future of an illusion. Garden City: Doubleday.

FRIEDENTHAL, L. & KAVANAUGH, D. 2007. Religions of Africa. Philadelphia: Mason Crest Publishers.

GAARDER, J. 1999. Sophie's world. London: Dolphin Paperback.

GEARON, L. 2001. The corruption of innocence and the spirituality of dissent: postcolonial perspectives on spirituality in a world of violence. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *eds.* Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 143-155.)

GEARON, L. 2004. Hope against devastation: children's spirituality and human rights. (In Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 188-197.)

GEISLER, N. 1999. Baker encyclopaedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

GELLEL, A. 2007. Valuing the language of intergenerational wisdom in the spiritual education of children. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 12(1):1-3.

GEORGE, Z. 2007. The blackboard jungle. *Sunday times*: 4, 7 Sep.

GETIS, A., GETIS, J. & FELLMANN, J.D. 2000. Introduction to geography. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

GLYNN, P. 1997. God: the evidence: the reconciliation of faith and reason in a post-secular world. Roseville: Prima Publishing.

GOBO, G. 2004. Sampling, representativeness and generalizability. (In Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. & Silverman, D., eds. Qualitative research practice. London: SAGE Publications. p. 435-456.)

GOERLITZ, E. & IMMISCH, J. 1984. Zeiten und Menschen. Band 2. Paderborn: Schöningh & Schroedel.

GOERLITZ, E. & IMMISCH, J. 1985. Zeiten und Menschen. Band 3. Paderborn: Schöningh & Schroedel.

GOUCHER, C.L., LEGUIN, C.A. & WALTON, L.A. 1998. In the balance: themes in global history. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

GOUGH, N. 2002. Blank spots, blind spots, and methodological questions in postgraduate research. (Paper presented at the Postgraduate Research Conference held at Deakin University on 4-6 October 2002.)

- GOUS, I.G.P., MOLAPO, D., MOLAPO, M. & BADENHORST, C. 1999. Abundant life: life skills for Grade 3. Teachers resource manual. Cape Town: Kagiso.
- GREEN, L. 2004. Nurturing democratic virtues: educator's practices. *South African journal of education*, 24(4):254-259.
- GRIFFITH, J.S. 1999. D.A.R.E.-ing to be different? A drug prevention and life skills education programme for primary schools. *Early childhood development and care*, 158:95-105.
- GROOTHUIS, D. 2000. Truth decay: defending Christianity against the challenges of postmodernism. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- GROVES, D.L. & GROVES, S.L. 1980. Life skills education: a conceptual framework. *College student journal*, 14(1):83-90.
- GROW, G. 1996. Buddhism: a brief introduction for Westerners. <http://www.longleaf.net/ggrow> Date of access: 3 Mar. 2001.
- GRUDEM, W. 1994. Systematic theology: an introduction to Biblical doctrine. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- GUBA, E.G. 1981. Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational communication and technology journal*, 29(2):75-91.
- GUBA, E.G., & LINCOLN, Y.S. 1989. Fourth generation evaluation. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.
- GUBA, E.G. & LINCOLN, Y.S. 2005. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. (In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., eds. The SAGE handbook of qualitative research. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p.191-215.)

GUR-ZE'EV, I. 2004. Contra spiritual education. (*In* Alexander, H.A. *ed.* Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 223-232.)

GUTHRIE, D. 1997. Questions of introduction. (*In* Marshall, I.H., *ed.* New Testament interpretation. Carlisle: Paternoster Press. p. 105-116.)

HABERMAS, G.R. 2006. Why I believe the New Testament is historically reliable. (*In* Geisler, N.L. & Hoffman, P.K. *eds.* Why I am a Christian: leading thinkers explain why they believe. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 161-174.)

HAHNE, P. 2005. Schluss mit lustig: das Ende der Spassgesellschaft. Lahr: Verlag Johannis.

HAINES, E. & MENTZ, W. 2002. Life skills for all. Learner's book Grade 2. Manzini: Macmillan.

HAIGHT, W. 2004. A sociocultural perspective on children's spiritual development. (*In* Ratcliff, D. *ed.* Children's spirituality: Christian perspectives, research and applications. Eugene: Cascade Books. p. 7-21.)

HALDANE, J. 2003. On the very idea of spiritual values. (*In* Carr, D. & Haldane, J., *eds.* Spirituality, philosophy and education. London: Routledge Falmer. p. 11-25.)

HALONEN, J.S. & SANTROCK, J.W. 1996. Psychology: contexts of behaviour. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

HANNA, F.J. & GREEN, A. 2004. Asian shades of spirituality: implications for multicultural school counselling. *Professional school counseling*, 7(5):326-333.

HARMIN, M. 1988. Value clarity, high morality – let's go for both. *Educational leadership*, 45(8):22-30.

- HART, T. 2006. Spiritual experiences and capacities of children and youth. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstye King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 163-177.)
- HAWKS, S.R., HULL, M.L., THALMAN, R.L. & RICHINS, P.M. 1995. Review of spiritual health: definition, role, and intervention strategies in health promotion. *American journal of health promotion*, 9(5):371-378.
- HAY, D. & NYE, R. 1998. The spirit of the child. London: Fount.
- HAY, D. 1999. Listening for the spirit of the child. Oxford: Farmington Institute for Christian Studies (ES2).
- HAY, D. 2001. Spirituality versus individualism: the challenge of relational consciousness. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. Spiritual education : cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 104-117.)
- HAY, D., REICH, H. & UTSCH, M. 2006. Spiritual development: intersections and divergence with religious development. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstye King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 46-59.)
- HEENAN, J. 2007. A case for teaching objective values.
<http://cornerstonevalues.org/acase.html> Date of access: 6. Nov. 2009.
- HENZE, M. 2006. Re-examining and refining Perry: epistemological development from a Christian perspective. *Christian education journal*, 3(2):260-277.
- HICKEY SCHULTZ, L., BARR, D.J. & SELMAN, R.L. 2001. The value of a developmental approach to evaluating character development programmes: an outcome study of 'Facing History and Ourselves'. *Journal of moral education*, 30(1):3-27.

- HIGGS, P. & SMITH, J. 2003. Rethinking our world. Lansdowne: Juta.
- HODDER, J. 2007. Young people and spirituality: the need for a spiritual foundation for Australian schooling. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 12(2):179-190.
- HOFF-SOMMERS, C. 2002. How moral education is finding it's way back into American schools. (In Damon, W., *ed.*, Bringing in a new era in character education. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press. p. 23-42).
- HOLDER, D.W., DURANT, R.H., HARRIS, T.L., HENDERSON DANIEL, J., OBEIDALLAH, D. & GOODMAN, E. 2000. The association between adolescent spirituality and voluntary sexual activity. *Journal of adolescent health*, 26(4):295-302.
- HOLLIDAY, A. 2002. Doing and writing qualitative research. London : Sage Publications.
- HOLMES, A.F. 1991. Shaping character: moral education in the Christian College. Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company.
- HOLT, B.P. 2005. Thirsty for God: a brief history of Christian spirituality. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- HORSTHEMKE, K. & KISSACK, M. 2008. Vorleben: educational practice beyond prescription. *Journal of curriculum studies*, 40(3):277-288.
- HOUSE, E.R. 1991. Realism in research. *Educational researcher*, 20(6):2-25.
- HOWARD, R.W. 1991. Lawrence Kohlberg's influence on moral education in elementary schools. (In Benninga, J.S., *ed.*, Moral, character and civic education in the elementary school. New York: Teachers' College Press. p. 43-66).

HOWARD, E.B. 2008. The Brazos introduction to Christian spirituality. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

HUDD, S.S. 2005. Character education in a consuming society: the insights of Albert Schweitzer. *Encounter: education for meaning and social justice*, 18(4):29-35.

HUNT, T.C. & MULLINS, M. 2005. Moral education in America's schools: the continuing challenge. Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.

HUNTER, C.G. 2007. Science's blind spot: the unseen religion of scientific naturalism. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

HUNTER, J.D. 2000. The death of character: moral education in an age without good or evil. New York: Basic Books.

INGERSOLL, R.E. 1994. Spirituality, religion and counseling: dimensions and relationships. *Counseling and values*, 38(2):98-111.

INSTITUTE FOR REFORMATIONAL STUDIES. 1998. Curriculum 2005 Life Orientation Foundation Phase: guide for Christian teachers. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education.

JACKSON, H. 2002. AIDS Africa: continent in crisis. Harare: SAfAIDS.

JAMES, W. 1988. Writings: 1902-1910. New York: Library of America.

JANKOWSKI, P.J. 2002. Post-modern spirituality: implications for promoting change. *Counseling and values*, 47(1):69-79.

JEEVES, M.A. & BERRY, R.J. 2000. Science, life and Christian belief. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

JOHNSON, B. & TURNER, L.A. 2003. Data collection strategies in mixed methods research. (In Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C., eds. Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioural research. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 297-320.)

JOHNSON, C.N. & BOYATZIS, C.J. 2006. Cognitive-cultural foundations of spiritual development. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 224-238.)

JOHNSON, R.B. & ONWUEGBUZIE, A.J. 2004. Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher*, 33(7):14-26.

JONES, S.L. & HOSTLER, H. 2004. The role of sexuality in personhood: an integrative exploration. (In Miller, W.R. & Delaney, H.D., eds. Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: human nature, motivation and change. Washington DC: American Psychological Association. p. 115-132).

JOUBERT, S.J. 1996. Christianity: disciples of Jesus Christ. (In Meiring, P. ed. A world of religions: a South African perspective. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers. p. 128-148.)

JUNGE, S.K., MANGLALLAN, S. & RASKAUSKAS, J. 2003. Building life skills through after school participation in experiential and cooperative learning. *Child study journal*, 33(3):165-174.

KAESTLE, C.F. 1984. Moral education and common schools in America: a historian's view. *Journal of moral education*, 13(2):101-111.

KAGAN, S. 2001. Teaching for character and community. *Educational leadership*, 59(2):50-55.

KANT, I. 1784. Was ist Aufklärung? *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, Dec.
<http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/philosophie/texte/kant/aufklaer.htm> Date of access: 28 Nov. 2006.

KAPHAGAWANI, D.N. 2004. African conceptions of a person: a critical survey. (In Wiredu, K. *ed.*. A companion to African philosophy. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p. 332-342.)

KARSTENS, A.C. 2006. Moving towards health-promoting schools: Spiritual well-being and lifestyle choices in adolescents. Potchefstroom: NWU. (Dissertation – M.Ed.)

KIMES MYERS, B. 1997. Young children and spirituality. New York: Routledge.

KING, A.S. 1996. Spirituality: transformation and metamorphosis. *Religion*, 26(4):343-351.

KING, U. 2002. Spirituality and postmodernism. Oxford: Farmington Institute for Christian Studies (PR11).

KIRBACH, R. 2002. Ritzen, Sex und Meerschweinchen. *Die Zeit*, 57(33).

KIRSCHENBAUM, H. 2000. From values clarification to character education: a personal journey. *Journal of humanistic counseling, education & development*, 39(1). Available: EBSCO Host. Date of access: 12 Feb. 2008.

KLOSTERMAIER, K.K. 2005. Hinduism: a short introduction. Oxford: One World.

KLUGER, J. 2004. Is God in our genes? *Time*, 164(21):48-56.

KNOWLES, K. & SIEGRUHN, A. 1999. Successful life skills: out and about. Teachers book Grade 3. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

KOENIG, H.G. 2004. Spirituality, wellness and quality of life. *Sexuality, reproduction and menopause*, 2(2):76-82.

KOHLBERG, L. 1966. Moral education in the schools: a developmental view. *The school review*, 74(1):1-30.

KOHN, A. 1997. How not to teach values: a critical look at character education. *Phi delta kappan*, 78(2):429-439.

KONOPÁSEK, Z. 2008. Making thinking visible with Atlas.ti: computer assisted qualitative analysis as textual practices. *Forum: qualitative social research*, 9(2). Available: EBSCO Host. Date of access: 11 Nov. 2009.

KOURIE, C. & RUTHENBERG, T.J. 2008. Contemporary Christian spirituality: a worldly embodiment. *Koers*, 73(2):303-322.

KRÜGER, J.S. 1996. Buddhism: religion of emptiness. (In Meiring, P. ed. *A world of religions: a South African perspective*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers. p. 67-95.)

KRÜGER, J.S., LUBBE, G.J.A. & STEYN, H.C. 2004. The human search for meaning: a multireligious introduction to the religions of humankind. Pretoria: Via Afrika.

KUHN, T. 1970. The structure of scientific revolutions. 2nd ed. Chicago : University of Chicago.

LADD, G.E. 1993. A theology of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans Publishing.

LAWRENCE, M. 1982. Moral education or indoctrination in South Africa? A brief response to Potgieter. *Journal of moral education*, 11(3):188-191.

LAWTON, C. 2003. What should adults offer children – ‘religion’ or ‘spirituality’? *International journal of children’s spirituality*, 8(3):281-287.

LEEDY, P.D. & ORMROD, J.E. 2001. Practical research: planning and design. Upper Saddle River: Merrill Prentice Hall.

LEGERE, T. 1984. A spirituality for today. *Studies in formative spirituality*, 5(3):375-383.

LEMING, J.S. 1981. Curricular effectiveness in moral/ values education: a review of research. *Journal of moral education*, 10(3):147-164.

LEMING, J.S. 1993. In search of effective character education. *Educational leadership*, 51(3):63-70.

LEMING, J.S. 1997. Whither goes character education? Objectives, pedagogy and research in education programs. *Journal of education*, 179(2):11-34.

LEMING, J.S. 2000. Tell me a story: an evaluation of a literature-based character education programme. *Journal of moral education*, 29(4):413-427.

LICKONA, T. 1999. Religion and character education. *Phi delta kappan*, 81(1):21-26.

LINDGREN, K. & COURSEY, R.D. 1995. Spirituality and serious mental illness: a two-part study. *Psychosocial rehabilitation journal*, 18(3):93-122.

LIPPMAN, L.H. & DOMBROWSKI KEITH, J. 2006. The demographics of spirituality among youth: international perspectives. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebsteyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 109-123.)

LOCKWOOD, A.L. 1978. The effects of values clarification and moral development curricula on school-age subjects: a critical review of recent research. *Review of educational research*, 48(3):325-364.

LOVELACE, R.F. 2000. Evangelical spirituality: a church historian's perspective. (In Collins, K.J. ed. *Exploring Christian spirituality: an ecumenical reader*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 229-241.)

LOWMAN, M.R. 1983. United States history. Pensacola: Beka Book Publications.

- LYOTARD, J.F. 1979. Het postmoderne weten, een verslag. Kampen: Kok/Agora.
- LYOTARD, J.F. 1984. The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- MACHLIS, J. & FORNEY, K. 1995. The enjoyment of music. 7th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- MACNAGHTEN, P. & MYERS, G. 2004. Focus groups. (In Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. & Silverman, D., eds. Qualitative research practice. London: SAGE Publications. p. 65-79.)
- MAGNANI, R., MACINTYRE, K., KARIM, A.M., BROWN, L. & HUTCHINSON, P. 2005. The impact of life skills education on adolescent sexual risk behaviours in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal of adolescent health*, 36(2):289-304.
- MAHER, M.F. & HUNT, T.K. 1993. Spirituality reconsidered. *Counseling and values*, 38(1):21-28.
- MAREE, K. & EBERSÖHN, L. 2002. Life skills and career counselling. Sandown: Heinemann.
- MAYKUT, P. & MOREHOUSE, R. 1995. Beginning qualitative research: a philosophical and practical guide. London: The Falmer Press.
- MBITI, J.S. 1990. African religions and philosophy. 2nd ed. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- MBITI, J.S. 1996. Introduction to African religion. 2nd ed. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd.
- MCCALLUM, D. 1996. The death of truth: Responding to Multiculturalism, the Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity. Grand Rapids: Bethany House Publishers.

MCCLAIN, C.S., ROSENFELD, B. & BREITBART, W. 2003. Effect of spiritual well-being on end-of-life despair in terminally-ill cancer patients. *The lancet*, 361(9369):603-1607.

MCCULLOUGH, M.E. & SNYDER, C.R. 2000. Classical sources of human strength: revisiting an old home and building a new one. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*, 19(1):1-10.

MCDOWELL, J. & DAY, D. 1987. Why wait? What you need to know about the teen sexuality crisis. San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers.

MCDOWELL, J. 1993. The myths of sex education: Josh McDowell's open letter to his school board. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

MCDOWELL, J. & HOSTETLER, B. 1994. Right from wrong: what you need to know to help youth make right choices. Nashville: W Publishing Group.

MCDOWELL, J. 1999. The new evidence that demands a verdict. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

MCELMEEL, S.L. 2002. Character education: a book guide for teachers, librarians and parents. Greenwood Village: Teacher Ideas Press.

MC GEE, M., NAGEL, M. & MOORE, M.K. 2003. A study of university classroom strategies aimed at increasing spiritual health. *College Student Journal*, 37(4). Available: Academic Search Premier. Date of access: 3 Feb. 2005.

MCKNOWN, H.C. 1935. Character education. New York: McGraw-Hill.

MCLAUGHLIN, T.H. 2004. Nicholas Burbules on Jesus as teacher. (*In Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 21-33.*)

- MCMINN, M.R. & HALL, T.W. 2000. Christian spirituality in a post-modern era. *Journal of psychology and theology*, 28(4):251-253.
- MCSHERRY, W. & CASH, K. 2004. The language of spirituality: an emerging taxonomy. *International journal of nursing studies*, 41(2):151-161.
- MENKITI, I.A. 2004. On the normative conception of a person. (In Wiredu, K. ed. *A companion to African philosophy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p. 324-332.)
- MERCER, J.A. 2006. Capitalizing on children's spirituality: parental anxiety, children as consumers, and the marketing of spirituality. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 11(1):23-33. Available: EBSCOHost.
- MERRIAM, S.B. 2006. Transformational learning and HIV-positive young adults. (In Anfara, V.A. & Mertz, N.T., eds. *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p.23-38.)
- MERRIAM, S.B. 2009. *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- MILLER, W.R. 2005. What is human nature? Reflections from Judeo-Christian perspectives. (In Miller, W.R. & Delaney, H.D., eds. *Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: human nature, motivation and change*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association. p. 11-29.)
- MNYAKA, M. & MOTLHABI, M. 2005. The African concept of Ubuntu/Botho and its socio-moral significance. *Black theology*, 3(2):215-237.
- MORE, M.P. 2004. Philosophy in South Africa under and after apartheid. (In Wiredu, K. ed. *A companion to African philosophy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p. 149-160.)
- MORELAND, J.P. & RAE, S.B. 2000. *Body and soul: human nature and the crisis in ethics*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press.

- MORELAND, J.P. 2001. Restoring the soul to Christianity. *Christian research journal*, 23(1):1-7.
- MORELAND, J.P. & CRAIG, W.L. 2003. Philosophical foundations for a Christian worldview. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- MORRIS, T. 1999. Philosophy for dummies: a reference for the rest of us. New York: Wiley Publishing.
- MORRIS, T. 2001. Autism and childhood spirituality. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century.* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 234-247.
- MULKEY, Y.J. 1997. The history of character education. *The journal of physical education, recreation and dance*, 68(9):35-37.
- MULLINO MOORE, M.E. 2004. Walking with children toward hope: the long road to justice and reconciliation. (In Alexander, H.A. ed. *Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives.* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 83-97.)
- MURRAY, K.M., CIARROCCHI, J.W. & MURRAY-SWANK, N.A. 2007. Spirituality, religiosity, shame and guilt as predictors of sexual attitudes and experiences. *Journal of psychology and theology*, 35(3):222-234.
- MUSEVENI, Y.K. 1992. What is Africa's problem? Kampala: NRM Publications.
- MYERS, J.E., SWEENEY, T.J. & WITMER, J.M. 2000. The wheel of wellness counselling for wellness: a holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of counseling and development*, 78(3):251-266.
- NARAYANASAMY, A. 1999. Learning spiritual dimensions of care from a historical perspective. *Nurse education today*, 19(5):386-395.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION. 2001. Youth risk behaviour survey.

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdfs/2005middleschoolquestionnaire.pdf>

Date of access: 2 Jul. 2005.

NATION MASTER. 2009. Religion Statistics. <http://nationmaster.com> Date of access: 2 Oct. 2009.

NAUDE, C. 1996. Islam: total submission to God. (*In* Meiring, P. *ed.* A world of religions: a South African perspective. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers. p. 149-203).

NESBITT, E. 2001. Religious nurture and young people's spirituality: reflections on research at the University of Warwick. (*In* Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *eds.* Spiritual education : cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 130-142.)

NODDINGS, N. 2002. Educating moral people. New York: Teachers College Press.

NOLAN, J.L. 2000. The early modern regime and its transformation. (*In* Hunter, J.D. *ed.* The death of character: moral education in an age without good or evil. New York: Basic Books. p.31-53.)

NOLL, M. 1995. The scandal of the evangelical mind. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.

NORTON, J. & DAWSON, C. 1999. Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa: Life skills and HIV/AIDS education: a manual and resource guide for intermediate phase school teachers. Grades 4-6. Sandton: Heinemann.

NORTON, J., VERGNANI, T. & NHLAPO, B. 2003. Life skills. Grade 3 learners book. Sandton: Heinemann.

NSAMENANG, A.B. 2002. Adolescence in Sub-Saharan Africa: an image constructed from Africa's triple inheritance. (*In* Bradford Brown, B. Larson, R.W. &

Saraswathi, T.S. *eds.* The world's youth: adolescence in eight regions of the globe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.61-104.)

NYAMITI, C. S.A. African tradition and the Christian God. Eldoret: Gaba Publications. (Spearhead, vol. 49.)

NYE, R. 1996. Childhood spirituality and contemporary developmental psychology. (*In* Best, R. *ed.* Education, spirituality and the whole child. London: Cassell. p. 108-120.)

OAKLEY, A. 2000. Experiments in knowing: gender and method in the social sciences. Cambridge: Polity Press.

OLADIPO, O. 2004. Religion in African culture: some conceptual issues. (*In* Wiredu, K. *ed.* A companion to African philosophy. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p. 355-363.)

OLIVIER, B. 1993. Deconstruction. (*In* J. Snyman. *ed.* Conceptions of social inquiry. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers. p. 241-267.)

OMAN, D. & THORESEN, C.E. 2003. Spiritual modeling: a key to spiritual and religious growth? *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 13(3):149-165.

OMAN, D. & THORESEN, C.E. 2006. Religion, spirituality and children's physical health. (*In* Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebsteyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. *eds.* The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 399-415.)

ORSMOND, C. 2002. Life orientation: a survival kit for the twenty-first century. (*In* Maree, K & Ebersöhn, L. *eds.* Life skills and career counseling. Sandown: Heinemann. p. 223-234.)

OTA, C. & ERRICKER, C. 2005. Introduction. (*In* Ota, C. & Erricker, C. Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 1-4.)

PALMER, R.E. 1969. Hermeneutics: interpretation theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2000. Adopting the life skills approach. http://www.paho.org/English/DBI/SP579/SP579_05.pdf Date of access: 2 Mar. 2006.

PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2001. Life skills approach to child and adolescent healthy human development. <http://www.paho.org/English/HPP/HPF/ADOL/Lifeskills.pdf> Date of access: 3 Apr. 2006.

PANNENBERG, W. 1983. Christian spirituality. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

PAPALIA, D.E., OLDS, S.W. & FELDMAN, R.D. 1999. A child's world: infancy through adolescence. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw- Hill.

PARGAMENT, K.I. 1999. The psychology of religion and spirituality? Yes and no. *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 9(1):3-16.

PAUL, R. & ELDER, L. 2005. The miniature guide to critical thinking: concepts and tools. 4th ed. Cambridge: Foundation for Critical thinking.

PAWSON R., BOAZ A., GRAYSON L., LONG A. & BARNES C. 2003. Types and quality of knowledge in social care. London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

PEARCEY, N.R. & THAXTON, C.B. 1994. The soul of science: Christian faith and natural philosophy. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

PEARCEY, N. 2004. Total truth: liberating Christianity from its cultural bondage. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

PELTZER, K. & PROMTUSSANANON, S. 2003. Evaluation of soul city school and mass media life skills education among junior secondary school learners in South Africa. *Social behaviour and personality*, 31(8):825-834.

PHILLIPS, D.C. 1995. The good, the bad and the ugly: the many faces of constructivism. *Educational researcher*, 24(7):5-12.

PIKE, M. 2005. Reading and responding to Biblical texts: aesthetic distance and the spiritual journey. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 1189-201.)

PILLAY, J. & MESTRY, R. 2005. Values in education: challenges from policy to practice. <http://www.education.gpg.gov.za> Date of access: 7 Nov. 2007.

PING HO, W. 2001. The prospects of spirituality in a globalized, technologized world. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *eds*. *Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 170-183.)

PING HO, W. 2005. The Chinese approach to learning: the paradigmatic case of Chinese calligraphy. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 154-174.)

PLANT, E. & PLANT, M. 1999. Primary prevention for young children: a comment on the UK government's 10 year drug strategy. *International journal of drug policy*, 10(5):385-401.

PORTER, S. 2007. Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: reasserting realism in qualitative research. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 60(1):79-86.

POSTMAN, N. 1985. Amusing ourselves to death: public discourse in the age of show business. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books.

POSTMAN, N. 1993. Technopoly: the surrender of culture to technology. New York: Vintage Books.

POTGIETER, P.C. 1980. Moral education in South Africa. *Journal of moral education*, 9(2):130-133.

POTGIETER, R.M. 2002. Keith Ward and panentheism: an evaluation of Keith Ward's panentheism as a step towards a model for a Christian interpretation of cosmology. Potchefstroom: NWU. (Thesis – D.Phil.).

PRABHAVANANDA, S. 1981. Spiritual heritage of India. Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

PRATT, J & SWANN, J. 1999. The crisis of method. (In Swann, J. & Pratt, J. eds. Improving education: realist approaches to method and research. London: Cassell. p. 3-11.)

PRENTICE, R. 1996. The spirit of education: a model for the twenty-first century. (In Best, R. ed. Education, spirituality and the whole child. London: Cassell. p. 319-340.)

PRING, R. 2000. Philosophy of educational research. London: Continuum.

PRINSLOO, E. 2007. Implementation of life orientation programmes in the new curriculum in South African schools: perceptions of principals and life orientation teachers. *South African journal of education*, 27(1):155-170.

PUCHTA, C. & POTTER, J. 2004. Focus group practice. London: SAGE Publications.

PURPEL, D.E. & MCLAURIN, W.M. 2004. Reflections on the moral and spiritual crisis in education. New York: Peter Lang.

QUINTON, A. 1994. Political philosophy. (*In* Kenny, A., *ed.* The Oxford illustrated history of Western philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.1-53.)

RADFORD, M. 2006. Spirituality and education; inner and outer realities. *International journal of children's spiritualities*, 11(3):385-396.

RAMACHANDRA, V. 1996. The recovery of mission. Carlisle: Paternoster.

RATCLIFF, D. & MAY, S. 2004. Identifying children's spirituality, Walter Wangerin's perspectives and an overview of this book. (*In* Ratcliff, D. *ed.* Children's spirituality: Christian perspectives, research and applications. Eugene: Cascade Books. p. 7-21.)

RATCLIFF, D. & NYE, R. 2006. Childhood spirituality: strengthening the research foundation. (*In* Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebsteyne King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. *eds.* The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 473-483.)

RE'EM, M. 2004. Religion, spirituality and authoritative discourse. (*In* Alexander, H.A. *ed.* Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p.212-222.)

RENS, J.A., VAN DER WALT, J.L. & VREKEN, N.J. 2005. Waarde-opvoeding in skole: kan dit? Moet dit? *Tydskrif vir christelike wetenskap*, 41(3,4):215-229.

RICHARDS, P.S. & BERGIN, A.E. 1998. A spiritual strategy for counselling and psychotherapy. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

RIDDERBOS, H. 1992. Paul: an outline of his theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

RITT-OLSON, A., MILAM, J., UNGER, JB., TRINIDAD, D., TERAN, L., DENT, C.W. & SUSSMAN, S. 2004. The protective influence of spirituality and "health-as-a-value" against monthly substance use among adolescents varying in risk. *Journal of adolescent health*, 34(3):192-199.

ROBERTS, R.R. 2002. Whose kids are they anyway? Religion and morality in America's public schools. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.

ROBINSON, B.E., BOCKTING, W.O., ROSSER, B.R.S., MINER, M. & COLEMAN, E. 2002. The sexual health model: application of a sexological approach to HIV prevention. *Health education research theory and practice*, 17(1):43-57.

ROBSON, C. 2003. Real world research. 2nd ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

RODGER, A. 1996. Human spirituality: towards an educational rationale. (In Best, R. ed. Education, spirituality and the whole child. London: Cassell. p. 45-63.)

RORTY, R. 1985. Solidarity or objectivity? (In Rajchman, J. & West, C., eds. Post-analytic philosophy. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 3-19.)

RORTY, R. 2004. Philosophical convictions. *The nation*: 278(23), 14 Jun.

ROSS, L. 1995. The spiritual dimension: it's importance the patient's health, well-being and quality of life and its implications for nursing practice. *International journal of nursing studies*, 32(5):457-468.

ROUX, C. 2006. Children's spirituality in social context: a South African example. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 11(1):151-163.

RUSHDOONY, R.J. 1968. The messianic character of American education: studies in the philosophy of education. Nutley: The Craig Press.

- RUSNAK, T. 1997. An integrated approach to character education. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- RUSSELL, B. 1957. Why I am not a Christian and other essays on religion and related subjects. New York: Simon & Schuster Inc.
- RUSSELL, B. 2005. History of Western philosophy. Abingdon: Routledge Classics.
- RYAN, K. & BOHLIN, K.E. 1999. Building character in schools: practical ways to bring moral instruction to life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- SADKER, M. & SADKER, D.M. 1997. Teachers, schools and society. New York: McGraw Hill.
- SAMPLES, K.R. 2007. A world of difference: putting Christian truth-claims to the worldview test. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- SANCHEZ, T.R. & STEWART, V. 2006. The remarkable Abigail: telling for character education. *The high school journal*, 89(4):14-21.
- SANCHEZ, T. R., 2007. The forgotten American: a story for character education. *International journal of social education*, 21(2):79-90.
- SANFORD LA SOR, W., HUBBARD, D.A. & BUSH, F.W.M. 1987. Old Testament survey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- SANON, A.T. 1985. Das Evangelium verwurzeln. Freiburg: Herder.
- SANTOS, R.J. 2003. Richard Rorty's Philosophy of Social Hope. *Philosophy Today*, 47(4):431-440.
- SANTROCK, J.W. 1998. Adolescence. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- SARTRE, J.P. 1974. Existentialism and humanism. New York: Methuen Publishing.

- SAVAGE, A. 2004. The link between spirituality and health: holistic outcomes and religious practice in clinical health care. *Quodlibet: online journal of Christian theology*, 6(3). <http://www.quodlibet.net/savage-spirituality.shtml> Date of access: 16 Mar. 2005.
- SCARLETT, W.G. 2006. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstyn King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 23-33.)
- SCHAEFFER, F.A. 1990. The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy. Wheaton: Crossway Books.
- SCHAEFFER, F.A. 2005. How should we then live? Wheaton: Crossway Books.
- SCHNEIDERS, S.M. 1986. Theology and spirituality: strangers, rivals or partners? *Horizons*, 13(2):253-274.
- SCHWEITZER, F. 2004. Children's right to religion: a response to Mary Elizabeth Moore. (In Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical, theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 98-104.)
- SCOTT, D. 2005. Critical realism and empirical research methods in education. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 39(4):633-646.
- SCOTT, D. 2005. Spirituality in young adolescents: thinking developmentally. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 94-108.)
- SCOTT-KAKURES, D., CASTAGNETTO, S., BENSON, H., TASCHEK, W. & HURLEY, P. 1993. History of philosophy. New York: Harper Perennial.
- SEALE, C. 2004. Quality in qualitative research. (In Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. & Silverman, D., eds. Qualitative research practice. London: SAGE Publications. p. 409-419.)

SEARCH INSTITUTE. 2006. 40 developmental assets for middle childhood.
www.search-institute.org Date of access: 17 May 2007.

SEAWARD, B.L. 1995. Reflections on human spirituality for the worksite.
American journal of health promotion, 9(3):165-168.

SEEMAN, B.N. 2007. Verifying pluralism: a thought experiment regarding
pluralism's exclusivisms and the question of tolerance. *Philosophia Christi*, 9(1):121-
143.

SEMETSKY, I. 2004. Learning from experience: Dewey, Deleuze and "Becoming-
Child". (In Alexander, H.A. ed. Spirituality and ethics in education: philosophical,
theological and radical perspectives. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 54-64.)

SETRAN, D.P. 2005. From moral aristocracy to Christian social democracy.
History of education quarterly, 45(2):207-246.

SHAH, N. 2005. A new argument for evidentialism. *The philosophical quarterly*,
56(225):481-498.

SHAPIRO, S. 2000. The new crisis in education. *Tikkun*, 15(5):21-24. Available:
Academic Search Premier.

SHAPIRO, S. 2005. Education and moral values: seeking a new bottom line.
Tikkun, 20(2):23-28.

SHELDRAKE, P. 1992. Spirituality and history: questions of interpretation and
method. New York: Crossroad.

SHELDRAKE, P. 2000. What is spirituality? (In Collins, K.J. ed. Exploring
Christian spirituality: an ecumenical reader. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 21-42.)

SHENTON, A.K. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative
research projects. *Education for information*, 22(2):63-75.

SHEPARD SALLS, H. 2007. Character education: transforming values into virtues. Lanham: University Press of America.

SIEGEL, H. 2006. Epistemological diversity and education research: much to do about nothing much? *Educational researcher*, 35(2):3-12.

SMITH, D. & SHORTT, J. 2000. Spirituality: not about religion? *Journal of education & Christian belief*, 4(1):3-8.

SMITH, J.K. & HODKINSON, P. 2005. Relativism, criteria and politics. (In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., eds. The SAGE handbook of qualitative research. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 915-932.)

SOKAL, A. & BRICMONT, J. 1998. Fashionable nonsense: postmodern intellectuals' abuse of science. New York: Picador.

SOUTH AFRICA. 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 8 May 1996 and as amended on 11 October 1996. (B34B-96.) (ISBN: 0-260-20716-7.)

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2001. Manifesto on values, education and democracy. <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70295>

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2002: Revised national curriculum statement. Grades: R-9. Life Orientation. Capetown: FormeSet Printers.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2003: Revised national curriculum statement. Grades: 10-12. Life Orientation. Capetown: FormeSet Printers.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2003b. Revised national curriculum statement. Grades: R-9: teacher's guide for the development of learning programmes policy guidelines: life orientation. Capetown: FormeSet Printers.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2008. National curriculum statement. Grades: 10-12. Learning programme guidelines. Life Orientation. <http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/ResourceDownload.aspx?id=39835> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2008b. National Curriculum Statement. Grades 10-12 (general) subject assessment guidelines life orientation. <http://fsdoe.fs.gov.za/curriculumonline> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2008c. National curriculum statement: Grades 10-12 (general) learning programme guidelines life orientation. www.thutong.doe.gov.za/ResourceDownload.aspx?id=39835 Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. 2003. National policy on religion and education. <http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/religion.pdf> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. s.a. National curriculum statement: assessment guidelines for general education and training (intermediate and senior phases). Life orientation. www.education.gov.za Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. s.a. Values and human rights in the curriculum. <http://www.thutong.org.za/ResourceFiles/whatsnew/Values.pdf> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

SOUTH AFRICA. Department of Education. s.a. National curriculum statement grades 10-12: life orientation grade 12 teacher guide. www.thutong.doe.gov.za/resourcedownload.aspx?id=39161 Date of access: 12 Nov. 2009.

SPADE, P.V. 1994. Medieval philosophy. (*In* Kenny, A., *ed.* The Oxford illustrated history of Western philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.55-105.)

- SPARAGANA, J. 2002. The educational theory of Thomas Jefferson.
<http://www.newfoundations.com> Date of access: 20 Oct. 2009.
- SPROUL, R.C. 2003. Defending your faith: an introduction to apologetics.
 Wheaton: Crossway Books.
- STEMLER, S. 2001. An overview of content analysis. *Practical assessment, research & evaluation*, 7(17). <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17> Date of access: 5 Jul. 2006.
- STEUP, M. 2005. Epistemology. (*In Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).
<http://plato.stanford.edu> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2009.
- STEVENSON, L. & HABERMAN, D.L. 2004. Ten theories of human nature. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- STEYN, C. 2004. Religion in life orientation: a facilitator's guide for the foundation school phase. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- STIFOSS-HANSEN, H. 1999. Religion and spirituality: what a European ear hears. *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 9(1):25-33.
- STONEHOUSE, C. 2001. Knowing God in childhood: a study of godly play and the spirituality of children. *Christian education journal*, 5(2):27-45.
- STROBEL, L. 2007. The case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- SWANN, 1999. Pursuing truth: a science of education. (*In Swann, J. & Pratt, J. eds. Improving education: realist approaches to method and research. London: Cassell. p. 15-29.*)

SWANN, J. & PRATT, J. 2003. Why you should read this book. (In Swann, J. & Pratt, J. eds. Educational research in practice: making sense of methodology. London: Continuum. p. 3-8.)

SWARTZ, S. 2006. A long walk to citizenship: morality, justice and faith in the aftermath of apartheid. *Journal of moral education*, 35(4):551-570.

SWEETMAN, B. 2007. Religion, secularism and God in public education: a review essay on Kent Greenawalt's "Does God belong in public schools?" *Philosophia Christi*, 9(1):213-222.

TACEY, D. 2001. Youth spirituality as a response to cultural crisis. (In Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. Spiritual education : cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 88-99.)

TACEY, D. 2005. Encountering tradition in a postmodern context. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 175-188.)

TEEN CHALLENGE. 1994. University of Tennessee report.
http://www.teenchallenge.com/main/studies/index.cfm?doc_id=169 Date of access: 5 Mar.2003.

TEEN CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL. 2001. Teen challenge international: a white paper. www.longislandtc.com/STUDIES-HTML/whitepaper.pdf Date of access: 26 May 2007.

TEMPLETON, J.L. & ECCLES, J.S. 2006. The relation between spiritual development and identity process. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstyn King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 252-265.)

TENNENT, T.C. 2002. Christianity at the religious roundtable: evangelicalism in conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

TENNENT, T.C. 2007. Theology in the context of world Christianity: how the global church is influencing the way we think about and discuss theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

THERON, L. & DALZELL, C. 2006. The specific life orientation needs of Grade 9 learners in the Vaal Triangle region. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(3):397-412.

THUNDY, Z.P. 1985. The tribal religions of India and their future. (*In* Thundy, Z.P., Pathil, K. & Podgorski, F. eds. Religions in dialogue: east and west meet. Lanham: University Press of America. p. 77-87.)

TROUSDALE, A.M. 2001. Using children's literature for spiritual development. (*In* Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 130-139.)

UNAIDS & WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2007. Sub-Saharan Africa AIDS epidemic update: Regional Summary.
http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/JC1526_epibriefs_subsaharanafrica_en.pdf
Date of access: 15 Oct. 2009.

UNICEF, s.a. Definition of terms. http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html
Date of access: 22 Feb. 2006.

UNICEF. 2007. South Africa: statistics.
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica_statistics.html#55 Date of access: 14 Oct. 2009.

UNITED STATES. Department of Education. 2007a. Mobilizing for evidence-based character education. <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html> Date of access: 12 Feb. 2008.

UNITED STATES. Department of Education. 2007b. What works clearinghouse: character education. www.whatworks.ed.gov Date of access: 1 Feb. 2008.

VALENKAMP, M. & VAN DER WALT, J.L. 2006. 'Quality of life' as basic principle in/for the scientific disciplines, including education, with special reference to the spiritual dimension of life. (Paper delivered at the International Conference of the International Society for Quality-of-life studies at Rhodes University, Grahamstown on 18 July 2006). Potchefstroom. 17p. (Unpublished).

VALENKAMP, M. 2008. The Spiritual and religious dimension of education and bringing-up. *Koers*, 73(2):323-346.

VAN BINSBERGEN, W. s.a. African spirituality: an approach from intercultural philosophy. <http://www.geocities.com/africanreligion/spirit.htm> Date of access: 9 Nov. 2007.

VAN DER WALT, J.L., WOLHUTER, C.C. & POTGIETER, F.J. 2008. Die intrinsieke verband tussen opvoeding en spiritualiteit. *Koers*, 73(1):1-14.

VAN DEVENTER, K. 2009. Perspectives of teachers on the implementation of Life Orientation in grades R-11 from selected Western Cape schools. *South African journal of education*, 29(1):127-145.

VAN HEERDEN, E. (ed.) 2005. Life skills: my journey, my destiny. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

VAUGHAN, F. 1991. Spiritual issues in psychotherapy. *Journal of transpersonal psychology*, 23:105-119.

VEITH, G.E. 1994. Post-modern times: a Christian guide to contemporary thought and culture. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

VENTER, J.J. 1992. From 'machine-world' to 'God-world' - world pictures and worldviews. *Koers*, 52(7):189-214.

VERMA, S. & STA. MARIA, M. 2006. The changing global context of adolescent spirituality. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstye King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 124-136.)

VINE, W.E. 1966. An expository dictionary of New Testament words. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company.

VITZ, P. 1990. The use of stories in moral development: new psychological reasons for an old education method. *American psychologist*, 45(6):709-720.

WAGENER, L.M. & MALONY, H.N. 2006. Spiritual and religious pathology in childhood and adolescence. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstye King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 137-149.)

WALKER, J. 2002. Teens in distress series: adolescent stress and depression. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/DA3083.html> Date of access: 4 May 2007.

WALKER, L.J. & REIMER, K.S. 2006. The relationship between moral and spiritual development. (In Roehlkepartain, E.C., Ebstye King, P., Wagener, L. & Benson, P.L. eds. The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. p. 224-238.)

WALLACE, T. 2000. Values and spirituality: enriching curriculum development and teaching/learning processes for a new millennium. *Journal of Christian education*, 43(1):41-50.

WATSON, J. 2006. 'Every Child Matters' and children's spiritual rights: does the new holistic approach to children's care address children's spiritual well-being? *International journal of children's spirituality*, 11(2):251-263.

<http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/> Date of access: 10 Nov. 2008.

WEBSTER, R.S. 2004. An existential framework of spirituality. *International journal of children's spirituality*, 9(1):7-19.

WELCH, C. 2005. North American Indian spirituality in the world of Western children: (neo)-colonialism in a post-colonial society. (In Ota, C. & Erricker, C. eds. *Spiritual education: literary, empirical and pedagogical approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 40-58.)

WESTGATE, C.E. 1996. Spiritual wellness and depression. *Journal of counseling and development*, 75(1):26-33.

WHOQOL SRPB GROUP. 2006. A cross-cultural study of spirituality, religion and personal beliefs as components of quality of life. *Social science and medicine*, 62(6):1486-1497.

WOLIN, R. 2004. The seduction of unreason: the intellectual romance with fascism from Nietzsche to postmodernism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

WOLTERS, A.N. 1989. On the idea of worldview and its relation to philosophy. (In Marshall, A., Griffioen, S., Mouw, S. eds. *Stained glass*. Lanham: University Press of America. Pp. 14-25).

WOOD, W.J. 1998. Epistemology: becoming intellectually virtuous. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press.

WOODHEAD, L. 1993. Post-Christian spiritualities. *Religion*, 23(2):167-181.

WOODS, E.R., LIN, Y.G., MIDDLEMAN, A., BECKFORD, P., CHASE, L. & DURANT, R. 1997. The associations of suicide attempts in adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 99(6):791-796.

WOOLFOLK, A.E. 1998. Educational psychology. 7th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 1999. Partners in life skills education: conclusions from a United Nations Inter-Agency meeting. http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/30.pdf Date of access: 9 Nov. 2009.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2000. Effective school health programmes. <http://www.who.int/mipfiles/1989/EffectiveSchoolHealthProgrammes.pdf> Date of access: 16 Feb. 2005.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 2005. Summary country profile for HIV/AIDS treatment scale-up. <http://www.who.int/3by5> Date of access: 10 Oct. 2006.

WORTHINGTON, E.L. & BERRY, J.W. 2005. Virtues, vices and character education. (In Miller, W.R. & Delaney, H.D., eds. *Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: human nature, motivation and change*. Wahsington DC: American Psychological Association. p. 145-164.)

WRIGHT, A. 1996. The child in relationship: towards a communal model of spirituality. (In Best, R. ed. *Education, spirituality and the whole child*. London: Cassell. p. 139-149.)

WRIGHT, A. 2000. *Spirituality and education*. London: Routledge & Falmer.

WRINGE, C. 2007. *Moral education: beyond the teaching of right and wrong*. Drodrecht: Springer.

WUTHNOW, R. 1998. *After heaven: spirituality in America since the 1950s*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WYNNE, E.A. 1991. Character and academics in the elementary school. (*In* Benninga, J.S. *ed.* Moral, character and civic education in the elementary school. New York: Teachers College Press. p. 139-155.)

YATES, P. 2001. Postmodernism, spirituality and education in late modernity. (*In* Erricker, J., Ota, C. & Erricker, C. *eds.* Spiritual education: cultural, religious and social differences. New perspectives for the 21st century. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. p. 207-219.)

YU, T. 2004. In the name of morality: character education and political control. New York: P. Lang.

YOB, I.M. 1995. Spiritual education: a public school dialogue with religious interpretations. *Religious education*, 90(1):104-117.

ZACHARIAS, R. 2006. Why I believe Jesus Christ is the ultimate source for meaning. (*In* Geisler, N.L. & Hoffman, P.K. *eds.* Why I am a Christian: leading thinkers explain why they believe. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. p. 302-317.)

ZIESLER, J.A. 1991. Pauline Christianity. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

ZINNBAUER, B.J., PARGAMENT, K.I. & SCOTT, A.B. 1999. The emerging meanings of religiousness and spirituality: problems and prospects. *Journal of personality*, 67(7):889-919.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Anne C. Karstens
P.O. Box 5335
Kockspark
Potchefstroom
2523
Tel: 018 299 1871
Fax: 018 294 7788
Cell: 083 401 7546

7 October 2008

Attention: Dr S.H. Mvula
Department of Education
Temane Building
Potchefstroom

Dear Sir

Re: Research process within the Potchefstroom District

I am at present a student at the North West University, currently enrolled for my PhD (education) degree. I would like to request to do research in the Potchefstroom District. My research concerns the nature and practice of Life Orientation and the possible role spirituality could play in the practice of Life Orientation. Practically this means that I need Life Orientation teachers to fill in a questionnaire, and that I have to do between 10 and 20 focus group interviews with some learners (mostly High School learners, as well as a few Senior Primary School learners).

I am of the opinion that the Education Department would benefit from the research to be done, seeing that the topic is relevant and has an influence on all stakeholders within the education system at schools.

I also want to assure you of the fact that I intend to conduct the research according to high ethical standards.

Therefore I would like to request permission to do the research within the Potchefstroom District.

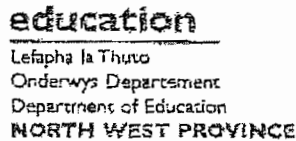
Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

A.C. Karstens
Student Number: 12569704

APPENDIX B

APPROVAL FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT

Ms S YETI - APC Manager: Fatchefstroom

APPENDIX C

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Life Orientation teacher,

Thank you for participating in this research project.

This questionnaire forms part of a research project which examines the connection between Life Orientation and spirituality. You as teacher play a crucial role here as you are teaching the children this subject. Therefore your insights and perceptions are of utmost importance in order to link theory and practice, especially in the light of the fact that this has not always happened. The ultimate aim of this project is the formulation of guidelines which can be used to improve the teaching of Life Orientation.

Please answer the following questions in full sentences on the questionnaire. If you receive this questionnaire by e-mail please also answer each question on the questionnaire (delete the lines) and mail the questionnaire back to **ackarstens@gmail.com** Please try and write a whole paragraph with at least some of the questions.

This research has been approved of by the Ethics Committee of the North West University. Be assured that these questionnaires will be treated as highly confidential. Only the researcher, supervisor and transcriber will have access to the questionnaires.

Thank you very much for your time and effort, which is very much appreciated.

Anne Karstens

Questionnaire

A. General Information:

Your age: _____

Gender: _____

Race: _____

Home language: _____

Language you teach in: _____

For how long have you been teaching? _____

Grades in which you teach Life Orientation: _____

For how long have you been teaching Life Orientation? _____

Please note that the term 'Life Orientation' is used, however Grade R-3 teachers can substitute 'Life Orientation' with 'Life Skills'.

*All questions: Use space provided, if insufficient continue on the back of the page.
Any comments on back of page.*

B. Definitions:

1) How would you describe the following?

a) Life Orientation:

b) Spirituality:

c) Religion:

C. Life Orientation:

2) What do you think do learners really learn in Life Orientation?

3) Give your opinion on whether or not you think the pupils really benefit from the subject Life Orientation in their personal lives.

- 4) What do you think are the most prominent themes covered in the Revised Curriculum Statement of Life Orientation?

- 5) What would you like to include/exclude in the Life Orientation Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

- 6) What do you like in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)?

- 7) What do you dislike in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)?

- 8) Which goals would you as a teacher like to reach in Life Orientation?

D. Spirituality:

Spirituality is a concept which includes the following aspects: belief in a power beyond oneself, hope and optimism, meaning and purpose, worship, prayer, meditation, love and compassion, moral and ethical values as well as transcendence.

9) Do you agree with this definition? Why or why not?

10) Do you think there could be a relationship between spirituality and Life Orientation? Motivate.

- 11) Do you think there is a relationship between spirituality and religion?
Motivate.

- 12) Do you think spirituality could possibly even serve as a basis/ foundation for
Life Orientation? _____

a) Why or why not?

b) How would you describe the characteristics of such a spirituality?

13) What in your opinion should be the role of religion in Life Orientation?

14) What according to your opinion could be the basis for Life Orientation and why do you say so?

15) To what extent do you feel qualified to teach Life Orientation?

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Questions for interviews:

1. What do you learn in LO?
2. Do you enjoy the subject? Do you in general feel positive or negative about it? Why?
3. Does it help you for daily living? Describe.
4. If you could decide on topics and activities in LO what would you do?
5. What do you think gives meaning to life? And is this addressed by LO?

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (QUESTIONNAIRES)

Respondent 6:

1) How would you describe the following?

d) Life Orientation: *This would be the process of learning and teaching about life – the skills and knowledge and practical exposure to what the children themselves and the teacher – hopefully competent and willing to teach this subject with his/her heart – consider important in life. What is very important here is that learners be permitted to say what is in their hearts. Also that learners be challenged and given different perspectives. Learners need to be exposed to aspects and viewpoints they have never been exposed to before and in the process of 'life orientation' they should be aided in finding themselves, what their values are, what reality is and how to deal with all of this in practice.*

e) Spirituality:

Spirituality is in my opinion the fact that there is an unseen, reality beyond the material of what one can perceive with the senses. It is the knowledge of a God and the human yearning and response to this longing.

f) Religion:

Religion is in my opinion the set of beliefs that dictate actions and form a lifestyle based on this knowledge of an unseen God or power. It can be vastly personal and be experienced as a relationship between a god and a human being, or it can be a set of rules that dictates actions only. Religion is something a person voluntarily chooses to believe in or not.

C. Life Orientation:

2) What do you think do learners really learn in Life Orientation?

This vastly depends on who the teacher is and what the learner's approach to life orientation is. At present most learners do not learn anything they consider meaningful in life orientation. This would include the whole spectrum on what they learn in personal well-being, career guidance, individuals and society and physical recreation. What I personally think most

learners learn in Life Orientation is that it is a useless subject, wasting their time and that some set of silly geniuses in authority decided that they needed to learn about self-image, drugs and AIDS and that it is all an empty farce and not applicable to life.

- 3) Give your opinion on whether or not you think the pupils really benefit from the subject Life Orientation in their personal lives.

Once again this depends largely on both the teacher and the learners. If the teacher really wishes to orientate learners to life and living and believes in what they are doing together, the benefit to personal life can be enormous. It is a marvellous opportunity for exposing the learners to so many things they need to learn and for addressing issues right at the core of learners' hearts. I also think that there can only be a true benefit if a teacher is allowed to try and get to the learner's hearts – to identify the very specific needs of a particular group being taught and then to address it by allowing them to express themselves without threat and by leading them into solutions for their problems – not by solving any problems for the learners themselves, or by simply helping them to understand themselves, but by teaching them how they should live. This, I believe most firmly, can only be done truly effectively if it is founded and integrated into the spiritual aspect of the learner and would of necessity include religion. If religion is excluded the matter learned often has no foundation or integrity to the learners concerned and life orientation becomes a waste of time, more than anything else. .

- 4) What do you think are the most prominent themes covered in the Revised Curriculum Statement of Life Orientation?

The RNCS of Life Orientation grade 10-12 has four main outcomes: personal well-being, the individual and society, physical recreation and fitness and career guidance. These form four major themes covered. Other themes, incorporated into this framework, but that one could mention specifically are: multi religious education and exposure, cultural integration, personal empowerment and HIV and aids. That one finds these specific themes makes a great deal of sense in South Africa at the moment as an educational system is more than anything else, a political tool aimed at instilling the political goals

of a given government into the young citizens of a country. Few subjects are better suited than life orientation to doing just this.

- 5) What would you like to include/exclude in the Life Orientation Curriculum Statement and textbooks?

I am of the opinion that the Life Orientation Curriculum statement and thus the textbooks are more than anything else, an image of the ideas and ambitions of the government in a country. I am convinced that this applies to just about all life orientation curriculum's in most countries throughout all times. If this is the case then, ironically, the whole focus and purpose of life orientation is defied and learners are orientated towards the life planned by a government. I believe that learners need to be orientated towards life freely and based on the spiritual foundation of their choice. In this sense I would exclude almost the entire L.O. statement and make it into a very fluid subject that educators could change as they like in order to fit their learners needs and situation. I know that this is what was also partly intended by the new curriculum, but a political framework was provided too, and the method I have in mind is very impractical and entirely dependant on the commitment, enthusiasm and integrity of educators. I should love to see a framework developed that is practical and fluid, based on a spiritual foundation and truly not a vehicle for indoctrination of any kind. .

- 6) What do you like in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)?

The answer to the previous question answers this one too – I disagree with the entire present approach to life orientation and do not wish to split hairs and say, "this is alright, this is not, this should be changed, this is fine, etc." What I am talking about is an entire emphasis change.

- 7) What do you dislike in the Curriculum Statement and textbooks (indicate which textbook)?

See question 5.

- 8) Which goals would you as a teacher like to reach in Life Orientation?

I teach young teenagers who have not had much exposure to anything beyond the rural world they live in, who have a very limited general knowledge and who do not have knowledge of the many doors open to them and who sometimes tend to a fatalistic outlook to life because they are often poor and see no way to improve their lot. As their Life Orientation I would like to get them to look into their own hearts at what they believe and I would like them to question why they think the way they do. I would like to show them a little of more of what the world is like and broaden their horizons. I would like to make them aware of the different possibilities and opportunities before them. I would like to hold a picture of different values in front of them and I would like them to have an opportunity to decide why values are important and how to apply them and live up to what they believe. I would also love to take current events and realities and get learners to evaluate these in the light of their own values and in context of government and world systems. I would love to challenge their perceptions and allow them to reveal the truth of what is in their hearts so that they can look at it and evaluate it, when it is exposed.

D. Spirituality:

Spirituality is a concept which includes the following aspects: belief in a power beyond oneself, hope and optimism, meaning and purpose, worship, prayer, meditation, love and compassion, moral and ethical values as well as transcendence.

- 9) Do you agree with this definition? Why or why not?

Yes I do. All of the mentioned characteristics are part of spirituality as I see it, but I would include reality. I think spirituality is also the way you view your reality and includes the knowledge of sorrow and suffering and its influence of mankind. How you interpret these things is also part of spirituality.

- 10) Do you think there could be a relationship between spirituality and Life Orientation? Motivate.

I think for Life Orientation to be successful, it is crucial that there be a relationship between spirituality and Life Orientation. Life Orientation is all

about life and how to live. To most learners, spirituality is a part of their lives. If this is not included in Life Orientation than Life Orientation becomes a farce and not applicable to 'real life' in their eyes.

- 11) Do you think there is a relationship between spirituality and religion?

Motivate.

Yes, there would definitely be some kind of relationship because in order to profess that one belongs to a particular religion, one needs to be aware of spirituality and acknowledge its existence. It is, however, possible to be aware of spirituality without belonging to a classified, specific religion. as religion can be a set of rules, more than anything else. I would suggest that when one applies spirituality to oneself and acknowledges that there is a spiritual reality, one forms a simple kind of religion for oneself, though you might not call it a religion.

- 12) Do you think spirituality could possibly even serve as a basis/ foundation for Life Orientation? Yes _____

a) Why or why not?

Yes, most definitely, as long, as spirituality is not reduced to a set of rules and turned into a religious knowledge education. I say yes, because as I have mentioned before, spirituality is often very important to learners and an absolute foundation to their lives, if this is not recognized and integrated as the basis of teaching learners how to love, the subject becomes an ironic paradox, empty and meaningless to the very learners it is supposed to aid and this would utterly defy the purpose.

b) How would you describe the characteristics of such a spirituality?

It would be very important that nothing is forced and imposed on learners. Learners would have to be allowed to make this spirituality their own. It would have to be based on a universally admitted source of truth, such as the Bible, if learners profess to be Christian. It should be characterized by an openness in approach, with no legalism at all. Learners should be able to use this spirituality embedded in education to define for themselves what they believe and how they apply what they believe to life:

- 13) What in your opinion should be the role of religion in Life Orientation?
In order to make spirituality effective and truly meaningful, it is given a description and an outline according to specific patterns. It is then called a religion with a more or less shared agreement on what exactly the idea of spirituality should contain and how one should apply these beliefs to life. If one teaches on a basis of spirituality, it would be only deeply meaningful if a common belief is shared and this would make a specific religion necessary. If this is not the case, Life Orientation once again just becomes interesting and, a case of, "Oh, I see this is what you believe, I don't necessarily agree with you, but that is alright. There are some basic things that apply to all of us, etc..." One needs to agree about values and how one should live to at least some extent and be able to share in this and investigate how to apply this to life and how to live as your heart and mind and spirit together dictate. One would of necessity need a common basic religion to make this effectively possible.
- 14) What according to your opinion could be the basis for Life Orientation and why do you say so?
I think that the basis for Life Orientation should be the following: the educator should determine what the learners want to discuss and investigate about the reality of their life. He/she should then try and determine apart from this what learners need to discuss and interact with. He/she should then be sure to apply current events and general knowledge as well as life issues in a format that is interesting and compatible to learner. These should then be investigated from a spiritual viewpoint so that it will truly be a reality to learners and so that they can truly learn about life.
- 15) To what extent do you feel qualified to teach Life Orientation?
When is one qualified to teach a subject Life Orientation? When one has put enough knowledge into one's head? When one has lived for a certain number of years and had a large number of experiences? I studied a basic educational degree and have not specialised to teach Life orientation in any way, but I teach Life Orientation with all my heart in the way I have explained in question eleven and I do not consider the question of being qualified as

important as I consider having an understanding of your learners and truly being in touch with their needs. I can simply say that being qualified or not qualified is a relative question and what qualifies a teacher in my opinion, is enthusiasm, empathy, understanding, true insight, a lot of wisdom and a genuine love for your learners. None of us need to be "qualified" we will not meet the standard, but we should do the best we can and be accountable for teaching learners true life skills.

APPENDIX F

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (INTERVIEWS)

Interview 10:

- R: Okay, please just tell me what you learn in LO, like the topics you do and, activities.
- L1: How to say no, when a boy comes across sort of very strong, different types of STD's your career choices.
- L2: Ah, democracy, the constitution.
- L1: What you're allowed to do and what you're not allowed to when it comes to government.
- L2: Your rights and responsibilities.
- L2: What happens if a child becomes abused, what you can do to protect the child, or to protect yourself if you're being abused...How to write a CV.
- R: Okay,
- L2: And become a?
- R: Okay?
- L2: And like dietary habits, good nutritional habits, things like that.
- L1: Personal fitness program.
- L2: Your body types.
- L1: Leadership capabilities, and games.
- L2: Games, recreational stuff, yeah, I think that's about it.
- R: Okay, and do you like the subject, do you experience it as negative or positive? And why? And please be honest!
- L1: Alright I'll go first, I really don't like the subject 'cause I, believe that LO or life skills is something that your parents can teach you, if you don't have parents then I suppose it would benefit you a lot, but since I do have parents I think I learn more from them than from...
- L2: I basically just see it as a waste of time, 'cause the, you don't learn anything from it. I think I used to be an innocent little girl before we took LO, it just expose you to the evils of the world. Ha ha.
- R: Okay.
- L1: Sometimes you're not ready for such age restricted lesson, before you see them.
- L2: Yah, really it's unnecessary and yah.
- R: Okay, do you think most children or pupils in your class feel the same.
- L2: Definitely.
- R: Okay.
- L2: We are hundred percent sure of that.
- R: Okay.
- L1: It could just be because of our teachers, we're not quite sure whether it's the subject or the teachers.
- L2: No, but we got a good teacher who's like, like Mrs. Moll.
- L1: Yes, she is.
- L2: She actually takes a lot effort with stuff, the point is that we don't see it as useful.
- R: Okay, okay so...Okay the next questions is; do you benefit for your daily life... I suppose, okay just answer it again.
- L1: No.
- L2: No, not at all, not really, it's a good way to bring your average up, but other than that...
- R: Okay.

L1: Mine always goes down with this subject.

L2: Oh, really? Basically you just have to like?

L1: It's a very subjective, hum, subject, it's not based on facts. People's opinions of things.

L2: Write fancy sounding answers and you'll get marks.

R: Okay, I understand, Okay now, if you were the teacher, or the curriculum developer or what ever.

L2: I'll never teach LO.

R: Okay but if, okay if you were the curriculum developer what would you do with the subject?

L2: I, I wouldn't have such a subject.

L1: I would change the subject so that it works like a finishing school where you learn, how to look after yourself, if you're living alone. And to do certain thing, like if you go to an important function, what you should wear, hum, your etiquette, your manners, the way to do proper speeches or things that you would use if you're going out there in the real world.

L2: Like some things practical a real life thing and also I'd bring religion in to it, more of a religious education.

R: Well, there isn't really any religious education anymore, so you're supposed to learn about the different religions, and they want to teach you that, they are all equal, it is sort of the message they want.

L2: Yah, oh and basically, in LO text books the stereotypes are terrible, they go against stereotypes and say you must not stereotype, but they have like, you know, the characters they introduce in the beginning of the book to do studies with.

L1: They are stereotypes.

L2: They are, they have, the rugby jog guy who's this white muscle, good looking guy, then they have the nerdy Muslim guy who took drugs or what ever,

L1: And they have a conservative Indian girl.

L2: Her parents don't let her go out and then they have the...

R: Okay, ha ha

L2: They have all the stereotypes.

L1: The poppie, dowwe dolla,

L2: Yes.

R: And, okay, the last question, you must just remember not to think about LO; what do you think gives meaning to life? What makes life worth loving, what's the purpose of life.

L2: God.

R: Okay, can you sort of say a bit more.

L2: Okay, what do you mean exactly?

R: Uhm, what gives your life a purpose and how?

L1: I suppose it's, well if I look at the guiding facts in my life it is the Lord, but apart from that, I think love, just love for my neighbors and for the people around me.

R: Okay?

L2: Ha ha.

R: Okay anyway, do you think that is addressed in LO?

L2: No

L1: No

R: Why not, or

- L2: Because they don't teach you about love or anything religious or anything, yah and it's just power points, with the points in the, that come in the text book and then lots of activities to do. It's not, doesn't help you with real life actually.
- R: Okay, anything more you want to say about the subject, anything you.
- L2: It gives you, it's meant to help you practical live and to deal with situations, but all of it is actually just theory and you can't necessarily but that into practice.
- L1: And sometimes when they ask you a you have to answer a certain question, you're not allowed it to be based on your own opinion, 'cause they don't mark according to your opinion, they mark according to your opinion with reference to the text book.
- R: Okay.
- L1: Like if you believe the sky is green, but the text book says the sky is blue, and you say the sky is green because...then they're going to mark it wrong.
- L2: For and example at the beginning of the year we had to write down our goals, with different subjects and different people got marks differently, so how can you tell me that my goals doesn't deserve seven out of seven, that's my goal in life, you know just because the text book says how it must be it doesn't that it's not a good goal.
- R: Oh, okay.
- L1: I got zero, for saying that I want to fink out what the different contents of different religions are, not to believe in them, but just to find out what different people believe.
- L2: Yah
- R: It's interesting.
- L1: It was horrible.
- R: Okay, okay thank you!