

The New Kind of a Teacher, to Handle the New Subject-Life Orientation, in a Township High School in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The study focused on the new subject introduced in South African schools' curriculum, namely Life Orientation (LO). The purpose of the study was to investigate Grade 12 learners' views with regard to characteristics of a new kind of a teacher to handle Life Orientation as a subject and the role played by this teacher, other than teaching the subject only. Also the LO teacher's views regarding her role and knowledge and expertise were taken into consideration. The sample size was 39 Grade 12 learners and 1 LO teacher from a township high school in Gauteng province. The school was purposely chosen since it had a good track record of Grade 12 results for the past fifteen years. Questions evolved around what the learning content entailed and the role of the LO teacher at school. Learners were given incomplete sentences to complete and the teacher got a separate one to complete also. All ethical considerations were observed. Findings revealed that learners saw LO preparing them for life. They enjoyed conversations in class which were around real issues in life. They also highlighted that, what was missing, was more of physical training which would make Life Orientation periods more enjoyable. Learners saw their LO teacher as a loyal and caring person. Results indicated that there was a need for support since most learners went through challenges.