The Journey Starts Now: Infusing Peace Education into LO Teaching in South African Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Peace education as part of the school curriculum can transform school functioning by equipping learners with conflict resolution skills. Currently peace education is not part of the existing curriculum in South Africa. Literature indicates that peace education can be appropriately integrated into the compulsory subject, Life Orientation (LO), in South African secondary schools. Informed by Danesh's integrative peace theory and the extant literature on peace education, a qualitative study explored the possible integration of peace education into LO to assist learners develop conflict resolution skills. Six teachers who teach LO in two secondary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa, which have implemented an extramural peace education programme through the agency of a non-governmental organisation, were purposefully selected. Data were gathered in focus group interviews with the teachers and thematic analysis carried out. Findings of the study highlight the significance of integrating peace education in LO in order to foster a more peaceful schooling environment. Furthermore, aspects of peace education already overlap or complement topics taught in LO, such as respect and tolerance for diversity. Barriers to effective integration of peace education in the LO curriculum are lack of targeted teacher training, rigid curriculum design, teachers' workload and poor resource allocation. It was recommended that the integration of peace education in LO be prioritised and that the LO curriculum should be expanded to accommodate more explicit themes of peace education. Implementation should be supported through targeted teacher training, attention to teachers' work schedules, additional teaching time and allocation of appropriate resources.

KEYWORDS

Life Orientation; peace; peace education; school violence; secondary schools; South Africa.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

According to Okolie-Osemene (2012), peace education is defined as the process of acquiring the skills, values and knowledge that enables individuals to live in peace and harmony with one another in society. Since the horrors of World War II, peace education initiatives have gained momentum due to the increasing recourse to violence in responding to conflict by individuals, groups, communities, and countries (Mishra, 2015). Over the past decade, peace education has also been introduced in schools worldwide. According to UNESCO (2017), about 246 million children and adolescents experience some form of violence at school. Wang, Chen, Zhang and Oudekerk (2020) report that schools in the United States (US) commonly record one or more serious violent incident every year. To date, peace education is the most important strategy to reduce conflict in schools by teaching individuals to resort to peaceful ways of resolving violence and conflict through cultivating active listening skills and instilling attitudes and values of tolerance, empathy, nonviolence and respect for others. Contemporary literature on the topic highlights the urgent need for the school to play its part in developing learners with peace resolution skills (John, 2016).

In South Africa, peace education is particularly relevant, given the country's history of racial segregation, violence and social inequality. Since the beginning of the new democratic era, the country has been striving to build a peaceful and just society, making peace education imperative in promoting sustainable social cohesion. However, unlike many other countries, South Africa does not include peace education within its formal curriculum (John, 2016). The necessity to introduce peace education in schools in South Africa is driven by alarming violent incidents in schools (Mabasa & Mafumo, 2017; Njelesani, 2019), which threaten the safety and dignity of learners and teachers and present a major barrier to the achievement of equality of opportunity and educational outcomes (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017; Qwabe, Maluleke & Olutola, 2022). The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) affirms that violence is a frequent phenomenon in schools in South Africa. About 15% of South African learners encounter various traumatic experiences monthly due to violence at school (Mabasa & Mafumo, 2017). Increasingly, learners are likely to bring unlawful lethal weapons, such as knives and guns, onto the school premises (Hendricks, 2018). According to Glober (2018), violence in schools is more frequently perpetrated by learners from neighbouring schools, who enter the school with malicious intent. Furthermore, school violence, particularly physical and verbal bullying, not only affects learners but also educators (Sibisi, 2016). Musariwa (2017) concludes that victims of bullying may experience reduced self-confidence, decreased focus in class, school phobia and even suicidal thoughts (White, Gina & Coetzee, 2015). Du Plessis (2008) highlights that the rise of crime-related violence in schools is often linked with the easy access of young people to drugs, lethal weapons and the engagement of young people on gang activities. According to Makhasane and Mthembu (2019), the common types of violence that threaten school safety include teenage suicide, bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination. Since schools are a microcosm of the broader community, social ills prevalent in communities permeate the school

environment (Pahad & Graham, 2012). Maphalala and Mpofu (2018) blame the breakdown of the family structure, which has left the school vulnerable to anti-social behaviour. The prevalence of school violence in South Africa is also traced to the former policy of apartheid, where violence was used to oppress people who toiled for a just political dispensation (Legotlo, 2014). Therefore, effective interventions, in terms of peace education and peace building, are urgently needed to address school violence in South Africa.

In the light of the above, Life Orientation (LO), which was introduced in the late 1990s as a compulsory subject in all public schools in the democratic South Africa, has great potential to be integrated with peace education. The aim of LO is to conscientise learners about their constitutional rights, to foster tolerance for diverse cultures and religious beliefs and to provide learners with strong values and good morals; aims which are compatible with peace education (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2018). Regrettably, research indicates that LO falls short in achieving its desired changes in learner behaviour including the competence to practise peace and resolve conflict effectively (Gama, 2015; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2017). A literature review study conducted by Ndwandwe (2021) proposed the integration of peace education into LO; however, no studies have been conducted to explore its viability in South Africa. In fact, peace education is not a widely understood phenomenon and has not received priority attention in South Africa (John, 2018). John (2013) maintains that peace education is a marginalised and under-researched subfield in South Africa, and has never been considered part of educational provision for youth and adults. To attain the goals of peace education, scholars in the field of peace studies have suggested curriculum reforms as a strategy to integrate peace education into schooling (Bhuttah et al., 2020; Hove & Dube, 2022).

In the light of the above, this paper aims to close that gap in the literature by exploring the integration of peace education in the teaching of LO in South African schools through a qualitative study. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the significance of integrating peace education into the teaching of LO in South African schools?
- Which aspects of peace education could be integrated into the teaching of LO in South African schools?
- What are the barriers to the effective integration of peace education into the teaching of LO in South African schools?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The qualitative study was informed by the integrative theory of peace (ITP) as the theoretical framework. Thereafter, a discussion section deals with related literature on peace education including barriers to the integration of peace education in the LO curriculum.

The integrative theory of peace

The ITP proposed by Danesh (2006; 2008) was used as a lens for this study. This theory rests on knowledge of psychosocial development and peace education, as well as lessons learned, and

observations made during the seven-year implementation of the Education for Peace Program in 112 schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Danesh, 2006). This theory of integrative peace argues that peace is dependent on and a product of the interaction between individuals and ethical, political, psychological and spiritual factors, which are expressed though intra and interpersonal interactions of groups of people within a certain geographical location (Danesh, 2006; 2011). All human states of being, including peace, according to the ITP, are the result of the primary human cognitive (knowing), emotional (loving) and conative (choosing) skills, which together shape our worldview (Danesh, 2006).

Peace education programmes informed by the ITP can serve as the best tool in transforming predominately conflict-orientated worldviews to a peace-orientated one. The peace-orientated worldview is centred on the concept of unity, and it is through unity that peace can be accomplished (Danesh, 2006). A unity-based worldview possesses the power to promote a consultative, cooperative and integrative power structure, which ensures the existence of accountability, unity, and caring interpersonal and group relationships (Danesh, 2006). Moreover, according to Danesh's view, a unity-based worldview ensures the fulfilment of non-negotiable human needs and rights, such as survival, security, justice, equality and freedom. Waldorf (2007) affirms that a unity-based worldview is an important ingredient in promoting a culture of positive peace. Both conflict resolution and peace education can be attainable in the context of a unity-based worldview (Danesh, 2008). For the purpose of this article, it is argued that the integration of peace education into LO in schools in South Africa can serve as a solution in transforming the learners' conflict-oriented worldview to a peaceful one. For that reason, the ITP can effectively guide the incorporation of peace education into the LO curriculum.

Unpacking the concept of peace education

Despite the existence of numerous definitions of peace education in the literature, a universally accepted definition is still lacking. Chehimi (2012) argues that peace education is difficult to define, because it is perceived differently by different people, and the definitions provided by practitioners and researchers are based on the desired goal. For example, Harris and Morrison (2003) define peace education as a kind of education aimed to furnish individuals with problem-solving, reflectivity, active listening, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills. In view of Nkang and Uwah (2021), peace education involves a process of inquiring values, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour to live in peace with others, and with the environment. According to Jeong (2017), peace education is also regarded as a social science that aims to identify and analyse violent and non-violent behaviours of people to achieve peaceful living conditions. Castro and Nario-Galance (2010) also view peace education as a strategy to create a culture of peace in individuals, which influences the state and society. According to Coleman (2015), the primary goal of peace education is to develop an individual with non-violent characteristics and conflict resolution skills. From a behavioral perspective, Ojha (2018) underscores that peace education involves a process of nurturing individuals which essentially values of impartiality, non-violence, respect, and devotion to humankind, which usually leads to peaceful socialisation. Therefore,

peace education involves the introducing of programmes that aims to transform people's mindsets to harmonious living, rather than violence (Nwafor, 2007). Similar to the preceding view, peace education refers to all efforts directed at fighting all negative feelings, by creating a space where people could come together, know each other better, and develop trust and cooperation with others, for the sake of resolving their disagreements and maintaining peace relations (Agarwal, 2011). Peace education in the formal setting, such as in schools, is about how education can contribute to peace building and social transformation. Implicitly, the school as a social institution is considered as an important space to foster learners with conflict resolution skills and sustain peace. In the context of the current study, peace education entails a process of empowering learners with knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours to assist them to resolve conflict through peaceful means, such as negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation.

Barriers and enabling factors in the integrating of peace education into LO

Despite the benefit of integrating peace education into LO, literature reports that peace educators are likely to face various barriers in their endeavours to integrate peace education into the curriculum (Enaigbe & Igbinoghene, 2016); Gursel-Bilgin, 2016). Based on Gursel-Bilgin and Bengu's (2021) view, structural, cultural, social and political barriers hinder the integration of peace education into the curriculum. This simply means that in societies where violence and conflicts are prevalent, if there is a lack of political will by the government to prioritise peace, it can be challenging to execute its integration. On the other hand, Abebe, Gbesso and Nyawalo (2006) report heavy teachers' workloads, poor leadership, lack of parental involvement, inadequate teaching resources and materials, and the lack of training of teachers as challenges facing the integration of peace education in schools. Evidence from a study conducted in Nigeria by Enaigbe and Igbinoghene (2016) showed that limited knowledge, expertise and capacity surrounding the concept and aims of peace education among various stakeholders as well as difficulty in measuring impact hinder implementation. According to Momanyi (2018), traditional assessment methods are not suitable to measure the impact of peace education, as the objectives pertain to the internalisation of values, attitudes, skills, and patterns of behaviour, rather than knowledge that can be tested.

In order to overcome these challenges, the school needs to provide a starting point and vital space for the transmission of peace education to change people's attitudes and to promote positive relations within the society (Bar Tal, 2002). Bhuttah et al. (2020) agree that children can only learn new values, manners and attitudes in a place called school. For that reason, several scholars propose two approaches to peace education: it should be offered as a stand-alone subject (independent subject) or be merged across the other school subjects (Damirchi & Bilge, 2014; Yastibas, 2021). However, for the purposes of the study, the integration approach is regarded as the most relevant approach of integrating peace education into an existing school subject, such as LO. Through the integration approach, LO teachers could be creative and infuse peace education in the daily lessons, with the approval of their head of department. Teaching

and learning of peace education in the LO subject will introduce the topic to learners and teachers and help them explore ways about how to live a peaceful life with others.

Before one can initiate the process of curriculum development, Wiggins (2011) and Mishra (2015) advise on another issue: it is important for wider public consultation to select peace education content that is necessary and acceptable to members of the society, that it is relevant, and which deals with real problems experienced by real people. Based on this suggestion, Carl (2011) provides aspects or broad themes of peace education that are seen as relevant in South Africa and that could be integrated into the LO school programme. These involve real life contexts such as the content of peace, root cause of conflicts, global issues or human right issues, approachable means to conflict resolution, empathy, human relations skills, healing wounds of violence, reconciliation, negotiation, non-violence and tolerance, and many more, using learner-centred methods such as role play, simulation, surveys, debates and group projects. In the process of integration, it is important to note that how we teach is equally important as what we teach. The right teaching methods that support learning and aims to relate the knowledge, skills and attitudes of peace education should be selected. Mishra, (2015) note that peace education requires specific content, objectives and pedagogies. Moreover, Ofojebe (2014) affirms that mainstreaming peace education across the curriculum requires the use of peace-prone instructional methods and strategies, which promotes an interactive learning process and includes cooperative group work, peer teaching, problem-solving, discussion role plays, mediation, storytelling, negotiations, simulation and other learner-centred instructional strategies. Again, in order to integrate peace education into the curriculum, schools should be prepared to make drastic changes including setting new educational objectives, preparing new curricula, writing school textbooks and developing instructional materials.

For teachers to be able to integrate peace education into LO, Khan, Mahmood and Aurangzeb (2019) and Bhuttah et al. (2020) emphasise that all teachers must be adequately trained on pedagogical strategies of peace education, so that they might impart the importance and skills associated with it more aptly to their learners. In this regard, Carter (2010) cautions that when teachers lack the competencies of delivering peace, they may find it challenging to accomplish the new instructional goals set before them. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers must possess knowledge on how to integrate peace education into existing school subjects, such as LO. Mishra (2011) emphasises that for teachers to be effective in the implementation of peace education in a formal setting, like schools, they first need to be trained as peacemakers. The preparation of teachers to integrate education in schools could be offered both in pre-service and in-service teacher education. The point made is that LO teachers need to be well abreast with the issues related to peace education in order to offer quality teaching to their learners. According to Bajaj (2015), teachers' capacity should include key competencies such as critical thinking and analysis, empathy and solidarity, cooperation, participatory and democratic engagement, communication strategies and conflict transformation skills. In addition, Anim (2022) suggests that teachers who are in field of peace education can be trained through in-

service programmes such as workshops, seminars, conferences and symposia. The formulation and implementation of national policies is a critical aspect of the successful integration of peace education in school. For example, researchers discovered that peace educators in Israel struggled to carry out peace education programmes in schools due to lack of official peace education policies (Zembylas & Bakerrman, 2009).

The following section outlines the research methodology and design employed in this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This empirical inquiry employed a qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to explore the viability of integrating peace education into the LO curriculum at selected secondary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The decision to use this approach was directed by the aim of obtaining rich data about the meaning research participants give to the phenomenon under study, which is the integrating of peace into the LO curriculum in schools (Nieuwenhuis, 2012). An exploratory research design was adopted within an interpretative paradigm to obtain in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the participants (Babbie, 2017) and to understand the meaning they ascribed to the social problem (Creswell, 2014).

Research sample and participants

Purposive sampling was used to select six (6) teacher participants from two secondary schools (School A and School B) in the Western Cape Province, which offered LO as a subject in their school curriculums. The criteria for selecting these schools were very specific: both schools were located in the Western Cape Province; they had high levels of incidents of school violence; LO is offered as part of the school curriculum. The schools were selected from a group of eleven schools that participate in an extramural peace education training programme implemented by a non-governmental organisation. The objective of the peace programme is to promote peace, respect, and conflict resolution among learners in schools. Its main mandate is to increase the number of individuals in schools who are willing to stand against conflict. In terms of criterion used to choose teachers, only those who were teaching LO as a subject were invited to participate in this study. Participants ranged from age 24–45 and their teaching experience ranged from 3–14 years in secondary schools. Four participants were females; two were males.

Data collection and analysis

Focus group interviews were used as the method of data collection with the six teachers. According to Patton (2015), focus group interviews involve an interview with a group of small people about a specific topic. I used the focus group interview because the method is suitable in exploring what people understand, their experiences and to find the rationale behind their thinking, which in this case was the teachers' perceptions on the viability of integrating peace education into LO (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Two focus interviews were held with the participants at each school respectively. A interview guide was developed to guide the discussions and focused on three main questions: What is the significance of integrating peace

education into the teaching of LO in South African schools? Which aspects of peace education could be integrated into the teaching of LO in South African schools? What are the barriers to the effective integration of peace education into the teaching of LO in South African schools? Prior to their consent the author explained the focus of the study to the participants which was to delve into their views and perceptions on the viability of integration of peace education into LO as well as the procedures for data collection.

Participants were assured of strict confidentiality of the interview, as stipulated in the consent form that was signed by both parties prior to data collection. The identity of each participant was coded in school A as T1:S1, T2:S1, T3:S1, T4:S1 and in school B as T1:S2, T2:S2, T3:S2, T4:S2 respectively. The T refers to teachers, numbers 1–4 refer to the participant number, and S1 and S2 refer to the two schools. Permission was sought to record the interview using a digital recorder. The focus groups lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The data from the transcribed focus group interviews were analysed thematically through coding and categorising, using the inductive analysis method. Trustworthiness of data was ensured by member checking, a clear audit trail of the research process and peer review of the findings.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the University of South Africa. Permission to conduct research in these schools was also granted by the school principals. All participants were formally invited and signed the consent form, agreeing to participate willingly in the study. Other ethical issues were adhered to, such as obtaining permission from each school, the anonymity of each participant's identity, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw or refuse to answer any questions without penalty.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three broad themes emerged from the data gathered during the focus group interviews and are as follows: the significance of peace education; aspects of peace education which can be integrated in the LO curriculum in schools; barriers to the integration of peace education into the LO curriculum in school.

The significance of peace education

The initial question probed the teachers' perceptions on the necessity of integrating peace education into LO teaching in schools. Several participants voiced non-contradictory views on the significance of integrating peace education into LO. Findings evince that violence prevention, instilling peaceful values, respect and conflict resolution skills were identified as important reasons to integrate peace education into LO in schools. One teacher averred:

> Peace education is critical in our schools in the Western Cape due to the high level of violence and conflict. Our learners come from violent homes, sometimes they also become victims of violence themselves and it's not easy for them also. They grew up seeing their parents fighting in front of them. So sometimes they bring their anger here at school and become bullies, so ya peace education is needed. One can maybe think of the subject LO, infuse it there. (Participant T1:S1)

The above findings were also supported by another teacher, who stated:

As you know our province Western Cape and communities have many young people are exposed to violence and gang related violence and the problem of drugs and this negatively impact on the school and learning process. So, for me, peace education is required to empower young people to become peace makers, so that we break the cycle of violence, which I think we inherent from the past apartheid as a nation. (Participant T2:T1)

This finding is substantiated by Bhat and Jamatica (2022) who argue that there is a global need for peace education to be taught in schools as a regular subject and tool to furnish learners with abilities, talents and attitudes to be able to resolve conflicts non-violently. These findings concur with Msila (2011), who advocates the need to integrate peace education as part of South African curriculum to create good and responsible citizenry.

One teacher also emphasized that the integration of peace education is important due to societal violence, which is related to the location of the schools in Cape Town, where the schools are in communities infested by gang violence, lack of role models, domestic violence and exposure to violence on television. Her response indicated that peace education is required to furnish learners with skills such as negotiation and dialogue skills. The teacher shared her view as follows:

I think because school violence is a problem, peace education remains paramount important … Maybe because our school is situated in a violent community with a lot of gang violence. We teachers are faced with a challenge to convince these learners that violence is not a solution, they don't have to fight to in order to obtain justice. I think these violent movies that they watch at home are damaging to our children's minds. (Participant T2:S2)

The findings are substantiated by Glober (2018) who argues that violence in schools is a devastating issue. As a result, schools suffer from a proliferation of violence, racial intolerance, and disrespect of law. These findings confirm Mguzulwa and Gxubane's (2019) assertion that the issue of youth gang violence is prevalent and a major cause in leading to increased fears about safety and security in and around schools in the Western Cape.

Aspects of peace education integrated within LO

The significance of peace education demands its integration into the curriculum. The participants were asked the aspects of peace education that should be integrated into the LO curriculum. The participants expressed various opinions of various aspects that could be integrated within Life Orientation. One participant made a confession that he lacks enough knowledge, since he was not trained in peace education. The participant opined that LO provides the perfect space for infusing messages of peace and teaching skills of conflict resolution. Further to this, the participants suggested that communication, negotiation techniques and problem-solving skills would be valuable. One participant (T3:S1) said:

To be honest with you I don't have much knowledge about this peace education, since I am not well trained on it, but subjects such as LO can provide an excellent platform dispense messages of peace and conflict resolutions skills. One could also teach learners about effective communication, negotiation techniques and problem-solving skills; maybe they could learn to resolve conflict in their daily life.

Furthermore, another participant confirmed that peace education is currently not part of the school curriculum. However, peace, respect, *ubuntu* and human rights issues are taught in LO which also fit within the scope of peace education. The view of one participant (T2:S1) is captured below as follows:

We need peace education to be part of the curriculum, and currently we don't have such a subject in the curriculum but in my class teaching, I focus on issues such as peace, respect, ubuntu, conflict resolution and human rights issues.

On the same note, another participant (T3:S2) remarked as follows:

We touch on topics like bullying, rape, violence and abuse and things like that, like goals in life also. So, we allow the learners to dig deep and to show who they are, we allow them to think critically about life, and their future and especially in communities where we face the issue of gang violence.

Findings also reveal that teachers use their own creativity to dispense messages of peace by choosing appropriate topics from the LO textbook. Furthermore, the data indicates that teachers are craving more training on peace education.

As a LO teacher, I use my textbook as well because in the textbook you find those topics, especially when they talk about religion, bills of rights, prejudice, so you will find that there are religions that emphasise peace and also emphasises issues of respecting human rights, but here I am using my creativity and I still needs to be trained more on this peace education. (Participant T3:S2)

The findings link well with Novelli and Sayed's (2016) view that teachers need to take the lead and ensure that learners learn social responsibility by integrating existing topics in LO with peace education content as part of the school curriculum. The findings also confirm Finley's (2011) assertion that the integration of peace education requires some form of creativity from teachers.

Furthermore, findings indicate that peace education is not offered as part of the formal curriculum, however, teachers indicate that already teach respect for others and the values of multicultural education, such as tolerance for diversity, in their classes. Below is the participant's (T2:S1) affirmation:

 We currently don't have peace education as subject in the curriculum, but during our lesson we teach our learners to respect each other, as you know that everybody is diverse, we have other religions and come from different cultures in our classrooms.

The findings concur with John's (2016) assertion that, like many countries, South Africa does not intentionally include peace within its formal curriculum.

Barriers that hinder effective integration of peace education

Similarly, participants were asked about the barriers they may face in integrating peace education into LO teaching. The research findings revealed that numerous challenges hinder the integration of peace education into LO such as lack of teacher training and resources, teacher workload and curriculum constraints, poor resource allocation and complex sociocultural contexts. This is illustrated by the following concerns raised by teachers. The first barrier identified was lack of training as a factor hindering efforts to integrate peace education into the LO curriculum. The following are what participants had to say:

> As a teacher I think my biggest concern challenge is that I am not adequately trained for this peace education, and there is lack of workshops conducted to train us in peace. Another challenge with not qualified to teach this LO , we were just allocated to by the principal because of the shortage of qualified teachers. Professional development programmes and workshops focused on peace education would be beneficial to us. (Participant T3:S2)

> The above was supported by another teacher (Participant T3:S1) who stated the

following:

> There is no in-service training for teachers on integration peace education. This lack of training and suitable resources makes it challenging to effectively integrate peace education.

> From the above responses, it is evident that inadequate training of teachers is a factor

hindering the efforts to integrate peace education into LO. The findings link well with Carter's (2010) view, who cautions that when teachers lack the competencies of delivering peace, they will find it challenging to accomplish the new instructional goals set before them. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers possess some knowledge on how to integrate peace education into existing school subjects, such as LO. In addition, Khan, Mahmood and Aurangzeb (2019), and Bhuttah et al. (2020) emphasise that all teachers must be trained adequately on pedagogical strategies of peace education, so that they might impart its importance and skills associated with it more aptly to their learners.

> During the interviews, teachers also complained about insufficient teaching time and lack

of content knowledge on peace education. A few participants indicated that the time allocated each week for LO was not enough to accommodate yet another component, that is, peace education. The teacher commented as follows:

> The challenge as teachers we are facing is the lack of time, we are not having enough period for LO. Remember we are only allocated only four periods per week, which two are allocated for PET and the remaining one for two for content teaching. So, we are left with not enough time to integrate peace education. I would like to personal receive more training on this peace education. (Participant T3:S2)

> This is in line with Novelli and Sayed's (2016) assertion that there are still visible gaps in

delivering the integration of peace education into the classroom, since peace education is often

viewed as secondary to academic subjects and this mindset can hinder its integration into the curriculum. Meanwhile, as indicated by Matindi (2013), the major constraint facing any curriculum design is competing demands on limited instructional time from different goals/content.

The demanding curriculum workload and limited instructional time were formidable challenges in the integration of peace education. Some teacher participants complained of being overloaded with work as they teach Grades 8–12 (i.e., all the grades in secondary school) and, as a result, integrating peace education was not possible. This is what one participant reported about the work overload:

> To be honest I currently have a lot on my plate. Our workload is too much. I am having other classes to teach for Life Sciences Grade 10 to 12, so integrating peace education add another layer of responsibility. Maybe if the government could introduce peace education a separate subject and then be added in the timetable.   (Participant T3:S2)

These findings confirm Matindi's (2013) argument that the lack of participation in extra programmes that aim to improve school is caused by the amount of work and classes each teacher is allocated. Teacher overload implies lack of time to integrate peace education into the curriculum. This finding also corroborates the views of Rubagiza, Umutoni and Kaleeba (2016), who posit that sometimes teachers struggle to get involved in any programme that is not part of the school curriculum because of tight and busy teaching schedules and pressure to complete the syllabus. Moreover, the authors highlight the problem that teaching workload and inadequate resources for teaching and learning reduce teacher motivation to integrate programmes such as peace education in the existing curriculum in schools.

CONCLUSION

This research has examined the possible integration of peace education into LO teaching in Western Cape secondary schools. The findings underscore that the significance of peace education cannot be underestimated, especially in a relatively new democracy such as South Africa, where violence threatens the safety and dignity of learners and teachers and jeopardises the achievement of equality of opportunity and outcomes of education. Hence, the school system is saddled with the huge responsibility to integrate peace education into the school curriculum to transform and shape learners' attitudes and behaviours. Regrettably, the study discovered that peace education is not offered as part of the curriculum; however, certain themes or topics of peace education are infused in the teaching of LO.

According to research, there are limited studies that explore alternative approaches to combat violence in South Africa, such as peace education (John, 2018). Hence, the paper served to close the existing gap and thus has made a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge by shedding light of the potential benefits, challenges and strategies associated with the integration of peace education into the LO curriculum. The overall findings of the study revealed barriers to the integration of peace education into LO teaching, such as limited teacher training,

time constraints and curriculum overload, insufficient resources, and complex sociocultural contexts.

Limitations of the study

The existence of several limitations to study is acknowledged, since there is no single study that is exhaustive. Firstly, since data was collected through self-reporting by teachers, which may therefore be subject to social desirability bias or inaccuracies in terms of their responses. Again, participants may have overstated their commitment and their role in the incorporation of peace education. Secondly, since the study involved a small number of six teachers, hence, the generalisation of findings may not be fully representative of all teachers in South African schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made to enhance the integration of peace education into Life Orientation:

- There is a need for the Department of Basic Education to review and revise the LO curriculum and ensure that peace education is thoroughly integrated. This could be achieved by developing content/topics related to peace education that are linked to a specific learning outcome.
- Providing comprehensive and ongoing training to teachers, such as workshops and seminars, is necessary to enhance their capacity to be conversant in peace education and to be able to integrate it into Life Orientation.
- Teachers' workload and curriculum demands need to be addressed, ensuring that adequate time is allocated for integrating peace education.
- The Department should ensure that teachers receive adequate resources and materials specifically designed for peace education.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares no conflicts of interest in relation to this article.

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