

Guidance,  
Counselling and  
**Life Skills Education**  
for the Subject Teacher

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**Only study guide for EDA3013**



Department of Further Teacher Education  
University of South Africa, Pretoria

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# CONTENTS

<i>Study unit</i>	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD	(vii)
1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION	1
THE PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE COURSE	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 A support base	2
1.3 Guidance, counselling and life skills	3
1.4 School Guidance and Counselling	4
1.4.1 The vision of School Guidance and Counselling	4
1.4.2 The nature of School Guidance and Counselling	5
1.4.3 The aims of School Guidance and Counselling	6
1.5 Objectives and performance outcomes of School Guidance and Counselling	7
1.5.1 The objectives of School Guidance and Counselling	7
1.5.2 The performance outcomes of School Guidance and Counselling	9
1.6 Differentiated and future-oriented education	10
1.6.1 Differentiated education	10
1.6.2 Future-oriented education	11
1.7 Conclusion	12
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
1.8 Introduction	13
1.9 The field: parameters of guidance, counselling and life skills develop- ment	13
1.9.1 Guiding the learner	13
1.9.2 The learner as a total human being	14
1.9.3 The learner as a rational being	16
1.9.4 The learner in reality	16
1.10 Inclusion into the curriculum — how?	17
1.11 Conclusion	19
2 GUIDANCE	20
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE	20
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 A total process	21
2.2.1 Personal and social guidance	21
2.2.2 Educational guidance	22
2.2.3 Vocational guidance	23
2.3 Principles of personal and social guidance	23
2.3.1 Individual uniqueness	24
2.3.2 Acceptance	24
2.3.3 Association	24
2.3.4 Encounter	24

<i>Study unit</i>	<i>Page</i>	
2.4	Implementing personal and social guidance	24
2.4.1	Physical support	25
2.4.2	Cognitive support	26
2.4.3	Emotional support	32
2.4.4	Social support	35
2.4.5	Normative support (moral/religious)	37
2.5	The role of the educator in dealing with learners with behavioural problems	41
2.5.1	Manifestations of behaviour	41
2.5.2	Evaluating learner behaviour	42
2.5.3	General guidelines for dealing with behavioural problems	43
2.6	Conclusion	45
	EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE	46
2.7	Introduction	46
2.8	Making a learning programme more accessible	46
2.8.1	Study assistance	46
2.8.2	Time planning	46
2.9	Modes of learning	47
2.9.1	Sensing	48
2.9.2	Paying attention	48
2.9.3	Perceiving	48
2.9.4	Thinking	49
2.9.5	Imagining	49
2.9.6	Fantatising	49
2.9.7	Memory	49
2.10	Learning restraints	49
2.10.1	Hyperactivity	50
2.10.2	Attention deficits	50
2.10.3	Reading problems	50
2.10.4	Counting problems	50
2.10.5	Mathematical problems	50
2.10.6	Language deficiencies	50
2.10.7	Impulsiveness	50
2.10.8	Emotional instability	51
2.11	Supporting the learner with a learning problem	51
2.11.1	Corrective teaching	51
2.11.2	Remedial education	52
2.12	Supporting the underachiever	54
2.12.1	What leads to underachievement?	54
2.12.2	Implementing educational support	56
2.13	Supporting the gifted learner	57
2.13.1	Categories of giftedness	57
2.13.2	Implementing educational support	58
2.14	Conclusion	61
	CAREER EDUCATION	61
2.15	Introduction	61
2.16	Career education programmes	62

<i>Study unit</i>	<i>Page</i>
2.16.1 Theoretical basis for providing career education	63
2.17 A career education programme	66
2.17.1 Self-awareness	66
2.17.2 Career and job awareness	69
2.17.3 Decision making	74
2.18 Conclusion	76
<b>3 COUNSELLING</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP, ASSESSMENT AND OBSER-     VATION</b>	<b>78</b>
3.1 Introduction	78
3.2 The characteristics and skills of the counsellor	79
3.2.1 Innate qualifications	80
3.2.2 The skills of the counsellor	84
3.2.3 Responses	89
3.3 A short-term counselling model	90
3.3.1 Preparation stage	90
3.3.2 Meet and greet stage	91
3.3.3 Exploratory stage	92
3.3.4 Action stage	92
3.3.5 Termination stage	93
3.4 Responses to the counselling process	93
3.4.1 Values	93
3.4.2 Referrals	93
3.4.3 Resistance and reluctance	94
3.4.4 The counselling contract	94
3.5 The participation of the learning programme teacher in the counselling model	94
3.5.1 Assessment	95
3.6 Observation	98
3.6.1 The observer	98
3.6.2 The observed	99
3.6.3 Observation guidelines	99
3.7 Conclusion	103
<b>THE INTERVIEW</b>	<b>103</b>
3.8 Introduction	103
3.9 What is an interview?	103
3.10 Methods of interviewing	104
3.10.1 The direct (structured) approach	104
3.10.2 The nondirect (unstructured) approach	105
3.10.3 Composite approach	106
3.11 Types of interviews	106
3.11.1 An exploratory interview	106
3.11.2 A historicity interview	107
3.11.3 An informative interview	107
3.11.4 An advisory interview	107
3.12 Interviewing techniques	108

<i>Study unit</i>	<i>Page</i>
3.12.1 Internal frame of reference	108
3.12.2 Asking questions	111
3.12.3 Reflection	112
3.13 Progression and structure of the interview	115
3.13.1 Individual interviews	115
3.13.2 Group interviews	117
3.14 Conclusion	119
4 LIFE SKILLS	121
DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS: AN HOLISTIC APPROACH	121
4.1 Introduction	121
4.2 Definitions of life skills	122
4.3 Life skills education	124
4.4 Purpose of life skills education	125
4.5 The origin of life skills education and different life skills programmes or models	126
4.6 Acquiring and maintaining life skills	127
4.6.1 The learner	127
4.6.2 The facilitator	127
4.6.3 Teaching methods in the classroom	128
4.7 Learning outside the classroom	133
4.8 Categorising life skills	133
DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS: SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS	134
4.9 Personal skills	134
4.9.1 Self-knowledge	135
4.9.2 How to be assertive	136
4.10 Thinking skills	138
4.10.1 Memory skills/study skills	138
4.10.2 Creative thinking skills	140
4.11 Social and communication skills	143
4.12 The ability to make friends	144
4.13 Communication/listening skills	145
4.13.1 Spoken, verbal or face-to-face communication	145
4.14 Survival skills	147
4.14.1 A budget	148
4.14.2 Writing a curriculum vitae (CV)	148
4.15 Conclusion	149
APPENDIX A	151
APPENDIX B	182
BIBLIOGRAPHY	194

# Foreword



## AIM

The aim of this module is to enhance the educational experience by means of guidance, counselling and life skills development.

We have compiled this module to introduce you to the discipline of guidance, counselling and life skills development as an integral part of the learning process.

This is merely an introduction to this broad field of study, but when you have completed this module you should be able to do the following:

Provide guidance to support learners in their personal and social development to ensure that they benefit optimally from their involvement in the education process, and to prepare them for the workplace.

Make use of assessment and observation skills and, through individual and group interviewing, ensure that each learner reaches his or her maximum potential (also referred to as self-actualisation).

Implement life skills as a part of classroom teaching and equip learners with life skills that are essential for their physical, emotional and social wellbeing, as well as with skills that will enable them to cope with the demands of society.

You will note from the following that this module is divided into four study units:

FIGURE 1

*A breakdown of the study units*

STUDY UNIT 1:	Introductory orientation
STUDY UNIT 2:	Guidance
STUDY UNIT 3:	Counselling
STUDY UNIT 4:	Life skills

We advise you to refer to the contents page before studying a particular theme to see where and how the section relates to the course as a whole.

You should take as much time as you need to complete each activity.

We suggest that you keep a journal and record responses, such as what plans of action you could follow when dealing with the case studies, which approach works best for a particular situation, or any information gleaned (learned) from additional reading or from your practical experience in giving guidance, counselling and teaching life skills. This is not compulsory, but a journal of such a nature will be an asset and an invaluable source of reference when you are involved in the real-life situation.

I hope that this module will serve as a stimulant and help you to gain more knowledge and understanding for this challenging, exciting disciplines of guidance, counselling and life skills development. I also hope that you will acquire theoretical and practical knowledge which is applicable to your specific situation.

Prof Eldrie Gouws

I have drawn from the material of experts in the different fields and I would like to acknowledge them:

Dr AM Dicker

Dr CR Fredericks

Prof IP Sonnekus

Dr N De Meillon

Dr R Venter

Prof AC Lessing



# STUDY UNIT 1

## INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION



### AIM

In this study unit, we introduce guidance and counselling, and the development of life skills as a means of enhancing the educational experience.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once you have worked through this study unit, you should be able to do the following:

- Indicate how guidance, counselling and the development of life skills form part of the education process.
- Define “differentiated” and “future-oriented” education, and explain how guidance, counselling and the development of life skills can promote the successful development of these forms of education.
- Discuss how the vision, nature and aims of guidance and counselling are related.
- Explain the whole learner.
- Examine possible ways in which guidance, counselling and the teaching of life skills can be incorporated into the school curriculum.
- Discuss the parameters within which guidance, counselling and the development of life skills operate.

## THE PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE COURSE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

We begin this exciting, challenging and vital discipline of guidance, counselling and life skills by examining the case study entitled, “Unfulfilled expectations”. The scenario sketched in this case study will introduce you to the purpose of guidance and counselling, and life skills in order to make education relevant to learners and to fulfil their needs and expectations.



## CASE STUDY 1: UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

### *Scene 1: First day of school*

“Today, at long last, I get to go to ‘big school!’”

The excitement of finally being able to attend “big school”, as Bernice called it, resulted in her tossing and turning in her bed all night. The long-awaited day had finally arrived. She felt a sense of pride as she put on the school uniform she had tried on so many times during the past couple of days.

As Bernice and her mother approached the school gates, Bernice felt her mother gripping her hand tightly. However, after seeing the other children and their parents assembled in the school’s courtyard, any apprehension or fear she might have felt were soon replaced with excitement. Bernice, her eyes filled with unspoken expectations, looked at her mother and exclaimed, “Oh Mom, this is going to be so much fun!”

### *Scene 2: Nine years later*

Mother: But Bernice, you have to go to school. What do you think will happen to you if you drop out of school?

Bernice: I hate school! I don’t want to go back again. My teachers never explain anything; all they do is pick on me for answers. Besides, there’s no point in having to learn all that boring stuff.



## QUESTION

Let us think about Bernice’s situation. What brought about Bernice’s change of attitude? What caused her excitement about attending school to turn to disillusionment with her school situation? What factors contributed to Bernice’s negative attitude toward school?

There are a number of factors which may have contributed to Bernice’s change of attitude. Since we do not have much background detail, however, we can only guess at the possible causes. Let us look at the following three deductions:

- Bernice may be experiencing problems with learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Bernice may be struggling to relate to her educator.
- Bernice does not see education as a means of preparing her for adulthood and the future.

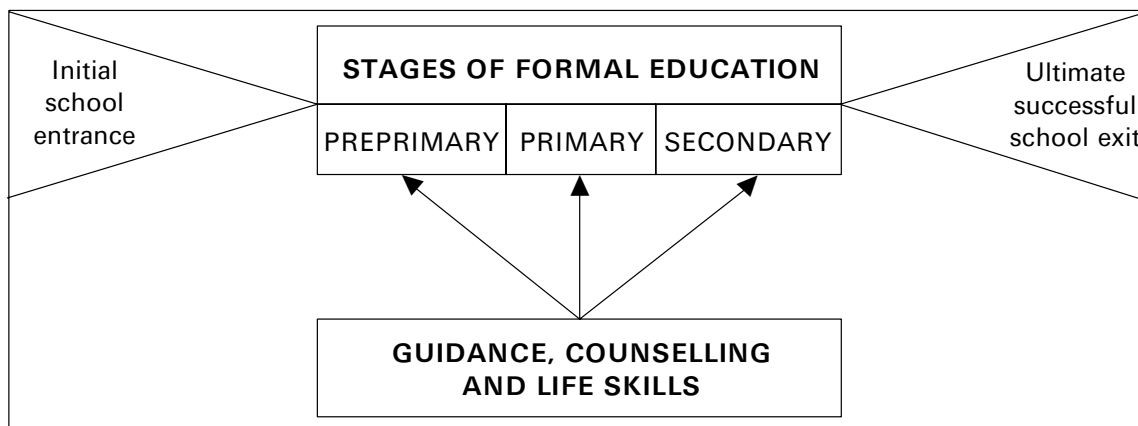
## 1.2 A SUPPORT BASE

Bernice is a classic example of a learner who is at risk of becoming a school dropout if the necessary support and help are not forthcoming. Her predicament is shared by many other learners. Learners are faced with different types of problems — major problems or minor problems — and they often need help in dealing with these often confusing situations. Learners may not be able to avoid the pitfalls inherent in (inseparable from) such situations if they are not given the proper support and guidance. Guidance, counselling and the development of life skills can contribute to the education process in

such a way that learners are able to make informed decisions about their lives. This dynamic relationship is illustrated diagrammatically in figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1

*Guidance and counselling, and the development of life skills: an educational support base.*



### 1.3 GUIDANCE, COUNSELLING AND LIFE SKILLS

Guidance, counselling and the development of life skills, as depicted in figure 1.1, are services that should be made available to learners throughout the preprimary, primary and secondary school levels. Learners have a right to each of these services which should all have equal value (Rao & Reddy 1992:223).

School Guidance and Counselling, and Life Skills collectively represent the learning area which deals with Life Orientation. The following description of Life Orientation as contained in the Curriculum 2005, forms the basis of this study module:

#### ***Life Orientation***

We live in a rapidly changing society. To cope with these challenges, learners need to develop life skills. Life Orientation includes the building of self-esteem, survival skills and a healthy lifestyle.

(Curriculum 2005 1997:15)

Life Orientation is an umbrella term which encompasses all the work that teachers should be doing with their learners. In other words, teachers should place some emphasis on School Guidance and Counselling, and Life Skills.

- School Guidance and Counselling helps children to get to know themselves, to become acquainted with different careers and to deal with academic problems.
- Life Skills teaches children to deal with situations in their lives.

In the Draft National Curriculum Statement (2001:16), the following five learning outcomes (aimed at teaching learners the necessary life skills) are stated:

- (1) Learning outcome 1. The learner is able to make informed decisions about personal health, community health and environmental health.

- (2) Learning outcome 2. The learner is able to demonstrate an active commitment to constitutional rights and social responsibilities, and shows sensitivity to diverse cultures and belief systems.
- (3) Learning outcome 3. The learner is able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential so that he or she can respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.
- (4) Learning outcome 4. The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of and participate in activities that promote movement and physical development.
- (5) Learning outcome 5. The learner is able to make informed choices and decisions about further study and career options.

By now you should be aware that this module focuses on guiding the learner in totality, that is, understanding the learner from a holistic point of view (see theme 2). In order for you to fulfill your task as teacher, you need to know how to use guidance and counselling in the classroom, and how to make life skills part of the learning experience in the classroom. (See Appendix B for National Curriculum statement for grades 4–9 Life Orientation.)

## 1.4 SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

In this section, we will investigate the vision, general aims, nature, objectives and techniques of School Guidance and Counselling. These are theoretical concepts, so you need to understand that they are all related and that they help to create a better school guidance and counselling system for the youth of our country.

The vision, nature and aims of School Guidance and Counselling are interrelated and are totally dependent on each other; they exist because of one another and through each other.

You may feel that philosophical statements such as the one above are meaningless. To make it more meaningful, therefore, we are going to link these concepts to your everyday teaching situations. The focus here is on encouraging learners to become responsible adults, so the content of your learning programme or subject is not relevant to the discussion.

FIGURE 1.2

*The basis of School Guidance and Counselling*

VISION AND NATURE	AIMS	OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	METHODS/ TECHNIQUES
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### 1.4.1 THE VISION OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

A vision is a dream held by a person or an institution; it is the underlying reason for the person or institution's existence. Often when people or institutions envisage their vision, they give too little detail. It then becomes a very difficult ideal to achieve.

The vision of School Guidance and Counselling is to create a healthy society. This is a broad vision which is difficult to realise. Formulate a vision for your subject. Ask yourself the following question: "What role does my subject play in guiding learners to become healthy, responsible adults?"



### ACTIVITY 1.1

In a single sentence, write down your vision for your learning programme or subject. Remember to consider how your learning programme could contribute to the personal growth of your learners.

The vision of School Guidance and Counselling is based on hope. Hope is intangible and abstract, so it needs to be made more concrete. One way to concretise it is to state aims. Before we deal with aims, however, we need to look at the nature of School Guidance and Counselling, that is, its underlying character and approach.

## 1.4.2 THE NATURE OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

When we speak of a person's nature, we refer to the general qualities that come to mind when that person's name is mentioned. A person's nature can, for example, be described as happy or serious. We sometimes also refer to a person's temperament. How would you describe the nature of School Guidance and Counselling?

The nature of School Guidance and Counselling is linked to the nature of Life Skills. According to Donald (1997:30) "life skills education is often equated with 'guidance'. Although it includes elements of 'guidance', it [life skills] goes far beyond this." For the purpose of this course, you should remember that guidance and counselling lay the foundation on which life skills are based. Guidance and counselling provide the building blocks on which Life Skills educators are able to build to equip learners for the future.

Life skills education is addressed in detail in study unit 4. At this stage, you need only differentiate between guidance and counselling, and life skills. According to Donald et al (1997:96), "life skills comprise particular attitudes, knowledge and skills (Nelson-Jones 1993) which enable us to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills are indispensable in the process of empowering individuals to engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges".



### ACTIVITY 1.2: The relationship between guidance and counselling, and life skills education

Visualise the difference between life skills and guidance and counselling. Now draw a diagram that indicates the relationship between guidance and counselling, and life skills education.

When we did this activity, we imagined a man selecting bricks which he would use to build a structure. As he investigates the different types and sizes of bricks (the bricks should be compared to his personal qualities), he becomes aware that the different bricks differ in quality (this means that he understands the value of his personal

qualities). He realises that the bricks are different; he also realises that they cannot all be used for the same purpose (he understands that certain personal qualities are more suited to certain careers). In the process of building a structure, the man has to understand that certain types of bricks (characteristic of his personal qualities) are more suited to certain types of structures (the future he can build for himself taking his personal qualities into consideration).

Life skills education helps the man to decide on the purpose of his structure. It is possible that the “bricks” the man has at his disposal could be used to build a high-rise structure such as an office block, or a tall block of flats. The man should also look at the quality of the soil on which he wants to build. If his site (context) is sandy, he would be unwise to build a tall building that needs deep foundations. If he really wants to build his structure, he will either have to modify his structure (a life skill), or he will have to find more suitable ground (this process also requires using life skills). How should the man make his decisions, that is, on what information should his decisions be based?

This example illustrates the guidance and counselling process, but just as the example above does not give a step-by-step analysis of the building process, neither does it explain the entire guidance and counselling process.

We could go on giving you more “building” examples, but we hope that we have illustrated the difference between the nature of guidance and counselling, and the nature of life skills education, namely, that the nature of guidance and counselling is all encompassing; it provides the learner with the necessary skills to face any situation.

Always remember that the nature of a learning programme sustains its activities. Thus, when teaching or working with learners, you must reflect the encompassing nature of guidance and counselling. You should also remind yourself that you are dealing with the whole learner. Remind yourself that everything you do impacts on the learner’s future life.

### **1.4.3 THE AIMS OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

The vision of School Guidance and Counselling is to create a healthy society, but since many professions echo this vision, the School Guidance and Counselling vision needs to focus on the school situation and on the site of learning (the school itself). A School Guidance and Counselling vision should aim to

- teach learners to become involved in the community and to take ownership of the community
- cultivate a culture of learning for all
- empower the individual by promoting healthy development
- create an effective education support system
- create teacher support teams that form the cornerstones of an effective education support service

The vision, nature and aims of School Guidance and Counselling need to be linked to concrete performance outcomes. These outcomes can be used to assess whether School Guidance and Counselling is being adequately used to expose learners to particular learning programmes or subjects.

As you work through the following section, apply the objectives provided to your own situation, since this will help you to set objectives for your own school and your learning programme.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Objectives and performance outcomes are closely related. If you set out to achieve an objective, check to see if the learners have achieved the performance outcome. If the learners achieve the required performance outcome, you can be sure that you have achieved the objective. If, for example, your objective is to travel to a city, then reaching the city is your performance outcome. Let us see how this is done in School Guidance and Counselling.

### **1.5.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

The objectives of School Guidance and Counselling focus on the learner and are an embodiment of the aims. The following eight objectives, according to Vorster (1979), can be set for School Guidance and Counselling:

- to provide learners with a sense of security
- to bring learners into contact with reality
- to orientate the learner towards reality
- to help learners to make sense of reality
- to assist learners while they are growing up by helping them to anticipate future events
- to give learners courage to fulfil their potential
- to shed light on learners' troubles so that they can find solutions for their problems
- to help learners to become productive citizens of their country

These objectives can be used in all situations as a basis for the guidance and counselling process. The whole learner must be taken into consideration, that is, teachers must get to know their learners before they can ascertain whether a learner's development is satisfactory. Objectives are not intangible, nor are they impossible to achieve. Objectives reflect realistic goals that can actually be achieved if the correct procedures are followed.

The school guidance teacher knows that the learner (with all his or her attributes) finds himself or herself in different situations in the learning environment and in life in general. These situations are as follows:

- the educational situation
- the personal situation
- the career situation

The school guidance counsellor's task is to assist the learner in these situations. The degree to which the learner needs assistance depends largely on the learner himself or herself.



### ACTIVITY 1.3

Complete the following table by filling in suitable words in the open spaces.

Situation	Aspect	Example 1	Example 2
EDUCATIONAL	Cognitive	Study methods	Summaries
	1	Friends	Time planning
PERSONAL	Emotional	Anger	2
	Social/Family	3	Moving house
CAREERS	4	Banking	Shop keeping
	Physical	PRO	5

As you work through the rest of this study guide, you may want to change or add to your answers. Note that each situation reflects the whole learner. Have a look at our answers. How do your answers differ from ours?

- 1: social
- 2: depression
- 3: divorce
- 4: cognitive
- 5: entertainment

The point of this exercise is to allow you to really enter the reality of the learner, since School Guidance and Counselling deals with every conceivable aspect of the learner.

We are now going to look at some objectives which are linked to one of the aims. As you read them, critically consider whether these objectives will achieve the aims that you have set for the learners in your community.



FIGURE 1.3

*A tabular illustration of an aim and its objectives*

Aim	Objectives
To assist the whole learner in the academic-scholastic or education situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish if the learner is physically healthy</li> <li>● Determine the learner’s relationships with his or her family members. How do the family members feel about the learner’s schooling?</li> <li>● To what extent do the learner’s friends influence him or her in terms of his or her educational situation?</li> <li>● To what extent is the learner spiritually prepared for his or her role in life?</li> <li>● Ascertain the learner’s general emotional state.</li> <li>● How dedicated is the learner to applying his academic capabilities to his or her school work?</li> <li>● Are there any other relevant aims which can be linked to this aim?</li> </ul>

Now write down what you think about these objectives.

The table above only looks at one aim of the learner, that is, to assist the learner in the academic-scholastic or educational situation. Please add your objectives to the list we provided.

Objectives, which are set to realise an aim, need to be formulated in a concrete way so that they can guide you. The easiest way to check whether you have achieved your objectives is in the outcomes you reach. In the next section, we will look at the performance outcomes that the learning programme or the subject teacher can achieve.

### **1.5.2 THE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Performance outcomes give tangible results. As stated in Curriculum 2005 (1997:7), the emphasis is on outcomes, that is, “what the learner becomes and understands”. You can actually see what has been achieved. If an aim is correctly formulated, the objectives will help you to achieve the aim that you have set. Performance outcomes show that the objectives have been met.

How can we formulate performance outcomes which are directly linked to the objectives in the table above?

The following quotation, from Curriculum 2005 (1997:9), gives some background to outcomes in general: “[O]utcomes ... are essential to learning and include skills and values such as being able to think; to solve problems; to collect, organise and analyse information; to work in a group, as well as independently; to communicate effectively and to make responsible decisions”.

The learning programme and you as the subject educator are required to achieve these outcomes. Educators now have the privilege (and the accompanying responsibility) of “develop(ing) their own learning programmes as long as they take into account the various kinds of outcomes and complement the needs of learners” (Curriculum 2005 1997:13).

This study module does not aim to turn every student into a school guidance teacher, but it does want you to understand that the work covered by a subject educator or learning programme helps each learner to realise his or her own potential. A subject educator must

- assist the whole learner as he or she is growing up
- give learners the courage to fulfil their potential
- shed light on learners’ troubles so that they can find solutions for their problems
- help learners to become productive citizens of their country

At this stage you may be feeling somewhat overwhelmed by all the responsibility you must carry; you may also never have felt that a learner with a problem is your personal responsibility. Perhaps though, you are excited that, for the very first time, you are able to do something for a learner with a problem. The challenge is to work preventatively, that is, to solve a problem the minute it is born — and it is or this very task that you are now being prepared.

In the next section, we will look at the importance of differentiated and future-oriented education

## **1.6 DIFFERENTIATED AND FUTURE-ORIENTED EDUCATION**

Guidance and counselling are not new to many South African schools. The general approach, however, has been that this is a service for secondary school students and so it is these students, and in particular senior secondary students, who have benefited from it. Although this approach has merits, it tends to marginalise (to make them feel isolated and unimportant) the vast majority of South African students at preprimary and primary school levels. Current trends in education, namely differentiated and future-oriented education, foresees guidance, counselling and the development of life skills as an integral part of preprimary, primary and secondary education.

We will now look at the implications of differentiated and future-oriented education to determine the need for guidance, counselling and life skills at all levels of education.

### **1.6.1 DIFFERENTIATED EDUCATION**

A differentiated education system is based on the principle that learners differ so vastly in their abilities, aptitudes and interests, that they will not all benefit from a uniform method of education. A learner’s individuality should always be borne in mind in any education environment. The aim of differentiated education is thus to understand each learner’s needs within the context of his or her position in a certain group, that is, to acknowledge his or her individuality. The system of differentiated education implies,

therefore, that the educator gets to know the learner and his or her interests and needs; the relationship is based on understanding, trust and authority.

The ideal is one educator for every learner. Although this would result in optimal (most favourable) realisation of the principles of differentiated education, it is not feasible. We should, therefore, view school guidance and counselling as a necessary addition to the system of differentiated education as a means of compensating for a system which relies on one educator for every learner.

The implications of differentiation are numerous and success depends upon the ability and creativity of the educator. Let us analyse the following case study of Phumula to determine if the educator allowed for differentiation or not:



### **CASE STUDY 2: APPLYING DIFFERENTIATION**

Phumula is in grade one. She is one of the more fortunate learners in that she comes from a relatively stable family background. She knows that she is loved and accepted.

Her parents realise that the home is an essential stimulant in the education process. They, therefore, introduce stimulating activities such as jigsaw puzzles.

Imagine her excitement and enthusiasm when her class educator informs the class that they are going to do a jigsaw puzzle together. Jane soon realises that she has done this puzzle numerous times before. She is so excited that she tries to take over. She makes comments, such as "Here, Mrs Jones, let me do it! No, not there, this piece belongs here", which are a source of irritation to the educator.

The educator, feeling that Jane is being inconsiderate and selfish, asks her to leave the class. "You must stand outside if you keep disrupting the class."



### **QUESTION**

What course of action could the educator have followed with Jane? Remember the principle of differentiation, that is, that each individual is unique and that each learner has different interests, abilities and aptitudes.

You should have realised that sending Jane out of the class was not the best option. We can base this decision on our knowledge of Jane's interests and her home situation. The educator could have made use of differentiated education if she had known about the learner's background. A good guidance and counselling programme will help the educator to get to know her learners and their backgrounds.

## **1.6.2 FUTURE-ORIENTED EDUCATION**

Education is not only about the present, but it is also about the future in that it aims to prepare learners for the future (to choose a career and to become a productive member of society). Learners are prepared for the future in the same way that different levels of education prepare learners for higher levels of learning. In the home, for example, learners receive a certain measure of informal or incidental education; it is in this way that children are prepared for preprimary school. Preprimary schools build on the initial

education received in the home; at the same time, they prepare learners for primary school. The same principle applies at the primary school level — learners are prepared for secondary school. The concept of preparing for the future is emphasised at high school level, because secondary school learners are expected to prepare themselves for the workplace and eventually to make a realistic career choice.

Success at one level will contribute towards success at the next level, because the different levels of education build on each other. Decision making, for example, is a life skill that learners need when deciding on a career when graduating from high school. Learners will struggle to make these kinds of decisions if they do not receive guidance and counselling, and are not taught the necessary life skills. If learners are taught the basics of decision making at preprimary and primary school levels, they are unlikely to struggle with indecisiveness at secondary school level.

The principle of future-oriented education means that learners will be taught the necessary skills for their future survival and wellbeing. These skills should be taught throughout the formal educational period of preprimary, primary and secondary school education, since it is impossible to teach these skills during a few sessions. Guidance, counselling and the teaching of life skills should form part of the learner's entire educational experience. Mwamwenda (1995:464) support this approach by stating that guidance, counselling and life skills training should take place as early as possible. He states that "no school system in Africa can claim to provide quality education when the majority of its pupils have no access to guidance and counselling as an integral component of their curriculum" (Mwamwenda 1995:457).

## 1.7 CONCLUSION

The school curricula often neglect the important contribution guidance, counselling and life skills can make to a learner's academic, social and personal development. This neglect is partly due to the following two factors:

- a lack of awareness of the importance of guidance, counselling and life skills
- an acute shortage of personnel with the necessary qualifications and skills to provide the service

In this part of the study unit, we presented guidance, counselling and life skills as vital facets of the education process, since they form a foundation on which the rest of the education process can be built. We introduced you to the vision, nature, aims, objectives and performance outcomes of the Life Orientation learning area. We focused on School Guidance and Counselling rather than on Life Skills, since we will be dealing with Life Skills in study unit 4. We also introduced you to differentiated and future-oriented education as the rationale for providing guidance and counselling, and for life skills. We learnt that guidance, counselling and the development of life skills is particularly important at the preprimary and primary school levels, since learners need support from an early age if they are to develop to their full potential (self-actualisation).

It is fair to say that providing guidance for a learner places an extra burden on the learning programme and the subject teacher. It is important to remember, though, that we are not just working with learners' heads, but with their hearts.

Fortunately, by dealing with the whole learner, you get much better cooperation, because they sense that you really care about them as people. Your levels of work may increase, but the rewards increase in equal proportion.

## **A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.8 INTRODUCTION**

For the rest of this study unit, we will focus on the parameters within which guidance, counselling and life skills operate. We will also examine the manner in which we can incorporate guidance, counselling and the development of life skills into the school curriculum. The discussion that follows is based on the work of Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996) and will highlight the extensive range of areas which can affect a learner's development.

### **1.9 THE FIELD: PARAMETERS OF GUIDANCE, COUNSELLING AND LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Prinsloo et al (1996) discuss "guidance" in terms of the following axiom (principle): the educator must guide the learner in all his or her relationships.

Using this axiom as a basis, we can make the following four statements: guidance, counselling and life skills are concerned with guiding the learner, understanding the learner as a total human being, comprehending that the learner is a relational being who will need assistance in developing relationships, and supporting the learner in the real world. We will now look at this four statements in more detail.

#### **1.9.1 GUIDING THE LEARNER**

Guiding the learner is the most important function of guidance, counselling and life skills. The following five activities form the basis of all "guiding".

##### ***1.9.1.1 SECURING THE LEARNER***

The adult positions himself or herself respectfully in the world of the learner and can thus can really become affectively and cognitively involved in the learner's concerns. The whole being of the adult should convey a willingness to listen attentively and to understand the learner and his or her specific situation. By doing so, the adult ensures a shift "from directing to facilitating, from talking to listening, from doing to observing" to promote the learner's actualisation. The adult sheds light on the situation (helps to find ways to alleviate the situation) and maintains strict confidentiality about the situation, thereby giving the learner a sense of security and encouraging further exploration and decision making.

### ***1.9.1.2 CONFRONTING THE LEARNER***

Confronting the learner brings him or her into contact with significant aspects of reality. The learner is confronted with an obscure issue and an adult who, with sensitivity and understanding, brings him or her into contact with new information and alternatives. This, together with a learner's essential confrontation with himself or herself, can lead to self-understanding, since the learner is confronted with existing and possible future relationships (Chuenyane 1990:2). This allows the learner to break through the obscurity and confusion of the situation and to prepare himself or herself to explore new horizons.

### ***1.9.1.3 ORIENTING THE LEARNER***

All enlightening guidance activities, such as confronting the learner and endowing him or her with a sense of security, contribute towards the learner's orientation. Guidance enables the learner to find his or her own bearings within the context of identified information and the variety of alternatives provided. The learner is better located within the prevailing constraints and possibilities and disposes (settles), figuratively speaking, a new vision of his or her world (Chuenyane 1990:8).

### ***1.9.1.4 ALLOWING THE LEARNER TO ANTICIPATE FUTURE OPTIONS***

Guidance enables the learner to set his or her sights on definite objectives which can be realised in the not too distant future. Undesirable and unrealistic objectives and goals can be dispensed with in this way. The adult facilitates the learner's reaching out to existing or new and attainable objectives and goals.

### ***1.9.1.5 FACILITATING THE ACTUALISATION OF THE LEARNER***

Guidance supports the learner in actualising his or her being, in becoming a self-actualiser. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1993:193) see self-actualisers as people who

- understand and can assign meaning to situations
- become involved in a task or cause beyond the restriction of self-concern and insecurity
- positively experience their real or anticipated involvement

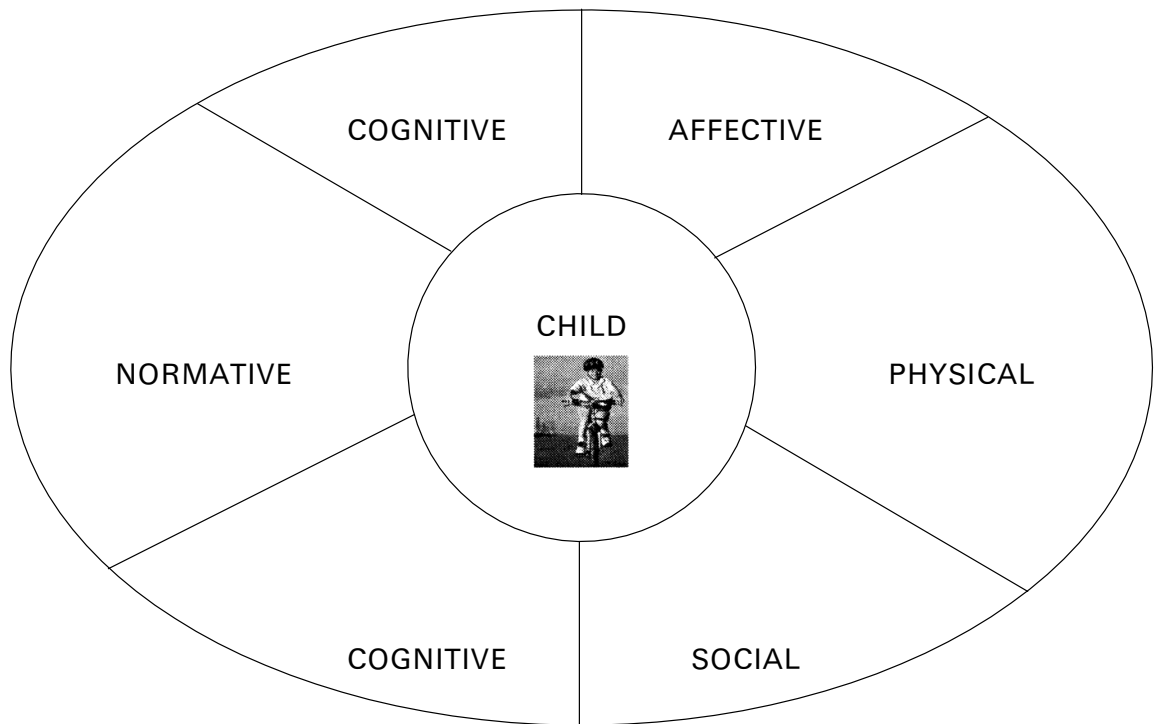
## **1.9.2 THE LEARNER AS A TOTAL HUMAN BEING**

Guidance, counselling and life skills are concerned with the learner as a total human being as illustrated by figure 1.4.

According to Du Toit and Kruger (1991), we can define the whole learner in terms of physical, cognitive, affective, conative, social and normative factors.

FIGURE 1.4

*The whole learner*



### ***1.9.2.1 PHYSICAL FACTORS***

The learner is born with a biological-physiological body which is subject to change as he or she grows older. The learner is either male or female. Children assume their position in the world through their bodies, that is, the body is the means by which the learner communicates and orientates himself or herself with the world.

### ***1.9.2.2 COGNITIVE FACTORS***

The word "cognitive" is derived from the Latin *cognoscere* which means "to know". Learners want to know, they want to become involved with people and things in their immediate surroundings. They explore their environments and get to know and understand it by attributing meaning to it; they thus orient themselves in the environment. A learner uses cognitive faculties, such as perception, representation, thinking and memory when he or she explores the environment.

### ***1.9.2.3 AFFECTIVE FACTORS***

The word "affective" refers to how a person is touched or moved by his or her emotional life. Feelings and emotions, sentiments and moods are unique to human beings. The learner's affective experiences, which may vary from the extremely pleasant to the extremely unpleasant, determine the learner's involvement, or lack thereof, with the components of his or her world.

### ***1.9.2.4 CONATIVE FACTORS***

The will is an essentially human phenomenon which precedes all conscious, psychological or motor actions. We can describe the human will as the inward driving force behind all human behaviour. This implies striving or desiring to achieve a goal or the dynamic impetus of realising the goal contained in his or her aspirations or needs.

### ***1.9.2.5 SOCIAL FACTORS***

Learners find themselves in a world of fellow beings in which continual contact and interaction takes place according to social norms, morals and customs. The learner has human social needs, such as human togetherness, communication and belonging, as well as human personal needs and aspirations, such as a need to be esteemed, accepted and recognised.

### ***1.9.2.6 NORMATIVE FACTORS***

To be able to live harmoniously with others, a human being has to live according to cultural norms. This involves making decisions (conscience), norms (values) and choices. Each community, family, individual sets guidelines, principles, rules and norms about what is considered right or wrong, proper or improper, and good or evil. The learner must learn these norms through the education process.

## **1.9.3 THE LEARNER AS A RATIONAL BEING**

The learner is a relational being who will need assistance in order to develop relationships.

### ***1.9.3.1 SELF***

Issues such as self-concept, self-esteem or self-acceptance have to be addressed.

### ***1.9.3.2 OTHERS***

Problems may result from having to relate to family, peers, educators and society in general.

### ***1.9.3.3 OBJECTS***

A learner's relationship to schoolwork may point to different areas that guidance, counselling and life skills might need to address.

### ***1.9.3.4 THE OTHER***

The learner may need support in learning to define his or her relationship with a Supreme Being.

## **1.9.4 THE LEARNER IN REALITY**

The axiom also shows that guidance, counselling and life skills are concerned with supporting the learner in reality. This covers a broad sphere, but we have summarised



some of the areas in which the learner should be supported. These include the following:

- coming to terms with the question “Who am I?” as a person in this world
- receiving guidance about acceptable societal norms
- dealing with academic matters
- providing the learner with adequate knowledge about the workplace so as to make realistic career choices
- helping the learner to become a responsible citizen

Take a look now at the summary provided by Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:64), which we have reproduced in this table.

**TABLE 1.1**  
*The parameters of guidance, counselling and life skills teaching*

<b>To guide ...</b>	<b>The total learner ...</b>	<b>in all relationships ...</b>	<b>about reality ...</b>
To confront	Physical	Towards self	Self-concept
To orient	Affective	Towards others	Norms
To secure	Cognitive	Towards objectives	Academic
To anticipate	Normative	Towards the other	Careers
To actualize	Conative		Citizenship
	Social		

Guidance, counselling and teaching life skills is a huge yet exciting task that awaits the educator.

## 1.10 INCLUSION INTO THE CURRICULUM – HOW?

One other important issue that we need to discuss is “when” and “how” guidance, counselling and life skills development should be incorporated into the school curriculum.



### ACTIVITY 1.4

How will you incorporate guidance, counselling and life skills development into your learning area or subject?

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There are two very different approaches that can be used to implement guidance, counselling and life skills development as part of the school curriculum.

If one period in each weekly teaching cycle is allocated for guidance, counselling and life skills development, you will find that you are able to complete the prescribed syllabus within the time given. This practice has been adopted in many schools where guidance is part of the curriculum. As with any practice, there are shortcomings and criticism, and these include the following:

- The subject content dealt with was irrelevant to the learner's needs.
- Since this is a nonexamination subject, the period is often used to catch up time lost during examination subjects. Learners also tend to use this period to study or to do their homework.
- In order to overcome the problem of irrelevant subject material, the socioeconomic needs of the learners have to be identified. These needs should then form the core syllabus, thus making the subject content relevant to the learners.

It is a good idea to implement guidance, counselling and life skills development according to the new interim syllabus, that is, that guidance, counselling and life skills development should form part of all teaching. This is illustrated in the following two examples:

### ***Example 1***

The educator is responsible for teaching an English lesson. The learners must read to practise their reading and comprehension. The educator could, however, integrate a life skill principle into the lesson instead of only concentrating on reading and comprehension.

For example, the educator could integrate the principle of respect for another's culture into the English lesson.

A newspaper clipping or magazine article could be given to the learners that deals with tolerance or intolerance of another's culture. In doing so, the educator conveys the importance of respecting others just as they do in comprehension passages.

### ***Example 2***

A grade two educator is teaching mathematics to her class. She senses that the learners are feeling uneasy. She finds out that a learner, known to the majority of the learners in the class, has died tragically. Rather than continuing with her mathematics lesson, the educator feels that it would be wise to introduce the class to coping with tragedy. She realises that it will be more beneficial to leave the mathematics lesson until later.

This second approach reinforces the fact that an educator should not only be concerned with teaching a subject to a class of students but should be concerned with educating students and this means taking all facets of the Child's life, physical, cognitive, emotional and social, into consideration.

Both of the approaches has its merits, so it would be wise to implement them both. Although it is a good thing to allocate a timetable period to guidance, counselling and life skills development, this should never substitute for combining guidance, counselling and life skills development when teaching other subjects as the opportunity arises.

## 1.11 CONCLUSION

Flexibility is the key to a successful transference of knowledge. Even when following a prescribed syllabus, you should always check that the information is relevant to the learners' needs.

Educators should always try to integrate guidance, counselling and life skills development into the class situation when they teach. This implies being alert to needs that may prevail (be present) while teaching and not hesitating to address these needs if at all possible. Then the teaching of the subject content becomes entwined with providing guidance, counselling and the development of life skills.

Guidance and education are indistinguishable and we should see and deal with them as one single entity (Chuenyane 1990:9).

This brings us to the end of study unit 1.



### SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answer these questions as thoroughly as you can. Remember to motivate your answer if required.

- (1) You have a temporary job at a school. The principal has learnt that you are studying at Unisa and asks you to explain some terms to the staff at the school. Using practical examples, explain the following terms to them:
  - guidance
  - counselling
  - life skills
  - differentiated and future-oriented education
  - life orientation
- (2) "An educator can incorporate giving guidance into their regular teaching." Do you agree with this statement? Motivate your answer.
- (3) Your weekly theme deals with animals. How will you incorporate giving guidance on self-acceptance into your weekly theme?
- (4) How can you combine giving guidance in the area of self-acceptance with teaching a grade 6 class about the different species in the animal kingdom?

## STUDY UNIT 2

# GUIDANCE



### AIM

The aim of this study unit is to give you an overall view of guidance as a total process.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once you have worked through this study unit, you should be able to do the following:

- Identify the characteristics of a learner's total development.
- Discuss practical activities which could be used to guide a learner in his or her total development.
- Define a learning problem and refer to specific learning problems that learners could face.
- Explain underachievement and giftedness.
- Examine possible methods which could be used in career education.

## PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE

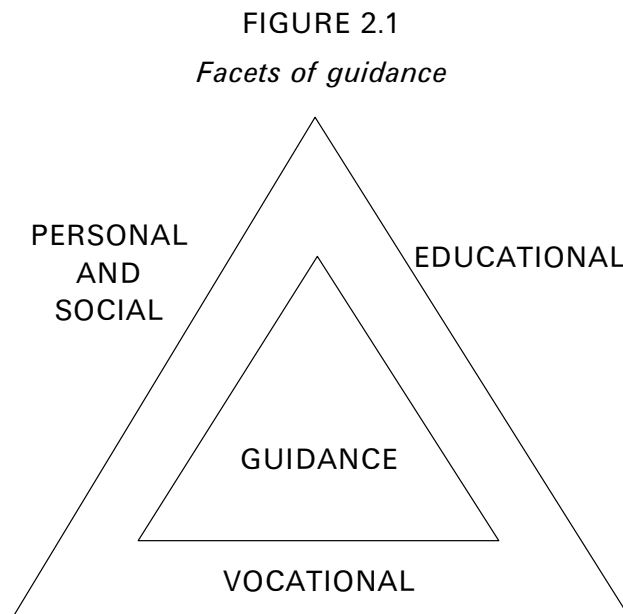
### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first part of study unit 1, we looked briefly at differentiated education. We saw that differentiated education is based on the understanding that each learner is unique in respect of his or her abilities, interests and aptitudes. Learners are in reality so different from one another that it is unlikely that all of them would benefit from the same method of instruction. The ideal, according to the principle of differentiation, is a situation of one educator per learner. Since this is impossible, however, we have to rely on a system of guidance to support the individual learner in his or her development in the education process. In this study unit, we will discuss guidance from the perspective of differentiation, that is, how guidance can be used to implement the principle of differentiation.

For the purposes of this study guide, we are going to deal with the different facets of guidance (personal and social guidance, educational guidance and career guidance) as separate entities. The three facets remain interrelated and are part of a total process. This is why we begin our discussion by giving a brief overview of guidance as a total process.

## 2.2 A TOTAL PROCESS

Figure 2.1 shows the interrelatedness of the functions of the three guidance facets.



The three sides of the triangle in figure 2.1 are equal, thus indicating that each facet is equally important. The triangle also shows that the boundaries of each guidance facet are not always definable, that is, they may overlap.

Let us now briefly look at the function of each guidance facet.

### 2.2.1 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE

Learners need personal and social support, because they will sometimes feel lonely, indecisive, inadequate, rejected, inferior, and hatred and dislike for themselves. We need to help these learners, by means of appropriate guidance, to grapple with these negative feelings and to transform them into positive feelings. This will enable learners to develop positive self-images, which is one of the principal responsibilities of educators and counsellors (Mwamwenda 1995:465).

Learners may also experience crises, such as the following, which could necessitate personal guidance:

- the death of a parent or sibling
- changing schools

- violence in the home or community
- physical abuse

Learners interact with learners, educators, parents, siblings and other members of the community, which is a form of social guidance. Although these forms of interaction may result in social and emotional satisfaction, they can also lead to behavioural problems such as the following:

- disruptive behaviour and activities in class
- physical fights and name-calling

Any kind of behavioural disorder, such as the ones mentioned above, needs social guidance. Learners with behavioural disorders often exhibit deviant behaviour patterns, such as the ones below, and these are usually referred to as antisocial acts:

- cheating
- lying
- stealing
- vandalism

All the problems we have mentioned are of a personal and social nature. Although guidance in general is usually carried out in a group situation, personal and social guidance is usually conducted on a one-to-one basis (ie between the individual learner and the educator or guidance counsellor) because of its personal nature (Petrick 1986:73).

### **2.2.2 EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE**

Educational guidance is concerned with all aspects of learning: how to learn, memorising work and writing tests. All issues relating to a learner's schoolwork fall under the facet of educational guidance. Educational guidance means that educators have to work with learners to discover how learners learn or why some of them find their schoolwork difficult. In other words, they, with the learner's permission, have to identify the issue, deal with it and find solutions for it.

Educational guidance needs to take note of the following issues:

- study methods
- academic assistance and reinforcement of academic work
- parents' unrealistic expectations
- educators' unrealistic expectations
- learners' motivation to learn

Educational problems do not occur in isolation, so when you offer educational assistance you should take all the other facets, such as the person himself or herself, peers, the home, school and community, into consideration.

### 2.2.3 VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Work is an important activity for any human being. The learner, as a unique person, should be guided to make a realistic career choice. Career education should be started at primary school level, so that the learner becomes familiar with the concept “the workplace”. The emphasis at primary school level should be on exploring work opportunities, rather than on a specific selection of work (Mwamwenda 1995).

#### ***Important points to remember***

- Guidance is an extensive service which requires different role players if it is going to be implemented in a way that will assist learners.
- Although this module is aimed at making you, the educator, more aware of your responsibility in guiding the learner, it does not claim to make you a specialist in the field.



#### **ACTIVITY 2.1**

Different people need to get involved in the guidance process if it is to become an effective service. Can you identify any of the important role players? Why are they important in providing guidance?

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Hopefully you identified the educator as the vital link in providing guidance, since the educator is in direct contact with the learners. It is important that you realise that the educator cannot provide this service on his or her own; rather, he or she needs the support of other educators, parents, peers, heads of department, guidance counsellors and school psychologists in order to provide an effective guidance service.

For the rest of this part of the study unit, we will focus on personal and social guidance and how to relate this to learners’ development.

### 2.3 PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE

Educators must support learners on a personal level, that is, every aspect of the learner should be noted. You should ask yourself questions such as the following: “How is Tabu doing in my class? Am I giving him the opportunity to grow to his full potential? Is he flourishing because of our contact, or does he feel inferior and a failure because of our contact with each other?”

We will now briefly look at four principles on which personal and social guidance rest.

### **2.3.1 INDIVIDUAL UNIQUENESS**

Learners have their own inner values. Educators should respect learners and their values, and help learners to discover their own self-worth. Learners need to develop an understanding of their own individuality.

### **2.3.2 ACCEPTANCE**

Once educators accept the uniqueness of learners, learners will learn to accept educators. A mutual relationship based on acceptance is essential for supporting students in their personal development, for when we accept learners, they will entrust themselves to us and accept the care and support that we offer.

### **2.3.3 ASSOCIATION**

Educators need to get to know learners, since it is impossible to support any learner from a distance. Once a relationship is formed between the educator and the learner, it is possible to work together towards finding solutions to the issues confronting the learner.

### **2.3.4 ENCOUNTER**

When two people have an encounter, they make an effort to communicate and make contact with each other. The educator and student must, therefore, meet each other with dignity and respect.

## **2.4 IMPLEMENTING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GUIDANCE**

We will identify the characteristic norms for each stage of the learner's development and identify possible deviations that could indicate that there is cause to help a particular learner in his or her personal and social development. We will base our discussion on the works of Prinsloo et al (1996); Mwamwenda (1995); Louw and Louw (1998); and Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2000). This part of our discussion will include physical support, cognitive support, emotional support, social support and normative (moral or religious) support.

***Remember:***

Learners in the intermediate and senior phase are

- in grades 4 to 9
- in late childhood and in the early adolescent stage



## 2.4.1 PHYSICAL SUPPORT

The young learner regards his or her body as something that enables him or her to be active: to run, climb, scramble and jump. In this way, the learner explores his or her environment, makes discoveries, attributes meanings and forms a self-image.

Appearance is of secondary importance to the young and active learner, and he or she is often not very tidy.

At the end of this period, learners enter puberty (the period when they reach sexual maturity). They then develop the traits of their gender, as far as their appearance, behaviour and self-image are concerned (Biehler & Hudson 1986:434). The development of stamina, strength, motor ability and coordination of late childhood continues during adolescence. There is greater control and coordination of the small muscles.

One of the outstanding characteristics of physical development is the rapid growth of the arms and legs in comparison with the torso. At about 10 to 11 years of age, girls' height and weight begins to increase far more rapidly than that of boys. In addition to growing taller and heavier, the learner also develops secondary sexual characteristics.

Learners also undergo other physical developments, such as early or late development, sexual maturation and acne. Any kind of physical development (or lack thereof) can affect a learner's attitude towards his or her own body and his or her self-image.

Although few learners contract serious illnesses during this time, many do have accidents as a result of their adventurous spirits and their lack of experience and judgement.

Educators should always take the following factors into consideration:

- Physical weakness can lead to poor coordination and lack of endurance.
- Learners may isolate themselves from their peers because of physical weakness. They may hide behind books, but inwardly long for more social contact.
- Physical differences, especially when learners feel inferior, may cause a learner to develop a poor self-image.
- Learners may need to be taught how to accept themselves.
- Learners at this stage of development are keenly interested in their appearance. They generally have strong feelings about puberty and adolescence, and often want to ask a lot of questions.

The educator plays an important role in observing and identifying problems. Be alert for some of the following:

- symptoms that indicate physical exhaustion
- signs that the learner may not be receiving proper care at home
- a careless attitude towards personal hygiene
- indications that the learner is overweight or undernourished
- any sign that may suggest physical abuse
- any indication of a negative body image or negative self-image

A learner's ability to cope with formal education is dependent on the development of his or her motor skills, his or her visual-perception and auditory skills. Educators should, therefore, focus on the following issues:

- gross motor ability and fine motor ability
- the ability to spot similarities and differences between objects
- visual memory
- understanding of relationships such as up, behind, in front of, under
- whether the learner is easily distracted
- whether the learner can repeat what he or she has heard
- whether the learner can clearly identify differences in sound

If there are indications of a problem in these or any other aspects, it could mean that the learner needs support in his or her physical development. Failure to give this support may lead to the learner's learning being stunted.

Let us now see if we are able to apply our knowledge of the learner's physical need of support to the classroom situation.



### **ACTIVITY 2.2**

You take a grade 6 class out to play during the physical education period. Mavis, one of the learners, refuses to take off her jersey to change into more comfortable playing clothes like the rest of the class. You speak with her and she says, "The boys tease me because of my big breasts. They call me Mina Moo."

How will you support Mavis in her physical development?

Please do not feel discouraged if you are not able to answer this question — you are only halfway through the study guide. Once you have worked through the entire study guide, you will be able to handle the situation.

## **2.4.2 COGNITIVE SUPPORT**

We now turn our attention to the thinking pattern of learners, that is, the concrete operational and formal operational phases, and the cognitive characteristics of the learner in the intermediate and senior stage.

### ***2.4.2.1 THE CONCRETE OPERATIONAL AND FORMAL OPERATIONAL PHASES***

According to Piaget, the learner in the intermediate and senior phase functions either on the concrete level or on the formal-operational level, and sometimes even on both levels. The younger learner, however, is at the stage of concrete operations. This means that the young learner is capable of logical thought about concrete objects, problems and events; he or she is able to use a logical process of reasoning based on concrete evidence.

In the early primary school years, learners are still primarily concerned with concrete, tangible objects. They are not at ease with symbolic and abstract concepts. The primary school learner's logical act of thinking is directed by cognitive activity and by meaningful and structured images, rather than by perceptions as in the case of older learners. We can describe these logical operations as representations of meaning or structured knowledge that have developed from earlier structures as a result of assimilation and accommodation. The learner who moves to the formal-operational phase is capable of thinking abstractly and logically. These learners can deal with possibilities and hypotheses, and their thought-processes are more scientific.

During the primary school years, these operations become more logical and internalised. They are also reversible which means that the learner is able to understand converse operations, such as adding versus subtraction and multiplication versus division. Internalisation of different measurable entities does not occur simultaneously, but is reached in the following order: matter, numbers, mass, volume and length (Piaget & Inhelder 1969 and Piaget 1971).

Learners are able to handle these concepts successfully by the end of the primary school years; the problems they are able to solve are concrete in the sense that their thinking acts are conceptualisations of concrete situations. When educators encourage learners to internalise and take these concepts as their own, they help them to feel intellectually secure and to reach higher levels of thinking.

Other significant characteristics of the concrete operational phase which educators should understand and use in the classroom are: seriation, classification, assimilation, accommodation and generalisation.

Other significant characteristics of the formal operational phase are abstract thought, propositional thought, hypothetical-deductive/combinatory thought and interpropositional thought.

For a discussion on these characteristics, we refer you to the module on Child Development.

#### ***2.4.2.2 COGNITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEARNER IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR PHASES***

Educators should be aware of the importance of cognitive development, so that they can ensure that optimal cognitive development takes place in adolescent learners.

Educators should be aware that individual differences exist between learners. It cannot, for example, be assumed that all 15-year-old learners are on the same cognitive level. It is important to remember that adolescent learners may be capable of formal operational thought on one day, only to lapse to the concrete operational phase the very next day. In other words, an educator cannot simply sit back and wait for all the learners in his or her class to reach the formal operational phase before continuing with his or her teaching. Education programmes should start with concrete considerations and build up (where

applicable) to more abstract reasoning; this is reflected in many mathematics and science teaching programmes, which begin with experimental or practical exercises before moving on to more analytical work (Child 1992). It is important to expose learners to as great a variety of experiences as possible, in order to promote their potential for flexible, versatile thinking. The educator must be careful not to force his or her views on adolescents.

Verbalisation is very important, because verbal interaction between learners and educators helps them to assign meaning to their life world. The educator must pay due attention to this matter. There should also be a certain amount of discovery learning so that learners can learn to solve problems on their own. The educator must provide learning material that is interesting and challenging, and that sustains learners' curiosity as they search for solutions (Mwamwenda 1995).

Educators must also provide abundant opportunities for learners to engage in social interaction, since it is through social interaction that they are able to rid themselves of egocentrism and to learn that alternative views may be right. Being brought to this realisation stimulates their cognitive development (Monteith et al 1988).

If learners are to form a realistic self-image, it is important that they acquire clarity about their cognitive abilities and their limitations. Educators must challenge their learners and provide sufficient competition in the learning environment so that learners are able to identify their abilities. Thus continual efforts must be made to offer learners a learning experience.



### **ACTIVITY 2.3**

How would your teaching approach differ if you were teaching a learner on the concrete operational level and a learner on the formal operational level?

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### ***2.4.2.3 PRACTICAL EXAMPLES***

We have included a couple of examples of tips you can use when teaching on the concrete operational level and the formal operational level.

### ***Concrete operational phase***

- Use concrete props and visual aids, especially when the subject matter is complex (eg three-dimensional models in the sciences).
- Give learners opportunities to manipulate and test objects (eg use problem-based project work).
- Presentations must be well organised. Give learners opportunities to practically apply what they have learnt. Ensure that you repeat the work adequately and provide summaries for the learners.
- Do not expect learners to generate several different hypotheses at once when solving mathematics or science problems. Allow learners to practise classifying and grouping objects and ideas in increasingly complex ways.
- Use familiar examples to explain complex ideas. Analogies or comparison are very powerful teaching tools.
- Introduce problems which require logical and analytical thinking, such as riddles, brain teasers, games and logic puzzles.

### ***Formal operational phase***

- Formal operations add to concrete operations; they do not replace them. Learners alternate between the two phases, so educators should concentrate on concrete operational teaching strategies. Use audiovisual aids (eg pictures and diagrams) to help learners to assimilate new information and to compare it with what they already know.
- Give learners sufficient time to explore hypothetical issues. Ask learners, for example, to express their views on issues such as teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. Learners should be able to explain and justify any actions they propose should be taken to solve the problems.
- Learners should be given plenty of practise in using skills such as problem solving, scientific reasoning and critical thinking.
- Educators should always use material relevant to their learners, that is, to teach broad concepts rather than isolated facts.

### ***General***

- Teaching should start with concrete considerations and then build up to more abstract reasoning.
- Educators should never force their views on learners. Expose learners to a variety of experiences in order to promote their ability to think in a flexible and versatile way.
- Learners should be exposed to a certain degree of discovery learning, so that they can learn to solve problems on their own.

#### ***2.4.2.4 COGNITIVE STYLES***

At about the age of 13, learners start to differentiate between different cognitive styles.

By cognitive styles, we mean the tendency or preference of the learner to respond in a certain way to a variety of intellectual tasks.

In table 2.1 we give a summary of the different cognitive styles.

TABLE 2.1

*Cognitive styles of learners in the senior primary phase*

<b>Cognitive styles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Impulse:	Tendency to give the first answer that comes to mind, to be eager to respond quickly.
Reflective:	Tendency to think things over, to be deliberate and cautious in responding.
Analytic:	Tendency to note details, preference for specifics.
Thematic:	Tendency to respond to the whole pattern, interest in the "big picture".
Attentiveness to detail:	Tendency to recognize and respond to many aspects of a situation.
One-track response:	Tendency to concentrate on only one aspect of a situation at a time.
Concentrated attention:	Tendency to concentrate on a particular task or idea and to resist distractions or interruptions.
Distractibility:	Tendency to be diverted from one task or idea when conflicting or different activities or ideas are present.
Conventionality:	Tendency to seek or provide one right answer or a conventional answer.
Individuality:	Tendency to respond in nonconventional, unexpected, or individual ways.

**2.4.2.5 SUMMARY OF STERNBERG'S THEORY**

According to Biehler and Snowman (1993:119–121), Sternberg's theory of cognitive style can be summarised as (Biehler & Snowman 1993:119–121) follows to further illustrate the cognitive styles of senior primary students:

Sternberg's theory of mental self-government proposes three functions (legislative, executive, judicial) and four forms (monarchic, hierarchical, oligarchic, anarchic) that can combine to produce 12 cognitive styles.

The legislative function deals with creating, formulating, imagining and planning. Learners who prefer this function like to create their own rules and do things in their own way. They might particularly enjoy activities such as designing experiments, writing stories and organising work groups.

The executive function involves implementing what the legislative function creates. Learners with an executive preference are comfortable following rules or guidelines. They enjoy listening to lessons and working out the answers to clearly stated problems.

The judicial function specialises in judging, evaluating and comparing. Learners with this preference like activities such as criticising an article, comparing two literary characters or evaluating the effects of a programme.

A preference for the monarchic style means to stick to a single way of doing a task or to focus on accomplishing one goal at a time.

Learners with a hierarchic style prefer to rank, order and pursue several goals. Such learners may assign different amounts of time to studying various subjects, but allocate more time overall to studying than to sport or watching television.

Learners with an oligarchic style also pursue multiple goals, but they consider each one to be of equal importance. Such learners may spend as much time preparing for a quiz as for an important exam and spend an equal amount of time on each subject.

Learners with an anarchic style might be called “free thinkers”. They enjoy tasks and situations that are unstructured; they dislike and tend to ignore rules and regulations. They like to try unique approaches to solving problems.

**Source:** Biehler and Snowman (1993:122)

Sternberg emphasises the following two points about cognitive style:

- Schools tend to be staffed by individuals who prefer the executive or hierarchic style. Learners with similar styles, therefore, are likely to perform better and to be more highly rewarded than learners with other styles.
- Most individuals can use more than one style, although some learners are more flexible than others in shifting from one style to another.

Educators must make allowances for these differences when working with different cognitive styles to those being used by learners. Learners, for example, who tend to use the impulsive style will shout out the first answer because they are concerned with giving a quick answer. Learners who tend to use the reflective style of thinking will take time to think about the issue before giving an answer.

An educator also tends to use a certain style of thinking and should guard against expecting all the learners in the class to adapt to his or her style of thinking.

Remember, it is our responsibility as educators to create opportunities for learners to realise their intellectual potential. It is also our responsibility to ensure that we provide the best possible education for our learners, since our learners’ intellectual potential is affected by the quality of the education and teaching we provide. Let us now see if we are able to apply our knowledge of the child’s cognitive development to the practical classroom situation.



### ACTIVITY 2.4

Jacob keeps disrupting the discussion time by blurting out answers before anyone else has a chance to answer. His behaviour disrupts the class discussions.

What is Jacob's problem and how can you help him?

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There is not only one solution to this problem. Use your creativity to find workable solutions to the problems.

We will now look at some of the emotional characteristics of the learner.

### 2.4.3 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Emotional development involves the learner's growing understanding and control of his or her emotions. As primary school learners develop, they acquire the ability to understand emotions and to restrain impulsive expression of feelings. Such control is due to increased rationality and to an ever-widening frame of reference acquired through new learning experiences.

Learners develop sympathy and empathy during middle and late childhood and this enables them to appreciate and identify with the feelings of others. They take pleasure in pleasing educators and parents, and are truly concerned about the feelings of their friends and classmates. Concrete fears decrease, but abstract fears can cause much pain and heartbreak. Situations at home and school, such as where learners are shouted at and humiliated in front of peers or siblings, can cause feelings of fear and distrust. Mwamwenda (1989:37) refers to the negative effects of such an atmosphere on African and Southern African children: it prevents effective learning and leads to truancy and dropping out of school.

As the primary school learner learns to take other people's feelings into account, he or she reacts very negatively to ridicule, criticism and failure. Educators must deliberately avoid any kind of situation where the child's feelings are abused. Sympathetic support, praise and the experience of success are the best motivators for effective and enthusiastic learning.

Stereotyping of gender roles also influences the nature and quality of emotional expression. All children have the need to express their feelings.

Boys are severely criticised when they cry or show fear of any kind. Girls are not allowed



to express aggressive feelings. Stereotyping often forces children to suppress important aspects of their emotional characters.

Feelings of fear and anxiety play an important role in all developmental stages. The fear of not being accepted, particularly by the peer group, comes to the fore during the late childhood and adolescence years. Many children in the late childhood phase report that they fear losing their parents through death or divorce. An alarming fact is the number of children who report that the person they fear most of all is their father. The cause of the fear relates to disciplinary action and very often to sexual abuse. Children's fears are in line with the times in which they live. South African children of the nineties have a far greater fear of violence and war, pollution and AIDS, hunger and unemployment than children of a decade or more ago.

The adolescent must learn how to control his or her emotions in an acceptable way. In order to assist learners to achieve greater emotional stability, educators must be knowledgeable about the manifestation of emotions, possess certain skills in handling emotions in the educational context and be mature in their own right. They must also be sensitive to learners' emotions and moods. They must help learners to come to terms with and to handle their emotions by verbalising emotions, displaying a sense of humour, providing the opportunity to cry, being supportive when crying does occur, and by providing the opportunity to get rid of pent-up emotions by means of physical activities.

You should remember the following guidelines when giving learners support:

- Create a warm and caring classroom atmosphere as there may be learners who come from backgrounds where they do not enjoy a positive relationship with their parents.
- Try to redirect a learner's energy into socially acceptable channels, such as sport, to make his or her frustrations less pressing.
- Help a learner to form an attachment to some other adult in cases where there is not a satisfactory parent-child relationship.
- Discipline the learner when he or she has done wrong. Point out the reason for the discipline. Once you have disciplined the learner, do not hold the misdemeanour against him or her.
- Watch for signs of maladjustment and call in appropriate or professional help if necessary. Early treatment will prevent the problem escalating to delinquent proportions.
- Discuss a learner's negative emotions when necessary.
- Create opportunities for the learner in your class to experience positive emotions.
- Watch out for bouts of depression.
- You need to take note of unusual and repeated episodes of crying, anxiety, unhappiness, withdrawal and unnecessary aggression, as these may all be symptoms of an underlying emotional problem.
- The emotional life of the learner will thus form an integral part of his or her development. Emotional instability will definitely influence the learner's intellectual ability.

In order to assist adolescents to achieve greater emotional stability, educators must be knowledgeable about the manifestation of emotions, possess certain skills in handling emotions in the educational context and be mature in their own right. They must also be sensitive to the adolescent's emotions and moods. They must help adolescents to come

to terms with and handle their emotions by such means as verbalising emotions, displaying a sense of humour, providing the opportunity to cry, and being supportive when crying does occur and by providing the opportunity to get rid of pent up emotions by means of physical activities.

In the light of this discussion and with your classroom situation in mind, pay particular attention to shy, withdrawn learners, anxious learners, rebellious learners and aggressive learners.

#### ***2.4.3.1 THE SHY, WITHDRAWN LEARNER***

Shy and withdrawn learners are often overlooked in the classroom. You should also be aware that these students often become objects of ridicule within their peer group.

#### ***2.4.3.2 THE ANXIOUS LEARNER***

You will identify the anxious learner by his or her sweaty hands, excessively strong grip on the pencil, stiff or tense appearance, or speech deviations such as stuttering. We also find anxiety in cases where children refuse to attend school. You should refer this type of learner to an expert so that he or she can be taught how to overcome his or her anxiety.

#### ***2.4.3.3 THE REBELLIOUS LEARNER***

It is not sufficient to go on one educator's claim that a learner is rebellious. Rather, try to get an overall picture of the learner's behaviour in different situations and what he or she is like with different people. Rebellious behaviour is often a cry for help, so do not label a learner as one "with whom you cannot do anything".

#### ***2.4.3.4 THE AGGRESSIVE LEARNER***

Educators are frequently confronted with learner aggression, although aggression is often veiled by other behaviour in the case of adolescents. Uncontrolled aggression can never be condoned, but you should never forget how difficult it is to fight for independence within prescribed boundaries — this can lead to feelings of insignificance, frustration and aggression on the part of the learner.

You should use a constructive approach when dealing with openly aggressive and antagonistic learners. Everything you do should be aimed at demonstrating that learners are accepted as members of a group and that people like them. You must show sensitivity to the real causes of aggression and to the circumstances that lead to aggression. If you adopt this approach, you will be able to act firmly, but with understanding and empathy. You cannot allow yourself to be intimidated or manipulated by a learner's aggression. Even though educators are encouraged to use the empathic approach, you cannot condone aggression or allow it to pass without reprimand.

Keep the following guidelines in mind when handling aggression:

- Aggression must never be answered with aggression.
- Act firmly without resorting to physical measures.
- Treat the learner as an individual. Patience and sympathy are two of the most important tools.

- Give the learner time to get his or her feelings under control.
- Acknowledge the learner’s need for autonomy and freedom of choice.



**ACTIVITY 2.5**

Jabu is a grade five pupil and he bullies everyone in his class.

How will you handle the situation?

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Are you working through these problem cases to try and find solutions? Remember, you need to practically apply this knowledge to the classroom situation.

We will now look at the social development and support given to the learner in the intermediate and senior phase.

**2.4.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT**

We now come to the social facet of the learner’s development. We will once again look at which characteristics are considered acceptable so that we can determine the amount of support a learner will need. However, we are a diverse population and so we should also consider the cultural social norms. This is important as the learner in one cultural context may have to learn social norms that may not be as important in another cultural context. The social interaction will, therefore, go beyond the immediate family, extending to people in the neighbourhood. The parents continue to be the repository (storehouse) of all wisdom, strength and virtue, but now other human beings are also taken into consideration.

***2.4.4.1 SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEARNER IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR PHASES***

A learner’s peers influence his or her behaviour; gradually, this influence increases, eventually taking the place of some of the parental influence. The senior primary learner will want to conform to the peer group, for example, to dress alike and to change his or her views to suit the group.

The peer group is important in that it provides companionship and gives the learner the opportunity to practise conduct which may not be permitted in the presence of adults.

The learner in the peer group is in a group of equals; it is through this group that the learner gains knowledge and information. The group will teach rules and regulations through the interaction that takes place between the group members. Learners are very aware of the difference between the sexes at this stage and the peer group helps to strengthen gender roles. The peer group also helps the learner to become less emotionally dependent on his or her home and parents. The learner develops social skills through communication and interaction with his peers; he or she also gains more knowledge about himself or herself.

It is important to note the gradual change in emphasis that occurs when learners become involved in heterosexual relations. As an educator you should be able to discuss this aspect with learners in order to teach them how to develop relationships. Information is also valuable when learners feel helpless in the initial stages of a relationship, because they do not know how to behave towards the opposite sex.

Senior primary learners have a concept of themselves and at school they will behave in a certain way to confirm that their ideas are correct. It is important at this stage that the educator has a positive view of his or her learners, because learners will try to live up to this view. If an educator sees a learner in a positive way, the learner will try to behave in a positive way. The same is also true if the educator has a negative view of the learner.

Never underestimate the truth of "self-fulfilling prophecy". Create opportunities to give positive information to learners, that is, information about who they are and what they are capable of doing.

Be on the lookout for peer groups that may have a negative effect on learners, but do not simply break up peer groups because the members are troublesome. Try using positive reinforcement to change a peer group's negative influence, such as giving them specific responsibilities.

Education takes place in a transcultural and multicultural climate, so you need to be alert to possible prejudices. Help to guard against generalisations, since generalisations lead to prejudice and will affect the social development of learners. Here are a few examples of generalisations.

- "People from that area are snobs."
- "All rugby players engage in foul play."
- "Lawyers are dishonest."
- "All computer freaks are nerds."
- "All poor people are dirty."

### ***Guidelines***

Learners should be taught to test any generalisations, that is, their views should be based on fact. Use the following guidelines to teach learners to make sound judgements:

- Create learning opportunities where learners can participate in their peer group's activities.

- Help your learners to develop skills, so that they can make wise decisions about peer group pressure.
- Sex education should be aimed at the learners' development stage. We have included some guidelines on sex education in appendix B at the end of this study guide.
- Learners develop social skills through communication and so create opportunities for them to improve and develop their communication skills.

Now, as you reflect upon the importance of supporting the learner socially, examine the following case and decide upon a course of action.



### ACTIVITY 2.6

You have noticed that Andrew sits alone during breaks. The other grade 6 boys seem to enjoy each other's company. You chat to Andrew and find that he is lonely and wants to be a part of the group.

How can you help him socially?

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## 2.4.5 NORMATIVE SUPPORT (MORAL/RELIGIOUS)

Social and cultural groups convey certain values, norms, behaviours, traditions and customs to members of the community. Each community prescribes what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad, and this they do by setting guidelines, principles, rules and norms. Learners, who are in the process of developing cognitive skills, now have a means by which to assess and embrace certain values and religious practices.

Learners must be able to distinguish between right and wrong; they need to develop an internal value system which equips them to take responsibility for their actions.

### ***2.4.5.1 NORMATIVE (MORAL/RELIGIOUS) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEARNER IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR PHASES***

Moral development is a process where learners discover and adopt the principles which enable them to differentiate between "right" and "wrong"; this, in turn, teaches them to channel their own behaviour. The ability to distinguish between right and wrong is, therefore, one of the most important developmental processes of the learner.

Research shows that educators who display moral behaviour and values are an important yardstick for most learners. Educators are, therefore, obligated to ensure that their behaviour is of such a nature that it is worthy of learner emulation. It is important, too, that educators teach learners how to practically apply their moral value systems, that is, to teach learners to make independent and responsible choices. Remember, by

denying the learner the right to make independent decisions, you may destroy his or her moral freedom. You, the educator, should add to what the parents have taught the learner — this is one of the school's main functions.

The learner also has what is often referred to as an "religious awareness", which recognises that the learner has a belief system. In other words, the fact that the learner believes in something is more important than what he or she believes. The learner's cultural group will usually determine the "what". Educators should, therefore, realise that learners need religion and that they exist in a world characterised by religious activities. Educators should also be aware that learners may experience feelings of doubt or frustration about their beliefs, particularly when they notice discrepancies between doctrine and practice. Thorough guidance education and religious counselling are important, since they allow the educator to become familiar with their learners' fears, frustrations and ideas. Educators need to openly display qualities such as friendliness, respect and approval, since learners need to feel wanted and accepted.

#### ***2.4.5.2 PIAGET'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT***

According to Piaget's theory (1932), a learner's moral development corresponds with his or her cognitive development.

In the five to 10-year-old age group, we find the learner in the phase of heteronomous morality, which is also called the phase of moral realism or coercive morality. During this phase, learners view rules and principles as being constant and unalterable; they are an extension of the higher authority of parents and even God. Rules determine what is "acceptable" behaviour and what is "unacceptable" behaviour and any transgression of the rules ought to be punished. Learners in this phase of development are not able to consider extenuating circumstances, such as exceeding the speed limit in the case of a medical emergency. They also believe in immanent (intrinsic) justice. If, for example, they fall and hurt themselves while trying to steal cookies, they believe they are being punished by wrong behaviour.

At about the age of 10 years, learners reach the next and last phase of moral development, that is, the phase of autonomous morality. Learners develop greater moral flexibility during this phase. They begin to realise that rules are often arbitrary, autocratic and are made by people who can make mistakes and who will sometimes enforce rules arbitrarily. The learner is now able to justify the action when a person exceeds the speed limit in a medical emergency. The learner no longer believes that disobedience is automatically punished and there is a growing ability to consider the intention of a transgressor. Learners see intentional disobedience in a much more serious light than unintentional disobedience.

Although Piaget's theory is often been criticised, it forms an excellent basis for evaluating and encouraging learner's moral development.

#### ***2.4.5.3 KOHLBERG'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT***

Kohlberg (1969, 1983) also believes that a learner's moral development corresponds with his or her cognitive development. As indicated in the table below, he discusses three general levels of moral thinking, with two stages at each level.

TABLE 2.2

*Kohlberg's six stages in the development of moral thinking*

<b>Level 1: Preconventional morality</b>		<b>Age</b>
Stage 1	Heteronomous morality. Obedience is based on fear of punishment. Egocentric point of view, difficulty in appreciating the viewpoints or interests of others. No real conscience or sense of morality yet, but behaviour can be controlled through reinforcement, especially fear of punishment.	5–9 years
Stage 2	Individualism, instrumental purpose and exchange. Still primarily egocentric and concerned with own interests, but is aware that others have their interests that they try to pursue. Generally concentrates on meeting own needs and letting others do the same, but when necessary will help meet others' needs in order to get own needs met. In this case, what is right is seen as fair or what amounts to an equal exchange.	Many intermediate and senior phase learners.
<b>Level 2: Conventional morality</b>		<b>Age</b>
Stage 3	Mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships and interpersonal conformity. Good boy-good girl orientation. Try to please authority figures and live up to expectations of one's role as son, daughter, sibling, friend, etc. Concern about being good by practising the "golden rule", showing concern about others and displaying virtues such as trust and loyalty.	Most intermediate and senior phase learners.
Stage 4	Social system and conscience. Moral ideals become more generalised and motivation to live up to them shifts from concern about the reactions of immediate others, to a sense of duty to respect authority and maintain the social order. Awareness of the individual's responsibility to keep the system going as a whole by following its rules and meeting its defined obligations. Belief that laws are to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties.	Many adults
<b>Level 3: Postconventional (or principled) morality</b>		<b>Age</b>
Stage 5	Social contract or utility and individual rights. A sense of duty and obligation to fulfil the social contract still prevails, but with recognition that laws are means to ends rather than ends in themselves, and that laws should be written to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number. Awareness that certain values and rights should take precedence over social arrangements and contracts. Recognition that the moral and the legal points of view are different and sometimes conflict; confusion about what is right when such conflict occurs.	A small percentage of adults.
Stage 6	Universal ethical principles. Belief in and a sense of personal commitment to universal moral principles (justice, equality of human rights, respect for the dignity of humans as individual persons). Particular laws or social agreements are usually considered valid and followed, because they rest on these principles, but the principles take precedence when there is conflict between what is legal and what is right.	A small percentage of adults.

Adapted from Good &amp; Brophy, 1990:109

Most educators find Kohlberg's theory sensible and helpful, and it has considerable empirical support. His ideas have been applied successfully in educational programmes designed to increase learner's levels of moral judgment.

As an educator, you should always look for ways to give normative support to the learner. According to Vrey (1979), educators should take the following seven principles into consideration when giving normative support to learners:

- (1) When disciplining a learner, take into account his or her level of moral development.
- (2) Do not make excessive use of threats to get learners to obey rules and regulations.
- (3) Actions speak louder than words. Learners will soon discover, by means of nonverbal behaviour, what values are important to you. They will copy your behaviour, rather than listen to what you have to say. You will thus become a role model for the learner.
- (4) Explain to learners what acceptable behaviour is, that is, why it is important to behave in a certain way.
- (5) Allow learners to question the norms and values of society. Help learners to accept and obey values out of choice rather than out of obligation.
- (6) Create opportunities for moral development in the learning environment. During language periods, for example, learners could be asked to debate moral issues, such as euthanasia.
- (7) Be aware that learners will experience feelings of doubt and frustration about their belief systems, particularly when there are discrepancies between doctrine and practice. Remember, if you have unsatisfactory human relations, you will have very little success in admonishing learners about religious and moral issues.



### ACTIVITY 2.7

A gang member's younger brother finds out that the gang is planning to rob a shop. The next day, he reads in the newspaper that the shop owner was shot dead during a robbery. He knows that his brother's gang is responsible. The money that his brother earns in this way is the family's only source of income.

#### Possible outcomes

- The young boy says nothing, because he is scared.
- The young boy discusses the situation with his mother.
- The young boy thinks his brother is going to go to jail.

#### Now answer the following questions:

- On which level and stage is the boy reasoning in each of these outcomes?

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- As an educator, what can you do to help this learner to reason on a higher level?

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We looked at some practical suggestions about the support that we can give in the learner's physical, cognitive, emotional, social and normative domains of development. Always remember that we work with the whole learner. In the next section, we will look at the personal and social problems most educators are faced with, namely behavioural problems. (Here we focus specifically on the whole learner).

## **2.5 THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR IN DEALING WITH LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS**

Although it is not the duty of the educator to classify learners' behaviour, it is important that you know enough to identify when a learner has behavioural problems and when the problem is serious enough to warrant referral to the educational psychologist serving the school. If the school does not have such a support system, it would be a good idea to first inform the principal and get his or her support before approaching the parents. When you interview the parents, remember that you may not label a learner or make any predictions about behaviour or conditions in the home; you should focus on getting the parents to agree to have their child evaluated by a psychologist.

### **2.5.1 MANIFESTATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR**

A learner's behaviour indicates whether he or she has a problem, since this is the way that children express their problems.

In order to support learners in the classroom or in order to refer them for expert treatment, you should realise that all learners are badly behaved at times.

Every learner will be naughty or badly behaved at some time or another. As an educator, you should be concerned if a learner never demonstrates a will of his or her own or if he or she shows no inclination to become independent. Typical examples of these phases are the "terrible twos" in which toddlers of that age exhibit defiance and the rebellious behaviour of adolescents. As long as a learner's behaviour is within reasonable boundaries in these phases, it can be seen as his or her normal process of acquiring a particular identity. As soon as the learner is guilty of misbehaving on a regular basis and people start to notice that his or her conduct is "different", then there is evidence of a behavioural problem which requires specialised attention.

A behavioural problem where a learner has lost contact with reality, is called psychotic behaviour. People who display psychotic behaviour have such a drastically different view of themselves and the world, or their place in the world, that it has no resemblance to reality. This distorted view of reality hinders their daily functioning and adjustment. Autism and self-inflicted injuries are examples of psychotic behaviour. If you think that a

learner is manifesting psychotic behaviour, you need to act quickly and refer the learner to an expert for help.

## **2.5.2 EVALUATING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR**

It is important to evaluate the whole learner before you decide whether a learner should be referred for specialised treatment or not. Try to answer the following questions about the learner before trying to determine if he or she is functioning adequately as a person. The questions deal with the emotional, intellectual and physical traits and then look at the learner's values, relationships and behavioural traits.

### ***Emotional traits***

- How well does the learner function emotionally? Is the learner emotionally stable?
- Is the learner tearful?
- Does the learner lack confidence?
- Does the learner show signs of extreme passivity?
- Is the learner unduly aggressive?
- Does the learner show signs of anxiety?
- Is the learner withdrawn?

### ***Intellectual traits***

- How does the learner function intellectually?
- Does the learner perform according to his or her potential?
- Has there been a decline in the learner's performance?
- Does the learner do his or her homework? Is it completed properly?
- Does the learner finish his or her class work?
- Is the learner involved in the class situation?
- Does the learner daydream on a regular basis?
- Does the learner struggle to concentrate?
- Does the learner wander aimlessly around the classroom?

### ***Physical traits***

- Is the learner physically healthy? Is he or she in good physical condition?
- Is the learner absent from school on a regular basis?
- Does the learner participate in active play or physical exercises?
- Does the learner eat regularly?
- Does the learner bring lunch to school?
- Is the learner alert in class, or is he or she drowsy or sleepy?

### ***Value traits***

- What sort of values does the learner have?
- Are you satisfied that the learner acts according to a set of moral standards and values?

## ***Relationships***

- What is your assessment of the learner's relationships?
- What do the other members of staff think of the learner?
- Does the learner communicate with adults?
- Does the learner have friends?
- What type of interaction is there between the learner and other learners in the class?
- How does the learner interact with his or her peers during breaks?
- What is the parents' opinion of their child?
- How does the learner view his or her relationship with parents, brothers and sisters?
- What do the learner's classmates think of him or her?
- Does the learner manifest any of the following behavioural deviations: stealing, vandalism, antisocial behaviour?

(Also see Appendix B: Checklist of referral indicators.)

There are many other questions you could ask, but it is important that you assess the learner's functioning as a total person in his or her environment. The learner in need of help usually has problems on more than one of the levels mentioned above. Knowledge of and compassion for the learner's condition are prerequisites for bonding with the learner; compassion is a prerequisite for entry into his or her world.

It is your duty as educator to support learners with behavioural problems. They may be receiving psychological help, but they still need your support and understanding.

### **2.5.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS**

Take note of the following general guidelines when dealing with learners with behavioural problems:

- Be sensitive to your learners' needs; this means being aware of and understanding the learners' backgrounds, conduct and performance.
- Do not set impossible tasks for your learners.
- Show your learners that you trust them and that they can trust you.
- Allow your learners to express their views in your class, but you should still maintain a balance between freedom of thought and speech, and clearly defined rules. Learners need boundaries to give them a sense of security.
- Give problem learners your individual attention.
- Allow your body language to reflect your involvement with your learners.
- Communicate with your learners. Create opportunities for informal discussion.
- Find ways to give problem learners responsibility.
- Find ways to make it clear to learners that you are available to discuss their problems. Remember, though, never to force a learner to confide in you. When conversational opportunities arise, talk about yourself or about neutral topics. Once the learner is sure that he or she can trust you, he or she will in all likelihood begin to confide in you.
- Reassure learners that you will treat all information in the strictest of confidence and keep your word. However, if a learner threatens to commit suicide, or if he or she asks you to keep his or her plans secret, you are compelled to inform the necessary people (parents, school, counsellors, etc).
- Be positive when dealing with learners with behavioural problems.

- Encourage your learners. Praising them for what they have already achieved helps them to build a healthy self-image.
- Show warmth, understanding, empathy and respect for your learners, since these qualities are the building blocks of solid relationships.

Please remember that you need to use your discretion when applying these guidelines; some guidelines are more appropriate for certain behavioural problems than others. A learner's behaviour is often a symptom of an underlying problem; if you can help the learner to solve the problem, the symptom, that is, the bad behaviour, may disappear. (See Appendix B for guidelines and notes on child abuse.)

Although you need to maintain discipline in your classroom, it is not your task to administer punishment — leave that for the principal or law-enforcement people. Learners need sympathetic and understanding educators who do not condemn or judge them and to whom they can turn for help. If you want your learners to trust you and to speak openly and freely to you, you need to refrain from moralising. (See Appendix B for guidelines and notes on punishment.)

It is important that you obtain professional help for serious behavioural problems. Although you can support the learner and his or her family, you are not trained to deal with serious behavioural problems.



## ACTIVITY 2.8

Read the scenarios below and then answer the questions that follow:

### Scenario 1

He was 15 years old, shy and withdrawn, with no real friends. The principal brought him to me and had the following to say: "See what you can do with this learner. He was caught stealing from the corner shop yesterday. He is naughty and dishonest and he belongs in jail!" The boy was standing in the doorway while the principal was speaking and he heard everything the principal said. I asked him about his stealing during the first counselling session, but he was not prepared to confide in me. Eventually, I tried to drag the information out of him, but after a while I gave up and sent him back to class. After a couple of sessions, I realised that he really is a thief. He does not want to listen to reason or to stop stealing. After discussing the case with the other teachers, I decided to hand the case over to the police. I really tried my best with this boy!

### Scenario 2

He was 15 years old, shy and withdrawn, with no real friends. The principal brought him to me and had the following to say: "See what you can do with this learner. He was caught stealing from the corner shop yesterday. He is naughty and dishonest and he belongs in jail!" The boy was standing in the doorway while the principal was speaking and he heard everything the principal said. We did not talk about the stealing during the first counselling session. I tried to get him to relax and to open up. I wanted him to know that he could trust me and that nothing we discussed would be shared with other people. After a couple of sessions, I realised that he stole small things to give to the other learners, because he badly wanted to be accepted into their group.

Because he was so shy, he could not relate to them and soon found himself being excluded again. As a result, he started stealing again, but he was caught this time. We explored his feelings and reasoning during the counselling sessions and he came to realise that he was trying to “buy” approval and friendship by giving presents to his peers. By learning social skills and by getting to know and like himself, he was able to make a new friend — and keep him — without giving him presents. What a wonderful new experience it was and yes, you guessed correctly, the stealing stopped!

Now answer the following questions:

- What is wrong with scenario 1?

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- How can you improve on scenario 2?

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What if you had the same attitude as the principal and condemned the learner to a worthless life? What if you had told him it was wrong to steal and that he would be punished? Would he have confided in you? Would you have helped him?

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In this part of the study unit, we saw that guidance, counselling and the development of life skills are an interrelated process aimed at supporting the developing learner.

We saw that guidance comprises three forms of support: personal, educational and vocational. Personal guidance is aimed at supporting the uniqueness of each learner and the underlying principles of personal guidance are respect for dignity, acceptance, association and encounter.

You will have realised that your approach of action to a particular case study or task will depend on your background and the way in which you interpret the theoretical material. Contact your fellow students and pool your resources — you might learn some new ideas and gain a different perspective. Here are two suggestions:

- Invite a group of people, such as the principal, one or two parents and a family planning professional, to visit your class to present information on the following

- topics: AIDS, eating disorders, stress, depression and relationships. How could you relay this information to other learners, their families and the general public?
- Cut out some “Agony Aunty” columns and use them to initiate discussions in your class. Ask your learners to discuss the problems mentioned and then to assess the quality of the advice given.

## **EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE**

### **2.7 INTRODUCTION**

Educational guidance is concerned with learning: how to learn, how to memorise information, how to write tests, or any other issue relating to a learner’s school work. Educational guidance means that the educator has to work with his or her learners to discover how they learn or why some of them struggle with their school work. In other words, the educator must identify the problem and find possible solutions for the problem. Educational guidance looks at all issues which relate to learners’ school work; it supports learners so that they benefit optimally from teaching and learning events.

### **2.8 MAKING A LEARNING PROGRAMME MORE ACCESSIBLE**

We are now going to look at a couple of ideas which, if implemented, should make learning material more accessible to learners. You have most likely already implemented some of these ideas in your teaching programme, since most good educators try to make their subjects as accessible as possible.

#### **2.8.1 STUDY ASSISTANCE**

It is your task to help each learner to find a study method with which he or she is comfortable and which suits your specific learning programme. You are the learning programme specialist, which means that you have attained a level of expertise in the subject. You need to transfer that knowledge to your learners. As you acquired your knowledge, you developed strategies to master the content of the subject and it is these strategies which we can refer to as study methods. Your study method may not have an official name, such as the SQR4 (Survey, Questions, Reading, (W)riting, Repetition and Review), but it helped you to acquire and master the information. Your learners can only benefit from your experience. (Study methods are extremely important in acquiring knowledge, so we will deal with them in the section on life skills.)

#### **2.8.2 TIME PLANNING**

Young people often struggle to plan their time constructively. There are so many distractions which they feel are essential to their wellbeing, that they often lose track of their responsibilities. Preaching to them about time planning, seems to fill them with resentment. If, however, you can teach them that time planning relates to increased

control over themselves, they may be more willing to plan their time sensibly. How can you explain to a young person that control comes from within? Try to show them that no one can learn, believe or grow for any one else. Personal control reflects an inner empowerment which is typical of a free person. A sign of adulthood is doing what you know has to be done, without anybody telling you what to do. This is what you want for your learners. Taking control of their own studies and their own time planning is a gift they can give themselves.



### ACTIVITY 2.9

Fareed is in grade four. He has above-average intelligence, but pays very little attention in class. He is negligent in his school work; it reflects an attitude of disorderliness and general disorganisation. He is a very untidy person. He is unable to see that every action has a consequence.

As an educator, how will you work with Fareed?

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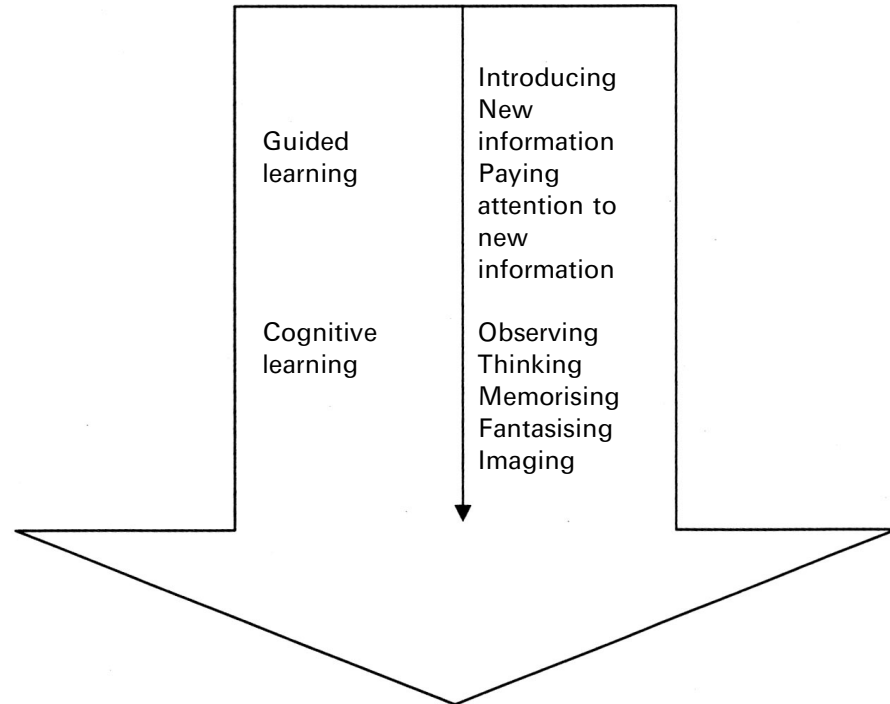
Fareed is unlikely to benefit much from the education process, since he seems to have a learning problem that requires specialised educational support.

By using educational guidance, you can ensure that each learner becomes involved in the learning process, that is, that the learner experiences the learning process positively and that it has meaning for him or her. Educational guidance covers a wide range of issues and it is dependent on numerous support structures and role players if it is to function effectively. Our focus in this section of the study unit is on supporting the learner in mainstream education who is struggling because of learning restraints. We will also look briefly at the underachiever and the gifted learner who are classified as learners with special educational needs.

## 2.9 MODES OF LEARNING

The function of educational guidance is to support the learner in the learning process. Before any educator can endeavour to offer educational guidance, he or she needs to understand the different modes of learning. We will now look briefly at the seven different modes of learning.

The process can be presented schematically in the following way:



Although we will refer to the different modes separately, they are not separate processes that can be realised in isolation. These modes of learning were identified as the result of a phenomenological reflection on learning and they are as follows:

### **2.9.1 SENSING**

Sensing can be explained as the initial moment of all learning. Learners become aware of things in their life worlds through their five senses: hearing, seeing, smelling, feeling and tasting. Learners will not become involved in learning activities unless sensing is adequately actualised.

### **2.9.2 PAYING ATTENTION**

Although it is through the senses that learners become involved in the learning process, they have to remain involved with the learning content. A learner's willingness to become involved will determine whether he or she remains involved or not. It is the willingness to be involved that sets in motion learning activities such as perceiving, thinking, imagining, fantasising and memorising.

### **2.9.3 PERCEIVING**

Perception is dependent upon the senses and is a precondition for learning. The learner will identify the learning content through the perception process. The language used is the medium of stating what has been perceived; language development is thus closely interwoven with perceiving.



## 2.9.4 THINKING

Thinking is the component that is directed at problem solving. The emphasis here is on the planning, analysing, arranging, reasoning and synthesising of learning content. We can differentiate between two different types of thought development, namely reproductive thought and productive thought.

- (a) *Reproductive thought.* Memory content that exists is recalled during this thought process. Reproductive thought plays an important role in the recall of existing memory.
- (b) *Productive thought.* This leads to the forming of new concepts. Here the thought may be inductive, if from the specific to the general, or deductive, that is from the general to the specific.

## 2.9.5 IMAGINING

The learner is able to transcend reality and enter a world of nonreality through the process of imagining.

## 2.9.6 FANTASISING

The learner is able to project himself or herself into the unknown through fantasy. We see creative moments coming into being during fantasy. The learner comes up with new ideas and designs as a result of his or her fantasies. Fantasising will also lay the foundation for the development of abstract thought.

## 2.9.7 MEMORY

This is the ability to recall information at a later stage. When the learner memorises adequately he or she is able to remember existing knowledge and to integrate new learning content. The learner is able to actualise his or her learning on the basis of these modes of learning. Other factors, which could affect the learning situation positively or negatively, influence these modes of learning on a constant basis. We will now look at those factors which hinder the learning process.

## 2.10 LEARNING RESTRAINTS

You have learnt that the learning process can be influenced by factors or learning restraints which may negatively impact on the learning process. We will now turn our attention to the symptoms that are indicative of a learning restraint (or a learning disability).

According to Lessing (1996:4–5), the following symptoms feature in most definitions of a learning disability:

- a discrepancy between a learner's actual and expected behaviour (We identify learning-disabled children primarily by underachievement, manifested in defective listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, play and calculation. These defects draw the educator's attention to the learning-disabled learner and form the basis of the helping programme.)
- absence of sensory defects

- absence of environmental disadvantage, mental handicaps or emotional problems
- average or above-average intelligence
- emphasis on psychological dysfunction, indicating an inability to comprehend and use spoken and written language

Our list of symptoms is not comprehensive, but it does serve to create an awareness of learning disabilities. Learners with learning disabilities must be referred for some sort of educational support. You should also be aware of the following eight problem areas:

### **2.10.1 HYPERACTIVITY**

There are two forms of hyperactivity: sensory-hyperactivity and motor hyperactivity. The learner with sensory-hyperactivity will respond to all stimuli regardless of their importance. The learner with motor hyperactivity is unable to leave any object untouched.

### **2.10.2 ATTENTION DEFICITS**

The learner with this category of learning problem will experience problems in the area of memory, attention and concentration. You may notice that such learners are unable to concentrate for a period of time normal for their age group, they do not finish their work and they find it difficult to work on their own. These learners are easily distracted and have a short attention span.

### **2.10.3 READING PROBLEMS**

Learners with reading problems struggle to associate letters with sounds and often do not understand what they are reading. Such learners do not enjoy reading.

### **2.10.4 COUNTING PROBLEMS**

This learner's work is characterised by general untidiness. The learner is likely to display motor and perceptual deficiencies.

### **2.10.5 MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS**

A learner with a mathematical learning problem tends to invert numbers and struggles with story sums and problem solutions.

### **2.10.6 LANGUAGE DEFICIENCIES**

These learners generally struggle to express themselves in speech or in writing. They tend to have a limited vocabulary and poor comprehension of the spoken language.

### **2.10.7 IMPULSIVENESS**

This learner has weak impulse control, has a low frustration tolerance and is unable to check unacceptable behaviour. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include antisocial behaviour such as stealing or destructiveness.

## 2.10.8 EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY

You will be able to identify this learner by his or her rapid mood swings, by depression, excessive fits of anger and by temper tantrums.



### ACTIVITY 2.10

Observe the learners in your class and see if there are learners who display characteristics that may be indicative of a learning problem.

How will you support these learners?

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## 2.11 SUPPORTING THE LEARNER WITH A LEARNING PROBLEM

In the previous section, we looked at learning problems which learners may struggle with. We will now briefly discuss how educational guidance can support the learner with a learning problem.

Our discussion on supporting the learner with a learning problem will be confined to less complex learning problems which can be dealt with using corrective and remedial teaching.

### 2.11.1 CORRECTIVE TEACHING

Corrective teaching means that the educator points out the mistake to the learner as soon as possible. A grade one educator, for example, is teaching his or her class. He or she notices that a learner incorrectly identifies certain letters of the alphabet. The first step in the corrective process is that the educator should alert the learner that he or she is identifying the letter incorrectly.

The educator should then explain the corrective action, such as the difference between the letters "m" and "n". The learner should be taught how to correctly identify and use the letter.

The educator should then create opportunities for the learner to practise using the letters, so as to consolidate correct usage. In other words, the learner should be confronted with situations where he or she must identify the correct letter until the educator is certain that the confusion has been resolved.

It is quite possible that a learner may not progress as he or she should after corrective teaching has taken place. If this happens, it may be necessary to reteach the particular skill that has caused the problem. Owing to the individual nature of the problem, you may have to reteach the skill outside normal classroom hours.

Reteaching does not mean repeating — using the same teaching style — that which has already been covered in class. The reasons for the failure of the first instruction will still be present, so a mere repetition will also fail (CESA: career guidance publication part 1 1994:31).

## **2.11.2 REMEDIAL EDUCATION**

The approach followed will depend on the school and availability of qualified personnel. This section is not an attempt to equip you as a remedial educator, but rather to help you to understand the function and application of remedial education. Our discussion about remedial education assumes that the key elements, needed for remedial education to take place, are indeed present.

Although it may be necessary to separate a learner from his or her class from time to time, you should not see remedial education as a separate classroom activity. The emphasis in remedial education is to rectify the learning problem so that the learner is able to continue learning in the ordinary class. You must ensure, therefore, that any learner who is taken out of the class for remedial purposes does not fall behind didactically.

We will now give you a brief, simplified summary of remedial education.

### ***2.11.2.1 STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION***

Early learner development educators will usually identify learners with possible learning problems, because of certain behavioural patterns that he or she observes. Examples of these behavioural patterns include the following:

- problems with writing, drawing and cutting
- an inability to identify certain letters of the alphabet
- an inability to understand spatial relationships, such as “in front of a chair”, “behind the cupboard” or “above the table”
- an inability to understand concepts of time such as “yesterday”, “tomorrow” or “this afternoon”

### ***2.11.2.2 STEP 2: AN EDUCATIONAL AID PROGRAMME***

The focus here is on the following development facets: auditory and visual perception, motor development, language and mathematics. The symptoms identified in step one will determine which development facet will be stressed.

- *Auditory perception.* The educator helps the learner to develop auditory skills such as auditory memory, auditory sequencing and avoiding auditory distraction.
- *Visual perception.* The educator helps the learner with visual perception and teaches him or her visual skills, such as visual discrimination, visual memory and visual distinction. The educational programme develops auditory and visual skills which are essential skills needed for reading and writing.
- *Motor development.* The educational aid programme will help learners with motor development difficulties, by providing exercises to develop skills related to left-right

movement, hand-eye coordination, balance and position in space. The programme emphasises writing skills.

- *Language.* It may be that the nature of the problem necessitates help in the area of language development. You can support the learner in the areas of listening skills, language enrichment and communication.
- *Mathematics.* The educator helps the learner to understand the number concept. The learner will be given very little written work at this time, because of his or her problem with number inversion.

Do not continue with formal classroom work during this therapeutic part of the educational aid programme. If you are the educator involved in providing this support, you may have to draw on other educational sources.

### ***2.11.2.3 STEP 3: CONSOLIDATION***

Once you have helped the learner to overcome his or her learning disability, work on developing reading and writing skills until the learner feels confident enough to begin written work in other subjects. You should then support the learner by helping him or her to extend these basic scholastic skills.

### ***2.11.2.4 STEP 4: MONITORING***

You must ensure that you place a learner in a class where he or she will be able to cope. If a learner is placed in the wrong class, you will negate all the remedial work that has been done. As class educator, you should monitor the learner on a regular basis. If you detect a recurring problem, you need to address it as quickly as possible.

You may find that you need to refer a learner to a psychologist, because of the nature and intensity of his or her problem. If you feel that you cannot deal with the learning problem, you must refer him or her to an expert.



#### **ACTIVITY 2.11**

- What informal activities would you use to develop auditory and visual perception, motor development, and language and mathematical skills? (You may have to consult an educational aid centre.)
- You identify a learning problem in one of your learners. You have applied the necessary corrective teaching, but the learning problem has not been resolved. What channels could you follow if you want to help this learner? Refer to what is available in your school context, that is, names of people, places and telephone numbers.

In the next section, we briefly discuss the underachiever.

## **2.12 SUPPORTING THE UNDERACHIEVER**

Who is the underachiever? An underachiever is a learner who shows a big discrepancy between his or her school performance and his or her true ability. This is a general definition of underachievement, but intensive research has found that the underachiever could fall into one or more of the following categories (CESA: career guidance publication part 2 1994:19):

- underachievers with average abilities
- slow learners
- gifted underachievers
- reluctant (lazy) learners
- learners with limited language development
- learners with limited backgrounds

Our concern in this section is for the learner who by all indications ought to be performing better than he or she is. We will briefly discuss the possible causes that may lead to underachievement before looking at possible ways of supporting the learner.

### **2.12.1 WHAT LEADS TO UNDERACHIEVEMENT?**

We will discuss the causes in terms of the family, the school and the learner.

#### ***2.12.1.1 THE FAMILY***

The learner's family background has a major impact on his or her academic success. A learner with a stable family background, with parents who are genuinely interested and supportive of him or her, who accept the learner as he or she is, and who do not place unrealistic pressure on the child, will probably do better than the learner who comes from an unstable family.

The following list of family-related factors (CESA: career guidance publication part 2 1994:23) may cause the learner to underachieve:

- unrealistic expectations on the part of the parents (expectations either too high or not high enough)
- excessive pressure from the parents
- too much or too little parental involvement
- excessive or excessively strict discipline
- an unhappy marital relationship between the parents
- constant moving of housing
- rejection of the child
- inconsistent parental behaviour
- inadequate communication between parents and child
- contradictions in the parents' educative attitude
- inadequate recognition of the child's sense of dignity
- an incomplete family resulting from the death of one or both of the parents
- the absence of the mother for reasons of work (labour force)
- family disintegration as a result of different factors and circumstances
- over-organisation of the child's life
- parents with limited education
- overprotection of the child

### **2.12.1.2 THE SCHOOL**

The school is often overlooked when examining causal factors of underachievement. It is often not the physical school that causes the problem, but rather the climate that prevails at a particular school. The climate that prevails will either enhance the educational process or hinder it.

The school climate is a type of group mentality and can be described as an atmosphere that exists because of a number of informal characteristics working together. The leadership, activities, method of instruction, curriculum and interrelations between staff and learners will all interact and affect the school climate. An inviting school climate will encourage learning, whereas an uninviting climate may actually degrade, discourage and demoralise the learners.

You should be on the lookout for the following factors which could contribute to an uninviting school climate (CESA: career guidance publication part 2 1994:24):

- biased, excessive emphasis on achievement
- premature introduction to the curriculum
- curriculum worked through too quickly
- insufficient variety within the curriculum
- inadequate quality of teaching provided for some learners
- presentation of subject matter along rigid, authoritarian lines
- inadequate counselling on the demands made in the academic and intellectual sphere
- wrong school placement or an inadequate educator-learner relationship
- inadequate support by the educator within the classroom
- inadequate identification with the sex of the educator
- school practices which lead to inadequate intellectualising
- purposeful heterogeneous division of classes which leads to underachievement
- inadequate planning by the school in respect of learner participation in extracurricular activities

### **2.12.1.3 THE LEARNER**

A learner may underachieve because of factors related to himself or herself. You should investigate the following when considering the learner as the cause.

- *Physical.* Is there any indication of a physical handicap that may affect the learner and lead to him or her underachieving (eg weak eyes or hearing problems)?
- *Intellectual.* Is there any indication of a learning disability, such as we discussed in the earlier sections of this study guide? Is the learner's level of language development inadequate?
- *Emotional/Psychological.* Is the learner motivated? Does the learner function in terms of an internal locus of control (self-discipline)? How does the learner see himself or herself (self-concept)? Does the learner feel that he or she is able to perform at a satisfactory level?
- *Social.* Does the learner possess adequate social skills and enjoy socialisation with others?

When looking at these three areas, you need to remember that it is not always easy to identify the cause of underachievement. The three areas may interact and the problem, therefore, may become too complicated for you to deal with. Before you attempt to help

the underachiever, you must try to understand the learner's life world, because much of your support will be on an individual basis.

## **2.12.2 IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

### ***2.12.2.1 EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE UNDERACHIEVER***

When you offer educational support to the underachiever, you should take the individual learner's situation into account. It is, therefore, impossible to prescribe a programme that will suit every learner. Keep the following guidelines in mind when you try to help the underachiever in your class:

- Carefully assess the learner's situation. Look at all the factors that may have contributed toward the learner being an underachiever.
- You will need the learner's cooperation, so try to establish a warm, caring relationship with him or her. Your interest in the learner must be genuine, or the learner will not be prepared to work with you.
- Try to help the learner to understand that he or she is not performing in accordance with his or her abilities. Encourage the learner to believe that he or she can improve his or her performance through hard work.

You should emphasise how beneficial an improved performance will be.

- Try to involve the parents if at all possible. Parents and educators should work together as equal partners in supporting the learner.
- Once you have analysed the situation and know what the causes are, you will have to help the learner to set realistic objectives and decide upon a plan of action. (You may need to call upon a trained counsellor or specialist to assist you in dealing with the problem.)

### ***2.12.2.2 EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED LEARNER***

Kokot (1992:135) proposes that the following components be incorporated in a programme aimed at meeting the needs of underachieving gifted learners; these components are also applicable to those learners of average ability who underachieve.

- Guidance towards a more positive, realistic self-concept. The learner needs to recognise and assess his or her strengths, and develop self-respect and confidence in his or her abilities.
- Therapy to alleviate anxiety and tension. Therapy may also help to improve family and peer group relationships, that is, learning to relate effectively in interpersonal situations.
- Guidance on how to channel aggression constructively.
- Help in making a better personal adjustment. The learner needs to be taught self-management skills, such as learning to set goals, evaluating behaviour and employing methods of self-modification and self-control. The learner must learn what it means to really belong to a peer group and school community.
- Help in acquiring correct study methods; he or she may need guidance on how to develop a more positive attitude to study and work.



- Guidance towards setting realistic goals in terms of his or her academic achievements, choice of subjects and eventual career.
- Remedial work to catch up on the scholastic backlog or to correct the learning deficiency once the psychological blocks to learning have been removed.
- Guaranteeing that learners experience success more often than failure in academic tasks.

Underachievement is a difficult problem to resolve, but if we identify it early enough, there is a good chance of remedying the situation. Early identification is, therefore, essential and you should always be on the lookout for learners who are less willing to become involved in the educational process.

## 2.13 SUPPORTING THE GIFTED LEARNER

Some learners are able to perform at high levels due to their abilities. These learners are, however, easily overlooked since educators often do not have enough time to spend with them; in most cases, the educator concentrates on the slow learner or the learner who struggles with academic material. The gifted learner, therefore, often goes through school without realising his or her full potential. We can identify a gifted learner as an underachiever when this happens. It is not always the educator's fault when the gifted learner is overlooked.

Some gifted learners consciously or unconsciously conceal their giftedness; they simply do not want to draw attention to themselves by being seen as "different". In this case you should help the learner to understand and accept himself or herself while supporting his or her unique educational needs.

### 2.13.1 CATEGORIES OF GIFTEDNESS

Giftedness is a multifaceted concept which refers to more than one type of gift.

Kokot (1992:49–59) specifies the following guidelines which should be used to identify the gifted learner in the classroom:

- Learners manifesting superior general intellectual potential are often regarded as gifted.
- We usually identify intellectually gifted learners by means of a specific IQ score and a demonstrated ability in most school subjects. These learners are characterised by their extensive general knowledge and vocabularies, and their excellent memories and abstract thinking skills.
- Learners manifesting exceptional aptitude and interest in a specific academic field. Learners in this category show exceptional ability, achievement or aptitude in a certain subject or field. A learner, for example, might excel in mathematics or languages, but show only average ability in other fields.
- Learners manifesting exceptional creative ability or potential. Creative learners are characterised by their originality and ability to produce new creations or products. They show a suppleness of thought, they are independent and nonconforming, they

believe in their ideas and show an unusual way of attributing meaning and solving problems.

- Learners manifesting exceptional leadership potential are regarded as gifted. This refers to the ability to influence other people. In the case of learners, this is usually in the peer group context. Gifted leaders often manifest their special talents at an early age. They have a natural air of authority and often display social skills such as tact and insight which they use in their interaction with others. Leadership ability is often used as a synonym for social giftedness.
- Learners manifesting exceptional command of and aptitude for languages. This could be a talent for prose, poetic or dramatic composition or a talent for rhetoric.
- Students manifesting exceptional talent for the performing arts, including singing, music, ballet and drama. This category of giftedness may overlap with creativity in that these gifted learners have a need for spontaneous expression of emotions and they satisfy their inner selves by performing (Verreynne 1991). The same applies to the following categories: learners manifesting exceptional artistic talent in fields such as graphic art, ceramic art, painting, sculpture, design (either mechanical or other) and models.
- Learners manifesting exceptional psychomotor abilities, including speed, strength, coordination, suppleness, ball control and so on. Learners who fall into this category are often those who excel on the sports fields, who set national records and who eventually participate internationally. According to Painter (Verreynne 1991), such learners will have above-average, but not necessarily exceptionally high, intelligence.

Kokot (1992) stresses that you should not only define giftedness in terms of intelligence (ie being a genius). The old idea that an IQ of over 140 represents giftedness is no longer valid. Giftedness, according to Kokot (1992), can be identified at three different levels: talent, giftedness and genius. Talent usually expresses itself in a specific field and is thus synonymous with giftedness in a specific academic, artistic or sporting field. Giftedness is a more fundamental aspect of personality; it allows the person to display his or her talent, understanding or performance on an international level that is not found in all of humanity (Kokot 1992:51).

## **2.13.2 IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

At this stage, we will once again rely on the work of Kokot (1992) in trying to implement educational support for the gifted child.

### ***2.13.2.1 AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY FOR GIFTEDNESS***

Kokot (1992:221–222) advocates an approach based on educating for giftedness and for the enhancement of creativity.

- *Individuality and not conformity.* The educator should nurture the abilities of individual learners by encouraging them to be what they can be, rather than what they must be. Comparisons stifle uniqueness; conformity is opposed to individualistic, creative development.
- *From the known to the unknown.* All learning should begin with the knowledge the learner brings to the teaching situation. Learners are more secure when leaving the known for the unknown; a secure learner is more likely to participate actively in the learning process.

- *Joy in the process.* Educators present the problems, but learners find the solutions by means of creative interaction with the problem. Active involvement enhances self-knowledge and the use of imagination. The joy of accomplishment is short-lived, but the satisfaction drawn from the process may become an unending source of pleasure.
- *Asking questions.* Questions awake curiosity and a latent thirst for knowledge. Facts only will not stimulate or fire the learner's imagination; creative questioning, when used as a tool to acquire knowledge, will help the learner to accept the knowledge for himself or herself. When learners are taught to ask questions, they are able to "find" the links between knowledge and experience. In other words, we should teach them where to find information and how to question what they hear and see.
- *Interdisciplinary thinking.* You should give a balanced curriculum top priority. Try to avoid early specialisation, because creative thinking requires wide connections and relationships. This means that the learner can be encouraged to apply associations from different study disciplines to a given problem, or to bring a new problem into relationship with past experience (existing knowledge).
- *Future.* Future-oriented learning, rather than learning based on the past, encourages learners to take their part in the continuity of human thought and accomplishment. The future cannot be taught, but learners can be challenged to play, plan, make decisions and imagine the future based on present knowledge. Futuristic education does not require a curriculum or a revised education system. Questions that help to narrow the gap between the past, the present and the future include: "How do we continue?", "Where will this lead us?" and "What do we still need to know?"
- *Learning through play.* Older learners should be allowed to learn through play; learning through play is recognised and encouraged at preschool level. By encouraging a playful attitude towards learning, you lay the foundation for an adult who experiments without taking himself or herself too seriously, who is able to learn from mistakes and who is prepared to try again. The belief that learning is fun serves as a foundation for a creative approach to life. Playfulness means that learning can take place through fantasy, intuition, spontaneity, humour, emotions and, of course, knowledge.
- *Social thinking.* Thinking in terms of society rather than the individual should be encouraged to strengthen the feeling of belonging. By raising social problems during mathematics, by provoking social and political thinking, we strengthen social consciousness among learners. This is particularly relevant to gifted learners who are often very individualistic. Social thinking is in the interest of the individual and society.

We will now look at steps that educators can adopt (Kokot 1992:225) which will not only benefit the gifted learner, but all learners in the class.

### ***2.13.2.2 THE EDUCATOR'S BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM***

The educator's behaviour in the classroom may encourage or discourage a learning atmosphere in the classroom. It is, therefore, essential that educators take note of the following steps.

- Create a peaceful atmosphere in class. Respect the ideas and opinions of learners and encourage them to ask questions. Learners should be free and uninhibited in their responses.
- Refrain from being a "judge" in class. An open, noncondemnatory attitude, on your

- part, will encourage divergent thinking and creativity in the learners. Learners should assess their own and other people's work according to specific criteria (objectively).
- Make a point of reminding learners to be creative and original, and to think of new ways to solve problems.
  - Reward original thoughts or behaviour, since this could lead to further creative actions. Be careful with rewards. Gifted learners will value rewards that are exceptional or unique.
  - Provide stimuli for as many senses as possible. A variety of stimuli will encourage learners to approach problems from different perspectives.
  - Participate in activities yourself. The educator should be an active problem solver, not someone who always stands on the sidelines.
  - Encourage learners to adopt a positive attitude about their abilities; they should avoid negative self-evaluation.
  - Ask the learners to evaluate the strategies you use in the classroom. Something which works in one case will not necessarily work in another.
  - Encourage curiosity and exploration.
  - Involve gifted learners in special projects which will benefit them, their class or school.
  - Do not feel threatened if you cannot answer gifted learners' questions. Help them to find the right answers.
  - Encourage the learners to make use of different resources — people, books, multimedia.

Finally, we look at teaching strategies (Kokot 1992:206) that you may have to adopt.

### ***2.13.2.3 TEACHING STRATEGIES***

You may have to combine two or more of these strategies in practice when teaching a gifted learner.

- *Acceleration.* You will need to create opportunities for a gifted learner to acquire basic knowledge very quickly. By doing so, you will allow the learner to complete the prescribed syllabus more quickly. You can then lead the learner to higher levels of deduction and problem solving. The gifted learner in the early development phase may, for example, have levels of abstract thinking similar to that of a learner at senior primary level. You will then need to challenge this learner with higher levels of deduction and problem solving.
- *Enrichment.* You must supplement the learner's work, that is, allowing the learner to study topics not covered in the normal curriculum. Please note that enrichment does not mean giving the learner more of the same work. Match the enrichment programme to the particular educational need and provide vertical and horizontal enrichment, that is, the learner should be exposed to more in-depth learning.
- *Grouping.* Group the learners according to their abilities, so that the gifted learner can be singled out for special education. (This method has been criticised as creating "elitist" learners which may result in "snobbishness". You may find that your school does not approve of this approach.)
- *Individualisation.* This concept is based on the uniqueness of each individual in respect of abilities, intelligence, aptitudes and interest. This means that learners are allowed to do the following:
  - assume some responsibility for their own learning

- become more independent
- learn at their own pace
- learn using a method suitable to them
- learn on a level appropriate to their abilities
- be evaluated in terms of their own achievements
- experience a sense of perceived control and achievement which will enhance their self-esteem



### ACTIVITY 2.12

Answer the following questions and motivate your answers.

- You are sure that Simon is not performing to his full potential. What plan of action will you adopt to help Simon? (Give the steps that you will follow.)
- Do you feel that grouping gifted learners and providing them with special education is the correct approach to follow in your educational setting? Please relate this question to your educational setting and not to an ideal, textbook setting.

## 2.14 CONCLUSION

Let us reflect on the educational guidance issues we have discussed. We looked at modes of learning, at learning restraints and possible indicators of learning problems. We then looked at how corrective teaching can help to alleviate certain learning problems; we noted, however, that there are times when learners need specialised remedial educational aid.

We briefly discussed two categories of learners, the underachiever and the gifted child. We highlighted some of the causes of underachievement and discussed how the home, school and personal factors could interact to bring about underachievement. Hopefully, you will be able to implement some of our suggestions to help the underachiever.

Finally, we looked at possible ways to support the gifted learner through appropriate behaviour in the classroom and at possible teaching strategies you could use in practice.

## CAREER EDUCATION

### 2.15 INTRODUCTION

Career education stresses that education is how a learner can prepare for the workplace; it should begin at preprimary level and continue with greater differentiation as the learner goes into primary and secondary school. (The focus in the early childhood development stages should be on career awareness, rather than on specific career choices.)

Young children often wonder what they will become one day, but as they grow older they start to think about it in a different way.

When Bongani was six, he told everybody that he was going to be a doctor one day. Now, in grade eight he simply laughs and shakes his head if anybody mention this. He realises that his maths marks are too low and that he will never be accepted to study medicine. He has also realised that he does not like the smell of a hospital. At this stage, he is planning to take up journalism as a career. With his cheerful, spontaneous nature he gets on exceptionally well with people. He know, however, that he still needs a lot of help and will still need to make a number of decisions.

If we apply a career programme faithfully throughout the different stages of formal education, the learner is more likely to make his or her career decisions without too much difficulty. Although choosing a career is difficult, the learner has to make this decision at some time. Learners come into contact with a variety of people in a variety of jobs, including educators, clerical and administrative workers, chiefs, peasants, farmers, fishermen, carpenters, nurses, doctors, traditional leaders, soldiers, policemen and women, businessmen and women, hawkers, domestic workers and mechanics. In the process they develop values, attitudes and preferences which influence their choice of career (Mwamwenda 1995:473).

Throughout one's life one has to make different choices, of which choosing a career is one of the most important and also one of the most crucial choices. Deciding on a career can influence one's attitude, motivation, career satisfaction and even one's health. It is, therefore, essential that learners are given the best possible advice and help with regard to a suitable career.

With the new political dispensation and the implementation of democracy in our country, it is important that learners choose careers that will bring them satisfaction and will serve their communities and country as a whole.

Choosing a career is often a stressful experience and a vast number of learners battle to find answers to the following questions:

- What careers are available?
- How do I choose a career?
- How will I know that I have made the correct choice?

## **2.16 CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

Educators are in an ideal position to support learners in answering these difficult questions. One practical way of helping them is to provide career education in the form of a career education programme from an early age. The educator should instil a sense of "calling" in their learners. This does not mean that learners should be forced to choose a career at an early stage; rather, we need to make learners aware that they have to make career development choices at appropriate times in their educational careers (Mwamwenda 1995:473).

This task is a difficult one for the educator and it is further complicated by the fact that the workplace is changing all the time.

Each new invention means that a new occupation is created or an old one is no longer necessary. Eighty percent of careers that will dominate in the year 2020 probably do not

even exist today. People's needs are also changing and the nature of occupations must change in order to supply those needs.

Let us take a look at the following points on career education before we look at how you, the educator, can go about providing career guidance.

- Career education is a purposeful endeavour and not merely an attitude or point of view.
- It is a programme that begins in grade one and continues into adulthood.
- It is a programme for all learners.
- Career education stresses that education prepares the learner for the workplace.
- Vocational guidance is one aspect of career education, but the terms are not synonymous.
- The subject, Career Education, should form part of the whole teaching programme and should not be seen as an addition to a learner's education. This means that career education is a far broader concept than vocational training. It is an educational programme aimed at giving the developing learner appropriate guidance and counselling so that he or she may make the necessary choices and so eventually arrive at self-actualisation and job satisfaction.
- You may not think that your learning programme or subject has much to do with careers. If so, you are going to have to undergo a major mind shift. Curriculum 2005 (1997:3) states: "Soon all South Africans will be active, creative, critical thinkers living productive and fulfilling lives." If our interpretation is correct, then it means that the new curriculum prepares learners for an active life in a career or in employment. The only way this ideal will be achieved is if you prepare them for such a life while you are transferring knowledge about your learning programme or subject.

We are now going to look at a number of issues which will help you to provide career guidance. We will discuss under the following headings: the theoretical basis for providing career education, what facets should be included in a career education programme and the practical implications of career education.

## **2.16.1 THEORETICAL BASIS FOR PROVIDING CAREER EDUCATION**

By now you will have realised that practice is usually embedded in theory and we can say the same for a career education programme. We will now examine a few basic categories which form the foundation of a career education programme.

We refer to the learner as a person in the world who should be evaluated according to the following anthropological categories: being in the world of significance, fellowship, temporality and being someone in your own right.

The anthropological categories, temporality and being someone in your own right, are particularly significant to career education. The discussion that follows is based on the work of Petrick (1986) and it should help you to see that providing career education is in keeping with the learner's uniqueness of being-in-the-world.

### ***2.16.1.1 TEMPORALITY***

A person is a creature of time who is constantly planning for the future and trying to bring those plans to fruition.

### ***(a) Hope for the future***

The individual is constantly reaching into the future and to the unknown and endless possibilities that it offers. As the educator you should help the learner — because of this hope for the future — to form a realistic picture of the future. You should help the learner to see the demands that will be made on him or her, that the decisions affecting his or her future are responsible and justifiable, that he or she must be prepared to meet the future with confidence and work towards the future in the present.

Every learner wants to be something even if he or she does not know what this something is. The learner's education must help him or her by allowing time to arrive at self-knowledge and self-acceptance (Petrick 1986:43).

### ***(b) Task of designing possibilities***

People are able to design new possibilities from their present ones because of the value they set on the present; by doing so, they unfold their personalities. To be a person means accepting the task of meaningful design, for it is only then that inherited possibilities become chosen possibilities and that there can be any talk of designing new possibilities.

When relating this principle to the learner, we see that the learner is someone with potential, received initially as a gift, but with the likelihood of ever new possibilities developing in the future. The task of the educator is to assist the learner to evaluate his or her own possibilities and to realise them. It means helping the learner to assume responsibility for actualising these possibilities and then using them to become a person. The educator will thus be helping the learner to design a career for himself or herself and to understand the possibilities of this career as his or her own potential (ideal).

### ***(c) Fulfilment of destiny***

The human being feels unfulfilled and restless; he or she has an inner urge to strive towards a certain level of perfection. A person's nature is fulfilled if his or her destiny is fulfilled, and the person continually sees himself or herself destined to attain a higher level.

If we consider the learner in the light of this principle, we see that the learner is one who is striving from an "is" to a "can be" situation as fulfilment of his or her destiny. We should help the learner to see his or her destination clearly and strive to reach it. In that destination, we must include the role of vocation which reinforces the need for having a career education programme to accompany learners in their attempts to reach their destinies.

## ***2.16.1.2 TO BE SOMEONE IN YOUR OWN RIGHT***

A person is part of a community but also has the desire to be someone in his or her own right. This is a general human phenomenon and so the individual is committed to cultivating his or her own unique way of being in the world.

We will now briefly examine each of these and see how they relate to career education.



### ***(a) Respect for one's dignity***

Every individual's situation is unique. This unique situation is confirmed when the individual and others show respect for his or her dignity and so indicate the meaningfulness of being human. If we look at the learner in the light of this principle, we see that the learner is a unique person and has a right to cultivate his or her own unique way of being in the world, that is, his or her personal individuality.

The educator's task is to help the learner to understand and recognise his or her individuality and to respect his or her otherness. This requires helping the learner to gain self-knowledge, which will eventually determine a career choice that is in keeping with his or her uniqueness.

### ***(b) Task of self-understanding***

The task of self-understanding is the individual's insight into what he or she is, what he or she can be, which direct his or her being and development. This principle entails the learner's need to understand himself or herself and develop a self-concept of who he or she is and what he or she are capable of becoming. The educator will have to help the learner to gain this self-understanding, as it is the developing self-concept and self-understanding that will help the learner to choose a career responsibly.

### ***(c) Freedom for responsibility***

Freedom is bound up with being a person. The person should, therefore, be aware of his or her freedom, but also of the responsibility that comes with it. Freedom for responsibility implies that the individual can never be without norms, but must live in the service of his or her freedom and always be bound by the highest authority. We see from this principle that the learner is someone who has the freedom to choose, but who should also be made aware of the responsibility that accompanies such a choice.

Each of these anthropological categories along with their underlying principles holds certain implications for the educator for providing career guidance. We summarise these principles and the implication for career education in table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3

*A summary of the anthropological categories*

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Implication</b>
(1) Hope for the future	(1) Help students form a realistic picture of the future
(2) Task of designing	(2) Learner has to evaluate his or her abilities
(3) Fulfilment of destiny	(3) Help the learner to self-actualisation
(4) Respect for one's dignity	(4) Accept his or her uniqueness
(5) Task of self-understanding	(5) Gain self-knowledge
(6) Freedom for responsibility	(6) Help the learner to see the importance of making responsible decisions

## **2.17 A CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

Career education, as we stressed earlier, is a systematic, educational programme which helps learners to choose a career and will provide them with the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for survival and progress in the workplace. We should incorporate these principles (see section 2.1.6) in a career education programme, since such a programme will cover the following fields: self-awareness, awareness of careers and decision-making skills.

### **2.17.1 SELF-AWARENESS**

Many learners do not have enough knowledge about themselves to make an important decision like deciding on a career.

An intensive, extended career education programme helps learners to gain knowledge of who they are in terms of nature, personality, ability and values. Self-awareness is, therefore, gained through a gradual process of self-exploration which starts as soon as the learner enters the early childhood development phase and continues through the senior primary years and into the senior secondary phase. It is during this final phase that the learner needs to decide on an occupation.

The exploratory techniques used in a self-awareness programme, although dependent on the developmental stage of the learner, is geared to help the learner to arrive at a clearer definition of his or her:

- physical abilities and limitations
- intellectual prospects
- social skills
- interests
- aptitudes
- personality

#### **2.17.1.1 PHYSICAL ABILITIES**

Physical abilities refer to characteristics a person is born with; it may also refer to the observable parts of the body. Physical factors, such as health, physical strength, fitness, build, height and physical appearance are important for individuals in the work place. People become aware of their bodies from the moment of birth through self-discovery and other peoples' perceptions.

When you help learners to explore who they are in the physical sense, you should emphasise their positive characteristics (eg "You have good eyesight."), rather than their physical defects or shortcomings (eg "Your eyes are so bad, you will have to sit in front of the class."). Remember to be realistic; learners need to be aware that physical conditions will influence career choices. A learner with bad eyesight, for example, will not be able to become a pilot.

### ***2.17.1.2 INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES***

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:117) define mental competence or intelligence as follows: "It is the function or practice or expression of the intellect: the use or exercise of the intellect, that is, the intellect's practical application. Intelligence determines a person's ability to grasp any given situation." There is a close correlation between intellectual abilities and certain occupational fields. Help the learner to accept a realistic concept of his or her intellectual potential.

### ***2.17.1.3 APTITUDE, ABILITIES AND SKILLS***

(Refer to the discussion in study unit 4 where we discuss these concepts.)

Aptitude can be described as a person's potential that enables him or her to attain a particular level of competence. It, therefore, pertains to whatever a person can do with ease.

A person's aptitude develops from birth. A young child, for example, who can draw may develop really artistic skills as an adolescent. When you turn your abilities into skills, you have found competence. It takes a lot of determination to develop abilities so that they become skills, but mature people are willing to take responsibility for their own development, that is, to take responsibility for their own lives and to make something of their lives.

### ***2.17.1.4 INTEREST***

Interest is a personal attribute that develops and changes as we mature. Interest is that which we want and like to do — one person likes to be outdoors in natural surroundings, while another prefers to collect stamps. A learner who is interested in an activity will not necessarily be able to perform it better than anyone else; it does mean, however, that the learner enjoys the activity.

### ***2.17.1.5 SOCIAL SKILLS***

A person's social skills determine how he or she relates to people, that is, his or her attitude towards others. Social skills are based on the following attributes: the ability to communicate, basic behavioural patterns, common sense or native shrewdness, personal affectivity, contributory relationships and social accomplishment (Joubert 1985). Social situations are an ideal place for learners to get to know themselves, because they will be with other people who will respond positively or negatively towards them. Certain vocations require people skills (eg teaching), so learners who choose professions which require social skills must ensure that they do indeed have the necessary skills.

### ***2.17.1.6 HIGHER INTELLECT OR FACULTIES***

This category encompasses people's values and norms, and their conception of right and wrong. Certain activities are wrong, because they are in conflict with what we believe; others are acceptable to us, because they conform to our value system. It is

important, therefore, that a career choice should also take a person's life-view and values into consideration. You should know what you value before you choose a career. If helping people is important to you, for example, you will not want a job that seems to harm others, no matter how much money you might earn. Keep in mind, however, that your value system affects your life style and will show in the way you live, no matter what your career.

### ***2.17.1.7 PERSONALITY***

Personality is everything that gives a person a wholly distinctive character. It is the sum of what a person is, that is, why a person is the way he or she is, what he or she appears to be, and how he or she is interpreted by other people (Hurlock 1974). Personality is the set of characteristics that makes you different from all other people and determines how you behave. Some people are careful while others are careless, some people have self-confidence while others are shy and introverted.

An individual's personality is unique. Learners should take their uniqueness into consideration when choosing a career.

### ***2.17.1.8 INTEREST***

Interest is closely linked to a person's personality in the sense that a person's interest can give some motivation and direction to the personality. A person's interest will also determine the amount of enthusiasm with which he or she will continue with an activity. It is very important, therefore, to take a person's interest into consideration when making a career choice.

An interest can be seen in various ways and at various levels. Many people have a hobby which indicates an interest in something (eg sewing), but they do this hobby in their spare time for their pleasure. People whose interest is much greater (and they usually seem to have a talent which they have developed to a fine skill), however, will have the ability to work faster and better because they have the corresponding aptitude. This shows that interest cannot be considered on its own, but must be taken in conjunction with other aspects.

The learner's interest will have a certain degree of influence on his or her occupational choice. Learners have to be exposed to various activities to discover their interests.

Learners are present as a totality in all their actions and thoughts. To know themselves, they must take due cognisance of all the features in themselves that we have discussed.



#### **ACTIVITY 2.13**

- Evaluate a current educational programme and determine to what extent (if any) these activities contribute to the learner gaining self-knowledge (self-awareness).
- Identify possible ways of using or adapting the present educational programme to develop self-awareness in each learner.

## **2.17.2 CAREER AND JOB AWARENESS**

The choice of an occupation already begins when the learner chooses his or her subjects (either at primary school level or in grade 9). Many learners choose subjects with little knowledge of the career options that exist and with little understanding of what different careers require. It is thus essential that educators and parents become involved in the career and job awareness process.

Learners should choose subjects and careers in such a way that they can be self-employed or that a number of career options are open to them. Learners should not, therefore, choose subjects which will limit their career opportunities.

To conclude this section on career education, we will now look at how we can implement career education. The discussion is structured according to the following headings:

- Orientation of careers
- Considerations governing a career choice
- Basic aims of career education
- How to collect career information
- Guidelines for educators

### ***2.17.2.1 ORIENTATION OF CAREERS***

#### ***(a) General orientation***

The focus in the preprimary school is on those careers that form part of the life-world of the child. The purpose is to give the young learner the necessary guidance and support so that the learner develops a positive attitude towards work and a career. The process takes place over a period of time and you will have to take the informal nature of the preschool into consideration. At this stage of development, knowledge will be transformed through the medium of play.

The emphasis at primary school level is also on teaching learners about a broad spectrum of careers. The learners will need to draw on this knowledge when they eventually choose their subjects and careers.

#### ***(b) Specific orientation***

When learners need to choose a career, one of the biggest problems is that they do not know what kinds of jobs are available. They also do not know the day-to-day work that every specific job entails. A learner might think that a graphic designer's work sounds interesting, for example, but does he or she know exactly what they do every day? Most learners know, more or less, what a doctor or dentist does, because they visit them, but do they really know their daily routine or the problems facing them? Is it possible to find out about these things before you make a big career decision?

The learner will come into contact with people who practise different careers on a daily basis. In the preprimary school, for example, there are a number of people employed: secretaries, educators, gardeners, cleaners and kitchen staff. The postman, electrician and plumber provide a service to the preschool. The learner should learn about these careers that are part of his or her world and understand that these are occupations that people must fill. This orientation can take place through field trips to a bakery, farm and so on.

During the primary school years, the educator will build upon the foundation laid in the preprimary stage and gradually extend the learner's knowledge to include other occupations.

### ***(c) Orientation in respect of the economy***

The young learner needs to know how the economy functions. The learner must begin to understand that you earn money when you work; this enables you to provide for yourself and for your family's needs. Learners should know something about the South African economy: some people work in agriculture, some in mining, others in factories or offices and others in services such as hospitals, hotels, the army, police and other government services.

In primary school, you could arrange a simple fundraising project to purchase an item that is needed in the classroom. This will teach the learners about the money, the economy and the effect the economy has on the availability of careers.

### ***(d) Orientation in respect of occupational choices***

Children make choices every day, such as "What role will I play in a game", or "What do I want to do today?" It is easy to relate this to making a career choice. Without concentrating on a specific career, you can start from: "If you love animals, what can you become?" You then go on to deal with relevant careers such as a game warden or veterinarian.

## ***2.17.2.2 CONSIDERATIONS GOVERNING A CAREER CHOICE***

The three main considerations governing a career choice are job description, working conditions and job opportunities. We will now discuss each one briefly.

### ***(a) Job description***

It is important to ask questions such as the following: What does the work entail? What are the responsibilities, tasks and duties? What is the nature of the work?

Here is a list of possible questions (from which you can select suitable items) to gain job or career-related information.

When you get information, do you have to ...?

- interpret what is meant or implied
- use various sources of information
- watch devices and/or materials for information
- evaluate and/or judge what is meant or implied

- be aware of environmental conditions
- use various senses

When thinking, do you have to ...?

- make decisions
- process information

When working, do you have to ...?

- use machines and/or tools and/or equipment
- perform activities requiring general body movement
- control machines and/or processes
- perform skilled and/or technical activities
- perform controlled manual and/or related activities
- use miscellaneous equipment and/or devices
- perform with or handle related manual activities
- have general physical coordination

When relating to other people, do you have to ...?

- communicate judgements and/or related information
- engage in general personal contact
- perform supervisory and/or coordinate related activities
- exchange job-related information
- have contact with the public

### ***(b) Working conditions***

Working conditions refers to the kind of environment and the kind of skills required for the job. When selecting a job, it is very important to determine the level of skill required. There are four levels of skill involved in work, each depending on the difficulty of the work and the training required. Remember to take the four aspects (personality, aptitude, values and interests) into consideration when choosing a career, because the level of skill will be influenced by your abilities. You cannot become a doctor if you are not good at physical science, nor can you become a jeweller if your eyesight is poor.

An unskilled occupation is one for which no further training is necessary. Examples include cleaners, labourers, bus conductors and hospital porters. On-the-job training is done when required in order to maintain standards and stay abreast of changes.

A semiskilled occupation is one for which a certain amount of basic training is required. Examples include factory machine operators, typists or waiters. At this level, refresher courses are given so that the person can improve his or her capabilities, when necessary.

A skilled occupation is one for which several years of training is necessary. Examples include: jewellers, electricians, carpenters, secretaries and building supervisors. During training, people become aware of the commitment which is necessary for them to maintain the expected standard of service.

Professional and managerial occupations normally require high qualifications (either from a technicon, university or technical college) and specialisation in a certain

direction. Examples include: lawyers, social workers, teachers, translators/editors, doctors, engineers, opticians and pharmacists.

### ***(c) Job opportunities***

Cilliers (1993:56–57) states that it is impossible to predict with any certainty what options will be available in the future, but the following three factors could be used as guidelines in establishing career possibilities:

- *Technological development.* Technology has had a profound effect on education, training and job requirements. In addition to the skills necessary to do a job, other qualities such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, computer literacy and leadership abilities are becoming more and more important in the work place. Workers need to be well educated and once employed, will need constant training and retraining to keep up with the changing technology. On the one hand, jobs have become more scarce because of mechanisation. On the other hand, however, employment in the maintenance and service sectors has increased because of technological advances.
- *Social and political conditions.* South Africa is facing enormous social and political changes and different opportunities are becoming available. Urbanisation, for example, will result in more housing being needed, which, in turn, means more jobs for builders, town planners and all building-related professionals.
- *Economic recession.* The worldwide recession has forced companies to concentrate on one main business. This has caused them to start subcontracting (larger firms transfer particular tasks to smaller firms, most of whom pay lower wages, employ unskilled and nonskilled labour and generally carry lower overheads). This causes a growth in the service sector and an increase in self-employment opportunities.

### ***2.17.2.3 BASIC AIMS OF CAREER EDUCATION***

The basic aim of a career programme is based on the following statements:

- You must be prepared for life.
- You need to live up to expectations.
- Circumstances can change and you have to make the necessary adjustments.
- You have to have a positive attitude towards work.
- You must do your own work.
- You can work together with others.
- You can choose your work.
- Work is honourable.
- All work is important.
- It is a privilege to work.
- Good work is rewarded.
- You value work that is done for you.

The learner moves into primary school with some of these aims having been realised. The primary school educator will build on these aims, so that by the time the learner reaches the stage of making a career choice, he or she will have the following:

- an awareness of personal skills and abilities
- an ability to make decisions independently



- access to opportunities that build self-knowledge
- skills to be able to make meaningful choices
- a great measure of self-fulfilment

#### ***2.17.2.4 HOW TO COLLECT CAREER INFORMATION***

Information may be obtained in various ways. Even if a school is situated in a rural area, far away from major cities with libraries and universities, it is still possible to collect career information. People, such as the media teacher (school librarian), parents, other teachers, learners and people in our community can assist learners to collect information. How then can information be collected?

- Learners with the same aptitudes and interests could form a group and try to obtain information about a particular group of careers (refer to the categories just described).
- Parents and the community at large are themselves employees and employers, and are good, up-to-date sources of information.
- There are a large number of media-related sources that can be consulted.
- The library teacher should ensure that the media centre has subject literature on careers. The Department of Labour issues a comprehensive guide to literature about careers; write to them and request a copy of this guide.
- Audiovisual media are useful for conveying career information. Here again, if you do not have the equipment or facilities to use films, video or tape recordings, it does not matter as this information can be conveyed in other ways.
- Pamphlets and brochures on specific careers and vocations may be collected. Tertiary institutions have brochures with valuable information and these can usually be obtained free of charge.
- Newspapers and periodicals are also important sources of career information. From time to time, certain newspapers discuss specific occupations; newspaper job advertisements give excellent information about job descriptions, qualifications, requirements, salaries and so on.
- Narrative literature (stories). Stories are a wonderful source of information. Here again, the media teacher may be of assistance in ensuring that there are books in this category. Novels featuring characters playing doctors, lawyers, detectives, farmers and so on usually contain descriptions of working conditions, advantages and the like. These sources may not give us detailed information, but they might prompt learners to find out more about certain careers.
- Outside institutions may also be approached for information. Examples of these include
  - the Department of Labour
  - the South African Defence Force
  - the Human Sciences Research Council
  - universities, technikons and technical colleges
  - private guidance centres
  - employment agencies

Another way to gather career information is to take learners to a career exhibition.

### **2.17.2.5 GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS**

We have only included a few guidelines, so please feel free to add to the list.

- Educators often only have one period per week for career education. You can use this time to deal with specific topics. Do not forget that your topic must be relevant to the age level of the learner. You should do a needs analysis before deciding what you will cover with the learners.
- The educator in the intermediate and senior phases should consider himself or herself as a facilitator.
- Make use of small group discussions, depending on the topic you are dealing with and the maturity level of the learners.
- Give learners opportunities to work on projects or to go on excursions. Encourage your learners to gain work experience related to specific careers.
- Guide the learner on a future course of study and the career options that he or she may follow as a result of the particular course of study by conducting individual interviews with each learner.
- Learners should also be aware of what educational qualifications are necessary for different jobs and professions. At the early childhood stage you need not go into too much detail; simply help learners to understand that certain jobs have different requirements or require more years of study than others.
- Learners can visit different working environments such as banks, industries, farms and business and commercial centres, as part of the career programme.
- You can ask individuals, including parents, to talk to the learners about their work.
- Ask the learners to list their parents' occupations; you could even include their relatives or other people they know. Ask them to explain the nature of these occupations in detail. You can ask them what kind of work they would like to do and why (Mwamwenda 1995:473).
- As the learning programme educator, you need to understand the value of your subject. The skills which you teach via your learning programme will more than likely help the learner in his or her future life. At the very least, your learners should know what skills are needed in different professions.

Since the choice of school, subjects and career are central in the intermediate and senior phases, we will briefly discuss decision making in the next section.

### **2.17.3 DECISION MAKING**

A decision is a choice between different solutions to a problem. Decision making is a mental process or activity which involves the mind. Decision-making abilities can, therefore, be improved with practice. Decision making always involves a choice. Choice can be defined as the act of choosing, while the word "decision" means to make up your mind. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:46–47) note the following in this regard: "When one or other aspiration is active the child is faced with a choice — he must choose. The final choice brings the child to the point of decision — a specific action. When a decision is taken it implies that the goal creating the aspiration is accepted or rejected, or its achievement is deferred as far as the child's behaviour is concerned."

Learners need to be taught how to arrive at a decision.

We should distinguish between simple decisions, with no or little influence on the future (“Shall I go to the party?”, “What shall I wear to the party?”) and complex decisions, which are usually very important for the future (choosing subjects, choosing a career). The choice of an occupation is, for instance a central issue in the intermediate and senior phases and affects the learner, the educator and the parents.

The learner is often burdened with the responsibility of weighing choices against each other to arrive at a decision. Educators who make excessive demands on learners or who usurp their choices, for example, with regard to a career, girlfriend, boyfriend, friends, field of study or sport, force the learner into a role that brings no happiness and may lead to confusion of identity. Such a learner revolts in an attempt to gain control of his or her life.

Please note that career education will entail developing decision-making skills.

Teaching decision-making skills is one of the more difficult tasks the educator will encounter. The educator can make learners aware of what they are doing when they make decisions and how important good, well-considered decisions are.

### **2.17.3.1 DECISION-MAKING STYLES**

There are numerous ways in which people make decisions. Here are a few examples:

- The paralysis decider — he is the “I just cannot face it” type.
- The intuitive decider — she is the “it feels right” type.
- The agonising decider — he is the “I cannot make up my mind” type.
- The compliant decider — she is the “tell me and I will do it” type.
- The delaying decider — he is the “I will think about it tomorrow” type.
- The fatalistic decider — she is the “whatever will be, will be” type.
- The systematic decider — he is the “I am systematic and organised” type.



#### **ACTIVITY 2.14**

After presenting a lesson to a grade eight class on decision making and decision-making styles, answer the following questions:

- How do these learners make decisions?
- Do you agree with their decision-making styles?
- What advice would you give them to improve their decision-making styles?

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In making a decision, there is no right answer; neither is there a best solution for everyone. It is a personal matter. We each have a different style of decision making that we use in various situations. Some of these styles are more effective than others. Remember too that some decisions are outside of our own control.

### **2.17.3.2 PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION MAKING**

Wise decisions are based on quality information. Lindhard and Oosthuizen (1985) differentiate between four principles of decision making:

- **Aims and value.** The objective has to be determined. What do you want to achieve?
- **Information.** Collect as much information as possible that will influence the decision. The various possibilities have to be weighed against each other.
- **Solutions.** Write down as many solutions as you can. The possible solutions have to be sought out, particularly since some may not be immediately apparent.
- **Decision.** Decide which is the best solution. Test the solution against the aims and values. Also test the solutions for any consequences by asking the following questions, for example: "Is it possible to carry out this solution?", "Is it the best solution in the long term?", "How will I be affected and will it also affect others?" The decision is then made and action is taken.

Learners must realise that they will need to consider the following (ask the following questions) when making their decisions:

- Which options are available?
- Will my choice affect me personally or will I have to compromise in matters of conscience, people or feelings?
- Will my decision hurt my families and friends?
- Once I have made my decision, will I be able to live with my decision?

It is important, too, that the learner be given the opportunity to acquire decision-making skills. This is not at all easy. As with learning to ride a motorbike, the learner must practise, but first he or she must know the rules. The more the learner practises the easier it becomes for him or her to solve the problems and make the right decisions.

If you are unsure of your own decision-making skills, work through the principles of decision making and PRACTISE them.

## **2.18 CONCLUSION**

In this section, we emphasised career education as an extended support programme offered to learners.

We looked at two anthropological categories and their significance for forming the foundation of the career education programme. We then examined the components of a career education programme and briefly discussed self-awareness, career and job awareness, and decision making.

When you assist learners to choose a career, it is important to lead them in such a way that they can really get to know themselves before attempting to select a job within a specific career field. Always keep in mind that learners have unlimited potential which develops as they come into contact with the world of work. A casual job can lead to more permanent work or to a career within a specific career field.

People can create unique careers around themselves and as they mature, they move along their career path, enjoying new challenges and thriving on change.

I hope that you enjoyed working through this study unit. What I hope most, however, is

that you have learnt something that is really practical; something that will aid you in your day-to-day encounters with learners and that the activities helped you to think critically and creatively about your work as educator. In the next study unit the focus is on counselling.

Keep on going — you are now already more than halfway through the module!



### SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

(We also refer you back to the activities in this section)

- (1) One of your colleagues asks you for advice and help, since she has one gifted learner and a couple of underachievers in her class. What advice will you give her?
- (2) Mervyn is 13 years old. Each Saturday he has to look after his 3-year-old baby brother while his mother is out trying to earn some extra money. His brother is asleep when his friend Tshepo arrives and asks him to come outside to play. How will you help Mervyn decide what to do?

Remember, you must not decide for Mervyn but help him to reach a decision.

- (3) One of your friends with no background on guidance and counselling asks you to explain the different facets or functions of guidance to him. How will you explain this? Make notes to help you.
- (4) You were asked by the local newspaper to write an article on the following topics:
  - modes of learning
  - learning restraints

Your article should not exceed 3 A4 pages.

- (5) Prepare a handout for the grade 9 learners on the career education programme of the school. Keep in mind that there are learners in grade 9 who have to make a career choice.
- (6) Describe how you would assist school leavers to collect career information.

## STUDY UNIT 3

# COUNSELLING



### AIM

The aim of this study unit is to equip the educator with the necessary knowledge and skills so that he or she can go into a counselling relationship with the learner.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once you have worked through this study unit, you should be able to do the following:

- Indicate what assessment techniques are available and how to use them.
- Observe learners to get a true perspective and image of them.
- Implement the skills of “questioning” and “reflection”.
- Conduct an exploratory interview with a learner.
- Plan an interview within a group context.

## THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP, ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATION

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION



### QUESTION

What is counselling? According to Gillis (1994:2), “the American Psychological Association’s Division of Counselling Psychology defines counselling as: ‘Helping individuals towards overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, wherever these may be encountered, and towards the optimal development of their personal resources’”.

However, for the purposes of the educator, we can use Gillis’s own definition (Gillis 1994:4): “Counselling is a facilitative process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special helping relationship, uses specific skills to assist young people to help themselves more effectively.”

We will now discuss each facet of this definition in detail.

- ***What is "a facilitative process"?***

This concept refers to the complex, interpersonal interaction which occurs between two individuals "which in itself promotes growth and change" (Gillis 1994:4). In other words, you cannot merely dish out help, advice, information or your personal opinion, but you have to accompany learners through this process and experience their growth pains with them.

Thus, it can be said that facilitation is "a process of supportive 'drawing out': helping people to look at their own issues and come to their own decisions about how to deal with them" (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwane 2002:211).

- ***What is "a special helping relationship"?***

The atmosphere which has to surround the facilitative process has to be conducive to the personal growth which the learner has to experience. There has to be a warm, accepting and empathetic bond between the participants. The participants in this situation are you the learning area specialist and the learner in your class.

The warm atmosphere helps learners to express themselves freely. They learn to trust you and you have to live up to this trust. Never repeat what they have told you in the staffroom! The warm atmosphere helps them to move towards responsible adulthood.

- ***What helping skills do you need?***

According to Gillis (1994:4), you need to be able to communicate well and to have specialised skills which are employed to help change feelings, thoughts and behaviour. These skills are discussed in more detail in section 3.5.1.

- ***What does "assist people to help themselves" mean?***

You should ask yourself the following questions: "Can you learn for anyone else?" or "Can you grow for anyone else?" Obviously the answer to these questions is "no". These are things which people must do for themselves. It is, therefore, important that learners learn to solve their problems themselves. This does not mean that you are disinterested in your learners, but that you care enough for them to help them when they need your assistance. You cannot prescribe how learners will grow, so allow them to experience situations and to grow in unique ways.

## **3.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS OF THE COUNSELLOR**

Petrick (1986:7) sees counselling essentially as interviewing in which the educator and learner converse in a way that guides and directs the learner. This definition incorporates the three aspects of counselling: it is a relationship, it is directional and it is a process. This definition highlights the important role of the counsellor in this dynamic process.

The characteristics and skills the counsellor brings to the counselling relationship determine to a large extent how successful the counselling process is.



### ACTIVITY 3.1

Identify the characteristics and skills that you feel are essential for a counsellor in order to establish a successful counselling relationship.

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You may have identified characteristics such as the following: understanding, warmth, sincerity, patience and friendliness. The important skills include listening skills and knowing how to conduct an interview. Characteristics are the innate qualifications such as abilities, competences, capacities, skills, expertise, personal qualities and so on which the counsellor may naturally possess. Skills are those qualifications which the counsellor can acquire.

Our focus in this study unit is on the necessary skills that a counsellor should acquire. By adding to your skills base, you can increase your chances of creating meaningful counselling relationships with your learners. Before looking at the skills you need to acquire, however, let us take a look at a list of innate qualities you should have.

### 3.2.1 INNATE QUALITIES

Each counsellor should have the following innate qualities:

- a calling to become a counsellor
- a love for learners
- a concern for the learner
- an interest in the learner
- a sympathetic attitude towards the learner
- empathy with the learner
- patience with the learner
- friendliness towards the learner
- consideration for every learner
- sincerity
- honesty
- frankness
- reasonable conduct
- way with learners
- level-headed conduct
- humbleness towards the learner



- a sense of humour
- openness
- wide interests
- a sense of responsibility

This list is not exhaustive, but it gives you an indication of some of the innate characteristics that counsellors should possess and which will enable them to create healthy counselling relationships. We will now briefly consider each of these qualities (adapted from Petrick 1986:106–114).

### ***3.2.1.1 A CALLING TO BECOME A COUNSELLOR***

A person who is “called” has a special need to serve fellow human beings. A learner who has “had an encounter with reality” may need a counsellor to advise and help him or her.

### ***3.2.1.2 A LOVE FOR THE LEARNERS***

The counsellor should have a warm, deeply-rooted interest in his or her learners. This should cause him or her to become involved in the learners’ lives, that is, the counsellor and learners should develop mutual concern for each other and thus share in each other’s joys and sorrows. Counsellors who involve themselves with a learner should do so because they want the best for the learner; they should never put their own interests first.

### ***3.2.1.3 CONCERN FOR THE LEARNER***

Concern for the learner means taking the other’s needs to heart. It is turning to the learner in an endeavour to understand the learner, his or her desires and needs and providing the necessary support and help.

### ***3.2.1.4 AN INTEREST IN THE LEARNER***

There is an unselfish willingness to spend time with the learner, because the counsellor is interested in the learner. Interest is more than saying, “I am interested in you”. It means being prepared to spend time with the learner.

### ***3.2.1.5 A SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LEARNER***

This means that you are prepared to share longings, confusion and other needs with the learner and then to identify yourself with those feelings.

### ***3.2.1.6 EMPATHY WITH THE LEARNER***

Empathy with the learner is more than sympathy; it means putting yourself in the learner's place and assessing how the learner is experiencing his or her problems.

### ***3.2.1.7 PATIENCE WITH THE LEARNER***

Patience with the learner is the ability to endure things calmly, to remain courageous in spite of failures, to persevere, to be long suffering and tolerant. Hasty and impatient behaviour may easily make the learner feel that the educator or counsellor has no time for him or her.

### ***3.2.1.8 FRIENDLINESS TOWARDS THE LEARNER***

Friendliness towards the learner is the ability to be a true friend to each learner; to be kind, loving, good natured, helpful and cheerful. It is easier to approach and talk to someone who projects friendliness.

### ***3.2.1.9 CONSIDERATION FOR EVERY LEARNER***

Consideration for every learner means being able to take into account (consider) the uniqueness of each learner with whom you associate.

### ***3.2.1.10 SINCERITY***

Sincerity means being genuine, answering questions honestly without pretending to be something you are not. The learner who knows you are sincere in your intentions will be prepared to discuss his or her problems with you. Van Praug (1950) said the following: "It is not the role we play nor the mask we wear, but the men we are who have educational force."

### ***3.2.1.11 HONESTY***

Honesty is partly covered by "sincerity", but it also means speaking the truth, not distorting facts, acting sincerely and reliably. It requires telling the truth at all times, never being guilty of white lies or distorting the true facts for the learner.

### ***3.2.1.12 FRANKNESS***

Frankness means being sincere, having a lack of reserve and being openly revealing. You must not be a closed book to the learner. You need to open up to the learner so that your actions will bear witness to your sincerity in wanting the best for the learner.

### ***3.2.1.13 REASONABLE CONDUCT***

Reasonable conduct applies to “fairness” and “justice” and acting in accordance with what is good and right.

### ***3.2.1.14 A WAY WITH LEARNERS***

If you have a way with learners, you know how to associate with them, approach them and win their trust. Your skills are useless without this ability.

### ***3.2.1.15 LEVEL-HEADED CONDUCT***

Level-headed conduct is being balanced; you are always the same, you are not easily upset and you are noted for your calmness in tackling and carrying out your tasks.

### ***3.2.1.16 HUMBLENESS TOWARDS THE LEARNER***

You are not proud. You show respect for the learner’s human dignity. Humbleness toward the learner means not expecting more from the learner than what the learner can give. Humbleness is a special virtue and should not be seen as a weakness.

### ***3.2.1.17 A SENSE OF HUMOUR***

A sense of humour is the ability to see the lighter side of life. You see the funny side of things, especially in your own life. You are able to laugh at yourself.

### ***3.2.1.18 OPENNESS OF HEART***

You are open, accessible and really impressed by the learner’s moving need. The learner should see you as one who will genuinely understand his or her predicament.

### ***3.2.1.19 WIDE INTERESTS***

You are well-informed, well-read and have the ability to talk with authority on a wide range of subjects.

### ***3.2.1.20 RESPONSIBILITY***

Responsibility is knowing and living up to values and norms. It means taking up the challenge of hearing the call of the learner and responding by being willing to take up the challenge.

It is now time for self-evaluation. See how you rate by doing the following evaluation test.

FIGURE 3.1  
Self-evaluation test



### ACTIVITY 3.2

#### SELF-EVALUATION TEST

For each question, circle the number which is most appropriate.

- 1 = weak
- 2 = less weak
- 3 = average
- 4 = strong
- 5 = very strong

● a sense of calling	1	2	3	4	5
● love for the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● a concern over the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● an interest in the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● a sympathetic attitude	1	2	3	4	5
● empathy with the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● patience with the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● friendliness towards the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● consideration for every learner	1	2	3	4	5
● sincerity	1	2	3	4	5
● honesty	1	2	3	4	5
● frankness	1	2	3	4	5
● reasonable conduct	1	2	3	4	5
● a way with learners	1	2	3	4	5
● level-headed conduct	1	2	3	4	5
● humbleness towards the learner	1	2	3	4	5
● a sense of humour	1	2	3	4	5
● openness of heart	1	2	3	4	5
● wide interests	1	2	3	4	5
● a sense of responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL SCORE:					

To obtain your total score, add up your response to each of the 20 characteristics listed above. Your score will be out of 100 as this is the highest that can be scored. A score above 60 is acceptable. If you scored less than 60 you are either too hard on yourself or you need to look carefully at your innate characteristics. Remember, it is your innate characteristics that will encourage or discourage meaningful counselling relationships.

### 3.2.2 THE SKILLS OF THE COUNSELLOR

In order to be a good educator and counsellor, you should have the following skills:

#### 3.2.2.1 LISTENING SKILLS

You should be genuinely interested in and concerned for the person who is talking to you. You should note what the learners say and you how they express themselves.

### ***3.2.2.2 RESPECTING SKILLS***

Each person has the right to be respected. This can be difficult when the person has values which are different from yours. It is even more difficult when the person does and says things with which you do not agree. It is your duty, however, to accept the person even if you do not accept (or agree) with his or her words or actions.

### ***3.2.2.3 ENCOURAGING SKILLS***

The learners must be encouraged to say what they really feel. They must feel free to move at their own pace and to tell their story in their own way. This can require a lot of patience from you, as most of us would like to solve the learners' problems for them. However, it is important that you encourage them to work through their own problems at their own speed, so that they can learn from their own situations.

### ***3.2.2.4 UNDERSTANDING SKILLS***

It is impossible to understand exactly what a learner is experiencing, because you are not in his or her situation. It is, therefore, necessary to check whether you are understanding their story and situation correctly. This is a slow process as you never assume that you have understood everything without checking that your understanding is correct.

### ***3.2.2.5 EXPLORATION SKILLS***

This skill allows you to look at a situation from different perspectives. Ask the following question of each person involved in a situation: "What effect did your behaviour have on ...?" This might help the learner to consider his or her actions from a different point of view; it may also help him or her see himself or herself through the eyes of another person, without you ever having to be judgmental or prescriptive. In other words, the learner must see that his or her actions affect others and that some "unexpected" reactions might be forthcoming.

### ***3.2.2.6 ACCOMPANYING THE LEARNER TO CHOICE-READINESS***

The learner needs to know how to make choices. Preparedness is essential which means that the learner has the necessary knowledge of the alternatives he or she has to choose from. You will have to learn how to support the learner so that he or she feels secure when making the necessary decision.

### ***3.2.2.7 ACCOMPANYING THE LEARNER TO RESPONSIBLE CHOICE***

This means knowing how to teach the learner to accept work as a life obligation and to help him or her build on a positive attitude to work as part of the philosophy of life. Only then will the learner be able to decide on an occupation and go on to meaningful occupational choice.

### ***3.2.2.8 ACCOMPANYING THE LEARNER TO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HIS OR HER DECISIONS***

Your task is to guide the learner in his or her exploration of personal potential so that he or she will eventually arrive at self-knowledge.

### ***3.2.2.9 SUSTAINED INVOLVEMENT WITH THE LEARNER***

Part of your task as an educator is to be involved with or engaged in helping the learner to develop. This does not mean that you can never take a break — because too much involvement will become a burden for you and for the learner — but it does mean that your concern should be constant rather than sporadic.

### ***3.2.2.10 SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEARNER'S INSECURITY***

You should learn how to help the learner so that the learner feels safe, secure and directed.

### ***3.2.2.11 EDUCATIVE INTERVENTION IN THE LEARNER'S LIFE***

You should know how and when to interfere in a learner's life, such as when you notice him or her doing something wrong. The learner needs to understand why you oppose or disapprove of certain objectionable things. Suggest a few alternatives, so that the learner can make use of his or her decision-making skills. When doing so, however, remember to take note of the pedagogic principles.

### ***3.2.2.12 HELPING THE LEARNER TO ACCEPT AND ADAPT TO HIS OR HER SHORTCOMINGS***

When supporting a learner in the process of self-exploration, he or she needs to acquire knowledge of his or her prospects, that is, knowledge about his or her limitations or shortcomings. You will be faced with the task of helping the learner to accept or adapt to irremediable shortcomings which may come as a shock to the learner. You will then need to help the learner to maintain a positive attitude and to make realistic decisions.

### ***3.2.2.13 GUIDING THE LEARNER'S ORIENTATION TO REALITY***

This means learning how to help the learner determine his or her true place and true position in the whole of reality. It is the counsellor's duty to provide the learner with certain beacons or anchors by which he or she can orient himself or herself in the world.

### ***3.2.2.14 AUTHENTIC ENCOUNTER WITH THE LEARNER IN NEED***

You should know how to hold out a hand to the learner who may be experiencing difficulties. This encounter is more than merely being together (association); it requires pedagogic proximity and turning to each other in trust so that a mutual belonging, attraction, destiny for each other, affection and intimacy will flourish. To accomplish this, you need to encircle the learner with authenticity so that he or she feels secure.

### ***3.2.2.15 MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN COUNSELLOR AND LEARNER***

Your encounter with the learner helps the learner realise that you accept him or her and that you are concerned about the learner because of your pedagogic love for him or her. To do this, you need to be able to make yourself accessible to the learner. Make room for the learner so that whenever you encounter each other you turn to each other in trust.

### ***3.2.2.16 PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY***

The relationship of trust between yourself and the learner should be of such a nature that the learner feels free to reveal himself or herself. You as counsellor will have to learn to keep the longings and troubles that the learner shares with you to yourself. When it is necessary to divulge confidential information, such as when you refer the learner for further help, you should only do this with the learner's permission.

### ***3.2.2.17 ESTABLISHING OF A SECURE SPACE FOR THE LEARNER***

When helping the learner, you should learn how to establish a place where the learner will feel secure. The learner should feel welcome and accepted in this secure place. The learner should also feel that you want to help and are accessible to him or her. The learner will not be willing to go further with you or be ready to accept your help without this feeling of security.

### ***3.2.2.18 STIMULATION TO ACTIVITY***

It is vital to acquire the skill of knowing how to call upon the learner and to encourage him or her to active participation.

### ***3.2.2.19 EXEMPLIFICATION AND OBSERVANCE OF NORMS IN THE LEARNING AND TEACHING EVENT***

As an adult, you identify with the norms and demands of propriety; you should extend these norms and demands of propriety to the learner with whom you come into contact in the education teaching event. This requires living a life to which the learners are able to look up to. It is your responsibility to be an example to the learners.

### ***3.2.2.20 ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LEARNER***

You must display a willingness to accept responsibility for the learner and to stand by him or her by trying to relieve the learner's situation.

You can acquire these skills through training and practice. Do the following task to see how far you have progressed in acquiring these skills. This is an evaluation to help you to identify the specific skills which you still need to acquire. Remember, a low score simply means you have to work harder in this area.



### ACTIVITY 3.3

Reflect where you are with each of these skills. Evaluate yourself, using the scale of 1 (weak) to 9 (strong), by completing the self-evaluation profile in figure 3.2.

Plot your score and join these points together to complete your profile. Be honest in your evaluation.

FIGURE 3.2

*Self-evaluation profile*

	Weak			Average			Strong		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
● supportiveness of the learner									
● guiding in readiness to choose									
● guiding towards responsible decision making									
● guiding towards accountability									
● sustained involvement									
● sympathetic understanding									
● capacity for educative intervention									
● helping the learner to accept and assimilate his or her shortcomings									
● guide to orient to reality									
● capacity for authentic encounter									
● capacity for establishing a mutual trust relationship									
● capacity to preserve confidentiality									
● ability to secure space									
● ability to stimulate to activity									
● exemplification of norms									
● acceptance of responsibility for the learner									
● listening skills									
● encouraging skills									
● understanding skills									
● exploration skills									



Have you joined the different points? Where do most of your points lie? Hopefully, as you proceed with the course, you will be able to come back and do another evaluation; then you will be able to compare the progress you have made.

### **3.2.3 RESPONSES**

Apart from the skills which we discussed briefly, there are also other factors which may influence the counselling process, namely, the responses made to statements or questions during a counselling session. These responses can be seen as

- evaluative
- interpretive
- supportive
- probing
- giving advice
- understanding

We will now discuss these responses in a little more detail.

#### ***3.2.3.1 EVALUATIVE***

When a response is evaluative, it means that you are judging the situation according to your moral standpoint. You may say something like: "You don't seem to have behaved correctly ..." which implies that their behaviour is wrong and that you would have done it differently.

#### ***3.2.3.2 INTERPRETIVE***

When you interpret a situation by saying something along the lines of: "You probably did that because you ..." it implies that you think you have an insight into the reason behind their behaviour. This is a patronising attitude to take and once again you assume that you are right and they are wrong; you may very well interpret the situation incorrectly. Giving them reasons for their actions is also wrong, as this will not help them resolve their problems — even if you are right (which you probably will not be unless you have both been working on the problem for a long time).

#### ***3.2.3.3 SUPPORTIVE***

Giving supportive or reassuring responses can have a good effect when they are timed correctly. The correct time is after a problem has been well worked through, all possible solutions have been investigated and the best one has been chosen by mutual consent. If you give reassurances such as: "I'm sure it's not as bad as it seems" at an early stage of the discussion, you can create a distance between yourself and the learner, because he or she feels misunderstood because you are not grasping the full impact of their problem.

### ***3.2.3.4 PROBING***

Questioning or probing are techniques that have to be used very carefully. Asking learners to explain “why” they did something, when they may not have the answer themselves, can make them feel guilty; they may even feel that they have to defend their actions. Make sure your questions focus on probing and exploring the situation in a sensible manner. All the information should lead towards a solution and a better understanding of the problem so that the learner grows beyond the present problem. Questions such as “What happened next?” or “How did they react?” will serve to stimulate the learners to explore their situation further.

### ***3.2.3.5 ADVICE***

Giving advice is the easiest thing for adults to do, especially where learners and young adults are concerned. This takes away any responsibility the person may have for the successful resolution of a problem. They can simply say that you told them to do this or that. If it does not work, then it is your fault; if it does succeed, they cannot honestly take any credit for their success. Either way, they do not benefit from advice which is given. Only towards the end of the counselling process, may it be necessary to give advice when you are really in tune with the circumstances and personality of the learner.

### ***3.2.3.6 UNDERSTANDING***

By showing our understanding of a situation, we really give the learner whom we are counselling the assurance that we grasp what he or she has been telling us; we confirm that we really have listened carefully by repeating the learner’s actions or feelings in our own words BUT KEEPING HIS OR HER POINT OF VIEW. There is no approval, disapproval, judgment or alignment in our words, but we confirm that we have accurately understood what has been said to us (Gillis 1994:8).

In the next section, we will give you some practical hints to create a school counselling model.

## **3.3 A SHORT-TERM COUNSELLING MODEL**

The following model is suggested by Gillis (1994:84–93) and we use it purely to make you aware that it may probably be a counselling model in your school. Although the counselling model in your school may be different to the one we propose, you will still be the initial contact between your learners and the help they require.

### **3.3.1 PREPARATION STAGE**

It is during this stage that the learner makes contact with the counsellor. Learners are either asked to go to the office (when they are in trouble or you see that they have a problem) or they will make the appointment on their own accord. The way you react to the learners will determine, to a large extent, the outcome of the whole counselling process.

- Try to understand the learner and (if possible) his or her problem. In this case it would be wise to consult the school educator and get insight into the personal file of the learner. If such a file does not exist, it would be wise to consult the Learner Profile to see what the learner’s circumstances are at home and what his or her academic record looks like.
- Ensure the most facilitative setting for the meeting, that is, the physical setting for the meeting. There should be at least two places where you both can sit; it is not a good idea to sit behind a desk, but try to sit opposite the learner. A facilitative setting also refers to the atmosphere which you create. Are you going to appear to be hurried and disinterested? Or are you going to be calm and interested in the learner’s problem?

### 3.3.2 MEET AND GREET STAGE

Your words, expression and actions should tell the learner that you are willing to help him or her. You are no longer the teacher, but a counsellor. This means that you assume an equal position, in terms of the problem, to the learner, that is, you are both going to try equally hard to sort it out and come to an acceptable solution.

- Once you have greeted the learner, you can ask him or her to sit down. The learner is usually agitated and uncomfortable when he or she first comes to visit you. You should assure him or her that your conversations are confidential and that you will not tell anybody about the content of the conversation without permission.
- Now tell the learner what the counselling process entails. You need to be given the details about the problem so that you can know what he or she is experiencing. It is imperative that the learner generates his or her own solution to the problem, because you cannot solve the problem for him or her. Tell the learner, however, that you are willing to help look at solutions which the learner may not have thought about.



#### ACTIVITY 3.4

Using the “meet and greet stage”, formulate introductory statements which you feel explain how you intend working with the learner. Remember, the initial contact between you and the learner sets the tone for subsequent meetings.

.....

.....

.....

.....



#### QUESTION

What will happen if you go to somebody whom you know well and speak to them in a businesslike, hurried tone of voice? Look carefully at their facial expression while you are speaking.

Your friend may be very surprised that you are so formal and businesslike. He or she may even be annoyed. At the end of your little experiment, you should explain that you were looking to see how your abrupt manner affected them. You now realise that this tone of voice is not a good way to create a warm, trusting climate.

### 3.3.3 EXPLORATORY STAGE

You have to establish several aspects during this stage. Remember, none of the information which you will be getting is merely interesting; it all has to help solve the learner's problem. You need to explore the situation with the learner. Asking questions can be very threatening, so it is important that the learner understands that you need the information in order to help him or her gain a different perspective about his or her problem.

Have a look at the following statements and questions. Do you think they will help a learner to see his or her problem from a different perspective?

- I believe you wanted to see me about something?
- You may be wondering why I asked to see you? You may be wondering why Mr X sent you to see me?
- Could you give me an idea of how you see the situation?
- I need to know as much as possible about you and your situation.
- How do you think the other person sees the situation?

Once the learner has started telling you about the situation in which he or she finds himself or herself, you may need to ask for an explanation about something in more detail so that you can understand the position properly. It also helps the learner to realise that you are listening carefully and that you really want to follow what the problem is doing to him or her.

The following statements or questions may be suitable at this stage:

- It seems that ...
- Could you explain ... to me in more detail?
- How did you feel when ...?
- What do you think ... did you feel ... think at that stage?
- Why do you think ... did you do that?

Be very careful not to give a solution to a learner, even if he or she asks for help. As stated by Gillis (1994:88): "This stage focuses on facilitating self-exploration, clarifying feelings, isolating the problem, and, wherever possible, defining it in such a way that goals can be set."

### 3.3.4 ACTION STAGE

There will be many situations where you will not be able to bring about change. After all, history cannot be changed, but it can be rewritten from a different perspective.

When specific goals are set, this can alleviate the problem or help the learner to deal with the present situation more effectively.

It is important to work with the whole learner (see sec 1.9.2 of this study guide). This means that you have to help the learner look at feelings, thoughts and behaviour. All three of these components contribute to the resolution of the problem. Using them together helps the learner to look at the problem on three different levels and this brings about a more permanent resolution to the problem.

The actions include addressing and setting goals, deciding on methods of achieving them, monitoring the progress of the actions and evaluating the results. Throughout this process, you as the adult in the helping relationship, accompany the learner until his or her situation has improved.

Some possible questions or statements you could use include:

- Do you think it would be possible to ...?
- What was the effect on ... when you ...?
- What did you think while ...?
- It is not an easy thing to do.
- It is quite strange when things change ... .

### **3.3.5 TERMINATION STAGE**

This is the closing stage when the problem has been resolved sufficiently for the learner to continue with his or her schooling and life. The end should have a positive note. This can be achieved by summarising the process as a whole, or even better, letting the learner tell you what has changed in his or her life.

Here are some statements which you could use:

- Well, things seem to be different now for you.
- You seem to be dealing with the situation quite differently now.
- I am pleased that you have managed to ...
- The changes which you are talking about show me that you are a strong person.

## **3.4 RESPONSES TO THE COUNSELLING PROCESS**

During the counselling process, you will probably encounter some of the following factors: values, referrals, resistance and reluctance, and the counselling contract.

### **3.4.1 VALUES**

Values show personal preferences. Each person has their own. Each person generally has a set of values which fits his or her lifestyle. This means that you should not try to impose your set of values on another person, but that you should recognise the differences and respect them. It is important to acknowledge other values, but this does not mean that you as the counsellor cannot also have your own set of personal values.

### **3.4.2 REFERRALS**

You have to remember that you are not a trained psychologist. In fact, you are not even trained as a school educator. This does not make your contribution to the health of your school any less valuable, but it does mean that you cannot handle certain cases (refer to the section on the Teacher Support Team later in this study unit). The team approach enables you to refer cases to trained professionals that you are uncomfortable with, or that you do not know how to handle. Do not waste your time by trying to assist learners with severe problems, when there are so many learners with milder problems whom you can help effectively.

### **3.4.3 RESISTANCE AND RELUCTANCE**

Young people find it embarrassing to reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings. If they did not come to you voluntarily, they may resist being helped as they think that only “weak” people go to a “shrink”. You need to explain to them that it takes a lot of courage to work on personal problems. You are not a “shrink”; you are simply a person who is concerned about their welfare and you wish to see them live a more fulfilled life.

Reluctance to work with you can hamper any progress in the counselling process. You will recognise reluctance by the sullen, uncooperative attitude which the learner has. Learners may even be late for sessions, or forget to come at all. The best way to address this problem is by explaining the work which has to be done: you want them to be happy and successful in their own manner. You can also “join” them by telling them that you understand their reluctance as they probably feel that you are going to tell them what to do. However, this is not possible for you to do as each person knows himself or herself best. The learner’s unhappiness is an indication that they need somebody to encourage them along the route which they themselves choose and you are willing to give them this support if they allow you to do so.

### **3.4.4 THE COUNSELLING CONTRACT**

This is one way in which learners commit themselves to undertake certain actions within a specific time limit. The task which is set is often in the form of an awareness exercise and the helper agrees to cooperate in this process. Let us look at this example:

“If you come back next week and tell me how the most popular person in your class behaves towards the opposite sex, I will give you the opportunity to talk about this so that we can evaluate this person’s actions together.”

These contracts are informal. If the learner comes back to the next session without having done the work, the reason for his or her inability to perform is agreed upon and this often allows the helper to understand the problem better and formulate a more suitable contract for the next session.

## **3.5 THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LEARNING PROGRAM- ME TEACHER IN THE COUNSELLING MODEL**

The counselling model cannot exist without your help. A model only survives if people keep it going and use it on a regular basis. This means that you, as the educator who has regular contact with the learners, have to be an active part of the counselling model. How is this done? You need certain skills for and responses to situations. Gaining these skills gives you confidence and allows you to interview a learner (or have an informal chat with him or her) which can eventually lead to the problem being solved.

You will always be faced with the problem of too many problems and too little time to pay attention to them. Your contribution can, however, make the difference between your school being a healthy one or not.

Let us now move on to discussing assessment and observation. These techniques can help counsellors understand the learner better.

### **3.5.1 ASSESSMENT**

Our discussion of assessment is based primarily on the work of Denamiel (1993) and seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is assessment?
- Why do we assess?
- How do we assess?
- How should we use this knowledge?

#### ***3.5.1.1 WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?***

Assessment in the school context usually concerns the learner's academic performance. The most common form is through some or other test and primarily assesses the learner's cognitive functioning. People often criticise this form of assessment, because it has numerous shortcomings when not applied correctly. It can also be misleading when, for example, a learner works consistently throughout the year only to do poorly in the examination because of certain physical and psychological influences at the time of writing the examination. Conversely, a learner who fails to work throughout the year may obtain a higher score in the examination by mere luck because he or she correctly spotted what to study.

Assessment should, therefore, not only focus on the learner's intellectual ability, since we should think of the whole learner. Assessment should thus cover the intellectual, physical, social and emotional facets of the learner.

The educator or counsellor collects, organises, interprets and records information through the assessment process to formulate a total picture. We can see this as an ongoing process and the learners should be encouraged to give their input.

#### ***3.5.1.2 WHY DO WE ASSESS?***

The reason for assessment is to provide insight into learners' needs. The educator is then able to plan more beneficial learning experiences or offer remedial support. Assessment will enable you to

- identify learner strengths and weaknesses
- diagnose sources of error
- motivate learners
- compare the learner's performance and behaviour with that of the required norms
- plan corrective measures

#### ***3.5.1.3 HOW DO WE ASSESS?***

The educator can use several appropriate techniques to gain suitable information about a learner. We see this from the presentation of assessment techniques in table 3.1. The technique is given followed by the recording procedures that are usually used with the technique. An indication of the type of information that is obtained then follows and finally some practical examples of how you can apply the technique in the classroom.

TABLE 3.1  
*Assessment techniques*

	<b>Assessment technique</b>	<b>Recording procedure</b>
1	Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● informal</li> <li>● planned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● anecdotal records</li> <li>● check lists</li> <li>● comments</li> <li>● collecting learner's work samples, and dating these at regular intervals</li> </ul>
2	Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner-educator</li> <li>● learner-parent/caregiver-educator</li> <li>● colleagues</li> <li>● group conferences</li> <li>● whole class discussions</li> <li>● members of the wider community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● anecdotal records</li> <li>● cumulative check lists</li> <li>● general/specific remarks relating to a mutual concern</li> <li>● educator's diary</li> </ul>
3	Questioning/listening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● oral or written</li> <li>● open-ended or closed</li> <li>● active listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● rating scales</li> <li>● learners' written, verbal or pictorial responses recorded as comments by the educator</li> <li>● cumulative checklists</li> </ul>
4	Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● norm references</li> <li>● individual diagnostic</li> <li>● educator-constructed</li> <li>● learner-constructed</li> <li>● criterion-referenced</li> <li>● open-book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● marks</li> <li>● grades</li> <li>● raw scores</li> <li>● rating scales</li> <li>● comments</li> </ul>
5	Negotiated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner self-assessment questionnaire</li> <li>● rating scales</li> </ul>
6	Peer learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner self-assessment questionnaire</li> <li>● rating scales</li> </ul>
7	Learner self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● individual profiles added to at regular intervals by the learner but kept by the educator for easy reference</li> </ul>
8	Peer assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● collecting samples of work</li> <li>● written review</li> <li>● notating learner comments</li> <li>● question-and-answer situations</li> </ul>
9	Learner's workbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● marks and grades</li> <li>● comments</li> </ul>
10	Displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● photographs</li> <li>● questionnaires</li> <li>● anecdotal records</li> <li>● surveys</li> </ul>



	<b>Information obtained</b>	<b>Practical example for the classroom</b>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner attitudes, feelings and values</li> <li>● strategies employed to complete a task</li> <li>● learner understanding of concepts</li> <li>● learner strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>● learner interaction and relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● roles</li> <li>● written work</li> <li>● performances</li> <li>● experiments</li> <li>● problem solving</li> <li>● reporting</li> <li>● conversation</li> <li>● improvisation</li> <li>● cooperative learning tasks</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● knowledge and understanding of concepts</li> <li>● learner attitudes, feelings and values</li> <li>● understanding and demonstration of concepts</li> <li>● strategies employed to complete a task</li> <li>● pinpoint learner progress and achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● individual, small/large group situations</li> <li>● individual learning programmes</li> <li>● contracts</li> <li>● analysing information from a parent/caregiver</li> <li>● reviewing past records and reports</li> <li>● discussing concerns with specialists in the wider community</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner attitudes, feelings and values</li> <li>● learner strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>● learner understanding of what is expected of them</li> <li>● learner communication skills</li> <li>● to gauge how learners organise data, recall information, explain and obtain conclusions incorporating creative and analytical thinking processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● interviews, questionnaires, surveys</li> <li>● quizzes and oral texts</li> <li>● group/class discussions</li> <li>● conferences</li> <li>● informal conversations</li> <li>● use questions to revise, reinforce ideas, clarify understanding, extend thinking and to explore available options</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● error analysis</li> <li>● mastery and understanding of concepts</li> <li>● application of skills</li> <li>● strategies employed to complete a task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● to check the prerequisite of the learner before introducing a concept, new topic or unit of work</li> <li>● to ascertain procedural/conceptual strengths and difficulties and the rate of progress made by each learner</li> <li>● to ascertain learner attainment of knowledge and skills at the completion of a topic or unit of work</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● work habits</li> <li>● organisational and planning skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● assignments/contracts</li> <li>● work cards/goal-setting tasks</li> <li>● individual learning programmes</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● leadership skills</li> <li>● cooperative learning skills</li> <li>● learner attitudes and values</li> <li>● organisational values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● task cards</li> <li>● check lists</li> <li>● peer tutoring</li> <li>● rating scales</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how learners feel and think about aspects that they are concerned about or happy with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● log books</li> <li>● brainstorming</li> <li>● attitude scales</li> <li>● diaries or journals</li> <li>● allowing learners to observe their peers at work</li> </ul>

8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learner reflection and feedback</li> <li>● insights into processes or criteria used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● sociograms</li> <li>● reviewing a class talk focusing on the positive aspects and areas needing further development</li> <li>● group activities</li> <li>● peer tutoring</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● work habits and attitude to work</li> <li>● organisational and planning skills</li> <li>● correcting and marking learner work, stressing the positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● correcting and marking learner work, stressing the positive</li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● level and range of learner understanding</li> <li>● organisational and cooperative work skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● this is an ongoing process which should encompass all key learning areas</li> </ul>

### ***3.5.1.4 HOW DO WE USE THIS KNOWLEDGE?***

You should realise that overall assessment is an essential part of your accompaniment of the learner, since assessment helps in the following ways:

- a learner's confidence and enthusiasm for the work will increase
- the learner's work habits will improve
- the learner will understand new concepts
- the learner will get to know his or her strengths and weaknesses
- you will better understand how to plan teaching programmes
- you will be able to diagnose learners' needs
- you will know how to group learners of the same level, thereby helping individual learners
- you will make the teaching profession more relevant
- you will also be more accountable to the learners' needs

We will now look at one assessment technique — observation — that you may use.

## **3.6 OBSERVATION**

Observation is an exploratory technique that should be part of every educator's role. We can assess the learner as a total person through an exploratory programme. This total knowledge is a prerequisite for you as the educator who are going to support the learner. The process of observation can either be informal or planned. We can learn something about the learner through informal and planned observation that the learner may not want to communicate verbally.

We will discuss observation by referring to:

- the observer
- the observed
- observation guidelines

### **3.6.1 THE OBSERVER**

Your reason for observing should never stem from idle curiosity, but always from a deep

concern rooted in pedagogic love. You observe the learner to understand how the learner sees himself or herself, in other words to find out his or her self-concept. This becomes possible by using a technique called “walk a mile in my shoes”, which simply means sharing the learner’s experiences and outlook on life.

Pedagogic observation will place the following demands on the observer:

- You have to be nonprejudiced. The observer must rid himself or herself of all previous impressions as this will influence perceptions of the learner.
- You should see every learner as an individual.
- You should regard each learner as unique.
- The observations must not be sporadic, but sustained over a period of time so that you can form a justifiable image of the person you are observing. Accurate observation is important and you cannot base it on infrequent behaviour occurrences. It is essential to note the frequency of such behaviour and the factors causing it.
- Be objective — do not become involved subjectively.
- Do not come to overhasty conclusions — first make sure that you have sufficient and reliable data.

### **3.6.2 THE OBSERVED**

The learner is never an object, but always a fellow human being who may be in need of support. The learner will reveal himself or herself in various ways such as by favourable or unfavourable manifestations.

Some of the more favourable manifestations include friendliness, honesty, willingness, sound school achievement, creativity, dutifulness, industry, reliability, humanity, courtesy, enthusiastic participation in school and other activities, relaxed attitude, neatness, tranquillity, good concentration ability, obedience, energy, realism, easy social intercourse, good manners, strong will, cheerfulness, loyalty, modesty, outstanding achievement in sport, qualities of leadership, frankness, punctuality, helpfulness, positive disposition, and interest.

Some of the more unfavourable manifestations include brutality, dishonesty, lying, thieving, quick temper, stubbornness, laziness, instability, underachievement, truancy, early school-leaving, evasion of homework, excessive tension, rebelliousness, bravado, withdrawal from school and other activities, general anxiety, fluctuating attention, restlessness, daydreaming, poor concentration, specific fears, poor appetite, headaches, stomach pains, hay fever, sleeping problems, disobedience, sexual activities, fatigue, obsession, hysterical outbursts, hyperactivity, bullying, various types of learning outbursts, exaggeration, lack of self-confidence, shyness, bad manners, weak will, rejection, lack of interest, absent-mindedness, boisterousness, neglect, roughness, depression, conceit, cowardliness, disloyalty, indolence, idleness, mournfulness, absenteeism.

### **3.6.3 OBSERVATION GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines apply to “what” should be observed (adapted from study guide: educational guidance practice 1, 1994:7–10).

### ***3.6.3.1 COMMUNICATION (CONVERSATION)***

The learner's way of communicating is one of the richest sources of obtaining information about him or her. Keep the following in mind when observing the learner's style of communicating:

- How does the learner send his or her message?
- Is the learner capable of verbalising his or her thoughts?
- How does the learner receive messages?
- Does the learner understand the symbols used during communication?

You should also pay attention to the learner's language usage when you are communicating, as this may indicate membership of a subcultural group. Garbers (1980:18–19) points out, for example, that short, simple sentences, very active verbs, the repeated use of conjunctions such as "and", as well as categorical statements in which cause and effect are confused, can be an indication of a milieu handicap. You should be very careful identifying this as a problem so that a learner is not labelled purely on the basis of his or her language usage. Not every learner who uses group language comes from a pedagogically nonsupportive family. This type of error is called semantic stereotyping.

### ***3.6.3.2 GENERAL SCHOLASTIC BEHAVIOUR***

The characteristic school milieu (climate) that is peculiar to each school can often have an effect on the learner's scholastic behaviour. The following example should explain this statement:

A school that has a tradition of being strongly academic in its orientation can make an underachiever or a weak achiever feel that he or she is rejected — even if this is not the case. (The scholastic underachiever is regarded as that learner who, according to all the indications, ought to perform better scholastically than he or she actually does. The weak achiever's scholastic performance is below the average percentage of the class.) The educational guide must, therefore, keep in mind how learners experience the school milieu.

In addition to the learner's general scholastic behaviour, the way in which a learner plays and his or her behaviour in the playground and on the sports field, will also reveal important facets of his or her personality.

### ***3.6.3.3 RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP***

The educational guide must try to obtain answers to questions such as the following:

- Does the learner plan and structure his or her time?
- Does the learner use his or her free periods productively?
- Does the learner approach his or her problems in a calm and systematic way?
- Can the learner control his or her emotions when he or she becomes tense and anxious?
- Can the learner be trusted with tasks in the absence of the educational guide?

If you undertake this type of observation, you should give every learner in the class the opportunity to carry out a task (clean the board, tidy up the books, even arrange debates

and serve as chairperson on committees). You should also let every learner have an opportunity as class leader. In this way, you can gain valuable information concerning the learner's leadership, self-confidence, self-assertiveness, tolerance, initiative, charisma and orientation to problem solving.

#### ***3.6.3.4 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS***

You can learn a lot about a learner when you observe what his or her interpersonal relationships are like. With this in mind, think about answers to the following questions:

- Does the learner assume the initiative and leadership among his or her friends?
- Does the learner readily accept the leadership of others?
- Is the learner accepted in the group?
- Who are the learner's friends?
- How does the learner adapt to new situations or after changes?
- How does the learner identify with members of his or her own sex?
- How does the learner identify with members of the other sex?
- Are there any indications of problems with relationships?

#### ***3.6.3.5 PHYSICAL CONDITION AND MENTAL STATE OF HEALTH***

Much can occur with a learner that may escape attention if you do not observe everything in the classroom. You should notice and report signs of the following:

- malnutrition
- abuse
- anorexia
- epilepsy
- chronic state of illness

You should approach problems of a sensitive nature such as pregnancy, suicidal tendencies, sexually related problems and spiritual problems with extreme tact and urgency. The implication when observing in this sphere is that you should be familiar with the symptoms of these problems.

#### ***3.6.3.6 OBSERVATION OF THE LEARNER'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT***

There are times when a community will look down on people who have different ideas and ways of doing things, or who practise unusual vocations. Similarly, learners in school may look down on learners who are "different" or whose parents' circumstances are not in keeping with the norm. This often causes a situation where such a learner does not have a girlfriend or boyfriend or does not get elected onto a committee.

You should be aware of the group dynamics among the learners.

#### ***3.6.3.7 CONSCIENCE FORMING***

Conscience forming refers to the moral and ethical significance attribution of the learner. Think about the way in which learners allow themselves to be guided by their consciences, their views of corruption, bribery and the use of influence to attain a goal.

### ***3.6.3.8 OBSERVATION OF THE LEARNER'S ATTITUDES, DISPOSITION AND TEMPERAMENT***

Learners' disposition towards themselves, their parents, the school and other people is important here. You should establish whether the learner is positive, anxious, aggressive, bored, confused, et cetera. Follow up enquiries about changes in the learner's disposition to determine their cause. Also note whether the learner's perceived attitudes are true or whether they merely reflect a mask.

### ***3.6.3.9 SELF-OBSERVATION BY THE LEARNER***

Remember that as the educational guide you should let the learner observe himself or herself. This technique can be particularly effective when a learner has to implement a study programme. Can the learner, for example, keep a personal record of how well he or she succeeds in keeping to his or her study times and how this assists or has an adverse effect on his or her routine. A learner with behavioural problems can keep a record of how he or she felt before each incident, such as uncontrollable temper or destructive behaviour, and what happened before and after. The learner should be able to discuss this self-observed behaviour with you and so explore his or her self-concept and experiential world.

### ***3.6.3.10 SUPPLEMENTING THE OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES***

You should constantly be aware of new fields of observation and try to keep abreast of new observation techniques that are being designed. Some other valuable techniques that we do not discuss here are the following:

- writing autobiographies
- creative paragraphs (fantasy style)
- puppet theatre (where, at critical times, the class is asked to say or write what will happen next)
- spontaneous role-play
- video recordings

Observation should not descend to a mere recording of learner behaviour. The observer's observations have to be verified. We do this by comparing the observations against observations of other observers or parties. This protects the learner from prejudiced observations.



#### **ACTIVITY 3.5**

Choose a learner from your group. Use some of the observational guidelines that we have given and observe this learner over a period of two to three weeks. Record your findings and write a brief summary of the personal image of the learner based on your observations

.....

.....

.....

.....

## **3.7 CONCLUSION**

We spent a considerable time in this section discussing the role of the counsellor in creating a meaningful counselling relationship. We looked at the innate characteristics and those acquired characteristics that enhance the success of the counsellor.

We saw that assessment of the learner is essential, but has to take the total learner into consideration. There are different techniques that we can use to assess learners but in this section we confined ourselves solely to the technique of observation.

# **THE INTERVIEW**

## **3.8 INTRODUCTION**

The interview is a technique that is associated with the dynamic process of counselling. The interview is one technique used in pedagogic exploration and generally takes the form of oral discussion. Although we often equate the interview with a discussion, it is a broader field of work than indicated by the term "discussion". In this section we will look at the interview as a form of pedagogic exploration. Our discussion will cover the following:

- defining an interview
- interviewing methods
- types of interview
- interviewing techniques
- an individual (one-on-one) interview
- group interviews

## **3.9 WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?**

You should not see the pedagogic interview as a one-way conversation; it is the actualisation of the appeal, listen to, response essences. It is also a coexistential involvement or engagement between participants in the dialogue: since existential communication takes place only between human beings, the pedagogic interview is a genuinely human event (Petrick 1986:27).

We want to highlight the following points about the interview (Petrick 1986:27):

- It is an individual affair, involving an educator and learner.
- It is the core essence of the clinical basis of a scientific vocational guidance and counselling programme.
- It requires an accepting adult in the role of interviewer so that the learner immediately feels secure.
- It requires a place that guarantees intimacy and provides the right atmosphere for consultation that supplies sufficient sources of information.
- A special understanding is needed between interviewer and interviewee.
- Educational trust, educational understanding and educational authority must mark the interview.
- The interview must be oriented towards advancing the learner's maturity.

In trying to answer the question “What is an interview?”, we also look at the definition of Gouws, Louw, Meyer and Plag (1979) which states: “The interview is a discussion between a therapist, counsellor or other professional person and a patient, client or prospective employee, aimed at gathering information for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, establishing abilities, counselling or research. In keeping with the aim, a directive or non-directive approach can be used in the interview.”

The definition of Gouws et al highlights the following:

- “a discussion”: It is a form of dialogue that should be seen as a two-way process. Both parties are equally involved in the process.
- “between therapist, counsellor or some other professional and a patient, client, prospective employee”: This gives us some indication of the roles of the parties involved in the interview. There is the counsellor or interviewer who, because of his or her training and expertise, will ensure that the interview situation progresses in an orderly manner. The client, in this case the learner, is the one who approaches the interviewer (educational guide) for assistance because he or she is experiencing distress, is in need of support or requires information about some matter.
- “aimed at”: As a discussion, it is not aimless chatter but is goal oriented.
- “gathering information for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, establishing abilities, counselling or research”: The specific aims for conducting the interview are highlighted.
- “direct or non-directive approach”: There are different approaches and techniques used in interviewing. The method and technique will, however, be linked to the aims of the interview.

## 3.10 METHODS OF INTERVIEWING

This explanation of what an interview is refers to the different approaches to an interview. We will now look at some of these approaches.

### 3.10.1 THE DIRECT (STRUCTURED) APPROACH

The interviewer has the leading role in the direct approach. The interviewer may have a set of questions compiled beforehand which he or she expects the learner to answer. The role of the person being interviewed is limited to answering questions to obtain information. We generally use this method in a selection interview, when the interviewer needs to obtain information about the learner or when the learner wants information from the educational guide. Jacobs (1985:53) refers to this as an interview that is conducted from an internal frame of reference. In other words, the interview is guided by what the interviewer wants to know. The following is an example of a directed (structured) interview.

#### Example

*Educator:* This is the third morning that you are late for school. What is going on?

*Learner:* It is my father, Miss.

*Educator:* Can you not get your father to leave earlier?

*Learner:* Yes, Miss.

*Educator:* How long does it take to drive to school?



- Learner:* About 10 minutes, Miss.
- Educator:* What route do you travel to school?
- Learner:* We come on the N3 highway, Miss.
- Educator:* You should try and get your father to use another route or else leave earlier, because the N3 is very busy after 7.00 am.
- Learner:* Yes, Miss.
- Educator:* Now I hope you will speak to your father this afternoon so that this does not happen again.
- Learner:* Yes, Miss

From this example you can see that the interview was guided and directed by the educator with her questions; it did not take the learner into consideration. Look at the following example of how this interview could have progressed had this been a nondirect (unstructured) interview.

### 3.10.2 THE NONDIRECT (UNSTRUCTURED) APPROACH

#### Example

- Educator:* This is the third morning that you are late for school. What is going on?
- Learner:* It is my father, Miss.
- Educator:* What do you mean, "it is my father"?
- Learner:* He first has to see to my baby sister and take her to a creche and only then can he bring me to school.
- Educator:* So he does this all alone.
- Learner:* Yes, Miss, because my mother is not there, Miss.
- Educator:* Where is your mother?
- Learner:* She left home three days ago.
- Educator:* Left home?
- Learner:* Yes, Miss, she left my father.

Can you see the different outcome and information that comes out of the nondirected interview? This approach was not based on the educator's preconceived ideas as in the first example. The nondirect approach enabled the educator to uncover the "real" problem and eventually, she will be in a position to offer educational support addressed at the need of the learner.

Petrick (1986:31) says that the indirect interview differs from the direct interview in that the learner plays the leading part; the learner has the active share and the interviewer is the sympathetic listener. The interviewer gives the learner the opportunity to tell about his or her problems and to "talk them out" (Haasbroek 1978:58). The interviewer's part is to summarise, evaluate and interpret the information given by the learner (Nel & Sonnekus 1959:106).

The implication of the free unstructured interview is that interviewer and learner encounter each other as equal partners, according to Van Strien (1966:49). Thus, there is a mutual encounter. The counsellor, as interviewer, cannot plan any theme for the indirect interview, or even control its course; the assumption is thus that the learner will spontaneously express his or her deepest feelings. The indirect interview may be useful when the learner is prepared and frank enough to unburden himself or herself openly

and spontaneously; but since in practice a learner seldom approaches the counsellor of his or her own accord, its general usefulness is doubtful.

Also, the method is based on the unjustifiable assumption that the learner is able to identify, formulate and even solve his or her own problem. Its other drawbacks are that it is very time consuming; examined more closely, it is seen to stress the learner's share excessively and reduce the share of the counsellor or educator to that of sympathetic listener.

### **3.10.3 COMPOSITE APPROACH**

The composite interview method is made up of the best elements from the direct and the indirect interviews, and is neither learner-centred nor interviewer-centred. As a professional, the counsellor does not force the learner in any one direction, but is interested in any view and attitude shown. However, the counsellor's educational responsibility obliges him or her to steer the learner's development in a different direction if it takes a wrong turn. The learner is, therefore, led to take the initiative and implement his or her own decisions. This means that the composite interview is intended to effect counselling, information and advice.

The composite interview emphasises the following three characteristics according to Petrick (1986:31):

- The educator is interested in the view and attitudes that the learner reveals.
- The educator's responsibility is to steer the learner in another direction if the learner takes the wrong direction.
- The learner is guided to take the initiative to carry out his or her own decisions.

## **3.11 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS**

There are different aims for interviews (indicated in our definition in 3.8) and the aim will thus determine the type of interview. One of the following types of interview can be used depending on the aim that is to be achieved:

- an exploratory interview
- a historicity interview
- an advisory interview
- an informative interview

### **3.11.1 AN EXPLORATORY INTERVIEW**

Being together is the crux of the interview and, in principle, this presupposes communication from a common world. Far more than mere reporting, the interview brings to light what has been hidden. Since the counsellor's aim is to get to know the learner as a person, he or she must enter subjectively into the learner's world, continually interpreting all he or she experiences with the learner. The interviewer enters into the learner's world to see things through the learner's eyes, but must remain the adult to evaluate his or her observations pedagogically. This produces the phenomenon, objectivity-in-subjectivity.

The condition for adequate unfolding of the exploratory interview is the quality of the

actualisation of the relationship between counsellor and counsellee. There must be no break in the mutual trust between the learner and the adult counsellor.

The exploratory interview is an element of counselling where the learner and counsellor together consider, analyse and integrate. The counsellor finds out, through deliberation, who the learner is and the nature and scope of his or her problem. Conversation itself is used as an aid in the exploratory interview. Assignments and examples from the learner's experience are sometimes necessary to reveal life-contents that have been hidden. This is particularly relevant when working with the very young learner. You will have to make use of different aids to explain the learner's life-world.

### **3.11.2 A HISTORICITY INTERVIEW**

The historicity conversation is an oral conversation carried on with people who know something of the learner's educational situation, or with the learner himself or herself and then we call it an auto-historicity conversation. The term "historicity" suggests the history of world relations formed by human beings in the course of time. The historicity conversation is an attempt to understand the learner's experiential world. It is meant to discover what the learner has become so far and how he or she has done it. The historicity conversation gives the educator some indication of the learner's personal development and the meaning the learner gives to the contents of education.

### **3.11.3 AN INFORMATIVE INTERVIEW**

Obtaining information is another form of interview. The information sought could include data on the learner's personality structure, education and career. The informative interview is carried out with the learner or with the learner's parents and/or educators. The interviewer gives data to the parents or educators, not intended as facts as such, but meant to be processed by them with a view to supporting the learner.

### **3.11.4 AN ADVISORY INTERVIEW**

The advisory interview involves the parents and/or the learner with problems. The parents of a learner with problems may in desperation approach the school educator for advice, because they are aware of their helplessness in their child's education.

The parents are worried about their child and seek help and advice from the counsellor.

The counsellor's helpful advice and relevant information set the parents on their way toward more efficient guidance of their child. The counsellor is responsible for initiating and directing the advisory conversation after giving the parents his or her moral support. The conversation centres on the problematic elements with a view to improving the educational situation.

The learner's involvement in an advisory conversation is not necessarily due to educational problems, but may be due to his or her need for help and support in decisions on educational and career choices. Advice is future oriented; it should help the learner to keep the future in perspective and help the learner to help himself or herself (Petrick 1986:32 & 33).

Remember, the type of interview will be determined by what you aim to accomplish.

## 3.12 INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

We stated that the aim of the interview will determine the type of interview. When we use the interview as an exploratory medium, its aim will be to understand the life-world of the learner. We will look at the use of "questioning" and "reflection" techniques used in interviews to learn about the life-world of the learner or to understand the learner's parents.

We will discuss "questioning" and "reflecting" within the context of the traditionally understood interview approach namely, one-on-one. These techniques can be used in other situations, such as when doing group interviews. The techniques are acceptable for use with young learners, but may need some adaptation. Instead of using a direct approach with a young learner the counsellor can, for example, create a fantasy situation such as the following: "Today we will talk about 'Thoko' or 'Bertie' (fictitious character). What do you think Thoko or Bertie want to talk about?" It is quite likely that the young learner will project some of his or her feelings onto Thoko or Bertie without feeling threatened.

### 3.12.1 INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

The questioning and reflection techniques are aimed at seeing the person from an internal frame of reference. "An internal frame of reference is how the client sees himself/herself, how he/she feels about the situation and an external frame of reference is how the counsellor sees the client, how the counsellor feels about the client's situation" (Porter 1950:63). So you see, the internal frame of reference refers to the person, to his or her feelings, desires, attitudes, et cetera while the external frame of reference indicates how another person (in this case the therapist or counsellor) sees the client. These two frames of reference play an indispensable part in interviewing and table 3.2 illustrates them diagrammatically (Porter 1950:63).

Table 3.2 shows that the therapist who operates in terms of his or her own frame of reference tends to interpret the data as he or she imagines them. The therapist also directs the interview to suit his or her own needs; in other words, the therapist decides what will be discussed. Figure 3.3 is a diagrammatic representation of an interview done from an internal frame of reference.

FIGURE 3.3

*Working from an internal frame of reference*

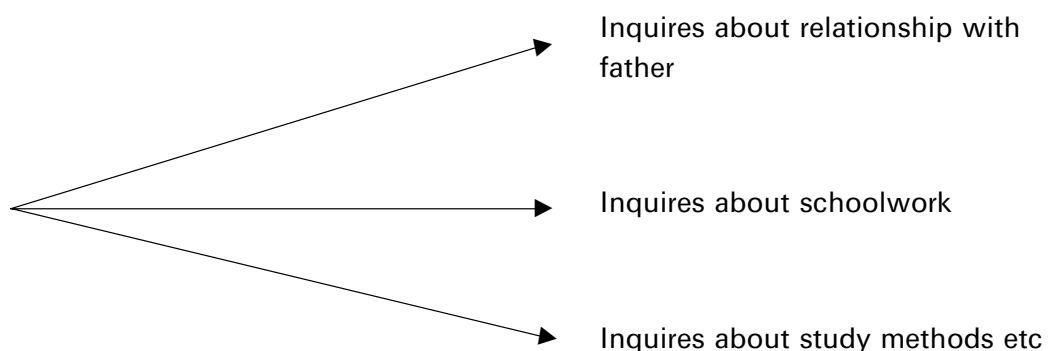


TABLE 3.2  
*Frames of reference*

INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE	CLIENT TALKS ABOUT	EXTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE
<p>The therapist conducts an interview from his or her internal frame of reference</p> <p><b>THERAPIST 1</b></p> <p>The therapist arranges the data into a schematic representation of some sort, for example:</p> <p><b>A. SYMPTOMS</b></p> <p>(1) .....</p> <p>(2) .....</p> <p>(3) .....</p> <p><b>B. EGO STRUCTURES</b></p> <p>(1) .....</p> <p>(2) .....</p> <p>(3) .....</p> <p><b>C. EXPERIENCED</b></p> <p>(1) .....</p> <p>(2) .....</p> <p>(3) .....</p> <p>According to this, the therapist makes a diagnosis as he or she sees the problem</p>	<p>External factors as they appear to him or her</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>own behaviour as he or she perceives it</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Personal feelings about himself or herself, his or her objectives, values, et cetera</p> <p>and</p> <p>during the interview, the client reveals much of his or her personality through behaviour</p>	<p>The therapist conducts an interview from an external frame of reference</p> <p><b>THERAPIST 2</b></p> <p>The therapist attempts to see what the client relates from his or her own point of view; the- rapist attempts to understand it.</p> <p>After this therapist attempts to arrange the data in the following possible scheme:</p> <p><b>A. The client appears to feel the following about matters:</b></p> <p>(1) .....</p> <p>(2) .....</p> <p>(3) .....</p> <p><b>B. The client appears to have the following behavioural mannerisms:</b></p> <p>(1) .....</p> <p>(2) .....</p> <p>(3) .....</p> <p>Et cetera</p>

● **Working from an internal frame of reference**

Now here is an example of how his interview (presented in figure 3.3) can proceed, working from the internal frame of reference:

Therapist or counsellor = T; learner = L

T: Johnnie, you wanted to discuss a problem with me?

L: Yes, sir. My problem is that I cannot concentrate properly.

T: How do you get on with your father?

L: Well, sir.

- T: Is he very strict?
- L: Yes, but not too strict, sir. We have a good relationship. It is just that I battle to concentrate.
- T: How is your school work?
- L: Not so good. I think I could do better.
- T: What do you get for mathematics?
- L: Maths is my best subject, sir. I get around 70 percent for it.
- T: How do you study?
- L: I make summaries, sir (and so on).

In this interview, the therapist is operating in terms of his own frame of reference. He chooses the questions and decides what he will ask about.

### ● Working from an external frame of reference

If the therapist uses an external frame of reference, the interview would be something like the following:

- T: Johnnie, you wished to speak to me?
- L: Yes, sir. My problem is that I find it difficult to concentrate.
- T: Tell me more about your concentration problem.
- L: You see, sir, our house is not very quiet. My mom and dad both work and my two older brothers play CDs the whole afternoon. There is so much noise that I cannot concentrate on my work.
- T: It sounds as though your two brothers do not do much studying themselves!
- L: No sir, they do not study at all. In the evening, when I tell my parents that I cannot work with all the noise, they do not believe me.
- T: Johnnie, do you feel that your parents do not understand your problem?
- L: Yes, sir. And they do not listen when I talk to them.
- T: Do you mean that they do not have enough interest in you?
- L: Exactly, sir. They are so busy doing their own thing and they do not really care about what I am doing. You see, sir, I was an afterthought and sometimes I feel that they did not really want me.
- T: Almost a feeling of rejection?
- L: Precisely, sir. I feel left out (and so on).

The therapist has no preconceived ideas in this interview. He tries to remain involved with the boy, thereby becoming part of his life-world. The therapist also tries to see the problem in terms of the learner's frame of reference — in other words, the way the learner is involved in his problem, attributes meaning to it and experiences it. You should study Jacobs and Vrey (1982:95–106) who deal with the trust relationship, the therapeutic climate and active listening. The following are important in active listening: accurate observation, accurate listening and accurate empathising with the client's feelings.

Jacobs and Vrey (1982:85–86) have the following to say about this:

- *Accurate listening.* The therapist must endeavour to listen perceptively to what the learner is saying. This means hearing what the learner is saying, not just what the therapist wishes to hear. If therapists hear what they wish to hear, they are working in terms of their own internal frames of reference. The therapist should listen in terms of an external frame of reference. This will make the therapist prepared to listen not only to the spoken words, but also to what is left unsaid. The therapist should, furthermore, note the tone of voice and intonation. Such sensitive listening will pick up both what the person is telling the therapist and what the client is saying to himself or herself.
- *Accurate observation.* This means that the therapist has to watch the learner closely, noting any signs of sadness, tension or anxiety. The therapist should ask himself or herself, “What do I learn from the client’s nonverbal communication?”
- *Accurate empathising.* The therapist should be sensitive to the learner’s dominant state of mind and emotional experience. Not only should the therapist define any aggression, anxiety or depression in a detached, cognitive way, but should empathise with the learner to the point where the therapist can “feel” the learner’s emotion, whether it be aggression or sadness. Only when the therapist opens up or “discloses” himself or herself can he or she get on to the client’s wavelength. Accurate observation, listening and empathising with the client (and his or her problems) demands an attitude of intentional involvement on the therapist’s part which will enable him or her to diagnose the client’s problems as the client personally experiences them.

Now that you have an idea of what we mean by an internal frame of reference we will look at questioning and reflecting as techniques to help you see the learner from within an internal frame of reference.

### **3.12.2 ASKING QUESTIONS**

#### ***3.12.2.1 POSE QUESTIONS***

Pose questions in such a way that they do not impede the flow of discussion. The constructed (open) question is more suitable for interviewing than the structured question that leaves the interviewee with little room to respond.

#### **Example**

*Unstructured:*           Where shall we begin today?

                                  What would you like to talk about?

*Structured:*             Do you regularly do your homework?

The above examples show that the unstructured question could open up further discussion, whereas the structured question may limit the response to a “yes” or “no” answer thus discouraging further discussion.

### **3.12.2.2 USE PROBING QUESTIONS**

Use probing questions to guide the interviewee to expand on something he or she has already said. We usually introduce this kind of question with words such as “how” or “who”. You can use other kinds of questions to penetrate to the core of what the interviewee wants to say.

#### **Example**

*Learner:* I do not like going home in the afternoons.

*Educator:* Why do you not like going home?

or

Could you explain a bit more why you feel this way?

### **3.12.2.3 TWO-PART QUESTIONS**

Guard against using two-part questions, as they will confuse learners.

#### **Example**

*Educator:* Do you have problems with the work, or is it your friends that are bothering you?

### **3.12.3 REFLECTION**

Reflection means thinking deeply about what the interviewee has said. You must ensure that you hear and understand correctly what the interviewee has said and is feeling.

Remember the personal and intimate nature of the interview and be aware that, whatever the interviewee shares with you, is loaded with feeling. The interviewee often communicates an emotional message without saying it in so many words.

You show your understanding of the interviewee’s feelings when you can verbalise his or her feelings. You put into words what the interviewee cannot or does not. This means that you indicate the following to the interviewee:

- You are aware of his or her feelings.
- The learner’s feelings are acceptable in the interview.
- You are prepared to deviate slightly from the course of the interview to give the interviewee an opportunity to explore and accept his or her feelings.

#### **Example**

*Learner:* If my sister had bashed the car, my father would just have laughed. It is always like that.

*Educator:* So you feel that your father favours your sister and you are bitter about it.

The interviewer should be able to reflect what the learner is saying, in other words be able to paraphrase or summarise the learner’s main idea or thought without changing what has been said.



### ***3.12.3.1 PARAPHRASING***

When paraphrasing, you

- restate the main ideas contained in the interviewee's communication
- do not add to or change the meaning of the interviewee's statement
- avoid parroting the interviewee's comments

Paraphrasing

- indicates that you are attempting to understand what the interviewee is saying
- helps to develop a working relationship between you and the interviewee
- serves to check your understanding of the interviewee's statement
- helps the interviewee crystallise his or her thoughts
- gives direction to the interview

You can paraphrase

- when the interviewee is threatened by a discussion of his or her feelings
- to check and clarify your perceptions of what the interviewee is saying
- to indicate to the interviewee that you understand what he or she has said, thereby facilitating further discussion

Here are a few more points to remember.

When summarising

- systematically integrate the important ideas contained in the interviewee's comments and restate them.

Summarising

- provides a concise, accurate and timely summary of interviewees' statements and helps them to organise their thoughts
- helps the interviewee review what has been said
- stimulates a thorough exploration of themes that are important to the interviewee
- provides organisation for the interview

You can summarise

- when the interviewee's comments are lengthy, rambling, or confused
- when the interviewee presents a number of unrelated ideas
- to add direction and coherence to the interview
- to move from one phase of the interview to the next
- to conclude the interview

Do the following exercise (from Jacobs et al 1992) to practise your skills in reflection, asking questions or responding to an interviewee. You have to choose the appropriate response. Try to give reasons why a specific response is correct and why the others are less effective. The correct responses appear at the end of the exercise.



### ACTIVITY 3.6

#### CHOOSING THE CORRECT RESPONSE

- 1 Client: We've been divorced for a year and I am having an awful time.
  - (a) Interviewer: (giving the client full attention): An awful time.
  - (b) Interviewer: (silent, giving the client full attention).
  - (c) Interviewer: (giving the client full attention): You've been divorced for a year.
  
- 2 Client: I just can't get used to everything that goes with being divorced.
  - (a) Interviewer: It's difficult being divorced, isn't it?
  - (b) Interviewer: It sounds as though you can't get used to being divorced.
  - (c) Interviewer: Could you give me an example of what you mean?
  
- 3 Client: One example is living in a flat instead of my own house.
  - (a) Interviewer: Do you have a comfortable flat?
  - (b) Interviewer: Uh hum.
  - (c) Interviewer: What are some other examples?
  
- 4 Client: And I find it hard to be on my own so much. It is so different from the way it was when I was married. I am used to having someone around the house.
  - (a) Interviewer: What does it feel like to be alone?
  - (b) Interviewer: It's nice to have someone else around the house.
  - (c) Interviewer: Did you and your husband spend a lot of time together?
  
- 5 Client: It doesn't feel good at all. Most of my friends are married. I feel isolated, even unwanted, sometimes.
  - (a) Interviewer: Now that you are divorced, your friends are no longer interested in you?
  - (b) Interviewer: Since your divorce, you feel lonely and left out.
  - (c) Interviewer: You feel isolated and unwanted.
  
- 6 Client: Yes, the one party I went to I felt very awkward. I haven't been invited to a party since.
  - (a) Interviewer: Can you tell me why you felt awkward at the party you attended?
  - (b) Interviewer: It sounds as though you have been left out of most of the parties.
  - (c) Interviewer: Was your former husband invited to these parties?
  
- 7 Client: I found it difficult to talk to people. It seemed like I didn't have much in common with them anymore. I ended up sitting on my own and after a while I just left.
  - (a) Interviewer: What did you try to talk about?
  - (b) Interviewer: Does this happen to you in other situations as well?
  - (c) Interviewer: You must have found this a very difficult situation.
  
- 8 Client: Yes, I have begun to avoid my old friends. I want to make new friends but I'm having trouble meeting new people.
  - (a) Interviewer: It sounds as though you want to make a fresh start.
  - (b) Interviewer: You're finding it difficult to make new friends.
  - (c) Interviewer: So you aren't seeing many of your old friends, but you're finding it difficult to make new ones.

- 9 Client: There are very few places where someone of my age can go in order to meet new friends ... that is, the sort of friends I would like to meet.
- (a) Interviewer: It sounds like a difficult situation.
  - (b) Interviewer: What kind of friends would you like to meet?
  - (c) Interviewer: You sound angry about the whole situation.
- 10 Client: I have tried singles groups, going to places on my own, joining in church activities; but I haven't met any interesting people.
- (a) Interviewer: You do not seem to have had much success.
  - (b) Interviewer: Is there anything else you can do to meet interesting people?
  - (c) Interviewer: How do you go about meeting new people?

***Correct solutions to exercise.***

(1) a; (2) c; (3) c; (4) a; (5) b; (6) a; (7) c; (8) c; (9) a; (10) a.

You may not have chosen the correct response each time because the techniques of "questioning" and "reflecting" are skills that require much practice. The more you improve these skills, the more efficient you will become in uncovering the learner's life-world. This is a prerequisite if the learner is to receive adequate support and guidance.

### **3.13 PROGRESSION AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW**

We will look at the structure and progression of the individual and group interview to conclude this theme dealing with the interview. This discussion is taken from Mwamwenda (1995:58–61).

#### **3.13.1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

##### ***3.13.1.1 BEGINNING THE INITIAL INTERVIEW***

When a counsellor meets the client for the first time, it is important that the client is made to feel relaxed and at ease with both himself or herself and the counsellor.

You can achieve this with a warm and enthusiastic exchange of greetings, preferably accompanied by a handshake which is a common custom among most ethnic groups. A general conversation about some events that have been taking place in the local community could follow. This would be part of a warming up session intended to make the client relaxed, in preparation for the more serious discussion of the problem that has brought him or her for counselling.

What you are doing in this initial encounter or interaction is establishing rapport, which simply means that the relationship between you and the client is made positive to the extent that you can see eye to eye and are comfortable enough to conduct a friendly conversation and relationship. You need not dominate the discussion, but you should provide room for the client to express his or her views or raise questions that will enable the client to express himself or herself. It is your responsibility to tune in to what the client is thinking and feeling and how the client is behaving. It is important to remember

that for counselling to be successful, there should be rapport between you (the counsellor) and the client.

It will not be easy for both of you to find a solution to a problem if the nature of the problem has not been clearly identified. One way of achieving this is by getting to know the client as well as possible in terms of his or her background, environment and the client's relationship with himself or herself and others in his or her given locality. You could find out this information by asking questions such as the following:

- What is the problem?
- Who has the problem?
- How and when does the problem occur?
- How frequently does the problem occur?
- What is the prime move of the problem?
- How long has the problem been in existence?
- What are the effects of the problem on the client and those around him or her?

Such questions ought to be answered as truthfully and as accurately as possible to enable counselling to proceed in the right direction.

### ***3.13.1.2 DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM***

After this initial encounter with the client, you can extend the process by directly asking the client to state the purpose of his or her visit. If you initiated the meeting on the basis of previous knowledge of an existing problem, then you should explain why you have invited the client to your office. You may need to find out at some point in the discussion what attempts have been made to resolve the problem, the extent to which success has been attained or why these attempts have failed. As the interaction between the two of you proceeds, you should see that good use is made of empathy, encouragement, attentiveness, acceptance, caring, support, honesty, et cetera.

Empathy, verbal and nonverbal, is considered important in a successful counselling session. Empathy means that you put yourself in the position of the client with a given existing problem, as a way of understanding fully what the client is going through. If a learner, for example, is failing in some of his or her work, you should put yourself in this position with your knowledge about failure in school work or in any other sphere such as work, marriage, relationships with colleagues, family members, or friends. This will give the client the impression that you appreciate his or her problem and will, therefore, enhance the client's willingness to share the problem fully.

You should display verbal empathy by taking an active role in the client's narration to show your deep and abiding interest in the client. You achieve this by summarising what has been said, seeking clarification where this is necessary, restating what has been said for emphasis and understanding by both of you, as well as probing for detailed information. It is equally important for you to display nonverbal behaviour where appropriate. This may include smiling, touching, leaning forward, eye contact, nodding and using gestures. Lack of eye contact in most African cultures may be interpreted as a form of respect, whereas Western cultures consider eye contact important. Touching should be done cautiously so that it does not lead to unintended socially unacceptable

behaviour particularly in relation to a member of the opposite sex. Leaning toward the client shows a desire to be close to the client, and an interest in the client's problem and what is being said. Leaning away from the client might be interpreted as distancing yourself from the client or showing a lack of interest in the client. Try to avoid yawning while counselling the client, as the client may take this as a sign of boredom with what is being said.

Once you have listened to the client and discussed the problem in question, you should seek the client's opinion on the matter. You should also give your assessment of how the client and others may have contributed to the problem and how the problem can be resolved. Some of the things you say in this process of interaction may be rather painful but this is part of finding a solution to the problem. However, you should be very careful not to damage the good and positive relationship established between you and the client.

The next stage is for both of you (counsellor and client) to come up with possible solutions to the problem and how these can be achieved. It is important that the client shows a serious commitment to resolving the problem by applying himself or herself to all necessary actions while you monitor and encourage him or her every step of the way.

### ***3.13.1.3 EXPLORING, IDENTIFYING AND SETTING GOALS***

It is important for the counsellor and client to set certain goals that they intend to accomplish in the course of their counselling. Accompany the setting of goals should be suggestions about how to go about achieving them. There should be a mechanism to assess the progress made and to determine the extent to which the intended goals have been followed and achieved. Setting goals is a difficult, demanding and challenging exercise. It follows, therefore, that the client will have to work hard, persistently and diligently to see that he or she achieves the set goals, thus leading to the solution of the problem.

### **3.13.2 GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Group counselling basically involves a group of people working together under the leadership of a counsellor, with the objective being to solve personal and/or interpersonal problems. It is generally believed that human beings by nature are group-oriented and as such, derive pleasure and satisfaction in functioning in a group setting. We can exploit this positive aspect of human behaviour by using group counselling as a way of solving an existing problem. Organised groups make use of people's natural tendency to gather, work, play and share.

Group counselling helps each client to realise that he or she is not alone in facing the problem that he or she is going through. This provides some psychological relief and reassures the person that the problem is surmountable (solvable). Clients come to understand themselves better and also to understand others better as they interact with one another.

Group counselling reflects what holds true in real life as observed in different groupings such as families, schools, clubs, ethnic and national groups. The group serves as a source of support and feedback which are essential in effective counselling. Each individual is provided with the opportunity of trying out his or her behaviour and finding out the impact it has on others. At the same time, each person learns how others go about addressing their problems.

Groups can play an important role in influencing behaviour formation in a variety of dimensions such as growing, learning behaviour patterns, copying styles, values, career development and social adjustment.

Group counselling acknowledges the influence that others have on individuals. We interact with one another, and in doing so, have the opportunity of influencing one another. The nature of our interaction makes provision for a careful and objective analysis of our behaviour. This is exactly what group counselling is likely to accomplish. We can see the group as a microcosm of society so that the way a person conducts himself or herself in a group reflects what he or she would do in a real society.

However, group counselling may not be beneficial to every client and some clients might find individual counselling more appropriate for their individual needs. Those likely to benefit from group counselling include the following:

- people who have no special problem, but who need to enhance their personal development
- women who have been subjected to ill-treatment
- those who are either shy or aggressive in their interactions with others
- those who have difficulty making or keeping friends
- those who need to learn how to control their temper
- those who have difficulty getting along with peers, parents, educators, bosses or authority figures

Group counselling may not be suitable for the following types of clients:

- those with personal or interpersonal problems that are of a personal and private nature
- those who have a strong fear of social interaction
- those with a low level of tolerance who are likely to be traumatised in such a setting
- impulsive people who may disrupt the proceedings of a group
- those who are ill at ease in a social interaction

Individual counselling is recommended as more effective than group counselling in all these cases. Individual counselling may be more suitable, with group counselling following after the individuals feel more confident or more in control of themselves.

The following weaknesses can be considered inherent in group counselling:

- Some clients' personalities and concerns may not be suited to a group setting.
- There may not be adequate depth in dealing with an individual's problem.
- There may be a tendency for a client to disclose more than is considered essential.
- Confidentiality may be a problem in some of the interactions.

- It is not possible to pay enough attention to an individual's problem.
- Some clients may find it difficult to trust other clients when it comes to self-disclosure.
- There may be pressure to conform, which would be counterproductive to effective counselling.

While individual counselling is predominantly used as a mode of counselling in school settings and other situations, it is evident that group counselling can be used effectively in a classroom as well as the school as a whole. Topics of interest in schools are numerous and include relationships between learners and between educators and learners, study habits, success and failure in school, vocational decisions, girlfriends and boyfriends, learners and their parents, learners in their community, selection of courses and employment opportunities. Learners, educators, and principals can learn how to adjust to their environments by means of counselling.



### ACTIVITY 3.7

Select a learner from within your class group and conduct an interview with him or her. Base your interview on the unstructured approach. Use the techniques of "questioning" and "reflection" to see if you are able to formulate a true picture of the learner.

**REMEMBER:** This is a task, but if you discover that the learner has a certain problem, do not leave it there. Look for ways to assist the learner in his or her predicament.

## 3.14 CONCLUSION

In this section, we defined the interview and then looked at the different methods of interviewing, namely:

- the direct (structured) approach
- the indirect (unstructured) approach
- the composite approach

We discussed the following types of interview:

- exploratory
- historicity
- advisory
- informative

We discussed the techniques of "questioning" and "reflection", and we gave you opportunities to practise using them. We concluded by looking at the structure of individual and group interviews.



## SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

(1) You were asked by the school governing body to present a paper on counselling. You should include the following in your presentation:

- what is counselling
- characteristics and skills of a counsellor.

Your paper should not exceed 3 A4 pages.

(2) You have a temporary job at a school. The principal has learnt that you are studying at Unisa and asks you to explain some counselling issues to the staff at the school. Using actual examples, explain the following to them:

- different methods of interviewing
- types of interviews
- interviewing techniques
- differentiated and future-oriented education

(3) You have to give your view on individual interviews and group interviews at a school function. Write a paragraph to prepare yourself for this task.



## STUDY UNIT 4

# LIFE SKILLS



### AIM

The aim of this study unit is to introduce you to an exciting field in education, namely life skills. The aim is also to equip every educator with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach life skills to learners.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once you have worked through this study unit, you should be able to do the following:

- Define and understand the concept “life skills”.
- Discuss the role of the learner and the educator in life skills education.
- Describe the origin of life skills.
- Name and define the four categories of life skills.
- Apply the knowledge gained in this study unit when working with learners.

## DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS: AN HOLISTIC APPROACH

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study unit, we will introduce you to an exciting field in education, namely life skills. People (especially learners) need more than academic knowledge to prepare them to cope with everyday situations.



### ACTIVITY 4.1

Write down any ideas that come to mind when you hear the words “skill” and “life skills”.

We are sure this was an exciting activity to do. We did this exercise with a group of grade seven learners and we realised the following:

- some of the ideas were good
- some of the ideas were not so good
- a few of the ideas were totally wrong

In the end, however, we were able to define the concept “life skills”.

## 4.2 DEFINITIONS OF LIFE SKILLS

Nelson-Jones (1993:10) defines life skills as “personally responsible sequences of self-helping choices in specific psychological choices in specific psychological skills areas conducive to mental wellness”. This author adds the following: “People require a repertoire of life skills according to their developmental tasks and specific problems of living” (Nelson-Jones 1993:12). As a supplement to this definition, you could consider that of Powell (Pickworth 1990:78), who describes life skills as “the life-coping skills consonant with the development tasks of the basic human development processes, namely those skills necessary to perform the tasks for a given age and sex in the following areas of human development: psychological, physical-sexual, vocational, cognitive, moral, ego, and emotional”. Rooth (1989) defines life skills as the ability to perform particular functions that help people to cope with and/or overcome life’s challenges, and for Lindhard and Dlamini (1990) life skills are practical skills in the art of living.

You will notice that when we start thinking about the concept “skills”, related concepts automatically spring to mind, such as “ability”, “aptitude” and “potential”. All these concepts indicate how a person functions in life. They all influence one another and are interrelated.

Perhaps the following illustration will explain some of the different concepts to you:



Batteries come in different sizes and shapes. Although this is a far-fetched comparison, a person’s brain can be seen as his or her Battery.



These different sizes and shapes represent the different amounts of power, energy, electricity which the battery can supply. This is also true of people. Every person’s brain has a different amount of power, energy, creativity, intelligence.



A battery can be linked to a different instrument, game, toy or system to which it has to supply power. In other words, the battery has the potential to make various things work. In the same way, a person’s potential can be linked (applied) to different objects or activities. As seen in the pictures on the left, you can choose whether to use your brain power to sit and watch television, to read a book or to play a sport. The same person could be involved in all three of these activities at various times, but he or she might prefer to do one thing more often. These activities could be a reflection of his or her various aptitudes.





The activities people choose depend on their interests, but also on their abilities. Is it possible to use any battery for any purpose? Would you put a car battery into a radio? The shape, size and voltage have to be correct for the purpose for which you want to use the battery. The battery has to have the correct “fit” or ability for your purpose. In the same way, it is important to ensure that someone’s

ability “fits” the purpose of his or her life. Would you agree that a small man is not really suitable for the job of picking up an enormous weight? His ability does not “fit” that purpose.

Sometimes a battery is the right size and it has the right shape and voltage, but nobody can get it to fit into the right position. The skill to use the battery’s aptitude and ability is not there. Have you ever tried to put a battery into position without success? Or have you ever tried to bake a cake? You may have all the right ingredients (aptitude) and you may have the perfect oven in which to bake the cake (ability), but you may lack the knowledge of how to mix the cake (skill). As a result, the cake flops.



This girl does not have the skill to fix the motorbike even though she has the manual to help her:

Some people seem to have a natural insight into certain functions, such as how different tools

work or how to make clothes. This type of inexplicable, untaught ability is called a talent or aptitude. You have heard about a talent competition and this is where people demonstrate any special talents they may have.

Simply possessing a talent or ability is no guarantee of success. It takes application to develop the talents or aptitudes you are born with into skills, and it takes hard work to use those skills to accomplish something.

For the purposes of this module we are going to concentrate on the concepts “ability” and “skills”.



### QUESTION

What is an ability? Abilities are seen as sources of competence, enabling a person to do something with ease. There are different types of abilities and these include the following:

- mental abilities
- physical abilities
- language abilities
- numerical abilities

Different people have different abilities. Take a look at the following examples:

- Nomsa is cleverer than Mary (mental ability).
- Arthur is stronger than Patrick (physical ability).

Abilities are sources of competence, because an ability is something we have not yet learnt to use. When we develop an ability we turn it into a skill.



### QUESTIONS

Have you ever turned an ability into a skill?

If yes, how did you go about doing it?

If no, which ability of yours would you like to turn into a skill and how would you go about doing it?

Abilities become skills as soon as we learn how to use them. A skill is, therefore, an area of ability in which we have gained competence. A skill is only learnt through practice.

Here is an illustration of how to turn an ability into a skill.

- Identify the ability.
- Measure how strong it is.
- Take responsibility for its development.
- Use every opportunity to develop it.
- Watch the ability become a skill.

## 4.3 LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Life skills educators are concerned with helping learners to develop the ability and skills to cope with important tasks in changing conditions. A systematic, highly visible, explicit life skills curriculum can empower learners with the competencies to successfully negotiate life's challenges. By anticipating and preventing problems or addressing them early on, we can substantially reduce human suffering (see Larson & Cook 1985).

According to Lindhard and Dlamini (1990; Lindhard 1986), life skills education sets out to do the following:

- Develop self-knowledge, which is the basis for self-confidence, decision making and further growth.
- Develop attitudes and values, which promote self-reliance, responsible decision making, the setting of personal goals and the choosing of personal behaviour styles.
- Teach skills for life, which include communication, personal relationships and decision making skills.

Life skills should not only be taught by the guidance educator or counsellor during the guidance period, but should be an integral part of the curriculum at all levels of education and should be presented by all educators involved in the education process. In this module we try to prepare every educator with the knowledge and skills necessary to help learners in their own classrooms.

#### **4.4 PURPOSE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION**

We live in a changing world. We need to equip our learners with academic knowledge and with skills to enable them to cope, survive and succeed under changing conditions. Skills have been identified as abilities in which we have gained competence. We need competence and coping skills to adapt to life and to deal with our everyday problems, needs and obligations.

Many schools still prepare learners for a world which disappeared years ago and the educators use teaching methods which are totally irrelevant to the kind of knowledge learners need to survive in the changing world. Such schools have failed to move with the times; they ignore factors such as technological advances and the role of the mass media in the lives of human beings. According to Prinsloo (1997), the challenge facing educators is to shift the focus from simply helping school leavers to make a career choice, to helping them overcome the barriers which may prevent them from reaching their goals in general. They must be taught skills which will enable them to adapt to life rather than just to adapt to work.

Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:27) give the following summary of the tendencies of the 21st century: "The world ... will seem smaller because of communication satellites and super jets. Work will change drastically, self-employment will be much more common, and education will become more important because individuals will have more opportunities. The family unit will change and become less stable. Women will find more equal opportunities."

Young people often lack the skills necessary to negotiate developmental hurdles and solve predictable life problems. Statistics show that there are an increasing number of cases of teenage suicide, unwanted pregnancy, juvenile crime and substance abuse. The acquisition of certain kinds of life skills is left to chance or is, at best, a haphazard process, which leaves our youth inadequately prepared for handling everyday problems and decisions (Larson & Cook 1985).

Learners find themselves in a life period of major developmental challenges and tasks, with the additional challenge of coping with societal change. Learners, therefore, face enormous demands when, at the end of their school career, they have to enter the adult world and accept the participatory role they are required to play in society (Olivier et al 1997).

The ever-changing world around them requires learners to possess, as far as their development, relationships and future are concerned, the "equipment to lead a meaningful life and to make a meaningful contribution to the world of fellow human beings around them" (Olivier et al 1997:25).

The challenge for the educator lies in preparing learners to cope in this world. Learners need to acquire the necessary skills at school to go into this world with confidence and to make a success of it.

## **4.5 THE ORIGIN OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AND DIFFERENT LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES OR MODELS**

The life skills movement is the product of many disciplines and the work of many individuals. It is difficult to determine exactly when the movement began to take shape, but it could have been with the third revolution in mental health in the 1960s with the move from clinical to public health and from remedial to preventative strategies of intervention (Gazda & Brooks 1985).

The life skills movement, as we have seen, thus began in the sixties and is still growing today. Various life skills programmes have been developed through the years, but we will only give attention to a few of them.

Pickworth (1990; see IED100–9) gives the following background to the development of the life skills movement: Adkins who completed a doctorate under Super, developed one of the earliest training models during the 1960s, namely the Adkins Life Skills Program: Employability Skills Series. It was an antipoverty training programme for the educationally disadvantaged adults and youths in the City of New York.

The term “life skills” was coined in the 1960s to “describe the behaviour-based psychological learning needed to help people cope with predictable developmental tasks” ([Adkins 1984]; see Gazda & Brooks 1985:2). Most of the early skills models were developed for professional counsellors, therapists or parents, but were subsequently adapted to include others and the general public (Gazda & Brooks 1985). According to Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:7) “[l]ife skills as they are taught today all over the world were first conceived by Barry Hopson and Mike Scally of Life skills Associates in Leeds in England. Their ideas can be found in Life skills Teaching Programmes 1 to 4, and in the book, Life skills teaching”.

During the 1970s, more comprehensive models were developed incorporating taxonomies of skills, rather than focusing on a particular skill and/or population group. The Life Skills Training Model by Gazda is a very comprehensive model (Pickworth 1990; see IED100–9).

Two programmes which we could use in the school setup in South Africa are the INO course and the Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence. The INO (“I know I can do it” course) Niels Lindhard wrote about in his book Life skills practice and the INO course, is a ten session or 3-day life skills teaching course for the age group 15 to 21 years. Another programme, which is often used in schools, is the South African edition of the Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence with different workbooks for the different age groups.

These and other life skills programmes could be used with great success by educators in general; it is important, however, that educators know something about life skills in general before they start to use programmes such as those mentioned above.

## 4.6 ACQUIRING AND MAINTAINING LIFE SKILLS

Life skills cannot be taught or learnt in a vacuum by using traditional teaching methods. There are implications for the learner, the educator and the teaching methods being used in teaching life skills.

### 4.6.1 THE LEARNER

Life skills education requires full learner participation, because the learner is the centre and not the educator. The educator only plays the role of facilitator.

Learners must realise that they can change. They should, however, be helped to consider the consequences of any change in their behaviour. Learners must be made sensitive to where and when it is appropriate to apply a skill, such as “being assertive”.

Learners can survive and cope in a changing environment, but they must be willing to accept help. “People who avoid rather than assume responsibility for their lives are poor candidates for initiating desirable behaviour change” (Nelson-Jones 1993:20). These people will use excuses not to change, such as (Nelson-Jones 1993:22):

- “It is my nature.”
- “It is my past.”
- “It is my bad luck.”
- “It is my poor environment.”
- “It is all your fault.”
- “It is all my fault.”

The learner who is prepared to accept help will acquire the necessary skills and will be able to use those skills in most circumstances, because he or she will have internalised them. Acquiring skills will also require increased awareness and responsibility.

### 4.6.2 THE FACILITATOR



#### ACTIVITY 4.2

The word “facilitator” is just another word for “educator”. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

There is a big difference between educators and facilitators. Facilitators are people who make things happen; they help or facilitate activities, but they do not direct them. They do not take the lead and so learners learn from them in a unique way.

Lindhard (1986:3) gives the following helpful hints for being a facilitator:

- The instructor must be willing to share openly the issues of the course.
- If a spirit of mutual respect is to develop in the course, the instructor will have to shed the mantle of superiority caused by authority of greater age, better education, more experience, and status or rank.
- The facilitator must be willing to listen and not to judge, that is, he or she must make an effort to understand the world of the learner.
- The instructor has certain limitations (just like other human beings) and he or she should be willing to let the learners know that his or her experience or knowledge on any subject may not be sufficient to answer some questions.
- The instructor will have to come out of his or her shell of privacy or authority and so reveal himself or herself appropriately. This makes him or her human and develops trust.

According to Kent (1990), practical experience is the most important means of achieving positive results in education, especially in life skills education.

The inculcating of practical skills, cannot be applied by learners whose participation in the learning process has been confined to being mere spectators; we can no longer afford to have learners listening passively to educators conveying information. The following statistics pertaining to knowledge transmission, have emerged from research findings (Hess 1987:315): learners retain 10 percent of what they hear, 20 percent of what they see, 40 percent of what is discussed with them, and 90 percent of what they actively practise.

It is important for educators to get used to their new role of facilitators. This will need practice, especially if you tend to be authoritarian.

### **4.6.3 TEACHING METHODS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Traditional teaching methods are not effective in teaching life skills. By using teaching methods that are closely associated with reality, learners are given the opportunity to acquire directly relevant knowledge of life skills. Life skills learning should take place through discovery, rather than through lecturing. Group work and group discussions are very important.

In Table 4.1 we have adapted Gibb's view (in Maas 1996:21) to point out the differences between the traditional teaching method and the life skills approach.



TABLE 4.1

*The difference between traditional and life skills approach*

<b>TRADITIONAL VS LIFE SKILLS APPROACH</b>		
<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>LIFE SKILLS</b>	<b>BASIS OF LIFE SKILLS TEACHING METHODS</b>
Learn from teacher only	Learn from each other	Group work
Passive role as listeners	Learn from sharing and debating	Discussion Group work
Learn from written text	Learn by doing	Self-practising
Learn from a framework created by the teacher	Learn by discovering	Discussion Group work Self-practising Experienced-based methods
Learn from feedback from one person	Learn from feedback from more than one person	Group work
Learn in a good organised environment with a fixed schedule	Learn in an informal flexible environment	Group work Experienced-based methods
Do not learn from others	Learn to learn from others	Group work
Are afraid to make mistakes	Learn from mistakes	Group work Self-practising
Learn from notes	Learn from solving problems	Group work Self-practising

Some teaching methods which may be useful in educating life skills (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990; Blythe et al 1979) are the following:

#### ***4.6.3.1 GROUP DISCUSSIONS***

Learners are usually divided into groups of five to six (six being the best number) to discuss problems or themes. These groups are often called a Koki. The name comes from the Japanese felt-tipped Koki pen, which groups can use to write down their findings on large sheets of paper. Learners learn to work together in this way. The timid become more confident and assertive while discussing an issue, and the dominant learn to listen. One learner in the group usually gives feedback. The feedback can be done orally or written down on sheets of paper and pasted somewhere where everybody can read it.

Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:23) say the following about group discussions: "When your students have done group discussions for five or six times, you will find a vast improvement in the qualities of the answer, the speed with which they organise themselves, and the quality of their joint thinking, because they stimulate one another mentally."

### **4.6.3.2 GROUP WORK**

Group work should never be seen as a traditional lesson since its form and content are unique and this distinguishes it from any other lesson. Group work is a class discussion in which each learner is given an opportunity to take part in the discussion, while the educator acts only as facilitator. In group work there are usually one or more initiators who introduce a certain point under discussion which then sparks off a discussion. There is never a right or wrong answer in group work. All thoughts and ideas are discussed. The basic criterion for group work is to what extent the learner achieves self-orientation — in other words, what is the meaning of the contents for the learner as an individual? This means that learners must evaluate themselves, usually with the aid of a questionnaire. This method is particularly suited to life skills education.

The content should be presented in such a way that the learners themselves achieve personalisation. Can you see that this method differs from the traditional lesson?

The planning phase of a group work lesson looks something like this:

- Awareness
- Exploration
- Personalisation (Remember, here the learner must evaluate himself or herself. A questionnaire may be useful. AND the learner need not share the results with you as facilitator if he or she does not wish to).

### **4.6.3.3 COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

According to Johnson and Johnson (1994), cooperative learning is important to move from the traditional competitive-individualistic “mass manufacturing” model to a high-performance team-based organisational structure. They declare the following:

“Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. With cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (Johnson & Johnson 1994:61).

As the educator you introduce the lesson, groups are formed and your learners receive the material they need for completing the set assignment. You then explain concepts and procedures needed to complete the assignment and the groups start working. It is important that each member of the group reach his or her goal. Members should encourage and assist each other to understand the work. You only intervene when learners do not understand their task or when problems arise in working together. After completion of the task, you evaluate and give feedback (Johnson & Johnson 1994).

### **4.6.3.4 BRAINSTORMING AND BUZZ GROUPS**

Brainstorming exercises are aimed at generating as many ideas as possible from a group of people in a short time and at trying to remove the fear of criticism. You can use flashcards on which individual learners can write their ideas. Flashcards allow learners

to express and to visualise their ideas. This method helps to make issues clear and learners remember them more easily. Learners also enjoy taking part in this activity, because no names are written up, so no one can laugh at them.

If you have disagreement in the class on some subject, ask the class to discuss or “buzz” the question with their neighbour. After a while you ask for feedback.

The rules for buzz groups and brainstorming are clear:

- never criticise any ideas
- never evaluate any ideas
- all ideas are valuable
- combine and build on previous ideas
- select any feasible ideas at the end

#### ***4.6.3.5 CASE STUDIES***

This involves the discussion of a situation which is described to the learners — it may be taken from a newspaper, book or life skills programme. Case studies are short descriptions of real or invented scenarios. Learners are required to make decisions, judgments and suggest courses of action. They take part as outsiders or observers. By presenting a case study to learners, you not only test their knowledge but also their insight.

#### ***4.6.3.6 ROLE PLAYING***

Role play means acting out a situation to make it realistic. The actors (learners in the classroom), however, need careful instruction beforehand. Role play ensures that each learner is actively involved. It is a way of exploring an unfamiliar situation “from the inside”.

When role play is used, learners tend to speak with greater confidence and are not afraid of making mistakes. Learners are afforded the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, and learn to take risks without entering reality. They come to realise that their decisions have consequences, exactly as would happen in a real situation (Kent 1990).

#### ***4.6.3.7 GUEST SPEAKERS AND/OR HANDOUTS***

Invited speakers can bring expertise and a glimpse of reality into theoretical learning. Notes can be given for more information on a subject.

In this way, learners can be exposed to different role models, with whom they can identify. Identifying with role models is a positive action that helps learners to organise their lives and make their own decisions (Kent 1990).

Examples from everyday life can make a vital contribution to the success of life skills education.

### **4.6.3.8 PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISES**

Much of life is composed of tackling problems and of finding solutions to those problems. You can help learners by getting them to solve problems:

- playing games such as Mastermind (Games with a strong element of excitement and competition stimulate the interest of the players [Lipper 1987:216]. Remember that children [learners too] learn best through play.)
- use case histories
- give them problem exercises with or without a tight deadline
- use De Bono problems and examples (De Bono exercises deal with problem solving with the function of encouraging nonroutine, inventive thinking methods, labelled by Edward de Bono as “lateral thinking”.)

### **4.6.3.9 QUESTIONNAIRES**

These are usually used for more personal matters such as self-analysis, values and maturity. These questionnaires should be treated as confidential and personal and children should have their own files.

### **4.6.3.10 ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND EXPERIENCE**

Once you have worked through the preceding methods, you will realise that all of them, if correctly applied, require the active participation of learners and include an element of experience. Try to determine from time to time how the learners are experiencing the contents. Researchers agree that practical experience is the most important method in achieving positive results in life skills education.

### **4.6.3.11 EVALUATION**

When using a specific life skills course or programme, you should ask the learners’ opinion half-way through it and at the end. You could do this by means of a questionnaire.



#### **ACTIVITY 4.3**

Now that you have worked through the different teaching methods, choose three of them to use in your classroom. Motivate your choice.

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## 4.7 LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Alternatives to working in a classroom environment would be to work in a workshop, a canteen, department store, a manager's office, a job centre, an interview room, talking to a security clerk, negotiating hire purchase or arguing for improved working conditions (Blythe et al 1979). Blythe et al (1979) suggest the following outside the classroom:

- Simulated workshops such as training restaurants in college catering departments, engineering and motor vehicle workshops.
- Visits to relevant places of employment, job centres, social security offices, legal aid centres, courts and hospitals.
- Work experience whilst doing a course.
- Community projects as individuals or in groups are useful for social and communication skill development.
- Study packs which include specific tasks fulfilled in a fixed period, such as obtaining information, recording observations, and tasks involving a variety of communication skills such as face-to-face communication, using a telephone, writing a letter and so on.
- Conducting a survey can give practice in both spoken and written communication and in numeracy; it can also give opportunities for considering personal, social and economic issues in a concrete way.

## 4.8 CATEGORISING LIFE SKILLS

There are a number of different ways of categorising life skills, but we will only mention a few.

Life skills Associates in Leeds, England (see Lindhard & Dlamini 1990:20) use the following subdivisions:

- Skills I need to relate effectively to you.
- Skills I need to relate effectively to others.
- Skills I need to manage and grow.
- Skills I need for my education.
- Skills I need at work.
- Skills I need at home.
- Skills I need at leisure.
- Skills I need in the community.

Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:20) propose the following areas:

- Know yourself
- Personal relationships
- Success in life
- Planning for the future

We will use the following categories when discussing life skills further on in this module:



You will probably agree that it is impossible to discuss all the skills we can think about here. We will only select a few and then discuss them briefly.

Once you have identified a life skill, you should implement a programme that will lead to equipping the learner with that particular skill. In appendix A we will give you some exercises/programmes that you can use in teaching these life skills to learners.

## DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS: SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS

### 4.9 PERSONAL SKILLS

The rationale for beginning with personal skills is that life skills experts feel that we should first try to understand ourselves before trying to deal with the cares of this life. The basis of personal life skills is the element of self-discovery. It is essential to master skills that will help you become a happy, fulfilled person. Self-discovery or self-awareness is dependent on the development of a number of personal skills, as we discussed in the section on vocational guidance in study unit two.



#### ACTIVITY 4.4

Identify five personal skills which the learner with whom you work may need. If possible, list these in order of importance.

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The personal skills that you have identified will differ according to the learner's uniqueness and environmental situation. Your list could include some of the following personal skills:

- Who am I?
- Developing a positive self-concept.
- How to be self-motivated.
- How to act responsibly.
- What I am like emotionally.
- Expressing my feelings in a sociably acceptable manner.
- How to plan for my day.
- How to reach my goals.
- How to say "no".

These are examples of personal skills and may not necessarily be skills that you identified.

It is not possible to name or discuss all the different personal skills, so we will briefly discuss the following two:

- self knowledge (Who am I?)
- assertiveness and how to say no

#### **4.9.1 SELF-KNOWLEDGE (WHO AM I?)**

Self-knowledge has remained important through the ages. One of Socrates' (469 BC) principal tenets was that self-knowledge is indispensable.

Self-knowledge is the insight that people have into their own personalities that enables them to know what they are capable or incapable of doing or reaching. A self-concept is the picture we have of ourselves — everything we think and know about ourselves. It can be realistic and true or unrealistic and false. It can be positive or negative (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990).

According to Lindhard (1986) self-knowledge is the basis of self-reliance, maturity and confidence, and it is of importance when making decisions. Each person is unique, but we also have similarities with other people. We need to know who we as individuals are and in which way we are similar to others.

Young people are engaged in a quest to discover their own identity. Biological, intellectual and emotional changes occur in adolescence. These changes compel the learner to deal with abstract ideas such as values, to experience a wide range of emotions, and to explore psychological aspects such as personal strengths and weaknesses. "From their interactions with adults and peers, as well as from increased self-insight, youngsters begin to develop a more definite self-concept and to become aware that who they are is strongly related to their sense of self-esteem" (Morganett 1990:85).

Self-knowledge leads to self-identity formation which hinges on the question, "Who am I?" and, therefore, on the learner's cognitive attribution of meaning to the self. According to Erikson (1968) the choices a person makes throughout his or her life depend significantly on the answer that person gives in response to the question, "Who am I?".

Answers to the question, “Who am I?” will differ from one person to another, because every person is a unique being.

A person’s self-knowledge consists of the certain components, (see study unit 2) which are undifferentiated in practice because people are totalities-in-function. People are present as a totality in all their actions and thoughts. To know themselves they must take due cognisance of all the features in themselves.

To equip learners with the necessary life skills to enable them to realise their potential and be able to answer the question, “Who am I”, we need to practise this skill.

(See exercises 1 and 2 in appendix A.)

#### **4.9.2 HOW TO BE ASSERTIVE**

Learners often lack the skills to share their wants, needs, ideas and feelings. Some behave nonassertively, because they lack skills to assert themselves. Others behave aggressively, because they often get what they want in this way. Either approach can result in feelings of worthlessness, guilt, anger at the self or others, and powerlessness. Learning the difference between assertive, nonassertive and aggressive behaviour and the skills to handle situations where assertiveness is needed, is important for all people (Morganett 1990).

Morganett (1990) has the following to say about nonassertive, assertive and aggressive behaviour:

- Nonassertive behaviour is passive and indirect. It communicates a message of inferiority. It means you do not respect your own right to express your ideas, needs, wants, feelings and opinions. Following this road leads to being a victim not a winner.
- Aggressive behaviour is more complex. It can be either active or passive. Aggression can be direct or indirect; honest or dishonest, but it always communicates an impression of superiority and disrespect.
- Assertive behaviour is active, direct and honest. By being assertive a person views his or her wants, needs and rights as equal with those of others. Being assertive means that you honestly state your feelings without denying your right to express yourself or denying the rights of others to be respected.

The difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour lies mainly in whether any damage is caused or not, for example:

Sipho is sitting on John’s chair.

If John points this out politely, he is assertive, but if he hits Sipho with his fists, for sitting on his chair, he has become aggressive.

To be assertive is to stand up to your rights. For this to happen you should know your rights, know when they are violated. It takes skill to know how to communicate to others that they are trespassing on your personal rights (Michelson et al 1983).

Always remember that a person with a positive self-concept will probably be an



assertive person. It also works the other way round — assertiveness builds self-confidence and a positive self-concept. Assertiveness provides you with the correct frame of mind to enable you to tackle problems effectively. If you fail to solve problems or getting what you need, this could easily lead to frustration, a lack of fulfilment and even aggression.

Assertive people usually

- feel happy and satisfied, because they are doing something about their rights and needs
- have a lot more self-confidence than nonassertive or aggressive people
- have fruitful lives, because their assertiveness allows them to explore and experience many opportunities
- have well-developed and balanced personalities
- are trusted by other people, because everybody knows where they stand with an assertive person
- know how to say “no”

If you want to help learners to master the skill of being assertive, suggest the following ideas to them:

- Be positive about yourself.
- Trust yourself.
- Know your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Plan ahead and know what you want to say or do.
- Respect other people’s viewpoints without necessarily changing your own.
- Learn how to relax and state your case clearly without being aggressive.
- Know how to say “no” without offending other people.

It is not easy to say “no”, especially to friends or relatives. “The ability to refuse another’s requests in a tactful and nonpunitive way requires much skill. The person who consistently gives in to other people’s requests, regardless of whether they are appropriate or not, is sometimes regarded as a ‘mouse’, a ‘pushover’ ... Researchers have found that individuals who lack the ability to refuse requests often feel disappointed, frustrated, and resentful” (Michelson et al 1983:81).

Concerning early sexual activities and drug abuse, adolescents should learn the skill of saying “no”. Educators should also convey knowledge of the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse as well as sexually transmitted diseases. Learners should learn to take responsibility for their own bodies (Gouws, Kruger & Burger 2000).

People of all ages should develop the ability to refuse requests, thus, gaining more control over their social interactions and helping with self-reinforcement.

Assertiveness and saying “no” is a fine skill that you have to develop over a long period, in fact you have to work very hard to be really effective as an assertive person.

(See exercises 3 and 4 in appendix A.)

## 4.10 THINKING SKILLS

There are few terms in education that cast such a broad net as “thinking”. When we start thinking about thinking, we become aware of the complexity of the term. In short, when a person is thinking, he or she is actually forming connected ideas. This connection is formed between what we already know and what we are now learning. From an educational point of view, thinking is seen as giving meaning to situations and events by a person, in which this person is involved. This is when the person asks questions, trying to understand what he or she has read for instance.

When we talk about thinking skills, we are actually referring to those skills that help a person to exercise the mind. These skills will help a person to make better plans, think in a more original way and come up with more interesting explanations for things that have happened.



### ACTIVITY 4.5

Write down as many thinking skills as you can come up with. Select from your list the ones that are the most prominent in the age group you are working with.

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There are quite a number of thinking skills, for example:

- reading skills
- writing skills
- problem-solving skills
- decision-making skills
- memory skills
- computer skills
- creative skills
- critical-thinking skills
- study skills

As you can see from this list, there are a lot of thinking skills. We are going to concentrate on the following thinking skills:

- study/memory skills
- creative skills

### 4.10.1 MEMORY SKILLS/STUDY SKILLS

#### 4.10.1.1 MEMORY SKILLS

Lots of people complain that they cannot remember things. There is no such thing as a

poor memory, only a lack of skill at knowing how to learn things and how to recall them. What things do we need to remember? Lindhard and Dlamini (1990) name the following:

- Events, such as what happened in our past, the people we met, and their names and their faces.
- Facts, such as the name of the Minister of Education, or the longest river in Africa.
- Semantics, such as remembering the meaning of words and concepts (rightbrain hemisphere), intrinsic motivation.
- Sensory experiences, such as remembering what you previously saw, heard, tasted, smelt or felt.
- Skills, such as remembering the things you have done well, such as welding, sewing, painting.

We all have a short-term memory and a long-term memory, and most study skills are designed to shift as much material as possible from the former to the latter.

Our short-term memory (STM) is like a note-pad, which handles all the things we need to remember for a short period of time, that is, the information needed for immediate or temporary use. In everyday terms, the STM is like a handbag or briefcase.

Our long-term memory (LTM) stores all the information we truly know, such as concepts and philosophies. When a learner has really learnt something, it takes up permanent residence in his or her mind and it is constantly available when required. According to evidence, the more a person stores in his or her LTM, the better it will work (Palmer 1984:31).

Successful study depends on the steady transfer of material from the STM to the LTM. This is achieved through constant and regular revision.

The more a learner keeps in touch with certain information, the more likely he or she is to retain it. Your memory is your responsibility, nobody else's — it is entirely within your scope to improve it. If your memory is poor and remains poor, it is because you cannot be bothered to improve it. The "intellectual" or academic memory is not an isolated structure; the more images and prompts you can bring in from the sensory memory, the better.

#### ***4.10.1.2 STUDY SKILLS***

Study involves purposeful concentration on what has to be studied, that is, on the subject matter concerned. It calls for dedication to the study assignment, which means investigating and thinking about the subject matter.

Helping learners with their studies is the duty of every subject educator. Please note that the hints must be regarded as guidelines since there are no fixed and rigid rules for successful study. What may work for one person, may not work for another.

Next, we give a few characteristics of learning:

- Learning as a phenomenon is a human datum (a given).
- Learning is the attribution of meaning and significance.
- Learning is an all-embracing concept and includes studying. When the learner explores the world with the intention of getting to know it, he or she is learning it.

The word “study” is derived from the Latin word *studeo* which means to be enthusiastic about something, to devote oneself to something. It suggests a personal endeavour or something that comes from the self. To study can also mean to examine, to ponder or to fathom something.

The characteristics of study are the following:

- Studying is an intentional act in which the learner consciously focuses on the matter to be studied.
- The learner has an enthusiastic approach to the subject matter.
- The learner makes a personal effort to master the subject matter.
- The learner is honestly and eagerly devoted to the subject assignment.
- To study is to examine, to investigate, to consider fully and to fathom the subject matter.
- Studying is an independent action.
- The aim of studying is to understand, to master and to apply the subject matter.

Let us use the above characteristics to formulate a definition:

Studying is the intentional action of focusing on new subject matter with the aim of familiarising oneself with it, mastering it and eventually applying it in new situations.

The purpose of study is to learn. Now we know what it means to study, but HOW can we study to be successful in our studies?

The problems most people struggle with are how to remember and how to study. These are skills learners have to practise.

We also discussed decision making in study unit 2. An exercise on practising decision making skills are also included in appendix A.

(See exercises 5, 6, 7 and 8 in appendix A.)

#### **4.10.2 CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS**

What is creativity? Creativity eludes definition, as attested by the bewildering number of definitions given in the literature.

Torrance (1962), who did valuable research on creativity, defines it as the process of sensing gaps or missing elements and forming ideas or hypotheses concerning them. Van Jaarsveld (1970) defines it as a person’s ability to make something new, that is, something that did not exist before. Researchers agree that creativity is more than mental abilities which are measured and that all people are creative to some extent. It subsists in the ability to deduce original ideas from the known as well as the unknown and to create new things.

The creative person, therefore, identifies the problem, seeks solutions and formulates hypotheses about possible solutions, which are then put into practice. Creativity then refers to that which is new and useful (innovation). Innovation is crucial for survival, competitiveness and growth (Bowen & Ricketts 1992:1). An innovation does not have

to be a totally new product or idea. A slight adjustment to an existing product or idea also qualifies as an innovation. Over the years, for example, various improved versions of the stove were designed and all of them were innovations and seen as new products. The microwave oven is seen as the latest brilliant innovation. Remember that every person's creativity is unique and is largely the outcome of free choice.

The Nobel prize winning physician Albert Szent-GyOrgyi put it well when he said: "Discovery (creativity) consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else does and then thinking something different" (Von Oech 1990). Staples (1992) defines creativity as an acquired intellectual skill aimed at generating new ideas that may be more useful than previous ones. Creativity is, therefore, a mental exercise.

Creative productivity takes many forms, such as written work, solutions to problems, approaches to problems and scientific discoveries.



### QUESTION

How many creative people do you know?

Researchers agree that everybody has the potential to be creative to some extent; we all have the ability to deduce original ideas from the known and the unknown, and to create new things. Von Oech (1990) differentiates between creative and less creative people.

The "I'm not creative" people stifle themselves because they think that creativity belongs only to the Einsteins and Shakespeares of the world. In fact, all of us are creative every day. If you think you are creative, then you will put yourself in situations where you can use your creativity, where you can take risks, try some new approaches and where you can come up with new ideas.

One of the main charges brought against educators is that they neglect learners' creativity and in some instances even suppress it. Most learners learn quickly to remain within the boundaries of their educator's expectations. Learners find it difficult to take chances, to look for alternative answers and to explore avenues of creativity or thought without help.



### QUESTION

Do you agree with that statement?

The following examples should be proof enough that this statement is based on fact.

The educator said:

"On this sheet of paper, you will find an outline of a house, trees, flowers, clouds and sky. Colour each with the appropriate colours."

John put a lot of effort in and when he got his picture back, he was surprised to find a big red X on it. "Why?" he asked the educator, her answer was simple:

"Because you didn't use the normal colours: the sky is not yellow and grass is green not grey." John was very upset and objected: "But that is how it looks to me when I get up early in the morning."

Also consider the following example:

A high school educator put a small chalk dot on the blackboard.

She asked the class what it was. A few seconds passed and then someone said: "A chalk dot on the blackboard." The rest of the class was relieved that the obvious had been stated.

"I'm surprised at you" the educator told the class. "I did the same exercise with a group of primary school children and they could think of 50 different things it could be."

A variety of suggestions for stimulating creativity are made in the literature. The works of Olivier (1984), Tshabalala-Mogdime (1988) and Yepsen (1988) deserve mention.

Kokot (1992:15–160) makes the following suggestions for stimulating the development of creativity in the classroom:

- Create situations that present incompleteness and openness. Try and use the learner's interest as the starting point.
- Allow and encourage many questions. Educators should interest themselves and treat unusual answers with curiosity. Regard it as quite normal that learners ask unanswerable questions. The quality of the educator's questions determine the quality of the learner's responses, and perhaps most importantly the quality of the relationship between the educator and the learner.
- Help learners to produce something and then do something with what they make.
- Emphasise self-initiated exploration, observation, questioning, seeking, inferring, classifying, recording, translating, testing and communicating.
- Stimulate self-motivation (intrinsic motivation) by:
  - treating learners with respect and allowing them to explore
  - creating an atmosphere with good aesthetics
  - respecting privacy
  - valuing the unusual, the divergent
  - helping learners learn from mistakes
  - avoiding sex role stereotyping
  - encouraging self-expression
  - teaching learners to look and really see
  - helping learners to learn to expand and trust their senses
- Permit learners' own creativity to emerge, by extending their creativity, by letting them hear more, see more, feel more. All creative people are particularly open to sensory experiences, but the highly creative are particularly responsive; they have a fine filtering mechanism and the ability to combine and recombine stimuli in unconventional ways.
- Brainstorming does stimulate creative thinking and this can be a group or an

individual activity. Common sense is suspended as ideas are accepted without any criticism being allowed. This is followed by sorting and evaluating.

Wallace (1986:73) states that we must allow enough time for the creative event, for the moment of discovery — the A-ha-Erlebnis.

The use of humour releases creative thinking. The balance between the serious and the playful reduces tension and thus helps to develop an atmosphere of relaxation. Learners are also able to make unusual or even bizarre connections more easily; they can play with ideas and venture into the unknown in a nonthreatening atmosphere. Remember too that you can use games, puzzles, riddles and other activities associated with fun. Young children learn through play and we should not assume that work must be associated with the tedious, the mundane and the repetitive. Play activities can also often demand enormous energy, dedication and perseverance.

Guide learners to seek more than one right answer and to realise that failure is not the end of the world. Failure can be used as a vehicle to success, creativity and restored adventure.

It is not very easy to teach creativity, because creativity is a way of life and not an academic paradigm. On the other hand, however, the more creativity is practised, the easier it becomes.

(See exercises 9 and 10 in appendix A.)

## 4.11 SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

What do we mean by social skills? Take a look at the following definition of social skills adopted by Petersen and Gannoni (1992:3): “Social skills are the ability to organise cognitions and behaviours into an integrated course of action directed toward culturally acceptable social or interpersonal goals”.

This definition highlights the following critical elements in social development:

- Knowledge of appropriate social behaviour and comprehension of strategies is important to achieve social goals and interpersonal solving abilities.
- Verbal and nonverbal behavioural skills, such as friendly approach behaviours and play styles, giving and accepting compliments, maintaining conversations, appropriate use of gestures, eye contact and facial expression are all important social skills.
- Prosocial motivation and goal orientation are essential elements of social development.

These social skills are indicators of social competence and affect the quality of peer relationships (Petersen & Gannoni 1992:3).

The definition can be the basis of identifying a number of social and communication skills. In the light of this we suggest you do the following task.



### ACTIVITY 4.6

Identify at least seven social skills that you feel are essential for a learner to have in the environmental setting in which you live and work.

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It is quite likely that your list may include social skills such as the following:

- the ability to make friends
- the ability to sustain friendships
- the ability to deal with disagreements and conflict
- listening skills
- the ability to communicate effectively
- the ability to understand body language
- how to get along with family members
- how to apply the principles of “ubuntu”
- the ability to overcome cultural differences

Once again (as with the other categories of life skills), we can extend the list of skills to include a number of social skills. We will briefly discuss the following skills:

- the ability to make friends
- communication/listening skills

## 4.12 THE ABILITY TO MAKE FRIENDS

As human beings, we need one another. We need the company of others.

Loneliness often makes people depressed, miserable and even physically ill. These people often have a shorter lifespan than others who have friends and family who can support them when in trouble or feeling down. We mainly seek relationships to satisfy our need to belong, for respect, for the love and affection of others, for support when we are troubled, for sharing thoughts and emotions, and to ask advice (Lindhard 1986).

Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:126; Lindhard 1986:48) give the following reasons for seeking the company of others:

- We need to belong to a group of people.
- We seek the esteem and respect of others
- We want status, importance and dignity.
- We want to share emotions, ideas and news.
- We want to help, and receive help and advice.
- We want support in times of doubt, despair and sorrow.
- We need approval, which is deserved respect.



- We want love, affection and intimacy.
- We want acceptance.
- We want friendship and company.
- We want to avoid being lonely, outcast, shunned, ignored, disliked, depressed and miserable.

Young learners do not have the capacity to empathise with others. Learners in the intermediate and senior phase, however, have an increased capacity to form emotional bonds, to learn concepts of loyalty and honest communication, and to be loving and kind. This is also the time for intimate relationships (Morganett 1990).

Learners gain a sense of who they are and what their lives are about through seemingly small and insignificant daily encounters with friends and members of their families (Erikson 1968). During adolescence, it becomes more and more important for learners to be accepted by the peer group and to spend time with their friends. Friendships with the same sex deepen and heterosexual relations acquire a romantic or sexual dimension.

Having friendship skills and being able to make friends is a very important developmental task for the learner. Friends provide social reinforcement, models of behaviour and values, and learning experiences such as forming and ending relationships. The successful forming of friendships has a lasting effect on a person (Morganett 1990).

The basis of a good friendship would be the sharing of ideas and values, and complete trust. Such a relationship would imply “give” and “take” from both sides (Lindhard 1986). Popular learners usually possess friendly and cooperative attitudes and communicate honestly, whereas the less popular frequently behave in either an aggressive or extremely shy manner, exhibit inappropriate behaviour, do not conform to peer group norms and have poor communication skills. Children with few friends are often unhappy, lonely and depressed (Morganett 1990).

Human relationships do not just happen by themselves — it is something we have to work on.

(See exercises 11 and 12 in appendix A.)

## **4.13 COMMUNICATION/LISTENING SKILLS**

We communicate in many ways, such as by action, speech, silence, in writing, by facial expression and body language. We greet someone by shaking hands, we speak to share ideas and thoughts, we put our arms around a crying child to comfort him or her, we slam a door to show anger, we write a letter to share news of some kind and we shake our heads to show disagreement. We communicate feelings, information, ideas, opinions and needs (Lindhard 1986; Lindhard & Dlamini 1990).

### **4.13.1 SPOKEN, VERBAL OR FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION**

Face-to-face communication is one of the most important forms of communication, because it is the most important way of forming, developing and maintaining

relationships with people. Good communicators speak easily, have a good vocabulary and are fluent in their use of the specific language they choose to communicate in. Such articulate people are very fortunate, for they are often more successful in their careers, their studies and their personal lives than poor communicators. Poor communicators often only get part of their message across; people, therefore, misunderstand them in many cases (Lindhard & Dlamini 1990).

With face-to-face communication, we need a speaker and a listener and both must be keen to really understand each other. As a good listener (Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence 1994) you should:

- focus your attention, by nodding, leaning toward the speaker and maintaining a comfortable level of eye contact
- tune in to understand by listening to the verbal and nonverbal communication
- ask for more information, opinions and feelings

Lindhard and Dlamini (1990:145) give the following divisions for good and not so good face-to-face communication.

The good speaker will:

- not jump straight into the subject, but use a warm-up time
- have prepared what to say and how to say it
- speak clearly and at a level of language that the listener can understand
- present one idea at a time
- check how well the listener understands

The poor speaker will:

- mumble, or use jargon or technical language
- expect things unsaid to be understood
- be unclear about his or her expectations
- show lack of respect for the listener and ignore his or her point of view or feelings
- be insincere, untruthful or try to manipulate the listener
- present his or her message in a biased or one-sided manner
- talk too much, in a boring manner
- avoid looking at the other person
- not check how much the listener has understood or how he or she feels about the discussion
- be bad tempered and ill mannered

The good listener will:

- switch off all interfering thoughts and concentrate on the present matter
- attend carefully and actively check whether he or she is following
- ask for repetition or clarification
- keep looking at the speaker
- listen for unsaid meanings and suggestions, being sensitive to the speaker's body language and feelings

The poor listener will:

- switch off if he or she dislikes the speaker or the subject
- plan what he or she will say next instead of listening
- interrupt too often
- change the subject or pick on small details
- pretend to understand even if he or she does not
- look bored or disinterested

The most frequently used skill in the classroom is listening, yet it is a skill infrequently taught, presumably owing to the assumption that it develops "naturally". However, good listening is a skill that can be enhanced by practice and by the use of some simple techniques.

(See exercises 13 and 14 in appendix A.)

## 4.14 SURVIVAL SKILLS

We now come to our last category of life skills. We speak about survival skills, but in a sense, all life skills are survival skills. If we are able to master some of the skills already mentioned, we will survive the tensions and uncertainties of each day. Some specific skills are, however, life skills that enable us to make a living.



### ACTIVITY 4.7

Can you think of specific skills that can be referred to as survival skills (eg skills related to earning a living)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

You may have identified skills such as the following:

- entrepreneurial skills (This is one of the most important survival skills. We refer you to the module, Economic Literacy and Entrepreneurship, for a full discussion on this issue.)
- how to apply for a job
- how to write a curriculum vitae
- job skills like being committed and being reliable
- how to deal with a difficult boss
- time management
- investing your money

- compiling a personal budget
- career planning

Once again (as with the other categories of life skills), we can extend the list of skills to include a number of survival skills. We will briefly discuss the following skills:

- compiling a personal budget
- how to write a curriculum vitae

#### **4.14.1 A BUDGET**

Living without a budget is like building a house without a plan. Budgeting makes you aware of how much money you have and where it goes. It can help you to save and to make your money grow to achieve your goals. Budgeting can help those people who feel they never have enough money, the ones who are getting into debt, those who are already in debt, as well as those who want to make sure they never have these problems. No matter what you earn, or how you earn it, a budget will help you make the most of your money.

A budget shows **INCOME** — the money that is paid to you — and **EXPENSES** — the money that you spend.

Income is the total amount of money you receive every month, that is, your wages or salary, any rent you receive or any interest you receive on your savings.

Your wages or salary is divided into **GROSS** and **NET**. Your **GROSS** is what you receive before deductions, while the **NET** is what you have after deductions.

Deductions include Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax, medical aid, pension or provident fund, and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) contributions.

- Expenses are all the things that you spend money on each month. These can be divided into essential and nonessential expenses.
- Essential expenses are things you have to pay. These can be fixed expenses like rent, or changing expenses, like food and telephone.
- Nonessential expenses are things that you choose to spend your money on, like clothes and entertainment.

Learners should also be given the opportunity to prepare their own budget. Very few people who use a budget have money problems and a lot of people have solved their money problems by starting to budget. To really get a grip on this skill you need to practise how to budget.

(See exercise 15 in appendix A.)

#### **4.14.2 WRITING A CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)**

The term “curriculum vitae” is Latin for “life history”. Writing a curriculum vitae implies that you introduce yourself as a prospective employee to a possible employer. Barkai et al (1992:27) describe a curriculum vitae (CV) as “... a logical and concise account of your personal background, academic and skills qualifications, work history and

recreational interests". The idea of a CV is to provide sales information about yourself. Use it to give the reader an accurate, adequate and positive idea of yourself by means of basic information, including special achievements, distinctions or promotions gained in your education, work or leisure background. Rainbow (1992:202) states that: "You should think of your CV as an opportunity to create a desire for the reader to want to meet you, and consider you as a potential employee." The CV must be accompanied by a covering letter stating why you think you are the right person for the job.

It is important to keep your CV updated, because it is difficult to remember details after a time. Always present it attractively and in an interesting manner. Try also to have it typed, because that creates a much better impression than a handwritten story. You also have to supply work references on the CV about who can be contacted if the employer wants to make an enquiry. Do not make use of friends and family for this purpose. Rather call upon a person of recognised professional standing or responsibility who has known you for some time and is willing to make objective comment on your character and abilities. If you do not want to make use of your employer, think about your doctor, clergyman, school principal or university lecturer for this purpose.

Full contact details for each reference should be included. Barkai et al (1992:29) suggest the following:

Mrs A Jones, Admin. Manager, XX Insurance Co,  
xxx Marshall Street, Johannesburg 2000  
Tel. No: 011-339-xxx  
(Supervisor 19xx-19xx)

Writing a CV needs practise. This exercise can be implemented during a language lesson.

(See exercise 16 in appendix A.)

## 4.15 CONCLUSION

Let us reflect on the issues that we have dealt with in this section of the study unit.

Firstly, we defined life skills as coping skills that the learner needs to function as a human being and as a member of society. We discussed these skills in accordance with the following categories:

- personal skills
- thinking skills
- social skills
- survival skills

Each of these categories was discussed and we briefly illustrated how these skills could be incorporated into a life skills programme (see Appendix A).



### SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- (1) You have a temporary job at a community centre. The head of the community centre has learnt that you are studying Education and asked you to help with a project named, "Who am I?". It is aimed at helping learners to discover themselves. You will have 10 adolescents in your group and you must work out a programme that they can follow. You will meet once a week for six weeks.

Describe how you will try to help these learners by doing the SWEAT ANALYSIS and the Johari Window with them.

Describe what you plan to do during each session of the six weeks.

- (2) In the same way, see how you can use all the categories of life skills and then briefly illustrate how you can incorporate it into a life skills programme.

We hope that you have enjoyed this module. You gained information on guidance counselling and life skills education. Remember that this was only an overview of life skills, since it is not possible to discuss all the life skills in one study unit.

# APPENDIX A

## PERSONAL SKILLS

### Exercise 1: Self-knowledge (SWEAT analysis)

One way of getting the learners in your class (and yourself) to take a good look at who they are, is to use the SWEAT analysis. By using the SWEAT analysis, your learners will be able to gauge skills, knowledge, abilities and accomplishments; it will also help them to set and review their goals. It will help them to compile a positive personal profile that highlights their strengths and helps them to cope with their weaknesses.

SWEAT is the abbreviation for the following:

- strengths, skills (S)
- weaknesses (W)
- education, experience (E)
- accomplishments, affiliations, activities (A)
- target (T)

#### *S-test: strengths*

Your strengths are the outstanding skills, knowledge and abilities you have honed (sharpened) through your education, training and practical life experiences.

Make a list of all the strengths you think you have. Name all the things you are good at (eg I am a good listener) and also name the skills that you have acquired (eg I can speak three languages, I am computer literate). Next to each strength, describe a situation in which you demonstrate this particular strength.

#### *W-test: weaknesses*

Everybody has weaknesses. The way people react to and address their weaknesses separates the winners from the losers. Acknowledge your weaknesses honestly.

Make a list of all your weaknesses (eg I have a bad temper, I am a lousy writer). Next to each weakness, see if you can make suggestions to improve this particular aspect of your life.

#### *E-test: education and experience*

Education encompasses all the opportunities you have had to learn something new. Experience is the unique bundle of skills that you have acquired in your personal, social and academic life.

Make a list of all your experiences and educational qualifications. Do not be modest. Specify all your experiences, such as attending workshops, following certificate courses, planning a welfare project or raising money for a new health clinic.

### *A-test: affiliations*

Most of us are active in one organisation or another. The affiliation test will help you to think about some of your significant memberships and contributions to your community.

Make a list of all the organisations you belong to. Membership of and active participation in an organisation — directly or indirectly — develop several skills which often help us to succeed in our personal endeavours.

### *T-test: target*

If you have established clear goals for your life, you will be able to spend time on planning strategies to realise these goals. If you have no goals, you are unlikely to end up anywhere.

So, make a list of all the goals you still want to realise.

## **Exercise 2: Self-knowledge (Johari window)**

Another way of helping learners (and yourself) to look at themselves is to use the Johari window. Two American psychologists, Joe Luft and Harry Ingham (Jo + Harri = Johari), made a useful diagram — the Johari window — to illustrate what we know and what we do not know about ourselves.

The extent of a person's self-knowledge can be clearly demonstrated with this model, which provides information about different aspects of the self in the four quadrants of the window. By applying this model, a person will be able to understand the process whereby he or she acquires self-knowledge.

The window is represented by a square which is subdivided into four smaller squares. Everything a person knows about himself or herself is on the left-hand side of the square (windows A + B), while the unknown information is on the right-hand side (windows C + D).

The first part (window A) represents those aspects of the individual known by the self and by others (called open). The first quadrant is the basis for establishing interpersonal relations. Windows A + B have to be expanded to address the question, "Who am I?" No one can know himself or herself fully, but the greater the amount of realistic self-knowledge the learner acquires about himself or herself, the better his or her self-concept will be.

The second part (window B) represents those aspects known by the self, but not by others (called hidden). How can a person learn to expand or contract window B? It is important that the person discloses information about himself or herself that other people need to know, such as the following: "I have a fear of taking risks." If the information is kept secret window B remains unchanged, but if the person discloses it he or she enlarges window A. This area may include information about your failures and successes, your best friend, problems with your boyfriend or girlfriend or eating disorders.

The third part (window C) represents that part of the individual known by others but not by the self (called blind). Steinberg (1993:86) has the following to say: "This may vary from the way you twitch your nose during communication, to the way you tend to monopolise a conversation or react aggressively when people do not agree with your



views.” Communication and interpersonal relationships are generally enhanced as the blind area becomes smaller.

The fourth part (window D) represents aspects not known to the self or to others (called unknown). How can a person learn to contract window D? This quadrant is reduced primarily by exploration media (IQ tests, aptitude tests, etc).

Learners may discover what they do not know about themselves through observation, being told by others, noticing other people’s reactions, comparing themselves to others, clues picked up in everyday life and tests (eg IQ, aptitude and personality tests).

Complete the following Johari window about your personality, aptitude, interest and values. Ask your parents to complete the second square, that is, those aspects known by them but not by you. (Perhaps you are not willing to acknowledge some traits?) Try also to complete the third square.

	Open	Blind	Hidden	Unknown
Personality				
Aptitude				
Interest				
Values				

Did you learn anything new about yourself by completing the Johari window? Your windows will change every time you learn something new about yourself. Has this exercise helped you to achieve a sense of identity, that is, who and what you are?

### Exercise 3: Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a fine skill that must be developed over a long period of time. In fact, you have to work very hard to be really effective as an assertive person.

You might find the following questionnaire very useful in the classroom (Crisp 1991:45–46). Answer the questions below honestly. They will help you to ascertain your current level of assertiveness.

Examples of assertiveness

Assign a number to each item using the following scale:

Always                      Never  
 5      4      3      2      1

- ... I ask others to do things without feeling guilty or anxious.
- ... When someone asks me to do something I do not want to do, I say no without feeling guilty or anxious.
- ... I am comfortable when speaking to a large group of people.
- ... I can confidently express my honest opinions to authority figures (such as my boss).

- ... When I experience powerful feelings (anger, frustration, disappointment, etc), I am able to express them easily.
- ... When I express anger, I do so without blaming others for “making me angry”.
- ... I am comfortable speaking up in a group situation.
- ... If I disagree with the majority opinion in a meeting, I can “stick to my guns” without feeling uncomfortable or being abrasive.
- ... When I make a mistake, I will acknowledge it.
- ... I tell others when their behaviour creates a problem for me.
- ... Meeting new people in social situations is something I do with ease and comfort.
- ... When discussing my beliefs, I do so without labelling the opinions of others as “crazy”, “stupid”, “ridiculous” or “irrational”.
- ... I assume that most people are competent and trustworthy and do not have difficulty delegating tasks to others.
- ... When considering doing something for the first time, I feel confident I can learn to do it.
- ... I believe my needs are as important as those of others and I am entitled to have my needs satisfied.

**TOTAL SCORE:** ..... (sum of the all the questions)

If your total is 60 or higher, you have a consistently assertive philosophy and will probably handle most situations well.

If your total is between 45 and 60, you have a fairly assertive outlook.

If your total is between 30 and 44, your natural response is often nonassertive, nonaggressive.

If your total is between 15 and 29, you have considerable difficulty being assertive.

Discuss the outcomes with your class and then practise being assertive.

Exercise to practise assertive behaviour.

This exercise can be done through role-play activities. Give two learners the opportunity to discuss a situation (role play); then ask the rest of the group to rate their performance in terms of the given criteria. Scenarios, such as the following, may be useful to test assertiveness skills:

- Siphon has taken Thandi’s pen.
- Jack kissed John’s girlfriend.
- Thandi called Joyce “names” in front of the other learners.

Look now at this example of a situation where a learner has the opportunity to react either assertively, passively or aggressively (Michelson et al 1983:62). You suspect that a friend borrowed one of your books without asking you. The dialogue may go as follows:

### **Scenario 1:**

You: Excuse me, Tom, but did you borrow my maths book? I can’t find it anywhere.

Tom: Oh, yes! I hope you don’t mind. I just needed it for one problem.

You: Sure, it's okay for you to borrow it, but please ask me first. That way I won't think it's lost.

Tom: Okay, I guess I was in a hurry.

This is a good assertive response for the following reasons:

- You avoid making Tom angry.
- You will probably get your book back.
- Tom knows that he cannot take your book without first asking.

### **Scenario 2:**

You: Gee, I sure wish I could find my maths book. I hope nobody took it.

Tom: Oh, I borrowed it. I knew you wouldn't mind.

You: Whew! I thought I had lost it.

Tom: Don't worry, I have it.

This is a passive and less desirable answer for the following reasons:

- You do not say what you really want to.
- Your friend may take advantage of you again in the future, because he does not understand that his behaviour bothers you.
- You may not get your book back.

### **Scenario 3:**

You: All right! I caught you stealing my maths book!

Tom: Are you serious? I was only borrowing it.

You: Sure you were (sarcastically). Thanks for asking!

Tom: Here, take your old book back!

This answer is aggressive for the following reasons:

- You do not say what you really want to.
- Your friend may be angry with you some time in the future and act the same way.
- You may lose a friend, because you verbally attack and embarrass him.

## **Exercise 4: How to say "no"**

It is very difficult to say "no", especially to friends or relatives. "The ability to refuse another's requests in a tactful and nonpunitive way requires much skill. The person who consistently gives in to other people's requests, regardless of whether they are appropriate or not, is sometimes regarded as a 'mouse', a 'pushover' ... Researchers have found that individuals who lack the ability to refuse requests often feel disappointed, frustrated, and resentful" (Michelson et al 1983:81).

People of all ages should develop the ability to refuse requests, thus, gaining more control over their social interactions and helping with self-reinforcement (Michelson et al 1983).

Michelson et al (1983:62–63, 82–86) give examples of role playing and scenarios that you could use to help learners to accept that it is acceptable to say “no”; remember, though, that there are different ways of saying “no”. Here are some practice scripts to use in the classroom:

- A classmate wants to borrow money from you and you do not want to lend it to him.
- You are watching your favourite television programme when someone walks in. This person wants to change the channels and you want to finish watching your programme.
- A friend wants to visit you after school, but you have too much homework to do.
- You are in a store with some friends who want to take sweets without paying for them. You think this is wrong.

The rationale, according to Michelson et al (1983:82–83) for saying “no” is

- You let others know where you stand and how you feel.
- You can help to prevent people from taking advantage of you.
- You feel good, because you do not have to do anything you do not want to do.
- You are less likely to be asked a second time to do something you do not want to do.

Here are some of the pitfalls of not saying “no”:

- You may end up doing something you do not like, which could make you feel angry, frustrated or unhappy.
- You could end up doing something that may get you into trouble.
- You could be giving other people (learners) the wrong impression about the kind of person you are, or the kinds of things you like to do.

## THINKING SKILLS

### Exercise 5: Study skills

At the beginning of each academic year, school learners often feel overwhelmed by the large amount of study material they receive.

We have worked out a study method that can be adapted to suit any type of learner or any kind of subject matter. Please feel free to adapt it to your particular needs when you use this method.

Generally speaking, this study method gives an overview of the subject matter, followed by a process of analysis and synthesis. Although this is the basis of most study methods, this approach is flexible and broad enough for both the creative and systematic learner. It is also divided into practical steps so that it can be followed with ease.

It is important to note that learners will need to invest a considerable amount of time and energy if they want this study method to work for them, that is, it is the learner's responsibility to work with this tool.

### *Step 1: Globalisation (overview)*

Skim-read (reading without close detail) the relevant subject matter (say a chapter of a textbook) to get an overview of it. Take note of the main headings, the subheadings and the margin notes; this will give you a general idea of what the chapter is about. The outline or conceptual framework established in the learner's mind as a result of this process is important, because it forms a receptacle (container) that holds or contains the detail that has yet to be learnt. Without this framework or structure, the subject matter could remain nebulous (like a cloud that floats in the air and evaporates easily).

Divide the chapter (ie the overall structure or conceptual framework) into manageable segments (structural units) and then repeat steps 2 to 5 with each of the segments or units.

### *Step 2: Analysis*

Analysis consists of breaking down information into fragments. Let us consider the following passage as a piece of learning material to see what is meant by analysis:

Learning is a process whereby the individual discovers and internalises the meaning contained in the learning material. It is a process of changing the state of "I do not know" to "I know". It is the result of practice and experience and it leads to behaviour modification.

Let us now look at how we could analyse this passage.

- Read the passage above carefully. Underline the key word or words in each sentence, that is, those words which are essential to the meaning of the passage. The words we chose are: process, meaning, transition (changing), behaviour modification.
- Use a dictionary to look up words or concepts that are unfamiliar to you; it is very important that you know exactly what each word means.
- As the student reads the passage he or she should change each important piece of information into a question. Alternatively, you could tie all the important bits to form one question. A question that would deal with the above passage as a whole could be: "Describe the learning process."

Remember, study material is written in an interactive style, which means that it will contain many examples and explanatory sections that are intended to clarify the content. These examples and explanatory sections should not be turned into questions.

### *Step 3: Interpretation*

Do not try to memorise exactly what is written in the study material. Try to make sense of it and then express it in your own words. If someone, who knows nothing about study material, were to ask you to tell him or her what you have learnt, you could answer as follows: The proof that someone has learnt something is that the person can do something that he or she could not do before. Study material must make sense to a person, otherwise he or she will not be able to remember it.

Can you see that the concepts described by the terms “behaviour modification”, “transition” (change) and “meaningful” have been tied into the answer, even if the actual words are not present in the answer?

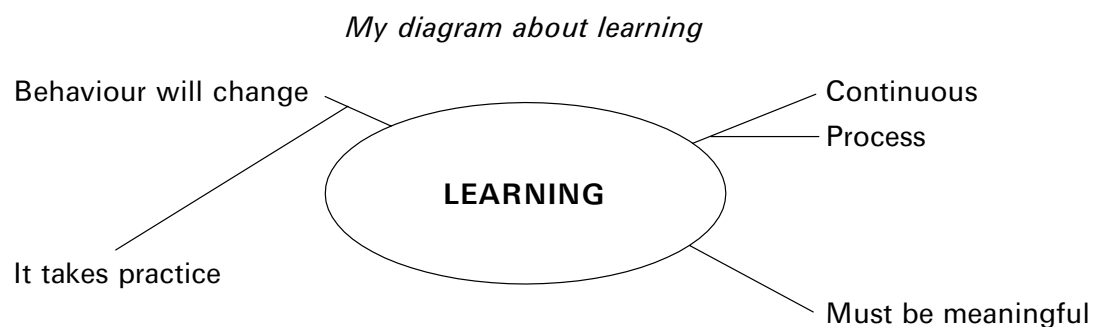
### *Step 4: Arrangement*

Rearrange the information in a way you find more logical. This will help you to concretise the information, because you are creating your own (cognitive) structure. This step is very important, because in the long term you will only remember meanings and not lengthy passages learnt by rote.

The learner who thinks systematically might arrange the content of the above passage in the following order:

- learning is a continuous process
- learning cannot take place unless the subject matter makes sense to (is understood by) the learner
- learning must result in behaviour modification
- learning requires practice

The student who thinks creatively and prefers to visualise his or her learning material, could draw a diagram such as the following:



### *Step 5: Synthesis*

Synthesis is a matter of assembling parts into a whole. The learner should answer the questions he or she has formulated in the previous four steps. This can be done orally or in writing.

- Keep your study material handy, so that you can look up any information you cannot recall.
- Try to give detailed answers, using your own words, without the aid of the study guide.

### *Step 6: Repetition of steps 2 to 5*

Repeat steps 2 to 5 with each of the remaining units into which the chapter has been divided.

### *Step 7: Final globalisation*

Remember that you began by skim-reading the whole chapter and then dividing it into units. Each unit was “taken apart” or “unpacked” and then studied in detail. The next step entails putting all the units together again to form a whole.

Start by writing down or verbalising, using the least possible words, the content of the each unit. Deal with the units one by one in the order in which you studied them. When you have done this, you should have a complete picture of the whole chapter in your mind — hopefully you will know where every bit of the information fits.

Here are a few study hints:

- Draw up a study plan that will not disturb your general routine. You should be able to achieve all your study objectives in the time you have available. Remember to leave time for relaxation! Place study plan or schedule where you plan to study; add a few words of encouragement at the bottom of it, so that you will be encouraged every time you see it.
- Most learners find it difficult to adhere to the schedules they work out for their studies. The secret is not to give up, even if you fall behind. If you have planned to put in two hours of study and there is only an hour left, use it wisely. If you do this, you will have overcome a major obstacle.
- Arrange your study corner so that you will enjoy sitting there. It must be well-lit, quiet and removed from anything visible or audible that could distract your attention. You should not try to work in front of an open window, for example, that has an interesting view. Neither should you work with the radio on or in a room with magazines lying around. Keep your study area neat and tidy. Put away your books and papers neatly at the end of each study session, so that you will not have to create order out of chaos before you can begin again.

## **MEMORY SKILLS**

### **Exercise 6**

The literature will give you lots of ideas on how to improve your memory, and to stimulate your brain and thinking. Here are a few examples you can use; you are welcome to adapt them to your unique circumstances:

- “*Mnemonics*”. The ancient Greek and Roman orators used special memorising principles known as mnemonics to improve their memories. Current knowledge about the way our minds work, shows that these principles are closely connected to how our brains function. This technique is particularly valuable when we learn or acquire facts that are not related (eg numbers). Mnemonics has become so popular that it is

being taught in schools as a way of generally improving the learning process. Mnemonics can really help to improve memory performances and the range of techniques is widely recognised. Mnemonics should be funny, colourful, dramatic, physical, logical, bold and simple. An example: to remember the sequence of the colours green, blue, red, orange and yellow, the mnemonic GB Roy, could be used.

- *Puzzles and games* can also be used to develop a variety of thinking skills. The variety of brain-building games and books on puzzles found in novelty stores these days is evident of the public's interest. Encourage learners to do puzzles and play games.
- *Break mental routines*. Let us look at the following ideas from Albrecht (1992):

The brain uses a vast number of mental routines, or programmed thought sequences, to carry out its work of information processing. A mental routine is simply a sequence of mental steps, usually taking place so fast you cannot consciously observe them, serving to organise and manipulate memories for a given purpose. Your brain has committed a vast number of these standard sequences to memory and can call them up when they are needed.

To explore some of these mental routines, try carrying out the following thought processes:

- Mary had a little ... .
- I eat when I am ... .
- The largest river in South Africa is ... .

You solve these simple problems by developing your standard programmes, or stored mental routines. Mental routines usually employ standard mental patterns, giving the brain an extremely efficient way to process information quickly and simply. By putting together a number of such building blocks, your brain can solve a typical problem and arrive at a conclusion without having to examine every tiny element of the information. It is, therefore, no accident that many people become less inquisitive, less creative and less willing to try unfamiliar experiences when they get older.

- *De Bono's thinking tools*. Many people consider De Bono to be the leading authority in the world of direct teaching of thinking skills. He usually makes use of abbreviations to specify the thinking "procedure" we have to follow to master a specific thinking skill. One of these thinking procedures or "thinking tools", as he calls them, is the PMI thinking tool. The PMI (De Bono 1992:19–20) stands for:

- P good or positive points
- M minus or bad or negative points
- I interesting points

You can use the PMI thinking tool in the classroom to direct attention to a particular task. It helps a person to systematically evaluate a question, statement or product. The PMI thinking tool will help learners to think in an orderly manner about what they have read or heard. Johann, for example, is at a party and someone asks him what he thinks about a new television series. He could use the PMI thinking tool to help him formulate the answer.



The positive points about the programme are as follows:

- I like the characters.
- I like the scenes.
- I like the story.

The negative features about the programme are as follows:

- The programme is scheduled at a bad time of the day.
- The episodes are too long.

An interesting feature of the programme is as follows:

- I enjoyed watching the mistakes they made while recording the programme.

If you want to master the PMI thinking tool, you need to practise using it every day.

- *Tony Buzan's mind maps* (1991) are another mental skill which you could use.

Buzan believes that by visualising and linking information to systems that already exist in the brain, you will be able to improve your memory. He also believes that mind maps are the most effective way to understand, summarise and recall study material. If you wish to study this mental skill in more detail, we recommend the following two books written by Tony Buzan:

- Use both sides of your brain
- The mind map book.

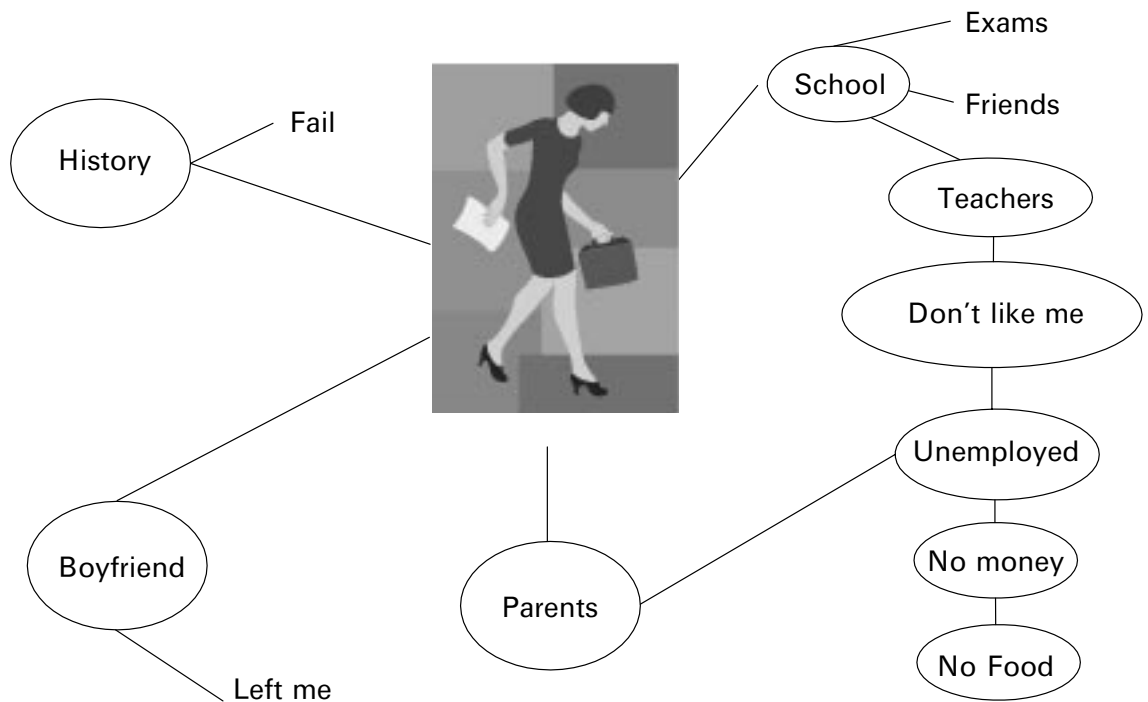
Exactly how to use mind maps is a study on its own, so we are only going to give you the basic ideas. A mind map is a design or diagram which summarises material by using lines, drawings, squiggles and words. Our brains remember more easily this way than when faced with lengthy, boring pages of words. In other words, mind maps make learning more fun and effective.

Here are the mind mapping laws by Tony Buzan (1991:77–95; 1995:83–91):

- Start with a colour image in the centre.
- Use images throughout your mind map.
- Words should be printed.
- Word should be printed on lines, which should be connected to each other.
- Words should be in "units", that is, one word per line. This leaves each word more free to hooks (links to related words) and gives note-taking more freedom and flexibility.
- Use colours in the mind map as they enhance memory, delight the eye and stimulate the right cortical process.
- The mind should be left as "free" as possible. Any thinking about where things should go or whether they should be included will simply slow down the process. The idea is to recall everything your mind thinks about in terms of the central idea.

You can also use the mind map technique if you wish to solve problems or have to make choices. When you try to solve a problem in your head, your thoughts keep running around in circles in your brain. Since we cannot hold more than about seven pieces in our consciousness at one time, we can never simultaneously evaluate all the complexities of the situation. A mind map allows a person to simultaneously look at the problem or situation and then make a sensible choice. It also allows a person to take stock of the

problems (if he or she feels that there are many at the same time), and then to realise that some of them are not really problems at all. Here, for example, is a mind map of Bogani's problems:



### Exercise 7: Decision making (a)

Wise decisions are based on quality information. Lindhard and Oosthuizen (1985) differentiate between the following four principles of decision making:

- *Aims and value.* The objective has to be determined, that is, what you want to achieve.
- *Information.* Collect as much information as you possibly can that will influence the decision and then weigh the possibilities against each other.
- *Solutions.* Write down as many solutions as you can think of. You will have to think about the possible solutions, since some may not be immediately apparent.
- *Decision.* Decide which is the best solution. Test the solution against the aims and values. Also test the solutions for any consequences, by asking the following questions: "Is my solution viable and can I carry it out?", "Is it the best solution for the long term?" and "How will this solution affect me and others?" Make the decision and then take any necessary action.

Now do the following exercise to practice your decision-making skills. Read the case study and then answer the question that follow.

Peter, one of the Grade 9 boys in your school, comes to ask your advice. He wants to buy a CD-player, but does not know how to go about it. He can either buy a secondhand one from his friend, Jack, or a new one (but then he has to save more money). What advice will you give him? Do you really think you have enough knowledge to help him? Motivate your answer.

Regardless of your choice, it is always important to keep the following four principles of decision making in mind:

- *Aims and objectives.* Peter needs to decide why he wants a CD-player.
  - Does he want to play at parties and make money, or does he just want it for himself?
  - Does he want to buy a cheaper CD-player now and then buy a more expensive one when he is finished with school, or does he want to make a long-term investment?
- *Information.* Peter needs to acquire as much information as possible.
  - What is the best type of CD-player and where will he find the best prices?
  - How does Jack’s set compare with the new ones in the shops?
  - Does Jack give a guarantee for his CD-player?
- *Solutions.* Peter must compare the information.
  - The best CD-player might be the most expensive.
  - Jack’s price may be the best, but he does not offer a guarantee.
- *Choice.* Peter can only make a decision once he has compared all the information. Peter must realise that you, as educator, can only help him to get more information or to compare the information (give guidance). He must make the decision himself. You can only help him to take his decision seriously and to think carefully about the implications.

Exercise to practise your decision-making skills. Use the following handout and work through the decision-making process.

My Mom has told me to wash the dishes and to make supper before she comes home from work.

<p>How will I feel if I do what she says?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>How will I feel if I do not do what she says and play with my friends instead?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>How will my Mom feel?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>How will my Mom feel?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>What will my friends think of my decision?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>What will my friends think of my decision?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

What will the consequences be of my actions? ..... .....	What will the consequences be of my actions? ..... .....
Shall I decide to do this? ..... .....	Shall I decide to do this? ..... .....

### Exercise 8: Decision making (b)

At the end of this group session, you should

- be aware of the prejudices (inflexibility) of people's thinking (the difference between fact and opinion)
- better understand the value of contrasting opinions
- realise the importance of gathering information before making a decision
- have insight into the importance of collaborating in a group
- consider alternative solutions before reaching a decision (Clark 1988:368–373)

#### Activities

- Suggest to the learners that they are setting out on a tour of Namibia. They plan a flight across the Namib desert in an old air force plane. Describe how the group excitedly boards the plane. Unfortunately, the two teachers leading the tour group are unable to make the trip and the learners are thrilled at the thought of departing on such an adventurous journey on their own. The flight was to have lasted approximately two hours. Dramatise the sequence of events. Describe the breathtaking view across the desert sand and the forlorn sight of a plane gliding over the lofty dunes. After about an hour, the learners sense that something is wrong when the aeroplane starts to lose height and it seems to be gradually descending. One of the girls shrieks as the passengers feel a sudden violent lurch . . . and then another! What is going on? And then suddenly, there is an ominous tearing sound, another violent bump and an earsplitting thud. Then all is silent. A catastrophe has struck. Mercifully none of the learners have suffered anything worse than scratches and bruises but, on closer inspection, they discover that the navigator and the pilot have died. What should they do?
- Hand out copies of *Struck by a catastrophe!* and explain that the items listed on the pamphlet represent what was found on board. Learners must study the items and consider the usefulness of each item. Their task is to arrange the items in order of importance for survival in a desert. The number 1 should be written next to the most crucial item, a 2 beside the next most important, and so on. Individual learners decide on their own rankings, without discussing them with anyone else.

- When the form has been completed, the group discuss the importance of the various items and the best way to use each of them. Learners listen to the various proposals, evaluating each suggestion in turn. The entire group has to reach consensus about an item before the decision may be viewed as a group decision. A few guidelines are provided to assist the learners to reach consensus:
  - Be as logical as possible
  - Avoid argument aimed exclusively at persuading others to accept your view.
  - Do not support a decision simply to avoid conflict.
  - Avoid techniques such as arriving at a decision by means of a majority vote.
  - See different opinions as assets rather than liabilities.

The reasons why an item is assigned a certain ranking, should be indicated on the sheet.

- When there is unanimity about the ranking of the items, the group leader discusses the “correct” sequence with the group. If there are certain differences of opinion between the group members and the leader, they are required to give valid reasons. The group leader must be open to discussion and should respect the group’s decision. What follows is the suggested sequence with the appropriate reasons:

- 1 Thirty litres of water to counteract dehydration.
- 2 Concentrated food for daily consumption.
- 3 Radio transmitter to transmit a distress signal.
- 4 Distress flares to be discharged.
- 5 Parachutes to draw attention during the day and to conserve heat at night.
- 6 First-aid box for treating wounds.
- 7 Lifeboats to be used as bandages or fuel.
- 8 Box of matches to use as signals by day, to frighten away wild animals and to create heat at night.
- 9 Wooden crates to be used as fuel.
- 10 Nylon cord to tie up the wreck during the night (defence against wild animals)
- 11 Revolvers to ward off wild animals.
- 12 The map is useless to a group lost in the middle of a desert.
- 13 A compass with broken glass, so useless.

- If there is time left, topics such as the following could also be considered:
  - Should the group remain close to the wreck or go for help?
  - What should the group do if two of its members demand their quota of provisions in order to start walking?
  - How would the group members decide on someone to act as their leader?

### *Follow-up work*

When making up their minds, the learners should consider alternatives, and then try to make an objective assessment of the best decision.

Items	Individual decision	Group decision	Reason for group decision	Correct decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● wooden crates</li> <li>● concentrated food</li> <li>● 50 m nylon cord</li> <li>● 1 box of matches</li> <li>● 2 parachutes</li> <li>● 2.38 special revolvers</li> <li>● a map</li> <li>● a lifeboat</li> <li>● a broken compass</li> <li>● distress flares</li> <li>● a first-aid box</li> <li>● a radio transmitter</li> <li>● 30 litres of water</li> </ul>				

### Exercise 9: Creativity (a)

You will see it is not easy to teach creativity, because creativity is a way of life and not an academic paradigm. However, the more creativity is practised the easier it becomes.

Use these exercises to help you to think of something different.

#### *Exercise A: What is this figure?*

If you look at it one way, it is a bird. If you look at it another way, it could be a question mark. If you turn it upside down, it looks like a seal juggling a ball on its nose.



*Exercise B:* Can you think of a way to put a sheet of newspaper on the floor in such a way that when two people stand face-to-face on it, they will not be able to touch one another? Cutting or tearing the paper is not allowed. You may not tie the people up, nor may you prevent them from moving.

Put the newspaper in a doorway and then close the door. If people stand on each side of the closed door, they will not be able to touch one another.

*Exercise C:* What happened in 1961 that had not happened since 1881?

If 1961 and 1881 are turned upside down or read back to front, they read the same. No other dates between 1961 and 1881 manifest this characteristic. The next time this will happen will be in 6009.

*Exercise D:* Change IV to 6 by one moving line.

IV become VI, which are the roman numerals for 6.

**Hint:** The old woman's nose is the young girl's nose and chin.



*An old woman, or a young girl?*

*Exercise E:* Here are some optical illusions for enhancing creativity and for stimulating the brain.



*A man playing a horn, or a silhouette of a woman?*

**Hint:** Move away from the screen and blink to see the skull or the woman (looking at the mirror).



*A vane woman, or a picture of a skull?*



*A picture with two faces, or one face?*



*A picture of a rabbit, or of a duck?*

**Hint:** The duck is looking left, the rabbit is looking right.



*A face of a native American, or of an Eskimo?*

### **Exercise 10: Creativity (b)**

Another way to stimulate creativity is to help learners to follow their hunches — many artists and scientists regard this as the key to creativity. It is also one of the most dramatic and useful forms of creative problem solving. Intuitive ability is not restricted to geniuses or individuals with special talents — we all possess this capacity — but most of us have been conditioned by education and our environment to neglect, repress and distrust our intuition. This is frequently implied in phrases such as “It is just a woman’s intuition”, or “It was only a hunch”.

Inventors of great note depended strongly on their intuition for their creative insights. Thomas Edison, for example, generated very useful equipment by following his hunches. Einstein also declared that he believed in intuition. Since intuition, as a way of knowing, is crucial to creativity, educators would do well to help learners to liberate and develop this latent ability.

Use the following exercises to unlock your intuition:

- Ask divergent-thinking and evaluative questions, such as
  - What would happen if ...?
  - Which option is best ...?
- Ask “just suppose” questions, such as
  - What if it were against the law to laugh ...?
  - What if a child from the moon joined your class ...?
- Give incomplete beginnings, such as
  - Create a design ...
  - Here are some interesting shapes. What can you make of them?



- Ask for product improvements, such as
  - How will you improve your chair at school?
- Making up story titles, book titles, song titles and picture titles is another way of practising original thinking. Examples include
  - thinking up an original name for a dripless Madonna-shaped candle
  - thinking up a creative name for an effective sunburn lotion or a delicious sauce for chips

## **SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

### **Exercise 11: Ability to make friends (a)**

This activity can be done with a group of learners.

*Step 1:*

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four learners. Give each learner the name of one person in the group. Nobody should let the group know whose name he or she has. The learner has to think of three positive qualities about the person whose name he or she has drawn.

You could make use of the following example card:

<p>List three positive qualities about</p> <p>1 .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>2 .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>3 .....</p> <p>.....</p>
--

*Step 2:*

Share the positive qualities about the person you have drawn; do not disclose this person's name. The other group members should try to guess who it is.

*Step 3:*

Help the learners to work through the following worksheet.

**Worksheet A**

Paste your list of positive characteristics here.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Carefully read each of the questions below. Think about each question and then try to answer them.

1 Do you agree with the things your classmate said about you?

.....  
.....

2 Was it easy or difficult to guess which mystery person was you?

.....  
.....

3 Are there good things about you that you would like others to know?

.....  
.....

4 How can you let people know what your good points are?

.....  
.....

5 Are there learners in the class whom you know better than others? Why?

.....  
.....

6 Are there learners in the class whom you would like to know better?

.....  
.....

7 How can you make that happen?

.....  
.....

When you write your sentences, think about all your strengths and talents. Think about yourself as a learner, a friend, a son/daughter, a brother/sister and anything else you can think of.

*Step 4:*

The class has to learn the following poem as an activity to consolidate the discussions:

**WHAT I CALL A FRIEND**

One whose grip is a little tighter,  
One whose smile is a little brighter,  
One whose deeds are a little whiter,  
That's what I call a friend.  
One who'll lend as quick as borrow,  
One who's the same today as tomorrow,  
One who'll share my joy and sorrow,  
That's what I call a friend.  
One whose thoughts are a little cleaner,  
One whose mind is a little keener,  
One who avoids those things that are meaner,  
That's what I call a friend.

(Anonymous)

Learners can also try the following exercise:

Write a "FRIEND WANTED" advertisement, which explains what characteristics, interests, hobbies and activities you would look for in a friend.

The advertisement could look something like this:

**FRIEND WANTED!!**

Must have a good sense of humour, like Chinese food and rap music, and be crazy about TV games. Must like adventure, be easy to get on with and enjoy playing or watching soccer.

You will agree that each advertisement will be different, because we do not all look for the same qualities in a friend. You can point out the differences by putting up the advertisements in the class. You could go even further by giving the learners the opportunity to answer a "FRIEND WANTED" advertisement. This should be an interesting exercise, especially to see who chooses who for a friend.

**Exercise 12: Ability to make friends (b)**

By the end of this group session, you should

- accept greater responsibility towards your friends

- realise the nature and value of a good friendship
- be able to cope with the problems that might crop up in a friendship (Elardo & Cooper 1977:79–93)

*Resources*

- copies of *Should I help?*



- copies of *To be a friend you need to be a friend*

A friend is someone who

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- copies of *Thorny issues*

What is the problem?

What is causing the problem?

How do the individuals feel?

How can the problem be solved? Suggest alternatives

What is the result of each alternative?

Why?

How can the situation be avoided?



Volunteers report back to the group, telling them about possible poor eating habits or physical neglect that have come to their notice. Group members describe which relaxation techniques they have found useful.

### *Activities*

- Hand out copies of *Should I help?* and ask whether, in the case of our friends, we have any responsibility towards others. Discuss the various situations depicted in the handout. Each situation is analysed and the group is required to substantiate the reasons why they think action is or is not necessary. Learners debate the desirability of taking action in certain situations. Learners determine the extent of a person's responsibilities towards personal friends.
- The group leader tells the story of a newcomer to the grade 9 (standard 7) class, called Lisa, who is battling to make friends in a new school. She tries hard to be popular and to gain favour with her classmates by continually paying them compliments. Eventually she becomes upset when her classmates start ignoring her (the group leader elaborates on the tale a bit). The group divides into groups of two and they try to establish why Lisa is unpopular and why she struggles to make friends.
- The group conducts a discussion on friendship, asking one another what expectations they have of a friendship. They discuss the value of a good friendship. The group examines certain circumstances in which the support of friends can be very valuable.
- Distribute *To be a friend you need to be a friend* and ask the learners to write down what they expect of a good friend. Discuss the various responses. They include the following possibilities: a friend is someone who cares about me, who understands me, who knows when and how to help me, who listens to me. Discuss the fine balance between giving and taking.
- Put it to the learners that in their friendship, they may yet face difficult choices. Hand out *Thorny issues* and discuss each situation with the learners. Ask them what they would do if

- two friends were arguing
- a friend was being sarcastic or spiteful — or was teasing them
- they witnessed someone pinching (stealing) something
- their friends invited them to join them for a smoke behind the school, or to have a beer

There could be a fair amount of debate about these issues as the learners express their views.

- Use the questions on the hand out to stimulate discussion about how to handle the problem situations mentioned above. Encourage the learners to participate and honour everyone's contribution.
- Close the discussion by asking the learners to describe situations involving friends who were uncertain about the correct way to behave at the time. Members of the group analyse the situation with the aid of the guidelines on the leaflet *Thorny issues* and suggest solutions.

### *Follow-up work*

Learners are required to spend some time analysing the quality of their friendships to determine whether they are meeting their responsibilities towards their friends. They also have to describe uncomfortable situations in which they have been involved, explaining how they behaved towards their friends. This helps them to realise that they have choices about how they behave and that, having made a particular choice, they have to take responsibility for it.

## **Exercise 13: Developing efficient listening skills**

Use the following checklist to determine how well you listen (Van der Merwe 1991).

### **HOW WELL DO YOU LISTEN?**

Which words describe you as a listener?

alert	distracted	uninterrupting	quick to judge
attending	impatient	not distracted	responsive
caring	inattentive	other-centred	self-centred
defensive	insensitive	patient	uncaring

Circle the term that best describes you as a listener.

Superior	excellent	above average	average
below average	poor		

How do you rate yourself as a listener? Read the questions that follow and answer “yes” or “no” to each of them.

- Do you find yourself not listening because the subject bores you?
- Do you find it difficult to listen to people who have ideas that conflict with yours?
- Do you find it difficult to appreciate others’ problems?
- Do you feel that you are often correct in arguments?
- Do you find yourself jumping to conclusions about what people are saying?
- Do you find yourself interrupting people before they have finished speaking?
- Do you finish people’s sentences for them?

Did you answer “yes” to any of these questions? If so, you must analyse which attitudes prevent you from listening attentively and you should make a conscious effort to change them.

### **HOW ACCURATE IS YOUR LISTENING?**

After you have spoken to a friend or colleague, can you identify the following:

- the main ideas
- examples given to support the main ideas
- the effect of the conversation on the other person

After watching the news on the television or listening to the news on the radio, can you

- state what the lead story was?
- name the main ideas presented during the story?

If you have only a hazy idea of the details of the main story, then you were not concentrating at your optimum level.

### **GENERAL LISTENING SKILLS**

- Do you listen more than you talk?
- Do you create a supportive atmosphere which encourages easy discussion with school mates, children, friends or family?
- Do you provide enough time for important listening/or speaking interactions?
- Do you regard your fellow learners as being on an equal footing, or do you try to control them?
- Do you patronise the speaker by being overly polite or by being insincere?
- Do you let emotion-laden words or ideas arouse personal antagonism?
- Are you nonverbally responsive when listening?
- Do you tell the other person how you are feeling?

- Do you allow personal internal distractions to become a barrier to effective listening?
- Do you allow abrasive personalities to prevent you from listening?

If any of your answers indicate that you do not listen carefully, you need to write down what attitudes, beliefs, actions or circumstances will help you to improve your listening.

The most frequently used skill in the classroom is listening, yet it is a skill which is infrequently taught; the assumption is that listening skills develop “naturally”. However, good listening is a skill that can be enhanced with practice and by some simple techniques.

Now we want to introduce you to the LISTEN technique (especially appropriate in the classroom) which you may pass on to your learners:

L = Look ahead

I = Ideas

S = Signs and signals

T = Take part

E = Explore

N = Notes

- *Look ahead (try to anticipate what the speaker may be going to say)*

- Read up on your subject before the lesson. You will then recognise some of the ideas, names and places.
- Think ahead, that is, plan which questions you want answered. The answers will then be more meaningful.
- Even if you have not prepared in advance, what information do you expect? If you anticipate certain information, you are more likely to hear it when it comes; if it does not come up, phrase it into a question for future use.

- *Ideas*

- Be on the lookout for the key ideas that form the basis of the lesson. Key ideas are usually repeated often and are generally supported by examples, explanations and evidence.

- *Signs and signals*

- Educators will not always tell you explicitly when something is important, but they will give you signs by using particular words, phrases or gestures.
- Examples of these signs include the following: “There are three reasons why ...”; the use of important words such as “major, crucial, central idea, the basic idea is, remember”; the use of supporting evidence for key facts, such as “for example, for instance, in contrast, also, similarly, in addition, bear in mind”; and the use of conclusions and summaries indicated by words such as “in conclusion, therefore, as a result, finally, and so you can see”.



- *Take part*

To be an active listener, that is, do more than just soak up sounds, you need to do the following:

- be on time for lessons
- sit where you can see, hear and be seen
- look at the educator
- respond to what the speaker is saying: write notes and respond physically (eg nod, smile, frown, laugh)

- *Explore*

- Ask questions based on your own ideas, your reading or your on-the-spot thinking. It is your right as a learner to ask the educator to explain something again; remember, though, that you must show that you are listening to the explanation.

- *Take notes*

- Taking notes helps us to listen by providing a logical framework for what we hear. When you are taking notes, you are forced to search for key points and ideas so that you can structure your notes.

People who have never tried to listen actively may find it difficult, because so many of the problems associated with listening have negative consequences. If you are not comfortable with this technique, here is another example (Gamble & Gamble 1987; Hybels & Weaver 1989; Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991):

- *Focus your attention.* In order to listen more effectively, you need to make a conscious effort to overcome your poor listening behaviour, and the external and internal barriers that may impede your listening ability. Being an effective listener requires you to put aside daydreams and distractions and to focus your attention on what the communicator is saying. Remember, your feelings and attitudes may distract you just as much as annoying sounds.
- *Show that you are listening.* It is important to pay attention to others and to actively show that you are listening. You can achieve this by offering them both verbal and nonverbal cues. Verbal cues can be comments such as “I see”, “Go on” or “Tell me more”. Nonverbal cues also show that you are listening, for example, by maintaining eye contact, smiling, frowning or nodding. Such feedback encourages the other person to give you the details necessary for better understanding and lets them know that you are involved in the interaction. At the same time, it is important to suppress what you want to say until the communicator has finished talking and not to interrupt while they are still expressing themselves.
- *Listening to understand ideas.* Since it is not possible to remember every word of a lecture or meeting, or even of a complex message, you should work towards identifying only the most important concepts — in other words, those ideas that comprise the main points of the person’s message. Thus, when you listen to understand, you actively concentrate on identifying the key words and phrases that will help you to accurately summarise the concepts being discussed.

- *Listening to retain information.* Listening to retain information also requires attention and concentration. Some of the methods that help retention include the following:
  - Anticipate what is coming. If the speaker says, “The following five points are important”, prepare yourself to identify and remember five points.
  - Form associations. Some people remember names, places and numbers by associating what was heard with something familiar, or by associating it with a visual image.
  - Take notes. When the message is complex and it is important to remember the information accurately, taking notes is probably the most reliable method of recalling information. Paraphrase, using your own words, what has been said by writing down the main ideas and points.
  
- *Listening to analyse and evaluate content.* Listening critically calls for even greater skill than identifying and remembering ideas. Try to establish the communicator’s motives and credibility by challenging and questioning the ideas expressed.
 

Sometimes you have the opportunity to question the speaker; at other times, you have to do this internally. To evaluate the validity of a message — and then to accept or reject it — involves the ability to separate fact from opinion to determine if an argument is based on logic or emotion, and to detect ambiguities in the argument (Barker 1984). You also need to recognise your own biases and prejudices about the topic. Hybels and Weaver (1989:65) express evaluation as follows: “We must learn to suspend judgement — delay taking a position — until all the facts and other evidence are in, we have had a chance to test the facts in the marketplace of ideas, or they have been chewed over sufficiently for digestion.”
  
- *Listening reflectively.* The best way to listen reflectively is to try to understand what the other person is feeling and to reflect those feelings back with empathy. You need to put aside your own feelings and opinions, then make an effort to recognise the emotions being expressed and to encourage the person to come to terms with their feelings. We do this by paraphrasing the communicator’s statements and by reinforcing those statements with nonverbal cues, such as eye contact, touching and facial expressions.

The following is an example of a reflective listening response in which the listener (Sipho) paraphrases the speaker’s words and feelings. Thandi has talked to Sipho about her studies.

Sipho replies, “You keep telling me how well everything is going and how pleased you are that your assignments are up to date. But every time you bring up the subject of credit marks for examination entrance, your tone changes and you sound less enthusiastic. Is something bothering you?”

It is important to remember that it is not your task to judge the situation. You can help the other person to reach a solution without offering advice in the form of, “You shouldn’t feel that way”, “Why don’t you look for another job”, “I really feel sorry for you” or “You must tell her you won’t tolerate such behaviour”. These are poor responses, because they do not help the other person to address the feelings that are the cause of the problem (Steinberg 1993).

# SURVIVAL SKILLS

## Exercise 14: Budget

Look carefully at the example of a budget and then work out your own budget. Example of a budget

DEBIT	CREDIT
<b>Income</b>	<b>Deductions</b>
Gross (monthly income)	5 000
Pay as you earn (PAYE)	1 000
Pension/provident fund	350
Unemployment insurance fund (UIF)	20
Medical aid	200
Total deductions	1 570
<i>Net Income</i>	<i>3 430</i>
<b>Essential fixed expenses</b>	<b>530</b>
Rent/bond	150
Repayments:	150
— Car	100
— Loans	50
Short-term insurance:	
— Household	??
— Car	150
School fees	50
Other	30
Subtotal	
<b>Savings and Investments</b>	
Savings	150
Life Insurance	100
Investments	50
Subtotal	
<b>Essential changing expenses</b>	<b>2 130</b>
Accounts	300
Furniture	300
Petrol/transport	300
Car maintenance	250
Food	500
Electricity/Water	350
Telephone	100
Medical	30
Other	??
Subtotal	??

DEBIT	CREDIT
<b>Nonessential expenses</b>	400
Clothes	200
Hairdresser	59
Alcohol	??
Entertainment	150
Domestic Help	??
Other	??
Subtotal	??
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3 210</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>R3 430.00 - R3 210.00 = R220.00</b>

### Exercise 15: Curriculum Vitae

*Draw up a CV for yourself. Curriculum vitae:*

Barkai et al (1992:32–33) present the following example of a CV.

<b>CURRICULUM VITAE</b>	
Name:	John Michael Brown (Enter your full name and underline the name by which you are usually addressed).
Residential address:	21 High Street, Wendywood, 2144 Postal address: (Include one, if different from above.)
Home telephone number:	(011) 802—xxx (If you do not have access to a telephone, make sure you include the number of a reliable contact.)
Marital status:	Single/Married/Divorced/Separated/Engaged  If you have children, state how many and their age[s], eg. Married, 2 children: 5 and 2 years old.)
Date of birth:	20 January 1963
Nationality:	(If you are not South African, indicate your employment status in the RSA, eg, British, RSA Permanent Resident 1976.)
Driver's licence:	(Indicate type of driver's licence and its validity.)
Education:	(For the sake of brevity, only give details of high school and tertiary or post-school education. Note significant achievements or offices held.) Eg, 19xx—19xx XXX High School

<p>Work experience:</p> <p>Reason for leaving:</p> <p>Interests/Hobbies:</p>	<p>TED Matric: English (Higher Grade)  Afrikaans (Higher Grade)  Biology (Higher Grade) (Dist)  Mathematics (Higher Grade)  Geography (Higher Grade)  Science (Higher Grade)</p> <p>School Prefect 19xx  Captain of Cricket 2nd Eleven 19xx  School Debating Society 19xx—19xx  University of the Witwatersrand  Bachelor of Science degree  (List subjects taken and grades achieved)  Tutored Biology II 19xx/xx</p> <p>(Set out details of positions you have held over the past 10 years, starting with your current or most recent job. Be careful to include accurate dates of employment, and give an indication of the type of work undertaken. A prospective employer needs to see at a glance when promotion has taken place and if any specific achievements have been gained.)  For example: XYZ Chemical Products (Pty) Limited, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg</p> <p>May 19xx–Nov 19xx: Part-time clerical position during school and university vacations (preparing shipping documentation.)  Final salary: R12 per hour</p> <p>Completion of studies/permanent employment.</p> <p>(Only list your major interests and hobbies, but give an indication of your level of interest and any honours or office achieved.)</p>
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## APPENDIX B

### VIEWS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The question of corporal punishment is still one of the most controversial educational issues in most developing countries. You are entitled to your own view.

The following is an interesting view adapted from Ferron (1990:232–234).

Punishment in some form or another is essential in the training of the young, and corporal punishment can prove very effective when employed wisely. It is indiscriminate use of corporal punishment which is bad. What would you think of a doctor who prescribed the same drug for every ailment, or wrote out prescriptions without examining his or her patients? The same holds for a teacher who resorts to corporal punishment for every misdemeanour.

Children make nuisances of themselves for a variety of reasons — because they are not fully occupied, because they have lost interest in the lesson, or out of a sheer love of mischief. In the latter case, the causes may lie very deep in the child's home conditions. Some children may have come to regard quarrelling and abusiveness, bullying and retaliating as normal modes of behaviour due to their home circumstances. Others live such a life of fear and subjugation at home that they see the classroom situation as their only outlet for self-assertion and adventure. Many children come to school so hungry and tired that it is difficult not to sympathise with them if they try to use the classroom as a haven of rest and relaxation. Moreover, some children are so sensitive that they would never need corporal punishment for their misdeeds. For them a reproving look or a show of displeasure would probably be enough. It is possible to reason with some children, while others may require a sharp rebuke, a warning, an ultimatum, or have to be deprived of certain privileges. It is foolish to use corporal punishment for every offence on the grounds that children are wicked or that they are possessed by some evil spirit which must be beaten out of them.

The modern psychological view is that no child is naturally bad or depraved. Children are human beings who have definite needs at various stages in their development and in different situations in life. Some attempts must be made to satisfy these needs. When children misbehave, parents or teachers should ask themselves the following questions:

- What do the children think they are gaining through this particular behaviour?
- What needs are being satisfied by their behaviour?
- How can the children's needs of the moment be satisfied in a more constructive way
- What is the background and history of their deviancy?
- Can I, at this stage, help to rectify the mistakes of the past?
- What should be my plan of action for the future, in the children's best interests?

If children disobey you or talk during class, there must be a reason for this behaviour. Perhaps what you have said has fired their imagination in some way and they need to discuss the matter with a friend, because you have denied them the opportunity of discussing it with you. Perhaps you (or some other adult) have shut

them up or ridiculed them in the past, so that they are afraid to approach you in this connection. Perhaps one of their peers asked them for help and they were in the process of giving it. Perhaps they are bored with your lesson and want to talk about something more interesting or exciting. Perhaps some other child took their pen, and they were in the process of regaining their property when you pounced upon them. Perhaps they just talk to flout your authority, or to annoy you. You have been the cause of frustration to them in the past, and this is the only way they know of getting their own back on you. Perhaps they are craving attention, and this is the only way they can get it from you or their peers, or both.

When pupils do not do their homework, their teacher should try to determine why. Perhaps there are no facilities at home or no encouragement from their guardian to do homework. Perhaps they were made to run errands or to do household chores as soon as they arrived home from school and were too tired afterwards. Perhaps they were not sure what they had to do, or how to do it. Perhaps they find your subject boring. Perhaps, once again, they are waging “war” on you in the only way they know how, or this is the only way they know of getting attention. Perhaps they earn status among their peers by repeatedly failing to do their homework. The other children may be too afraid to tell you that they find your lessons boring, but these children have discovered a way of doing so. Perhaps they are flogged for their repeated failure to do their homework, and take their punishment without flinching. This earns them status among their peers for being “tough, brave kids”. If pupils throw paper balls about the classroom, there must be a reason. People do not throw paper balls about for nothing. Perhaps they are the class paper ball throwing champion and have to demonstrate their skill from time to time in order to retain this title. Being paper ball throwing champion gives them a certain status among their peers. Perhaps somebody you did not see, hit them with a paper ball first, and they were merely retaliating when you caught them in the act. Perhaps they had almost perfected their skill in throwing paper balls without being caught, but today was their unlucky day! Or perhaps they were just trying to get your attention. If children cannot get their sums right, they can still achieve some distinction among their peers by being the roughest and toughest kid in the class. Other children will look up to them, and that makes them somebody!

This is an interesting view, but remember that corporal punishment is against the law and a teacher using this method of punishment will face a great many problems.

## **SEX EDUCATION**

Introductory orientation

Sex education has been lacking in many South African schools. Some of the underlying reasons for this lack include the following:

- It was seen as the parents’ responsibility to provide sex education.
- Educators did not have the training to present sex education.
- It was argued that talking about sex at school would cause a learner to become sexually active at an earlier age and so increase the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

A number of factors have led to a shift in this kind of thinking.

Sex education is considered a vital part of the learner's formal education, since ignorance of sexual matters could lead to severe problems, such as rape, sexual abuse, increased pregnancies and Aids.

### **What is sex education?**

Sex education is more than a mere biological presentation of facts; it is part of personal, social and health education. It has moral, legal, cultural and ethical dimensions as well as having a skills base which involves assertiveness and communication (Massey 1988:9). Sex is also about exploring feelings of love, sexuality and responsibility towards oneself and others.

Purposeful sex education is effective education (Massey 1991:9–10):

- It is developmental and appropriate to the age and stage of the learner.
- It puts forward factual knowledge and encourages exploration of facts.
- It needs to be taught several times and in a number of different ways.
- It examines opinions, accepts and encourages deliberation and discussion of a range of these opinions and concepts.
- It encourages the development of personal and interpersonal skills.
- It encourages awareness and respect of self and others.
- It encourages reflection and responsibility.
- It requires, as a prerequisite, some negotiations with learners to establish what their starting point is, rather than assuming common levels and experiences.

Sex education is not just a topic for adolescence or for crisis intervention. It begins in the early years and is delivered consciously and unconsciously by parents, educators, other significant adults, the peer group and the media.

### **The aims of sex education**

The purpose for providing sex education is to meet needs. The needs of the learners will thus determine the aims of the sex education programme.

Here are some of the needs:

- facts, information and clarification
- decision-making skills
- self-esteem
- self-improvement
- exploration of values and attitudes
- peer group cooperation and support
- support from significant adults

These are just some of the needs that learners may have, so you may not necessarily have identified these specific needs. We can safely say, however, that we will fulfil the learners' needs if we aim the programme at the following four perspectives:

- Educational. The educational perspective will deal with some of the following issues:
  - development of skills



- exploring concepts
  - gaining of knowledge and information
  - classifying attitudes and values
  - becoming aware of differing views on sexuality
- Pastoral. The pastoral perspective aims to identify problem areas and provide support.
  - Preventive. The preventive perspective aims to combat
    - unfulfilling relationships
    - unwanted pregnancy
    - sexually transmitted diseases
  - Social. The social perspective focuses on
    - outreach to parents and community
    - moral, ethical, religious and legal dimensions

According to Massy (1991:16), the following factors will influence the aims of sex education:

- the learners' ages
- the natural level of the learners
- the learners' specific needs
- any available resources
- the ethos of the school

## **HIV and Aids**

Issues, such as HIV and Aids should be included when sex education is taught. When you deal with the issues of HIV and Aids, you should always keep the level of the learner in mind. You should seek to inform the learner, that is, answer the learner's questions and concerns rather than create unnecessary "paranoia" about HIV and Aids.

## **ECD and SP students**

This is a good time to test your knowledge. See if you can answer the following questions on HIV and Aids:

(1) What is Aids?

.....  
 .....

(2) How does Aids make you sick?

.....  
 .....

(3) How do you get Aids?

.....  
 .....

(4) What are some of the symptoms of Aids (physical signs)?

(a) early signs

.....  
.....

(b) later signs

.....  
.....

(5) How is Aids NOT transmitted?

.....  
.....

(6) How do learners get Aids?

.....  
.....

*Compare your answers with the following and then determine how well you did:*

**ANSWERS:**

(1) What is Aids?

Aids is caused by a virus called HIV. The HIV virus can only live in blood, sperm and vaginal juices, and it is too small to see.

The HIV virus is passed from one person to another through body fluids (such as sex-juices or blood). It then begins to attack the body from the inside. An unborn baby can also get Aids if the mother has the HIV virus.

(2) How does Aids make you sick?

Our bodies have many different parts and every part has an important job to do. The heart, for example, pumps the blood around the body, the brain thinks, the lungs breathe air and the breasts make milk. We have a very important system in our bodies called the immune system. The job of this system is to protect and defend the body against germs and diseases. It also heals the body after sickness or injuries.

The immune system is really our body's army. We cannot defend ourselves against germs and viruses when this army gets weak.

The HIV virus slowly damages the immune system if it gets into a person's body. This means that the body starts to lose its power to defend itself against germs or viruses, such as TB. It also loses its power and strength to heal itself.

The HIV virus slowly gets stronger and stronger. The person starts to feel sick when the HIV virus has broken down most of his or her immune system. This may take many years. This person with Aids has a very weak immune system.

The person with the Aids is very sick and can get sick from many different germs. These germs can cause problems such as weight loss, excessive diarrhea,

sores in the mouth, coughs, pneumonia, TB, brain and nerve diseases, swellings, fevers and sores. These do not get better, because the immune system is weak.

What is HIV negative?	What is HIV positive?
The person has no HIV virus in his or her body.	The person may look well, but is able to pass the virus on to others.

(3) How do you get Aids?

Aids is passed on in the following ways:

- *Sex*. The HIV virus will be in the sperm or vaginal juices of a person who is HIV positive. He or she can pass the virus on to another person through unsafe sex. A person with a sexually transmitted disease (STD), such as syphilis, may have a discharge or sores on his or her private parts. This makes it easier for the HIV virus to get into the body during sex.
- *Pregnancy*. The HIV virus can pass onto the baby if a pregnant mother is HIV positive. Not all HIV positive mothers, however, give birth to HIV positive babies.
- *Blood*. The HIV virus can pass from one person to another through his or her blood. Sick people are sometimes given extra blood via a blood transfusion. Blood transfusions are safe in South Africa, because all blood is tested before it is given to sick people.

(4) What are some of the physical symptoms of Aids?

(a) Early signs of Aids. You can have any of the following problems when you first get Aids:

- weight loss
- swellings in the neck, behind the ear, under the arm and in the groin
- sores on the lips which do not heal
- thrush — a white rash inside the mouth or on the private parts
- signs of TB (tuberculosis) — coughing, sweating and weight loss
- painful sores or rashes
- fevers and sweating at night
- sores on the private parts which do not get better
- continual diarrhoea

(b) Later signs of Aids. You can also have any of the following problems when you are very sick with Aids:

- TB (tuberculosis)
- pneumonia
- painful rashes
- “pins and needles” and pains in the hands and feet
- weakness and tiredness
- dark blue marks on the skin
- losing a lot of weight
- headaches, fits, blackouts, loss of memory and difficulty in concentrating

(5) How is Aids not transmitted?

Aids is not transmitted in the following ways:

- casual contact — sitting next to someone, kissing, hugging, working together
- people who cough and sneeze
- living together and sharing cups, spoons, et cetera
- toilet seats or taps, towels
- swimming pools, rivers
- pets (dogs, cats, etc)
- sharing a cold drink, ice-cream, et cetera
- donating blood

(6) How do learners get Aids?

- Learners can be born with the HIV virus. These learners usually get sick and die before they are five years old.
- Learners can get Aids from an older person who has the HIV virus if that person abuses them sexually.
- A breastfeeding mother who is HIV positive can pass Aids on to her child.
- Learners can get Aids if they use things that have another person's blood on them, such as razors, knives or used needles.

Before concluding this section, let us look briefly at some common misconceptions about Aids.

Many people do not believe that Aids is real. They think it is a story to fool people, to make them use condoms or to stop having sex. This is not true.

Many millions of people have the HIV virus inside them. Many thousands have already died of Aids.

Some people think that only homosexual men can get Aids. This is not true.

Everyone can get Aids, in fact most HIV infections these days are in heterosexual men and women. Heterosexual means making love with somebody of the opposite sex. Homosexual means making love with somebody of the same sex as yourself.

In South Africa, some people say that Aids is only a disease of white people. Others say it is only a disease of black people. This is not true.

We have seen that Aids is a disease that affects all races, colours, faiths and nations.

Some traditional healers, like sangomas, say they have a cure for Aids. This is not true.

These people may be able to cure some of the infections that people get, but as far as we know, nobody has found a cure for Aids.

Some people think that Aids can be spread in food and water, from toilets, showers, baths and pools, or from mosquitoes. They think that just touching a person who is HIV positive can give you Aids. This is not true.

Aids can only be spread through unsafe sex and through blood. It can also spread from mother to child during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Some people say that condoms do not give much protection against Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. This is not true.

A condom gives a lot of protection if it is used correctly.

Remember, we should dispel (dismiss) these misconceptions from the minds of our learners.

## **Didactic guidelines**

You should try to implement certain basic guidelines when teaching and helping the learner to develop life skills in the area of sexuality. Sex education is so sensitive and controversial that it should be handled by an educator with special qualities, that is, someone who (Louw et al 1996:71)

- is a positive role model
- is trusted and respected by the learners
- is trusted and respected by the parents
- has a sense of humour, without being vulgar
- is able to guide learners individually or in groups towards making morally responsible choices about their sexual behaviour
- is willing to read and learn more about sexuality; perhaps even be prepared to be trained for the task of sex education
- is an experienced educator and is able to use audiovisual media
- is able to empathise
- has a healthy heterosexual orientation
- can accept the sexuality of others
- is strict but not rigid in his or her approach
- is willing to answer sensitive questions
- does not preach or talk down to learners

Try to evaluate yourself as an educator. Assess yourself according to each of the above qualities. Use a scale of 1 to 10.

1 = very poor

10 = very strong

How did you rate? The higher the score, the more likely your chances are of being a good sex education educator.

## **How to speak to learners about sex**

The success of sex education will depend on the kind of educator presenting it and the way the educator talks about sex. Keep the following in mind:

- Try not to show embarrassment.
- Be honest and open.
- Use the correct biological terminology.
- Use humour to relieve tension; but humour should never be vulgar.

- Never preach or judge the actions of parents or learners. Rather teach learners to understand which behaviour is acceptable and which is not; thereafter, they should be equipped to make responsible choices.
- Ask learners to give their opinion on sexual issues; encourage open discussion.
- React calmly to the use of street words or other coarse remarks by replacing these words with biological or medical terms and explaining what they mean.
- Speak with a certain amount of sensitivity (soften the content) to prevent vulgar interpretations and to maintain respect for human sexuality.
- Maintain discipline (not too rigid) so that meaningful discussions can take place.
- Avoid teaching sex techniques (ie details of certain sexual activities) as this could lead to a sex information lesson, instead of a sex education lesson.
- Avoid discussing personal sexual experiences with learners.

## THE ABUSED LEARNER

Abused learners often display behavioural problems. It is important, therefore, that educators are knowledgeable about learner abuse, so that they can identify an abused learner and render the necessary assistance. It is not easy to identify an abused learner; they are often labelled as difficult and disagreeable learners who disturb the class situation.

Child abuse can take different forms. Each child has the right to nutrition, shelter, basic health care and general wellbeing. It is each child's right to be protected against abuse, neglect and indignity. These are just a few of the basic rights to which children may lay claim to. If a child is abused (in whatever way), his or her basic rights are abused and he or she may lay claim to legal protection. This means that you, as educator, are legally obligated to report child abuse if you are aware or become aware that a crime has taken place.

### Forms of abuse

- Physical abuse takes place when a person is hit, bitten, burnt, pushed around, had things thrown at him or her, shocked, hit with a fist, et cetera.
- Neglect refers to emotional, social or physical neglect.
- Psychological abuse can take place through neglect, for example.
- Sexual abuse includes
  - paedophilia (nonviolent sexual contact between an adult and a child, where the child is the sex object)
  - violent molestation
  - pornographic exploitation
  - incest (usually between a father and daughter, but also between a mother and son, father and son, mother and daughter, and brother and sister)
  - rape

It is clear that there are different forms and degrees of abuse; it is also clear why abuse is not always easy to identify. Think, for example, how difficult it is to investigate neglect or psychological abuse. It is essential, therefore, to determine the characteristics or behavioural characteristics of abuse, so that it is possible to identify possible abuse cases.

According to Pretorius (1998:368), the symptoms of abuse are as follows:

- socially undesirable behaviour
- poor relationships with the peer group
- tantrums
- fear and anxiety
- enuresis
- encopresis
- low frustration tolerance
- theft
- lies
- hyperactivity
- impulsive and/or negative behaviour
- sleeping disorders
- self-destructive behaviour (attempted suicides and threats)
- brothers and sisters who attack each other
- a low self-concept
- withdrawing socially
- excessive caution
- learning problems at school

The consequences of child abuse are manifested in the continuum ranging from *failure to thrive to deadly injury*.

These characteristics may also be found in learners with other problems; they do not necessarily indicate molestation. It is this fact which makes it very difficult to identify possible abuse. Regular assessments may help educators to identify these learners.

You must assure your learners that you are willing to help them. You need to be approachable, which means that you cannot be judgmental.

The education department prescribes how possible cases of abuse should be reported and each school may also lay down certain requirements. Acquaint yourself with the procedures prescribed by your institution. Ensure that you accumulate sufficient evidence (from assessments, records, etc). Should a learner take you into his or her confidence, it is essential that you can convey the disclosure as precisely as possible. This is particularly important in terms of possible court procedures.

Remember that the situation is confidential. Ensure the learner that you believe and trust him or her, and that it is not his or her fault.

This is purely an introductory look at child abuse. You should study the relevant literature and so expand your knowledge on the subject.

We hope that the information in Appendix B will help you when giving guidance and counselling to learners.

## CHECK LIST OF REFERRAL INDICATORS

Area	Signs to look for	Yes	No	Comments
Health-related indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Frequent complaints of headaches, stomach aches or other somatic symptoms.</li> <li>● Lack of energy, apathy, appears to “drag”.</li> <li>● Often falls asleep in class.</li> <li>● Frequent stumbling or falling.</li> <li>● Episodes of staring during which there is no response to classroom events.</li> <li>● Frequent absences due to illness.</li> <li>● Suspected alcohol or drug abuse.</li> </ul>			
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Failure to pay attention to board work.</li> <li>● Problems with small motor coordination.</li> <li>● Crossed, bloodshot or swollen eyes.</li> <li>● Complaints of headaches, dizziness, eye pain, nausea, blurred or double vision, burning eyes or itching eyes.</li> <li>● Frequent walking into objects or stumbling.</li> <li>● Inability to distinguish colours.</li> <li>● Holding reading materials too close or too far away.</li> <li>● Closing one eye or squinting.</li> <li>● Frequent rubbing of eyes.</li> <li>● Inability to see distant objects clearly.</li> <li>● Undue sensitivity to light.</li> </ul>			
Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Failure to pay attention in class.</li> <li>● Facial expression indicating lack of comprehension when oral directions are given.</li> <li>● Mispronunciation of words.</li> <li>● Breathing exclusively through the mouth.</li> <li>● Tendency to localise sound with ear.</li> <li>● Unnatural voice pitch.</li> <li>● Complaints of earache; frequent ear rubbing.</li> </ul>			
Learning problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disruptive behaviour.</li> <li>● Excessive shyness.</li> <li>● Socially withdrawal.</li> <li>● Poor peer relationships.</li> <li>● Preservative behaviour.</li> <li>● Excessively fearful or suspicious behaviour.</li> <li>● Antisocial behaviour such as lying or stealing.</li> <li>● Inability to concentrate or to remain still for more than a few minutes.</li> <li>● Extremely aggressive or violent behaviour.</li> <li>● Excessive self-stimulating behaviour.</li> <li>● Self-mutilating behaviour.</li> <li>● Irrelevant or bizarre talk; echolalia; infantile speech.</li> <li>● Appears to be “out of contact”.</li> </ul>			



Area	Signs to look for	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Giftedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History of excellent graded in academic work.</li> <li>● Superior work on special projects such as creative writing, science projects, social studies projects, et cetera.</li> <li>● Awards for outstanding work in academic areas (eg maths award).</li> <li>● Superior test scores (academic and intellectual).</li> <li>● Above-average insight or quality of ideas in relation to chronological level.</li> <li>● Disruptive behaviour.</li> </ul>			
<b>Home centered child abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bruises, abrasions, suspicious burns, cigarette burns, bite marks that are located on unlikely parts of the body or are inadequately explained.</li> <li>● Repeated injuries.</li> <li>● Evidence of medical neglect (ie needs dental care, glasses or treatment for a medical condition).</li> <li>● Malnourishment. The child comes to school without breakfast or goes without lunch.</li> </ul>			

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