

**RESPONSES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTION
LEARNERS TOWARDS INFORMATION,
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS
USED TO PREVENT HIV IN LESOTHO**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Lesotho has a Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) prevalence rate of 23 percent which is now the second highest prevalence rate in the world. Print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were identified and used as a core component for prevention of the spread of HIV in Lesotho since the year 2000, with the trust that they are able to reach masses of people at the same time, as illustrative information or to serve as references to remind people of information they received earlier. However, almost thirty years after the emergence of the first case of this Virus in 1986, there is still a high rate of prevalence reported especially among people aged 15-49 years with a continuous high rate of new infections emerging amongst this group. This was a concern for the study because this age group not only comprises a highly sexually active population in the country, but it also encompasses learners of tertiary institutions. It was therefore necessary to explore the relevance of the existing communication strategies on health education or behaviour change used to prevent the spread of HIV in the country.

Data was collected in order to investigate responses of the Lesotho tertiary institution learners towards print IEC materials that are used to inform, educate and communicate HIV issues with young adults in Lesotho. Such initiatives in Lesotho have not previously been theorised and have not used follow up interviews to investigate reactions after the initial exposure to materials. The study explored the comprehensibility, significance and appropriateness of three print materials, namely, poster, pamphlet and magazine. The study employed a comparative case study of three IEC materials, drawing on the interpretive paradigm and taking a qualitative approach which used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and follow up interviews as the main source of data collection. Institutions were chosen based on three different ecological zones found in Lesotho. The lowlands (urban) were represented by the National University of Lesotho in the Maseru District. The foothills (semi-rural) were represented by the Technical Institute of Leloaleng, in the Quthing District and mountain areas (rural) were represented by the Lesotho College of Education satellite campus in the Thaba-Tseka District.

Twenty six Learners from the three tertiary institutions participated in an effort to establish factors related to the reactions on how young adults generally felt about these materials, communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from these materials and impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. Furthermore the study sought suggestions from learners on how these materials could be improved, so that they would contain and successfully communicate accurate and attractive health related text and images for targeted audiences.

Data was collected using two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and two follow-up individual interviews per institution. The discussion also included a comparison with the researcher's own interpretations of the materials as an IEC educator, for triangulation purposes. The data were transcribed and analysed manually using the pattern coding method, through the lenses of communication theory and discourse analysis. The semiotic approach to communication provided concepts which explain how signs in IEC materials communicate, and how they may be interpreted in different ways. The findings were organized around three thematic categories emerging from all four narratives. These themes comprised: first impressions, meaning making and suggestions for the improvement of the materials.

The findings of the semiotic analysis of the materials revealed that the signs, words and pictures contained layers of meaning, understood as denotation and connotation. It was envisaged that the materials have many connotations, because although the underlying essence of the messages in all of the three materials is to prevent the spread of HIV, the specific intended message of each one is different and open to interpretation due to the nature of this media.

The results indicated a need for purposeful dialogue as a back-up to print IEC materials. The dialogue process and collective meaning making in a group discussion seemed to have played a crucial role in helping learners to understand the meaning of messages that the materials intended to communicate. The researcher's own response to the materials also confirmed that print IEC materials need to be backed up with discussions as her own findings revealed that she did not consider several aspects that the learners considered.

Some semiotic based suggestions which had to do with meaning in relation to the signs that made up the materials, were made for the improvement of print IEC materials. These suggestions were specifically related to the principles that guide use of text and images in communication and the manner in which these represent the content of the intended message. These included suggestions to fill the communication gaps identified in all three materials, suggestions to improve the attractiveness of the poster and the pamphlet, suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho in the poster and the cover page of the magazine as well as suggestions for adjusting the diagram of the poster.

The study proposes that special attention needs to be paid to tertiary institutions learners, whereby the use of print IEC materials is supported with opportunities for discussion and dialogue to ensure opportunities for learners to derive meaning and reflect on the significance of the messages contained therein. A communication model which represents the desired communication process is offered as a way forward for future development and use of IEC materials.

The study concluded that print IEC materials alone as educational resources, are inadequate in assisting readers to develop meaningful understandings for attitudinal or behavioural change. In other words without accompanying dialogue the readers are not able to construct new meanings or perhaps change their existing attitudes on certain issues. It was therefore recommended that print IEC materials should be blended with face-to-face discussions to enhance interaction and stimulate critical thinking because it seems people tend to interact with print IEC materials with a closed mind or as spectators.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Disease Syndrome
ALAFA	Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS
AVERT	HIV and AIDS – Global Information and Advice about HIV and AIDS (Averting HIV and AIDS: Media gallery)
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BoS	Bureau of Statistics
DCD	Disease Control Division
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CSA	Center for the Study of AIDS
DSW	Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GoL	Government of Lesotho
GoL-UNGASS	Government of Lesotho-United Nations General Assembly Special Session
HED	Health Education Division
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IEMS	Institute of Extra Mural Studies
LAC	Lesotho Agricultural College
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoH	Ministry of Health

MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NUL	National University of Lesotho
PATH/FHI	Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health/Family Health International
PESP	Pre-Entry Science Program
PSI	Population Services International
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TIL	Technical Institute of Leloaleng
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-IBE	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Bureau of Education
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background to the study on Lesotho tertiary institution learners' responses towards print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials (text and images) that are used to prevent the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). It starts with the statement of the problem, motivation for the study, research questions and purpose of the study. This is followed by a global overview of the HIV situation, which then focuses on the African continent and the Southern Africa region. Lesotho's responses to this epidemic are outlined in order to provide a relevant background context for the study's focus and scope. Since the study investigates the application of adult education through print IEC materials, in addition it briefly looks at what is meant by adult education.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Lesotho is still facing the big challenge of combating the spread of HIV, almost thirty years after the emergence of the first case of this virus in 1986. In 2012 at the beginning of this study, Lesotho had the third highest HIV prevalence rate in the world (GoL¹, 2009; UNAIDS², 2009; WHO³, 2009; NAC⁴, 2012; and Misselhorn, Quinlan, Chitindingu, Koseki and Katz, 2012), at 23 percent, and is still at that level to date (MoH⁵, 2015: 2). It was exceeded by Swaziland at 26.5 percent and Botswana at 23.6 percent (indexmundi.com). However, in 2015, at the completion stage of this study, Lesotho is now rated the second worst affected country, despite intensive HIV preventative efforts that have been in place in the country since the year 2000 (MoH, 2015: 3).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017), activities designed to address people's behaviours in response to particular national issues are widely known as

¹ Government of Lesotho

² United States Agency for International Development

³ World Health Organization

⁴ National AIDS Commission

⁵ Ministry of Health

“Information, Education and Communication (IEC)” activities, which often use “posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, booklets, messages for health education sessions, radio broadcast or TV spots” to communicate with target audiences, which may be in campaigns with timeframes or ongoing isolated events (WHO, 2017).

As a health educator, employed by the Lesotho Ministry of Health, the relevance of the communication strategies on the health education or behaviour change models that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in the country are really a concern. This is because the rate at which new HIV incidences occur remains worrying, as this implies that people may be failing to, among other things, respond to HIV messages that are being disseminated through IEC materials. For instance Nkonyana, (Director MoHSW⁶ Disease Control and AIDS⁷ Directorate, personal communication, December 15, 2011) indicates that over fifty new HIV infections are discovered every day, at an incidence of $\pm 21,000$ in adults and $\pm 1,300$ in children per year. Hence, the study is necessary in an effort to establish peoples’ opinions on the comprehensibility of these materials and how people generally feel about them, including communication issues that may appear to enhance or hinder their learning from these materials.

According to MoH (2015: 3) there is a high rate of prevalence reported, particularly among people aged 15–49 years; and there is a continuously high rate of new infections emerging amongst this group. This is especially worrying because this age group does not only comprise a highly sexually active population in the country, but it also includes learners in tertiary institutions. Literature points to HIV in Lesotho as being predominantly transmitted through unprotected heterosexual intercourse between an HIV infected and an HIV free person (Kimaryo, Okpaku, Gitthuku-Shongwe and Feeny, 2004; GoL-UNGASS⁸ Country Report, 2009). Misselhorn *et al.* (2012) elaborate that it is spread through an interrelated combination of biomedical, behavioural, social and structural factors (see Table 1) and many of these

⁶ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

⁷ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

⁸ United Nations General Assembly Special Session

factors manifest because of the high rate of sexually active people who do not use condoms and who have more than one sexual partner at a time.

Table 1: DRIVERS OF THE EPIDEMIC IN LESOTHO

Biomedical	Behavioural	Social	Structural
Low and incomplete male circumcision	Incorrect and inconsistent use of condoms	Peer pressure	Gender inequality
Sexually transmitted infections	Low use of condoms	Inter-generational sex	Income disparities
Early age of sexual debut for young females	Multiple and concurrent partners	Transactional sex	Erosion of traditional values
Levels of viral load	Alcohol and drug abuse	Male dominated gender norms	Labour migration
		Increasing desire of consumer goods	
		Sexual and gender-based violence	

According to MoHSW and ICF Macro Inc. (2010: 15), the bulk of new infections in 2008 occurred among people who are particularly reported to lead a ‘single’ lifestyle, people who are not married or who do not live with spouses on full time basis even if they are married. The Ministry of Health, in its Country Report on the Global AIDS Response Progress (MoH, 2015: 8), shows the burden of HIV as still high amongst this group. People reported to lead a ‘single’ lifestyle do so for different reasons. This includes attending school away from home (away from spouses, parents or guardians) or having never been married. Most tertiary institution learners fall under either of these categories, which places them amongst the ‘at risk population’. Also, certain aspects of social life place learners at risk of contracting HIV in view of the fact that “enhanced personal freedom coupled with social and material attractions, peer pressure, casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships which are common in tertiary institutions can be a recipe for unsafe sexual activities and experimentation” (DSW⁹, 2014: 7). Furthermore, HIV can again be fueled by “instances of offering sex in return for favours like promotions or good grades – which are euphemistically termed as ‘sexually transmitted

⁹ Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung

degrees and diplomas' [which] exist in some of these institutions. Commercial sex is common as poor students seek to earn money to pay for their fees or for personal upkeep" (Thakaso, 2010: 70). In view of all of these concerns, tertiary institutions need to equip learners with adequate knowledge on HIV through the use of informing, educating and communicating preventative HIV messages using, among others, print IEC materials in order for learners to be able to protect themselves. For these reasons the study set out to explore the responses towards the print IEC materials in the fight against HIV, especially among young adults. In regard to all these concerns, the next section therefore elaborates on what motivated the study.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

There are various HIV prevention interventions targeted at equipping youth and young adults with life skills in Lesotho. These interventions are provided in educational institutions, churches and societies through formal and non-formal modes of education (academic subjects, workshops, peer education, health talks, community gatherings, individual and group counselling) where print IEC materials are used as supporting educational materials. These materials are provided with the belief that direct communication with youth and young adults will help to intensify their understanding and appreciation of key issues regarding HIV and the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). However, there seems to have been no evaluation of the influence or impact of educational materials.

The study focused only on print IEC materials, comprising a poster, a pamphlet and a magazine, using young adults in tertiary institutions with the aim to also seek suggestions towards the improvement of these materials so that they contain accurate health messages.

Considering the focus of this study, the comprehensibility of the print IEC materials that have been used and continue to be used to inform, educate and communicate HIV issues with people is of particular concern, especially among youth and young adults. No study has been found that has investigated the impact or influence of IEC materials used to prevent HIV on the student body in any institution of higher learning in Lesotho. This is worrisome, if after all these years almost nothing is known about prevention efforts that are being undertaken in the

Lesotho institutions of higher education, even though they contain communities which are assumed to be ‘highly’ sexually active. As Saint (2004: 6) says, these institutions are a potential “breeding ground” for HIV infection. Saint is concerned about the situation among Africa’s institutions of tertiary education and expresses his concern thus:

...after all, their campuses constitute a potentially fertile breeding ground for HIV/AIDS. They bring together in close physical proximity devoid of systematic supervision a large number of young adults at their peak years of sexual activity and experimentation. Combined with the ready availability of alcohol and perhaps drugs, together with divergent levels of economic resources, these circumstances create a very high risk environment from an AIDS perspective (Saint, 2004: 6).

Although the National University of Lesotho (NUL) undertook a study in 2010 to establish the prevalence, knowledge, attitudes and practices of the Pre-Entry Science Program group of 2010 with respect to HIV issues, they did not investigate the learners’ responses towards IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV, despite the fact that even the World Bank (2004) had declared the intensity of the HIV/AIDS challenge as very strong in African tertiary institutions. The NUL study focused only on the students’ level of knowledge on HIV prevention and transmission, their attitudes and behaviour towards people living with HIV and other HIV related issues such as their practices towards sexual intercourse, condom use, alcohol and drug use plus peer pressure (NUL, 2011: 16-25). Baxen and Breidlid (2009: 35) are also concerned that current education debates regarding HIV/AIDS focus mostly either on the impact of the pandemic on the education sector at a systemic level, on pedagogical practices or on the success of HIV/AIDS educational intervention programmes among youth and young adults. They are concerned that few studies, if any, focus on the context of schooling as a site for the transmission and reproduction of particular forms of HIV/AIDS knowledge, or on the different contextual circumstances of educational institutions and their learners.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to explore and analyse the tertiary institution learners’ responses towards print IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV in Lesotho. The intention was to question the effectiveness of these type of materials, by examining their

comprehensibility, which is whether people can be able to read and understand them. To determine their credibility, which is how convincing the materials were to the reader. The study also examined the materials' applicability, which is how relevant or appropriate were these materials' messages to the reader as well as how practical these messages were to young adults in the fight against HIV, in Lesotho. Drawing on semiotics and embedded in communication theory and discourse analysis theory, the study strived to find out what messages the material conveys to the learners, how learners perceived the significance of print IEC materials in combating HIV and how these materials could be improved so as to inform future prevention efforts (Maxwell, 1996) of print IEC materials producers. To facilitate better understanding of the situation in Lesotho it was necessary to also inspect the HIV overview prospects from different positions, that is globally, continentally and regionally, before attention could dwell on what is happening in Lesotho.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study endeavoured to explore and analyse responses of tertiary institution learners towards IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho through raising questions about the kind of HIV and AIDS messages and the type of IEC materials that young adults in Lesotho value and need. This was sought through the following broad question:

- What are the tertiary institution learners' responses towards print IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV in Lesotho?

Drawing on semiotics, from communication theory, and using discourse analysis, the study strived to answer these questions:

1. What messages do the print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV convey to the learners?
2. What are the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of the print IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV?
3. In what way can the HIV prevention message(s) and outline of the print IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV be improved in order to influence positive behaviour change among youth and young adults?

1.5 GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF HIV

Access to information, knowledge and skills is an indispensable condition for young people to live a healthy and self-determined sexual and reproductive health life, to prevent unwanted pregnancies or an infection with HIV and AIDS or other sexually Transmitted Infections (DSW, 2014: 7).

These words are not only echoed by Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (an international development, advocacy and awareness raising organization from Germany), but have been and still are echoed internationally by such organizations as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) since the mid-1980's. This is the time when the world realised that HIV was no longer confined to the United States of America (where, according to CDC¹⁰ [2001: 429], it was discovered in 1981), but had spread throughout the world. From then onward it was hoped by WHO and the nations of the world that if people receive the necessary information in relation to how the disease is spread and how the spread can be prevented, the knowledge would lead to change in behaviour. Hence, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) gave HIV and AIDS special attention and, with a United Nations (UN) Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (2011 resolution, 65/277), made a resolution. The resolution declared that the member states were going to intensify efforts towards the elimination of HIV and AIDS and, adopted at the UNGA High Level Meeting on AIDS in June 2011, came to be known as UNAIDS.

UNAIDS was mandated to support countries and ensure that they report on their commitments and activities every year. UNAIDS was also mandated to ensure that countries help each other to fight HIV in every aspect. Thus, international data on the status of HIV and AIDS has been, and is still, collected through these reports since 2012. According to these organizations, in 2012 (when this study began) AIDS was the most serious public health problem the world had ever encountered. When looking at the global HIV epidemic at a glance, UNAIDS (2012: 8) reported 31.4–35.9 million people worldwide as having been infected with HIV at the end of 2011 despite the joint efforts that countries were undertaking to fight this epidemic. Of these

¹⁰ Centre for Disease Control

people 0.8 percent were estimated to be adults aged 15–49 years, the age group under which the study population fell. As the magnitude of the HIV epidemic moved from continent to continent, regions and individual countries, developed countries joined efforts to assist the least developed countries with finance and technical expertise to fight the spread of HIV. UNAIDS (2012: 11) reported the incidence of HIV infection among adults in 39 countries as having declined by more than 25 percent from 2001 to 2011, although the epidemiological trends were said to have been less favourable in some countries, as the number of new infections in 2011 indicated an increase of 25 percent when compared to 2001. Drawing from the 2011 Political Declaration, UNAIDS articulated ten specific targets for 2015 to guide collective action towards the fight against HIV, but of these targets there were none that specifically targeted prevention efforts through use of print IEC materials. The focus was rather on prevention through biomedical approaches such as HIV testing and counselling, supply and distribution of condoms and male circumcision. The UNAIDS (2013) mid-term review indicated worrying signs that, while the number of newly infected people indicated a decline globally, the national epidemic appeared to increase in many countries. It was therefore not surprising to hear UNAIDS advocate for the reinvigoration of social and behavioural change (UNAIDS, 2013) in the process of fighting HIV, though it was still not clear ‘how’.

Thus, it was assumed that these targets could be achieved not only by informing and educating people about HIV issues, but by communicating these issues with them in the most culturally acceptable and engaging ways that would allow them to become part of the solutions to related problems. These communication strategies could, therefore, include participatory methods such as ‘dialogue’. This is because dialogue does not only allow people to participate in discussions, but consequently helps them to learn from the information itself as well as from each other. Through dialogues people contextually relate with the messages easily. Upon trying to construct meaning out of the messages, discussions inspire them to engage in transformational thinking, thus, in the process they yield insights into transformational learning, which more often than not, can lead to desired attitudinal and behavioural changes

(UNAIDS, 2012). In view of all these concerns, the following section provides an overview of HIV in the African continent where Lesotho is situated.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF HIV SITUATION IN AFRICA

According to AVERT¹¹ (2014), it is suspected that the HI virus on the African continent started in East African countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya. In the beginning the infection was largely confined to individuals with higher risk behaviour such as sex workers, drug injectors and men having sex with other men (UNAIDS and WHO, 2003). The disease started to be considered seriously in Africa in the mid-1980s when it reached epidemic levels in Uganda.

HIV further spread into Western Equatorial Africa and Western African nations in the early 1980s. By the end of the decade HIV had spread to all of the West African states, probably due to rapid urbanization and immigration. As the decade progressed, so too did the epidemic, moving south through Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Although the virus arrived comparatively late in this region, it spurred a devastating epidemic in the general population. In Lesotho it was first discovered in 1986.

With a few notable exceptions, the 1980s were characterised by an insufficient response to AIDS in Africa, as HIV was then not a priority for governments. As there was no treatment or cure for HIV infection or AIDS in the 1980s, governments' strategies had to focus on prevention. Prevention efforts often included encouraging people to revise their sexual behaviour, by abstaining from sex or delaying first sexual encounters, being faithful to one partner or having fewer partners, or using condoms consistently and correctly. For this reason, prevention efforts in Africa were often confronted with opposition from religious authorities. Both Muslim and Christian leaders found prevention campaigns such as condom promotion difficult to reconcile with their teachings, despite prevailing evidence that abstinence and

¹¹ HIV and AIDS – Global Information and Advice about HIV and AIDS (Averting HIV and AIDS: Media gallery)

mutual monogamy were perhaps not as common as they wished. The magnitude of HIV in Africa can be attributed to WHO for its slow response to the emergence of the epidemic in this continent. Lack of political will from African countries themselves also contributed to the scourge, as most leaders delayed to acknowledge that HIV and AIDS was a problem in their countries for fear of discouraging tourism or creating panic among citizens and among other countries of the world. As a result, the increase in risky sexual behaviour in several countries continued as politicians delayed taking action. The disease spread rapidly across Africa, but particularly in Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho where there is significant cross border travel (AVERT, 2014).

1.6.1 OVERVIEW OF HIV IN THE SUB-SAHARAN REGION

Sub-Saharan Africa is counted among regions excessively affected by HIV and AIDS, hence, UNAIDS (2013: 12) refers to it as “home to 70 percent of all new HIV infections” in the world. Although the natural dynamics of the epidemic, according to UNAIDS (2013: 12), undoubtedly contribute to high rates of infection in the region, changes in social and cultural norms seem to yield good results. Reports show a decline in the rate of new infections. For instance, out of 39 countries internationally that showed a decline of 25 percent of new HIV incidences between 2001 and 2011, 23 were from the Sub-Saharan region (UNAIDS, 2013: 12). There is also a marked indication of improved sexual behaviour among citizens of numerous countries in this region since 2000. High rates of behavioural shifts such as cutting down the number of sexual partners that were reported by countries like Zimbabwe also resulted in the reduction of new HIV infections (UNAIDS, 2013: 14). Increased knowledge on HIV prevention among youth also resulted in the decline in young people aged 15–24 who had sex before the age of 15. Use of condoms has increased even among those with multiple partners. Numbers of young people who test for HIV in the region have also increased. Still, the region is said to have accounted for 71 percent of new infections in the world among adults and children in 2011, despite these gains. Hence, UNAIDS (2012: 11) urges countries of the Sub-Sahara to continue to strengthen their efforts in the prevention of HIV, and thus issued the following statement in the international HIV/AIDS status report in 2003:

In a belt of countries across Southern Africa, HIV prevalence is maintaining alarmingly high levels in the general population. In other Sub-Saharan African countries, the epidemic has gained a firm foothold and shows little sign of weakening... The epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa, in other words, remains rampant.

All these statistics show a need for countries to do things the way they have never done them before. Ek (cited in Saint, 2010: 88) supports the view that through discussions people are able to challenge existing beliefs, norms, attitudes and practices, thereby using the very challenge (of HIV and AIDS) to facilitate change. Thus, according to Ek, “a situation where previous experiences and ways of organizing human relations no longer can guide future interaction, has great potential to open up for social change”.

Since Lesotho is not only situated in the Sub-Saharan region, but is part of the 15 countries that form the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, it is necessary to also look at the status of HIV within the SADC region.

1.6.2 OVERVIEW OF HIV IN THE SADC REGION

One of the most affected regions within the Sub-Sahara is the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, with 34 percent of people infected with HIV living in the ten SADC countries (UNAIDS, 2010 Global Report). The SADC region, therefore, remains the most affected by the HIV prevalence globally. SADC is formed by fifteen member states, Lesotho included. The Global Report states that there are significant differences in the rate of HIV prevalence between countries in this region. Generally, the infection is higher in the urban than rural areas. More women are infected with HIV than men, and they are infected at early ages. However, young women aged 15–24 years appear to be more susceptible to the disease than any other group. Apart from issues related to their biological makeup this is attributable to social factors that prevent women from being able to negotiate for safer sex. Social factors place them in positions where they are not informed about HIV and economic factors make them engage in intergenerational and transitional sex. Consequently, females comprise 53 percent of HIV infections across the SADC region. In certain countries, 80 percent of the infected population consists of women and girls. In Lesotho this was confirmed

by the Prime Minister of Lesotho in his keynote speech for the 2015 World AIDS Day, where he indicated that about 180 girls are infected with HIV every month in the country.

According to the SADC HIV and AIDS strategic framework for 2010–2015 (2009: 2), 36 percent of people (an estimated 12 million people) who lived with HIV in the world were found in the SADC region by the end of 2007. The main mode of HIV transmission in this region, according to the framework, is through heterosexual intercourse (92 percent). Thus, HIV is predominantly found among people aged 20–39 years because they are the most sexually active, although the consequences of HIV (including AIDS related deaths) equally affect members of the population across the region.

There were, and there still are, a range of responses undertaken by SADC countries, as a region and by individuals, to fight HIV. For instance, the high-level political commitment to address HIV in the region is strong, as evidenced by the Member States' commitments to the SADC Maseru Declaration (2003), the Organization of the African Union (OAU) Abuja Declaration and Plan of Action (2001), the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets and United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV and AIDS (2011).

In 2000, SADC developed the first Strategic Framework (2000–2004) which was to guide all its member states towards a unified regional response against HIV and AIDS. Based on these frameworks (which are reviewed and updated every three years), the member states thereof develop their own national HIV and AIDS policies and National Strategic Plans. These plans have enhanced funding for HIV and AIDS programmes at national levels and thus improved the prospects for scaling up these programmes. However, the USAID (2012) mid-term reviews indicated that some countries have reduced their support for the social-behavioural HIV prevention programmes. For example, a highly successful 'Take control' campaign in Namibia was discontinued in 2011. In Lesotho one can mention the 'Know Your Status Campaign', which, according to Strand (2010: 71), was the world's first comprehensive plan whereby a government offered its entire adult population HIV testing and counselling. The

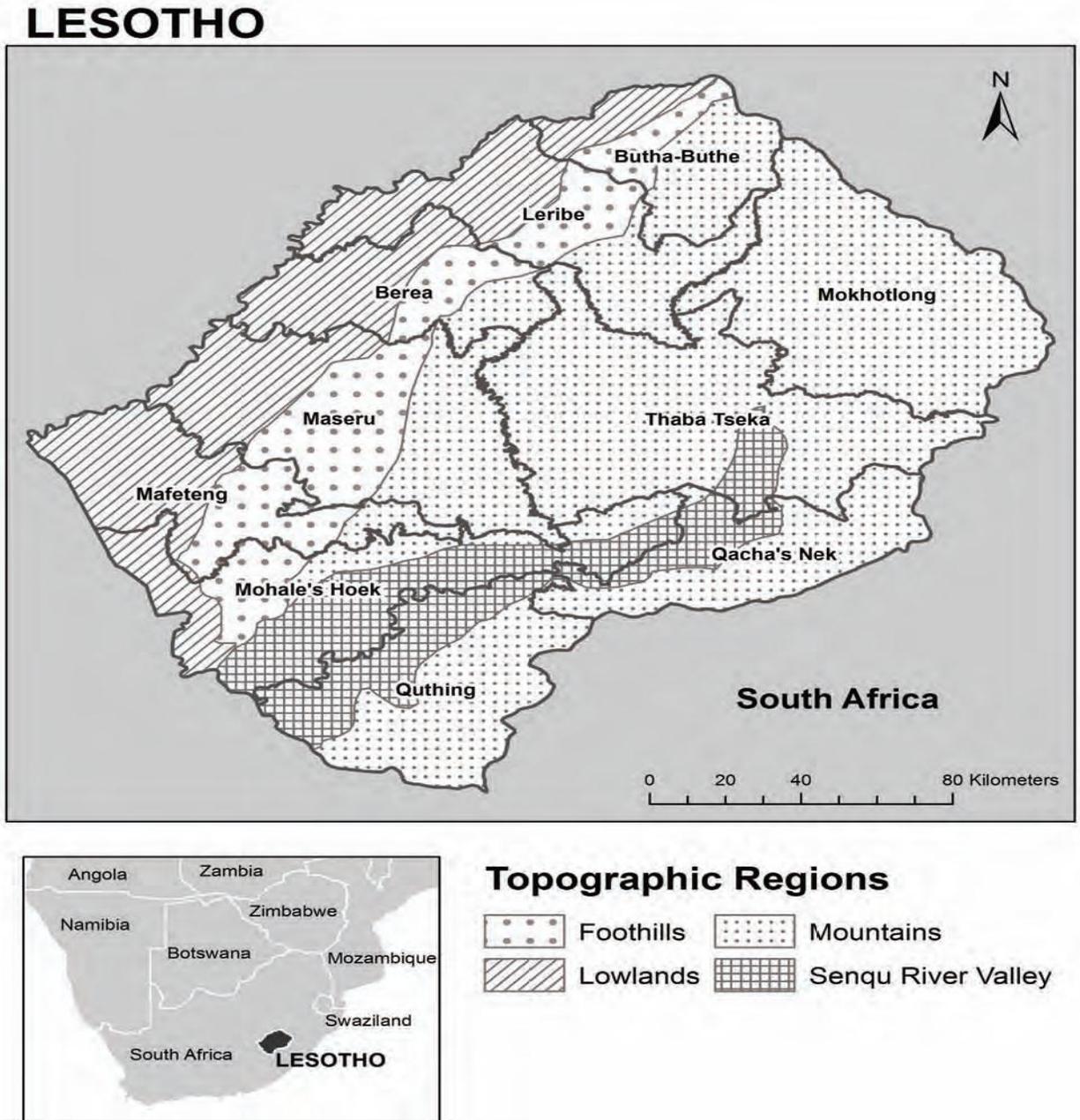
campaign lasted only seven months. It started in 2006, but due to inappropriate planning that led to rapid lack of funds, it collapsed in 2007.

Since this study investigates the Lesotho tertiary institution learners' responses, it is necessary to first give the country profile of Lesotho before expounding on the overview of HIV in the country.

1.7 LESOTHO COUNTRY PROFILE

Lesotho, also known as the 'Mountain Kingdom' because of its mountainous terrain, lies 1,000 meters above sea level in the southeastern part of Africa, reaching 3,000 meters in its highest peaks. It is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Located in the eastern part of Southern Africa, it covers an area of 30,350 km² and has an overall population of 1, 894, 194 with 48.6 percent male and 51.4 percent females. Lesotho is largely mountainous and 23 percent of the population live in urban areas clustered along the flatter northwestern borders, with the remaining 77 percent living in rural and difficult to reach areas. The population growth rate is one percent and the average life expectancy is 42 years (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Diagram 1: THE MAP OF LESOTHO



Source: adapted from MoHSW and ICF Macro (2010).

Lesotho is a former British protectorate. It is a democratic country with a parliamentary or constitutional monarchy rule and, therefore, a kingdom led by a king (King Letsie III) under parliamentary rule. The government is headed by a prime minister who provides the day-to-day leadership for the country according to the provisions of the Constitution of Lesotho and is assisted by a multi-party cabinet of ministers. The country is divided into ten districts and each is headed by a district administrator. The districts are further subdivided into 80 constituencies, which consist of 129 local community councils. Lesotho gained its independence from Britain in 1966, hence, English is used and acknowledged as an official first language, along with Sesotho, in this country (GoL, 1993: 13). Both English and Sesotho languages are acceptably used for IEC materials in the country. UNICEF's (2008) country statistics indicate that the population of Lesotho is almost entirely homogeneous with almost everyone speaking the national language of Sesotho, though a few communities, mostly found in the southern part of the country, have Sethepu as their first language. Most Basotho are Christians (80 percent) with some 20 percent practicing indigenous beliefs and a few (± 0.03 percent), who are mostly non-Basotho in origin, following other religious practices such as Islam.

According to Preece (2009: 144), Lesotho has high adult literacy rates compared with other Sub-Saharan countries, at an overall figure of between 82 and 85 percent with high female school attendance and literacy rates. The females' school attendance and literacy in Lesotho are higher than those for males due to cultural practices of herding animals for boys and young men, especially in the rural areas. While primary education has been free since 2000, people still have to pay for secondary education. Preece (2009: 145) shows that the impact of this is evident in the net enrolment rates for primary education (82 percent male, 88 percent female) as compared to those for secondary level (16 percent male and 27 percent female).

The tertiary education accommodates approximately two percent of primary school entrants. Although this is a relatively small portion of the population, it represents an 'at risk population' (risk of being infected with HIV) because it is sexually active and includes the most potentially productive members of the nation. The way in which this population group

receives and responds to IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV is therefore of critical significance in ensuring an HIV free future generation in Lesotho. It was therefore of utmost importance to look at what HIV and AIDS means, how HIV is transmitted and efforts that are being undertaken to establish its prevalence and how it is being combatted in Lesotho.

1.7.1 HIV OVERVIEW IN LESOTHO

The description of HIV and AIDS epidemiology in Lesotho is based on incidence rate and type of population affected. For instance, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) shows that in the past national HIV prevalence estimates were derived primarily from sentinel surveillances among pregnant women and by population-based surveys like the Demographic and Health Surveys (MoHSW, undated: 4). Sentinel surveillance refers to the “monitoring of the public health by a group of practitioners or institutions that agree to notify a public health agency of all cases of a specific disease or condition” (*Mosby's Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions*, 2009). In the case of Lesotho, the mother and child health units in the health centers monitored the prevalence of HIV and reported to the district, which in turn reported to the Central level (health headquarters) and the Central level reported to WHO. Nkonyana (in MoHSW and ICF Macro, 2010: 199) explains that the HIV Sentinel Surveillance was first established in 1991 at five sites in the country, where blood samples taken from pregnant women for routine investigations during their first antenatal care visits and blood samples from patients with sexually transmitted diseases were also anonymously tested for HIV. However, the practice has changed because the Ministry of Health together with several private organizations like the Population Services International (PSI), the Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFa), International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Program and the Mailman School of Public Health now provide HIV and Voluntary Counseling and Testing services throughout the country, thus making it easy for the Ministry to compile HIV related statistics. The next paragraph elaborates on the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Lesotho to orientate the reader to the situation in Lesotho.

MoHSW and ICF Macro (2010: 210) point out that the spread of HIV infection among young people is mostly influenced by factors such as: having concurrent multiple sex partners,

irresponsible alcohol consumption, incorrect condom use and intergenerational sex relationships because older people are likely to be infected with HIV since they may have had a longer period of exposure to unsafe sexual practices. Alcohol and drug abuse is thought to be a factor that drives the HIV epidemic in the country. Hingson, Strunin, Berlin and Heeren (2004) describe the use of alcohol or other drugs, thought to interfere with judgment and decision making, as some of the major contributors to sexual risk taking. They also show that freedom and peer pressure, which characterise tertiary institution culture, can lead to learners experimenting irresponsibly with the use of alcoholic beverages and drugs, something which may contribute to learners experiencing decreased judgment resulting in increased likelihood for undertaking risky sexual behaviour.

The gender disparities in HIV prevalence in Lesotho are 26.7 percent among women and 18 percent among men. Females comprise about 60 percent of all infected people. Prevalence is also higher in urban areas (27.2 percent) compared to rural areas (21.1 percent). According to AVERT (2014) over ten percent of young women and almost six percent of young men aged 15–24 in Lesotho were living with HIV between 2011 and 2012. AVERT (2014) continues to show that young people are significantly affected by the epidemic and increasing efforts have been made to provide adequate youth-oriented support and services for them across the country. This includes promotion of knowledge and information on safe behaviour among this population, as only about 39 percent of young women and 29 percent of young men appeared to have comprehensive knowledge in regard to HIV and AIDS issues. Furthermore, young people (22 percent of girls and 8 percent of boys) appear to engage in sexual activity before they even reach the age of 15 (AVERT, 2014), which also reflects a need for Lesotho to give critical attention to protecting this population from HIV.

Although the rate of new infections seems to be increasing among youth and young adults, the government, together with several non-governmental organizations, is continuing to conduct a variety of HIV prevention campaigns with a specific component of behavior change featuring in strategies across the country. Furthermore, AVERT (2014) shows that various HIV prevention programmes have been carried out to reach this population and gives examples that

in 2011, Kick 4 Life project reached over 100,000 young people by utilizing technology such as social media to send text messages in an effort to spread awareness and increase HIV knowledge among young people. Cash transfer programmes have also been found to be an effective method of HIV prevention in Lesotho, particularly for young females, and the United Nations agencies funded youth oriented civil society groups to educate their peers about HIV and AIDS, using edutainment approaches such as street drama, talk shows, music competitions and football matches.

Kimaryo *et al.* (2004: 78) suggest that IEC materials based on health education or Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) models should be used as a core component for prevention of the spread of HIV in Lesotho. This is supported by a personal communication by Professor Michael J. Kelly (September 17 2008): “In the absence of biomedical remedies, the only remedy left to society is education. Education is part and parcel of every intervention against the disease. It is the social vaccine we must rely on”. Education, according to McGuire (2000: 25), is the process of establishing behaviour which will be of advantage to individuals and others around them. McGuire (2000: 24) advises that for HIV prevention programmes to be effective, they must provide a mixture of services and activities that promote safe practices and increase access to health services and prevention commodities. He says these programmes must also address structural human rights and environmental issues that influence risk-provoking situations and vulnerability. Accordingly, the government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Health, mandated the Health Education Division (HED) to oversee all health education and health promotion activities to raise awareness and promote behaviour change in the society in an effort to fight the spread of HIV.

To this end, the HED agreed that IEC materials were a major weapon that could successfully be used to combat HIV, pending the discovery of a vaccine or cure. Through IEC materials people who do not have HIV can be given information and knowledge that will enable them to protect themselves from becoming infected and people who are already infected can be empowered to protect themselves from being re-infected and ensure that they do not infect others. Since IEC materials appeared to be of paramount importance in the battle against the

spread of HIV, HED encouraged different stakeholders, including other government ministries, to make determined efforts to educate the society about HIV and AIDS. They used different types of IEC materials aimed at equipping people with knowledge and skills that would help them to understand the disease, understand themselves and understand the world around them. The subsequent section outlines the purpose and evolution of the HED to facilitate the reader's understanding of its mandate and significance in the ministry.

1.7.2 LESOTHO'S NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE HIV EPIDEMIC

At the time this study started, efforts to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho were guided by the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2011/12-2015/16 and still are to date (2015). The Government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Health, became a signatory to regional and international AIDS prevention efforts in Lesotho since 2000 and is continuing to do so. It designed and implemented prevention and control measures starting with drawing up of a National HIV and AIDS Policy, including strategies for scaling up the fight against HIV and AIDS in 2000 (Kimaryo *et al.*, 2004: 10), and it is planning to curtail the spread of new HIV infections by 50 percent as well as to improve information and communication on HIV and AIDS (GoL, 2000a: 3) by 2016. One of the primary strategies that was implemented is the Multisectoral National AIDS Strategic Plan in 2000. The plan is multisectoral, because it includes key line ministries, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

Following an in-depth review of the national response in 2005, which involved a range of internal and external stakeholders, the National HIV and AIDS Policy was updated, the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan for 2006-2011 and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Plan were approved by the government in 2006. The National AIDS Commission (NAC), which was set up by an act of parliament in 2005, also became fully functional in the same year. The National HIV and AIDS Policy and the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan had set ambitious targets with a view to achieve universal access for HIV testing and anti-retroviral treatment by 2010. This plan provided a broad strategic framework for action. It indicated that IEC materials (though the type was not specified) with culturally acceptable, gender and age sensitive messages should be disseminated nationwide, including into hard to

reach areas. These materials were to address factors that drive the epidemic in the country. These included gender and socio-economic issues. In addition, the plan's objectively verifiable indicators of achievement included the promotion of life skills education in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, including the out-of-school youth population. Youth-friendly health services equipped with personnel who are specially trained to work with young people were promoted so that youth could feel free to obtain HIV related information and be tested for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. For this purpose Adolescent Health Corners were attached to some health facilities.

In 2006 several new laws and law amendments meant to create an enabling environment for accelerating the national response to HIV were made. These included the Lesotho Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 9 of 2006 (GoL: 2006) that provides equal status to women who had previously been considered minors under customary law. The enactment of this Act, along with full implementation of the Action Plan on Women, Girls and HIV, is considered key to removing barriers to access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for women and girls. The Labour Code was amended to stop discrimination based on HIV status in the workplace (GoL: 2006). This Code was amended to ensure confidentiality and to prohibit compulsory disclosure of one's HIV status, pre-employment testing for HIV, HIV testing during employment, and discrimination in employment.

The Christian fraternity was not left behind in the response. The Reliefweb News and Press Release (11th July 2007) indicated that 14 senior Christian church leaders belonging to various denominations had signed a Statement of Commitment on HIV and AIDS. Thus, an inter-faith body to coordinate the faith-based response to AIDS, called Lesotho Inter-Religious AIDS Consortium was established.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are currently thirteen public and private institutions of higher learning in Lesotho. These include two universities, namely, National University of Lesotho and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, with the former being the largest with enrolment of about

11,500 students. Other institutions are polytechnics, which offer certificate and diploma programmes. Their enrolments range from about 4,000 to 10,000 students (MoET¹², 2011: 1). UNESCO-IBE¹³ (2010: 4) highlights that education and training in Lesotho is provided and managed through a joint venture between the government through the Ministry of Education and Training and the churches. However, the regulation of these services is solely the responsibility of MoET.

The study selected three different institutions based on three different ecological zones found in Lesotho. These were as follows: the lowlands (urban) represented by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in the Maseru District; the foothills (semi-rural) represented by the Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in the Quthing District; and the mountain areas (rural) represented by the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) satellite campus in the Thaba-Tseka District. The reason for including all three ecological zones was to take into consideration that people living in the rural, mountainous areas are highly disadvantaged regarding their access to media and other educational facilities and are, therefore, not exposed to information or literature in the same way as their peers in the urban areas (Bekele, 2008). This is also supported by the MoHSW and ICF Macro Inc. (2010: xxiii), who indicate that the lowlands have the highest rate of HIV infection (24 percent) and the Sengu River valley (in the foothills) has the lowest rate of infection at 21 percent. For this reason the study therefore demonstrates a comparative element between the different contextual circumstances of the three institutions and their learners. Nevertheless, students in any particular institution may come from all areas of Lesotho, making it possible for them to have acquired different levels of exposure to HIV prevention materials before joining their respective institutions.

¹² Ministry of Education and Training

¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-International Bureau of Education

1.9 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Initially the intention of the study was to use only second year learners. This was because it was believed that they would still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials, but would have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to have adapted to the higher learning institutions' culture. Due to unforeseen problems, where institutional activities conflicted with timing for the research interviews, the study ended up including learners other than the second years. For instance, at Thaba-Tseka (Lesotho College of Education) I interviewed third year students, since second years were out in the field performing their teaching practice. Maseru (National University of Lesotho) used first year degree learners, but they were accepted as applicable since they had already been through a two-year diploma level with the institute and, in a way, could be said to be in their third year as part of the university's student body. I chose to continue with these groups, because in reality they too fell within the specifications for the research population since they had spent more than a year away from their caregivers (parents or spouses), and with the assumption that they had adequately established themselves in the institutions to adapt to the tertiary institution culture.

1.9.1 NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

The National University of Lesotho (NUL) is an autonomous institution. It is governed by a council and grants its own degrees with the authorization of its senate. According to the UNESCO-IBE (2010/2011), the GoL provides the university with financial assistance for its intermittent expenses. The university's academic year commences in August and ends in May. In an effort to improve the healthcare of its community and strengthen its fight against HIV and AIDS, the university established an HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee in 2002. According to van Wyk and Pieterse (2006: 10-11), the committee drafted its HIV/AIDS policy in 2002. In an effort to facilitate the implementation of this policy and assist the committee to carry out its mandate, the Vice-Chancellor established a special office at the NUL main campus in Roma in June 2003. However, the policy was only put in place in 2009 because of some administrative setbacks that resulted in its delayed formalization. The policy contains a

strategic plan, which outlines actions to be taken by NUL staff and students on policy formulation, capacity building, advocacy, information generation, dissemination and storage, fundraising, networking, care and support, and community service.

Among the interventions that NUL has managed to undertake through its HIV/AIDS office, though hampered by lack of resources (van Wyk and Pieterse, 2006), is to initiate training for peer educators and organise HIV/AIDS workshops for students and staff. For example, it managed to negotiate with the Center for the Study of AIDS (CSA) at the University of Pretoria to initiate the expansion of the CSA's Future Leaders @ Work peer education programme to NUL, under the Beyond Borders regional initiative. The NUL HIV/AIDS office has also been commemorating World AIDS Days since 2004 (van Wyk and Pieterse, 2006), with help of the three anti-AIDS student groups active on the campus. It also included a brief component of HIV/AIDS information in the 2004/2005 orientation programme. With the assistance of the Joint Economics AIDS and Poverty Programme and NAC, the university conducted an HIV sentinel survey to determine HIV prevalence among its community (NUL, 2011) with a view to inform the AIDS Programme so that it could have a basis for making meaningful decisions. Afterwards, the Pre-Entry Science Program (PESP) group of 2010, which registered for studies in May 2010 was identified as the appropriate sample that could be used for the initial HIV related study to be undertaken by the University among its community.

The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of HIV among the Pre-Entry Science Program students and to assess their knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviours that may be associated with their predisposition to HIV. The aim was also to have an idea of their HIV status at the beginning and at the end of their studies (after four years), as the preliminary report (2011) apparently indicated that there was a high rate of sexual activity, including unprotected sex, multiple concurrent partnerships and a high rate of unwanted pregnancies. Currently, the prevalence of HIV among the student body is confidential at NUL, though the 2008-2012 services data from the university clinic show a prevalence of around three to five percent. HIV prevalence among this group at entry point, where a total of 416 students took

part, was found to be 1.7 percent, of which 57.2 percent were females and 42.8 percent were males. Almost all the respondents were Basotho and they were entering the university after their 'O' level qualifying examination. More than three quarters of the respondents were indicated to be less than 21 years of age and 97 percent of them had never been married. Three quarters of them had been day scholars during their previous school years, out of which only two thirds had stayed with their parents. Nine in ten respondents were straight from school with no work experience. The PESP study (NUL, 2011: v) revealed that knowledge about HIV was widespread. However, the study did not explore the extent to which IEC materials were influencing sexual behavior or strategies for protection against HIV infection among the learners.

1.9.2 TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF LELOALENG

The Institute was established as a boys' school in 1879 by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, under the name Leloaleng Trade School (Masenyane, Principal, personal communication, 19/09/2013). Until the year 2000, only four courses were offered, namely, automotive mechanics, carpentry and joinery, leatherworks and upholstery, and tailoring. In 2000 the school changed its name to Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) and included girls in its training. The courses offered were also increased to six, by including bricklaying and plastering, electrical installation and computer applications. In regard to HIV and AIDS, the Institute is said to be working on finding its own counsellor. So far, it is being helped by a private organization, the Population Services International (PSI). For instance, PSI provides testing services and printed IEC materials more than once each year, their last visit being in March 2013. However, the principal indicated that the institute is faced with a problem of how to ensure that the infected are enrolled into Anti-Retroviral Therapy, or are adhering to the treatment, since PSI does not do any follow-ups on those who tested positive or those on a window period during their visit.

1.9.3 LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The National Teacher Training College, now the Lesotho College of Education, was established in 1975 when the government decided to replace the teacher training college that

was operated by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, with a centralised institution for both pre-service and in-service teacher training for primary, secondary and vocational schools of Lesotho. As a result, the college's budget is provided by the government through the Ministry of Education. The college offers four full-time and pre-service diplomas in teaching programmes, including the Distance Teacher Education Programme as well as programmes for primary school managers and administrators. In 2006 the college opened a satellite campus in the Thaba-Tseka District (LCE, 2011), one of the remote districts in Lesotho. The satellite offers the same programmes as the main campus.

All programmes are of three years duration except for the new Diploma in Education (Primary) programme, which was started to replace the Primary Teachers Certificate in September 1998. This Diploma takes three and a half years for teachers and two and a half years for principals. All programmes lead to certificates, which are accredited by the National University of Lesotho (UNESCO-IBE, 2010). The first semester is for a bridging course, designed to upgrade student achievement in the core subjects and to prepare them for tertiary studies. The college also provides an in-service Distance Teacher Education Programme to avail opportunities to unqualified and under-qualified practicing primary school teachers to become qualified to the undergraduate diploma level.

With regard to HIV and AIDS, the college offers a course on adolescence, relationships, reproductive and sexual health, HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STIs) prevention, treatment, care and support. In view of this, the college's rector writes a foreword in this course's manual (Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS – Life skills course book for teacher trainees, LCE: 2012). In this, he indicates that the College aspires to equip teachers with knowledge, skills and vision and to stimulate their thoughts and ideas on viable life skills and approaches to handling STIs, including HIV and AIDS, in an effort to produce teachers that can address issues related to sexuality and reproductive health in a way that corresponds with the conceptual level and cultural background of adolescent learners in Lesotho.

The college runs a small medical clinic that provides general ambulatory services. According to the nursing sister at the LCE health center (personal communication 24/09/2013), the clinic is fully accredited to provide HIV testing and counseling, anti-retroviral treatment and related services. The satellite campus does not have a clinic. As a result learners are oriented on HIV and AIDS issues and given print IEC materials (produced by the Population Services International and Phela Health and Development Communications) during their one-week orientation provided at the main campus at the beginning of every academic year.

1.10 THE HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION SERVICES IN LESOTHO

WHO (1986: 1), in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, defines health promotion as

...the process of enabling people to increase control over, and improve their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realise aspirations, to satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment. The Charter recognises health as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. It also sees health as a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.

Health promotion is, therefore, not just the responsibility of the health sector, but “goes beyond encouraging healthy life-styles to promoting well-being” (Ewles and Simnett, 2003: 25). To this end, Lesotho developed a Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategic Plan to reduce the transmission of HIV through effective communication prevention strategies in an effort to motivate individuals, families and communities to adopt healthy behaviour so as to avoid being infected with HIV or infecting others. MoHSW and NAC (2008: 19) shows that the strategy is guided by several principles which illustrate that all stakeholders engaging in the promotion of behavioural change are expected to adhere to producing clear and consistent messages about HIV prevention and desired behaviour, based on the epidemiological as well as behavioural information on age, sex and behavioural patterns of target groups. In the strategy’s foreword, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare pronounced that the strategy will be used as a guiding tool that will ensure the uniformity of purpose and direction among all those engaged in the vital area of behavioural change communication for HIV and AIDS in the country.

According to the MoH (2005), the Health Education Division in Lesotho was established in 1972 by a British medical consultant as merely an educational wing (known as Health Education Unit) of the Mother and Child Health and Family Planning Programme at Tšakholo Health Center in the Mafeteng District. When the government realised that other programmes could benefit from similar services, this unit's scope was increased and in 1981 it was promoted to become a division and was charged with the responsibility of planning and management of national health education and health promotion activities.

According to the MoHSW Policy (2003: 7), HED is committed to achieving equity in empowering communities and individuals to make healthy choices and also to ensure that public policies facilitate those choices. It also commits to empower people to exercise their rights and responsibilities as well as help in the shaping of their environment into systems and policies that are conducive to health and wellbeing, because it is regarded as a strategy for the promotion of good health. It is also used as a tool for providing education on existing health problems and the methods of controlling them; that is why HED acts as a mouthpiece for all other programmes in providing education on health issues. The fact that many partners are developing and implementing BCC related interventions that have not been centrally audited by MoHSW, has led to uncoordinated, and sometimes conflicting, messages on health related issues. To control this, in 2011 HED established a coordinating body called the Behaviour Change Communication Messages Clearing Warehouse Committee (MoH: 2005).

This Committee is intended to provide technical guidance in the development of all BCC messages and to ensure that all messages disseminated in the country are accurate and do not send out unintentional messages. It is made up of HED, Disease Control Division (DCD), Family Health Division (FHD), United Nations Agencies like UNICEF, WHO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFP) as well as private organizations such as ALAFA, PSI, Lesotho, Christian Health Association of Lesotho, Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association and Phela Health and Development Communications. The Committee is guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and is scheduled to meet twice a month, or as often as required,

under the chairmanship of the office of the Director General of Health Services assisted by HED and the secretariat of DCD.

According to MoH (2005), the Committee aims to ensure the dissemination of coordinated and accurate messages, at national, district and community level, on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, mitigation and impact; to promote evidence-based research as a prerequisite for the development of BCC interventions and; to provide technical guidance on mainstreaming of information flow. The SOPs further indicate that the committee's specific roles are to: review all final IEC materials developed by stakeholders before their printing and dissemination; update BCC focal points through an appropriate knowledge management system and mechanism countrywide; provide technical guidance to partners in the development of BCC messages on HIV whenever needs arise; develop and share BCC messages and guidelines with all stakeholders in the country; sensitize all stakeholders about the existence of the clearing warehouse and the monitoring and controlling of HIV and AIDS information flow in country.

This study, therefore, directly addresses the commitments and aims of this committee. It is hoped to enhance the committee's work by providing a theoretical framework for analyzing BCC messages and contribute to the committee's work by presenting in-depth feedback on the case study of tertiary level student responses to IEC text materials and images.

Guidelines that govern the BCC committee, as contained in the SOPs, show that it was mandated to see to it that a secretariat is put into place before its operations commence, as all messages are to be submitted to the secretariat at least three working days before its sitting. Also, all cleared messages are to be returned to the owners within three working days. The SOPs highlight that once misleading information is found to have been disseminated through media channels, radio, television, posters and brochures for example, an immediate stoppage of dissemination is pronounced and such material is recalled. Following this, a corrected and approved version conveying the same condemned message is provided. Issues that are scrutinized include, among others: clarity, accuracy, and relevance of the information.

After the committee has reviewed and commented on the materials, the producer is expected to incorporate the comments and to bring it back to the committee for clearance. Acceptable materials are endorsed with the HED logo and can then be circulated in the country.

According to the MoH (2005) the mandate of HED also includes: development of a comprehensive health education policy; steering the planning, management and control of national health promotion activities; producing and distributing researched IEC materials; fostering social education, political actions and healthy lifestyles; facilitating communication in support of health to monitor progress and impact of education, including IEC materials, and advocating for agenda setting for health promotion programmes at all levels. In health facilities HED focuses on patient health, in workplaces it focuses on occupational health, and with school health programmes it focuses on learners and community health. These materials are not only meant to educate people about the HI virus, how it is spread and how it can be avoided, but they are also meant to educate them on how they can accomplish and maintain high self-efficacy against HIV infection.

In 2004 Kimaryo *et al.* (2004) advised the government of Lesotho to use print IEC materials to fight HIV, because these materials are able to reach masses of people at the same time, to illustrate information given in one-on-one settings or serve as reference to remind people of information they received earlier. They also indicated that IEC materials can be used to teach people skills by providing hands-on experience or by illustrating step-by-step approaches. That is, IEC materials should give people complete information so that they can become knowledgeable and be able to make informed choices. Thus, it is argued that effective IEC materials can positively influence peoples' attitudes, perceptions and help build their self-efficacy and decision-making processes towards avoiding risky behaviour and leading healthy lifestyles. IEC materials are also expected to change peoples' values and to promote transformational learning towards the prevailing HIV scourge.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in the application of communication theory, using semiotics and discourse analysis to assess responses to print IEC materials that aim to prevent the spread of HIV among youth and young adults in Lesotho. Therefore, this study hopes to provide new and better theoretically informed data to improve understanding about how IEC materials should be developed and tested. The study is of utmost significance to me as a health educator and other IEC materials producers, including the MoET and higher learning institutions themselves, in alerting all to tertiary institution learners' perceptions and their expectations of the print IEC materials. It was hoped that the findings would facilitate print IEC materials producers' understanding on how to develop appropriate strategies for disseminating HIV prevention information to youth and young adults in the future. This is because research on the comprehensibility of IEC materials is supposed to contribute towards increasing the effectiveness of awareness programmes, provided that specific user problems are timeously identified and addressed in an appropriate way (see Chapter two). Furthermore, findings from the study are expected to help the Ministry of Health (through HED) and all stakeholders in the production of IEC materials to observe laws and principles that govern the dissemination and distribution of HIV and AIDS information, education and communication in the country.

Besides creating new knowledge on factors that influence the successful use of printed IEC materials produced for educated youth and young adults, the study also provided an in-depth understanding on what is it about the HIV and AIDS related print IEC materials that indicate whether they are useful or not, so that the Health Education Division and other IEC materials developers could be informed. Therefore, this research on the usability of print IEC materials, it is assumed, would contribute towards increasing the effectiveness of this type of material for HIV and AIDS awareness programmes amongst youth and young adults. The hope is that the research findings provide recommendations that will contribute to better development and coordination of IEC materials. Since the study investigates application of education through print IEC materials for young adults, what is meant by adult education is briefly looked at.

1.12 ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is a broad concept which, according to UNESCO (cited by de Goñi, 2006: 11-12), refers to

... the entire body of organised educational processes for people, who are categorised as adults by virtue of their legal status in terms of age or social responsibilities, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise (that is non-formal, continuing, recurrent, extension, community, lifelong, distance, correspondence and informal education) ... through adult education people can develop changes in their attitudes or behaviour for personal development or participation in social, economic and cultural developments.

IEC materials reflect different forms of adult education, but in the context of print IEC materials that circulate in the country, or are available in tertiary institutions, they can be understood as an informal or non-formal mode of adult education that is expected to promote attitudinal change.

1.13 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

This section explains a range of concepts commonly used in the study. These concepts are organised alphabetically, some starting with acronyms.

AIDS: This stands for the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a disease or a group of infections that attack the human body after the body's immune system has been weakened by HIV.

HIV: This stands for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is the virus that attacks the body's immune system and makes it susceptible to AIDS.

HIV incidence: This refers to the new HIV infections in a certain time period for a certain group of people.

HIV prevalence: This refers to the number and percentage of people living with HIV in a particular area.

High-risk situation: This refers to a situation that increases learners' risk of contracting HIV.

Materials: This refers to print or electronic informational articles (not fabrics).

Medium: This refers to the objects by which messages are conveyed.

Print: This refers to or derives from the technical process of printing by which IEC materials or documents are produced and reproduced, and not to print in the sense of verbal text or written words that occur in many different media.

1.14 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study has ten chapters. Chapter one describes the background of the study. It clarifies the motivation and purpose for undertaking the study, statement of the problem, research questions, scope and focus of the study. This is followed by an overview of HIV prospects from different positions, that is; globally, in Africa, in Sub-Saharan Region, in the SADC Region and in Lesotho, including the prevalence of HIV in Lesotho. The national efforts that were being made in response to the epidemic are also looked into, particularly considering youth and HIV in Lesotho. The history and mandate of HED, as the overseer of HIV prevention activities in the country, and IEC materials as the major weapon in the prevention of HIV are also discussed. The chapter further articulates the significance of the study and briefly defines the concept of Adult Education, since the use of print IEC materials used in this study were designed for adults.

Chapter two gives an account of literature reviewed in relation to the intentions of the study. Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter four defines the research design and methodology used in the study. Chapters five, six, seven and eight present and analyse the research findings. Chapter nine interprets and discusses the findings, while chapter ten provides the conclusions and recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

1.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the background to the study, giving an overview of the HIV prospects from different positions and Lesotho's responses to this epidemic. The chapter included the statement of the problem, motivation for the study, purpose and significance for undertaking the study, which all pointed to the paucity of research into how youth and young adults respond to print IEC materials. It could be concluded that there is a need for intensive

monitoring and a need to regularly evaluate the significance of print IEC materials if Lesotho is to achieve its long anticipated dream of promoting attitudinal and behavioural change through delivery of appropriate and effective HIV information, education and communication. It was hoped that if youth and young adults timeously receive the relevant information about HIV (since the literature showed Basotho to be knowledgeable about the basics of HIV), the new knowledge might lead to change of attitudes and change from risky to desired behavior.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This review specifically focuses on studies that examined the appropriateness, effectiveness and usefulness of print IEC materials. Of particular relevance to this study on tertiary learners' responses to such materials in Lesotho were the studies undertaken in South Africa by Katherine Arbuckle (2011, 2014) and Adelia Carstens (2003, 2006). Although the focus of their investigations was different from this one, since their primary concern was to find out how adults with low literacy levels interpreted health related print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, they framed their studies with similar theories to those used in this study.

Even though the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are two different entities (in Lesotho they are often referred to as HIV and AIDS), in the chapter they are referred to as HIV/AIDS since this is how the literature frequently refers to the two features of the disease. At the time the study was undertaken, in Lesotho HIV specified the infection only, while AIDS referred to the later stage of infirmity.

There were a number of studies prior to 2000 which reflected relevant issues for this research, related to IEC materials and how they might be received in relation to the three thematic categories that emerged from the findings of the study. Some of these studies succinctly reflected issues pertaining to the comprehensibility of the materials, learners' reactions on how they generally felt about the materials, communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from the materials and the impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. Others reflected issues in relation to suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the materials. For instance, Tripper-Reimer and Afifi (1989), Doak, Doak and Root (1996), Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1984), Cornwall (1992) and Bradley (1995) explored issues in relation to culture. Holtgrave et al. (1995), Hale and Dillard (1995) and Wolitski's (1990) studies identified the impact of fear undertones in IEC materials. Although these will be

referred to, where relevant, in the discussion chapter, this review concentrates on more recent literature. The following studies that were done in 2000 and beyond provided a more useful point of comparison in the interpretation and discussion of the findings. These are studies by Hoogwegt, Maes and van Wijk (2009) in relation to elements of confusion in interpreting IEC materials. These authors made suggestions regarding communication gaps and towards improving the attractiveness of the materials. The studies of Taylor (2001), Merriam and Ntseane (2008), Cherie, Mitkie, Ismail and Berhane (2005), Ziehe (2009), Vella (2002) and Baumgartner (2001) all focused on meaning making by recipients of IEC communications. PATH/FHI¹⁴ (2002) provided information in relation to cultural issues that affected attitudes to IEC messages. Rule and John (2008) discuss undertones of fear of HIV/AIDS messages as well as the issue of denial versus reality, as if respondent attitudes to the materials, together with the discussions, reminded them of the degree of HIV risk involved in the kind of life they may be leading.

Since there has been little research done on this aspect of HIV/AIDS since 2009, this review focuses mainly on studies by Aggleton, Yankah and Crewe (2011), Das and Gupta (2011) and Bekele and Ahmed (2008). These studies explored the long-term impact of HIV/AIDS education since AIDS was first identified. In addition, Arbuckle's recent (2014) study is discussed because of its focus on semiotics as a means of analysing the communication effect of IEC materials on adults. Besides looking at the progress or impact of HIV/AIDS education, these studies were of interest because the study aimed to find out how young adults perceived the significance and appropriateness of the educational materials that were used over this period.

2.1 IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON HIV AND AIDS

Aggleton, Yankah and Crewe (2011) examined the progress made by education in tackling the epidemic from the date since AIDS was first identified over 30 years ago. They examined the consequences and effects of different forms of HIV-related education such as treatment

¹⁴ Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health/Family Health International

education, prevention education, and education for positive response. They specifically looked at how education could be used to help people develop new ways of seeing, understanding, and coping with the epidemic. They also assessed the impact of education processes and systems in encouraging people to ‘think’ faster than the epidemic. But for the purposes of this study, only findings related to education for prevention were considered. However, in some cases terms such as ‘providing knowledge and understanding’, ‘spreading news of innovation and success’ and ‘facilitating the development of a more supportive environment for HIV prevention and care’ were used to refer to education.

At the time of their study, Aggleton *et al.* (2011: 497) divulged that “education for HIV prevention” had been the basis of the international response to HIV and AIDS for well over 20 years. Their findings indicated that the expected increases in HIV infection rates among gay and other homosexually active men, including injection drug users in European contexts for example, were reversed through education. Aggleton and colleagues also identified some studies (for example, UNAIDS, 2009) that reported a 20–30 percent decline of the HIV infection rate in sub-Saharan Africa countries as a result of educational interventions (even though they were not specific as to whether it was in certain or in all countries in the sub-Saharan).

In terms of reducing HIV risk, Aggleton *et al.* (2011: 497) show that education seemed to have had an important role to play in providing people with information that led to developing knowledge on how to prevent infection, shifting attitudes toward risk reduction and risk behavior change. They give examples extracted from the discoveries made by UNAIDS (2009), which expose that through education, condom use is now widespread in African countries and among gay men throughout the entire world. Injection drug users were persuaded to use clean needles and syringes and educated other users to do so. Through education, sex work was also made safer for both the sex worker and the client.

Also, education appeared to have played a major role in helping, among others, the cultural and political leaders to see the need to deal with obstinate social issues so as to reduce social vulnerability to major factors which are associated with increased risk of HIV. These issues

include poverty, gender inequality, war and civil unrest. In Lesotho, the National AIDS Commission (NAC, 2012: 28-31) indicate these obstinate social issues to contribute to poverty, unemployment and low rates of male circumcision including such practices as having multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, low levels of consistent and correct condom use, resistance by people to change patterns of sexual behaviour and high rates of alcohol use. According to Mahloane-Tau (2010) alcohol tends to interfere with judgement and decision-making and increases likelihood for people to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse due to impaired judgement, which result from the intoxicant.

Pulerwitz and Barker (2008), in Aggleton *et al.* (2011: 498) indicate that through education laws have been changed to lay foundations for a more “holistic response”. In Lesotho, for instance, the 2006 Lesotho Labour Code was amended, according to the Medical Care Development International (undated), to include policies, standards of operational procedures and national guidelines for management of HIV and AIDS education programmes in workplaces. Lesotho also passed the Legal Capacity of Married Person’s Act in 2006. This Act provides equal status to married women, because under traditional customary law women lacked political, financial and social rights, which made it difficult for them to negotiate safer sex practices.

In regard to the mainstream education, Aggleton *et al.* (2011: 504) elaborate that the majority of educational responses to HIV/AIDS were in a form of “technical remedies, providing checklists against which schools and their performance is [sic] to be measured”. How the epidemic could transform education systems for the better and what kind of HIV education young people value and need seemed not to have been given enough attention. They specify that

... much of the field of education remains unexplored. In particular, little has been done to document the different forms of education around HIV that exist, together with their consequences; the relative contribution of education in general and HIV-related education in particular in bringing about determinate effects ... (Aggleton *et al.* 2001: 504).

This is also true in Lesotho; little attention seems to be given to the kind of HIV education that tertiary institutions value and need for their communities. For instance, the initial investigations for this study in 2012 revealed the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to be the only tertiary institution that had an HIV/AIDS policy and this is still the case to date in 2015.

Aggleton *et al.* (2011: 504) concluded that education for prevention played a key role, regardless of whether it was given formally or informally, because it seems to have helped communities yield beneficial effects and has displayed significant potential in halting the spread and mitigating the impact of HIV in the past 30 years.

In a similar desktop study in India, Das and Gupta (2011) examined the importance of awareness and prevention strategies for HIV/AIDS among men and women aged 15–49 years living in the seven states of the northeastern region of India. They looked particularly at findings from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3; 2005-06). Their findings support the conclusion of Aggleton and colleagues that education has an important role to play in holding the spread of HIV and, therefore, concluded that all people need to be educated about HIV, regardless of whether infected or not. Their findings revealed that people who are not infected need to be educated so that they are able to guard against the infection, while those who are already infected need to be educated so that they can avoid being re-infected or infecting other people. Above all they learned that education can help those who are already infected to harmoniously live with the virus (Das and Gupta, 2011).

Das and Gupta's study (2011: 874) was undertaken to investigate the impact of HIV/AIDS education in view of the devastating effects of the epidemic, which seemed to continue to tear down communities despite 'valiant' educational efforts that were undertaken by the government and societal groups to equip people with information about "the nature of the disease" and what they needed to do in order to protect themselves against it. An overview of their literature review revealed that a number of studies showed that a majority of the population in India was knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. Yet this knowledge did not seem to have helped them to stop stigmatizing the disease or discriminating against people with HIV.

Also, this knowledge did not seem to have helped people to guard against the disease, as the rate of new infections kept on increasing. Consequently, Das and Gupta agree with other researchers (such as Pradhan *et al.*, 2008) that for countries to be able to fight HIV and AIDS, people do not only need to be equipped with information or knowledge about HIV/AIDS, but governments need to consider other factors (such as economic factors and social vulnerability). It therefore became apparent to Das and Gupta that it is not only ignorance that influences the spread of HIV, but that it can also spread as a consequence of certain behavioural patterns caused by some of the aforementioned factors. Thus, they recommended that preventive policies and awareness efforts through the media and interpersonal communication should also target the poor, the rural and the uneducated people in the northeastern states of India, since awareness and preventive measures seemed to be inadequate in that part of the country. Likewise, they recommended that while HIV preventative efforts were focused on addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS among the economically productive and those leading risky lifestyles such as the commercial sex workers, injecting drug users, males having sex with males and all sexually active members of the community, the focus should also be directed to other groups like students, youth, migrant workers in urban and rural areas as well as women and children.

Although the Government of Lesotho (GoL) started undertaking efforts to protect all these vulnerable groups from HIV from the beginning of the twenty-first century (GoL 2000b), the impact is still felt as adults become too sick to work and children orphaned by AIDS are left to run households. Efforts undertaken in Lesotho include awareness education and promotion of condom use targeted towards sex workers, taxi and truck drivers, migrant labourers (including mine workers) and factory workers. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, little has been done to target communities in tertiary institutions. It can, therefore, be argued that while the GoL considers issues that influence the spread of HIV among communities, special focus should be directed to tertiary institution learners.

One study that targeted young people was undertaken in Ethiopia by Bekele and Ahmed in 2008. Upon realizing that stigma and discrimination continued to hinder interventions through

IEC materials which were being used as a major instrument in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, Bekele and Ahmed undertook an interventional study to assess the perceived sufficiency and usefulness of HIV/AIDS IEC messages and materials. They aimed to identify preferences for IEC sources and methods in four high schools in 2007. These interventions included: interpersonal communication between intervention implementers (health officers and high school teachers trained on how to organize the intervention sessions and supervise the overall activities), reading of pamphlets and watching educational videos, or a combination of the three. Similar to the situation in Lesotho, findings by Kimaryo, Okpaku, Gitthuku-Shongwe and Feeny (2004) revealed that stigmatizing attitudes among the pupils are fueled by social and economic factors that include religious beliefs, myths and misconceptions that HIV is transmitted through witchcraft, among other things.

In reviewing literature related to their study, Bekele and Ahmed learned that an increase in knowledge and a change of stigmatizing and discriminatory attitudes towards HIV/AIDS issues is maximized by exposure to HIV/AIDS messages when they are provided through electronic IEC materials such as television, radio and film rather than print materials like pamphlets. However, a combined use of all IEC materials was found to be more effective in creating awareness and reducing stigma and misconception, as different people have different learning preferences. Although print IEC materials such as pamphlets were a cheaper method of communication, they seemed to have yielded low results in Bekele and Ahmed's study and in other studies that they came across during their literature review because, they stated, people are "lazy to read" (Bekele and Ahmed, 2008: 240). They, therefore, concluded that interventions needed to be strengthened by using combined IEC interventions in order to address misconceptions, stigma and discrimination in the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS among adolescents. Goldstein, Usdin, Scheepers and Japhet (2007: 481) confirm that "environments need to be saturated with consistent messages that reinforce information" from pamphlets in different ways so as to reinforce one another and to extend their communication reach. Consequently, this study sought to find out whether readers in Lesotho were any more willing to respond to print media messages in a climate where HIV is a dominant factor in people's lives.

Although some studies did not concentrate on HIV/AIDS only, they were of interest because they investigated the use of print materials on health related issues, including HIV/AIDS, and used the same theories that were used to frame this study. One particular study by Arbuckle (2011, 2014) used semiotics and communication theory and provided some theoretical insights for examining responses to print materials.

Between 2011 and 2014, Arbuckle conducted a study to investigate the extent to which Zulu-speaking adults with low literacy levels understood pictures that portrayed health information in urban and rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In order to be able to assess the participants' interpretation of the pictures, Arbuckle asked participants (23 adults who attended Adult Basic Education and Training [ABET] Level 1 Zulu literacy classes in two rural and two urban literacy centers in KwaZulu-Natal) to look at pictures (without text) and to describe their meanings. She used 27 illustrations from health education print IEC materials aimed at adults. These illustrations were used as both data sources for semiotic analysis and as part of the research instruments used in the interviews. The significance of her study is that it could help to “contribute towards the theoretical foundations for understanding how low-literate adults derive meaning from pictures” (Arbuckle, 2014: 7).

To analyze how visual meaning is structured in print materials, Arbuckle first conducted a semiotic analysis of the illustrations to describe how the signs used related to the intended meaning of the illustrations (that is, she constructed meaning out of the illustration). Then she assessed how participants understood the meaning and the practicality of what the pictures represented to the participants who were given the illustrations (Arbuckle, 2011, 2014). The illustrations themselves were placed into two different groups to assess the style and technique of depiction plus the way in which content, for example, in iconic, ‘realistic’ pictures, compared with those operating more at the symbolic or indexical levels were portrayed.

Results revealed that the level of education does influence a person's ability to correctly interpret pictures. But the most striking thing to Arbuckle was that participants who appeared to already have knowledge about HIV, probably through experience, interpreted the

illustrations correctly, seemingly regardless of their formal education levels. Geographical setting did not have much influence, as the difference between participants from the rural and the urban settings was not as significant as expected, since both rural and urban participants appeared to misinterpret the illustrations in the same manner. Differences in the range of responses towards the pictures supported Arbuckle's suspicions that, while illustrations somehow enhanced education amongst low-literate audiences, they cannot be relied upon to convey messages on their own, but need health educators to interpret them, especially when used for educational purposes. As a result, Arbuckle (2014: 300) concluded that such illustrations should not be left in isolation without a way to fix or "anchor" the intended meaning and that "captions or other forms of explanation are always necessary" where it is important that the information should not be misunderstood. She added that no matter how convenient (financially) the production of print IEC materials may appear to be to the educators, these materials need to be complemented with face-to-face discussion in order to clarify or correct any misapprehensions. Accordingly, this study sought to determine if these same issues would apply to educated tertiary institution learners in Lesotho.

The overview of all studies: Aggleton *et al.* (2011), Das and Gupta (2011), Bekele and Ahmed (2008) and Arbuckle (2014), indicated an impact of education on HIV and AIDS in one way or another. Hence, this study sought to find out how much youth and young adults in Lesotho valued and needed print IEC materials on HIV, in order for HIV education to have a better chance of halting the spread and of mitigating the impact of HIV among young people in the country, especially considering that Aggleton *et al.* (2011) have highlighted that education has significant potential to do this. In addition, it was hoped that this study would influence policymakers in Lesotho to introduce laws and policies (Das and Gupta, 2011) that target the tertiary institution population as a special entity that needs focused HIV educational efforts. In addition, Bekele and Ahmed (2008), and Arbuckle (2014), enhanced the appreciation of the use of combined methods of educational communication (for example, print IEC materials plus discussion) in order to increase their effectiveness. In addition, it was necessary to find out whether these factors do have an influence on educated audiences like tertiary institution learners in Lesotho.

There were also a number of other studies (such as Durojaiye, 2011; NUL, 2011), which were relevant because they looked into knowledge about HIV and AIDS among youth and young adults. These studies were of interest to establish how this target group perceived the significance and appropriateness of educational materials that may have been used to equip them with knowledge.

2.2 LEVEL OF HIV/AIDS KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Durojaiye (2011) conducted a cross-sectional baseline study in Lagos, Nigeria among tertiary education students with a mean age of 23 years. It investigated their knowledge of and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS behaviour change and their practices with respect to this. The aim was to make recommendations for the establishment of suitable interventions that would encourage and drive youth to start practicing safe sex. A risk reduction model was used as a framework to guide this study. This model, which was specifically meant to look at the behaviour related to sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS, was introduced in 1990 by J.A. Catania (Durojaiye, 2011: 22). Durojaiye (2011: 22) discovered that most students were at the “initial stage of a behavior change process”, implying that they were in a stage where they recognized the problem, but were not involved in the solution. Durojaiye assumed that the low-risk perception prevented these students from moving to the next stage where they were expected to commit to changing to desired behaviours. He then concluded that the Lagos tertiary education students were highly aware and knowledgeable of HIV/AIDS issues, even though their risk perception was low where high-risk sexual behaviour was concerned. Thus, failure to perceive HIV/AIDS as a personal risk seemed to prevent them from committing to behaviour change. He recommended that interventions aimed at influencing risk perception among tertiary education students in Nigeria should be put in place to curtail the spread of HIV among this society.

Similar findings were revealed in Lesotho, where the National University conducted a study in 2010 to determine the prevalence of HIV among the Pre-Entry Science Program students and to assess knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviour that may be associated with their

awareness about HIV (NUL, 2011) before they joined the University. Although NUL was not using the risk reduction model, the study assessed the students' level of knowledge on HIV prevention and transmission, their attitudes and behaviour towards people living with HIV and other related issues, their practices towards sexual intercourse, condom use, alcohol and drug use as well as peer pressure (NUL, 2011: 16-25). This study sought to find out what stage the Lesotho students had reached and whether they were involved in finding solutions to HIV prevention.

As with the India study, the NUL study revealed that HIV knowledge was widespread among students because at least 75 percent of the respondents were knowledgeable about HIV prevention and transmission. Overall, 41 percent of the respondents knew all the five methods of either transmission or prevention of HIV. On average, respondents knew at least four methods of prevention of HIV transmission. Therefore, they were considered to be well informed. Regarding sexual practices, where almost half (48 percent) of the students claimed not to be sexually active, for those who were, condoms were the main method of protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Although NUL seemed to have made the right assumptions about the learners' predisposition to HIV information before joining the university, further information about how the students acquired their knowledge, what they liked and what they did not like about the mode of teaching that was used, or the channel(s) of communication that were used, was missing. Such information could improve understanding of how to develop appropriate communication strategies that would further enhance development of quality IEC materials in the future. Although the focus here is only on print IEC materials, the hope is for this study to address these information or knowledge gaps.

A cross-sectional descriptive study conducted by Sachdeva, Malik, Sachdeva and Sachdev (2011) to examine the level of HIV/AIDS knowledge among the first year students in a health faculty of one of the universities in India was also reviewed. Even though most people were considered not to be infected with HIV in India, these researchers deemed it necessary to carry out a study among communities at regular intervals to establish their HIV/AIDS knowledge, so that they could give planners information for "fine tuning the educational activities

undertaken through use of IEC materials and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) strategies” (Sachdeva *et al.*, 2011: 156). The focus of the study were first year nursing and pharmacy students. Both IEC materials and BCC strategies were the main pillars of the action undertaken by stakeholders to control the spread of HIV. Results showed a high level of knowledge on the difference between HIV and AIDS, routes of transmission of infection and methods of prevention. The knowledge regarding issues related to the non-curability of infection was, however, low.

The study by Sachdeva and colleagues only concentrated on determining the students’ degree of knowledge about HIV/AIDS. They concluded that there were still plenty of chances for universities to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and for students to positively change their behaviour and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS issues during their training at the university, since “ignorance and erroneous beliefs” have the ability to drive a person to behave and communicate in a certain way (Sachdeva *et al.*, 2011: 157). They suggested that educational endeavour should be broadened to also deal with opportunistic diseases that take advantage of a low immune system and anti-retroviral therapy. They also concluded that education can possibly straighten myths and misconceptions such as a belief that infection can be spread by social activities like a handshake, or playing together with people with HIV, or through mosquito bites. It seems that over the years educational efforts have mainly only focused on informing communities about risk of HIV transmission, methods of prevention and promotion of good practices. This study also set out to explore to what extent these issues prevailed among the Lesotho tertiary education students.

The reviewed literature, and the studies of Durojaiye (2011), NUL (2011) and Sachdeva *et al.* (2011), significantly indicated different levels of HIV/AIDS knowledge among youth and young adults. However, Durojaiye (2011) specified that educational intervention aimed at influencing risk perception should involve these target groups in every step of all such endeavours. While learners at the health faculty of the university in India showed knowledge on HIV/AIDS issues, (Sachdeva *et al.*, 2011), and learners at NUL appeared to be knowledgeable about these issues as well (NUL, 2011), the studies failed to provide

information on how to develop appropriate communication strategies that enhanced development of quality IEC materials. For instance, they did not include information about how students acquired their knowledge, what they liked and did not like about the mode of teaching that was used, or the channel(s) of communication that were used for them to acquire knowledge. Hence, this study aimed to discover the preferences of young adults about the mode of teaching that is used, or the channel(s) of communication that are used in HIV prevention interventions with the aim to produce data that will inform policymakers and print IEC materials producers so that they can improve on future HIV education.

There were some studies that confirmed or supported these substantive findings, even though they were not specifically targeted at youth or young adults. These studies included ones that inspected the receptiveness and effectiveness of IEC materials used to curtail the spread of HIV (for example Onyene *et al.*, 2010; Rawjee, 2003; Marschall, 2003 as well as Preece and Ntseane, 2003).

2.3 RESPONSES TO IEC MATERIALS FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

Onyene, Uzoka, Ikonta and Bakere conducted a multi-phased study among students at the Nigerian tertiary institutions of learning in 2010. They aimed to examine the tertiary institution learners' receptivity towards HIV/AIDS sensitization tools. These tools consisted of print (flyers, billboards), electronic (jingles, television, internet) and verbal explanations of IEC materials communicated in the form of face-to-face encounters. These were examined in an effort to take an inventory of communication tools that are used to sensitize learners on HIV/AIDS issues in tertiary institutions. Moreover, they aimed to combine these tools to develop one communication tool that would help instill correct values towards sexual behaviour and co-habitation among students in tertiary institutions. They hypothesized that the use of intranet and internet facilities does not have power to significantly influence HIV/AIDS awareness among students. They also assumed that the nurturing efforts from the schools' administration did not have power to influence learners to join or form HIV/AIDS unions or to give their personal opinions. To substantiate their hypotheses, Onyene and colleagues used a combination of functional education or campaign tools to collect data. Onyene *et al.*, (2010)

indicate that these tools were said to have been used over the years by the government, non-governmental organizations and private agencies to either create awareness or to follow up the management of campaigns (Onyene *et al.*, 2010: 82). Based on the results, which, among other findings suggested that the prevailing tools were failing to create the desired level of HIV awareness, these researchers ought to have made a special tool for their study, which would have helped verify their hypotheses.

Rawjee (2003) had undertaken an earlier similar study in 2003 in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. Rawjee investigated the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS communication planning for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, which included the use of different communication tools, while Onyene and colleagues investigated the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS sensitization tools (communication tools) used for awareness campaigns. Both studies targeted youth and young adults at institutions of higher learning.

Rawjee (2003) sought to find out whether education and behavioural change occurred after the implementation of a plan that was formulated by the life skills counsellor and the Director of Student Counselling of the ML Sultan Technikon. The plan aimed to bring about positive behavioural change in the Technikon community with regard to sexual practices, to minimize and prevent the occurrence of new HIV infections, to provide support for those already infected and to manage and reduce discrimination towards those infected by providing information. It was divided into four service providing components, namely, preventive or educational services, counseling services, health care services and developmental services. For the purposes of this study, only the preventive or educational service component was explored as the only component directly related to this investigation. This component was of professional interest to me as an adult educator and a health educator, because I deemed education to be the backbone of the ML Sultan Technikon campaign, the success of the other three services that were involved in the plan all depending on it.

Rawjee (2003: 238) used elements of social marketing theory (product, price, place, promotion and positioning) to create a participatory communication tool. Time and energy that the planners invested in the planning were referred to as: price, place, promotion and

positioning. Place referred to the place where the services were offered; in this case services were offered at ML Sultan Technikon's Student Counselling Center. The concept of promotion in this study referred to the various promotional activities planned, and positioning referred to the students' existing knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Like Bhagwan and Singh (1999), who advocated for inclusivity of beneficiaries to enhance participation, ownership, empowerment and commitment, Rawjee (2003: 245) upheld that the success of any communication campaign plan depended on the inclusiveness of the beneficiaries in all stages of the campaign, starting from the planning stage so that planners would be able to establish where the beneficiaries were in relation to their knowledge, beliefs, fears and hopes, attitudes and practices.

The findings revealed that the ML Sultan Technikon's HIV/AIDS awareness campaign had managed to capture the attention of youth and to increase their knowledge levels on HIV/AIDS. Apparently, the education they gained from participating in the planning stage of the campaign influenced their beliefs and attitudes about sexuality and responsible behaviour. Rawjee (2003: 246) concluded that participatory communication planning constituted the basis for successful HIV/AIDS education programmes, because it not only allowed the recipients of the message(s) to participate in the formulation of the message(s), but also gave them the opportunity to decide on what they wanted. This case study further demonstrated that the system of dialogical education allowed people to look upon their lives with resilience, as the discussions helped them realise their problems and enabled them to examine future prospects for change and growth. In addition, this approach seemed to have the ability to equip people with the power to stand up against challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, since all those involved in the planning acquired a lot of information (UNFPA¹⁵, Myanmar, 2003) during the process. Participating in research projects also seemed to have the ability to equip people with new knowledge, new skills and change of attitudes, because it considers and realises the joint effort as a condition (Skidmore, 2004) for the attainment of the full growth of each person in the knowledge of the discussed topic. The United Nations Population Fund

¹⁵ United Nations Population Fund

(UNFPA, Myanmar, 2003: 23) indicated that involving people in the “planning of communication campaigns” not only helped equip them with knowledge, but it also showed respect for target audiences and enhanced their ownership of such campaigns. Right timing was identified as important for these kinds of interventions (UNFPA, Myanmar, 2003: 28-29), since the success of subsequent interventions depended on whether initial interventions had succeeded in building acceptance and support for the issues being taught to target audiences. For these reasons, the study aspired to identify the degree to which youth and young adults were involved in the development of print IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV.

One other study which dealt with the characteristics and development of IEC materials for HIV and AIDS prevention, specifically looked at visual imagery in an effort to learn how safe sex messages were conveyed to promote AIDS awareness. However, Onyene and colleagues, including Rawjee, did not look into the sensitiveness of the sex-related messages, particularly in regard to such aspects as cultural sensitivity.

In 2003, Marschall analysed the iconography (use of images or symbols in visual arts) that was employed by mural artists in the 1990s in South Africa. These murals were drawn by individuals, schools or non-governmental organizations and were sponsored by AIDS awareness organizations, the Department of Health and the private sector. The murals were classified into two distinct categories representing different preventive paradigms. One paradigm was classified as motivational. Murals under this paradigm were meant to encourage people to think positively about the epidemic, or plan for the future, despite its fierce consequences. Other murals which reflected the shocking reality about the effects of the epidemic were meant to stir up fear in people, in the hope that they would fear, for instance, risky behaviour such as engaging with multiple concurrent sexual partners. Both paradigms used text and images.

Marschall (2003) noted that only images or pictures were initially used to promote AIDS awareness until the beginning of the new millennium (the year 2000) when a prominent red

ribbon symbolizing AIDS¹⁶ could be seen on all AIDS-related materials. This ribbon was meant to help people easily spot HIV/AIDS related murals. Some HIV/AIDS activists in the United States, where this ribbon originated, objected to the way the ribbon was used in many countries, arguing that it was going to lose value and meaning. The implication here is that the ribbon would lose its ability to raise awareness, if it is placed everywhere or ubiquitous, as if people aimed to make a profit out of it. Marschall (2003) discovered that, in contrast, South Africans perceived the extensive use of the symbol as necessary, with the assumption that it would facilitate easy identification and use of HIV/AIDS related materials since talking about AIDS issues was still a taboo amongst many. Marschall (2003) concluded that the majority of these murals were successful in defining HIV/AIDS issues to communities.

Some action research studies have specifically designed materials in response to research findings. One such example is a project undertaken in Botswana in 2003, where Preece and Ntseane conducted an action research project to analyse the HIV/AIDS prevention strategies used at workplaces in Botswana. Their study particularly scrutinized the way in which IEC materials were developed for these workplace interventions. Its strategies drew on adult education theoretical and pedagogical perspectives and used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Data from these discussions and dialogues formed the basis for designing the communication strategies and development of IEC materials.

The results highlighted that existing materials did not seem to take into account cultural issues and educational strategies tended to be top-down lectures rather than providing opportunities for discussion among workers. So the researchers chose to use the FGDs as a source for their IEC materials. Preece and Ntseane (2003: 234) suggested that for HIV/AIDS preventive strategies to bring about the desired change, the group discussions and dialogues should be conducted in such a way that they would consider cultural concerns and stimulate awareness of the contradictions that may be obscured by cultural discourse. At the same time the strategies should encourage new thinking but within familiar contexts, because new

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knowledge and awareness are brought about according to the stage at which people are in relation to the desired change. They also suggested that the educator's role must be that of a facilitator, so as to allow people to re-position themselves within the frameworks of the knowledge that they may already have and in order for the participants to make connections to new knowledge. Furthermore, they recommended that this must be a continuous process, as people reach new understandings at a different pace from one another.

Although these studies all dealt with the characteristics and development of IEC materials for HIV and AIDS prevention, only two (Onyene *et al.*, 2010 and Preece and Ntseane, 2003) were undertaken for the purposes of generating information for the development of IEC materials. Like Preece and Ntseane (2003), who encouraged the inclusion of targeted audiences through discussions and dialogues, Rawjee (2003) advocated for participatory communication so that IEC materials producers could establish where beneficiaries of HIV messages are in relation to their knowledge, beliefs, fears, hopes, attitudes and practices. Similarly, Marschall (2003) pointed to the importance of knowing the targeted audiences, as knowledge of some of the realities that these audiences have about HIV and AIDS could be used to stir up fear in them so that they conform to the desired change accordingly.

Apart from this literature that relates to this study, literature on the characteristics of IEC materials was also reviewed as a preface to the theoretical framework, starting with the concept of communication, because IEC materials are a means of communication.

2.4 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Shayo (2012), Ewles and Simnett (2003) and Steinberg (2007) define communication as being all about the giving, receiving, processing and interpretation of information. It is explained as a process of intentionally or unintentionally transmitting ideas, information and attitudes through conventional or unconventional signals, linguistic or nonlinguistic forms (such as the use of symbols, actions, words, pictures, or figures) from the source to a receiver for the purpose of influencing them according to an objective.

Shayo (2012) traced the history of communication and describes the word communication as derived from the Latin word *communis*, which means to make common. Shayo's review of the definition of communication reveals that it could be conceptualised as a sharing of experiences, a process which increases commonality, an exchange of facts, ideas or opinions between two or more persons, a transmission of meaning or an art of persuasive speaking or writing intended for a receiver.

Based on all these definitions one can deduce communication to be a dynamic process whereby people exchange meaningful messages through the use of such things as symbols, actions, sounds, words, pictures and figures.

For communication to be successful and effective, Shayo (2012) explains that it needs to have certain qualities or characteristics. First, a common language is required which facilitates the effectiveness of the communication process. Linkage is also required, since communicated information must logically link to the sender. Then, clarity of language, which is simple and clear, is necessary so that receivers can grasp it easily. There must be a common level of understanding (frame of reference) between the sender and the receiver. Good communication must have an aim or goal where the senders of messages need to always ensure that messages are contextually relevant. Moreover, before sending out these messages, they must try to ensure that it eliminates the possibility of bias or misunderstanding.

2.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

According to de Fossard, (1996) IEC materials should have certain characteristics. They should command attention, meaning that the materials should be designed in such a way that they can be noticed or attract a viewer's attention, and can easily be remembered. They should cater for the heart and the head. That is, messages should appeal to emotion and also have sense, because people respond emotionally not intellectually. They should call for action. That is, they should specify the exact action to be taken by the recipient upon hearing or seeing the message, because learning that is applied immediately is retained for longer. The materials should clarify the message. That is, their message should be simple and direct, because

complex messages cannot always be understood or easily remembered, regardless of the type of audience (for instance, the audience's level of education may influence their understanding). They should communicate a benefit. Messages should clearly specify to their recipients what they would get in return for taking an action called for in the message. They should create trust, because communication starts with a climate of credibility, which is built by the performance of the source of the message. Messages should be consistent, using comprehensive media strategies; persuasion and penetration require repetition and a multimedia approach, because different media (Goldstein *et al.*, 2007) reinforce one another and, above all, help extend the reach of messages to many people at the same time. Taking all this into account, de Fossard, (1996: 5) emphasised that messages for IEC materials should be “credible, complete, current, clear, convincing, concise and culturally sensitive”.

According to Ewles and Simnett (2003), forms of IEC materials can include print and electronic materials and communicate verbally and non-verbally. They explain that print IEC materials messages can be printed on almost any artefact. Kimaryo *et al.* (2004) confirm that IEC materials can be used for information in one-on-one settings, to help communicate with masses within a short period of time and also be used to serve as a reference to remind people of information they have already received. Likewise, Arbuckle, (2014) claims that IEC materials can be used to support training in developmental activities, whereafter they can be given to participants to keep for future reference. Kimaryo *et al.* (2004) elaborate on how IEC materials can also be used to teach people skills by providing hands-on experience or by illustrating step-by-step approaches and that effective IEC materials can positively influence peoples' attitudes and perceptions and help enhance their self-efficacy and decision-making processes. Self-efficacy determines one's level of motivation in performing a task. For instance, if one believes one can do something, one is more likely to be successful at doing it. Likewise, if one believes that he or she cannot do something, he or she is not likely to be successful at doing it (Mahloane-Tau, 2010). Decision making, according to Solomon and Annis (2005: 83), is the “process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made from among them”, which means people make decisions because there are alternative choices to be considered. Furthermore, Kimaryo

et al. (2004) are of the opinion that IEC materials can also be used to change peoples' values and to promote transformational learning about the prevailing HIV scourge. Arbuckle (2014: 61) highlights that IEC materials can also be used as “conversation starters” in homes, because they “have the potential to break down communication barriers between generations and to enable families to discuss sensitive subjects (like HIV/AIDS or teen pregnancy)”. Hence, it is important that print IEC materials on HIV contain complete information so that people can make informed choices, as communication appears to be fundamental to successful health promotion.

Most importantly, the literature advocates for the use of appropriate messages, channels and methods of distribution to communities (Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, 1998) and emphasises the need for thorough audience research and the pre-testing of IEC materials (PATH/FHI¹⁷, 2002) to ensure that they are culturally sensitive and acceptable.

This means that dissemination of information through IEC materials is an interactive process that includes the building of societal networks in specific populations with different cultures, norms and values. Therefore, IEC materials producers need to ensure that their communication is sensitive to everything that relates to the culture of target audiences to ensure the acceptability of messages. They also have to use appropriate channels and methods of dissemination to different community fraternities, like youth and young adults, in different settings that include tertiary institutions.

The major reason for assessing print IEC materials was to determine their comprehensibility and quality in terms of fitness for purpose. In respect to this Carstens, Maes and Gangla-Birir (2006) and others identified five user-focused dimensions to consider for health information materials. These dimensions, briefly discussed here, served as a focus of analysis in the findings.

¹⁷ Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health/Family Health International

2.6 USER FOCUSED DIMENSIONS

First, Carstens *et al.* (2006: 221) opine that people need to understand health information in order to apply it to their own behavior (comprehension). That is why effective communication is essential for health promotion and disease prevention as “effective materials for development communication should be people-centered and be ideally produced in an action-reflection cycle with the active participation of members of the intended audience or users of the materials at all stages” (Linney, 1995; as cited by Arbuckle, 2014: 57). Likewise, it is members of the intended audience or end users who will know better what will attract members of their fraternity to the materials, what will persuade them to act accordingly after reading them and what they will accept and trust to be true. It is in this regard that four additional user-focused dimensions are here explored, namely, attractiveness, persuasiveness, acceptability and credibility, because of the role they play in the process whereby people assimilate information and how they connect with it. These concepts are elaborated on in the subsequent paragraphs, starting with comprehension as the overarching concept.

2.6.1 COMPREHENSION

Davis, Crouch, Wills, Miller and Abdehou (1990, in Carstens *et al.*, 2006:221) regard comprehension as the most important of the literacy skills used in healthcare. According to Crompton (1997: 57), a normal person is “estimated to see between 1000 and 1500 different promotional messages per day” and it can be assumed that these are not messages that people necessarily retain. Actually, comprehension, according to Carstens and Snyman (2003) goes together with memory, as memory seems to be indispensable to successful memorization and assimilation of messages, health related and otherwise. This implies that it is of no use for one to be able to comprehend a communicated message, yet not be able to respond accordingly because one cannot remember it. Thus, it is important for print IEC materials to carry clear messages and for them to be simple and direct, because complex messages cannot be understood or remembered easily. For a person to be able to comprehend and memorize a message, Hoeken (1995) states that a three-step sub-process must be undergone, namely, perception, analysis and conceptualization, so that a mental representation of the text can be

built. According to Carstens and Snyman (2003: 125) perception in semiotics refers to “visual processing of the text or the transformation of visual patterns into letters and words or signs”; analysis is the “interpretation of individual words as well as compositional meaning or syntactic structure and semantic content”; conceptualization “entails production of a mental representation of the text”. This representation should also contain evidence-based information and reasoning and “is evoked by characteristics of the text as well as the world knowledge” (Carstens and Snyman 2003: 125). It is therefore argued that print IEC materials producers should develop ‘audience targeted’ materials so that they are able to use familiar language, and objects or situations to help their audiences to build on their own experiences as resources for learning. This is because, according to Chandler (2007: 13), even though people may not be aware of how they are making meaning, they can only interpret or understand the meaning of things when they are able to relate them to familiar “systems or conventions”. Comprehensibility can be enhanced by features that contribute to the attractiveness of the materials, for example, colour, illustration, font size and layout of the materials. The next paragraph briefly discusses how attractiveness contributes to the comprehensibility of print IEC materials.

2.6.2 ATTRACTIVENESS

Carstens and Snyman (2003), citing Pettersson (2001), argue that there is a control mechanism in the brain that determines things that induce functional reactions that make people notice certain things and ignore others and is necessary for one to become attentive. This mechanism involves selecting some components from available sensory information for further mental processing. Doak *et al.* (1996) agree that a person’s interest in looking at a printed article can be stimulated by things that can cause them to become interested in an article. This includes such aspects as the appeal of the visuals and of the instruction itself (whether the instruction helps people to understand the message). Another stimulus may be a colour’s compliance with the state of the message conveyed by the article. It is therefore important for print IEC materials producers to establish why people choose certain materials and ignore others, before embarking on developing the next batch.

Attractiveness relates to ‘lookability’ (Carstens and Snyman, 2003: 129). Lookability referring to the ability of articles to attract attention and have visual information such as photographs, graphics, symbols, typography that make sense and also comprise the reader’s ability to link such aspects as the headings, bullets, numbering, summaries, and a statement of purpose. They go on to explain that attractiveness relates to readability as well. Readability relating to the ability for one to comprehend meanings of print IEC materials by interpreting the characters that compose the text. According to Carstens and Snyman (2003), readability can be promoted by the reader’s prior knowledge. That is, prior knowledge helps create interest for the reader to want to know more of what is being conveyed about something he or she already knows. Thus, if a material has no point of interest that attracts the reader, then it will be less likely to attract or influence them. Doak *et al.* (1996) confirm that if an article fails to capture a person’s attention, then it cannot have an effect on them. Carstens and Snyman (2003) refer to this reading and assimilation process as the utilization of devices for chunking, queuing and filtering of words and sentences, although not all readers do this to an equal extent. This indicates that if youth and young adults in tertiary schools do not even notice and look at print IEC materials intended to prevent HIV, they cannot be influenced by them. For these reasons, this study sought to explore ways in which the selected materials were deemed attractive and comprehensible. It is important for message developers to first find out what most appeals to a targeted audience when producing any material, because people do not react to messages in the same manner. Hence, it is common that substantial messages to certain audiences or persons may not be convincing enough for them to act accordingly after they interact with them (Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, 1998). In view of this, the next paragraph elaborates on items that promote persuasiveness in print IEC materials.

2.6.3 *PERSUASIVENESS*

Carstens and Snyman (2003) refer to McGuire’s *Information Processing Paradigm* (1972) and highlight that the persuasiveness of messages is something that results from attention, comprehension and yielding. Attention is equated to the attention that one gives to the IEC materials. Comprehension is the ability to read and make meaning out of the messages, and yielding is associated with how readers weigh the costs and benefits attached to what the

message says. Hence, when developing messages, producers have to find out what appeals to targeted audiences. When dealing specifically with persuasive text, Doak *et al.* (1996) show that other people also identify the following considerations:

- **News value.** According to Berlyne (1974), the subject contains news and can be referred to as enlightening only if it is new to the reader.
- **Absolute interest.** The “interestingness” of any topic, from Shank’s (1979) point of view, differs from reader to reader.
- **Individual interest.** Readers have the liberty to select which information to take and which one to ignore (Hidi, 1990).
- **Personal relatedness/consequence-involvement.** Personal bias to pay attention to certain information is naturally promoted by the information’s significance to that person (Carstens and Snyman, 2003).
- **“Surprisingness”.** According to Berlyne (1974), people get interested if information is about an uncommon factor or contains an element of surprise to them.

2.6.4 ACCEPTABILITY

Carstens, (2004a), Tripp-Reimer and Afifi (1989), and Doak *et al.* (1996) are of the opinion that the socio-cultural and demographic variables such as ethnic group, gender, dress, social custom and physical environment can influence the acceptability of a message, decrease motivation to read and hinder comprehension, if for instance the reader fails to interpret the new information or accept it. Carstens (2004a: 12) explains that, “if the mental schema or knowledge system underlying the picture”, for instance, “is not compatible with the indigenous knowledge system of the recipient”, a misunderstanding may occur and this will impact on the health messages in relation to HIV, since health behavior is largely patterned by culture. Hence, Martin and Rose (2007 cited in Carstens, 2011: 13) stress the importance of the “textual function of language”, which refers to logical flow of information. Also important is “textual analysis”, because in the case of print IEC materials it reveals the viewers’ level of

knowledge about the communicated issue and helps them to understand or perceive the new knowledge (Butt *et al.*, 2000 cited in Carstens, 2011). It is therefore necessary for IEC materials producers to organize messages in such a way that they enhance the reader's experiential and interpersonal meaning of the message, forming it into a linear and coherent whole (Carstens, 2011).

Consequently, print IEC materials are expected to achieve their objectives, if they are made together with the targeted audience. Hence, it is encouraged (Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, 1998) that target audiences should be involved in every step of the programme; that is, during the planning, implementation monitoring and evaluating of activities. This approach ensures that more culturally sensitive IEC materials are developed and appropriate dissemination approaches are used, because not everyone is equally open to new ideas and different people vary in their knowledge and attitudes about innovation and in the access they have to communication channels. That is why IEC strategies need to be designed to suit particular circumstances of the intended audience, using appropriate messages, materials and communication channels. Similarly, health education advocates for community participation at all times. Community participation is considered important because when people are involved in health education and health promotion activities, they get empowered and become able to identify their problems and to prioritize and consider solutions for them because they have an enhanced sense of belonging and ownership of such activities.

Since characteristics of the audience such as their age, sex, income and literacy level, determine what messages and methods are most appropriate, the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (1998: 26) has shown that it is also important to assess the characteristics of the community in an effort to, among other concerns, find out where people are in the behaviour change decision-making process. These concerns helped to motivate this study and the choice of methods used.

Likewise, it is also important for IEC materials producers to analyze existing policies and programmes before embarking on their projects (UNAIDS, Zambia, 2010), as this would help

in providing information about the services already available and the gaps that need to be attended to. UNAIDS, Zambia (2010: 1) states that existing policies and programmes determine the types of materials that are acceptable and which ones are in circulation already. Thus, in this way producers become exposed to and learn about appropriate IEC strategies and approaches from experience of previous projects. Furthermore, producers will get to know what worked and what did not and why, so that they avoid repeating their mistakes. Carstens and Snyman (2003: 123) declare that “even if a reader does not have the ability or the motivation to read the entire message he or she may still be persuaded to follow instructions on the basis of the look and feel” of the message. That is, a person can be persuaded to read the material if he or she feels comfortable with, for instance, the type of language or the pictures used in the material. However, all these preparations do not assure acceptability if the message is not credible. The following paragraph elaborates on what constitutes credibility.

2.6.5 CREDIBILITY

The Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (1998: 26) describes credibility as the “degree to which a source or channel of information is considered to be knowledgeable and trustworthy”. They therefore advise that it is important for IEC materials developers to observe demographic, social and cultural aspects that make up their targeted audiences. For example, materials developers should clearly know whom they are targeting. They should be certain of such factors as the gender, age, geographical setting and status of the targeted audience within the community (that is, whether they are ordinary members of the community or leaders). Even if the targeted audience is only women, the materials developers need to consider things like the age group of these women. If they are a group, what brings them together? Developers must also be conversant with customs and cultural practices so that they can produce suitable messages which will help win the trust of the particular audience. Segregating people into groups also assists in the identification of those with specific needs and those that may need certain information. It also helps educators to choose the most effective communication channels to reach the range of communities they are targeting. In light of this, it appears as if countries can successfully restrict new HIV infection from occurring if they capitalize on “evidence-based information about behavioral prevention

efforts, and on behaviors that are driving the epidemic among people who are engaging in those behaviors” (Townsend, 2013: 88).

As has been described in the preceding passages, messages are central to print IEC materials. These materials, therefore, need to be created in such a way that their users can have trust in them, because communication, according to de Fossard (1996), starts with a climate of credibility which is built by the performance of the source of the message. Furthermore, de Fossard (1996: 5) highlights that “messages are developed to meet the specific information needs of an audience, based on such audience’s concerns and level of knowledge, or are developed to create demand”. As a result, the way they are presented is crucial for the process of encouraging behaviour change, vis-à-vis attitudinal change. That is, print IEC materials with preventative HIV messages should observe targeted audiences’ concerns and level of knowledge so that they are able to foster the required attitudinal change. In that manner these materials should be able to move learners from the stage of ignorance to that of acceptance and maintenance of desired attitudes towards HIV issues.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This literature review addressed selected studies on the impact of HIV/AIDS education. In particular, studies undertaken by Aggleton, Ekuu and Crewe (2011) examined the consequences and effects of different forms of HIV-related education. Das and Gupta (2011) as well as Bekele and Ahmed (2008) shared the same focus as that of this study. Das and Gupta investigated the impact of HIV/AIDS education, while Bekele and Ahmed assessed the perceived sufficiency and usefulness of HIV/AIDS IEC messages and materials. Similarly, this study investigated the comprehensibility and usefulness of print HIV materials in view of the escalating rate of HIV infections in Lesotho, despite ‘valiant’ educational efforts that are undertaken in the country.

Arbuckle’s (2014) study, which investigated the extent to which adults with low literacy levels understood pictures portraying health information in rural and urban areas, was of interest because she used the same theories (semiotics and communication) that framed this

study. Arbuckle's study therefore provided some theoretical insights for examining responses to print IEC materials, even though the focus in this research is on a population with rather higher literacy levels. Even though it was more or less limited to investigating the significance and appropriateness of IEC materials, this research was also interested in how Durojaiye's (2011) findings established that despite students being knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, their risk perception was low; although they recognized the problem, they were not involved in the solution.

Chapter three introduces and discusses the theories and concepts underpinning this study by providing tools with which to interpret the findings.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that was used to investigate the individual and group response of tertiary institution learners to print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials used in the prevention of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Lesotho. Tertiary institutions that participated in the study included the Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in Quthing, Lesotho college of Education (LCE) in Thaba-Tseka and National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Maseru. The IEC materials comprised: a poster, a pamphlet and a magazine. Due to the importance of learning in human life, psychologists and educators regard theories of learning as highly important because they equip them with knowledge on how learning processes take place, thus enabling them to perform their work (on helping learners to learn) more effectively. This latter point is the main reason why the study was undertaken, that is, to find out how youth and young adults respond to (learn from) print IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV in Lesotho. The findings can then inform IEC materials producers so that they will be in a better position to produce materials that can equip targeted audiences not only with knowledge, but with skills that enable them to deal with any challenging educational situations (Behr, Cherian, Mwamwenda, Ndaba and Ramphal, 1996; Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan and Willingham, 2013), including those related to HIV and the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

The original core theory was semiotics, drawn from communication theory, and use of discourse analysis to answer the three research questions. However, since learning was a primary goal of the materials, and the data findings revealed that dialogue played a key part in this learning process, communication theory and its semiotic content is framed by relevant learning theories which focus on concepts of transformative learning and dialogue. Drawing on communication theory with a semiotic approach, the study strived to determine three aspects: what messages the materials conveyed to the learners; how learners perceived the significance of these materials in combating HIV; and how these materials could be improved.

It was anticipated that communication theory would provide a deeper understanding of how communication contributes to learning, while the semiotics approach would assist in the analysis of how learners derive and or express meaning from text and images that make up these materials and what they understand text and image functions to be. The study also drew on discourse analysis theory, looking particularly at the works of Fairclough (2005, 2015) and Gee (2005), to see how the participants derived meaning from written or spoken language. The study, therefore, looked at discourse as a social practice. The framework also included two learning theory concepts. In particular, one of the stages in Mezirow's (1996, 2000) learning cycle, transformative learning, complemented the basic learning theory (communication theory), because communication theory in itself would have been insufficient to aid an understanding of how people make meaning out of the materials in order to generate behavioural change. The concept of dialogue, as articulated by Gravett (2001), was also included, since the role of dialogue is central to the way learners responded to these materials.

Given that the study involved learning, communication strategies and issues to do with interpretation of education materials, the concept of learning is briefly defined from the point of view of various theorists, with particular focus on adult learning, since the kind of education that the study is based on falls under the adult education mode, where youth and young adults are regarded as adult learners.

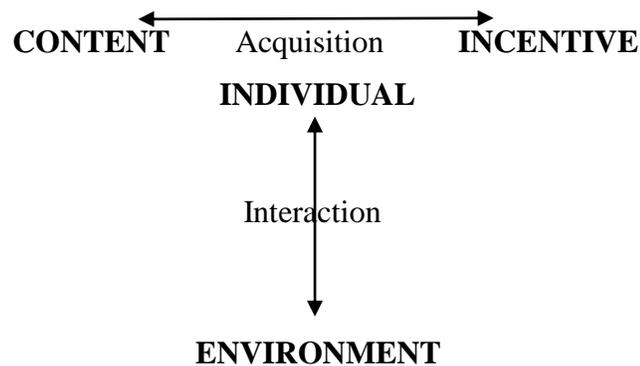
3.1 LEARNING

There are many different definitions of learning emanating from different theorists. However, for Behr *et al.* (1996), Rogers (2002) and Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005) learning generally involves an internal transaction resulting in acquisition of new knowledge and new experiences, development of new skills and change in the learner's attitudes, beliefs, values, and consequently, behaviour. Although learning refers to a potential behavioural change from a given situation, the above authors' definitions imply that such change can only be brought about by repeated experiences in similar situations. More recently, learning has been broadly defined by Illeris (2007: 3) as "any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or ageing". It can be

argued that not all learning leads to permanent capacity change because some knowledge or skill needs practice such as vocational skills and the learning process needs ‘continuous repetition’ because it fades away if not practiced regularly. Continuous repetition does not necessarily refer to memorization (rote learning), whereby people repeat things until they are committed to memory, but it can reflect meaningful learning which, according to Gravett (2001: 17), requires “active thinking of the learner”. However, Illeris (2007: 8) highlights that all learning implies “integration of two very different processes, namely an external interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural or material environment, and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition” which involves three dimensions: content, incentive and the interaction.

According to Illeris (2009: 10-11) the “content dimension” concerns what is learned. This refers to knowledge and skills, though these comprise many aspects such as behaviour, opinions, insights, meaning, attitudes, values, methods and strategies. The “incentive dimension” energizes and controls all things that motivate or encourage people to learn. It results from such affects as emotional state, enthusiasm and preferences. The “interaction dimension” caters for the compulsions that drive people to learn. These impulses sometimes function as discernment and contribute towards stimulating action towards understanding communication among communities and society. Illeris (2009) clarifies that the content and the incentive dimensions are usually started by impulses from the interaction processes and after having been acquired they expand and integrate into the inner processes of consideration. That is why acquisition of new knowledge depends on what the new knowledge holds for the learner. It depends on the emotions (desire, interest, necessity or compulsion) that drove the learner to learn as well as the content. For instance, new perspective on, or understanding of the already learned information can change the incentive to learn. These fundamental processes of learning can best be understood from Diagram 2 that follows.

Diagram 2: THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCESSES OF LEARNING



Source: adapted from Illeris (2009)

Furthermore, Jarvis (2004) reviews learning, especially adult learning, through five theorists' perspectives. To Freire (cited in Jarvis 2004: 119), learning relates to notions of "conscientization and liberation", as he assumes that, through learning, the learner discovers him or herself and can thus become able to act upon his or her environment to transform it. For Freire, learning results from a combination of actions and reflection. Gagne (cited in Jarvis 2004) looked at learning from a psychological perspective, particularly at the stages of how learning occurs. Knowles (cited in Jarvis 2004) looked at learning from a humanistic perspective, with a particular focus on how to assist adults to learn (andragogy). He identified conditions that promote learning and principles that guide it, placing tremendous emphasis on the "self". To Mezirow (cited in Jarvis 2004: 133), the learning focus is on "meaning making" from experience as a result of the learner's previous knowledge. To him learning is an interpretation of the meaning of an experience and a guide to future action. Mezirow's perspective elaborates on Knowles, in that the focus is on meaning making. Rogers (cited in Jarvis 2004: 135) defined learning from a humanistic psychologist's perspective. Like Mezirow, he was concerned about the results brought about by learning, and hence, he talks about "self-actualization" of the learner. To him, for learning to have taken place, there must be a "fully functioning person".

Looking at all these perspectives, it can be assumed that learning is based on experience in one way or another. These notions were relevant to this study in that they aided an understanding of how and why the Lesotho tertiary institution learners responded to the print IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV. For instance, according to Illeris one way of acquiring learning is due to continuous repetition. For Freire learning is about conscientization and liberation. This means there can be no conscientization if one hasn't experienced certain feelings nor would there be any liberation if one has not experienced oppression. Even though Gagne and Knowles look at learning from two different perspectives; psychological and humanistic respectively, they are both of the opinion that learning occurs because of experience. To Gagne one learns because of the experience one had from a previous stage, while to Knowles one learns because of a 'drive' from certain experiences. To Mezirow one learns because one wants to make meaning out of new and old experiences.

Based on all these definitions, it can be assumed that the experience of engaging with IEC materials should bring about new meaning making and result in attitudinal and behavioural change. This research endeavoured to find out if the IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV in Lesotho indeed had this effect by investigating their influence on the learners' attitudes. It would not have been appropriate to measure behaviour change, as this is something that happens over a long period of time and the time frame for the study was inadequate for that. In view of this, the study focused on how learners made meaning out of the three types of IEC materials that were used for the research, with the expectation that they would facilitate attitudinal change. Since the study focused on communication and meaning making, the investigation followed Mezirow's different levels of reflection, as cited in Jarvis (1995: 97) who explained that "learning is the process of making meaning from experience as a result of the learner's previous knowledge, so that learning is a new interpretation of an experience". It is in this regard that the learning theory dealing with transformation, henceforth described in this thesis as transformative learning theory, was included as one of the framing theories for this study and is together with other theories and conceptual frameworks that were used as lenses to analyze the findings, discussed in more detail in this chapter.

3.2 THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

The theory of communication was examined so as to gain deeper understanding on how communication contributes to learning. Fiske (2011: 1) points out that “communication is one of those human activities that everyone recognizes but few can define satisfactorily”, though it plays a crucial role in facilitating what he calls the “practice of social relationships”. Steinberg (2007: 39) confirms that communication is not easy to define. She cites that in 1973 Dance and Larson found 126 definitions and they are still being formulated to date. She believes the reason for this proliferation in definitions was brought about by the fact that, whenever communication accomplishes little or the effect differs from the intended outcome, people come up with a new definition for it.

Fiske (2011: 2) states that, “communication is central to the life of our culture”. As a result, he assumes that the “study of communication involves the study of the culture within which it is integrated”. Hence, in order to generate new information that would inform health educators about perceptions and expectations of HIV related IEC materials, it was necessary to investigate tertiary institution learners’ responses towards these materials that are used to prevent HIV as coming from a particular youth culture in the Lesotho context. Given that the concept of behavioural change is central to the meaning of learning, apart from acquiring knowledge from the HIV materials, recipients of information or education are expected to indicate a change in attitude and or behaviour.

This research drew on a “process” theory of communication (Fiske, 2011: 2) with a view to identifying which communication model(s) apply to mass communication strategies. But since communication models usually demonstrate a one-way communication system, this study attempted to find a communication model that represents the purpose: to elicit a better understanding of recipients’ responses to IEC print media messages, and to identify one that demonstrates a feedback-loop to the sender.

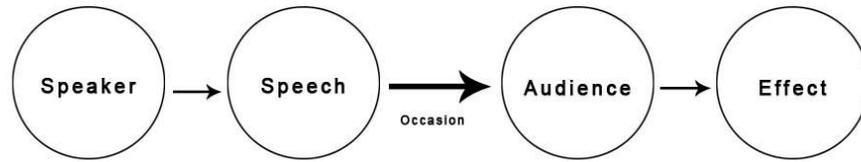
Steinberg (2007: 39) advocates the use of models to “describe and explain” how people communicate. Fiske (2011) equates a model to a map, because of its features of representing

certain parts of the communication process. Mortensen (1972, in Steinberg, 2007: 30) likens a communication model to a diagram. Steinberg says that Mortensen sees communication models as diagrams through which abstract processes of communication are displayed in a simple form, according to the way the author of a given model sees or understands the functions of communication. Because they are of “heuristic value”, that is, models help us to institute new discoveries or at least new interpretations and help us learn. Hence, philosophers generally believe that it would not be easy to get a total view of communicated issues if it were not for the assistance of communication models. Thus, the “more complicated the real object or item, the more useful is the model, without which, in certain cases, it would be very difficult to get a picture of the represented whole” (Steinberg, 2007: 30).

Although communication seems to have been a popular field of study at universities in the late 19th century, efforts at describing the nature of communication only started appearing in the literature in the 20th century (Steinberg, 2007). Even though Steinberg says theorists like Lasswell, and Shannon and Weaver are regarded as the fathers of communication models, there are indications that the basic model of communication, on which most subsequent models are building, is parallel or linear in shape and was actually started with Aristotle’s rhetorical model in 330 BC.

Aristotle advised speakers to be considerate when making speeches because there is no ‘one size fits all’ communication. He is said to have advised speakers to “build speeches for different audiences on different times (occasions) and for different effects” (Communication Theory, 2013). Although the model is said to be “more focused on public speaking than interpersonal communication”, the advice is in line with requirements for the production of print IEC materials. In this regard, producers of HIV prevention materials should produce materials for different audiences, on different occasions and for different effects to ensure that their messages induce expected feelings that would compel readers to act accordingly. The model can best be understood from diagram 3 that follows.

Diagram 3: ARISTOTLE’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



ARISTOTLE’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

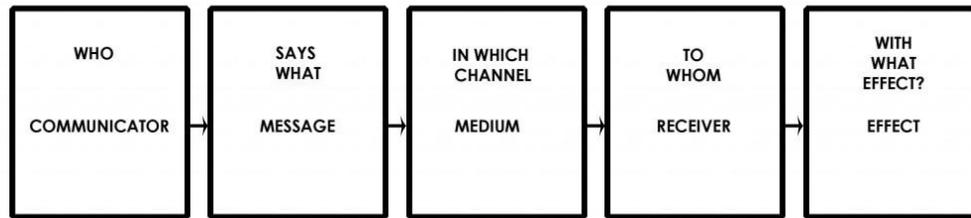
Source: Communication Theory (2013)

Nevertheless, the views of other early communication theorists such as Lasswell, Shannon and Weaver, and Schramm, which all evolve from Aristotle’s model, are briefly reviewed here in order to advance an understanding of how models of communication developed over time.

3.2.1 LASSWELL’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

According to Fiske (2011) and Steinberg (2007), a communication theorist, Harold Lasswell, developed a linear model of communication in 1948. Steinberg (2007: 52-53) elaborates that Lasswell believed that communication process occurs in a sequence that begins with the communicator and ends with the recipient, though he emphasized the effect of a message on the recipient(s). Steinberg simplifies Lasswell’s view of the communication process by asking: “Who? Says what? To whom? In what channel? With what effect?” In this model, the ‘who’ refers to the communicator who formulates the message, ‘what’ refers to the content of the message, while ‘channel’ indicates the medium of transmission, and ‘whom’ describes either an individual recipient or the audience of mass communication. ‘Effect’ refers to the outcome of the message, which for Lasswell was supposed to be that which the recipient will be persuaded to adopt. How Lasswell basically understood the process of communication is illustrated in the following diagram 4.

Diagram 4: LASSWELL’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



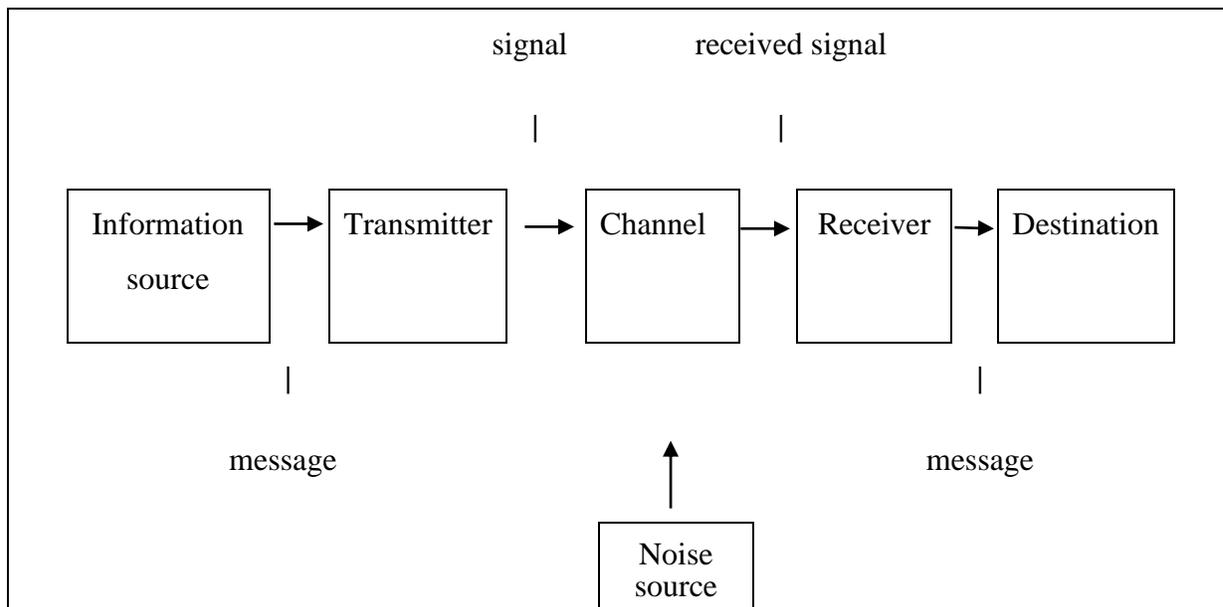
Source: communicationtheory.org/lasswells-model/comment

Steinberg (2007) indicates that the main weakness with this model is that it assumes the communicator to be the only active player and the recipient a passive player in the communication process. It regards the communicator as being the only one who is able to ‘give’ the message and neglects a message that may be found from the receiver’s response. One may add that another limitation with this model is that it does not consider the importance of language or context in the process of communication because it does not provide a loop for feedback. That is, health communicators who might follow Lasswell’s model, would use IEC materials as media through which they transmit HIV prevention information or messages in an effort to inform, educate or communicate with learners as a one-way process and would not know if the recipients got the message or not.

3.2.2 SHANNON AND WEAVER’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Based on Lasswell’s model of communication, Shannon and Weaver developed a model in 1949, though theirs was rather technical. According to Fiske (1990), and Steinberg (2007), Shannon and Weaver’s main aim was to find solutions to problems of signal transmission and to improve on how channels of communication could be used more efficiently; hence, their model is often referred to as transmission or technical model. Diagram 5 that follows illustrates Shannon and Weaver’s basic model of communication.

Diagram 5: SHANNON AND WEAVERS' MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



Source: adapted from Fiske (1990)

Although this model is concerned with the clarity of the channel of the message, it is considered to have some limitations. For instance, Steinberg (2007) points out that it does not provide a channel for feedback; it assumes that noise arises only in the channel and it is not concerned about the clarity of the message in terms of its meaning or comprehensibility. Just like Lasswell, Shannon and Weaver overlooked the importance of language in communication, as explained by Steinberg (2007), because their model also does not consider the power of semantic and psychosocial noises in distorting information or communication messages. Steinberg (2007) further specifies that, no matter how clear the channel of communication may be, when the receiver cannot comprehend the language, or the writing is not comprehensible, the message will fail to reach its intended destination. In the case of this study this says: no matter how well structured, nice looking and accessible print IEC materials are, if youth and young adults or tertiary institution learners fail to comprehend them, the materials will fail to convey the intended message. However, it could be argued that there are many more issues that contribute to the effectiveness of communication than just semantics and psychosocial noise. For instance, fear undertones resulting from the message, or failure to

contextually relate to the message, the receiver's attitudes (those that are influenced by culture or gender), including peer pressure, could affect how messages are received and interpreted. Therefore, this model has a weakness in that it does not seem to appreciate transmission that takes places between the channel and the receiver, because if the message was transmitted from the source to the channel, such as in the case where messages are transmitted from the health educators via the IEC materials that were used for the research (poster, pamphlet and an article from a magazine), the message also has to be transmitted from the receiver back to the source through the channel.

During this study this transmission could have been achieved through discussion, whereby the researcher represented the source, the materials were the channel and the learners were the receiver. Steinberg's position (2007: 52) that most communication models are significantly limited, therefore, seems to reflect reality in that "they present a simplified picture of communication, because they present only the aspect of the communication process a particular theorist wishes to emphasize". In reality, communication contexts are complex and there is much, much more to the communication process than what is displayed in a model. This implies that a certain model may perhaps miss or neglect a vital point in the flow of information. Steinberg (2007: 52) confirms that models do have limitations and the major one is "premature closure". She explains it in this way:

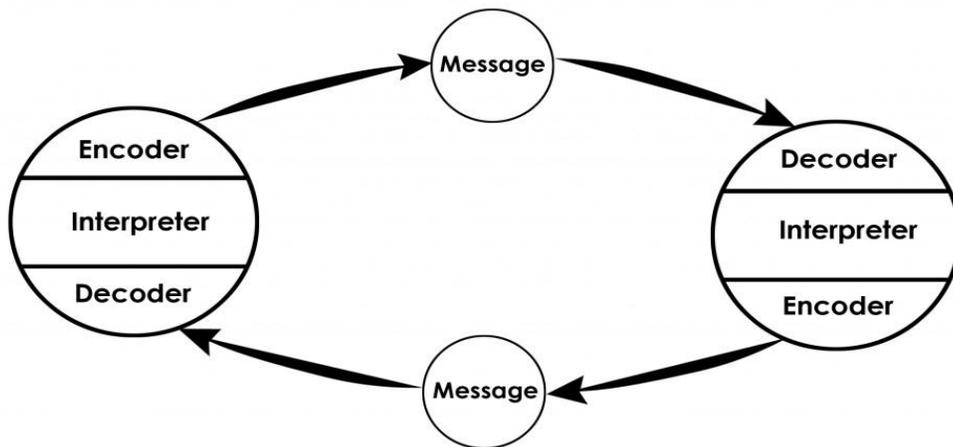
The danger is that the model limits our awareness of unexplored possibilities of conceptualization. We tinker with the model when we might be better occupied with the subject-matter itself... Closure is premature if it lays down the lines for our thinking to follow when we do not know enough to say even whether one direction or another is more promising. Building a model, in short, may crystallize our thoughts at a stage when they are better left in solution, to allow new compounds to precipitate.

However, having realised the weaknesses in Shannon and Weaver's model, Wilbur Schramm came up with a model that focused more on the content and meaning. This model is elaborated on in the next section.

3.2.3 WILBUR SCHRAMM'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

In 1954 Wilbur Schramm produced another model of communication (Steinberg (2007), which had moved away from the technical view of communication and focused more on the content and meaning exchanged between messages. Schramm believed that for the recipient to understand the message in a manner that was intended by its sender, both the sender and the recipient of the message must: “share a common language, common backgrounds and a common culture” to avoid misinterpretation (Steinberg, 2007: 55). Thus, Schramm acknowledged that for communication to have taken place, some feedback should be provided in order to inform the sender how the message was interpreted. Also, he looked upon meaning, not transmission, as the most important aspect of the communication process. Diagram 6 below illustrates Schramm's model of communication.

Diagram 6: SCHRAMM'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



Source: *Schramm as presented in Steinberg (2007)*

In this model, the receiver of the message seems to be appreciated as an active participant in the communication process, while in the first two models the receiver was regarded as a passive recipient. However, this model seems to neglect the importance of the channel through which the message is transmitted, as it appears to be concerned mainly with the interpretation of the meaning of the message. Yet a clear message could be misunderstood due to

interruption caused by noise (physical, semantic or psychosocial) that occurs during transmission, thus causing misinterpretation of messages. Among the models that evolved over time, Jakobson's model of communication was found to be the most relevant to this study, and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

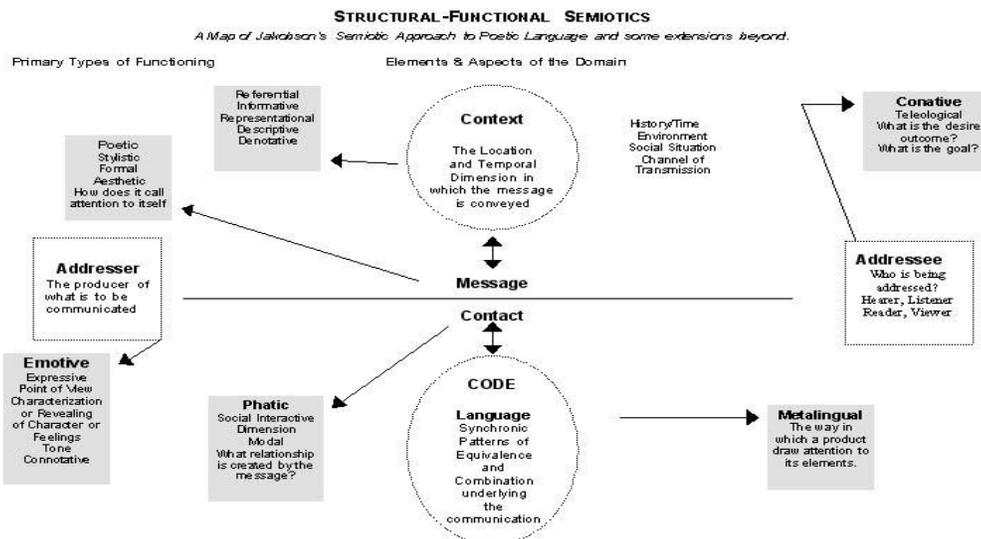
3.2.4 JAKOBSON'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

In 1960, Jakobson invented a double-featured model, which resembled both linear and triangular models of communication, in an effort to bridge the gap between the 'process' and the semiotic schools of communication. The model entails six constitutive factors of communication and their functions. These comprise the addresser, message, addressee, context, contact and code. The addresser refers to the source of information or sender of the message. The message refers to the information that is being sent out to the receiver. The addressee refers to the receiver of the message. The context refers to the real meaning or the connotation of the message. The contact refers to the physical channel and covert or psychological connections between the addresser and the addressee. The code refers to the point of orientation, the shared 'language' used, made up of signs which both the addresser and addressee can interpret and thus construct meaning out of transmitted messages.

There seem to be social functions underlying acts of communication that most communication theorists do not usually identify, but which Fiske (2011) highlighted. However, Jakobson appears to have tried to capture these functions in his model of communication. According to Fiske (2011: 33) and Serban (2012: 839), these include the emotive function, conative function, referential function, phatic function, metalingual function and the poetic function. The emotive function includes such factors as the addresser's emotions, attitude, status and class. This function is orientated towards the addresser factor and serves to portray the addresser's expressions personalized in the message. In other words, it is oriented towards the influence that message has on the receiver. Fiske (1990: 36) says that in some messages "such as love poetry" emotive functions are clearly distinguished while in some, like "in news reporting", they are suppressed. Parallel to the emotive function in the communication process is the conative function, which is acquainted more with the effect of the message on the

addressee (Serban, 2012: 839). According to Fiske (2011: 33) the conative function prominently works in situations where people are given commands and in cases of propaganda. Another function, the referential, refers more to the context factor and can somehow be said to validate communication because it causes information to be considered true. The phatic function is oriented more towards the contact factor and serves to ensure that communication channels are clear and open so that communication can take place smoothly. The metalingual function serves to identify sets of laws that are used to regulate the communication. For example, in research reports, dissertations and theses this function can be clearly seen in the first chapter in the definition of terms section, where it helps to distinguish codes that are used. The poetic function, which is inclined more towards the message, is according to Fiske (1990: 36) an “aesthetic communication” because it denotes the association of the message to itself. Diagram 7 below indicates functions of factors that constitute an act of communication according to Jakobson’s model.

Diagram 7: JAKOBSON’S STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL SEMIOTICS MODEL



Source: *Diagram courtesy of Professor Don Keefer, Rhode Island School of Design* (cyberartsweb.org/cpace/theory/luco/Hypersign/Jakobson.html) (last modified 2005)

Table 2 below illustrates how factors from this study connect to the factors of communication and their functions from Jakobson’s model.

Table 2: FACTORS OF COMMUNICATION

JAKOBSON'S FACTORS OF COMMUNICATION	FUNCTIONS	FACTORS FROM THE STUDY
Addresser	Source of information or sender of the messages	Producer or writer of HIV preventative IEC material
Message	Information that is being sent out to the receiver	HIV preventative messages
Addressee	Receiver of message	<i>Generally:</i> youth and young adults <i>Study:</i> tertiary institution (TIL, LCE and NUL) learners
Context	Real meaning or the connotation of the message	<i>Generally:</i> core message of IEC materials <i>Study:</i> core message of poster, pamphlet and magazine
Contact	Tangible objects and covert or psychological connections between sources and receivers of information	<i>Generally:</i> HIV preventative IEC materials <i>Study:</i> poster, pamphlet and magazine
Code	Point of orientation through which the addressor and the addressee structure or construct meaning out of transmitted messages	<i>Generally:</i> text used to construct medium of communication (language) that make up HIV preventative IEC materials <i>Study:</i> text used to construct medium of communication (language) that make up the poster, pamphlet and magazine

No matter how extensive Jakobson's model is, it still does not provide a loop for feedback nor indicate how messages are transmitted from the material to the receiver. That is, although Jakobson has tried to take account of all aspects that happen during the communication process, it seems to leave too much to assumption, which could possibly result in the wrong interpretation of messages. Hence, health promotion educational efforts often appear to lack the ability to influence attitudes or bring about expected behavioural change. This is a concern for this study, where the rate of new HIV infections in Lesotho is escalating (MoH, 2015: 3).

The implication for the Lesotho context is that there is a need to find or use communication efforts that can help to curtail the spread of HIV. It is, therefore, hoped that the findings of this study will suggest a more effective model for communication campaigns, such as how materials should be distributed and used.

Having discussed communication as a process, the discussion further looks at how meaning is produced and exchanged in a text or written communication and the role played by a sign in this context. This aspect of communication is called semiotics or semiology. Consequently the semiotics theory will be used as a means of analyzing and interpreting print and picture signs of print IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV, looking specifically at Pierce and Barthes' concepts of; denotation, connotation, elaboration, anchorage and relay as ways of describing how messages are put together in texts and how titles can anchor the meaning of texts and pictures in print IEC materials. It was however deemed necessary to first start by looking at what is meant by semiotics.

3.3 SEMIOTICS THEORY

Dobrovolsky (1996: 628) defines semiotics as “the study of signs and a field of study that links many diverse disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, zoology, genetics, literary studies and computer science”. For Chandler (2007: 1), Fiske (1990:40) and Berger (1995: 73), semiotics simply refers to the “study of signs”. Umberto Eco (in Chandler, 2007: 11) describes semiotics as “concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. It involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else”. This definition is regarded as the most comprehensive definition of semiotics. Although a Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and an American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) are generally regarded as the co-founders of semiotics, Chandler (2007:2) argues that the first explicit reference to semiotics appeared in John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* as far back as 1690. While Saussure’s semiology seems to differ from Peirce’s semiotics in some respects, this study has made little distinction between the two perspectives since both are concerned with signs. According to Berger (2004:6), semiology is concerned with what constitutes signs and

what laws govern them, while Peirce's semiotics focuses on how signs help supply part of the meanings (Berger, 2004: 5). The next section briefly defines the sign as a semiotic concept in communication theory.

3.3.1 THE SIGN

Fiske (2011: 18), Steinberg (2007: 46) and Dobrovolsky (1996: 627) define signs as physical signals that stand for things other than themselves. Hoffman (2000: 43) equates signs to substitutes; that is, things which represent or stand for something else. According to Chandler (2007: 13), a sign emanates from two contemporary models, that of de Saussure and Peirce. de Saussure (cited in Chandler, 2007: 13) defines a 'sign' according to the way in which it is composed. He describes it as being composed of a "signifier" and a "signified". Chandler (2007: 15) goes on to explain that "within the Saussurean model, a sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified", while Peirce says (1931 cited in Chandler 2007: 15), "people think only in signs". Chandler's interpretation of this statement is that people "make meanings through their creation and interpretation of signs". Chandler (2007: 15) indicates that Peirce went on to declare that, "nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign". According to Chandler (2007: 13) signs are "systems of conventions in a society such as words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects that are used to interpret something". This implies that people can only interpret or understand the meaning of things when they are able to relate them to familiar systems of conventions. However, one of Peirce's leading exponents, Thomas Sebeok (1920, in Copley, 1996: 27), was "concerned with signs in biology and elsewhere other than literature", which implies a 'sign' does not only help people to communicate with others, but it helps 'humans' to make meaning in all things they see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Based on all these definitions one can sum up that a sign refers to something or anything that helps people to make meaning out of communication amongst themselves as human beings or in relation to non-living things.

According to Fiske, for human communication to take place one communicator has to create a message (2011), which is made out of signs. This message is expected to stimulate the second communicator (the receiver) to make meaning out of the message that relates to some extent

to the meaning that the first communicator attached to it (message). Furthermore, he indicates that in order for these communicators to be able to understand each other, they have to share the same codes. Codes are, according to Fiske (1990: 1), “the systems into which signs are organized and which determine how signs may be related to each other”. Consequently, the meanings these communicators generate within the communicated message would be more or less the same because they would be using the same sign systems. For example, some members of the youth use certain systems of conventions, referred to as youth slang, which adults are not able to understand since they are not familiar with them. This means that IEC materials producers need to have comprehensive knowledge about their audiences, so that they can anticipate which types of signs to use, including their structures, to formulate relevant systems of conventions to ensure comprehensibility of messages.

As has already been said, text and images are signs, because they stand for something. They essentially do not have meaning, but become signs only when people attach meaning to them. Chandler (2007) states that Saussure refers to this aspect of communication or the significance of the sign as semiology or “a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life” and Peirce refers to it as semiotics (formal doctrine of signs).

However, Berger (2004: 34) criticizes semiotics theory because, “in its concern for the relationship of elements and production of meaning in a text, it ignores the quality of the work itself”. Even so, this criticism does not affect this study, as the ‘quality’ involved in the construction of the poster, the pamphlet and the magazine that were used for the research was examined through questions that inquired about attractiveness, acceptability and credibility. Following this brief definition of semiotics, the next section explains the necessity for its use to frame this study.

3.3.2 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SEMIOTICS TO THE STUDY

In order to understand how tertiary institution learners perceive IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV, an understanding of how meaning is constructed and how reality is presented in written communication is necessary. Following on Chandler’s (2007: 11) view that “studying

semiotics can assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing social realities”, an exploration of semiotics in relation to communication theory would promote an understanding of how signs work in the construction of meaning and reality in the context of this study’s focus on the communicating role of print IEC materials. According to Chandler (2007: 11),

... meaning is not ‘transmitted’ to us but we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are normally unaware, and becoming aware of such codes is both inherently fascinating and intellectually empowering

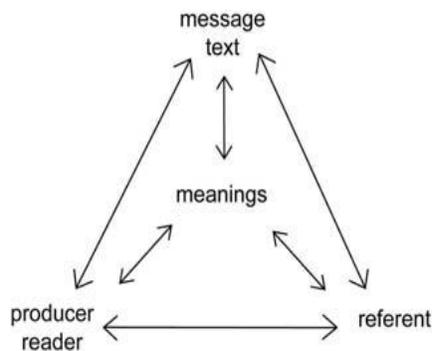
In consideration of this, a mainly semiotic approach to communication theory was used to frame the study, in the belief that it would assist in finding out whether the IEC materials that are used to help curtail the spread of HIV in the Lesotho tertiary education context are received and understood in the ways they are intended. Examining how the recipients make meaning could reveal whether the materials are sufficiently “fascinating” and have the ability to “intellectually empower” the reader, influence their attitudes, help them make informed decisions and bring about change towards desired behaviour.

Fiske, (2011: 2) defines communication as “social interaction through messages”. That is, it is a means through which people reach out to influence other people’s behaviour or state of mind. He goes on to say that there are two schools of communication; the process and the semiotic schools. The process school sees a message as something “which is transmitted by the communication process” or “what the sender puts into communication by whatever means” because followers of this school believe that effectiveness of messages is influenced by the meaning of the receiver of the message, but not what the sender of the message intended them to mean. On the other hand, the semiotics school sees a message as the “construction of signs which, through interaction with the receivers, produce meanings”. The latter school is in line with the purpose of this study, as the text and pictures that constitute the print IEC materials are central to the communication between health educators and learners and it is expected that learners structure meaning as they interact with them. The following description by Fiske clarifies the process:

For semiotics ... the message is a construction of signs which, through interacting with the receivers, produce meanings. The sender, defined as transmitter of the message declines in importance. The emphasis shifts to the text and how it is 'read'. And reading is the process of discovering meanings that occurs when the reader interacts or negotiates with the text. This negotiation takes place as the reader brings aspects of his or her cultural experience to bear upon the codes and signs which make up the text. ... so readers with different social experiences or from different cultures may find different meanings in the same text. (1990: 3)

It is with this understanding of how meaning is produced that the respondents, as members of youth and young adult fraternities and recipients of information and education, are expected to have acquired the knowledge and skill to deal with HIV-related challenges after interacting with and reading IEC materials. Furthermore, it was expected that discussion would also have an influence on their attitudes towards HIV issues. In contrast, the process school does not seem to actively involve the receiver of the message, as it is concerned only with getting across the intentions of the message producer. Diagram 8 illustrates how Fiske views messages or texts interacting with people in order to produce meaning.

Diagram 8: HOW MESSAGES AND MEANINGS ARE PRODUCED AND EXCHANGED ACCORDING TO FISKE



Source: *adapted from Arbuckle (2011: 21) based on Fiske (2011: 4)*

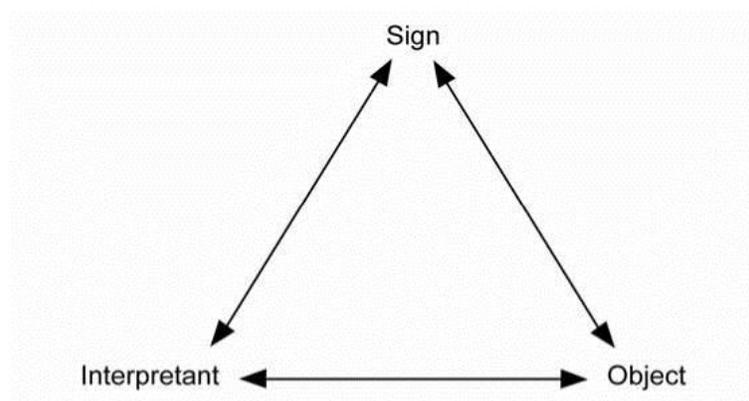
According to Arbuckle (2011: 20), “the semiotic approach to communication considers the production and exchange of meaning (as opposed to transmission) – how messages or texts interact with people in order to produce meanings”, which is in line with this study’s intended investigation into the clarity of the signs that make up print IEC materials.

Chandler (2007: 9) confirms that, “the meaning of a sign is not in its relationship to other signs within the language system but rather in the social context of its use”.

3.3.3 PEIRCE AND THE SIGN

According to Chandler (2007: 29), Peirce attaches a different structure to the sign in semiotics and seems to make a closer link between semiotics and communication theory than other semiotics authors. Like Saussure, Peirce unpacked the concept (sign) according to its functions and structure to formulate his model of the sign, but in contrast, Peirce’s model consisted of three elements: “representamen, interpretant and object”. The representamen is also called by some theorists the “sign vehicle”. The sign vehicle, according to Chandler (2007: 29), represents the form that the sign takes, “not necessarily material, though usually interpreted as such”. The interpretant refers to the sense made of the sign and the object refers to something beyond the sign to which it refers (a referent), which can be understood as the intended meaning or message. The representamen is similar in meaning to Saussure’s signifier, while the interpretant is more or less similar to the signified, though the interpretant is “itself a sign in the mind of the interpreter” (Chandler, 2007: 31). Since some of the concepts that constitute this model are complicated to use (for example representamen), the basic concepts that are commonly used by most semioticians: sign, interpretant and object, are used. Hence, diagram 9 below is adapted to illustrate Peirce's elements of meaning.

Diagram 9: PEIRCE'S ELEMENTS OF MEANING



Source: adapted from Arbuckle (2011) based on Fiske (1990)

Chandler (2007: 33) goes on to explain that the “object” is not confined to physical things alone, but, like Saussure’s signified, it includes abstract concepts and fictional entities. It is, basically, the intended message content that the sign is trying to convey.

The semiotics theory, looking specifically at Peirce, was used for analyzing and interpreting the signs (text and pictures) in print IEC materials that are used in the prevention of HIV. To this was added Barthes’ concepts of denotation, connotation, elaboration, anchorage and relay, as ways of describing how messages are put together (in texts and images) and how titles anchor the meaning of texts and images. According to Chandler (2007: 52), these concepts (factors) help “sign-users ascribe significance” to the signs. The next section elaborates on the orders or systems of signification of the sign.

3.3.4 ORDERS OR SYSTEMS OF SIGNIFICATION

Roland Barthes is a structuralist, whom many in the field of communication (for example, Fiske 1990, Copley 1996, van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001, Berger 1995) look upon as the core founder of the more contemporary study of signs known as semiology or semiotics. He produced a systematic model, because he felt Saussure’s linguistic system did not look at how the ‘reality’ to which it ‘referred’ related to the reader and his or her socio-cultural position. In a way, Barthes wanted to establish how the same sentence which Saussure was interested in was “constructed”. That is he wanted to find out what determines the meaning of a sentence and what makes the same sentence convey “different meanings to different people in different situations” (Fiske, 1990: 85). Barthes then discovered what he called “two orders of signification”, namely denotation and connotation. The first order, Fiske (1990: 85) says, is equivalent to Saussure’s description of the signifier and the signified’s relationship within a sign and the sign’s relationship with its referent in external reality. Instead of talking of “orders of signification” when referring to denotation and connotation, Copley (1996: 129) refers to these two concepts as “systems of signification”. In visual semiotics, (denotation and connotation) Roland Barthes refers to the same concepts as “layers of meaning” (van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001: 94).

Denotation

According to Cobley (1996: 129), denotation is similar to the signifier of the second system, in that for people to be able to interpret what is being communicated they have to first be familiar with the structures or characters that make up, among others things, words or language used. For example, in the case of print IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV, people have to be familiar with the text (language) and the picture(s) used in the material in order to be able to read what has been written. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001: 94) continue to show that Barthes regarded denotation as “relatively unproblematic”, as people need not strive to construct meaning out of what is being communicated, but just need to be conversant with signs used to construct the language used in such a communication. For instance, in the case of print IEC materials people would just need to be able to interpret the apparent signs involved in the communication processes. They would need to be able to interpret the first layer of the meaning of the communication or be able to interpret the literal meaning of the involved signs, but not the core meaning of what is being communicated. That is, if the materials are written in Sesotho, they just need to be able to read Sesotho, but not necessarily interpret what the written message is all about.

Connotation

Cobley (1996: 129) indicates that this plane of expression is “wider than the first one” and is usually not easy to understand. That is, connotation is wider than denotation because it is made up of signifiers of connotation (connotators), signifieds and the process that unites the signifier to the signified. It is said to be more complicated than the first one in that sometimes a connotator can be made out of several denoted sign(s). Hence, large pieces of denoted communication are made up of numerous words but have a single connotator (Cobley, 1996: 130). Barthes, on the other hand, uses the term connotation to describe one of the three ways in which signs work in the second order of signification and is explained thus by Fiske:

...connotation describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture ...when meaning moves towards the subjective, or at least the intersubjective ...when the interpretant is influenced as much by the interpreter as by the object or the sign... (Fiske, 2011: 81)

This implies that connotation involves an internalization process in order for people to make meaning out of any communication. It can be looked at as an implied understanding of the core message of what is being communicated, which means connotation determines the message's degree of influence on the viewer's attitude. Similarly, Berger (1995: 79) shows that connotation deals with the "historic, symbolic, and emotional matters suggested by or that go along with a term". Fiske (2011) adds that Barthes considered the signifier in the first order to be very crucial in any communication process, as it is the one that starts communication among humans, even though the way people interpret things differs from culture to culture. This is true with print IEC materials that contain messages for HIV prevention, as they are made up of not only numerous signs (words and images), but numerous content items, for example, information on how HIV is transmitted, how to avoid being infected with HIV, who is at risk of being infected, just to mention a few. But the underlying core message (connotation) in all this combined information is to prevent the spread of HIV.

Van Leeuwen (2005: 219) goes on to point out that in constructing meaning out of information, people normally do not think about it as a "whole" but think about it in terms of "bits and pieces". Yet those pieces of information that are usually ignored tend to have significance and could possibly add more value to the meaning of the chosen "bits", if considered. This led van Leeuwen to assess what Maruyama (1980, in van Leeuwen, 2005) calls "contextual information" as: "the value of information lies in its relation to its context" (van Leeuwen, 2005: 219). This implies that in communication, a single word that composes a piece of information has a meaning on its own, but it takes other words for this single piece to become a message. The next paragraph discusses how a certain piece of information can elaborate or extend information presented in others to make up a message and how meaning can be elaborated, anchored and relayed through certain sign combinations. Van Leeuwen (2005: 219) is of the opinion that how messages are constructed out of pieces (for example, words), and how meaning is constructed out of messages, depends on the interests and purposes of communicators and of the prior interests and knowledge of the recipients.

Elaboration, Anchorage and Relay

According to van Leeuwen (2005: 229), elaboration, anchorage and relay are Roland Barthes's approach to the 'linking' of words and images. Elaboration is more or less the same as anchorage, where "words pick out one of the possible meanings of the image", while relay is an extension of a message between two items that "provide different, but semantically related information", one in a form of a text and another in a form of an image. With anchorage, meaning of pictures is clarified through words. This implies that text helps people to make meaning out of the pictures, depending on their familiarity with the signs that constructed the text. This means that even though text and images may look independent of each other, they stand in a complementary relationship and are both fragments of an additional 'syntagm' (Barthes, 1977), to which each contributes in its own way towards a message.

Following the above discussions, it can be concluded that, being culturally sensitive, IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV must carry carefully connoted and denoted messages because in Lesotho any information on sex or sexual intercourse is still a taboo, making it difficult for health educators to communicate HIV prevention messages in a straightforward and easy to understand manner. These debates helped in the realization of how 'we', as information providers, educators and communicators, underutilize semiotic concepts in our efforts to inform and educate the public and communicate HIV related issues to them. This can be identified in the next chapter (Chapter five), which presents and analyses data from my own point of view as a health professional, and in Chapters six, seven and eight, where data is presented and analysed from what the learners understood to be communicated by the signs and images in the print IEC materials. That is, these Chapters present and analyze what learners determined to be the communication messages that the signs and pictures in the print IEC materials attempted to portray.

Upon reflection, semiotics theory seems to ignore the 'affect element'. Therefore, this component was addressed by discourse analysis of the participants' responses. Discourse analysis theory was used as a tool to analyze how respondents make meaning out of the materials. This section, having presented the concepts of denotation, connotation, elaboration,

anchorage and relay, is followed by a discussion of discourse analysis theory, consulting the works of Fairclough and Gee.

3.4 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEORY

Before discussing the discourse analysis theory itself, the concept of ‘discourse’ and its relationship to language is examined, as a prerequisite the analysis of the responses of the participants in this research. The following paragraph defines and discusses the concept of discourse and reviews its relationship to language.

3.4.1 DISCOURSE

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2001) defines ‘discourse’ as a spoken or written “conversation or lengthy treatment of a subject, lecture or speech”. In academic terms, discourse takes on additional meanings. Fairclough (1996: 20), for instance, refers to ‘discourse’ as a language that is used to reflect a society’s “social practice”. This implies that discourses also include ways in which people conduct and present themselves, and what shapes their world in relation to each other. They are the verbal expressions of internalised value systems, world views, assumptions and beliefs about behaviour, and even identity (for example youth sometimes relate to each other through the use of different discourses [behaviours and language]). Gee (1990: 143) defines it as “any stretch of language (spoken, written, signed) which ‘hangs together’ to make sense to some community or people who uses that language”. These include ways of performing and recognizing characteristic identities and activities or ways of coordinating and ‘getting coordinated’ by other people, things, tools technologies, symbol systems, places and times. Characteristic ways of acting may include interacting, feeling, valuing, gesturing, posturing, dressing, thinking, believing, knowing, speaking, listening, reading and writing. To Gee (2005: 33), discourse essentially involves “situated identities”, while to Fairclough (1992: 64), discourse is fundamentally “a practice not just a way of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning”, in other words, discourses represent the way communities make sense out of language.

Furthermore, van Leeuwen and Kress (2011: 113) and Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011: 358) define discourse as a social phenomenon that plays a very important role in shaping societies, and is in turn shaped by societies. They explain that even though discourses are socially constructed, since they basically “form and describe content of texts and communicative events”, they have no “physical existence” because they are taken to refer to knowledge and mental resources. To Fairclough *et al.* (2011: 358), a discourse is also important because “it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, in the sense that it contributes to transforming it”. Although, in the case of HIV not every discourse is useful, because some discourses tend to fuel the spread of HIV in the form of myths that contradict medical information. Looking particularly at youth and young adults in tertiary institutions, learners are more receptive to adopting discourses that are mostly influenced by their institution’s culture, peer pressure and media. These discourses, depending on what is being said, may place them (learners) at risk of contracting HIV just because they want to ‘belong’ to the crowd. It is a common practice for learners, to adapt to the institution’s way of life, even if it means doing things that they know are against their families’ terms and conditions for good conduct; these include such misconduct as consumption of alcoholic beverages and co-habitation. Hingson, Strunin, Berlin and Heeren, (2004: 731) explain how alcohol or other drugs are thought to interfere with judgment and decision making and are some of the major contributors to sexual risk-taking. They also argue that freedom of association and peer pressure, which characterise tertiary institution culture, are major factors that can lead to learners experimenting with irresponsible use of alcoholic beverages and drugs. Furthermore, Hingson *et al.* (2004: 731) warn that all these factors, often articulated through peer group discourses, may contribute to learners experiencing decreased judgment that can possibly result in increased likelihood for undertaking risky sexual behaviour.

Accordingly, in the case of this study, HIV messages that are supposed to be communicated through print IEC materials should be research based. In order for educators to be able to produce ‘target specific’ print IEC materials that can contribute to transforming risky youth or young adult behaviour into desired behaviour, they need to first find out how their target audience uses language, behaviour and relationships as discursive social practices as well as

how much knowledge their target audience already has. In other words, what is their current thinking and how can they ‘profitably’ move forward from that position so that they can be said to have acquired new knowledge that would help them to achieve the desired behavioural and attitudinal change. This is in line with the principles of teaching in adult education (Knowles, 1980), which emphasize that the learning process should build on the experiences of learners. One of the principles for facilitating learning is that the teacher must help the learners exploit their own experiences as resources for learning (build on what they already know) through the use of such techniques as discussion, role-playing, and case study to help them to apply the new learning to their experiences and make it more meaningful. In the case of this study, it is expected that such learning can be demonstrated through attitudinal (language and action) change after the learners’ interaction with print IEC materials.

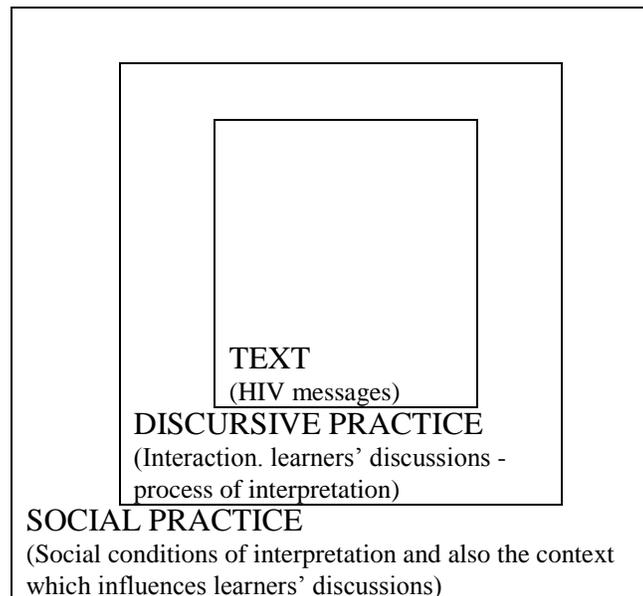
Shifting the focus from ‘discourse’ as a concept, how meaning is derived from discourses through discourse analysis theory is examined. Since institutional discourses are a core feature of tertiary institution learners’ social norms and practices amongst their peers, it is important to recognize discourses in the learner responses to the study’s questions. As has already been mentioned, this discussion is framed by the works of Fairclough and Gee, with the works of other authors also used to solicit support or debate. Discourse analysis explores what influences interpretation of the text and pictures, specifically looking at such aspects as language, pre-existing knowledge and meaning that the respondents attach to messages in relation to their context, personal biographies and cultural backgrounds.

3.4.2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEORY

In analyzing discourses, Fairclough (2015) distinctively focused on discursive practice because he wanted to analyze even the discursive formations (conventions of talk or patterns of behavior) that contribute to shaping a person’s world and that are born out of societal practices. That is, he focused on the effects that the discursive formations may have on social structures, social relations and social struggles, which he believed societies more often than not ‘take for granted’ or are unaware of. Hence, the main concern of the research, from a health education perspective, was to study links and struggles that exist between social

structures and the way that text as spoken language by learners is constructed, distributed and expended in their responses to text IEC materials, specifically looking at what Fairclough (1996: 29) calls “discursive practice”. The center of interest for this discursive practice lies in how text is being produced, distributed and expended. How this three-dimensional conception of Fairclough’s discourse analysis applies to this study can best be understood from diagram 10 below.

Diagram 10: DISCOURSE AS TEXT, INTERACTION AND CONTEXT



Source: adapted from Fairclough (1996).

When analyzing discourses there are three indispensable traditions that need to be observed (Fairclough, 1996), and these are: the tradition of close textual and linguistic analysis within linguistics; the macrosociological tradition of analyzing social practice in relation to social structures; and the interpretivist or microsociological tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared commonsense procedures. Based on Fairclough’s (2005: 8) explanation that “texts as elements of social events” are capable of influencing people’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, the focus here was on how discourse can reveal multiple interpretations according to context.

Hence, discourse analysis was used alongside semiotic analysis and as a means of interpreting the discourses and discourse behaviours of the learners.

Fairclough (1992: 103) warns that the intertextuality of a text is rather complicated or ambivalent because of the relationships it has with the genres, discourses, styles and activity types which make up an order of discourse. So such questions as ‘can you use the condom for your own good’ could be viewed as a question, a request, an order, a suggestion, or even a complaint, depending on the ‘context’ in which it was sourced. It was useful to take a closer look at the intertextuality of the texts materials and the learner responses to them so as to gain a deeper understanding of the kind of ambivalence and how it is generated in texts in order to analyze the suitability of print IEC materials for youth and young adults in their context as literate young Basotho adults (tertiary institution learners), even though the study does not focus on discourse analysis in detail.

As was indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the above theoretical framework also connected to a learning theory that talks about the transformation of adult learning, looking particularly at one of the stages in Mezirow’s learning cycle: transformative learning.

3.5 TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

Illeris (2003: 402) explains that there is a far-reaching type of learning that Mezirow (1991) described as transformative learning and which Engestrom (1987) named expansive learning. Only the concept of transformative learning was used for the purposes of this study.

According to Illeris (2003: 402) transformative learning implies

...what could be termed personality changes and is characterized by simultaneous restructuring in the cognitive, the emotional and the social-societal dimensions, a break of orientation that typically occurs as the result of a crisis-like situation caused by challenges experienced as urgent and unavoidable, making it necessary to change oneself in order to get any further.

Mezirow (1996: 162) perceives learning as a process through which one “construct[s] new or revised interpretations of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action”.

This implication for learning reflects what is expected of people when they interact with or read print IEC materials for the prevention of HIV. Information from these materials is expected to help reinforce the prevailing good behaviours, or help those leading ‘unacceptable’ lives to undergo personality changes and cognitive restructuring after reading these materials.

Duveskog, Friis-Hansen and Taylor (2011: 1531) consider “transformative learning theory as uniquely adult and as situated in human communication”, because adults already have past experiences on which to build new meaning or help promote new understanding. Cranton (2006: 2) defines transformative learning as “a process by which previously assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values and perspectives are questioned and validated”. She elaborates that this process is distinctive and voluntary, and so there are many learning styles (preferences of learners) attached to it. But to Brock (2010: 123), transformational learning occurs when a learner is struck by a new concept or way of thinking and then follows what is learnt to make a change in his or her life. It is not what people ‘know’, but how people acquire knowledge, which is important. However, Dirkx (1998: 11) regards transformative learning as relatively rare within settings of adult education, because to him the learning process has no distinctive beginning or ending. Rather, it presents a potential that is eternally present within educators and learners alike.

As was mentioned earlier, the theoretical framework also includes reference to Gravett’s learning theory that talks about dialogue, and the role of dialogue seemed to be central to the way learners responded to the poster, pamphlet and the magazine that were used for the research. But since the concept of dialogue in learning situations is embedded in dialogical educational theory, it is in this respect that the review in the next section touches on this theory.

3.6 DIALOGIC EDUCATION THEORY

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2001) defines dialogue as a “discussion directed towards exploration of a subject or resolution of a problem”. In this section this concept of dialogue is looked at from an educational perspective (Gravett, 2001; Skidmore,

2006). Brookfield (1987: 12-13), in his work on developing adult learners to become critical thinkers, referred to this process as ‘dialectical thinking ... that focuses on the understanding and resolution of contradictions’. In a similar approach to Freire’s (2000) notion of emancipatory learning he argues that discussion is central to developing critical consciousness. According to Gravett (2001) and Skidmore (2006), dialogic education differs from the dialogue that takes place during ordinary educational endeavours in that it requires active thinking of those who engage in dialogue as connected to a purpose, which appears to be what health educators need to use to back up the print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in order to make certain that people have understood the intended messages. Looking at the term dialogue only from an educational perspective, Gravett (2001) is of the view that it does not just refer merely to a technique or tool used for engaging participants in conversation or exchange of ideas, but it is a respectful relationship (among educators and learners) where those engaged think and reason together. Based on Burbules (1993, cited in Gravett, 2001: 35), she summarizes this view of dialogue as:

...a kind of social relationship that engages its participants...involving a willing partnership and cooperation in the face of likely disagreements, confusion, failures and misunderstandings. Persisting in this process requires a relationship of mutual respect, trust and concern – and part of dialogic interchange often relates to the establishment and maintenance of these bonds. The substance of this interpersonal relation is deeper and more consistent than any particular communicative form it might take.

In the preview of his recent book: *Educational Futures: Rethinking Theory and Practice. Dialogue and Boundary Learning*, Rule (2015) agrees to the term “dialogue” being used as a form of learning because it is an abstract concept and have no fixed meaning, and so can be applied to numerous platforms, depending on the situation. To him, dialogue seems to have the potential to be used depending on how one feels or what one foresees, and so he associates dialogue with the concept of “sense” (Rule, 2015: xvii). He relates it to six senses, which he calls “six senses of dialogue”: i) Dialogue as talk, referring to conversation between two or more people; ii) Literary dialogue, referring to conversation between two or more characters in literature ; iii) Dialogue as mutual engagement involving active engagement between people or groups to develop mutual understanding or gain consensus. It is described as both

normative and descriptive; iv) Dialogue understood as being, referring to dialogue with oneself, or with others and dialogue with the world; v) Dialogical self, is when the self is constituted in and through dialogue; vi) Dialogue and learning. Rule, like Gravett and others, understands that dialogue can be used as both a method and a framing concept or principle in educational contexts. In this educational view of dialogue and learning the educator does not assume the role of a unilateral authority, but together with learners cooperatively enquires into the learning content (Gravett, 2005), working with it and reasoning about it. The learners co-construct knowledge as they mutually participate (Skidmore, 2006) in the learning activity.

Skidmore (2006: 513) also advocates for “dialogical pedagogy” and defines dialogic education in this way:

Dialogic education signals the co-presence of the teacher as a concerned other, available to guide and coach the learner, as a member of a community of learners, through the emotional rollercoaster ride of self-development, from the mixture of curiosity and apprehension we often experience when approaching the not-yet-known for the first time, through the solidarity of mutual encouragement which can help overcome the confusion and uncertainty involved in practicing a new type of knowledge-activity for the first time, to the thrill of shared discovery and personal growth felt at the moment of breakthrough when one confidently masters a new way of doing things. By modeling the exploratory nature of dialogue in our discursive interactions, we can help students draw on a wider range of emotional resources in their learning, and harness these to the project of becoming increasingly self-directed in their development.

Macedo (in Freire, 2000:17), in the introduction he wrote for the 30th anniversary edition of Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is of the view that fruitful dialogue is based on the degree of critical thinking of those engaged in it, because dialogue is “never an end in itself but a means to develop a better comprehension about the object of knowledge”. Gravett (2005: 41) introduces what she regards as basic principles of dialogue in learning:

- The typical tone of the dialogue is exploratory and interrogative.
- The purpose of the dialogue is to break through to ... new insights.
- The dialogic process implies cooperative and reciprocal inquiry through questions, responses, ... redirections and building statements that form a continuous and developmental sequence.

- It requires a commitment to dialogue. This commitment does not necessarily precede the dialogue, but is generally established through the creation of a context that fosters engagement in the educational setting.
- The dialogue is marked by an attitude of reciprocity among participants underpinned by the interest, trust, respect and concern they share for one another, even when disagreeing or encountering misunderstandings.

These principles imply that a willingness and openness to participate is key to successful dialoguing. Macedo (in Freire, 2000), further explains that critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed, whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation, and that the content of that dialogue can and should vary in accordance with historical conditions and the level at which the oppressed perceive reality. Freire (2000) emphasises that when the oppressed fight for their liberation this is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their conscientization and that this can only be brought about successfully through dialogue. It can be argued that HIV should be looked at as the oppressor, while learners are the oppressed, and IEC materials producers and health educators are initiators of dialogue. However, Freire (2000: 65) warns that “to substitute monologue, slogans, and communiqués for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication”. In the case of HIV this suggests that billboards and slogans alone are inadequate for stimulating the creative thinking needed to liberate attitudes towards behavioural changes.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study. These comprise communication theories, specifically semiotics, utilizing concepts mainly from Peirce and Barthes. In addition, the study included the discourse analysis theory by Fairclough and Gee to see how meaning is derived from written or spoken language. Transformative learning theory, drawing on Mezirow’s concept of transformative learning, became a further theoretical resource to explain how the communication strategies and subsequent discourses contributed to attitudinal change and new learning. The concept of dialogue, embedded in dialogic educational theory was also used to frame the study, looking particularly into Gravett’s work, since the data collection process itself became a dialogic form of

communication that contributed to transformative learning and ultimately was the discursive exchange that was analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The study employed a comparative case study design, drawing on the interpretive paradigm and taking a qualitative approach using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and follow-up interviews as the main source of data collection. Data to investigate responses of the Lesotho tertiary institution learners towards print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials that are used to prevent the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) was taken from three tertiary institutions: Lesotho College of Education (LCE) in the Thaba-Tseka district, National University of Lesotho (NUL) in the Maseru district and Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in the Quthing district.

This chapter addresses the following aspects of research design and methodology: target population, ethical considerations, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, trustworthiness of the instruments and the procedures used to collect and analyze data.

4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 4) define research as “a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information (data), in order to increase understanding of the phenomenon in which the researcher is interested”. They go on to explain that research projects, by and large, have eight characteristics, even though they may vary in complexity and duration. These characteristics include the fact that research: 1) originates with a question, 2) requires a clear articulation, 3) follows a specific plan of procedure, 4) usually divides the principal problem into more manageable sub-problems, 5) is guided by specific research questions or hypotheses, 6) accepts certain critical assumptions, 7) requires the collection and interpretation of data in an attempt to resolve the problem that initiates the research, and 8) is by nature cyclical. Neuman (2000) adds that qualitative researchers focus on describing peoples’ experiences on given research issues regardless of their complexity.

The study adopted a qualitative (explanatory) research approach. Qualitative study describes and interprets things that cannot easily be described numerically (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001) and it is used to answer questions, describe and understand the nature of facts or situations from the participants' point of view. Descriptive research, according to Anderson (2004), has two major branches – historical and contemporary. Historical research describes what happened in the past. Contemporary research describes the present happenings. The contemporary research branch was used for the purpose of this study, as I intended to study what is happening now. That is, whether or not the print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in the country serve the intended purposes. The research was explanatory because it aimed to explore and analyse the kind of meaning the learners attached to the print IEC materials that are used in Lesotho, or the kind of message the materials convey to them. Explanatory research, according to Anderson (2004: 8), “asks the question; what is causing this to happen”. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (1997: 142-143) explain that, “explanatory research focuses on the why questions, while descriptive research simply describes achievements, attitudes, behaviours or other characteristics of subjects”. Therefore, the research could be said to have been explanatory because it intended to explore whether these materials are significant and appropriate; that is, whether they manage to motivate people into changing behaviour. For instance, Kimaryo, Okpaku, Gitthuku-Shongwe and Feeny (2004: 78) indicate that it was anticipated as far back as 2001 that, “delivery of information [in a form of messages] will cause individuals to change their behaviour”, but the emergence of new HIV infections, especially among the tertiary institution learner age category, did not seem to decline.

The explanatory approach was chosen over other research approaches because the study investigated a rather complex phenomenon: learners' interpretations of the print IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV, in an effort to ascertain how much they value these materials and how these materials could be improved in order for their messages to become complete and attractive. However, Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006: 149-150) assume that: “a researcher must first understand the meanings that people have of the world around them, because these meanings tend to govern their actions”. Hence, the tertiary institution culture is briefly

discussed in Chapter one, in order to explore what might influence the learners' ideas, attitudes, motives and intentions towards the print IEC materials. Nevertheless, Neuman (2000) announces that choice of research methodology determines the quality of information that will be gathered about a programme. This is confirmed by McMillan and Schumacher (1997), who indicate that the methodology is indispensable to any research study because it covers, among others, an overview of the research paradigm (how knowledge is acquired). Literature shows that in order for researchers to be able to gain knowledge and understanding of what they are researching, they have to work within paradigms, or essentially, what they refer to as the worldviews that encompass a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within which research takes place. The next paragraph deliberates on the paradigm that guided this study.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The paradigm, as stated by Chilisa and Preece (2005) and Joubish, Khurram, Amed, Fatima, and Hainder (2011), essentially denotes the way researchers perceive, imagine or understand the world around them (their worldviews). According to these authors, this involves the framework of beliefs (conceptual framework or theoretical orientation that informs the choice of the research problem investigated), values (framing of the research objectives) and methods (research designs, instruments for collecting data, data analysis and reporting of the research findings) within which the research takes place. In other words, the word paradigm refers to the way in which the researcher views and considers the world to be.

Henn *et al.* (2006: 10), point out that there are various research paradigms, but only three are taken to be the major ones and the most commonly used. They outline these as: positivism which helps researchers to predict the outcomes of researched phenomenon; interpretivism, which helps researchers to understand what they think about, and the way they see, the researched phenomenon; and critical orientation, which allows researchers to explore questionable facts or situations with an emancipatory goal. However, Chilisa and Preece (2005: 21) indicate that these paradigms compete for recognition, acceptance and supremacy, because they all claim to help researchers to produce valid, reliable, trustworthy and

dependable knowledge. The logic of interpretivist research design, Henn *et al.* (2006: 15) say, is “to explore or build up an understanding of something that we have little or no knowledge of”. That is why the interpretivist paradigm was chosen for the purposes of this research, in view of the fact of the desired purpose to explore or build up an understanding on the meaning that the Lesotho tertiary institution learners attach to HIV messages that are conveyed through print IEC materials and the usefulness of these materials. Given that no study was found that looked specifically at the impact or appropriateness of print IEC materials themselves for tertiary level students, let alone one that was specially conducted on the Lesotho tertiary institutions, this study is deemed to be original and to provide new information. The interpretivist paradigm was used also because of its phenomenological stand, which “allows for human thinking, perceiving and other mental and physiological acts, and spirituality to describe and understand human experience” (Chilisa and Preece, 2005: 28). That is, it allows us to answer the how and why questions. According to Chilisa and Preece (2005), phenomenologically, truth is determined by human experience; thus it can be determined according to time, space and context. Phenomenologists use human thinking, perceiving and other mental and physiological acts, and spirituality to describe and understand human experience.

Du Plooy (2009) is of the opinion that in order for researchers to be able to understand and explain reality, or how knowledge is gained, they have to explore meanings that people attach to communication according to their culture, so there is an assumption that knowledge is presented in different ways because cultures differ. Du Plooy (2009) further explains that the capacity to gain an accurate and deeply intuitive understanding of reality or how knowledge is gained, is directed by the ontological assumption that reality is subjective because it is believed to be socially constructed, and that the true understanding of other people’s social worlds, including communication, can only be attained through their viewpoint. That is why Chilisa and Preece (2005) advocate that researchers using the interpretivist paradigm for African research contexts should involve questioning everything, including the language used in the research process. For this research this was covered under section ‘A’ of the interview guideline for the first focus group discussion. This is accessed through questions that were

meant to establish the learners' understanding of the materials, namely, comprehension. Section 'D', which questioned the acceptability of the materials, was also in line with du Plooy's statement because it strived to find out the learners' viewpoint of the materials.

Discussions with learners were carried out in a mixture of Sesotho and English. Henn *et al.* (2006: 14) support the idea that participants should be allowed to "provide an account of their world in their own words". This implies that the research design is flexible because methods and techniques that people choose are largely determined by their understanding of what constitutes acceptable knowledge or epistemology (Bryman, 2010), though these methods and techniques in qualitative research should be trustworthy and credible. That is why it was important to empathize with the participants and allow them to express themselves in their chosen language during the discussions. The expectation was that this would make them feel relaxed and be able to fully and honestly express their views, since they would be expressing their opinions in the way they wanted. Thus, to establish the responses of the learners towards the print IEC materials during the second meetings, they were asked what meaning they attached to the IEC materials and whether the materials raised any critical awareness after their interaction with them in the first meeting. They were also asked whether the materials influenced their attitudes and understandings towards HIV related issues or not. Indications of behavioural change could not be assessed because of the study's short-term nature, but attitudes towards behavioural change could be gleaned by the way the students responded to the materials.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This was a comparative case study, using learners from three tertiary schools to establish issues related to the comprehensibility of the three different print IEC materials used in the research, namely: a poster, pamphlet and magazine. The study also intended to establish the learners' reactions to and how they generally felt about these materials and communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from them and the impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. It also sought suggestions from learners on how these materials could be

improved, so that they would contain accurate health related text and images for targeted audiences.

Jegede (1995: 73) describes research design as “a direction towards testing the hypotheses... a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to address a specific question or to test specific hypotheses in given conditions”. Some people equate a research design to a “plan or strategy” in the research study (Henn *et al.*, 2006 and Gravetter and Forzano, 2009) because it outlines the approach to be employed and goals of the study.

According to Ralise (1997), there are many different research designs and a few are discussed here. These include participatory research design which is used to solve problems through collective efforts. Action research used to generate knowledge in order to reflect on the cause of action or alternative solutions to a problem. Historical research collects information through description and analysis of physical sources and documentary sources. Case study is undertaken to deeply probe into a particular case or similar sets of cases in order to explain their special features. Survey is concerned with certain patterns of behaviour in the community that need to be described in order to confirm acceptable explanations of events or provide alternative meaning of events. Experimental research is based on the researcher manipulating certain controlled conditions in order to identify the relationships between particular variables that it is hoped will explain cause and effect relationships.

This study drew on qualitative research through a case study of three forms of print IEC materials and the learner responses to these materials from three different tertiary institutions. A case study, according to Stake (1995: xi), who adopts an interpretive stance, is ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances’. Some authors refer to a case study design as an in-depth study of a single individual or a small group done for the purpose of obtaining a detailed description of that individual or group’s daily concerns or issues (Gravetter and Forzano, 2009; Henning, Gravett and van Rensburg, 2005).

Rule and John (2011: 3-4) argue that a case study may have many definitions, depending on the happening(s) that caused a 'case' under study. They indicate that a 'case' may refer to at least three different things. For instance, "a case may refer to a particular instance" and because of their singularity and distinctiveness, cases differ in size and scope, depending on the person, thing or action's condition. A case may therefore be "a circumstance or problem that requires investigation" and can be identified by its characteristics. A case can also refer to "the body of evidence that supports a conclusion or judgment" where there is tangible evidence that can be used to "make an argument or present a case for a particular view". Rule and John (2011) also give four instances where a researcher may choose to use a case study design: 1) to generate an understanding of and insight into a particular instance by providing a thick, rich description of the case and illuminating its relations to its broader context; 2) to explore a general problem or issue within a limited and focused setting; 3) to generate theoretical insights, either in the form of grounded theory that arises from the case study itself or in developing and testing existing theory with reference to the case and; 4) to highlight other similar cases, thus providing a level of generalization or transferability. In this study the IEC materials that were used for the research can be referred to as the 'cases'. Then a comparison was made of the responses towards them from the three different institutions for potential generalization or transferability. They became the cases because they were investigated in terms of their influence on the learners' attitudes, as the purpose was to generate understanding and insight into the relationship between these materials and the learners' responses to them.

Merriam (1998) agrees with Rule and John that a qualitative case study has many faces. It is fastidious, that is, it focuses on a particular situation. It is descriptive, in that it presents a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study. It is heuristic, because it enlightens the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study, and leads to the discovery of new meanings. Furthermore, Merriam (1998) says a case study can be used as a process of studying a case, a unit of study or as a product of an investigation. The case study method is confirmed to be useful in that it provides an in-depth description of a small number (less than 50) of cases (Mouton, cited in Endresen, 2010). The case study method was chosen here

because this study used a qualitative research approach with a small number of cases, although a variety of data collection methods and sources (covering three different institutions) was used, where each of the learners had their own institutional context. These made it a comparative case study. This method was also important because it helped to generate an understanding of and an insight into learners' responses from different geographical zones of Lesotho to the print IEC material's efficiency and appropriateness in fighting the spread of HIV, which could not have been achieved through other methods.

Nonetheless, the limitation with this method is that there is a danger of distorting information (Bell, 1987), as it is difficult to crosscheck information gathered in all cases. Again, it can sometimes be influenced by the particular sources that are consulted, since at times respondents may tell researchers what they think they want to hear. Thus, researchers may end up getting completely different results if other methods of research are used for the same questions.

4.4 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population was tertiary institution learners. Samples of volunteer learners were taken from the three target tertiary institutions. Gravetter and Forzano (2009: 138) define a sample as a "set of individuals selected from a population and [which] is usually intended to represent the population in a research study" and should be selected through a sampling procedure, commonly known as a sampling method or sampling technique. However, in case study research, Rule and John (2011: 64) highlight that the sample selection should be purposive because these are the "people who can shed most light, or different lights on a case". The choice of respondents was therefore purposively made from three different geographically located institutions found in Lesotho to assess their responses to the cases of the IEC materials. But since the respondents were volunteers, there was also an element of convenience sampling. Also quota sampling was employed to ensure the volunteers provided a gender balance in each of the institutions.

The intended research sample was 24 respondents (eight from each institution) in order to meet the requirements of the population for a focus group discussion, which requires a minimum number of eight to a maximum of 16 participants for a group (Blanche and Durrheim, 2000). However, the number was increased to 10 participants per institution, (30 in all) in consideration that some respondents may withdraw for different reasons along the way, especially when there was a four-week interval between the first and the second group discussions. Blanche and Durrheim (2000: 320) assert that “careful selection of the target population should be geared towards ‘deepening the understanding’ of the incident in question”. To achieve this, the original intended population for the study comprised only second year learners, because it was believed that they would still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials, but would have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to adapt to the higher learning institution culture. Regrettably, only six learners were able to participate at NUL. This meant that the overall number for the study became 26 instead of 30. Fortunately, there were no dropouts and the increase in the number of participants did not affect the discussion, as the numbers were within the required range per institution and manageable.

4.4.1 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A total of four visits were carried out to each institution for the study to be conducted. Heads of schools that were chosen for the research were first sensitized by phone, to make arrangements for the school to allow their students to be used for the study. After the verbal agreement I then visited the school. The first visit was to deliver the requisition letters, which were approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These were followed by several telephone conversations where the principals and directors introduced me to teachers they had assigned to assist me to identify the participants and organize the meetings for the study. The secondary visits were for orientation meetings with the participating learners. Participants were chosen with the assistance of the assigned teachers. They assembled learners (whom they knew would be able to participate in the study) to inform them about the study as well as to seek their assistance. During these meetings learners volunteered to participate in the study. The third meeting was held to conduct the first focus group discussion, while the fourth and

last one was for the second set of discussions and individual interviews. But due to unforeseen problems, with institutional activities conflicting with timing for the research interviews, the study ended up using learners other than the second years in Thaba-Tseka and Maseru.

4.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009: 151-152), there are two techniques that are commonly used in behavioural research and these are convenience and quota sampling techniques. They state that with convenience sampling researchers simply use available (and willing) members of a signified population as study participants. In quota sampling researchers ensure that individuals in the population are adequately represented. Thus, quota sampling can also be used to control the composition of a convenience sample, because it appreciates that there are distinctive features (subgroups or strata) that make up a population and ensure that these subgroups are equally represented in a convenience sample. Based on these considerations, quota sampling was included in the final selection from the convenience sample in order to observe gender equality and to make certain that some learners with disabilities were included in the study (although in reality there were none with disabilities in the chosen populations). Purposive sampling was also used to maintain a bias-free sample. For example, this population would have had a bias if it had included learners who were in their first year away from home, as they would not have adequately adapted to the higher learning institution culture.

Quota sampling allowed a quota of five males and five females to be ‘imposed’ to make sure that these subgroups were sufficiently represented, especially at TIL and LCE. A quota of one male and one female was again imposed to make sure that each subgroup was represented in the individual interviews. To obtain these samples, after the learners who had volunteered to participate in the study had gathered in the class room (the school had briefed them about the study prior to my visit), males and females were then asked to form a group each and count from one to five (each person representing a number). As a result, all the ones, twos, threes, fours and fives from each group formed a sample and in turn a focus group for the study. Thereafter, no other male or female was allowed to participate in the study. Thus, a total of 20

learners was drawn up for the full sample from these two institutions (10 from each institution). This was not the case with NUL, as explained in the previous section, increasing the number of participants for the sample to 26. Still, the same procedure was followed to form a group with these learners.

All students indicated that they had volunteered to participate and that the school had not coerced them into participating. Those who did not attend the orientation meeting would also not have been permitted, even if they had been willing to participate.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Observing ethical principles is a mandate for every research. All participants were of legal adult status, thus the study did not knowingly involve participants who had intellectual or mental impairments, had experienced traumatic or stressful life circumstances, had HI Virus, were highly dependent on medical care, were in dependent or unequal relationships, were in captivity or living in particularly vulnerable life circumstances. Thus, participants' rights to informed consent and confidentiality were fully observed to ensure that the respondents' rights were protected.

Although the study was ethically cleared by the university as involving minimal risk and not regarded to be of a sensitive nature (see Appendix a), all procedures were followed to also seek approval from the Lesotho National Health Research and Ethics Committee under the Ministry of Health. Thus with the clearance from my respective university this Committee was approached to seek permission to undertake the research using tertiary institutions students. All people in Lesotho researching on health care issues, where their studies involve human subjects, are obliged to obtain permission from this Committee. The permission was awarded without objections (see Appendix b). Permission was also sought from the tertiary institutions (see Appendices c, d and e) and from the participants themselves permission was sought verbally. One consent form was prepared per school, with all participants, including the assigned teacher, endorsing their signature to show that they participated of their own free will (see Appendices f, g and h).

Orientation meetings with participants were planned to be held a day before the actual focus group meetings in order to fully inform the respondents about the study, using an information sheet (and invitation to participate in the study - see Appendix i). These meetings were held a day before the actual interviews to give participants time to discuss the issue with their teachers and peers afterwards, so that they could decide whether to participate in the research or not without fear of compulsion. Hence, their written consent was sought before the focus group discussion could commence.

In view of the possibility that the materials or the questions could generate distress for some participants, since some might relate them to their own health status or bitter experiences (of illness or even death of loved ones), a qualified HIV and AIDS¹⁸ counselor was available in the event that any participant(s) showed a need for such support. The length of the interview was also considered as one of the factors that may induce stress for participants and make them shy away from taking part in the second discussions. So it was explained from the beginning that the second discussion would take a short time. However, the interviews suffered no causalities.

At the end of the orientation meeting participants were allowed to keep a copy of the information sheet. During these meetings the concept of volunteerism was emphasized, to ensure that the learners understood that their participation in the study was not compulsory, that they participated at their own free will and were not supposed to be asked by their institutions to give reasons why they wanted to participate, nor would their withdrawal from the study have any negative consequences. This was emphasized because institutions have an authoritarian culture where learners are used to receiving instructions. Although the learners' anonymity was observed in the findings, participants were, however, asked to write down their names and give the list to the assigned assisting teachers to make sure that the same students were used for the second meetings.

¹⁸ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Although participants were granted no material or financial incentives for participating in the study, it was hoped that learners would gain new knowledge and thus be educated on HIV-related matters. In this way it was hoped that the study would be profitable for them in that it would help to minimize their chances of being harmed by HIV. This was deemed possible, especially because the study employed an interpretivist paradigm, which according to Chilisa and Preece (2005: 28), “allows for human thinking, perceiving and other mental and physiological acts”. For instance, it was hoped that issues such as masturbation would have a news value, be informative, interesting and contain an element of surprise for them, as masturbation is still a taboo in Lesotho.

Respondent institutions were not by any means deceived by attempts to access any information from the learners without their institution’s prior consent, or by asking learners to commit any act which might diminish their self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret. Throughout all stages of the research, learners were never exposed to stressful or upsetting questions or procedures which may have had unpleasant or harmful side effects, as the research did not involve the use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may have been experienced as stressful, harmful or unpleasant.

To ensure that both males and females were equally represented in the study, discussion groups were formed with five males and five females. In the pursuit of fairness, institutions were also asked to ensure that learners with a disability (especially those with sight and hearing impairments) were included in the study. For those with hearing impairment, a sign language interpreter would have been made available, had they been present. I had hoped to share the study’s draft report with the respondents, in order to ensure that justice was maintained and to solicit their comments, but this was not possible with the Lesotho College of Education, since participants were in their last year of the study. However, the final copy of the report will be shared with all three institutions, in the hope that recommendations that emanated from the study will be of benefit to the learners as individuals and to the institutions as well.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

After the Human Subjects Approval Statement from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee was gained (Protocol number HSS/0077/013D), the data collection process started. But before finally conducting the actual interviews, the three target institutions were each visited four times. The first visit was to deliver the requisition letters. The second one was for orientation meetings. The third meeting was held to conduct the first focus group meeting, while the fourth and last one was for the second discussions and individual interviews. Ralise (1997) argues that the basis for collection and organization of data is determined by, among other things, the purpose of the study; that is, the researcher's aspirations and the intended sources of information. As was explained earlier, the study adopted a case study design and deemed focus group discussion as the most appropriate method that could be used to collect data. Nonetheless, Barbour (2007) advises that case study researchers should watch out for the possibility that respondents may simply tell them what they think they want to hear, a problem which Smithson (2000) says may be worsened by focus group discussions because of peer pressure or fear of genuine opinions being disapproved by other group members. That is why two individual (one-to-one) interviews were conducted immediately after the second FGDs with two learners, who had participated in both FGDs to see if they had influenced each other as peers. Access to schools was sought from the university's vice chancellor and the two colleges' principals. Permission to use learners for the research was also sought from the schools' authorities and the learners themselves. Data was collected over twelve months from February 2013 to April 2014.

4.8 TRIANGULATION

In order to ensure that the findings of the study accurately reflected the responses of the Lesotho tertiary education students towards the print IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV, methods that were used for data collection were multilayered, in which both group and individual interviews were conducted and included the initial semiotic analysis of the materials for further comparison. The study, therefore, adopted a triangulation method to capture as much information from the learners as possible. Blanche and Durrheim (2002: 128)

point out that this approach helps researchers to “home in” and correctly understand the phenomenon by approaching it from different angles. Babbie (2002) says triangulation is important because it elicits both definite and unexpected kinds of information from the respondents. Triangulation can be categorised in three ways: (i) Multiple data sources triangulation, which can be used to make sure that the probability of the findings will be seen as credible or worthy of consideration; (ii) Methodological triangulation, in which the researcher simultaneously gathers with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods and then interprets the results together to provide a better understanding of a phenomenon and; (iii) Investigator triangulation, in which the results of an investigation, employing a method associated with one research strategy, are crosschecked against the results of the same investigation using different approaches and methods. For this study, a multiple data sources triangulation method was adopted to make sure that the probability of the findings would be credible or worthy of consideration.

Triangulation of data sources was enhanced by conducting two sets of FGDs and two sets of one-to-one interviews in three different institutions. This was important, because triangulation can help improve the credibility of the research results (Bradley 1993). Communication, semiotics and discourse analysis theories were used to augment the theoretical triangulation. Based on the comments of the supervisors, the cohort members and their supervisors, both instruments were amended and pilot tested. The subsequent paragraph deliberates on the stages that were taken to pilot the instruments.

4.9 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two different semi-structured interview guidelines (see Appendices j and k) were used to collect data for the study. Semi-structured interview guidelines or topic guides were chosen over other research instruments to appropriately focus on all communication issues that are relevant to print IEC materials, HIV and tertiary institution learners. They were chosen also because they did not restrict the interview procedure to the guideline, but allowed the addition of other questions and the repetition of some questions where necessary, for appropriate responses to be elicited (Jegede, 1995). Moreover, the guidelines allowed questions to be

clarified with the interviewees (Bell, 1993). For example, during the collection of data, questions were asked in English as they appeared in the interview guidelines, but they were also translated into Sesotho for clarification purposes. Barbour (2007: 33) supports this process, in that it allows “the researcher to focus on issues salient to those being studied, rather than emphasizing the researcher’s preconception or agenda”. Respondents were subjected to semi-structured interviews with the underlying assumption that this type of interviewing would assist in the acquisition of some information that could not easily be captured through questionnaires (Schrerak, Colthrap and Cooner, 1997), because they allowed probing for more information and clarification of what was required, where and when necessary.

The items in the interview guidelines were structured around the issues of the comprehensibility, attractiveness, persuasiveness, acceptability and credibility of print IEC materials. Hence, a 15-item interview guideline was structured and used for all respondents of the study during the first focus group discussion. Using the 15-item interview guideline, a meeting for the first group discussion was held to explore the learners’ understanding of the materials. Another focus group meeting, using a seven-item interview guide, was held four weeks from the first one to establish the type of meaning the learners attached to the print IEC materials and to find out whether or not the materials had any influence on their attitudes towards HIV-related issues.

Thus, a different interview guide, entailing five questions, was used for the second FGDs. Two individual interviews were conducted per institution, using the same learners who participated in both discussions and the same interview guide to solicit clarifications. These interviews were conducted immediately after the second set of FGDs, to establish whether or not their peers had any influence on their participation during the FGDs. These individual interviews were held to also solicit clarification and elaboration of any issues raised during the focus groups. Besides this, individual interviews were found to be an ideal forum to explore detailed personal experiences and to evaluate the intended interventions. It was expected that the second FGDs and individual interviews would reveal further implications for improving

youth oriented messages aimed at preventing the spread of HIV. The documents (the materials), as a form of documentary analysis, were used on two levels. A semiotic analysis of the documents was conducted prior to collecting data from the above mentioned population. Then focus groups and individual interviews were used as data collection methods for student analysis of the same documents (HIV materials).

The interview guidelines were structured around the effectiveness of the print IEC materials at conveying messages aimed at curtailing the spread of HIV among youth and young adults in relation to the three theories: communication, semiotics and discourse analysis, and the seven concepts: sign, object, interpretant, denotation, connotation, elaboration and anchorage and relay that make up the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

The guideline for the first meeting ended by asking the respondents to give their opinions on the quality of the materials and how print materials can be improved so that they can ‘talk to them’ as a community (in a school setting), and to youth and young adults in general in their respective districts. The second meeting ended by asking which type of IEC material the learners thought would be most appropriate to get HIV and AIDS messages through to youth so that they could provide insights on what can be done to improve HIV prevention message(s) and the outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence attitudinal change among youth and young adults, especially in their respective districts. In addition, respondents were asked how they acquired HIV and AIDS-related materials and the frequency with which they acquired them. This was asked to verify the supposition that people living in the mountainous areas are highly disadvantaged regarding their access to media and other educational facilities, (as was mentioned in Chapter one) and are, therefore, not so exposed to information or literature as are their peers in the urban areas.

Using semi-structured guidelines helped the exploration of the “investigated issue in detail” (Henn *et al.*, 2006: 162). They allowed for the probing, prompting and using of flexible questioning, since the study inquired about a rather hypothetical entity created from theory and speculation. The hypothetical entity was that IEC materials inform, educate and communicate with people. The same guidelines were used for all three institutions, so that the

predetermined questions were not deviated from, in order to be able to demonstrate a comparative element between the different contextual circumstances of the three institutions at the end of the inquiry. Moreover, these guides were used because they helped to create some level of standardization across the six interviews that were conducted in these institutions. Having deliberated on the study instruments here, the next paragraph looks at how the trustworthiness of these instruments was assessed.

4.9.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Henn *et al.* (2006) argue that small scale qualitative research (like this one) is often criticized for lacking both structure and system. Their argument is that the findings cannot be used for generalization. They claim that this is because the number of cases (items or respondents) used in this approach is too small. They consider generalizability to be problematic in small-scale qualitative research (Henn *et al.*, 2006:178) and go on to show that, “some researchers claim that generalizability should not be considered as a standard against which the credibility of a research should be assessed”, especially because the goal of researchers who use this approach is not to discover general laws of human behaviour, but to describe and explain the existing patterns of behaviour of a specific group, as was the case in this study. The intention here was not to investigate the general laws of the Lesotho tertiary institution learners’ behaviour in regard to HIV, but to describe their responses towards print IEC materials that are used to prevent HIV, with the aim of explaining the patterns of responding to these type of IEC materials. Looking at the overall population of Lesotho, this approach is trustworthy enough to make general conclusions concerning youth and young adults in Lesotho.

Since this was an interpretive study, it was evaluated by assessing its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, the preferred terms in qualitative research to the concepts of validity and reliability, in order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the research (Rule and John, 2011).

4.9.2 CREDIBILITY

According to Bradley (1993: 436), credibility refers to the “adequate representation of the constructions of the social world under study”. In an effort to establish an adequate rapport, all

institutions were visited a day before the actual data collection meetings were held to conduct an orientation meeting with participants. Besides orientating the respondents about the study, these meetings were also carried out in an effort to augment the amount of time all the participants and the researcher needed to spend with each other. For instance, Chilisa and Preece (2005: 166) indicate that respondents are likely to relax and “volunteer different and more sensitive information” when a researcher spends more time with them. Substantial FGDs and interviews were conducted to avoid repetition by the respondents of information, themes, patterns, trends and examples. Besides talking to the supervisors, to help improve the credibility of this study, peer-debriefing meetings were also held with fellow PhD cohort members, who helped to scrutinize the procedures used for the study, as well as the findings, conclusions, and analysis. Negative case analysis was achieved by recording all issues that do not appropriately fit the categories of the study, so that the working thematic interpretations based on the discovery of such cases could be revised. Interpretations were checked by asking respondents if the notes accurately reflected their deliberations at the end of every discussion and interview.

4.9.3 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability, according to Bradley (1993: 436), is the extent to which the “researcher’s working hypothesis [sic] can be applied to another context”. However, they warn that researchers should understand that it is not their task to provide an index of transferability; but theirs is to provide high-quality “data sets and descriptions” that are transferable to different settings or contexts. The fact that the same instruments were used in all three contexts here is in itself an indication of the transferability value of the instruments. Patterns within the findings also demonstrated the transferability of findings to different settings within the Lesotho tertiary learning context.

4.9.4 DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is the “coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomena” (Bradley, 1993: 437). To enhance dependability, three different sets of FGDs and individual interviews with similar participants were

conducted. The first meetings were held to establish message(s) that the learners deemed the materials to convey and their perceptions on the materials' significance and appropriateness to them. The second meetings were aimed at finding out the kind of meaning that they (learners) attached to the materials, whether or not the materials raised any critical awareness for them, whether or not their exposure to the materials influenced their attitudes towards HIV-related issues, whether or not the materials offended them in any way or affected their feelings after the first discussion. This was done in view of the fact that dependability can be determined by checking the consistency of the study processes (Bradley, 1993). During these meetings the learners were also asked to suggest topic(s) that they felt should have been included and those that they wanted removed from the material(s). They were also asked to make suggestions regarding the materials' layout so that it would attract the intended audience.

4.9.5 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability refers to “the extent to which the characteristics of the data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results” (Bradley, 1993: 437). Regular presentations before my supervisors, cohort members and their supervisors were made as a technique for checking the internal coherence of the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations to set up the trustworthiness of this study and to ensure that it conforms to the requirements of qualitative research. Their comments thus helped to rule out bias and improve the quality of the methodological triangulation used in the study.

4.10 SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS

First, the materials were analysed from a semiotic perspective to understand how the messages (signs) are created in these materials, and then they were analysed through discourse analysis to determine what the messages and pictures in the materials could be portraying, in order to be able to compare and evaluate the learners' understandings in relation to this analysis of the IEC messages (see Chapter five).

4.11 PILOT TESTING

When developing a new measurement instrument, it is useful to “test it” by “means of a pilot study” before administering it to the actual sample of study. This process of testing entails administering the instrument to a limited number of subjects from the same population as that for which the eventual project is intended (Babbie, 2002: 129). The purpose of the pilot study, according to Gravetter and Forzano (2009), is to detect possible flaws in the measurement procedure, to identify unclear or ambiguously formulated items and to give the researcher the opportunity to notice non-verbal cues that may possibly indicate discomfort and embarrassment about the content or wording of the questions.

They explain that, “possible errors in the measurement procedure may include among others ambiguous instructions and inadequate time limits” (ibid: 117). To rule out all these concerns, the interview guidelines were piloted to establish whether or not the questions were comprehensible, and also the length of time that would be required to conduct the meetings. Thus, two pilot studies were conducted. One was done with the National University of Lesotho Adult Education diploma students, from the Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) in Maseru. The second pilot was done with the Lesotho Agricultural College in Maseru.

The intention was to initially conduct the pilot with the IEMS students only. A group had been identified, as an ideal group for the pilot study, of about eleven third year students that at one time were used to hold their group discussions near my workplace. The group consisted of eleven members, six females and five males. But before approaching them I telephonically contacted the National University of Lesotho’s Institute of Extra Mural Studies Adult Education diploma course coordinator to find out what was required to use these students to pilot this study. She promised to consult with the head of the Adult Education Department. Her consultation yielded positive results and the group was immediately approached for their assistance, after which they granted permission. After they had agreed to assist, an orientation meeting was arranged so that the purpose of this study could be explained. The explanation included: my name and the names of my supervisors, why it was important to have that orientation meeting, the purpose of the study, why they had been chosen to participate,

whether or not they were obliged to take part, what would happen to them if they took part, whether or not their taking part in the study would be kept confidential, what will happen to the results after the study, who was organizing and funding the study and who had reviewed the study. This explanation ended by providing the institute and the learners with the contact details of my lead supervisor, should they have needed to discuss any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project. At the end of the meeting, together we set up dates and times for the next three meetings, which were to be held at IEMS.

Despite the fact that attendance at the orientation meeting was not good, it continued with those that were available (six out of eleven). The meeting lasted for about thirty minutes, which was sufficient time for the participants to fully understand what was expected of them and what they could expect from me. From this, I was then able to estimate the amount of time needed for the actual orientation meetings. This meeting also gave me a 'feel' for how to conduct this kind of meeting. The orientation sheet was not only discussed for the purposes of sharing information, but also for the purpose of informing the learners about the pilot study before asking for their consent.

We met again after four days to continue the first group discussion. On this occasion, nine participants were on time, while the other two arrived late. Due to time limitations only one material (poster) was discussed, as the meeting was held after working hours (5pm). A new date and time for another meeting was arranged, but never materialized, again because of the poor turnout (only three learners). However, a month later, an individual interview was held with a gentleman who had shown interest and was always there for the discussions. This interview also helped to estimate the length of time needed for the one-to-one interviews. No comments from the pilot study were included, as they did not raise anything different from what the other respondents had said. Upon failing to complete the pilot with the IEMS students, it was necessary to look for other avenues. Therefore the registrar at the Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC) was contacted telephonically to find out the requirements for using their students to pilot the study. A requisition in writing was requested, which was done and delivered on the same day. Permission was then sought and obtained from the Lesotho

Agricultural College (Maseru), as this institution was not participating in the main study, to interview eight to ten of their second year learners. To enhance the authorities' understanding of the nature and purpose of the pilot study, I attached the information sheet, which was intended to be used as a basis for soliciting the respondents' verbal informed consent before the actual interviews. Interview guidelines were also attached to the requisition letter (see Appendix 1) as it was requested by the registrar during preliminary telephonic conversation. A positive response was granted a week later. However, the first meeting was held almost three weeks later as the school took some time to identify the learners for the pilot study. A 30 minute orientation meeting with eight students (four males and four females) was held to discuss the fact sheet. To make certain that individuals in the population were adequately represented, the group was made up of equal number of males and females. The first meeting was successfully conducted in March and the second one, which was immediately followed by the individual interviews, was conducted in April.

Results from the pilot study revealed neither errors nor ambiguities in the instruments except that they took much longer than had previously been anticipated. The first FGD was expected to take one and half to two hours of the respondents' time. Unfortunately, it lasted for far more than three hours. The same thing happened with the individual interviews; they lasted more than one hour thirty minutes, whereas they were each anticipated to take one hour or less. This forced me to cut down the amount of content in one of the research materials. This was done on the pamphlet, as it contained information which could be read independently from the remaining content. That is, the first three folders of the pamphlet explained what is meant by voluntary counselling and testing. This deliberated on the importance of knowing one's HIV status, who should test for HIV, what happens when one has a negative or positive status; whilst the other three folders explained the process undertaken during the voluntary testing and counselling. The pilot aided the adjustment of time for the discussions and the drawing up of a strategy that could best keep the discussions alive, as they were still going to be long, with an estimated time frame of about two hours. After drawing up the new strategy, efforts to collect data were embarked on. The subsequent paragraphs deliberates on the stages that were taken to collect data.

4.12 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus group discussion was the best method for data collection as it enabled the participants to discuss the issues among themselves. This method enabled me to get a deeper insight into this research than conducting individual interviews, even using the same participants (Bless and Smith, 2000). It also provided a good platform and an opportunity for participants to learn from the materials as well as from each other and perhaps resolve problems that they may have faced in the process, consequently granting me the opportunity to learn from them and from the material as well. The focus group discussion method is recommended when researching health related issues (Green and Thorogood, 2004) because participant deliberations are better reflected in the circumstances that form the setting for their actions. Above all, FGDs allowed potential issues of interest that were raised during the discussions to be followed up as well as permitting more in-depth discussion of issues that may not have been easy to probe in a one-to-one situation (Du Plooy, 2009, and Lindlof, 1995). Focus groups were found to be suitable for the study particularly because they can help researchers to detect misconceptions that may arise from the participants and their cause (Barbour, 2007). It was important to find out the causes of substantive differences in the learners' responses, as individuals or as groups, and whether there were any.

However, FGDs can have a negative influence on some participants, making them shy away from voicing their views. Consequently, two individual interviews were held to solicit clarification and elaboration of any issues raised during the focus groups. Besides this, FGDs lack the opportunity for the interviewer to explore the interviewee's detailed personal experiences and evaluation of the intended interventions. So, some individual interviews were conducted, which in addition served a triangulation purpose, as previously indicated.

4.13 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were used because this was conducted as a qualitative study. Barbour (2007: 47) explains that, "whilst the concern for quantitative researchers appealing to 'triangulation' is to corroborate or confirm results produced using different methods, qualitative research thrives analytically on differences and discrepancies". The interviews

provided an opportunity to explore issues that may not have been raised in the more public FG forum. Moreover, Barbour demonstrates that qualitative researchers greatly benefit from using triangulation, as it permits the comparison of data from “parallel data bases”. Barbour (2007: 47) argues that “... if research finds differences between the results from individual and group interviews, then the methodological goal should be to understand the sources of these differences”, which was the aim to discover through this study.

4.13.1 THE FGD AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROCESS

During the group discussions and individual interviews, respondents were given the liberty to use both Sesotho and English to enhance their freedom and comfort in the hope that this would maximize their participation in the discussion and thus help to attain a more comprehensive perspective about the value or worth of HIV-related print IEC materials. The result was that the responses were done in Sesotho and had to be translated into English. Questions were asked in an open-ended, non-directive manner. For example, “What do you see in this picture?” and more responses and information would be solicited, if the interviewees seemed to be leaving out some important issues, with a follow-up question such as “What else?” or “Does anybody have a different view or idea?” or “Why do you say that?” When they indicated that they had exhausted their responses these were summarized and their meaning confirmed before moving on to the next question. Permission to record and to jot down some notes during the discussions was sought from participants at the beginning of the meetings. Proceedings from the discussions were recorded with a digital voice recorder while some were noted down on paper in both Sesotho and English during the discussions. Those written in Sesotho were translated into English later on. Recorded discussions were transcribed verbatim afterwards.

Learners were asked to take turns in reading out aloud a paragraph or bullet point from the materials during the discussions, thus actively involving them and helping them to exercise their mental and physiological involvement (Chilisa and Preece, 2005) in the hope that their participation would be maximized. This was also encouraged in response to Carstens’ idea (2004b) that it is helpful for materials developers to observe the person reading, or to listen to

them reading aloud, so that they are able to discuss with them the reasons why a text is difficult to comprehend to enable them to make the appropriate changes. The same process was carried out for the second focus group discussions, though this time the reading was done mainly to remind participants of what the materials contained. The second discussion was meant to find out whether the first discussions had any influence on the learners' attitudes towards the print IEC materials.

The first group discussions lasted, on average, one hour and forty minutes, the second, forty-five minutes, while the individual interviews, on average, lasted twenty minutes. During the first meeting participants were each given a copy of the material to be discussed and were asked this general question "What do you see in this material?", where participants were expected to mention everything they saw that they thought made up the material, or what in communication and semiotics is called a 'sign'. For instance, in the case of this study this particular question was found to be of utmost importance, as it looked for something in terms of 'signs' that formed the basis for efficient communication, even though it might have also helped to promote a relaxed atmosphere. This argument is based on the three theories that form the theoretical framework of the study, namely communication, semiotics and discourse analysis theories, because without a correct understanding of 'signs' in print IEC materials, no communication would take place.

After mentioning what they saw in the materials, participants were asked to take turns to read them, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Then, the actual discussion on the materials followed, guided by the rest of the questions from the interview guidelines. The same process was followed for the second discussions, starting with a general question: "How did you feel after the first discussion?" followed by the question, "What meaning did you attach to this material?"

Probing for details was, however, minimal, as the concern was that it might overextend the discussion time and in the process stress the respondents and make them lose concentration. Although participants were prompted to say more on all the questions, it was done with great caution for fear of getting 'fake responses' if probed harder, that is, they might provide what

they thought the interviewer wanted to hear, since the discussion was on rather sensitive topics in a school setting where they might have felt that they were supposed to give correct answers.

Even though the participants' views were captured as a group, it was perceived that they felt and attached different meanings to the material as individuals. This confirmed the fact that it was of absolute necessity to conduct the individual interviews, as the materials affected each in a different way. There were some indications that some disagreed with others during the group discussions, although unfortunately it was not considered ethical for the researcher to choose participants for one-to-one interviews because they were allowed to volunteer. A rotating work plan was used to make sure that all materials received maximum attention. So each discussion (per different institution) started with a different material with the concern that the discussions stretched over a long period of time and the respondents might get tired or lose interest during the course of the discussion and so deny some of the materials justice by not giving them the required or expected attention. In order to overcome this, the materials' precedence was rotated between the institutions. So if the discussion in institution 'a' started with a poster, at institution 'b' it started with a pamphlet and at 'c' with a magazine, so that each material had an opportunity to be analysed whilst respondents were still fresh. As was mentioned earlier, the materials were used both as a source and a tool for data collection and analysis. Hence, Chapters five six, seven and eight were devoted to the analysis of the materials, so that the researcher's analysis would in turn provide background information about the materials and guide the reader when discussing the student responses through comparing the findings.

4.14 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analysed thematically in a descriptive and explanatory form and presented in paragraphs through verbatim excerpts, over three different chapters (Chapter six - pamphlet, Chapter seven - magazine and Chapter eight - poster). As already mentioned, methods that were used for data collection were multilayered in that both focus group and individual interviews were conducted. Data was initially analysed semantically (see Chapter five) in order to support the researcher's deliberations in relation to the researched problem

and the reviewed literature. Each category was analysed through semiotics embedded in a communication lens, under the same themes as those used for the learners' responses towards the key research question. Information or facts beyond interview guidelines, which were important, were also considered where relevant.

Collected data was transcribed and translated into English in the process to generate different categories, which were grouped to form independent themes for each question. It was acknowledged that translating is an interpretation in itself, which means that some information may have been missed or misinterpreted. However, to avoid this eventuality, the interview recordings were listened to several times to ensure as accurate a translation as possible was obtained each time. For identification, learners were named according to gender and position to maintain anonymity. For example, males were referred to as **M**s and females **F**s. Hence, there were individuals such as **M¹** and **F¹**. The position (**1, 2...**) was added to the identification coding, reflecting how they happened to follow upon their initial responses to questions, but not in order of importance.

Although each respondent participated in reading out aloud the materials at the beginning of the discussions, analysis did not include looking into factors that determined whether or not the messages were easy or difficult to read such as sentence length, complexity and structure and lexical familiarity (of or relating to the words or vocabulary of a language). The analysis explicitly concentrated on the signs plus the emotional responses or reactions that indicate anxiety, joy, anger and sadness that could have had an effect on the minds of the learners. These included: learners' mental concept produced by both the sign and their experience of the object within their context or frame of reference (interpretant); obvious messages that they derived from looking at the picture(s) or text (denotation); essence of messages or hidden messages that they figured the text or picture(s) to be conveying (connotation); whether or not the text messages were elaborated in the picture(s) or the picture message(s) were elaborated in the text and whether or not the text and pictures complemented each other and were fragments of a general syntagm.

A fifteen-item interview guideline was used to explore the learners' understanding of the materials. This guideline was divided into five different parts: a) comprehension, b) attractiveness, c) persuasiveness, d) acceptability, and e) credibility.

Part (a) inspected the comprehension to establish what messages each material conveyed. It comprised seven questions to address the following:

- signs – what the learners saw when looking at the materials
- denotation – the direct specific meaning of the messages that the learners understood the materials to convey
- connotation – the implied meaning by a word or associated idea that the messages and pictures meant to the learners, apart from the things they explicitly name or describe
- elaboration or anchorage and relay – the relationship between image and text or words and illustrations
- learners' preferences on what could be included or deleted in the materials, what they liked or disliked about the materials in order for the materials to convey the intended messages as determined through their interpretations.

Part (b) consisted of three questions that examined the attractiveness of the materials, particularly looking at the learners' preferences or what would make them have a closer look at the materials. This section also analysed the learners' interpretations of what they liked or disliked about the materials as well as what they desired to be included in or deleted from these materials to convey the intended messages.

Part (c) determined the persuasiveness of the materials through emotions that the learners felt in response to the meanings they derived from these materials (their discussions which revealed particular belief systems as discourses). This was determined by asking what action(s) they understood the materials wanted them to take.

Part (d) examined the acceptability of the materials through the learners' interpretations according to what may be offensive in Basotho culture as per the social discourses stated by the learners. In view of these discourses, learners were asked how the materials could be made to suit the Basotho culture better.

Part (e) contemplated the credibility of the materials through the learners' interpretations and discourses by examining what they disagreed with in the materials and the benefits that they understood they would get by following what the materials communicated.

The significance of the materials and objects that could be used to improve HIV preventative message(s), including an outline of IEC materials in general, was examined through an eleven- item interview guideline, which was divided into two sections. Section A focused only on the researched materials, whilst section B looked into IEC materials in general.

Collected data for Section A was presented and analysed according to the first six items that formed part of the interview guideline. This section examined the influence of the researched materials on the learners, looking at how they felt after the first focus group discussions, determining whether the materials raised any critical awareness and whether the discussions influenced their attitudes in any way towards HIV and AIDS related issues, including the meaning that they attached to the materials (connotations). Learners' discourses were used to analyze the degree to which the materials conformed to the Basotho culture, or the learners' understandings thereof. As already indicated, to be able to draw conclusions on the learners' responses, the materials were first analysed from a semiotic perspective.

The data was then interpreted and discussed through verbatim excerpts from the participants in order to support the researcher's deliberations in relation to the stated research problem, the research questions and the reviewed literature. Analysis also included the researcher's semiotic interpretation of the materials as a further source of triangulation and point of comparison. Even though each respondent participated in reading out aloud the materials at the beginning of the discussions, analysis did not include looking into factors that determined whether or not the messages were easy or difficult to read. The observation was, being able to read did not necessarily mean learners understood the message of the materials.

Explicitly, the analysis concentrated only on the aspects of the materials that had an effect on the learners' interpretations of the messages ('objects', to use Peirce's concept). These aspects included the learners' mental concepts produced by both the sign and their experience of the

object within their context or frame of reference (interpretant). It also looked for obvious surface messages that they derived from looking at the picture(s) or text (denotation), the essence of messages or hidden messages that they figured the text or picture(s) to be conveying (connotation), and whether or not the text messages were elaborated in the picture(s) or picture message(s) elaborated in the text (elaboration). In addition, it was analysed whether or not the text and pictures seemed to complement each other and together form a general syntagm, a linguistic term designating any combination of units... which are arranged in a significant sequence (Fiske, 1990). For example, a sentence is a syntagm of words, which together carry a complete message. This was done because the study partly aimed to explore the materials' comprehensibility to see if print IEC materials are useful or not in informing, educating or communicating HIV and AIDS issues to young adults with the aim to identifying any communication hindrances that may emanate from language-specific and culturally embedded meanings (if any).

4.15 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since tertiary level students have a high degree of literacy competency, there were limitations as to what the study could concentrate on within the time available.

- My position as a health educator meant that the study was at risk of researcher bias. To rule this out, proceedings of my work were crossed-checked with my two supervisors and my cohort members during peer presentations.
- The school calendars of the institutions and the climatic conditions also appeared to have mainly contributed to limitations of the study in terms of the final selection of participants and time frames for orientation and data collection.
- The availability of researched materials producers or HIV and AIDS Focal Persons in the respective organizations to respond to my questions was very limited.
- Access to updated HIV related statistics was difficult to obtain.

4.16 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the following aspects of the research: methodology, paradigm, design, population, sample and sampling techniques, ethics, data collection procedures, instruments and instrumentation, and instrument trustworthiness. It included the data analysis method, pilot testing and limitations of the study. Qualitative approach and a case study research design were used to carry out the study. An interpretivist paradigm was used to guide the study. The population of the study comprised tertiary institution learners. A non-probability purposive sampling technique to select the year groups, followed by convenience sampling of volunteer participants, and which was subsequently refined through quota sampling, was used to select samples for the study. Different types of interviews (focus group and individual) were used for the purposes of triangulation to collect data through semi-structured interview guidelines. The chapter also discussed how the trustworthiness of the study was evaluated according to qualitative procedures by assessing its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in order to ensure that it conforms to the requirements of qualitative research. Pilot testing showed that the instruments were tested with two institutions (IEMS and the Lesotho Agricultural College). Data collection was done through six FGDs and six one-to-one interviews to enhance methodological triangulation alongside the researcher's semiotic analysis of the materials prior to data collection for further comparison. Details on data analysis show that data is presented and described in a thematic form using illustrative verbatim quotations.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Prior to embarking on data collection (from the participants), an analysis was made of what were determined to be the messages portrayed by the three examples of print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials used for the research. To do this, the structure and the meanings of the materials was explored using semiotic concepts to study the signs (Chandler, 2007; Fiske, 1990; and Berger, 1995) that made up the materials. The discourse analysis (Fairclough 2005; 2015; and Gee, 2005) was also used to derive meaning from the materials. This chapter describes the materials and presents this analysis.

As was mentioned in Chapter one, there are many stakeholders in Lesotho producing educational materials aimed at preventing the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) among youth and young adults, but only three materials, developed by three different producers, were selected for the research. The selection of materials was restricted to the availability of adequate numbers of copies from the sources at the time. Hence, one of the materials (the pamphlet) was not specifically developed for these audiences, but for the general public. The materials included a poster on how the virus spreads through multiple partners, developed by the Ministry of Health. A magazine with eight articles, developed by a private agency called Phela Health and Development Communications, and a pamphlet about HIV testing which was developed by the Population Services International (PSI) for the New Start centers. The New Start centers provide Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) services for the PSI. The poster and the pamphlet are written in Sesotho, while the article from the magazine is written in English.

5.0.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF ANALYSIS

The significance of analyzing the materials prior to conducting interviews with learners, laid in its value to helping print IEC materials producers and members of the IEC Clearing Warehouse Committee to realise how important it was for them to revisit the materials (in the absence of the producer) after a certain period of time (6-12 months or before they could be

re-printed) to see if they would still attach the same meaning as the one they initially attached during the Clearing Warehouse Committee review.

This analysis and interpretation exercise was considered important in that it will help to enlighten print IEC material producers to determine the potential impact of intended materials before embarking on their production. The exercise also provided the researcher with an opportunity to draw on theories that provided her with deeper insights into how print IEC materials might be understood by the readers and the significance of dialogue in facilitating understanding of intended messages from these kind of materials. For instance, it provided the researcher with the opportunity to understand and appreciate among others, the importance of semiotics concepts like denotation and connotation. These provided insights into how the language used in the materials needs to be culturally sensitive (especially because some of the straightforward Sesotho words are sometimes taken to be insults and can therefore not be used for public messages), driving IEC materials producers to use euphemisms or metaphors to describe sensitive issues, while at the same time it is important that the intended audience easily distinguishes the connotative messages.

In addition, this analysis and interpretation made me appreciate the value of retesting the materials before they could finally be produced and distributed. The current practice is that the materials are produced based only on pretesting results, without being retested after they have been reformulated according to the results of the initial pretest. Carstens (2004b: 459) confirms that “owing to budgetary and time constraints, these practitioners often rely on gut feelings and general style sheets for plain language writing, which may result in the production of materials which do not fit the needs and the skills of the intended audiences”.

5.0.2 THE ANALYSIS

In order to be able to understand the general principles of communication incurred by the materials, the study drew on Barthes layers of meaning, as well as Peirce’s theory of signs, particularly using the elements of meaning, a structure made up of the sign, object and interpretant (Chandler, 2007 and Fiske, 2011). The discussion of each material is accompanied by the analysis and closes with a summary.

5.1 THE POSTER

The first example of the print materials is a pale grey A2 size poster titled: **NA U KENA BANENG? E!!** The title is a Sesotho question asking if one likes to go out with young ones (youth), or it can be interpreted as asking if one likes to have a ‘nice-time’ (that involves sexual intercourse) with young people. At the top, situated in the center of the poster is a coat of arms logo. Immediately underneath the coat of arms, again situated in the middle, is the above mentioned title. The title is followed by an array of pictures of young people (youth): four males and four females in different occupations, from those who look like they are engaged in white collar jobs, or are school learners, to a taxi driver and a commercial sex worker. These pictures are individually positioned in a circular composition, though attached to each other to form a big circle. Inside the circle is a web of lines, with each line pointing at two pictures, suggesting that it is connecting them. However, all pictures are pointed at by more than one line. For instance, one of the pictures is pointed at by four lines that extend from four different pictures. All the pictures connect to each other through these lines.

Beneath the pictures is a Sesotho text: **BONA HEE, HIV E KENA LE UENA.** This means, ‘look HIV enters nice-time with you’. This expression seems to answer the question asked in the title, because it informs the person who was asked whether he or she likes a ‘nice-time’ that, if so, HIV will accompany him or her there.

Below the expression is a meandering light brown line, below which lie five logos. On the far left is the Ministry of Health logo, which indicates that the poster is an initiative of the ministry. Next to it, with a red dot on a white background, is one that represents the Government and the people of Japan. Immediately below it is one that represents the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Next to these is the Health Education Division logo (as an indication that the poster was approved by the division on behalf of the ministry) and on the far right is one that represents the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The poster is undated.

Diagram 11: THE POSTER (Lesotho Ministry of Health)



5.1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE POSTER

The material is a poster indicating a web of possible sexual interpersonal relationships. That is, it shows eight photographs portraying people, eight in all (four males and four females), connected to each other by a web of lines. Based on Barthes' systematic model, through which the role of meaning in a text and the process of reading can be analysed, the poster was examined using Barthes's two orders of signification, the first order (denotation) and the second order (connotation).

The poster contains denoted signs (numerous words and several pictures) with the connoted message that all people run the risk of being infected and, in turn, infecting others with the HI Virus, regardless of their educational, economic or social status, unless this fact is proven otherwise. The text (words) and pictures (images) seem to complement each other and, by forming parts of the general message, can be understood as a syntagm (Arbuckle 2014) to which each part contributes its own distinct information. In the analysis, it was assumed that even illiterate people would be able to interpret the intended message from looking at the picture because they would be familiar with the type of people shown, though the findings of others in the literature (Arbuckle, 2014, Carstens, Maes and Gangla-Birir, 2006 and Carstens, 2004b) seemed to contradict this assumption because the connotation or underlying meaning of the poster is not presented in an analogous way. That is, it does not show the people actually having sex with each other, but relies on the linking lines to symbolize that they might do. The anchorage provided by the text message is what determines or pins down the connotation; otherwise they could perhaps be seen as members of a social club, savings club or church movement, for example. However, it was concluded that the message was constructed in such a way that its essence was elaborated in the picture, and in the same manner the picture message was anchored and relayed in the title and subtitle for their meaning to be determined.

The web of lines in the middle of the pictures symbolized the connections between those who like a 'nice time'. The web is a metaphor for the way HIV spreads, indicating that each person connects through sexual intercourse, and with more than one person, without knowing it. The phrase 'nice time' was understood to represent a euphemism for risky behaviour mainly associated with unprotected sexual intercourse and HIV, especially because the title continues to indicate that HIV enters 'nice times' with those who like to engage in such activities. Thus, the poster consists of vivid layers of meaning (Barthes, in van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001) that portray HIV related high-risk behaviour conducted by males and females who look so ordinary and healthy. This means one cannot tell, from merely looking at them, which one is infected with HIV and which one is not. The poster, it was assumed was an initiative of more than one government ministry, since it had the coat of arms logo (which represent the

Government of Lesotho). The coat of arms could also be interpreted as representing institutional authenticity, and this official status gives the message a certain credibility.

The researcher's reaction to the material was that it was visually readable in that words were written in a large enough font and the colours were generally bright, making it attractive to look at. In addition to the appearance of the text, Carstens and Snyman (2003), citing Mody (1991), argue that readability is promoted by the reader's prior knowledge. Lookability, according to Carstens and Snyman (2003), involves the quality that the materials possess (due to the design) and the capacity of the reader to make sense out of the visual information such as photographs, graphics, symbols, typography, and the reader's ability to link headings, bullets, numbering and summaries. Carstens and Snyman (2003: 129) expound that this should include a statement of purpose in order for the material designer to try to reduce the reader's "cognitive load" whereby it will not be difficult for the readers "to recognize individual elements and attribute relevant roles to them in the depicted scene or situation". Carstens and Snyman (2003: 129) argue that readers also have to "recognize and understand abstract elements and conventions suggesting meaning aspects that cannot be visualized directly (such as action and states of mind); and they have to combine all this to derive the ultimate message." This is because even though some pictures may appear to be simple, it may not be easy for the reader to process the desired opinions that are being conveyed or to interpret them.

The poster was therefore understood as intending to make people, especially youth and young adults, aware of the extent of the HIV risk that a single love affair or sexual relationship entails. This is because one partner does not know what other sexually related activities the other partner engages in. This poster, in this respect, was an eye-opener and it subjects one to undergo an introspection (examine his or her thoughts and feelings) and to realise the degree of HIV risk involved in the interpersonal relationship that one is presently engaged in, as well as the ones that one has had before. This had the effect of making one feel scared.

5.1.2 CRITIQUE OF THE POSTER

In relation to the poster's communication value, it appears that a viewer would already need to be aware of HIV issues to appreciate the full implications of the intended message. For instance, a viewer would need to know how HIV is transmitted in order to infer what is happening in the poster. Also, depending on the geographic location and the level of education, a viewer would need to be willing to make their own connections in order to understand that the poster is addressing them in particular, because the pictures are not inclusive of all sectors of Basotho society, not even members of the youth fraternity outside of tertiary education. For example, the dress of the characters in the photographs does not represent people from the rural areas, making it highly possible that they may think that the message is aimed at the urban population. Thus, the material has not included the total population of the target group in terms of their knowledge, culture and life experience. Since I did not have the opportunity to meet the material producer, including others who were involved in the ministry's pre-test exercise, nor to access the pre-test report, it was not possible to find out how others, besides the participating learners, felt about this poster.

5.2 THE PAMPHLET

The format of the pamphlet is double-sided and three-folded (six folds or columns in total), with rust and yellow colours, comprising text and pictures. The first three folds also include the cover fold. The cover consists of the title: **Tlhahlobo ea kokoana-hloko ea HIV** (translated as Testing for the HIV virus) written in white on a black half circle shaped background positioned at the top. Immediately below the title and aligned more towards the right side of the page there are two big circles shaded in two tone of yellow. Inside the first circle is a plus sign (+) and inside the second one is a minus sign (-) sign. Lying on the left side of the two circles is a black circle containing a photograph of a right hand. The hand's four fingers are folded into a fist and the thumb is pointing up in a 'thumbs up' position that is intended to indicate that 'things are fine'. The middle of the thumb also has a red shape superimposed on it, which could be said to represent a drop of blood. Underneath the thumb, but outside the black circle is a question mark sign (?). Towards the left side of this page and

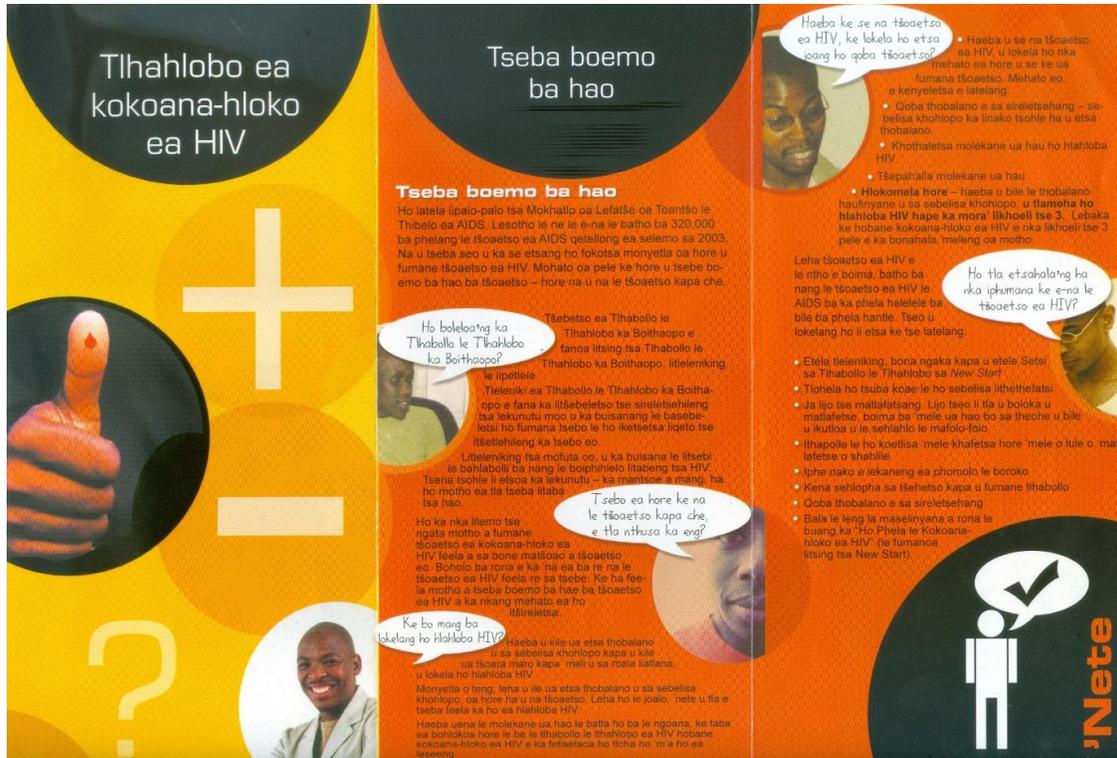
a little adjacent to the mark is a small quarter shaped circle with a deeper gold colour. On the right side of the sign, inside a white circle is the face of a happy looking man.

The other two folds of the pamphlet also contain a title: **Tseba boemo ba hau** (translated as know your status), written in white on a black half circle shaped background. This title is situated in the top center of the second fold. Below this title is a subheading: *Tseba boemo ba hao* (translated as know your status) written in white on the burnt orange colour that makes up the general background colour of the pamphlet.

Both folds contain pictures (three males and a female) and text. All pictures are situated inside circles. At the bottom right side of the third fold is a big black quarter circle containing a white graphic symbol of a standing person and a speech balloon containing a tick sign (✓) only. Inside this black circle is also a word 'Nete (truth), written in a rust colour. The first two pictures (photographs) are placed in the middle of the second fold, while the other two are placed on the third fold. In the second fold, one picture is situated on the upper left corner of the page and the other on the right side, but in the middle part of the page.

All pictures have white speech balloons attached to them. Inside the speech balloons are text sentences, in semiotic terms a sequence of black letters or coded signs arranged in such a way that they form questions: *ho boleloa 'ng ka Tlhabollo le Tlhahlobo ka boithaopo?* (What does Voluntary Testing and Counseling mean?); *Tsebo ea hore kena le tšoetso kapa che, e tla nthusisa ka eng?* (How will the knowledge that I'm infected with HIV or not help me?); *Ke bo mang ba lokelang ho hlahloba HIV?* (Who is supposed to test for HIV?); *Haeba ke se na tšoetso ea HIV, ke lokela ho etsa joang ho qoba tšoetso?* (If I'm not infected with HIV, what am I supposed to do to avoid getting infected?) and; *Ho tla etsahala 'ng ha nka iphumana ke e-na le tšoetso ea HIV?* (What will happen if I find that I'm infected with HIV?). Most responses to the questions from the speech balloons are written in paragraph form, next to and following on from the relevant speech balloon shape, while a few found in the third fold are bulleted.

Diagram 12: THE PAMPHLET, SHOWING FOLDS 1, 2 AND 3 (New Start)



The other side of the pamphlet (which contain the fourth, fifth and sixth folds) also consists of three black circles containing pictures and a graphic, the same type of speech balloon and plain text. This side also has two headings. The first heading, which is found on the fourth fold reads: **Nka fumana thuso le tlhahlobo ea HIV kae?** (Where can I get help and test for HIV?). The rest of this page provides information on New Start centers, explaining why these centers should be visited, also indicating their physical addresses and telephone numbers. In addition, the fold bears four logos of the concerned stakeholders, including New Start. It is difficult to say which of these stakeholders is the publisher of the material, but because the pamphlet encourages the target audience to utilize New Start centers, it is taken to be the main publisher. Like the poster, the pamphlet is undated.

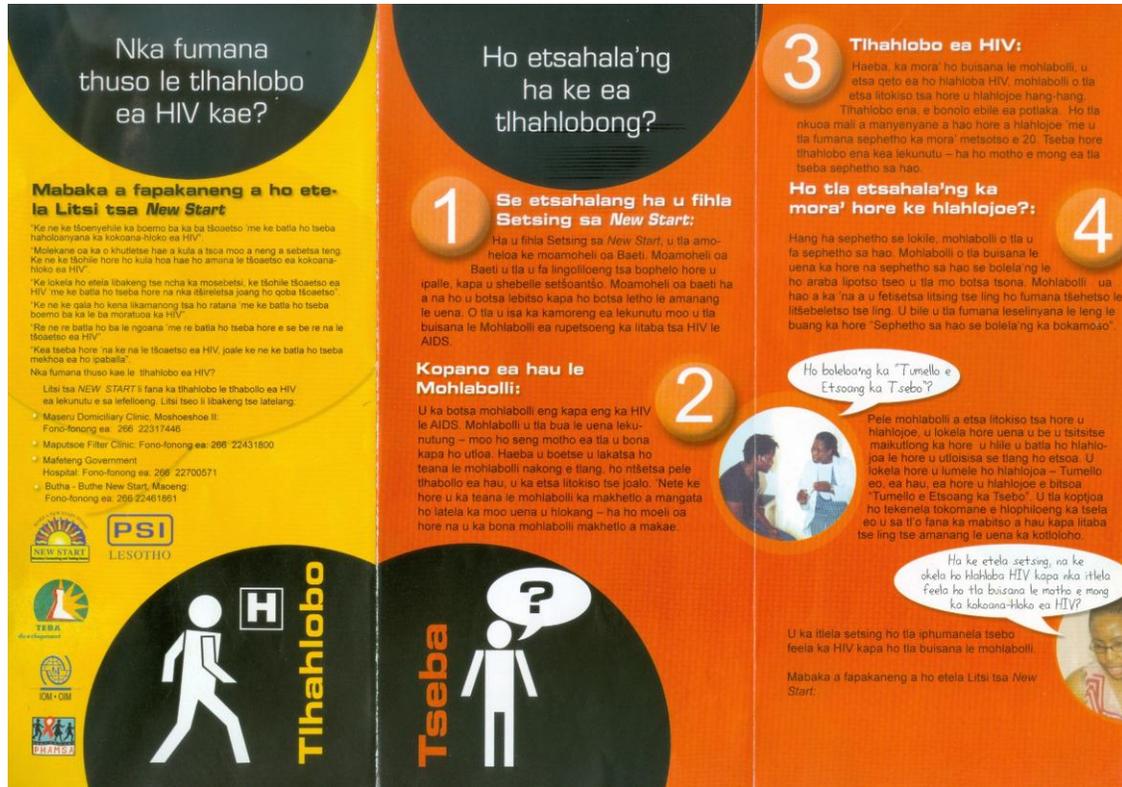
The second main title in bold text is situated on the fifth (middle) fold and reads: **Ho etsahala'ng ha ke ea tlhahlobong?** (What happens when I go for counselling?). There are two numerically numbered **1** and **2** sub-headings written in white colour on the fifth fold. The sub-headings are as follows: **(1)** *Se etsahalang ha u fihla Setsing sa New Start* (What happens when you arrive at the New Start center?); **(2)** *Kopano ea hau le Mohlabolli* (Your meeting with the counselor). Looking at the heading on the second fold of the pamphlet, it can be summarized as the textual content of the two folds generally informing on the importance of knowing your HIV status.

There are again two numerically numbered **3** and **4** sub-headings written in a white colour on the sixth fold. The sub-headings for **3** and **4** are as follows: **(3)** *Tlhahlobo ea HIV* (HIV test) and; **(4)** *Ho tla etsahala'ng ka mora' hore ke hlahlojoe?* (What happens after I get tested?). All of these numbers are written in white on small burnt orange coloured circles. Besides the aforementioned title, the fourth fold also contains a big black quarter circle containing a white graphic symbol of a walking person, a big white letter **H** placed in a small square drawn in white. Inside this circle is the word *Tlhahlobo* (testing) written in yellow. Besides the title and the two subtitles, the fifth folder also contains a big black quarter circle containing a white graphic of a standing person with a speech balloon that contains a question mark sign (**?**). Also inside the circle is word *Tseba* (know) written in a burnt orange colour.

Of the two pictures on these pages, one is located over the circular photograph spans both pages and is an illustration of two seated women who seem to be engaged in a discussion. Like the previous folds, both pictures have white speech balloons attached to them and inside them there is a sequence of black signs assembled to form questions. It can be assumed that the woman in the picture with an apron is a counsellor and is responding to the other one (client) who has asked the question: *Ho boleloang ka Tumello e Etsoang ka Tsebo?* (What is meant by informed consent)? The other picture which is situated in the bottom left of the last fold is that of a young woman with the speech balloon containing the question: *Ha ke etela setsing na ke lokela ho hlahloba HIV kapa nka itlela feela ho tla buisana le motho e mong ka*

kokoana-hloko ea HIV? (When I visit the center do I have to test for HIV or can I just come to talk to someone about HI virus?)

Diagram 13: THE PAMPHLET, SHOWING FOLDS 4, 5 AND 6 (New Start)



5.2.1 ANALYSIS OF THE PAMPHLET

The pamphlet, described in the previous section, conveys HIV related information in large pieces of text. It starts by outlining the procedure for accessing Voluntary Counseling and Testing and goes on to cover a lot of related information in an attempt to make people see the importance of knowing their HIV status. Based on Barthes’ conceptual tools, through which the role of meaning in a text and the process of reading can be analysed, the researcher examined the messages’ denotation and connotation and could understand most of the messages (except the meaning of the signs on the cover page which she could not determine). In particular, the meaning of the symbols ‘+’, ‘-’, ‘?’, ‘✓’ and ‘H’ could not be determined. However, a guess could only be ventured that the ‘H’ stood for ‘hospital’, since it was placed

in front of a symbolic shape of a person which appeared to be in motion. So the understanding was that the person was going to hospital to undertake an HIV test. Perhaps this was because of the prior knowledge that the researcher already had of what was being communicated. This reflects Fiske's (1990: 85-86) argument that people can only make meaning out of messages when they already have an idea of the content. Although the material was comparatively simple, it was nevertheless not lookable or readable, because it had too much information and this appeared to have affected the size of the font, making it become very small.

The message contained in the picture on the cover page showing the right hand fist with a pointing thumb and a red dot on it, which can be said to represent a drop of blood, was anchored in the title; Testing for the HIV virus (*Tlhahlobo ea kokoana-hloko ea HIV*). However, the text (words) and pictures (faces of different people) did not complement the title, as these people only asked questions presented in the speech balloons. They did not pictorially display what the text was saying. That is, they did not seem to add any value to the meaning of the text except that they perhaps helped to make the document attractive and enticing to read in order to discover what the message was saying.

Regardless of the fact that the pamphlet communicated a familiar message, the intended meanings of some of the signs were not clear. But, based on the main heading I assumed the tick referred to 'correct', though it is not clear which part of the message the tick relates to. Also, the + and - can be seen as positive (HIV-positive) and negative (HIV-negative). However, interacting with the pamphlet somehow helped to give me courage and confidence to go for HIV testing, despite all these misunderstandings. The pamphlet can, therefore, be said to have been persuasive and useful, given that it reminded me that it was my responsibility to establish my HIV status so that I could protect myself and protect others from HIV.

The use of "u" for the second person and "o" for the third person is not consistent in the pamphlet, according to the Sesotho language. This showed that the material developers had not used language consistently so that the reader would feel that the material was constantly addressing him or her, rather than talking to or about a second person. It appeared that every

speech balloon came from an independent individual who also explained or answered what was asked or said in the speech balloon. The connotation was that the message came from the sponsors of the pamphlet, whose logos appear on it. If that is the case, these then lend an official credibility to the messages. For example, *Ho tla etsahala 'ng ka mora' hore ke hlahlojoe?* (What happens after I get tested?) on the third fold is not relevant to HIV testing and counselling. Also, the material did not exactly answer the speech balloon: *Ho tla etsahala 'ng ha nka iphumana ke e-na le tšoaetso ea HIV?* (What will happen if I find that I'm infected with HIV?). Looking at the number of people involved (those in the speech bubbles) who were all giving out information, one tended to doubt the credibility of this pamphlet, especially because some of the information did not correlate with the title. De Fossard (1996: 5), indicates that communication starts with a "climate of credibility" which is built by the performance of the source of the message. As a result of the lack of credibility, one questioned the number of people who would go or would be encouraged to go for HIV testing after interacting with this pamphlet. This also made one doubt the quality of the services offered by the producers of this particular pamphlet, since they also offer HIV testing services.

5.2.2 CRITIQUE OF THE PAMPHLET

With regard to language style and the factual question and answer approach, the pamphlet was written in a simple and straightforward manner. Nevertheless, this conclusion is only true for those who are literate and familiar with HIV issues and who already have some idea of the content, including the use of speech balloons, making it possible for them to attach the same meaning as those intended by the material producer. Even though this pamphlet was written in the vernacular language and was meant for general public consumption, it was not all encompassing, as it seemed to cater only for those who can read or are able to interpret the written signs because the pictures alone could not relay any message. Not all Basotho are addressed in this pamphlet, as it does not cater for illiterate audiences, even if its message is to encourage the whole population to go for HIV testing. It is true that no material can be all encompassing, but even with my own privileged position as someone who works with this type of material, the analysis revealed that there were some parts of the message that did not

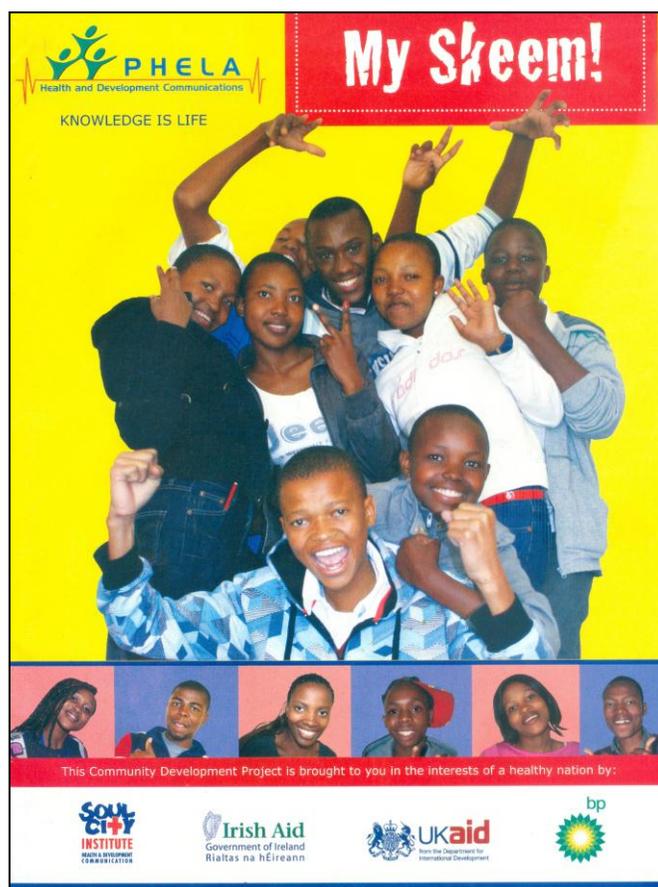
communicate because the signs that were used were confusing or ambiguous. This was evident on the close examination required by this kind of exercise.

With regard to attractiveness, the severely cropped half images of people made me lose interest in this pamphlet. Their presentation in this manner could be either a deliberate attempt to make the design look modern or different, be due to space constraints, or be due to lack of expertise. However, they were not good images, as the people were not clearly identifiable (as men or women) and therefore the pamphlet did not look attractive. My assumption was that this could have a negative effect on the target audience, especially if the viewer thinks that the images are portrayed in this way due to a lack of expertise by the producers. If that happened to be the case the pamphlet would not only lose its attractiveness, but would lose credibility as well.

5.3 THE MAGAZINE

The magazine is a 38 page English magazine titled **My skeem!** with a bright yellow cover. This phrase was unfamiliar to me and the producer of the magazine explained the word ‘skeem’ as slang for ‘friends’...Therefore the title is translated as “My friends”. The title is written in white over a red background on the top right of the cover page. It lies to right of the Phela Health and Communications logo and a slogan ‘Knowledge is Life’ which are on the top left side of the page. The main picture on the cover page shows a group of eight happy looking youth (five boys and three girls). Beneath this picture is a set of six pictures of individuals (three boys and three girls) lying in a row adjacent to each other. Below these pictures at the bottom of the cover are the logos of different stakeholders that contributed to the development of this magazine.

Diagram 14: COVER PAGE OF THE MAGAZINE (Phela Health and Development Communications)



The magazine features eight articles on the following topics: (1) self-esteem; (2) relationships, (3) sexual relationships; (4) myths about sex; (5) masturbation; (6) facts about HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS); (7) contraception and; (8) what you can do. Only the fifth article on masturbation was used for the research, as it is not about relationships or HIV testing and these topics were covered in the poster and the pamphlet. Article number five was also used to assess how the participants react to material on a topic that may not be familiar to them, as it is not often discussed openly in Lesotho. Because masturbation is not a commonly discussed topic, even with regard to HIV and AIDS issues, it was deemed interesting to assess how participants received, understood and reacted to new information that they may not have been previously exposed to.

Article 5 covers only one page. It contains a picture of a male nurse who, through a speech balloon, explains what masturbation is. The page also contains two paragraphs and four bulleted texts. The first paragraph explains the role of masturbation and informs men, women, boys and girls that it is preferable to masturbate, rather than engage in penetrative sex, and then goes on to explain that this is a way to avoid HIV.

The second paragraph and the first bullet address the myths about masturbation. Bullets two and three discuss why people should masturbate. Bullet four advises on what can be done whenever one gets aroused. There are also six highlighted strips put in pairs (three in English and three in Sesotho) that serve as a dictionary to explain four assumed to be difficult English words in Sesotho. The words explained or translated in this dictionary include: guilty (*molato*), climax (*sehlohlole sa ho khotsofala*), simply meaning maximum satisfaction of a sexual desire, and aroused (*ho tsohelo*), meaning that the body's sexual feelings are aroused. These four words are also highlighted with an underline in the text. The article ends with a large, boldly written statement in blue font: *It is normal!* to emphasise that it is normal to masturbate.

Diagram 15: ARTICLE 5 OF THE MAGAZINE (Phela Health and Development Communications)



5.3.1 ANALYSIS OF THE MAGAZINE

The article advises on how to avoid penetrative sex while achieving a thorough fulfillment of sexual desire. Besides explaining the concept of masturbation, the article also clarifies the myths and misconceptions about masturbation. An assessment of the messages found the material to contain different layers of meaning, although the picture does not obviously explain the content of the text. Still, both text and image can be said to be the fragments of a syntagm to which each contributes in its own discrete way, even though there are no pictures that indicate where people are supposed to touch themselves, or others, in order to masturbate. It can be supposed that the picture of the male nurse signifies the credibility of the material, since it represents someone who is supposed to be trustworthy and knowledgeable on biological issues such as masturbation. The Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council

(1998:26) justifies an understanding that credibility measures the degree to which producers and preachers of a message are considered to be knowledgeable and trustworthy. The material was readable and consisted of a 'lookable' (attractive) layout and it conveyed a clear, simple and direct text message. I concluded this because sense was made of the photograph, symbols and typography. The headings, bullets, summary and a statement of purpose could all be linked. The information made me feel happy, since I was not aware that through masturbation one can safely achieve maximum satisfaction of sexual desire.

5.3.2 CRITIQUE OF THE MAGAZINE

The material is very informative, attractive, persuasive, acceptable and credible, although it would have been more understandable if it had pictures that complemented the text and explicitly indicated physiologically (literally which body parts) how to masturbate. However, since it was communicating a rather culturally sensitive topic, making it difficult to elaborate the message explicitly through pictures, as a Mosotho woman, I accepted it as it is.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the analysis of the materials as data, in terms of my role as the researcher and an employee of the Ministry of Health who is among others charged with the responsibility for testing IEC materials, and what I determined to be the intended messages in these materials prior to embarking on interviews with the respondents. These materials included an A2 Sesotho poster on the risks of interpersonal relationships, a threefold (with six panels or sections) Sesotho pamphlet on HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing and a 38 page English magazine from which only one page on masturbation (article 5) was assessed.

The analysis was very useful in revealing the patterns that informed me on how IEC materials should be examined or thought about. All materials comprised signs, words and pictures and vivid layering of meaning as denotation and connotation. However, the materials can be said to have two connotations, because besides the already mentioned ones, it could be said that the essence of their messages was to prevent the spread of HIV.

All materials displayed ordinary colours, yet I would have expected them to be dominated by ‘red’, since red is the awareness or theme colour for HIV and AIDS. Perhaps it does really not matter since colours are chosen to mainly attract attention and to provide visual appeal (as in the case of the bright yellow magazine cover, while the earth tones of the pamphlet seem to be design oriented).

Meaning is constructed in each material quite differently, with the poster being the most contrasting in that it uses the metaphor of the ‘web’ to express the interconnections between different partners, and relies on the connotation of this, combined with brief text messages to anchor the meaning of HIV risk. A poster is a very different type of material in that it is bigger and has to convey its message quickly and visually to a passing audience (making it more appealing to those who do not like reading).

The pamphlet and the magazine both use a ‘talking head’ approach to humanize the message. However, the magazine (article 5) makes use of the nurse as a sign of credibility to establish that the material can be trusted in the absence of being able to depict the actual content visually, thus making it even more appealing. The pamphlet uses more graphical devices such as speech bubbles and symbols, which come across as random and therefore confusing because they are not linked clearly enough to the message and rely on the reader already knowing the signs’ meanings.

The materials also did not display the AIDS ribbon symbol, which made me consider what meaning the Lesotho IEC materials producers and the tertiary education learners attach to this ribbon, but during the informal discussions (after the interviews), I learned that, unlike in South Africa, where Marschall (2003: 45) found that “the South Africans perceived extensive use of the symbol necessary”, the tertiary institution learners in Lesotho did not appreciate the use of this ribbon at all. In contrast, learners indicated that the ribbon made them lose interest in anything that carried it. They explained as a reason for this that ‘they are tired’ of HIV, the issue of which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Finally, it can also be concluded that the pages in the magazine with a light background seem to be a model for lookable, easy to read and simply designed materials and it made the example article look simple and therefore appealing.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS – POSTER

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the findings from the following tertiary institutions: Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in Quthing, Lesotho college of Education (LCE) in Thaba-Tseka and National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Maseru. These findings reflect learners' individual and group responses towards a poster that is used to educate youth and young adults about the prevention of the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in Lesotho.

The findings are organised around three thematic categories emerging from four narratives: the first focus group discussion, the second focus group discussion and two individual interviews from each of the three institutions. The categorisation of these themes emerged partly from the order in which questions were asked and also as a crystallisation of the core stages of learning that took place. The themes comprise: first impressions, meaning making and suggestions for the improvement of the poster. It appears that most individual interviews did not really reveal any further information, but they reinforced the group statements. All sections reflect a discourse analysis of themes and semiotic issues that were raised during the discussions. These interpretations revealed the ways in which the learners derived or expressed layers of meaning from what they saw in the poster. These understandings included the key semiotic concepts recognised in text and image relations and their functions, considering different ways in which text and image influenced each other, since understanding in communicative learning requires that we assess the meanings behind words and pictures.

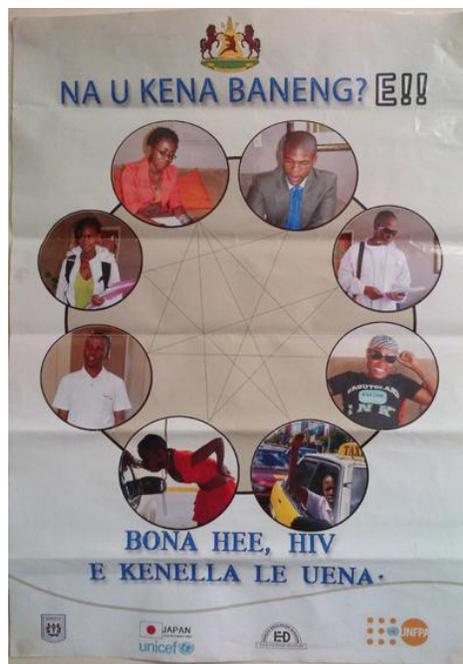
Some sections specifically discuss meaning making and learning through dialogue. These themes are further explored in Chapter nine through the lens of relevant learning theories such as Mezirow's transformative learning theory and Gravett's focus on learning through dialogue, the latter because dialogue appears to have been central to the way learners made meaning out of the poster. Indeed it was observed that it could not have been possible for the respondents to comprehend the poster without having discussed it with each other and with

the researcher as part of the research process. Likewise, the learners' participation appeared to have increased their capacity to view the world and their 'place' in it differently. The chapter concludes with a summary analysis of the learner's comments about the text and images that seemed to be of importance in designing health related posters.

6.1 THE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This chapter outlines the learners' responses towards poster that is used to inform and educate youth and young adults about the consequences of liking the 'nice time'.

Diagram 16: THE POSTER (Lesotho Ministry of Health)



This section consists of the theme of first impressions, but in trying to interpret what they saw when they first looked at the poster, learners also appeared to have reflected on some deeper analysis and raised certain semiotic issues that may have emanated from their cultural background. Hence, they contextualised the setting for what is happening in the poster to what was happening in their own lives, which consequently seemed to shape the gender profiles in the poster that could be seen to be detrimental to the poster's educational intentions towards attitudinal and behavioural change. This section includes five sub themes. These

themes emerged after several readings of the transcripts whereby the following issues appeared to influence the learning process. They comprise: motivating factors, cultural issues, gender issues, elements of confusion and mixed messages.

Recognition and comprehension of concrete and abstract elements that make up the poster was tested using a specific question, “What do you see in this material?” in an effort to establish the learners’ impressions of the signs (text and images) that made up the poster. To this, respondents were asked to articulate everything that they saw when they first looked at the poster. All the respondents had no problem recognizing the human beings (people) in the picture, although there were some variations in the understanding of items that seemed to connect people in the picture to each other, and these items (arrows or lines) were also mentioned by the participants at all the institutions, as opposed to the text and the logos that made up the poster, which were ignored. The first quotation following describes the denotation of the poster, while the second one suggests what the poster means, the connotation:

F²: I see pictures of several people who seem to be related. No let me say, I see several people who are put in circle like arrangement and who seem to be connected by lines or arrows (**LCE:** 45-48)

F³: These arrows seem to connect these people. They indicate that infection is or can be passed from one person to another, as they all seem to be having many partners (**TIL:** 10-13)

Despite the fact that there were several interpretations that initially emerged at NUL, respondents eventually indicated seeing people and arrows as well. For instance, there was an indication that although people in the poster were from different walks of life, there were some arrows or lines that united them:

F¹: ...different people who seem to be doing different things (**NUL:** 1398-1399)

F²: ...they are bound by these arrows. They seem to indicate that there’s some relationship somehow (**NUL:** 1496-1497)

Facial expressions in these images were also picked up during the first encounter with the poster and were interpreted as expressing various conditions. Some were said to reflect happiness, while some reflected worry. Connecting lines or arrows (it will be seen later that

there was some discussion about what these were) illuminated the risk involved in interrelationship affairs. Hence, the worried faces implied that the characters already knew about their HIV status. All these gave an impression about the seriousness of the situation with the connotation that people know that HIV is dangerous:

M⁴: I believe some of them are already aware that they are in danger (**TIL:** 24-25)

M²: I see pictures of gentlemen and ladies of whom some look happy while some look unhappy... (**LCE:** 14-21)

F⁴: Oh! Still she doesn't look happy, or maybe she's worried over something (**NUL:** 1426-1427)

Again, respondents were equally consistent in attributing the role of the man in the car to that of a taxi driver. The car itself was recognized as a four-plus-one taxi by participants across all institutions:

M⁵: Yes, who is standing next to the four-one (taxicab) (**TIL:** 220)

M²: ...because it is having this yellow line which is a sign for special taxis known as four-plus-ones (**LCE:** 23-24)

F¹: I see a lady who looks like she's going to school. This one is calling for passengers, the taxi driver (**NUL:** 1401-1402)

The roles of other people were problematic to identify because the parts of the scenes that form the settings to their images did not clearly represent who they were or what they did. It was assumed that this was because this contributory information consisted of things that could not easily be shown visually. Only the role of the taxi driver could easily be identified. Based on their normative beliefs, respondents tried to make out the occupations of the other people in the pictures. This is elaborated on under the theme of cultural issues. The picture representing the taxi driver was even commented on by some respondents during discussions on other publications to show how well appreciated it was:

F⁴: ...like you see in the poster there the four-plus-one driver is well defined... (**NUL:** 384-388)

Aspects of the poster were considered that may have motivated learners to look at or read it to form part of the first impressions that they had of it, because these impressions seemed to have

also influenced their attitudes towards the poster in a positive manner. The subsequent section explores factors that appeared to have encouraged learners to read or look at the poster. It also explores the effects of the discussions on the attitudes of the learners towards the poster.

6.1.1 MOTIVATING FACTORS

Some features that relate to attractiveness, or what could motivate learners to look at or read the poster, evoked positive reactions. For instance, the language seemed to appeal to the targeted age group:

F⁴: ...likewise when looking at this language, it fits well with us because when we speak we include things like da (slang for 'there'), so it is alright because it is ours
F³: Yahh, it's good because you'll find that they like to inject in a lot of slang when they speak. For instance: na u kena baneng because straight language would be: na u rata ho ea monateng (do you like to go out or to go to have nice time). So of course it is comprehensible, I think its ok (**NUL:** 2145-2153)

M⁵: Another thing is the way the key message is illustrated, about the danger of having multiple partners is well and clear (**LCE:** 320-322)

The symbols that connect people with each other seemed to promote the poster's attractiveness, as they were amongst the first things that attracted some of the respondents to look at or read the poster:

F³: ...their facial expressions together with the arrows, they would make me ask myself what is happening here (**TIL:** 420-425)

M¹: I like the way it is written. I think it could easily be read by everyone. The letters are big enough (**LCE:** 314-315)

After looking at the factors that encouraged learners to read on or look at the poster in this section, the next section presents and analyses aspects that indicated an influence of their cultural backgrounds on their attitudes towards the poster.

6.1.2 CULTURAL ISSUES

As was mentioned earlier, the fact that the roles of some people in the poster were difficult to identify because their backgrounds were not clearly represented made the message difficult to interpret. As a result, some of the learners' interpretations of the message appeared to be

influenced by experiences within their cultural context as Basotho, but not necessarily within that of their learning institutions.

The normative beliefs influenced by certain appearances implying promiscuity seemed to be so strong that they blinded respondents from seeing an alternative reality, where not only ‘scantily dressed’ characters ‘sleep around’, but also those so called ‘innocent’ characters have numerous partners and could therefore be promiscuous as well. For instance, when asked what they would like to include or delete from the poster so that it conveyed the expected intention, learners pointed at many things which were associated with the scantily dressed female (referring to the woman who was labelled a crocodile by TIL learners, a horse-and-trailer at LCE and a prostitute or sex-worker at NUL), but ignored aspects that were related to those people who were considered to be innocent. Respondents seemed to be misled by the appearances, so much so that they held on to the fact that people whose looks, according to them, was considered to be beautiful or handsome are innocent and well behaved regardless of the fact that they may have more partners than the scantily dressed. They did not see the danger of judging people only by their appearance:

F²: No, this one is troublesome more than any other

M³: ...look at her mini skirt

R: Why do you say she is the most troublesome because this one adjacent to her seem to be going is having four, there’s even a woman included?

F¹: ...but she does not look as troublesome as this one (**TIL:** 332-337)

Several cultural issues which challenged some of the aforementioned normative beliefs about who is attractive and who is not, again emerged when examining whether the message matched the picture or not. At this juncture, respondents appeared to have particular, normative ideas about who looks responsible and who does not. This reflected how much they aspired to be trusted in an effort to please a partner rather than being afraid of HIV. Their responses illustrated that they were not concerned about the illness, since to some of them HIV did not appear to be an issue to be avoided, but it was simply a disease that needed a cure:

F¹: No, these ones, they look innocent, they do not look like people who like “nice time”

F³: ...who are smiling so much, yes and this one in white outfit, her smile shows that she’s forever chatting

M⁴: As for this who is wearing stomach out; no (sounding disgusted) (**TIL**: 167-172)

F¹: That’s true. Me too, that’s how AIDS came to be mentioned even with us, I agree with you. We all know that this monster is here with us yet it’s like every one of us want to appear as if he or she has to be brave as if you would be considered a coward if you portray that you’re scared or worried about it. Guys let us be honest isn’t it why you’ll find that we use condoms twice or thrice, and on the fourth round you start complaining that ahh it looks like you don’t trust me, it looks like you don’t love me if one insist on using condoms, just be honest (**LCE**: 2042-2052)

F⁴: Of course we’ve to socialize and there is no way you can socialize without nice times

F³: It is natural that at this stage people like nice times and they should fully participate so that they wouldn’t look back after they’ve passed onto the next stage. Rather these people should be warning us on how to protect ourselves against AIDS rather than scaring us. No, I think it’s wrong. Every young person is naturally entitled to going out upon reaching that age. We’re entitled to go out and enjoy ourselves just like our parents did. I don’t deny it this may differ from place to place, but it’s our right (**NUL**: 2312-2317)

To emphasise that HIV is not an issue to be avoided, but is simply a disease that needed a cure, their responses indicated stigmatization and discrimination based on the way they seemed to relate to some people in the picture. Consequently, some people were considered to be homosexuals. This referred to two or more males who seemed to be connected by the arrows/lines. The same applied to the females, where two or more who were connected by the arrows/lines were considered to be lesbians. As a result, it was understood that if a person likes ‘nice times’, he or she is likely to sleep with defamed characters such as prostitutes, lesbians, homosexuals, including taxi drivers, and the thought of that kind of relationship disgusted the respondents and revealed ‘traditional’ cultural attitudes and bias. Although the message was intended to convey that one can get HIV from anybody, regardless of that person’s educational, economic or social status, most respondents seemed not to think so. Even though they may not be aware of this, it was acknowledged that they might nevertheless be mixing with a wide social range of people through sexual transmission:

F⁵: ...here it means; if you like nice time, you're likely to find yourself sleeping with many people such as prostitutes, lesbians and hmmm...as well (sounding disgusted)

R: Oh. Do you mean if you like nice time you'll likely go for prostitutes and lesbians as well?

M¹: Yes.

M³: ...and the gay, putting yourself at risk (**TIL:** 75-82)

F⁴: ...meaning you can find yourself meeting with the crocodile unaware?

F¹: Yes, it is true that it (crocodile) would have gone there to execute its intentions and this student unknowingly finds herself sharing him with it (**NUL:** 1501-1505)

The discussions also revealed very important cultural issues about visual communication and the role of pictures that must be understood in any communication medium. It was illustrated that it is important for print IEC materials producers to be aware of normative values and assumptions when presenting images, so that message recipients will avoid misinterpretation in the ways indicated by the learners in the following extracts:

F¹: ...also one could mistakenly think HIV infects only those who dress in this fashion (**TIL:** 501-502)

F³: Yes, as it is they could miss the message. One could even wish to come down to the lowlands in order to be like these people, thinking that this is how life should be (**LCE:** 236-239)

F⁵: I for one prefer written things because I never want to deviate because with a picture you've to make assumptions. You've to assume that this means this or that yet with written things you don't have to make any assumptions (**NUL:** 1729-1733)

Learners seemed to have contextualized the setting for what is happening in the poster to what happens in their own lives. It is worth acknowledging that there were some overlaps, where some issues to do with meaning making and contextual relevance were more related to semiotics in terms of interpreting signs and images, but others were about meaning making in terms of understanding the issue. The next sub-section relates how learners associated the poster's message with real life scenarios under the sub theme contextual relevance.

Contextual Relevance

The circumstances that form a setting for what is happening in the poster seemed to emphasise what was happening in the learners' social context, since, in terms of semiotic theory, the way individuals make meaning depends a lot on their context and experience. This is because these shape the interpretant which in turn combines with the object (intended message) and the sign

to influence the final meaning that is derived. Hence, the question *na u kena baneng?* is meant to be closely connected to what is happening in the viewer's world in regard to HIV. Even so, the intention to attract 'lovers' (*ho kena baneng* meaning they liked 'nice time') seemed to be at the forefront of some respondents' thoughts, instead of the negative implications that may occur as a result of such relationships. They appeared to be less worried about HIV as a focus of attention:

F²: ...some seem to like beauty, they like to look good

R: Oh, you see people who like beauty, what are they doing that makes you say that?

F²: Because of things they're wearing to smarten up themselves

R: Ok and what does that say to you?

F³: They are trying to attract attention

R: Ok.

M²: Yes, they like to be proposed [to]

F²: Yes, someone who wants to attract others (**TIL:** 119-128)

It can be assumed that the poster had not quite captured the intended message that would help the targeted audience to arrive at the most informed judgment. Rather, it appeared as if the poster wanted the learners to forfeit their rights to enjoy relationships. This was illustrated by responses to the question about what the learners understood as the kinds of benefits they could get by following the message from the poster. It was evident that they were not prepared to let go of their existing behaviour, no matter how risky it may be:

F¹: My sister you can say that again. Hmm! For instance if I get a lecturer I can maybe agree to practice unprotected sex because the truth is we're here for two things, academic certificates and marriage certificates with the so called better people. Who wouldn't like to be married to somebody with an academic degree? (**NUL:** 2435-2440)

However, some respondents looked at this point from a potentially educative dimension where, by including mature adults, the same poster could be relevant beyond the immediate target audience. They were of the opinion that their parents needed to be included in the targeted audience, because first and foremost HIV does not observe age limits, so it is essential that adults be equipped with information. Again, learners raised a strong argument in favour of materials which can be used to start discussions in families and for future reference. They were also concerned that on occasion the poster may be the only source of information

that is freely available in certain areas. Therefore, if mature adults are included, it could easily attract their attention if they interpret it correctly and can share the ‘right’ message:

M³: Adults should also be included so as to attract their attention, because even if they no longer go out with many people but they could pass the message on to their children

M⁴: Yes it can help give them an idea on where to start the discussions relating to HIV with their children, especially when we know that it is not easy for our parents to talk about sexually related issues with us (**TIL:** 558-566)

F²: ...but I think it should include adults because HIV does not have age limit, it attacks even old, old people. It does not infect youth only. So it has to give room for my mother to get the message when reading it

F³: ...but not only for her benefit but also for her to be able to teach people like Kabelo about these things

R: Who are those?

F³: Grandchildren (**NUL:** 2226-2233)

Furthermore, the opinion of learners representing urban areas or lowlands seemed to undermine people from rural or mountainous areas:

F⁶: ...but when you get to Thaba-Tseka would they still understand what you’re saying when talking things (like na u kena baneng). I don’t think people they would understand what you’re saying (**NUL:** 2160-2163).

This was emphasised in responses to the question that asked whether or not the poster had any offensive issues that could prevent it from being circulated within the wider society, that is, whether or not the poster was culturally acceptable to them as Basotho, and to them as members of communities in their respective districts or institutions:

F⁴: Do you want to tell me I speak the same language as my age-mates from up the mountains, which are not exposed to same things as I am? No, no ways. They would be having a youth slang alright, but theirs in there ... would not be the same as this one (**NUL:** 2205-2209)

In addition, learners contextually related what is happening in the poster to real life intergenerational sex-related issues in the country.

Intergenerational Sex Issues

The overall impression from the learners' responses was that they seemed to appreciate circumstances that formed a setting of 'nice times' in the poster, because it demonstrated realities of life, where, for instance, young boys go out with mature adult women commonly called 'sugar mummies' and young girls go out with mature adult men, called 'sugar daddies':

F⁵: I like it because it shows what is practically happening; it gives the true picture that students go out with older people and drivers of four-plus-ones (**TIL:** 454-456)

Even though some of these contextually related issues came about in forms of recommendation, they were found to be important because they revealed a need to make the poster inclusive of mature adults, as it talked about the things that were actually happening in the country. For instance, respondents indicated that it would be good if the picture included mature adults since, in reality they partake in those kinds of sexual interrelationships:

F²: Even though it is meant for youth as such, can I suggest that we include a picture of an adult person, maybe that of a male or a female?

M⁴: ...or even both, yes as for instance, even though we're not certain of who is behind the wheel in this car, all I know is it might be somebody as old as this girl's father and all I know is she might be negotiating him to buy, judging from the way she's dressed. Apart from that it is a fact that we cannot run away from that it is adults who buy from sex workers. Our fathers buy from these girls and mothers from small boys (**LCE:** 268-279)

Again, when questioned about what they liked or disliked about the poster, considering the inequitable practice in the distribution of IEC materials in the country, learners were adamant that the posters be all-inclusive in representing all Basotho. Based on experience, they were concerned that, since the poster may be the only source of information available in some places, it should 'talk to' both youth and mature adults to ensure that everybody gets the information because all are likely to be infected by HIV:

F³: I think it would be right if it also includes adults

R: Why? Remember this is supposed to be for youth

F³: Because they are part of the network as they like going out with young people (**TIL:** 543-546)

F⁴: The same applies to the students; there should at least be picture of secondary and high students in uniform because we all know that they are sexually active, that is a fact we all cannot run away from. So we should design this thing in such a way that it talks to them as well. Because it is a sure fact that they are sexually active that we cannot run way from and therefore they need to be protected as well (**LCE:** 2168-2175)

F¹: Yes, I think this kind of materials should be made to accommodate every Mosotho

F⁴: ...regardless of whether young or old

F⁶: Especially because if they are made according to age strictly, those for adults would be boring (not interesting) to us and those that are meant for us would not be comprehensible to adults and yet they would be aimed at giving people the messages

F⁵: ...and we should also consider that that same poster could be the only source of information accessible to that person for over a long period of time. So let them accommodate every person at all times, so that we could all be able to access information. People should share (**NUL:** 2238-2250)

Some respondents seemed to also be concerned about the inclusion of mature adults in the poster from the perspective of practices that promote intergenerational sex. They thought that mature adults should be included so that it would attract their attention, as they are the ones who sponsor ‘nice times’ because they have money:

F¹: ...the young at heart mothers and fathers. You can say that again, there are old people who don’t want to grow up who are engaged in far bad things even more bad than those that are done by youth. They are great drivers of infection

R: In what way? How do they drive infection, or do you mean spread infection?

F¹: Yes, because... because of money they do whatever they like with women, they go out with young and old women as they please (**LCE:** 2179-2188)

It was, however, unanimously agreed that the poster is culturally acceptable, since it has no offensive issues that could prevent it from being circulated within the society. Nevertheless, there were some gender disparities that surfaced during the discussions. It was as if gender, as a determinant of positioning and power among the Basotho youth and young adults, also clearly impeded HIV prevention information, education and communication efforts intended towards the desired behavioural change of the poster’s consumers. The following section presents and analyses these gender dimensions and gender implications that may be detrimental to the poster’s educational endeavours.

6.1.3 GENDER ISSUES

At the NUL, the variable 'gender' did not seem to have any direct bearing on their perceptions, perhaps because the group comprised of females only. It appeared as if their love for their partners had blinded them so much that they were generally less concerned about themselves, let alone the risk of HIV. Although, their views were of great value to the study, they did not seem to raise the same concerns about gender power differentials as those of their counterparts.

Strong gender undertones could be ascertained from the other institutions upon analysing responses to a question that inquired about the actions that the poster wanted readers to take. These included gender relation issues and concepts of fidelity, to oneself and one's partner. Although the awareness that the poster raised in the learners appeared to, at a certain point, have lost some focus, especially with the women, it still seemed to have raised some concerns that could, hopefully, help reduce the high-risk HIV-related behaviours surrounding the existing sexual interrelationship culture in the country. For instance, at LCE females appeared to be more willing to consider issues of fidelity and self-respect as a feature of trust in relationships:

F¹: There's just no way I can be able to be faithful to another person without being faithful to myself first. If he becomes the only person in my life, if I do not cheat him it means I won't only be faithful to him but to myself as well

F⁴: You should at least say it wants us to be faithful to ourselves and to our partners. Maybe it is because I love myself more than I love anybody else, so the same should apply to you my dear sister (**LCE:** 363-371)

However, the men seemed not to consider being faithful, even to themselves. Rather, they appeared to be comfortable with condoms, because the condoms helped them to comfortably pursue their practice of having multiple and concurrent sexual partners, no matter how risky this practice was. So, the impression was that they were not prepared to stop having multiple partners:

M¹: Yes, we're always told that you should trust a condom if you're having multiple concurrent partners (**LCE:** 1942-1944)

Gender specific issues also came about as part of the discourse of sexual relations, or behaviour that the learners attached to the meaning of the poster. Some female responses implied that women also tended to be mistrustful of men's attitude towards condom use. They pointed out that their men would refuse to use condoms if they knew that precautions for pregnancy were taken, for example, family planning commodities like a pill:

F³: ...because some of them sometimes, taking my case for example I'm using family planning commodities since I already have children of my own, if you can let them know that you're using them they would take an advantage and refuse to use protection

R: Why would they do that?

F³: Because they are [more] afraid of impregnating us than acquiring HIV (**TIL:** 2507-2515)

This suggests that some males have accepted HIV like they do any other disease, and do not find it necessary to take precautions against it. However, inasmuch as women are conscious about HIV, they seem not to have enough power to convince their male partners to also take responsibility in preventing it. Hence, the women stated they have to retain a degree of deception because of their submissive position in order to survive. Nevertheless, the gender dialogue about sexual relations and use of condoms also came out very strongly among men, but for different motives. This is because, upon further probing on how they handled the challenges of a partner who does not want to use condoms, the men indicated that women who refuse to use condoms scare them and make them lose interest, though it seemed it was not for the fear of infection but rather because of jealousy:

F³: ...but the fact remains, most men don't like to use protection

M²: ...for me such a person makes me lose interest. It makes me think that's what she does with all those she has slept with before me

R: Ohh! It kind of scares you

M²: Yes, it scares me

R: What about you?

M⁴: Madam?

R: Have you ever come across such a problem?

M⁴: Yes, I once did

R: How did you handle it?

M⁴: We quarreled and that was it, we split up (**TIL:** 2556-2568)

Although it was evident that the learners identified aspects that motivated them to read the poster, the lack of clarity in the roles performed by people in other images, among other things, seemed to have consequently led to some uncertainties; learners were sometimes doubtful of their interpretations of some of the items that made up the contents of the poster. These uncertainties seemed to have made the poster ‘less easy’ to understand, since respondents were sometimes forced to make choices between two or more alternatives in trying to construct meaning or interpret it. These elements of confusion are evident in the deliberations that follow in the next section.

6.1.4 ELEMENTS OF CONFUSION

This section specifically illustrates the different elements of confusion that appeared to have impeded the learners’ understanding of the message, with the suggestions that something simple and clear is needed to attract the attention of people. A sub-theme of learners mixing up the messages also forms part of this section.

Incongruities due to calligraphy as well as punctuation issues seemed to have caused some confusion as to what certain symbols represented or meant. For instance, a lack of clarity regarding the Sesotho word ‘*ee*’, which can be translated as yes or as a question ‘*ee?*’ is represented by two ‘*ees*’ not a single ‘*e*’:

F⁴: As for the written message, it says: na u kena baneng? (do you like nice time) and this thing here which confuses me “E” (question) or “E”(yes)

F¹&F⁶: “E?” / “E”

F⁴: I don’t know whether it’s “E” for a question or “E” for a positive answer

F²: ... but doesn’t the “E” for yes stand alone?

F⁶: Yes, it supposed to

F²: So this can’t be for yes then, it indicates surprise from the person who is asking the question. He must be surprised at how much you like nice time

F³: I think it’s just an expression, see these exclamations? I think if it was a question they would have put question marks instead

F²: Had it been on an audio, maybe this person could have whistled instead, to show his surprise

R: What should I say...? What should I say when reading it?

F⁴: The problem is every one of us seems to read it with a different understanding or interpretation rather (**NUL:** 1518-1536)

The discussion continued for a while and finished with a claim that the message is not clear:

F⁵: We can take it to be a continuation of this question

F¹: In that case it should have had a comma somewhere, to read: na u kena baneng comma (,) “E” and then a question mark if it were one sentence

F⁴: What can we say it represents? Looking at this other message, bona hee HIV e kenella le uena, I would really say this is a question

F²: Ahh! It really is not clear (**NUL:** 1552-1559)

Responses to the question that asked whether the content matched with the title or not, also pointed to a communication gap that illustrated how images can be misinterpreted or interpreted differently when there is not enough anchorage in the message. This gap meant learners failed to understand the meaning of the image. This further indicated how an insufficiently supportive relationship between text and image can confuse people:

F⁴: Yahh! Because it does not point out exactly what is happening especially if it refers to every one of them. For instance it says: (u kena baneng?) Meaning she likes or is going out for nice time? As we’ve just agreed that this person for instance looks like she’s a student, it may be that she is on her way to the library meaning she’s not going there for socialization and may even not be having time for such things. She does not represent what this title is referring to. The same applies to these two whom we said look like they are at work; in the offices, people don’t go to work for socialization. They go to the bars and stuff like that (**NUL:** 1791-1802)

The confusion was again evident in the ideas or opinions that learners had of the symbols that made a ‘web’ that appeared to connect people in the picture to each other. These symbols to some represented “arrows”, to others “lines”, while to others still, they represented “sticks”. In Thaba-Tseka (LCE) the dilemma was resolved after a symbol that represented an arrow was drawn on the chalkboard and the consensus was that the symbols in the poster did not represent arrows, but instead they were lines:

M⁵: No I don’t think we can call them arrows, they are just lines. If they were arrows they should be having a pointer to show where it is pointing

M³: They are just sticks

R: What do you say now; did you hear that somebody calls them sticks?

F²: I still maintain that they are arrows, because their purpose is to point

M⁵: But what does the question want or say? You’re not being asked for their purpose at this stage

R: What does the house say, what do you call these things; are they arrows, lines or sticks? (**LCE:** 52-63)

After some discussion, the majority decided that these were lines. This confusion was also apparent in Maseru, though it came in the form of a recommendation:

F²: It should clearly be indicating what is happening

F⁶: ...and they should say what these lines are for, if they wanted to point at people they should be precise, they should use arrows (**NUL**: 1847-1850)

Even though during the group discussions in Quthing (TIL) respondents appeared to have looked upon the symbols that seemed to connect people in the picture as arrows, one of the individual interviews revealed otherwise and indicated that he had not understood how the lines or arrows worked. This suggested that the symbols were not as clear as they had appeared to be during the group discussions, but it may have been the discussion that helped to make the message clear to him and also to the rest of them:

M¹: No, but going back to the poster, I did not quite understand how these lines, or arrows as they are called, arrows worked (**TIL**: 2963-2965)

There also seemed to be a fairly consistent sense of confusion about this poster among the respondents in Maseru. Learners here came up with very interesting misinterpretations that usefully illustrated how different signs can influence this and drive people to make an interpretation of a picture difficult if there is not enough elaboration; that is, if the text message is not elaborated in the picture or the picture message is not elaborated in the text:

F³: To me this does not say anything, because we're assuming that this is what is happening and yet it may not be that way. If the people who developed this poster were to stand here and explain what it means, you may find that we are all lost

F¹: Of course they may all be redundant yet we've classified them...

F⁶: This one may be sitting in a bar waiting to be served with drinks, yet we decided he's an officer

F³: ...this one a student and yet she may be the one who is a sex worker

F¹: ...and this one just a passenger who wanted to know if the taxi can take her somewhere or maybe asking for a lift. Poor soul, she may not be a sex worker

F³: After all, these arrows may be meant to show that these people are talking to each other, not sleeping with each other. This one may even be insulting this one, who knows? (**NUL**: 1749-1759)

Moreover, efforts to establish the signs (text and images) that made up the poster indicated some mix-up in their understanding where respondents sometimes appeared to be completely off track, especially because AIDS seemed not to be the first thing that attracted their attention

to the HIV and AIDS related publications. The next section demonstrates examples of these mixed messages that contributed to some of the confusion.

6.1.5 MIXED MESSAGES

The mixed messages appeared to be a particular problem with learners in Maseru. For instance, the coat of arms which was supposed to indicate that the poster was an initiative from several Government Ministries, became part of the message in an unexpected way. Despite the fact that the poster's overall message was understood to mean that anyone can get AIDS, there appeared to be a confusion in that some learners did not seem to be aware, or think, that it was possible to mix with such a wide social range of people through sexual relationships, including a character to whom they referred to as looking "cheap". The implication here was that this character represented somebody with unacceptable behaviour. Learners were so disgusted by this so called "cheap" character that to them the person did not qualify to appear under the coat of arms as it represented the King of Lesotho, who is supposed to be highly respectable. This suggested that 'branding', such as the logos that represent the sponsors or patrons, should be omitted from such material in order to curb the confusion:

F³: This is supposed to be respected, it represents the king

R: What does the coat of arms mean to you?

F⁵: I relate it with the government. Whenever I see it I see the government, it reminds of our father, ntate (father) Mohato (His Majesty, King Letsie III) so I cannot associate him with people like this (**NUL:** 1637-1642)

This sense of confusion continued among other group members at NUL, except for **F²** who seemed to distinctly understand the message well and clearly. She understood the poster to show that people are engaged in different activities as well as being engaged in sexual affairs and that would cause them to become HIV positive, although her views did not seem to have any influence on her co-participants:

F²: Yes, putting them at risk because when you look at it you'll realise that each of these people have their own way of doing things but at the end of the day they interrelate somehow, in fact you may even find that in the long run they have all interrelated (**NUL:** 1681-1685)

It was, therefore, not surprising to hear responses such as this one that follows:

F³: To me this does not say anything, because we're assuming that this is what is happening and yet it may not be that way. If the people who developed this poster were to stand here and explain what it means, you may find that we are all lost (**NUL:** 1741-1745)

However, some responses provided useful illustrations of how the picture can be misinterpreted:

F³: After all these arrows maybe meant to show that these people are talking to each other, not sleeping with each other. This one may even be insulting this one, who knows? (**NUL:** 1755-1758)

Or interpreted differently, as stated earlier by **F⁴:**

F⁴: Yahn, because it does not point out exactly what is happening especially if it refers to every one of them. For instance it says: u kena baneng? Meaning she likes or is going out for nice time? As we've just agreed that this person for instance looks like she's a student, it may be that she is on her way to the library meaning she's not going there for socialization and may even not be having time for such things. She does not represent what this title is referring to. The same applies to these two whom we said look like they are at work; in the offices, people don't go to work for socialization. They go to the bars and stuff like that (**NUL:** 1790-1801)

Similarly, one of the respondents in Quthing indicated a completely different interpretation of the picture. He showed that he did not approve of the poster because some people may take it to mean that it is a good thing to like nice times and thus encourage them to have multiple partners:

M²: On the other hand I don't like it because it's like it is encouraging people to go out with many people at the same time (**TIL:** 458-460)

Even though the concern was projected at the general public, it exposed the learner's state of confusion towards understanding the relationship between the pictures and the text. Likewise, the use of celebrities in the poster appeared to encourage misinterpretation of the message:

F⁶: We would think that maybe their station has organised something, a social function you see, so I'd look at it because I'd think it's an advert not because of AIDS (**NUL:** 1895-1898)

Responses again indicated that text and images that formed the poster did not have a uniform effect on the mind of learners, and for this reason it was apparent that communication through

posters that are used to curtail the spread of HIV are not necessarily effective without dialogue to ensure that viewers clearly understand the meaning. For instance, some responses indicated an insufficient text anchorage of the meaning, hence the poster did not appeal to some learners:

F³: I don't like it because there are no arrows indicating what people say. It is quiet.

Maybe it would be interesting if there was some indication of a dialogue

R: You want them to write what these people are saying to each other?

F³: Not literally talking, but it should have something like an explanation. It is kind of quiet; it doesn't say anything (**NUL:** 1957-1963)

Even though the poster did not offend learners in any way, their responses made it clear that there is no 'one size fits all' communication, even when it is targeted at a particular age group. This is especially so because some of the people who form this targeted audience may come from areas where the metaphor; *na u kena baneng?* can form part of the youth slang that is used in certain places in the country while not in others. This, therefore, made it difficult for the respondents to interpret what is implied in this phrase because this type of slang may not be used in the areas where they live.

Again, even if people live in these areas where this type of slang is used, they are usually at different levels of education, because of different levels of literacy, some would not be familiar with it. Only people with high levels of literacy can be expected to generate meaning out of such metaphors as "*ho kena baneng*" that formed part of the poster.

F¹: ...especially because they're not being distributed at learning institutions only. So I can foresee somebody looking at them and saying: Hi, what this is? How do I enter into the children? (*ke kena baneng joang?*) Thinking that this enter (*kena*) literally means to enter especially because he or she'll be seeing neither children nor any door here. In some places I honestly think it would be a waste of time, they won't get the message. Don't forget environment plays a crucial role in our life my dear (**NUL:** 2176-2185)

Respondents appeared to be less worried about the implication that HIV may occur as a result of such relationships; rather, the intention to attract "lovers" seemed to be in the forefront of their minds:

F⁴: It wants you to look or I can say it wants me to look for somebody I can love or somebody whom I feel I can match with

F⁶: Your role model?

F⁴: Yes. To me this one looks like she has got the style that I like

R: Meaning you would want to lead the same kind of life she's leading?

F¹: Yes, but since there are no lines underneath, indicating who she is or what she does, I can sometimes get carried away by the kind of clothes she's wearing and think that we're being encouraged to do as she does, to become like her. Like this one, she looks smart (**NUL:** 2067-2079)

However, by building on their previous existing knowledge and experiences, respondents were able to make some meaningful deliberations out of the poster. These deliberations are described in the next section on meaning making.

6.2 MEANING MAKING

This theme specifically illustrates the meaning that the respondents constructed to show what they understood in the message being conveyed through the poster, and also what that message particularly meant to them as tertiary institution learners. The section includes five sub themes. The first four are: transformative thinking, missing messages, learning from each other, and denial versus reality. Since the respondents also displayed some bouts of fear in the process of trying to make meaning, fear appeals were also included as a fifth sub-theme in this section.

Mezirow (in Jarvis, 2004: 134), defines learning as “the process of making meaning from experience as a result of the learner’s previous knowledge, so that learning is a new interpretation of an experience”. In this example these learners seemed to have gained some additional learning or new interpretations after their experience as research participants. Patterns of interpretation that were highlighted during the discussions revealed the ways in which the learners derived or expressed semiotic layers of meaning out of the poster. These patterns of interpretation outlined the key semiotic concepts recognised in text and image relations and their functions, considering the different ways in which the text and image influenced each other. Responses indicated an implied understanding with several meanings that the learners derived from the symbols that seemed to unite people in the picture with the denotation that there are many different types of people in the picture with many drawings or lines that go between them. The connotation was that they liked having a ‘nice-time’, since

they appeared to be linked in some way through one or more sexual relationships. Incidentally, this connection was understood to influence the high risk of HIV infection, as was implied in the text where it was explained that HIV enters 'nice-times' with those who liked them (*bona hee HIV e kenella le uena*). These connotations are reflected in the subsequent verbatim excerpts:

F³: It shows that all of them are having more than one lover (**TIL:** 40-41)

F¹: It is showing us that a person can have relationship with one or more people (**LCE:** 98-99)

F²: What I was saying is much as they are of different characteristics there seems to be some common element that binds them

R: What could be binding them?

F²: They are bound by these arrows. They seem to indicate that there's some relationship somehow (**NUL:** 1492-1497)

All the respondents understood the message of the poster to mean that HIV can infect anyone, regardless of gender, educational and or economic standards. In Quthing and Thaba-Tseka, learners indicated that the message that was being conveyed through the poster is the susceptibility of all people to HIV infection:

F⁵: Ok, the message that is being conveyed through this material I think is to show us that HIV does not choose who you are or your position, you can be a student, you can be driving a four-plus-one (taxi) and still get it (**TIL:** 44-48)

F⁴: I see that this serves to show that HIV does not choose who you are. It shows that it does not care whether you're doing a white collar job or not (**LCE:** 26-28)

F²: It shows HIV does not choose where you work or your level of education (**NUL:** 2445-2446)

Discussion of the meanings of the message and the picture ensued to another level of meaning making as the respondents transferred the meaning to their own situations. They seemed to realise the reality of life that anyone can behave unfaithfully and thus put everyone else at high risk of HIV:

F²: Also I think we're being made aware that it is important that we protect ourselves whenever we engage in sexual activities because we can see that our partners may not be faithful. So we need to use condoms all the time so as to avoid infections of HIV and STI^s. It shows that I should be faithful to myself because it shows that even our

affairs may be like these, we might be sleeping around with other people (**LCE:** 127-135)

F⁵: Having helped us to understand how it is transmitted, I'd say this is saying to us: look at how you as an individual relate to this

F³: They reflect on the things we do, because this is what people do, young and old in the same manner. People cheat. Men and women alike (**NUL:** 1572-1577)

Respondents also acknowledged that they do behave irresponsibly and have to stop, although they were left with the dilemma of how to build trust because they realised that even if they behave responsibly, their partner is not necessarily going to do so. They indicated their understanding of the danger of 'nice times' and how easily they could get infected, since some partners refuse to use condoms during sexual encounters:

F³: It is one's responsibility to stop it

R: What did you say we should stop doing?

F³: Funya-fehle ena (sleeping around with different people, having concurrent multiple sexual partners, sort of a mixture) like we are used to doing

F⁵: It is true, we should stop it (**TIL:** 282-287)

M⁵: Through this poster I can say we're being made aware that people can cheat (**LCE:** 104-105)

F⁶: It shows we might get out of here with three certificates... hee... if we're not careful enough. The degree, marriage and AIDS (**NUL:** 2441-2443)

Likewise, the image illustrated how appearances can be deceptive. The smartly dressed people in the poster were considered to be responsible and considerate, with the connotation that all smart looking people are responsible. This was because the facial expressions in the poster pictures were denoted as reflecting that they were engaged in deep thought. The connotation was that they were thinking about their past actions, as they realised that they may already have been infected with HIV:

M²: No, but there's something else. Maybe when I look at this gentleman here

R: Do you mean the one with a tie? Yes, what about him?

M²: Yes, he looks worried in view of this statement here which says: look HIV enters with you. I assume that he may have done a lot of things in the past and he's now worried fearing that...

F⁵: Even though he may now be a changed person, a well behaving dignified man, but poor him because he may already be infected (**TIL:** 183-193)

M⁴: Whatever. What I wanted to say is for instance one would have thought this lady here to be a cool person, a one timer kind of person, but look how many she's having (**LCE:** 1928-1931)

In Maseru the feeling towards smartly dressed people was different. NUL learners' understanding of smartly dressed and serious looking people involved some cultural nuances that were not apparent in other districts. Here, smartly dressed people were considered to be irresponsible and were therefore unimportant:

F⁴: Yes, what does he do?

F²: Nothing, he looks like a know it all

F⁶: They are those types that when you come across with in the streets you'd think that he's working somewhere and yet he's not

F³: Those who think they are clever and go to town every day, yet they do not work

F⁴: ...and you'll find that they always look smart, even smarter than those that are employed

F⁵: Yahh, you know there're those types of people who seem busy and yet they are doing absolutely nothing, just like this girl (**NUL:** 1441-1452)

Even though the respondents from all three institutions were not able to interpret some content of the poster, when asked what they understood the function of the picture to be, the response was that it was meant to advise them as well as to help them understand that HIV can infect anyone without caring whether a person does a white collar job, is a student or a taxi driver. To them, this meant that people should be more selective with who they go out, even though for some respondents, the appearance of people in the poster influenced that decision making process rather than the fact that 'appearances can be deceptive' as was evident in the previous deliberations. So, just because someone looks responsible or irresponsible, it does not mean he or she in fact is:

F³: You've got to know somebody first before you can do anything with him

R: How are you going to know which type a person belongs?

F⁵: It teaches us that we should avoid picking up all and sundry from the streets. We should not go along with each and every one we come across with (**TIL:** 242-248)

M²: ...or a garden boy or be very wealthy, it will attack you if you're not careful – you should be vigilant. Open up your eyes boy and see these things. Truly speaking, HIV does not choose who you are (**LCE:** 163-167)

In Quthing, the picture helped them understand that people with HIV look and behave in a normal way, but could easily infect others. This meant that they should be careful how they choose partners and should avoid “picking up all and sundry from the streets”:

F²: What is being preached or indicated here I think is, a person who is infected with HIV is not labelled on the forehead. One can look dignified or responsible yet he or she could be the most dangerous (**TIL:** 271-274)

In Maseru, respondents pointed out that the picture itself was meant to help people understand the message:

F²: Mmm! I think the picture, normally the picture. I’ve realised that people who make these things prefer to use a picture than to write words because people are lazy to read, so it helps not only to pass the message, but to pass it even more speedily (**NUL:** 1707-1711)

Various views emanated in response to a question about whether the content matched the title or not. In Quthing and Thaba-Tseka learners agreed that they did match. In Maseru the view was different. Here, it was argued that the title matched with only two images, but did not match with others. They argued that these other images did not represent people who appeared to like a ‘nice time’:

F⁶: Hei, it’s kind of difficult to say whether they match or not because the picture is referred to as one thing, because we can say yes it matches with some while with some it does not match at all. For instance to me this person yes I can say looks like is the one who could be liking nice time (**NUL:** 1804-1809)

In trying to interpret the meaning of the poster, learners experienced some transformative thinking that seemed to have re-awakened their consciousness. In this process they identified some communication gaps in the message. The subsequent section scrutinizes how the discussions helped these learners to develop a more enquiring and, therefore, more critical thinking process and, through this, identify a communication gap in the message of the poster. Hence, following this section on transformative thinking, a sub-theme on missing messages was formed.

6.2.1 TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING

During the second focus group discussion there was an indication that the first discussion had inspired the learners and caused them to engage in some transformative thinking. The dialogue process and collective meaning making in the group discussion appeared to have played a crucial role in helping them not only to understand the message that the poster intended communicating, but also to process new understanding about love and trust:

F⁴: You shouldn't trust a person. One should love but not trust the partner.

R: Hmm! This is interesting. Is it possible that you can love but not trust?

F², F³, F⁴&F⁵: Yes, it is possible. It can happen.

F¹: How can you love me if you don't trust me? And the person would want to know how you can love him yet you don't trust him.

F³, F⁴&F⁵: Don't let him know that you don't. Why should you let him know? You don't have to tell him that you don't trust him. (**TIL:** 2492-2502)

M³: But the problem is you yourself can go out with only one person, but you wouldn't know how many that person is going out with at the very same time.

F¹: That is why I think what we're being made aware of here is that it is important to protect ourselves at all times, no matter how much you love a person, not that we wouldn't be trusting our partners, but I think people should by all means protect themselves... to be on the safe side. (**LCE:** 1912-1920)

F⁶: Can you imagine? You could possibly be infected by a virus from the four-plus-one driver, because your person is going out with someone who goes out with him (the driver) and this side you'd be sure that you're going out with... (**NUL:** 2429-2433)

There were some important issues of concern that were mostly raised during the individual interviews. Until the group discussions some learners had thought that going out with multiple partners was something of a source of pride and they were looking forward to doing it.

However, individual interviews indicated that the discussions had stimulated elements of transformative thinking, which resulted in a change of attitude and a new discourse that said: going out with multiple partners harbour a risk of being infected with HIV. This gave the impression that other learners may have experienced the same kind of fear, but did not want to mention it during group discussions to appear brave in front of their peers. The following comment came from one of the individual interviews:

F⁴: really they have made me aware that I should not get involved with many people, I should no longer take pride in having numerous love affairs but should always think about the risks involved before getting involved with a new partner (**TIL:** 3039-3043)

The second focus group meetings also established that the discussions helped equip learners with a sense of extended accountability and cautionary thinking:

F¹: rather its message helps us to refrain from doing the wrong things

F³: when looking at this paper I realised that going from this one to that one was not right (**TIL:** 2646-2649)

F²: because even though I may trust him I would never know what he is doing while I'm not there (**LCE:** 3318-3319)

F⁴: I think or I can say it helped me to believe that people can cheat, no matter how much you love them and how honest you're with them (**NUL:** 2529-2531)

These second discussions, however, seemed to have had the effect of updating or reminding the learners to take action to change the opinions that they had about themselves and also their perceptions about how they could possibly secure their future, rather than contributing new awareness or technical knowledge. The point being that they were already aware of the consequences of sexual interrelationships and HIV issues. But the discussions helped re-awaken their critical senses and generated new perspectives, and, more importantly, new thinking on how to handle their love affairs in order to keep safe from HIV. This included the idea of taking regular HIV tests together with their partners), in order to guard against HIV. Even though it was not clear whether it was that some of these envisioned strategies were going to be used to keep themselves safe from HIV, or if it was out of jealousy, the discussions had still helped them to think of doing things that they had never thought of or done before:

M⁵: my advice to her, I think I can start by making her aware that AIDS seems to be capable of attacking people regardless of their status. So it dawned to me that it would be better if we go to check our HIV status every month. In this way I believe it will help to ensure that we don't cheat each other. I see this as a solution to allay my fears as I'd never know what she does when I'm not with her. So I can say this poster made me feel it'd be better for us to visit the hospital regularly in order to test (**LCE:** 2891-2901)

The poster seemed to have opened some learners' eyes to new perspectives in that, for example, they were reminded that loving someone did not necessarily mean being the only one loved by that person. This realisation appeared to have also induced in them a lack of trust

towards their partners, which, in turn, would require some further action on their part to protect themselves from HIV:

F²: well I can say it reminded me that no matter how much I may love somebody I should always remember that I may not be the only one (**LCE:** 3336-3338)

Apart from questions about detailed elements that constitute the comprehensibility of the poster, respondents were asked what they thought the gist of the message was. To this, learners were asked to mention what actions they thought they were expected to take after having read the poster. The message was supposed to be understood as generic advice or a recommendation to act wisely or refrain from doing risky or unhealthy things, congruent with the story of linking the ‘nice time’ (*ho kena baneng*) with exposure to HIV. This means that respondents were expected to interpret the message not so much as simply showing images, text or the aforementioned facts of life, but rather as prescriptions of what they should do or refrain from doing:

M¹: it wants us to look at ourselves

F³: to respect ourselves. To shun away from this kind of life, if we had already started (**TIL:** 577-579)

M⁵: yes we used to talk about AIDS related issues but in a different manner. For instance now I realise that we did not talk about them in regard to our health, but we used mention it when for instance we heard of somebody’s death, maybe linking his death to that of the girlfriend. But we never actually pointed fingers at ourselves, as if it can never touch us. We never asked ourselves what our situation was, as if we were immune from infection. Honestly I never really thought about the risk I might be involved in until the discussions (**LCE:** 2860-2870)

F²: like if a person is not careful enough she might get infected with HIV and others. Which means one is not supposed to agree to unprotected sex because the person told her that he loves her or promises her marriage (**NUL:** 3404-3407)

By the end of the discussions, learners were of the opinion that the process of dialogue had facilitated this critical reflection, through which they were able to perceive HIV as a tangible risk that they could take some responsibility for prevention with a change in behaviour.

Another example was a response from one of the woman interviewees to the question on whether or not she had developed any attitudinal change towards HIV-related issues after exposure to the poster, revealing that the discussion had stimulated her to read such materials,

whereas previously she had simply ignored them. This response indicated that previously her learning had been hindered by denial, which resulted in limited or no learning at all. But the transformative process seemed to have occurred only after the discussions:

F⁴: I would read them. At first I used to ignore them, I never looked at them with interest or never tried to understand what they were all about because I thought there was nothing more to learn about AIDS (**TIL:** 3074-3078)

M⁵: Yes, had we not discussed it, I don't think I would have understood it (**LCE:** 2211-2212)

F²: I think the difference is we've had time to discuss them and I suspect that maybe all materials would be interesting if we don't just read them on our own, but have time to discuss them and that's it (**NUL:** 2579-2582)

The outcome of the first focus group discussion had wider implications than the learning that took place in the meeting itself. During the second group discussions, learners indicated that the first one had motivated them to go on learning, and they even expressed the wish to access more “teaching aids” (IEC materials for HIV). Other than helping learners to go through phases of new understanding about love and trust, the responses from the second group discussions reflected that dialogue continued to play a crucial role in helping respondents to not only understand the message that the poster was intended to communicate, but also to make sense of their reaction to the poster. Thus, the discussion helped them acquire new knowledge and a change of attitude towards HIV-related issues. It helped them realise that certain practices grounded in youth, and related perspectives of meaning that are familiarised with ‘nice times’, consequently harbouring a high risk of HIV infection:

M⁴: I can say I used to envy those who seem to be “in” but hi! I no longer want to after the discussion. It made me realise that I'll be doomed if I follow that desire (**TIL:** 2478-2481)

Furthermore, the second meeting revealed an important additional contribution that indicated the acquisition of new information on HIV issues for the learners. It seemed that the first discussion had helped some of them to gain more knowledge, and thus boosted their confidence to advise others through technology-based social networks such as cellphone messages, face-book and others. It also implied that verbal communication had supported the visuals in order for it to become explicable and more convincing. This indicated that a verbal

message alone is not enough, and that people also needed the materials (such as the poster) for them to understand the intended message of the communication. It also appeared that for some learners, use of a print medium validated the information, as they suggested that if it is written down and printed then it must be true:

M¹: no but I could say I've always preferred to discuss them rather than to read about them. In a way I can say these discussions have boosted my confidence in discussing these issues through social networks like cellphone messages and face-book. For instance at first I used not to have answers to some of the things that I would have introduced, such as asking others about what they think about our social life and HIV and I was not able to stand for my concerns. But now I'm able to tell them what I think and have realised that even our discussions lately last longer, unlike before when I did not have confidence

R: meaning that you're using what you gained from our discussions to advise others through the social networks?

M¹: yes madam and wish I had the materials to support what I talk about because sometimes some of them don't want to believe what I tell them (**TIL:** 2920-2937)

M⁴: ...if I were to choose, I would choose something we didn't discuss at all to see what I can make of it (**LCE:** 1894-1896)

F⁶: ... I can say it has made me develop interest and wish we could have had time to discuss other materials with you (**NUL:** 2546-2548)

Efforts to establish the signs (text and images) that made up the poster indicated some gaps in how NUL learners thought the poster should look. The following section briefly highlights the messages that respondents considered to be missing.

6.2.2 MISSING MESSAGES

Responses in regard to missing messages exposed some communication gaps. For example, to some respondents the poster was not attractive because, in their opinion of what the HIV story must entail, the story in the poster was not complete, as it did not show what happened to these people after they had 'entered the nice times'. This emphasised a need for a dialogue to close communication gaps that may exist in printed (IEC) materials:

F⁶: let me say for this poster to attract me, I think if they had shown end results of maybe two people. Maybe it should show that these two people as having a love affair and then AIDS because this one ended up going out with this one and this one with this one, and at the end of the day these two appear in a different form, say with frail emaciated bodies indicating sickish people with their hair fluffy and falling off to show

that they are now having AIDS. I think that could attract me to look at it (NUL: 1976-1984)

Although the point about the message of the poster seemed to have been well made, that a person cannot tell from a mere look whether one has HIV or not and that people are always at risk, learners insisted that the story must be illustrated in full to thoroughly explore the negative connotations and consequences of HIV infection:

F⁴: may I also point out that, if we're saying HIV awaits these people at the nice time and they now have it, this should appear conveying such a message whose essence is: these people got HIV because they liked nice time, it should show them at the stage when they suffer HIV or when positive. At this stage they all look normal; they are just ordinary people. Nobody looks ill so you don't know why they should be associated to HIV. Truly speaking this does not indicate that because none of these people show any sign of illness. So there's nothing that relates them to HIV (NUL: 1998-2008)

Besides the missing messages that learners identified, there was evidence of additional thinking, and learning from each other, as is portrayed in the subsequent section.

6.2.3 *LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER*

Some responses to the question about whether the poster had raised any critical awareness or not, provided evidence of mutual learning from one another, which, in the process, promoted a much fuller understanding of the whole meaning behind the picture. This showed that learners had engaged in new thinking, marking the beginning of new awareness towards some HIV-related issues. This also helped them realise the danger incurred from unprotected sex, and that it is not right to have multiple partners:

F¹: we should protect ourselves. We should always use a condom (TIL 2490-2491)

F²: all in all I think the poster is saying: watch out AIDS does not choose, it is out there waiting to attack no matter which corner you take you'll still find it

F³: and in a way this emphasizes that we should always use a condom

M¹: yes we're always told that you should trust a condom if you're having multiple concurrent partners

M⁴: no not only when you're having multiple concurrent partners, but looking at this poster it looks like you should trust it so long as you're having someone because that someone is the one who could be having multiple concurrent partners and it definitely follows that you'd be one of them (LCE: 1936-1950)

The discussions seemed to have assisted learners to also construct self-critical awareness and allowed the poster to speak to them as individuals and as a collective. This helped them to further see that HIV is no longer something that happens to other people:

M²: yes meaning we don't have to look far but need to look at what we ourselves are doing or have been doing, how much risk we're already carrying before pointing fingers at other people (**LCE:** 1982-1995)

However, learning, in terms of sustaining attitudes towards behavioural change, could not be ascertained, since a majority of the respondents claimed that there was no action that the poster encouraged them to take. It is possible that what caused this claim was some sort of denial that existed among them, perhaps because the setting of what is happening in the poster challenged their normative practice. This observation suggests that, they may not have wanted to see the message at all, because it meant a change of lifestyle for them, and they may have wanted to continue having a 'nice time'. The next section displays how learners denied the realities of what is happening in their lives.

6.2.4 DENIAL VERSUS REALITY

Inasmuch as the learners indicated that they had adequate information on HIV and AIDS, some of their responses still reflected a refusal to acknowledge the disease. Every now and then their portrayed attitudes revealed that the discussion entailed an unacceptable truth. As a consequence, they tended to use denial as a defence mechanism against the reality of what is happening in their lives. For example, when asked what the message (text) and picture meant to them, learners appeared to project their own behaviour onto the images, as if they thought they could be infected but chose not to test for HIV or tell others, despite the fact that they had indicated several times that AIDS is not discriminatory, that it does not choose who to infect and who not to infect:

F³: it shows that they seem to be thinking about what they are doing. They seem to be seriously worried about what will happen to them regarding the kind of life they are leading (**TIL:** 91-94)

F⁵: also I can become stress free, if I do follow this poster. After all, love affairs are such stress

F²: hmm! You can say that again (**LCE:** 438-440)

F¹: ok. It looks like the message says every person has her way of living and is at liberty to choose

F³: and this one looks like she's that kind of person who lives for nice times only
(**NUL**: 1481-1484)

The sense of denial seemed to be stronger at NUL. However, during the second discussion the TIL and LCE learners suggested they were prepared to change their behaviour:

F¹: me too. I would say I do not have many partners or in fact I've cut down their number

R: does it mean the discussion helped you to cut down?

F¹: yes (**TIL**: 2472-2476)

M¹: or we would talk about it upon hearing that somebody is critically ill. I think it scared us. I think we could see this monster stealthily moving towards us, but I don't remember us really strategizing on how we could protect ourselves because on the other hand we didn't want to hear anything about HIV. I guess we thought we were learned enough on HIV issues, at the same time we were scared about it (**LCE**: 2033-2041)

At NUL the denial remained and they appeared angry and dismissive. Nevertheless, one female gave the impression that she understood that they, too, could be infected:

F⁵: it also shows that we're all at risk (**NUL**: 2428)

Yet, others chose not to acquaint themselves with this understanding. As a result, they failed to detect the benefits they would get if they followed the advice being conveyed through the poster. They appeared to be angry at the disease and, in the process, created some blockages towards the message:

F³: which is wrong, according to me it is wrong because, I've to socialise, so to be warned that I should not go for nice times, it's like I'm being denied my right

F⁴: it is natural that at this stage people like nice times and they should fully participate so that they wouldn't look back after they've passed onto the next stage. Rather these people should be warning us on how to protect ourselves against AIDS rather than scaring us. No, I think it's wrong. Every young person is naturally entitled to going out upon reaching that age. We're entitled to go out and enjoy ourselves just like our parents did. I don't deny it this may differ from place to place, but it's our right (**NUL**: 2318-2327)

Their responses sounded full of anger, implying that they did not only deny that the poster was addressing them, but they also denied the realization that it portrayed a vivid reflection of

what is happening in their lives. Hence, they unleashed their anger at the producers of the poster with angry statements such as these cited below:

F⁵: oh! 'm'e (mother) I was saying this was meant maybe for kindergarten kids or...
F³: only prostitutes like themselves would be moved because they'd understand this language (**NUL**: 2408-2411)

Although they admitted that the discussion had helped them to understand the message of the poster, they still maintained that the poster did not mean anything to them, and they therefore denied associating with its message:

F²: myself I felt nothing because it did not mean anything to me. In fact I only understood it because it had been discussed, so it didn't move me (**NUL**: 2402-2404)

The discussion also stimulated an understanding of the potential negative consequences of ignoring information, education and communication on HIV, and thus induced in the respondents a feeling of fear.

6.2.5 FEAR UNDERTONES

The bouts of fear that were expressed during the discussions suggested that this level of understanding of unpleasant consequences that can occur as a result of ignoring HIV-related information, education and communication, has not been brought home to the learners before. Although it was questionable how long this fear was going to last, as some of them appeared to consider HIV as simply another disease that needed a cure. They appeared to have accepted that HIV is 'here to stay' and were apparently prepared to live with it. Nevertheless, the feeling of fear could be detected in the measures that individual interviewees thought they should take in order to protect himself from HIV:

F¹: we should protect ourselves. We should always use a condom (**TIL**: 490-491)

M⁵: yes and afterwards, I advised her that we should consistently use condoms for our safety, that we should use protection at all times, starting with me so that she can get used to it. So that even if she is having other boyfriends she should at least play it safe (**LCE**: 2878-2883)

F²: so condomise girls, condomise (**NUL**: 2456)

After a considerable amount of discussion during the second meeting, it was established that the poster had prompted the emotion of fear in some learners, but at the same time it influenced a positive change in lifestyle towards the way they were conducting their love affairs. Even though they did not know their status at the time of the interviews, but the risk was apparent, as they realised that the things they had done in the past may have already put them in danger. The connotation was that the message had, through the induced fears, served as a warn that helped them to examine their actions:

M¹&M³: fear / I could say it instilled fear

F³: especially with the one night stands, you see the risk you were putting yourself at
M², M⁴&M⁵: it served as a wakeup call / it helped me to examine my acts / do the introspection (**TIL:** 2630-2634)

F²: It looks like it has helped me to ask myself about the degree of HIV risk I'm involved in. It will help me to conduct introspection on the kind of life I'm leading. For instance it makes me look at the number of partners I'm having and to reduce the number if they are many (**LCE:** 424-429)

F³: personally after looking at it I think it is saying to me don't get involved with different partners (**NUL:** 2101-2102)

The feeling of fear also implied frustration, which could be detected in the subsequent extract:

F⁵: hei! Life can be hard sometimes you know; I wonder how long it is going to take before they find a cure for this problem (**NUL:** 2457-2459)

Even though some of these learners appeared to be more concerned about the discovery of a cure for HIV, than about the avoidance of risk-prone behaviour, they could not deny the fact that all people are at risk of being infected, as has been indicated in the previous sections. Interestingly, with some, the fear could be sensed from fantasies such as the one quoted below:

M⁵: I wish I was born a hundred years ago (**LCE:** 2111)

As the discussion continued, it became clear that respondents started to understand the risk of HIV that lingers around them. The discussion appeared to have helped them realise that what is happening in the poster, could also be happening around them:

F²: that the gays and the lesbians can still go out with normal people. Which means the worse may even come to the worst by having your person go out with another man.
Joo!
R: ok
F²: hmm! I feel scared (NUL: 3414-3419)

The discussion and its meaning making triggered another type of fear, as learners appeared to be more concerned about the negative consequences of unfaithfulness in relationships such as emotional pain, rather than the issue of the increased risk of disease transmission:

F⁴: I think the overall message says I should take care, I should always think of my safety first because my partner may not be faithful (LCE: 118-120)

F⁶: maybe a bit depressed and unsure of myself

R: why?

F⁶: because of the love I have for my boyfriend

R: yes what depresses you?

F⁶: to think that he might be doing the same thing

R: going out with several people?

F⁶: yes

R: what about the fear of diseases? Aren't you afraid that he might get infected and end up infecting you as well

F⁶: well that one I never thought of, but I understand it can happen (NUL: 3541-3551)

Nevertheless, the discussion helped some respondents realise the benefits of following the poster's message to avoid multiple partners. The sense of fear indicated a desire for a change of attitude towards the practice of engaging in multiple and concurrent sexual affairs:

F⁴: be faithful to myself and my partner, because it instills some kind of fear in me (LCE: 421-422)

Although learners trusted condoms as a measure that could help to eliminate the danger posed by HIV rather than altogether avoiding risk-prone behaviour, they ultimately seemed to accept that it is their responsibility to change their behaviour and to comply with the message in order to reduce the negative consequences that the discussions helped them to vividly see:

M³: honestly. It is a true fact that we're scared about it that one we cannot run away from but at the same time it's like in a way we're blaming somebody for it or we don't want to believe that it is here to stay as long as we don't change the lifestyle we're leading

F²: you know this is scary

F¹: yes because we don't want to change our lifestyle (LCE: 2102-2110)

As indicated earlier, the focus group discussions covered the comprehensibility of the poster, learners' reactions on how they generally felt about the poster, communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from the poster and the impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. The following section, presents suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the poster, so that it would contain accurate text and images for targeted audiences. This section also covers the overall theme: suggestions for improvement. It presents and analyses suggestions that the learners made for improving the poster in order for its message to become complete and attractive.

6.3 PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Under this theme respondents showed different ways in which the poster could be improved in order to have an influence on all Basotho's sexual behaviour. Amongst the twenty questions that comprised the interview schedules, there were only four that elicited suggestions for the improvement of the poster. However, any important suggestions that emerged from other questions, besides these four, have also been included here as possible guidelines for the improvement of the poster.

Some suggestions resulted from the learners' inability to combine the signs and objects from the poster, where the signs themselves were not correctly interpreted by the participants, partly due to semiotically based and culture specific issues. Other suggestions emerged from the presentation issues in the design as well as the content. These are discussed under the four subsections: suggestions to improve attractiveness, suggestions to fill the communication gaps, suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho and suggestions for the diagram structure to be modified.

6.3.1 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE ATTRACTIVENESS

Although there are features of the poster that encouraged respondents to read on, there are also some that seemed to discourage them from looking at it. For instance, some learners complained about the thickness of the lines that connected people, saying they were 'small' and therefore not legible enough to allow people to read it from a distance or to capture the

message at a glance (especially if one is moving). This required that people get very close to it in order to make out what is written or what is happening in the picture, which is not suitable for a poster:

F³: another thing is you need to be very close to it in order to establish what is happening here. If it were in that notice board I wouldn't see what this is, I would take it to be just an ordinary drawing (**NUL:** 1992-1995)

6.3.2 SUGGESTIONS TO FILL COMMUNICATION GAPS

Even though learners apparently did understand the message, some of their responses indicated a need to fill communication gaps to describe how the title and the picture should complement each other and work together to create a whole message. Their argument was that the present message of the poster does not reflect what becomes of people who liked 'nice times', because all people in the picture look healthy, despite the fact that they are assumed to have multiple and concurrent sexual partners. The learners' understanding was that it was not 'a good thing' to like 'nice times'. It was, therefore, suggested that the poster should include the end result, at least for the 'troublesome' woman, to show the end result of misbehaving:

F²: what I would like to be included is the end result of this girl in the red outfit down there (because she is troublesome as you can see) after she perhaps becomes ill due to what she would have been doing, because she would definitely have collected it. Her picture at that stage should be put on this side to show what she will look like at end of her tasks (**TIL:** 321-327)

M⁴: they should show end results of these people, what became of them after certain years so that we could see their misery if there be any. I think it would help us understand dangers involved in ho kena baneng, if it is something that we're discouraged to do (**LCE:** 197-202)

F¹: it should show end results. Show these people at the stage where they have AIDS so that we could understand how HIV comes in, because as it is we don't see how HIV is related (**NUL:** 2026-2029)

6.3.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF ALL BASOTHO

Other responses suggested the need to make the poster representative of all people who possibly liked 'nice times'. One suggestion was for the inclusion of mature adults and people with disability. The argument was that such people are also susceptible to HIV infection because they also like 'nice time', and hence the need to equip them with information:

F⁵: then for it to be inclusive, some of these pictures can be removed and be replaced with one wearing a blanket; representing the herd-boys and another wearing a blue overall representing technical schools students

F¹: and someone who represents people with disability

M⁵: you are right, because they are people and their disability does not protect them from or make them immune to HIV

M³: and someone with traditional wear 'seshoeshoe' dress to show that it is for Basotho (**TIL**: 531-542)

M¹, F³, F¹, F⁵, M⁵, M⁴&M³: we pointed at things like including pictures of adults / and the hut / and someone with a blanket / herd-boys / herd of cattle / even a kraal in the background

F²: can I suggest that we also include picture of a woman in seshoeshoe? (**LCE**: 342-347)

F²: ...but I remember there's somewhere where we showed that this is not encompassing, like we suggested that this should include pictures of people wearing traditional attire like blankets and 'seshoeshoe' (**NUL**: 2647-2652)

Responses revealed further that Basotho culture is constructed according to different geographical settings, which marked an existence of two different cultures, one rural and one urban. There was a concern that the poster would not appeal to audiences in rural areas, as it did not reflect their context or style of living. Furthermore, they were concerned that the language in the text may not be understood by everybody, especially those from the rural areas:

M⁵: it should be inclusive. Characters should represent all Basotho youth. That is those from rural and urban areas alike (**TIL**: 615-617)

F⁴: they should have at least included cadres of other Basotho people

F¹: like a shepherd so that they could feel that they too, it is talking to them

M²: yes for example a herd-boy walking after a herd of cattle, so that they could feel that this message is meant for them as well (**LCE**: 240-246)

There appeared to be a general feeling that all sectors of communities should be represented in a single poster for it to better reflect the Basotho culture. Responses also revealed a need to make the poster representative of the people it is targeting. Some respondents complained that it does not address people who are not represented in the picture, such as the respondents who were from technical institutions, who are popularly known across the country to wear blue overalls for their uniform. As a result, these learners from Quthing were concerned that

without having somebody wearing their uniform, the poster was not addressing them as learners in technical institutions:

F²&F⁴: it does not include everybody

F³: especially because people from different places use different dress codes. Let us think for instance about tertiary education students, especially those at technical schools such as yours here; LTI and Technical Institute of Leribe, are known to wear blue overalls at all times or as your uniform, isn't it so? (**TIL**: 504-511)

Respondents were also concerned that members of youth from rural areas were not represented in the poster and as such, they could easily misinterpret the message, thinking that the poster did not signify danger for them, but only related to what is done by youth in the urban areas:

M⁵: ok. Thanks for reminding us. I would say they have been sidelined because the poster doesn't seem to include them and in that way it is not talking to them

R: who are they, who are being sidelined?

M⁵: people from rural, rural areas

F³: yes as it is they could miss the message. One could even wish to come down to the lowlands in order to be like these people, thinking that this is how life should be (**LCE**: 239-246)

6.3.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ADJUSTING THE DIAGRAM

Although learners appeared to have clearly understood the challenge of multiple partners even if one partner is faithful, they still felt that the message could have been made clearer by adjusting the diagram in the poster to make it more appealing:

M³: I think what she is saying is right. Wish there could be a picture of someone outside the circle who is connected with one of them through a single arrow to show that even though he/she is having only one partner, he/she is part of the web through his/her partner. Because if he/she sleeps with this one, it will be as good as he/she's sleeping with all those that the partner sleeps with as well (**TIL**: 397-404)

It was also suggested that the diagram structure should be modified to allow for the inclusion of images of ill people, since the message should 'tell the whole story' of what happens when a person gets HIV. They deemed this information important for people to be able to understand why they should want to avoid HIV:

M⁴: within this poster, using the same picture. Maybe they could make another circle behind this one and pictures in that other circle be linked to these ones with arrows so that we could be certain that this is the picture of this one showing their features having changed due to HIV or AIDS which they acquired through that kind of lifestyle

F⁵: ho kena baneng

M⁴: yes the kind of life they would have been leading - ho kena baneng. In that way I think our cycle, like every cycle would have the beginning and the end

R: ok, though it would make our poster congested

M⁴: in that case we could use a chain for the structure instead of a circle, in order to accommodate those pictures (**LCE:** 207-222)

6.4 CONCLUSION

The overall analysis of the responses of tertiary institution learners towards a poster that is used to prevent HIV in Lesotho was categorised into four sections, including a section on recommendations that learners made towards the improvement of the poster. These sections were organised around collective theme groupings that emerged from all four narrative sources: two focused group discussions and two individual interviews. There were three themes: first impressions, meaning making and transformative thinking. There were some communication and attitudinal issues that were observed throughout the discussion that enhanced or impeded the learners' understanding of the poster's message.

Respondent interpretations revealed ways in which the learners derived and expressed semiotic layers of meaning from what they saw in the poster. These reflected patterns of uniformity as well as variations in their understanding of images and text that made up the poster. For example, all learners interpreted what they saw when they first looked at the poster, and human beings (people) and arrows/lines were pointed to as the first thing they saw. Responses pertaining to making meaning out of the poster showed harmonised views across all the groups. There seemed to be two levels of understanding: the immediate first impression and the more thoughtful reflections that came along with the discussion. There were issues that challenged learners to make choices between two or more alternatives in their attempts to interpret the content of the poster and this appeared to confuse them.

Even though respondents had unanimously agreed that the poster was culturally acceptable because it had no offensive issues that could prevent it from being circulated within the society, there were culturally embedded issues which included normative beliefs that were

recognised as factors that could possibly influence the success or failure of educational efforts and the achievement of broader behavioural-change goals intended through the poster. All learners gave an impression that the context of what is happening in the poster had relevance to what is happening in their real world. This included issues pertaining to intergenerational sex and gender. Great variation between learners' views in regard to these two issues was observed. There were patterns of uniformity among learners from Quthing and Thaba-Tseka towards intergenerational sex and gender related issues. Learners in Maseru appeared to be less concerned about these issues, an observation that could be attributed to the composition of their group, as it comprised of females only.

The analysis also reflected patterns of fear illustrated by learners' inclinations towards disowning their feelings and projecting them on to other people, instead of being realistic and admitting the reality that they can also be, or could have already been, infected with HIV. This was assumed to be an indication that they were trying to control their fears.

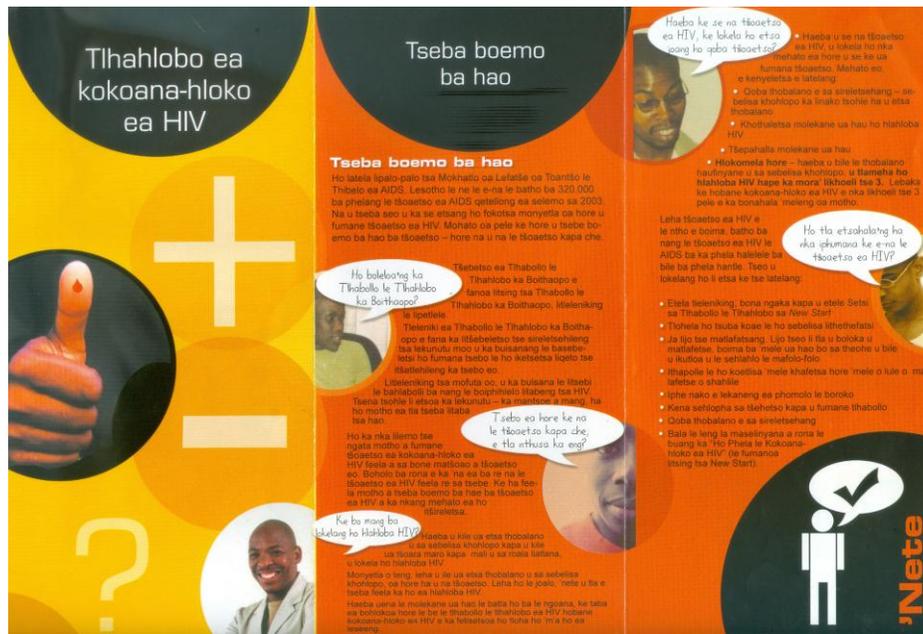
Finally, there were suggestions that learners made for improving the poster. Depending on the institutional context, some suggestions emerged from the presentation aspects in the design as well as the content. These were classified under the four subsections, namely, suggestions to improve attractiveness, suggestions to fill the communication gaps, suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho and suggestions for the diagram structure to be modified. Discussions revealed some different and some common perceptions on how the poster could be improved in order for its message to become complete and for it to be able to attract attention. Some seemed to be quite useful and achievable, while others were less so. Even though all learners made some suggested changes that could be made, NUL learners made very few. This could be attributed to the fact that the setting of what is happening in the poster appeared to have intimidated them. The next chapter presents and analyses findings on the pamphlet that is used to inform and educate people about the process followed in carrying out the HIV test

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS – PAMPHLET

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In a similar manner to the previous chapter on the poster, this chapter outlines the learners' responses towards a pamphlet that is used to inform and educate people about the process followed in carrying out the HIV test.

Diagram 17: THE PAMPHLET (New Start)



The findings are presented and analysed around three thematic categories. These comprise: first impressions, meaning making, and suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the pamphlet. The chapter concludes with a summary of the learners' comments about the text and images that seemed to be of importance in designing health related pamphlets.

The first section describes the first impressions that the learners had upon seeing the pamphlet.

7.1 THE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The recognition and comprehension of concrete and abstract elements that make up the pamphlet was tested using a specific question: What do you see in this material? in an effort to establish

their reactions to the signs (text and images) that make up the pamphlet. Learners were expected to mention everything that they saw when they looked at the pamphlet for the first time. There were different layers of denotations and connotations to what the learners described as their first impressions of the pamphlet. Even though there were variations in the sequence of what they said they were seeing, the images and text were generally mentioned as the first things that they saw. Examples of this were three different symbols:

F³: plus (+), and (&) and minus (-) signs
F¹: question mark (?) (TIL: 646-647)

M¹: I see plus (+), minus (-) and question mark (?) signs (LCE: 459-460)

F²: we also see signs; positive sign (+), negative sign (-) and a question mark (?) (NUL: 994-995)

These signs were understood and analysed by respondents as signifiers of information the meaning of which is explained in the subsequent quotations:

M⁵: the plus sign means HIV positive, minus, HIV negative and the question mark wants to know whether you, the person that is being encouraged to go for testing, are negative or positive. Whether you know your status (LCE: 572-576)

F¹: positive and negative. The cross one shows that a person is having HIV. The minus one shows that it is not there. The question mark shows that you do not know because you have not tested (NUL: 997-1000)

Furthermore, learners mentioned seeing a human hand and thumb, with the connotation that the person had just, or may possibly have been tested for HIV, because there is blood on the thumb. The connotation of what the hand is doing seemed to have been based on the learners' underlying knowledge about HIV testing:

M⁴: finger pricked with an injection to show that it was tested (TIL: 648-649)

F²: I see a human hand which looks like the owner has just tested (LCE: 456-457)

F¹: we see somebody or a finger that shows he or she has possibly tested or has just been tested (NUL: 983-984)

Some learners also acknowledged lettering as the first thing they saw when they looked at the pamphlet:

F⁵: I think I can say we also see written words and pictures of different people (**LCE:** 461-462)

There were some issues related to attractiveness, which inspired respondents to read the pamphlet, and contradicting ones that discouraged them from reading it. These are elaborated on in the next section.

7.1.1 MOTIVATING AND DEMOTIVATING FACTORS

Factors which could inspire learners to read the pamphlet (motivating factors) were considered important, as they appeared to have had a positive affective appeal for the learners, while those that could discourage them from reading it (demotivating factors) were also considered important to the materials producers, even though they seem to have had a negative affective appeal. Both were also considered important because they determined the effectiveness of the pamphlet's impact on the reader. Comments indicating that the pamphlet had a positive affective appeal for the learners were fewer than those that could demotivate them from reading it. For instance, the title attracted respondents to look at the pamphlet:

M⁴: I think the title can also attract me (**LCE:** 840)

F²: the title page

R: you mean you would be attracted by that hand?

F¹: yes, actually the whole of this page starting with the title, to me is the major one that could attract me

F²: I too could be attracted by the title and this thing, this finger (**NUL:** 1149-1154)

The size of the font for the title, on the other hand, discouraged some learners at TIL and LCE from reading the pamphlet. They complained that it was too small and, therefore, not attractive. This appeared to have a negative effect in relation to the size of the document. The font size consequently determines the attractiveness of print documents:

M⁵: and the title should be made bigger or at least bolded, so that people don't struggle to see what it is all about (**TIL:** 1046-1048)

F³: and the font size, when things are written in small size like this it discourages us from reading it because it tends to look bulky (**LCE:** 841-843)

In contradiction, NUL learners seemed to have no problem with the font and rather liked the size of the pamphlet:

F⁴: I also like it for its portability. Its size makes it easy to carry; I can take it so that whenever I happen to be bored or tired of school books when at home, I can always pick it up and remind myself about all these (**NUL:** 1212-1215)

Apart from these concerns, the idea that blood was associated with pain was felt by some to detract from the idea that testing should be attractive (although this seemed not to be the case at NUL), suggesting that images need to be kept ‘tame’ so that they do not instill fear in the readers. For instance, the size or amount of blood were identified by TIL and LCE learners as an issue on the basis that if it was small or very small it would not be seen and therefore people would not have a problem with it:

M⁴: no, the thumb would be ok without the drop of blood

R: why? Is blood not involved in the testing progress? Is it not the blood which is used for testing?

F¹: mmmm. It represents pain (reacting as if she feels pain) (**TIL:** 1207-1213)

M⁴: delete that blood drop on the thumb; it is too big, it can make people fear to go for testing (**LCE:** 928-929)

R: the first question says: what in this material could make you want to have a closer look?

F¹: this picture, this one of a thumb with blood (**NUL:** 1146-1148)

Sometimes the reactions to the design of the pamphlet differed considerably even among members of the same group. For instance in Thaba-Tseka (LCE), some indicated that they could be turned away by the design, while others appeared to have been impressed by the way the pamphlet was designed:

F¹: I just want to point out that I commend the people who developed this pamphlet, for using questions in boxes, next to the pictures. This makes whatever information that is being given here appear as if it’s a dialogue. It helps break the monotony of reading and in this way it becomes interesting. It honestly encourages one to read, unlike when it is information only, put in paragraphs as usual (**LCE:** 671-679)

Surprisingly, the amount of pictures used in the pamphlet appeared to demotivate the very same respondent, who earlier on indicated that she was impressed by the style of writing used in the pamphlet. Although, pictures are assumed to be good for helping illiterate or

semiliterate people to get information, for this respondent it was desirable that they should be used less frequently:

F¹: also I think use of pictures should have been moderate too. They kind of become irritating if they are too many (**LCE:** 901-903)

There was a sense that the material producers had not sufficiently edited the pamphlet and had paid insufficient attention to removing aspects that easily demotivate people to read print IEC materials. These included such things as typographical errors and grammar mistakes. These incongruities pointed to the importance of ‘quality’ in the presentation of messages, in order for print HIV and AIDS related IEC materials to become readable and attractive:

M⁴: much as she compliments the style of writing used in this, to me it is their style of writing that could make me not read it. First there are too many grammar mistakes and inconsistencies in the reference to second and third person, maybe that’s because as a teacher... (**LCE:** 2295-2300)

While some responses simply indicated a lack of congruence in the message of the pamphlet, others indicated gender bias, and therefore it was felt that the pamphlet needed to show equal numbers of men and women:

M⁵: I think the conclusion is no matter which of them is a woman, what I see is they are not gender sensitive; there are too many males as if it is men only who are supposed to go for testing (**LCE:** 664-667)

Contradictorily, again this was not the case at NUL. There, the learners indicated a fascination with the apparent male bias in the pictures of the pamphlet, showing gender biasness on their part. This seemed to reinforce what was argued in the previous chapter; that these learners were not prepared to let go of their existing behaviour, no matter how risky it may be:

F³: it can attract me because I think I would want to look at it because it is showing young males only

The rest: burst out laughing

F³: really I would want to know what is happening with these gentlemen

F⁴: because you love men. Well it is normal. There’s no healthy living female who wouldn’t be attracted by anything that involves men

F³: does it mean AIDS infect men only? (**NUL:** 1162-1170)

Some comments indicated that the respondents' expectations of how these materials should look were stereotyped. While some learners were impressed by certain elements that made up the pamphlet, the same elements caused misunderstanding for others and were therefore demotivating:

F⁴: yes I like the use of speech balloons, but it would become even more attractive if they had used pictures of younger people, our age-mates (**LCE:** 827-829)

F²: the font, it is too small and to me all these pictures and different colours are confusing (**TIL:** 1058-1059)

Seeing a cheerful looking person at a health facility was pointed to as something that could stimulate the reader to want to take a second look. Based on normative expectations of how people are supposed to look or feel in a certain situation, this appeared to contradict normative discourses that say people should be miserable in a health facility because they are supposed to be in distress due to pain or illness:

F⁵: ... I won't be attracted by the gentleman as in man and woman, but I would be attracted to him to see what this happy person could be saying at the health facility because you don't see or expect people to look so happy in a health facility, they are in pain or worried about their conditions (**TIL:** 1019-1025)

Although different opinions and values, including normative expectations, were conveyed throughout the discussions, learners in Thaba-Tseka (LCE) were the only ones who appeared to have contextually related to the pamphlet. They associated the pamphlet's message with real-life situations. For instance, there were several different reactions in connection with generational expectations and differences such as the age of people represented in the pictures, actions taken by people in pictures, the use of certain signs and slang that learners believed could specifically help to generate interest among youth and young adults towards print IEC materials:

F⁵: well if that be the case they should have explained what these signs on the cover page here stand for, so that old people could easily get the message too. Because as it is it's like it is talking to youth only. Even this thumb, I can't imagine my mother doing 'thumbs up' sign when telling her friend that she went for testing or she has tested. But with us, well it is practical that when talking to one another I could do things like that (**LCE:** 881-889)

The way in which LCE learners related to this pamphlet could be attributed to many things, including location (situated in the mountain areas), age (at 26-32 years of age, they were older than learners from other institutions), normative beliefs and gender inferences, as indicated above.

Although certain factors either motivated or demotivated the learners from reading the pamphlet, there appeared to be some elements that caused confusion for them because they could not be easily interpreted. Detailed accounts of these elements of confusion are illustrated in the next section.

7.1.2 ELEMENTS OF CONFUSION

Although the learners indicated they understood the message of the pamphlet, there were occasions when they displayed a sense of confusion. This was notable, for instance, in the responses to the question that asked what they understood the function of the pictures in the pamphlet to be. The uncertainty mostly appeared to be gender linked:

F⁵: it's like they are saying to me HIV and AIDS attack men only because I see there appears to be men only who appear here (**LCE:** 640-642)

Features of some images were so confusing that one respondent at LCE, who at first said she could see “men only in the pamphlet”, later referred to the pictures as old ladies:

F⁵: also they should use pictures of young people not of old ladies such as these (**LCE:** 816-817)

It was interesting to note that, irrespective of their age and level of education, these learners wanted to see unambiguous images of men and women in order to associate the pictures with the message they expected. The absence of such stereotyped images resulted in a remarkable confusion which exploded among respondents in Thaba-Tseka (LCE), where they could not agree upon which images represented males and which ones represented females with most of the pictures:

M⁴: if there be a woman here it would this one

R: ahh! That's even worse because to me that one looks like a man. Since they seem to be confusing let me do this, how many people do say this person in a green sweater is a female?

M¹, M², F², M⁴ & F⁴: we do / it's a woman honestly / honestly it's a woman

R: ok what's the conclusion?

F²: even though she may not be good looking, but if you look closely you'll see that that is a female (**LCE:** 654-663)

In Maseru one respondent was adamant that a certain image of a person with plaited hair represented a female, with the implication that it is only women who can have their hair braided. The rest seemed not to share this opinion with her and had simply decided that all the images represented males:

F⁵: no she's saying she would ask herself when seeing that this involves men only. But if you look closely, this person is a woman

F²: no that's not a female, there's no female here

F⁵: but look, this person's plaited

F⁴: no, no, no there's no woman; you take women to be very cheap ehh. Where have you seen such an ugly woman?

F⁶: don't forget even men have their hair knitted

F⁴: good people there's no woman here

F⁵: ok

R: does that mean there are no women here at all?

F²: we honestly don't see any, if this one is not, then there's no woman here

F³: it doesn't look like there's any

R: so what's the agreement?

All: there's no female here / there are no women / no females (**NUL:** 1174-1190)

In Quthing (TIL), responses to the question that sought the message that is being conveyed by the pamphlet revealed differing points of view, especially among the female members of the group. They disagreed about what exactly a certain caution meant. The caution reads: "*Be aware that – if you have recently been engaged in sexual intercourse without using a condom, you have to test for HIV again after 3 months. Because the virus that causes HIV takes 3 months before it can be detected in a human body*". Even though the learners' past experiences may have had an influence over their responses, the fact remained that there was confusion about exactly which "time" was being referred to. The issue was whether the person who had engaged in unprotected sex is advised to go for testing immediately after the intercourse or after three months. The following excerpts from one respondent can be quoted to indicate the confusion that existed on discussing this issue:

F²: if you have recently engaged in unprotected sex, you should go for testing after three months (**TIL:** 710-711)

F²: no, no. but the sentence says (re-reading the sentence) considering the word ‘hape’ (again) I think this sentence says you should immediately go for testing and then go again (hape), after 3 months. This explains that you don’t go for testing once, but more than once (**TIL:** 751-756)

Although they read and re-read the caution several times, they could not agree upon the first testing time that the caution referred to, and some decided that it was up to the reader of the message to decide when to go for testing. But according to **F²**, it appeared that the first time that people are advised to go for testing was implied in the concept “again” with the connotation that the person is supposed to go immediately for testing after having engaged in unprotected sex and then go again after three months. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the message indeed implied that one should immediately test after having engaged in unprotected sex, and then go for re-testing after three months:

R: yes, do you understand the message to say if I’ve had unprotected sex I should go for testing after 3 months? Do you understand this message to mean that?

F¹: yes

F³: no you should test immediately and go to re-test after 3 months (**TIL:** 719-725)

There were some interesting distinctions that were relevant to how learners understood the pamphlet. This showed that the different signifiers in the pamphlet alone are not enough to get the message across to all readers, as without the discussion some of the learners would have understood the matter very differently:

M⁴: honestly I’m looking at it through that lens. The use of these speech balloons is fine but at the same time confusing because there’s no clear demarcation between the responses, so you can imagine what will happen to that person who has not gone far with education if it confuses me and you, what about them? Unless this was not meant for the public in general (**LCE:** 2302-2309)

F³: these pictures are silent

F⁴: these pictures cover questions and then the written words answer those questions

R: yes what does that say in regard to the pictures?

F⁶: I think like we said we want a dialogue, these pictures, in fact people in these pictures have asked questions then those questions are answered here

F²: it looks like somebody who is interested to know, somebody who is interested to know things

F⁵: had this dialogue been hidden and you see only these people...

F⁶: it wouldn’t make sense

F⁴: it would be a problem, it would have no meaning
R: so what do you understand their function to be?
F²: to inject life into this pamphlet, to make it lively
R: in what way?
F²: by turning this into kind of a dialogue
F⁴: they personify it
F⁶: and thus makes it more interesting than if it were just simple a,b,c (**NUL**: 1101-1120)

There appeared to be a lack of clarity for LCE learners, about the relationships between the different elements in the material, as if there were insufficient anchorage and relay between images and text. This appeared to cause a lack of congruence in the message of the pamphlet, as is reflected in arguments such as the one quoted below:

M³: I have question, there's this picture, in fact there are several of them that appear down here, these ones that look like drawings, I would like to know what is their use or meaning (**LCE**: 1025-1028)

There was a marked difference in the way learners responded to the question asking whether the message matched with the picture. Some argued that the message and the pictures would only match in the eyes of someone who is familiar with them, but to someone who does not already understand their purpose, they would not match:

M¹: my question still concerns these signs. Unlike with these other pictures there's nowhere where they were mentioned. See the difference is that with the other pictures I can see they are people talking whereas with them they are just put there. To me they're just mathematical signs, well I do understand how he explains them but what about somebody who won't have a chance to get all these explanations, do you think that person would get any message? (**LCE**: 588-597)

Learners seemed not to appreciate the general concept of a blood test that is being conveyed, but appeared to be stuck on details that cannot be exactly matched to every situation. These created an additional communication problem, which appeared to have lessened the pamphlet's credibility among some of the learners. They seemed to receive information in a very concrete way, further indicating a need for unambiguous images in order to help them associate pictures with the message, or a need for intensive education that there are several different ways of doing a blood test. For instance, based on personal experience, some learners at TIL and LCE reflected a need for accurate visual representation of the actual finger that is pricked during the test, so that the message would be convincing. However, those learners

who had tested before did not agree that the picture portraying the thumb was being used to show collecting blood for testing, since they were not pricked on the thumb. This became a big issue, as is reflected in the following extracts:

F²: and the site is wrong, one is not pricked on that site; in the front middle part like that! You are pricked on the fingertip (**TIL:** 1228-1230)

F⁴: it is just that I would like to know which finger is usually used for testing. Do they prick on any or is it a certain finger that is usually used for collecting blood? I don't remember seeing or having heard of anyone who has been pricked on the thumb (**LCE:** 992-997)

There were also some concerns that indicated a communication gap in the message in the pamphlet, suggesting a necessity for further illustration of how the people shown are feeling in order for the respondents to be able to establish the function of the pictures:

F³: so that we could have an idea of the kind of feeling that people usually experience when asking themselves these questions. Whether one becomes worried or cheerful and relaxed because he or she will be asking her or himself; but to be honest who is going to benefit from testing, is it not me?

R: are you saying the pictures assist in explaining the message?

F³: yes, they help to explain the message

F⁵: yes it helps to emphasise the message (**TIL:** 866-875)

Other reactions indicated that the discussions had helped respondents to make meaningful deliberations of the pamphlet, as is demonstrated in the following section.

7.2 MEANING MAKING

Several different views emerged in response to the question that asked what message learners understood the pamphlet to convey. The variety of specified signs that were noted as the first impressions of the pamphlet indicated a clear understanding of the symbols:

F⁴: because this question mark asks whether your status is positive or negative. Positive being indicated by the plus sign and negative by the minus sign and this finger indicates that you can know by testing (**NUL:** 1071-1074)

The lone question mark also seemed to have clearly served its purpose. It was associated with the pamphlet's main message – knowing one's HIV status:

M⁵: I think this question mark made me realise that it's been a long time since I last tested, because the issue is you don't just check once in five years and keep on claiming that you know your status. Like they have tabulated the kind of people that should go for testing, it means whenever you had committed any one of these you should go for testing (**LCE:** 2237-2244)

In some instances the meaning of the message was mainly interpreted in view of facial expressions portrayed by images as opposed to describing feelings verbally in the text. To the learners, these expressions represented people's feelings. Based on this, the interpretations included seeing people with relaxed and happy faces, suggesting that these people were happy because they already knew their HIV status or were not afraid to undergo the HIV test. Some of the characters in the images were pointed to as looking worried and scared, implying that the owners were afraid to undertake the test. One of the characters (first picture in the 'middle fold' with the speech bubble *ho boleloa'ng ka tlhabollo le tlhahlobo ka boithaopo* that inquired what is meant by counselling and voluntary testing) was even referred to as looking astonished, with the connotation that the person was ignorant about HIV testing related issues. All these connotations gave an impression that the producers of the pamphlet included images with differing facial expressions with the aim to attract different types of people, be it those who are afraid or not afraid to test for HIV:

F¹: smiling gentleman

F²: astonished lady (looking as if she's wondering at what is meant by HIV testing)

M³: scared gentleman **F²:** a worried person or somebody who is deeply in thought

R: is there anything else?

F¹: happy/smiling gentleman, as if he is wondering how knowing his status is going to be of help to him or of what benefit is knowing his status going to be to him

F³: a relaxed somebody who is looking forward to undertake the test (**TIL:** 650-662)

Another interpretation implied that the images were included for the purposes of preventing the spread of HIV, to show the reader that he or she also could discuss HIV issues with anyone:

M²: when looking at these pictures, especially these faces to me they mean that if one has had training on HIV and AIDS issues, he or she too is at liberty to disseminate related information in order to help prevent the spread of this disease (**LCE:** 631-635)

Upon being asked what they understood the message that is being conveyed by the pamphlet to be, respondents gave a list of things which indicated that they understood the message, but

not necessarily that it was all new to them. These included knowing oneself, relations with others and also ways in which to look after oneself, as described in the following extracts:

- M⁴**: know your status
- F³**: be confident; know what you want to do
- M¹**: use condoms
- M⁵**: be honest to your partner
- F¹**: do not use alcohol and drugs
- F³**: eat nutritious food, so that you can live long, go to see a doctor whenever you do not feel well
- M⁴**: exercise
- R**: I haven't heard you say anything from this side
- M⁴**: sleep on time/early (**TIL**: 673-682)
- F³**: we're encouraged to use condom during sexual intercourse
- F⁴**: we're also being encouraged to eat foods with good nutrition once we know our status and to also exercise
- M²**: we're also being encouraged not to use drugs
- F²**: we're also encouraged to visit health facilities to test for HIV and we're told we can go to New Start centers as well
- F⁵**: we're also encouraged to take care or protect ourselves regardless of our status, regardless of whether we already have it or not (**LCE**: 470-482)

- F⁴**: I should know my status
- F⁶**: I should go for testing
- R**: yes what did you say?
- F³**: I'm saying it means one should go for testing, so that he or she can know his or her status (**NUL**: 1012-1016)

Again, learners provided some interesting interpretations, which reflected three layers of understanding of the pamphlet's message. First and foremost they acknowledged that the pamphlet indicates things that happen in real life, things that are thought of and done by ordinary people like them. The second key message was understood as encouraging people to go for testing, hence they interpreted this with a notion of personal responsibility to get tested and with the understanding that people can be given information, but it is one's responsibility to take action. The message was also understood to say that people should not be worried because their status will remain a secret, although it appeared to be only the male respondents who were worried about confidentiality as if they were worried that if the test outcome was a positive status they needed assurance that the outcome of their results would be kept a secret. The subsequent extracts give examples of male concerns that surfaced in Quthing (TIL):

M³: you should feel free to go for testing because your status will be kept a secret (**TIL:** 695-696)

M⁴: and at least we are assured that our status will be remain a secret if we go for testing, so one should feel free to go for testing (**TIL:** 786-788)

M⁵: yes it means we should relax knowing that when you go for testing your status will remain your secret (**TIL:** 805-807)

The main point of the pamphlet was summarized to give people information about the testing process, and what happens when people go for testing. This was discussed in the context of whether anything needed to be added to or removed from the pamphlet:

M¹: nothing because if anything is removed, it will lose meaning or the intended message. If we add anything it will lose focus or logic because maybe that thing would be something else which doesn't exactly fit here. My understanding is this pamphlet is about the testing process, what happens when you go for testing, so that's it (**TIL:** 1086-1092)

The second message was that one should take care of oneself, with or without HIV:

F⁶: to me it stressed on self-care (**NUL:** 2722)

Although learners understood the overall message, nevertheless they seemed to view HIV as just a disease like any other that one might get and which simply needed to be treated with drugs. There were few deeper insights towards HIV prevention, such as a change of lifestyle, as is illustrated in the following extracts:

F³: it made realise that regular testing is not only right but it helps to keep me up to date about my status (**TIL:** 2733-2735)

F³: because you'd be conscious of what you've done. That bird would be haunted by misbehavior. If you've had engaged in an unprotected sex it'll...

F²: especially because you'll find that we don't just go for testing, we go because there's a reason (**NUL:** 2683-2687)

Out of the three participant groups, learners from NUL, appeared to have a deeper understanding of the message of the pamphlet, something that could perhaps be attributed to the influence they gained from their environment. Their school is situated in the capital city where HIV and AIDS educational messages can easily be accessed. Also, NUL has a more active HIV policy. The NUL learners appeared to be capable of applying the modern

discourses of HIV and AIDS such as those quoted below and even referred to popular media messages about HIV in their responses:

F⁴: it's not a death sentence this thing (**NUL:** 1049)

F¹: they indicate that every person should know his or her status. It is important that people know their status in regard to HIV (**NUL:** 1085-1087)

There was also evidence that learners engaged in an enquiring thinking process when trying to interpret the meaning of the pamphlet. This process helped them not only to acquire new learning from both the pamphlet and their peers, but it appeared to have re-awakened their consciousness towards HIV and AIDS related issues as well. The evidence of this is discussed in the following section.

7.2.1 TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING

There was an indication that the first meeting had inspired the learners as a group and made them engage in some transformative thinking from the very first discussions. The dialogues seemed to have played a crucial role in helping them to understand the message that the pamphlet was attempting to communicate and in the process they also learned a lot from each other. Although their responses did not exactly indicate a desire for a change of behaviour, some said that the pamphlet had not only advised them, but it had challenged them also. It had made them realise (possibly also based on what they had already learned from the poster discussion) the importance of reducing the number of their sexual partners in order to minimize the risk of infection. It also helped them develop a new understanding that people should talk to others about HIV and AIDS issues:

F⁴: they (pamphlet and discussions) have helped me realise some things that I was not aware of before. That for instance it is not only important to know my status alone but that of my partner as well, because they may not be faithful. So I understand that I'll have to always use condoms in order to protect myself (**TIL:** 3031-3036)

M¹: and not sleep with every Jack and Jill

F⁵: of course yes, not sleep around

M¹: we're also being encouraged to go for testing regularly

F³: we're also encouraged to be faithful to our partners (**LCE:** 485-490)

Although respondents in Maseru (NUL) shared the same understanding of the poster's message, that they can live longer when they know their HIV status, it was argued, however, that this was not always the case, as there were known cases in which people had died because of depression or denial within a short period of time after knowing that they are positive. Further discussions, nevertheless, revealed the learners' understanding that being HIV positive does not mean a 'death sentence'. Nonetheless, there were some quite harsh, but perhaps also pragmatic comments, such as the one quoted below:

F⁴: we can just add: bold people can live longer when they know their status, because those who die of depression or of denial are stupid and I think it is good that they die, they must die. Let them die (NUL: 1037-1040)

There was a marked change between the two meetings (Focus Group Discussions [FGD¹ and FGD²]), which indicated transformative thinking through a new level of understanding and acquisition of new attitudes. This was revealed during the second group discussions, which showed that the first discussion had influenced their thinking:

M⁵: afterwards I felt I could boldly go for testing irrespective of the outcome. I felt I could face it, be negative or positive (TIL: 2736-2738)

M⁵: yes I've also learned that a person can still live for a long time even if he or she tested positive as long as he or she follows what is being said here. If they follow these advices (LCE: 3191-3194)

F¹: well even though I can't say I had time to digest all that we discussed but now that you're asking us I think I can say nowadays I've been thinking about going for testing even though I haven't had time

R: had this feeling been there before we first met or did it come after our discussion?

F¹: I'm not sure but I think maybe it came because of the discussion (NUL: 2693-2700)

The discussion, therefore, seemed to have pushed learners to rethink HIV matters. Some reflected an enthusiasm to go for testing, although it could not be guaranteed that they would actually go, or that the first discussion had helped them develop sustainable attitudinal change towards HIV related issues. This further confirmed the importance of interaction dialogue in HIV education, as participating in the interviews motivated learners to go for testing:

M¹: Yes. I think our discussion helped drive away that fear which I had for testing and will now go. I had always wanted to but never gained enough courage to go and now

I'm going to use the first opportunity that I get to test like other people (**TIL:** 2949-2953)

M⁵: I used not to read them. In fact even if anything looked interesting but the minute I see the word AIDS or I realise that it had anything to do with AIDS I dropped it. But yes I see that it was important to have participated in these interviews because they have made me realise that we're still in danger of AIDS (**LCE:** 3248-3254)

Through transformative thinking, respondents now understood the message of the pamphlet to include advising people on what to do in order to live healthy and longer lives. The variety of images played a crucial role in helping them to understand that the message of the pamphlet applies to everyone, including them:

M³: they also help to encourage us to go for testing since they represent different people full of contentment from knowing their status, signifying that I have to go for testing too in order to know my status (**TIL:** 876-880)

F¹: we're encouraged to know our status

F³: we're encouraged to use condom during sexual intercourse

F⁴: we're also being encouraged to eat foods with good nutrition once we know our status and to also exercise

M²: we're also being encouraged not to use drugs

F²: we're also encouraged to visit health facilities to test for HIV and we're told we can go to New Start centers as well

F⁵: we're also encouraged to take care or protect ourselves regardless of our status, regardless of whether we already have it or not (**LCE:** 470-482)

F²: they mean that we can live longer when we know our status (**NUL:** 1022-1023)

Moreover, the pamphlet stimulated further discussion about HIV that was not necessarily a focus of its message, but became a focus of conversation about wider HIV issues. There were suggestions that went beyond the intended message of the pamphlet. They were regarded as important points to consider in the fight against HIV, because they reflected maturity in the learners and how caring they were towards those infected with HIV. For example, in the context of the pamphlet's recommendations, they considered what might happen if people are too poor to eat. Learners suggested solutions to this such as helping or advising people to grow their own food:

F³: you should relax in order to avoid stress thinking about what you're going to eat. Also, you have to eat well, for example. eat an egg every day

F¹: oo oee! What's going to happen if one doesn't have access to eggs? Do you realise that people end up having to steal them? What will then happen if you can't afford to get nutritious food?

F³: no. What I mean is one can rear chickens, so that he or she will be able to get enough protein. Use your medication well and see the doctor as directed and try to relax to avoid stress (**TIL:** 697-707)

In discussing the pamphlet and sharing related experiences, respondents across all institutions agreed that there was nothing offensive about it. Nonetheless, the dialogue seemed to have helped respondents to learn certain things from each other which were of importance to IEC materials producers and to them as message consumers. The following section highlights examples of learning that learners acquired from each other during the discussions.

7.2.2 LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Responses to the question that asked what learners liked or disliked about the pamphlet revealed how dialogue helped boost their confidence in interpreting the pamphlet's message as they looked at it from different contexts or frames of reference. For instance, learners revealed that the language and the pictures used in the pamphlet indicated a targeted age range of people who are expected to benefit from the pamphlet. It was argued that for people to be able to relate IEC materials to their own context, they have to understand the language and identify with the images. As was indicated earlier, it is because signs are understood through familiarity of usage:

M⁵: to me this looks like it was meant for youth. This page rather the front page I think bears straight youth slang, no question about it, even these people inside here fall within range. Remember legally here in Lesotho you're a member of the youth fraternity until you reach the age of 37 and you can't tell me any of these people here is above 37

F⁵: meaning whoever lost interest, because these are not labelled, must be over 37

F⁴: and it's obviously not for her (**LCE:** 891-900)

NUL students engaged in additional analysis, giving the impression that they had not interpreted the pictures just at face value and had taught each other through discussion. They analysed the meaning of the pictures and in the process influenced one another to refrain from engaging in detrimental habits. They also helped each other understand that what the pamphlet advocates can still benefit even those who are not infected with HIV. Their deliberations

suggested that they were warning each other about the use of drugs, including alcohol and cigarettes:

F⁶: is anything about drinking mentioned here?

F⁵: it is mentioned, they have indicated that you should not use substances, or you wanted alcohol to be singled out?

F¹: the word substance refers to drugs

F³: and you should also not smoke

F⁴: it is just that smoking has been singled out; actually they refer to all types of drugs including medications. It can be any medicine, even those that are manufactured at the NDSO (National Drug Services Organization) their overdose becomes a substance or a drug. So it wants you to stop using drugs (**NUL:** 1276-1287)

Moreover, the discussions seemed to have helped learners to scrutinise and make sense of what was really meant by certain issues in the message, or why they were put in a particular way. For instance, although the images seemed (for some participants) to represent males only and therefore distort the message, the reasoning during the discussions helped to make acceptable sense out of it:

F⁵: but all the same you would ask yourself what is happening if you see men only, whether is it only men who get AIDS? (**NUL:** 1191-1193)

F⁵: besides one can assume that these men should have infected women or have been infected by women

F⁶: maybe those women were all dead by the time this pamphlet was made (**NUL:** 1197-1200)

Although LCE learners did not understand the purpose of these images, they were insightful enough to analyse them and try to make sense out of them, while the respondents in the other two institutions did not seem to have noticed these images and texts, implying that they did not understand them. Students from NUL approved of the credibility of the pamphlet and appeared to be more knowledgeable than others. They claimed to know everything that was mentioned in the pamphlet and agreed with it. This was perhaps because, as was indicated earlier, they were exposed to a variety of HIV related information, and also had HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) services at their disposal from a clinic on the campus:

R: so there's nothing you disagree with here?

All: yes

F²: because we've seen them happen, we've heard about them

F⁶: also because they have provided true answers to these questions that are asked here
(**NUL**: 1370-1375)

It was interesting to also recognize that NUL learners were thinking very much beyond the immediate. They believed that everyone who lives in Lesotho should understand the message of the pamphlet, irrespective of their nationality. This, perhaps, reflected their more cosmopolitan environment, which granted them more opportunity not only to mix with people from different spheres of life, but also to access more HIV related information outlets:

F⁶: I wouldn't mind sharing this one with my father as well

F⁵: those ones are half Basotho; half people of their respective countries. They have dual citizenship

F²: regardless of whether Basotho or not, my understanding is every person has a right to be informed and educated on all health related issues

F⁶: no we're not talking about those who applied for citizenship, but natural Mosotho
(**NUL**: 1344-1352)

In the other institutions strong gender undertones could be observed, showing that learners had understood and applied the message of the pamphlet to themselves. In this regard, there were many examples of men and women who used the message to challenge each other. For instance, instead of congratulating a male member of the group who indicated that the question mark made him realise that it had been a long time since he last tested, one of the female members ridiculed him and told him that he needed to have done that a long time ago. The male hit back with the same comment, indicating that the female member also needed to go for testing. Even though these learners appeared to be joking, this could imply that they mocked each other because they felt that the pamphlet was directly addressing them, and that they knew each other's behavioural conduct needed serious educational interventions that would lead to positive behaviour change:

F¹: and you must be long overdue

M⁵: who?

F⁴: I'm talking about you

M⁵: what about you? (**LCE**: 2245-2248)

There was also an indication, during the second meeting discussions, of a clear level of understanding of the pamphlet's message amongst the respondents, though it appeared to have

less to do with behavior or attitudinal change, but rather more with fear of infection. In other words, the discussions not only enabled the learners to connect with the pamphlet, but the issue of testing also stimulated an understanding of the potentially negative consequences of not knowing one's HIV status, thus inducing some fear in them. The next section presents and analyses responses that hinted of this fear.

7.2.3 FEAR UNDERTONES

It can be inferred that the discussion helped to positively influence attitudes towards HIV testing and HIV related IEC materials despite the argument that the pamphlet did not provide any new information to the learners, but rather served more as a reminder about a well-known issue (HIV testing). Although some responses argued that print IEC materials need to be accurate, there were indications that the information generated fear.

NUL learners used the metaphor of HIV as a monster, as if they were so afraid of this disease that they hated to say its name. Examples of these fear undertones are cited below:

- F⁴:** I'm saying it wants me to know my status pertaining to this monster
- F³:** HIV monster
- R:** just listen to that, you wanted me to leave out such a nice statement in case it was not captured here
- The rest:** laugh
- F⁶:** do you hear that word monster
- F³:** actually it is a monster amongst monsters (**NUL:** 1246-1253)

This suggested that respondents were not as brave to take the test as they claimed:

- F¹:** I can say I feel confident to go for testing, even though it wouldn't be for the first time. So it's not like it taught me something new, but still I can say it served some purpose because you know there's always a bird (fear, nervousness) when you have to go for testing
- F³:** because you'd be conscious of what you've done. That bird would be haunted by misbehavior. If you've had engaged in an unprotected sex it'll...
- F²:** especially because you'll find that we don't just go for testing, we go because there's a reason (**NUL:** 2678-2687)

The fear discussions also stimulated an understanding of the importance of knowing their status and that it is their responsibility to go for testing:

F³: ok I think it is talking to us and to others outside this discussion who are not informed about their status

R: yes, what is it that it is saying?

F³: it is trying to allay people's fears about going for testing

F⁵: or knowing their status (**TIL**: 2759-2765)

M¹: I feel I should update my knowledge about my status. In other words I need to go for testing

F³: it helped to remind me to go for testing (**LCE**: 2229-2231)

As indicated, the discussions included comments on the comprehensibility of the pamphlet, learners' reactions on how they generally felt about it, communication issues that appeared to have enhanced or hindered learning from it and the impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. The subsequent theme presents and analyses suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the pamphlet, so that it would contain accurate text and images for a targeted audience.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section follows a similar format to the suggestions theme in the previous chapter. Some suggestions for the improvement of the pamphlet were semiotically based, while others were culture specific. It was only the TIL and LCE learners who had suggestions on how the pamphlet could be improved in order for it to influence targeted audiences. Those from NUL appeared to agree with and liked everything about the pamphlet, perhaps because they came from a more urban environment, or because they had more interest in HIV testing related issues and so were more knowledgeable.

7.3.1 SUGGESTIONS TO FILL COMMUNICATION GAPS

Some suggestions indicated a communication gap or omission of detail. Learners expressed a need for the message to portray how people who tested positive can be assisted to help them accept their status, since not all people test negative. The argument was that the present pamphlet's message and pictures did not seem to reflect any misery, as the normative expectation was that people who tested positive would sound and look miserable. It was, therefore, suggested that the pamphlet should include the following:

F¹: I think they should have indicated how someone whose results come out positive is helped so as to help him/her accept positive status (**LCE:** 709-711)

M³: I think they should have included a picture of someone who suffers from it so that we can have an idea on how they look like (**LCE:** 715-717)

Some responses from LCE learners reflected maturity and more understanding. They appeared to consider HIV issues more seriously than their counterparts. They seemed to understand that it is not only volunteers who would go for testing, but also people who have had unpleasant experiences such as rape and accidental piercing from used needles. With respect to this awareness they made the following suggestions in order for the message of the pamphlet to be complete:

F³: ... I think they should have included information that relates to emergency situations. For example they should have indicated what people should do in case they have been raped

R: oh! You would like information on PEP included. Remind me what it is called in full

F³: Post Exposure Prophylaxis

R: yes Post Exposure Prophylaxis

M⁵: one other thing is I think the issue of pregnancy needs to be included. People should be informed on how pregnant women who are found to be having HIV can be helped as well (**LCE:** 734-745)

Respondents also recommended that the pamphlet should portray the full picture of what happens to people who test positive. They wanted readers to be carried through to the end, including the phase where the pamphlet demonstrates the emotional state of people whose results come out positive, and how those people are helped to cope with these results, in the hope that this can encourage people to want to know their status:

M²: I did not see pictures or information on persons who perhaps have tested positive to show that maybe you tested positive and you have to accept yourself (**TIL:** 914-917)

They also wanted the ‘appliances’ that are used for testing to be shown in the pamphlet to portray a complete picture of what goes on during the testing process. Again, this was in the hope that the inclusion of these ‘appliances’ in the images would allay the fears of those who might be afraid to go for testing:

M⁵: how about if those appliances or equipment that is used for testing is included, one showing negative results and one which shows when results are positive (**LCE:** 918-921)

In addition to the concrete suggestions learners were concerned that some people may not be able to understand the message that is being conveyed because there was an incompleteness in the message of the pamphlet, in the sense that not all signs were comprehensible since they were not explained:

M¹: no. I say no because for instance here I see the plus and minus signs but I did not hear anywhere where they talked about them, unless I was not listening properly or did not understand the explanation if it is there somewhere. I did not hear where it was explained that this means this and this means that in regard to testing or for that matter why they are being used (**LCE:** 542-549)

During the discussions, LCE learners continued to show a deeper analysis and raised some issues that related to attractiveness. These resulted in the suggestions discussed below.

7.3.2 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE PAMPHLET

No one understood what some of the images or “drawings” represented, where the use of additional sign types to reinforce a point did not add to the meaning, but caused confusion. The incongruity seemed to cause so much confusion that learners decided that it would be better if these drawings were removed:

F²: I’m sorry if I’m being out of track. But I want to suggest that we delete these pictures of wooden men...

The rest: burst out laughing

F²: can’t you see they look like they were cut from planks or timber

R: which ones are they?

F²: these ones in semi-circles, where the word ‘nete’ (truth) is written

R: ohh! I see

F²: in fact I think the whole semi-circle can be removed, after all I didn’t hear any of us talk about them

R: ok

F⁴: actually what are they for?

M³: they are just decorations

F⁴: and they make this congested

M²: yes I think she’s right, we don’t need them (**LCE:** 770-786)

As already indicated, perception about the design of the pamphlet differed considerably from institute to institute, and even among members of the same group. Nevertheless, the following

alterations were suggested in order to improve the structure and attractiveness of the pamphlet:

F³: shape; it should be a booklet instead (**TIL**: 1038)

F¹: also I think use of pictures should have been moderate too... (**LCE**: 901-903)

M³: but I think the issue of language is very important if you want to get to youth. This is a good pamphlet but I don't think it would serve the purpose even if it was translated into 'straight English' so to speak. What I want to say is, I wish the same pamphlet could be written in such a way that could be interesting to youth. I don't know how to put it, but if we really want to reach out to them I think materials like this should also be written in their language, so to speak. I don't know if you understand what I mean (**LCE**: 866-876)

7.3.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF ALL BASOTHO

Although the pamphlet was deemed culturally acceptable, there were some additional suggestions that were expected to help increase a sense of ownership and responsiveness towards the pamphlet among Basotho. These included suggestions such as this:

M⁴: even though it is culturally sensitive, but I think some pictures should represent our culture; wear Sesotho attire to show that it is for everybody (**TIL**: 1103-1105)

The normative beliefs which appeared to have been influenced by the experience of learners of certain practices that prevailed within their social context as Basotho, not necessarily within that of their learning institutions, revealed some important and strong gender dimensions that need to be taken into account by IEC materials producers. The learners were concerned that HIV materials tend to talk to individuals; yet relationships always require two people. They suggested, therefore, that the pamphlet should vividly reflect people in a relationship:

F³: another thing is, I think it would be nice to include a picture showing a man and woman in discussion, representing couples in order to motivate men to go for testing because they usually don't like to go for testing. It is women who normally take the initiative and when they come back positive men always move out and they come back when they are sick. Men don't easily accept themselves when positive (**TIL**: 969-977)

F³: it should be after the wife has tested and she should appear relating the findings (her status) to the husband so that the husband supports her and gets inspired to go for testing (**TIL**: 985-988)

7.4 CONCLUSION

The overall responses towards this pamphlet were categorised into four sections. These sections were organised around collective theme groupings, namely, first impressions, meaning making, transformative thinking and suggestions that the learners made for improvements.

There were harmonious views across all the groups pertaining to the first impressions about the pamphlet. Items that could motivate people to read the pamphlet and those that could discourage them to read it were also viewed as part of the first impressions, because they determine the attractiveness of the pamphlet. Images and text that caused confusion among learners because they could not be easily interpreted were included under the first impressions, because they determine the usefulness of the pamphlet.

Highlighted patterns of interpretation to some extent revealed the ways in which the learners derived or expressed semiotic layers of meaning from what they saw in the pamphlet. There seemed to be two levels of understanding: the immediate first impression and the more thoughtful reflections that came along with the discussion. These reflected patterns of uniformity as well as variations in the respondents' understanding of images and text that made up the pamphlet. In trying to construct meaning, learners shared related experiences and in the process learned certain things from each other which were of importance to IEC materials producers, as well as to them (learners) as the readers of the messages. Although respondents across all institutions agreed that there were no offensive issues in the pamphlet, and the discussions appeared to have enabled the learners to connect with the pamphlet, it was the fear of infection and the issue of testing that seemed to have stimulated an understanding of the potential negative consequences of not knowing one's HIV status, which sometimes translated into fear of the unknown.

The discussions, it was assumed, helped learners to develop an enquiring thinking process that inspired them to engage in a more transformative kind of thinking, irrespective of claims that they were familiar with everything that was said in the pamphlet.

The presentation was closed with suggestions that the learners made towards the improvement of the pamphlet. Only learners from Quthing and Thaba-Tseka made contributions that could complete the pamphlet's message and make it look more attractive. Even though some suggestions went beyond the intended message of the pamphlet, they were regarded as important points to consider in the fight against HIV.

Institution	Summary of main ways that learners used to interpret the pamphlet's message
Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only learners who made suggestions for the pamphlet to become all encompassing • Introduced strong gender dimensions that need to be taken into account by IEC materials producers for HIV prevention. Were concerned that HIV materials tend to address individuals, yet relationships always require two people (males and females) • Suggested that some pictures should represent culture; for example, they should reflect people wearing Sesotho attire to show that the pamphlet is for everybody
Lesotho College of Education (LCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More mature in terms of knowledge and understanding or experience • Used the message to challenge each other as men and women to show that they understood and applied the message of the pamphlet to themselves • The only learners who contextually related with the pamphlet
National University of Lesotho (NUL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected maturity and care towards those infected with HIV • Reflected a more cosmopolitan attitude, because they wanted this kind of message to be accessible to everyone who lives in Lesotho irrespective of their nationality

It was concluded that TIL learners were the only ones who seemed to be concerned about the pamphlet becoming particularly encompassing, perhaps because they lived and were schooled with Bathepu students (Xhosa people, a minority group, found in the Quthing district). The

LCE learners attributed their maturity to the course of study they were doing (Diploma in Primary Education) because it included, among others, HIV and AIDS as a subject. The year of study they were doing could have had some influence, since they were the only respondents who were in the third year of their studies. They were also a bit older compared to their counterparts. The NUL learners' maturity and care towards those infected with HIV was perhaps due to their environment that granted them more opportunity not only to mix with people from different spheres of life, but also to have access to more HIV related information outlets.

Having presented and analyzed the findings on the pamphlet in this chapter, the next chapter presents and analyses findings on the magazine which specifically aims to inform and educate teenagers in Lesotho on issues related to HIV and AIDS.

CHAPTER EIGHT: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF MAGAZINE

8.0 INTRODUCTION

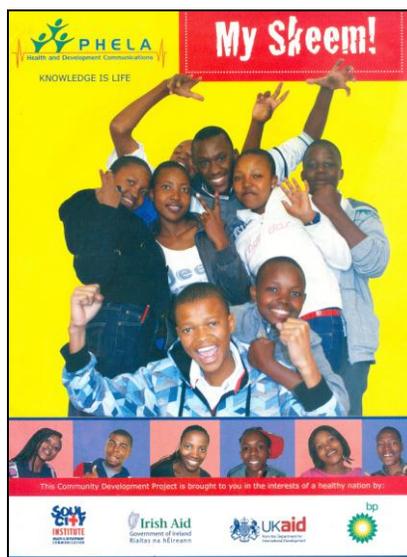
In a similar manner to the previous chapter on the pamphlet, this chapter outlines the tertiary education learners' responses towards a magazine that is specifically aimed to inform and communicate on HIV and AIDS related issues to teenagers in Lesotho. The magazine's content is made up of eight (8) articles, which were referred to as chapters during the discussion. As was indicated earlier, the research was done only on one article, article 5, which discusses masturbation and comprised only one page (page 27).

Diagram 18: ARTICLE 5 OF THE MAGAZINE (Phela Health and Development Communications)



Since people see the cover page before they read the articles, the cover page of the magazine was also examined because the first impressions that people have about it determines the use of the magazine.

Diagram 19: COVER PAGE OF THE MAGAZINE (Phela Health and Development Communications)



The findings are presented and analysed around three thematic categories. These are: first impressions, meaning making, and suggestions that learners made for the improvement of both the cover page and article 5. However, findings concerning the cover page are presented and analysed around only one theme, first impressions, as the cover page was not the focus of the study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the students' comments about the text and images that, to them, seemed to be of importance in the design of print based health related messages.

8.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To establish the first impressions that the learners had about the magazine, they were asked to interpret what they saw when they looked at the cover page and article 5 respectively. Some factors motivated learners to look at the cover page or to read article 5, while others demotivated them. These included culturally related issues and certain factors that were not clear to them and therefore could not be easily interpreted, resulting in some confusion. These were presented and analysed as sub-themes that formed part of this section, namely, motivating factors, cultural issues, demotivating factors and elements of confusion.

As with the previous IEC materials, when learners were asked to interpret what they saw, they were expected to describe everything. All respondents had no problem recognizing the picture on the cover page as representing a group of teenagers. For instance, TIL and LCE learners mentioned a “group of youngsters”.

F⁴: a group of happy youngsters (**TIL**: 1272)

M⁴: a group of happy youngsters (**LCE**: 1061)

At NUL, although these young people were seen as attractive, they were only commented on after respondents had mentioned seeing a “book”, and then used the same term:

F⁴: a group of happy youngsters (**NUL**: 15)

Learners also mentioned the title of the magazine ‘My *skeem*’ and based on this, the connotation was that these youngsters were friends because to them the word ‘*skeem*’ refers to friends:

M⁵, F³&F⁵: title or name of the book / book name my ‘skeem’, my friends / yes book title my friends

R: oh does the title my ‘skeem’ mean my friends?

All: yes (**TIL**: 1274-1277)

F⁵: the word my skeem, or the title my skeem

R: what does this word mean?

F¹: my skeem?

R: yes what does it mean?

M¹, M⁴, F⁵, F⁴&F³: friends / yes friends (**LCE**: 1066-1070)

F⁶: no a magazine. A yellow magazine called my “skeem” (**NUL**: 13-14)

Besides the interpretation of the title ‘My *skeem*’ as referring generally to friends, there was the acceptance of an assumed norm that people of the opposite sex also need friendship:

F³: that the magazine contains different issues that answer different questions from my friends

F¹: I think it shows that what is written in the magazine would be like I'm talking to as many people as those that appear on this cover page

M⁴: yes it's like it is saying you're having all friends contained in this magazine

F⁴: that it contains different stories

F²: (laughing) meaning if I have this magazine I'll be having you guys contained in a book (**TIL:** 1312-1321)

M⁴: I think it says if you have friends you'll be happy like these people, because you'll be able to share problems (**LCE:** 1113-1115)

F⁴: they mean people need one another, regardless of sex

R: by sex are you referring to gender?

F⁴: yes regardless of whether the other person is a boy or a girl (**NUL:** 139-142)

Several interpretations concerning the picture on the cover page were given as signifying the targeted audience for the magazine. For instance, learners seemed to have understood that the function of the picture is to help people know who the magazine is meant for. For this reason it was generally thought that the magazine was meant for people younger than them, like those in the picture. Respondents also indicated that, had it not been for the discussion they would not have looked at the magazine in the belief that whatever is contained inside it was meant for people of that age only:

M²: I just told myself that it is for young stars. Had you not introduced it, I don't think I would have ever had interest in it (**LCE:** 2428-2430)

This indicated a need for a rather more comprehensive picture on the cover page that would represent a broader audience, if the magazine is to attract a wider audience. The learners realised that even people beyond the age of people who appear on the cover page could still benefit a lot from the magazine. They were concerned that it appeared as if the magazine communicated only to "teenagers", and this was misleading because an older age group people were thus unlikely to have an interest in the magazine even though HIV attacks everybody irrespective of age:

M³: I also thought it contains only fairy tales for children this age (**LCE:** 2431-2432)

F²: I think when looking at the cover page, it made me think that it was meant for teenagers and in a way I think it's going to mislead a lot of people. For instance, had we not discussed it I don't think I would have ever had interest in it (**NUL:** 3277-3281)

Problems that resulted in the mixed messages again helped to explain why learners had not had any interest in the magazine before, especially those in Maseru. For instance, some of them indicated that the word '*skeem*' made them keep their distance from the magazine, as they thought it was written in Afrikaans and was therefore meant for South Africans only:

F¹: I wouldn't look at it because I'd have thought it's for Boers
The rest: burst out laughing
R: wait, wait let us hear what could have made her think like that
F¹: because of this word (pointing at the word *skeem*), I thought it's Afrikaans (**NUL:** 536-542)

There was a sense that producers of the magazine failed to sufficiently observe factors that could make people contextually relate to it. These factors influence cultural appropriateness in terms of language, dress, gender and age range that, if the materials are to attract, needed attention:

F¹: I would say yes because I never knew that this magazine contains so much information, also I always thought it's a South African product (**NUL:** 3020-3023)

As with the materials discussed in the previous chapters, there were several layers of messages interpreted from the picture on the cover page. For instance, there seemed to be the practical message, with the underlying socially or culturally embedded connotation, which learners seemed to trust, because being part of a group makes people contented:

F²: I think the function of this picture is to emphasize what the people who produced this book want people to be - since their company is called "Phela" (be alive), - they want them to be lively. Like when you look at these people they look lively like the name says (**NUL:** 257-261)

Learners were similarly asked to mention everything that they saw when they looked at article 5 to establish how they interpreted the signs (text and images) that make up this article. Even though there were variations in the sequence in which the items were mentioned, respondents

generally reported seeing text and a human figure representing a healthcare worker. This image was associated with health because of the way the person was dressed:

F¹&F³: a nurse / a male nurse

M³: I was going to say a doctor

F⁵&M¹: a title - masturbation / written in blue

M⁴: writings in blue and black

M²: myself I could say I see a page, because there has to be a page first before there could be writing

M⁵: and other information written in black then...

F²: and the blue stripes or are they decorations? (**TIL**: 1284-1291)

F⁴: I see a picture of a male nurse

R: a male nurse. What else do you see?

F²: writing for example. I would say a title written in blue, words written in black, vocabulary written in black on blue strips

F³: and additional information or footnote which emphasizes that masturbation is normal written in light blue (**LCE**: 1093-1100)

F²: I see a doctor or a nurse, the reason being the attire he's wearing. Maybe he is eeh probably giving an orientation on masturbation

R: would we call this a doctor, do doctors dress like this?

F³, F⁶&F⁵: no / they don't dress like that / no this one is a nurse

F⁶&F⁴: this one is a nurse / this one is a male nurse (**NUL**: 35-41)

In addition, there were factors which motivated learners to look at the magazine, which the next section outlines for the cover page and article 5 respectively.

8.1.1 MOTIVATING FACTORS

The pictures on the cover page seemed to have had a positive affective appeal for the learners, because some indicated that when they looked at the cover page they felt that they wanted to be as happy as the people in the picture or to at least be "smart" like them, making them keen to read the magazine. Therefore, that the picture can be said to assist the magazine to reach its target audience and encourage it to read the information:

F¹, F², F³&F⁴: the picture, they look happy because they know what is inside / they are smart and smart people read smart magazines / you would wish you could be one of them, so I would take a closer look to see what is it all about / you would want to share their happiness by reading this (magazine) (**TIL**: 1607-1612)

F³: also it is to attract young people to read this book, because if they see their age-mates on the cover, they would want to know more or what's inside (NUL: 253-255)

The title, colour and the picture of the cover page were described by the learners, across all institutions, as the first things that would attract them to have a closer look at it. However, at NUL there appeared to be another aspect which indicated that the magazine would not necessarily be read for information purposes, but for relaxation, as indicated in the last response cited below:

F⁵: well colour

F²: the picture

R: the picture yes and it had already been mentioned

F⁵: the size. The size of the book itself could attract me. I don't like bulky books especially when I'd be reading it for leisure (NUL: 548-553)

The same applied to article 5, where learners seemed to be attracted by the title "masturbation" because it seemed to provide information about a topic that they were not very familiar with, while some were attracted to the article because they appreciated that picture of the nurse is a male nurse:

M⁴: I could be attracted by this picture of a male nurse, of which I feel proud of. Also maybe because I'm interested in health issues. The topic also I think could attract me (LCE: 1334-1337)

The bilingual glossary on the page and the size of the font used for the title were pointed to as other features that might attract respondents to read article 5:

M¹: I also like their style of writing. They have used simple and clear language. Yes and the fact that words which are assumed to be difficult are explained in Sesotho, that's wonderful (LCE: 1389-1392)

F⁶: the way it is written, it says see me

F¹: can you see that?

F⁴: had it been written in a small font would you have seen it?

F⁶&F³: mmm (no) / no (NUL: 559-563)

Others indicated that they would be attracted by the length of article 5, because it does not contain too much information. It was said to be brief and to the point, but still informative:

F¹: as for me I think I could mainly be attracted by the length of this chapter. Maybe it's because I'm lazy to read (**LCE:** 1358-1360)

The article being linked to a health professional also attracted them, because to the learners this gave the chapter its authority and credibility. Even the way the nurse was posing suggested confidence to them:

M⁴: ok a nurse, the way he's posing it shows that masturbation is something that one should not feel ashamed of doing (**TIL:** 1420-1422)

F⁵: I think I could also be attracted by the title. Masturbation is not a familiar word to some people myself including, I could want to find out what is said about masturbation. Some would be seeing it for the first time and some would have heard about it before, maybe from their peers, so this time they would want to hear what a health professional has to say about it (**LCE:** 1343-1350)

F¹: I would be attracted by this picture, looking at the fact that this information is being provided by a health professional that I trust to be knowledgeable about it. Whom I trust to be able to tell how good or bad it may be (**NUL:** 620-623)

In contrast, there were some aspects that discouraged learners from reading the magazine, as is evident in the subsequent section.

8.1.2 DEMOTIVATING FACTORS

The learners indicated that nothing discouraged them to study the cover page. However, responses to article 5 revealed issues of congruence, as well as some incongruities showed up variations in the manner in which the signs (text and images) that made up the magazine were presented. For instance, the picture of a nurse was pointed to by some learners as discouraging, because they saw no obvious link between the meaning of the text and the picture. They claimed that the picture did not complement the words, but which seemed to contradict an earlier response that the nurse was a useful image giving authority and credibility to the message. Further probing revealed that some learners looked at the issue of the nurse differently. It seemed they were not against the picture of a nurse as such, but were against the way the nurse is posing. They argued that a masturbating person doesn't smile like the nurse is. This reflected the learners' underlying perceptions and, perhaps, experience of masturbation:

M¹: also the picture is not attractive for masturbation; a masturbating person does not portray such a face (**TIL**: 1701-1703)

Some respondents were certain that they would not read article 5 because they did not support the issue of masturbation being publicised at all:

F⁵: the word masturbation

R: you don't like the title. What about...

F⁵: no I don't like the whole chapter, so I wouldn't look at it (**NUL**: 641-644)

Although learners seemed to have no problem identifying and interpreting signs used in article 5, they did raise some concerns that appeared to be influenced by culture. In the next section these cultural issues that emerged during the discussions are presented and analysed.

8.1.3 CULTURAL ISSUES

Even though they may have not been aware of doing it, learners selectively interpreted only certain cultural issues that they found disturbing. This suggested a need for this topic to be extensively discussed before they could untangle their disorientation between culture, religion and the practical reality of their lives. For instance, it was evident that cultural and religious taboos about premarital sex did not prevent respondents from engaging in these activities, and which they so openly acknowledged to be doing throughout the discussion:

F⁴: another thing is even if you can get satisfaction from masturbation during his absence you're definitely going to find yourself sleeping with him when he comes back. So it doesn't really solve the problem because he might bring along the AIDS

R: why would you have to sleep with him?

F⁴: because I would be missing that touch

F¹: the human touch

F⁴: so long as I would not have found the new one I'm going to find myself in his arms before I know it

F⁵: I'm still adamant that this is wrong

F²: because they're unholy?

F⁵: God doesn't like this kind of things

R: which things; masturbation or sex before marriage or missing the touch

F⁵: all of them, but masturbation is on the forefront (**NUL**: 498-513)

Some of their interpretations of the message, as members of the youth, appeared to have been influenced by experiences from within their cultural context as Basotho, rather than from within the youth culture of their learning institutions. These culturally embedded issues portrayed that there is a very limited range of youth that a single message can relate to, because among the youth fraternity cultures there are different influences. These issues also demonstrated how different factors can influence the way the same messages can be understood, and why they are understood differently by different people. For instance, the cover page showed a limited age range of youth, yet as it was later discovered, the magazine content could also benefit people of a far wider age spectrum, as denoted in the subsequent extract:

F²: what I mean is you see if this question is being asked somebody of this age, well I would say they do match. But if when talking to me or you, looking at the same book with the same title and the same picture I'd say no they don't match because this does not represent my "skeem". There's no way they can be mine or your friends (**NUL:** 319-324)

Although article 5 was the only document from this research that learners had reservations about sharing, their level of intimacy with it appeared to have been very high and they appeared to identify very strongly with it. It was the only document to which they attached age specifications, something that reflected an important cultural point, because the acceptability of this masturbation related communication also seemed to depend on 'who is talking to whom' about it:

F³: guys I'm joking. The fact is there's nothing offensive if we share it amongst us but with our elders it will seem offensive (**TIL:** 1893-1895)

F¹: they are good if discussed amongst us or among other youths per say. In fact I can only share it with these people in here, because it's kind of against our moral principles as Basotho (**LCE:** 1486-1489)

Other than helping learners to go through phases of new understanding about masturbation, the second group discussions reflected that the dialogue continued to play a crucial role in helping them to make sense of article 5's challenges to their normative belief systems. Thus, the discussion helped learners to acquire new knowledge and a change of attitude towards HIV and masturbation. This they reflected through their responses to a question that examined

the cultural sensitivity of the article. These responses illustrated an intergenerational issue, where they indicated that they would not be able to share article 5 with anybody. For example, they showed that they could not share it with either their teachers, or their parents, nor could they advise their younger brothers and sisters to use masturbation rather than penetrative sex:

All: no / yoo, yoo, yoo! No ways / oh no that is undreamed of / there's just no way

R: but you just said it did not offend you?

M⁵: hi I don't know how to put it. Let me say yes there's nothing offensive at all, at all but it cannot be easy for me or for any of us to discuss masturbation issues with an elderly or young person (**LCE:** 2671-2677)

All these seemed to be driven by culturally embedded issues, which again challenged the learners' normative beliefs. Even though this can be said to be true in any culture, their issues were more to do with their normative expectations as Basotho, than as tertiary institution learners or members of the youth or young adults in a society:

F⁵: honestly there's nothing offensive in all that has been said here, it is just that as Basotho or Christians there are some words or things that we grew up being forbidden to talk about (**LCE:** 1525-1528)

Some debates exposed a 'conflict of understanding' among the respondents. This was particularly evident when it came to discussing the role of illustrations, and whether more explicit images explaining the topic should be included or not. It was interesting to see that, for some, such images would be pornographic, while for others such images would be helpful. (The issue of illustrating this sensitive topic is discussed further below, under section 8.1.4 in the topic elements of confusion.) Although the discussion focused on a choice between including explicit pictures that show where people touch in order to masturbate, or not including them out of respect for cultural dynamics, the discussion also promoted new understanding about what can be presented in IEC materials and what cannot. The producers of the magazine were commended for a job well done in giving people information without using explicit pictures:

M⁵: hi, these people, this magazine is not for 'blue stuff'

M⁴: yah this magazine is not for 'porno'

F³: who said anything about 'porno'? Don't you this time want the pictures to match with what is written here?

R: but we aren't there yet
F³, F⁵ & M³: I don't want anything changed / I'm ok with it (chapter) like this (**TIL:** 1560-1568)

F⁴: yes 'm'e even though it may not be an opinion as such, but I just want to say now I understand why they did not put pictures that show people touching their private parts, where it says: "masturbation means that you touch your private parts because: da-da-da-da. Now I acknowledge why they have put a nurse instead, because it was not going to be acceptable (**NUL:** 3164-3170)

Strong gender undertones showing that males and females react differently could be felt in the responses to the question that asked learners what they saw when they first looked at article 5. Responses included a gender distinction, which showed that women were more prepared to accept male nurses, but males appeared to think that men should be associated with a more powerful role:

F¹ & F³: a nurse / a male nurse
M³: I was going to say a doctor (**TIL:** 1284-1285)

While most men assumed that men should be portrayed in positions of greater power, a male respondent in Thaba-Tseka (LCE) had earlier indicated that he would be attracted to the article 5 by the very picture of a male nurse, of which he was proud. Again, in Quthing (**TIL**) there seemed to be a gender power dynamic that reflected that men think only women can be or are supposed to be nurses. They seemed to 'selectively perceive' what the picture was portraying, and selective perception is an important issue that IEC materials producers need to consider when developing educational materials:

M²: yes I could tell you mistakenly came here; because you always wanted to be a nurse. Maybe you should go back and retrace your choice of career man
M⁵: hei! You're going to insult me; do I look like a woman?
F³: you two I think you are the most confused, how can you say nursing is for women? Are you so blind that you don't see this is a man here, even if you haven't seen one in real life? (**TIL:** 1644-1653)

Furthermore, learners contextually related what is happening in the article 5 to generational sex-related issues. The overall impression was that most learners appreciated the content of masturbation, because it described the realities of life that somehow distinguishes sexual behaviour from important relationships. However, it was as if these learners did not consider the amount of risk involved, as their perspectives about sexual intercourse seemed to involve

age-related sexual norms rather than cultural concepts, where there was “social sex”, which appeared to be just ‘foreplay’, and “serious sex”, which would be with their significant partners in the future. It was as if they would only start thinking about HIV risk when “the right one” comes along. That is the person they would want to have a meaningful relationship with, comes along. In other words, most young people nowadays appear to treat sex differently from how their peers did in the past. There was a sense that these learners only needed a partner for “social sex” nowadays, and people were judged and accepted among peers through their sexual behaviour.

Respondents disapproved of article 5 being circulated freely, arguing that it would encourage even those who had not yet come of age to start thinking about sexual intercourse. Because distribution of the magazine is not regulated, it could be accessed by anybody, even those under age:

M⁵: I just wanted to know whether we really agree with this as it’s like by giving people information, we would be opening their eyes by so doing and everybody is then going to do it and as we know one thing leads to another. Even these children will end up sleeping around because masturbation does not give a person the actual satisfaction (**LCE:** 1600-1606)

F⁵: it’s not only the publicity but if you read this well, they’re encouraging people to use it, which means they’re encouraging even those who have not yet come of age to start thinking about sexual intercourse. Because this book can be picked up by anybody who wants to, there are no control measures on who can have a copy and who cannot (**NUL:** 2939-2945)

However, the discussion on the magazine had helped connect them to what is happening in their real world, despite these conflicts. The next section examines how the learners related the message from article 5 with real-life scenarios.

Contextual Relevance

It was evident during the second meeting that the discussion had helped learners to develop an interest in HIV related print IEC materials, as there were claims that the discussion had helped them to understand the message, unlike before this, when they had just looked at the pictures. There was, however, an indication that for them, it was not going to be easy discussing this particular topic (masturbation) with other people. This suggests that how, and with whom, one

communicates depends very much on how a person feels towards the discussed issue, depending on the user's experience within their context or frame of reference. The way in which a discussion unfolds depends on what meaning one derives from any form of visual image, or written or spoken language, particularly in relation to the nature of normative social practice of the discourse being used by a particular group:

F³: yes it is talking to us, but myself I think I can have a problem telling it to others. To let others know about masturbation I think we would need company of an older person in order to be able to discuss it with them (**TIL:** 2120-2124)

For some learners it was not going to be easy discussing this topic with their peers either, but for different reasons. For instance, some claimed that people do not want to hear anything about HIV and AIDS. This showed a need for a new approach to dissemination that would help this topic get attention, because it has already been around for a long time and has resulted in communication fatigue within the Basotho society. This suggested the need for a communication strategy that would create the opportunity for deeper thinking:

M⁵: yes but I think I'll need people to discuss it with afterwards

R: so where's the problem?

M⁵: ahh! This people don't want to hear anything about HIV or AIDS (**LCE:** 2414-2418)

At NUL the students' resistance to the topic from the first meeting was consistently carried forward throughout the second discussion. This evidenced resistance has implications for how IEC materials should be developed for targeted audiences, because their perceived virtue among people differs. It also has implications for how health educators should use printed articles, because it seems no single mode of communication is enough to convey the intended messages. For instance, even though one of the learners may have reacted negatively to the notion of masturbation being publicized, her resistance to the concept provided a clear indication that somehow the IEC material needs to address this topic. It appeared that this level of resistance had to be acknowledged and somehow considered by IEC materials producers, because it seemed that insufficient situation analysis prior to materials development can hinder relevant learning from the material. The learners also stated that print communication should be supported with consultation if it is to change people's beliefs about

a wide range of things such as religious attitudes towards certain behaviours like masturbation, to ensure that people receive the information that may help them avoid HIV infection:

F⁵: I think they needed to have asked for public opinion or at least religious people's opinion before writing something like this for the public. According to my religion and culture this is not acceptable. Yes we're aware that it's been done but as Basotho we don't go public about things like this (**NUL:** 2822-2827)

Some responses implied that traditional attitudes were already not being adhered to, which reflected the reality of the present day culture such as engaging in pre-marital sex, which has lately become a norm among Basotho. But other normative beliefs, for example about the use of appropriate Sesotho words in relation to sex and different intimate behaviour, seemed important, especially since these IEC materials usually start off in English:

M³: no, but considering the fact that masturbation is not one of those topics which one can go around talking about I would in a way say yes the topic was offensive. Because to be honest with you it kind of shocked me when I first saw it, especially in your presence as an elderly person and somebody we are not used to for that matter. But as the discussion went on I found it to be an issue that could be discussed like any other

M²: to me I have no problem with it maybe because it is in English, can you imagine how all these would be like in Sesotho. I remember we even tried to translate some few lines into Sesotho with my brother here afterwards; hei it was terrible. But in English it is fine (**TIL:** 2300-2314)

F¹: well I think its culture. The way we're brought up. I think masturbation is like an insult, there are Sesotho words which are taken to be insults, because Christianity has made us look at them like that. They have been replaced with what are considered to be lighter words or language, yet they are just Sesotho words (**LCE:** 2688-2694)

F⁵: see why I said this is unholy, really it is against Christianity. It is against the Godly law that says people should reproduce, multiply and fill the world and that can only be achieved through sexual intercourse, isn't it? I really don't agree with this thing, even our Sesotho culture does not agree with this. It is not acceptable even in our culture for people to be going around talking about things like masturbation just like this. No good people, it is wrong very wrong (**NUL:** 474-482)

This level of resistance had to be acknowledged, because it seemed that insufficient situation analysis prior to materials development could have hindered relevant learning from the material:

F⁵: because to me it's like the whole chapter is an insult if I can put it that way, because it's talking about masturbation. So to me everything offended me because it is not culturally sensitive. It is against my religion; I think these people were not consultative enough before they embarked on this, because if they were I don't think any Roman Catholic would have agreed with them. In my view they're wrong, so to me it not acceptable and I can say I'm highly offended (**NUL:** 3152-3160)

While other group members at NUL were a little more open, 'F⁵' remained offended throughout the discussion. It was, therefore, not surprising to get responses such as the subsequent quotation, when the group was asked whether anything offended them or not. She expressed a crucial issue in relation to learning that may or may not have taken place:

F⁵: yes 'm'e [madam]; the whole issue of *masturbation* offended me. Let alone when it's been aimed at teaching young people. I just don't understand how people could have thought of such a thing. Talking about masturbation especially to young people, khele! (emphasis) this really offended me honestly (**NUL:** 3140-3145)

There were also indications that the collective discussion could inhibit any dissenting voices. This is because during individual interviews one person pointed out that he did not support the issue of masturbation. When asked why he didn't voice this during the group discussions, he said that he did not want to articulate these arguments because others had sounded so excited about masturbation and he found himself in a compromised position, so he ended up agreeing that masturbation was right for those who would not mind doing it. He also indicated that he saw the issue of masturbation as simply a psychological 'trick' to encourage young people to abstain from sexual intercourse:

M⁵: no I still think it is ok for youth because it more or less supports abstinence which is what has been and is still advocated for youth to use in order to avoid HIV. It is just that I, as an individual do not agree with all these (**LCE:** 3038-3042)

Although the discussion appeared to have positively influenced the learners' attitudes towards reading about HIV and AIDS related IEC materials, some of which were described as revised

attitudes towards IEC materials, their responses generally suggested that they, as learners, were not necessarily going to change from engaging in risky behaviour. Some even admitted that they had ‘sugar daddies’ and did not sound like they were ready to stop:

F¹: when last did you go home? You seem to have forgotten what grandmothers look like; I’m a “ben10” I belong with them (**NUL**: 76-78)

In addition, there were some parts of the text that could not be easily interpreted and this made learners display a sense of confusion. These elements of confusion are evident in the deliberations that follow in the next section.

8.1.4 ELEMENTS OF CONFUSION

There appeared to be some misunderstandings caused by certain aspects of the text such as the use of punctuation. For instance, learners did not understand the use of the exclamation mark placed at the end of the title, they considered punctuation to be unwarranted:

F²: they’ve even closed it with an exclamation mark. Wonder what it means, these people seem to like it so much

F³: I don’t think it means anything because there’s nothing surprising here. When you say: masturbation, it’s normal. What’s astonishing there? Or maybe they don’t understand the use of exclamation mark

F¹: it’s just their style of writing

F³: no they shouldn’t write unnecessary things just for the sake of writing

F²: especially when their aim is to educate people (**NUL**: 567-574).

Also, there were some vocabulary concerns, which meant that it was impossible to capture an authentic viewing or reading context. This was a challenge and also an important point that made one question to what extent people targeting their intended audiences understand of the purpose of an aid such as a glossary, if it caused a confusion even among the so called ‘learned’:

F⁶: like these words climax and others, had we not been discussing this like this I wouldn’t have seen them

F⁴: what exactly is this, why are they placed there?

F³: isn’t it a glossary?

F¹&F⁶: it looks like / I think so (**NUL**: 576-580)

However, the message in article 5 appeared to be clear even though the picture seemed not to be illustrative enough. But the lack of presentation of pictures that show precisely where people touch themselves or one another in order to masturbate seemed to also cause confusion amongst some learners who initially wanted the article to show explicit pictures to help even those who cannot read to get the message. This was, however, discouraged by others, as publishing them was be deemed culturally unacceptable:

F², F⁴, M¹&M²: yes include pictures that show where people touch themselves / and those that show how partners help each other to masturbate
R: meaning that you want three different pictures to be included, one indicating where a male touches himself. A second where a female touches herself and a third how partners help each other to masturbate?

M¹, M², F²&F⁴: yes

F³: no four, because it will be those two and the third one split into two; one showing a male helping a female to masturbate and another showing a female helping a male to masturbate (**TIL:** 1547-1558)

R: didn't you say you would like pictures that show where people touch themselves?

F⁶: private parts? Joo!

F²: no there's no way that can be accepted with the community

F³: no we don't need that

F⁴: its fine as it is (**NUL:** 887-893)

Responses to the question that asked whether the content reflected the title, illustrated how images can be misinterpreted or interpreted differently when there is not enough anchorage in the form of a verbal message. This gap caused learners not to understand the meaning of the picture of a nurse in the article, as there seemed not to be enough supportive relationship between text and the image. For instance, until one read the text, one might think the article could be on any health topic, because the uniform denoted a health worker and the connotation was that the message has something to do with health, but not necessarily with masturbation:

R: does the message match the picture?

All: murmuring yes / no

R: how many do say yes

M⁴: me

R: are you the only one?

M⁴: no, we are two, and this one

R: how many do say they don't match?

The rest: all of us (**TIL:** 1408-1415)

R: what about this chapter does its message and picture match?

All: no

R: why do you say that?

M²: because we are just seeing a picture of a male nurse who is not masturbating

F¹: what if that's the way he does it

M²: remember here it says masturbation means that you touch your private parts and he is not

F⁴: and the picture does not show where to touch oneself, meaning they could have placed any other picture, say of someone holding the hair, therefore they do not match (**LCE:** 1214-1226)

R: does the message match the picture?

F⁵, F¹, F²&F⁴: no / mmm / no at all / there's no picture that shows people that masturbate

F³: yes honestly, they do not match

F⁴: how are we to see that this person is masturbating?

F³: because as of now we're seeing just an ordinary nurse. The picture does not represent masturbating person (**NUL:** 218-225)

Although, to some learners, the picture in article 5 was not illustrative, the message was said to be clear enough, and for cultural decorum reasons they felt that there was no need for the article to show explicit pictures. As a result, it was unanimously agreed that article 5 was still informative, even without pictures. Nevertheless, learners were able to make meaningful deliberations despite all the confusion. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the theme meaning making and all its sub-themes: transformative thinking, learning from each other, fear undertones and denial versus reality is not discussed in relation to the cover page. The following section focuses on the meaning that the learners extracted from discussing article 5.

8.2 MEANING MAKING

Based on their previous knowledge, there emerged a second layer of understanding that reflected new information, showing a clear insight that masturbation is an alternative and preventative strategy:

F⁵: I think it wants us to rather masturbate than to sleep around

F³: yes because sexual intercourse is too dangerous

M³: yes to use masturbation more than sexual intercourse

R: why

The rest: to avoid HIV / HIV / because of HIV

M³: and unwanted pregnancies
F³: including STIs (**TIL**: 1787-1795)

F¹: the message that is being conveyed to us says, masturbation is a normal thing to do

F⁵: it is also saying that if I masturbate, I won't get infections

F³: yes of HIV, STI^s including unwanted pregnancy

R: anything else?

F⁵: also it is saying that masturbation is not against our culture (**LCE**: 1122-1129)

F⁶: in order to get rid of the feelings

F⁴: it's been encouraged so as to help people not get HIV, STI^s and unwanted and unplanned pregnancies

F²: and again to reach climax (**NUL**: 109-112)

Three words can be associated with masturbation: its normality, its safety, and the need to reassure one to be guilty free, but additional associated words came out of the interpretation during the discussion as a reinforcement of things learners already knew. These included words like satisfaction, helpful, usefulness and enjoyable:

M⁴: that masturbation is important, it is not dangerous

R: is it important? What exactly do you want to say, do you mean it is important or valuable? Ok let me jot it down, I'll try to find a more suitable word later

M²: that one should not feel guilty when masturbating

M¹: that one can become sexually satisfied through masturbation

F³: which means it is helpful or useful

R: thank you, those (words) are more suitable I think

M²: yes it is useful because it can be used to reduce chances of getting HIV infection (**TIL**: 1330-1343)

F⁵: looking at the way this gentleman is posing, I can say this picture shows that masturbation is good, enjoyable. While the message, I would say it also says that masturbation is good because it can help you avoid a lot of things (**LCE**: 1185-1189)

There were different layers of meaning in the learners' interpretations of article 5. For instance, the picture denoted a smiling male nurse, and the connotation of his "happy" appearance was that the accompanying text is a positive message implying that he is advising that masturbation is a happy experience:

M³: I think they placed a male nurse in order to authenticate contents of this chapter

F⁵: yes to show that what is being said here is true because it is being given by a health professional

F⁴: I would say this picture also serves to show that we can go to see health professionals for any clarifications or to seek more information (**LCE:** 1245-1251)

F¹: also when looking at this nurse I see a happy looking person who looks like he's talking something he likes, something that has made him happy and which could make other people happy as well because they going to enlighten them (**NUL:** 46-50)

The discussion raised another level of meaning making, as respondents began to transfer the meaning to their own situations. The overall interpretation of the message was that the article was meant to encourage youth to abstain from sexual activities until they are married. This is because when people masturbate (as individuals, not when they help each other to masturbate) they don't have to touch other people's fluids and in that way they'll avoid HIV:

M⁴: I think it is all in all saying we should abstain until the right time (**LCE:** 2457-2458)

F²: I would say, during; no in the past our understanding was that masturbation was done by certain people, silly people. So this article I can say has helped me see that it is not like that (**NUL:** 3299-3302)

However, some learners supported the publicizing of masturbation as a prevention strategy for HIV, despite the fact that they themselves were worried about doing it. This was because, to them, abstinence as a form of HIV prevention strategy had failed, so the connotation was that masturbation as a form of abstinence could be a new strategy to help vulnerable groups, especially youth and young adults:

M⁵: yes because I understand masturbation to be part of abstinence. The magazine should be stressing on abstinence instead rather than to spell it out like this. Well maybe they used this to psychologically get to the youth because they may have realised that people have taken abstinence as a joke, since they realised that young people have failed to abstain. So to me this is another way of continuing to discourage them from engaging in intersexual activities (**LCE:** 3045-3054)

Some responses reflected why most tertiary institution learners are inclined to living risky lifestyles and why their world is shaped the way it is. They indicated that this could be attributed to their culture and certain 'discourses' as Basotho. As products of these discourses,

learners seemed to conform to normative behaviour regardless of the HIV education that they are equipped with:

F³: aoo! Here in Lesotho? People do what whenever they want to and nobody cares, look what is happening with alcohol. Everybody drinks; liquor is even sold to very young children (**NUL:** 2947-2950)

There were also alternative responses that addressed common discourses about masturbation and, in turn, helped to promote learning and understanding not only about IEC materials, but also to correct myths and misconceptions about it. This is evident in the following extracts:

F⁵: but I would like to make my brother here aware that when given information like this, it is up to a person to decide. For instance when given information that advantages of masturbation are one two three, depending on whether you rely on it or not it is therefore up to you to decide whether you take it not. Otherwise we're going to live in the dark, without acquiring any new knowledge. Considering the era in which we live, I don't think that is what we want. Can we say we really want to lead that kind of life, well I would say it is up to us as individuals to decide whether we practice what we read or not (**LCE:** 1639-1651)

F³: I think I can say it's also written in response to this things ehh, myths and misconceptions. It is meant to correct myths and misconceptions about masturbation and to help people reach climax

F⁶: I can also say it stands to correct cultural beliefs and lies. It is meant to help us understand what masturbation is, to look at it with a different eye

F⁴: so that we could stop saying one would suffer from mental illness if he or she masturbates (**NUL:** 121-129)

In their attempts to construct meaning out of article 5, there was an indication that the discussion had inspired learners and, consequently, helped them come to a better understanding of the issue of masturbation. The subsequent section scrutinizes how the discussions helped learners to develop a more enquiring thinking process.

8.2.1 TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING

The discussions played a crucial role in helping learners not only to understand the message that article 5 intended to communicate, but it helped introduce a new discourse about masturbation into their mindset, thereby promoting a much fuller understanding of the whole meaning behind affection and sexual feelings:

All: yes, with this we can now make the right decision / we won't be in the mercy of anyone / I won't hesitate to shake them off / me too / it has given me self-assurance / we're happy / and not ashamed to masturbate (**TIL:** 2107-2111)

The second group discussions revealed considerable mutual or reciprocal learning. This could be detected through a new discourse that appeared to have promoted confidence and reflected new understanding towards intimate relationships:

F³: yes one could and we will continue having people we go out with but I feel it would be for the sake of intimate friendship more than for wanting somebody who would assist me to satisfy my sexual feelings (**TIL:** 2086-2090)

There was an indication of mixed feelings towards the use of masturbation as a preventative method for HIV and other things such as unwanted pregnancies, but some responses indicated that the discussion had stimulated new learning that motivated learners to go on learning from HIV and AIDS related IEC materials. This is because, although learners did not appreciate the issue of masturbation being publicized, they did appreciate that they had learned something new out of article 5:

M⁵: ok I can say I've learned something new. I had heard of different ways of controlling HIV in the past, but this one concerning masturbation it was the first time, maybe because it is not commonly discussed. Hence I think I have developed conflict of appreciation towards use of masturbation as a prevention method for both unwanted pregnancy and HIV. However I would try to find out more about it in order to understand more about it (**LCE:** 2961-2969)

F¹: yes I can say it has. It shows that it's not only penetrative sex that can give you satisfaction

F⁵: but that doesn't justify that they should have gone public about this

F¹: to you yes

F³: to be honest I was not aware that masturbation is regarded as one other method that can be used to prevent HIV

F⁴: and STI's

F²: me too (**NUL:** 2999-3008)

The overall message from this instance could indicate that IEC materials need to constantly bring up new ideas in order to attract youth attention, as shown in the case of masturbation; it was something new to them, and that people never talk about:

F³: rather, this is all interesting

F¹: I too realise that we have been taking so much for granted. I never looked at any educational materials seriously and I now realise how much there is to learn from them

M³: and how useful they are (**TIL:** 1857-1862)

M⁵: because it is something new and they are going to go back to their old ways when their excitement wears off, just like they did with abstinence, when we were first told about it people got so excited about it and you could hear them talk about it but lately, no (**LCE:** 3100-3105)

F⁵: masturbation, we knew about, but to be honest there are some related facts that I for one never knew

R: like?

F⁵: such as the fact that ehh let me see, ohh that partners can help one another masturbate (**NUL:** 3055-3059)

The new discourse about masturbation was raised at all three institutions, which showed that it was universally admitted that the discussion had helped stimulate new learning. For instance, it was established that learners were not aware that masturbation could be used as an alternative to intercourse to prevent the spread of diseases such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as HIV. The discussion also helped them understand that masturbation is normal and that it is a topic that can be discussed like any other. This was because they indicated that they had never talked about masturbation as they were growing up, knowing it to be associated with ‘silliness’ and, therefore, not wanting to be looked down on as not having ‘good manners’. As a result of the new learning participants claimed they were now eager to go and discuss the issue of masturbation with friends, and they claimed that they had never told anyone that they sometimes masturbated. They promised to stop the culture of silence and indicated that they were going to discuss this issue with their children, as they would not like them to go through what they had experienced as lonely and frightening. Respondents indicated that, as a result of the discussion, they were going to masturbate without fear, which they hoped would help to reduce high-risk HIV related behaviour surrounding the existing sexual interrelationship culture in Lesotho:

F⁵: it’s importance because if you’re using it you won’t be infected by AIDS

R: yes

F⁵: and many other things as well as to avoid things like unsafe sex etc.

R: did you know about masturbation on the whole before we read about it?

F²: yes we knew about it, but we seem to have thought it was done or could be done only by men. We were not aware that even women could use it (**TIL:** 2153-2162)

M²: well I think I wasn't interested. Also I thought I had enough knowledge on HIV and AIDS. But now I realise that there's still a lot that can be learned from these materials (**LCE:** 2595-2598)

F⁴: myself I didn't know that it could be used to prevent HIV, STIs and pregnancy (**NUL:** 3064-3065)

However, this did not necessarily mean they would actually adhere to all these things beyond the artificial situation of the focus group, where they may have been aiming to please and may have been influenced into agreeing with the group, as one participant admitted to in the individual interview:

M⁵: in short what I can say is, I see the developer of this material trying to psychologically trick people into abstaining from sex

R: can I ask why you did not voice this out during the group discussions?

M⁵: I didn't want them to make arguments (**LCE:** 3072-3077)

There was noticeable change of attitude among the learners during the second meetings. This showed that the dialogue had had a positive influence on them, and in assisting them to understand the message from article 5:

M⁴: yes you see this way we come to understand things better. I think discussion is always the best method that can be used if you want people to learn (**LCE:** 2659-2661)

R: what about you, do you appreciate it or not?

F²: of course I do. I highly appreciate it

R: why?

F²: one: because I did not know much about masturbation. Two: because this was done in an effort to help protect people from AIDS (**NUL:** 2848-2853)

There were some comments that showed the importance of engaging in face-to-face discussions using print IEC materials to stimulate change of attitude and interest. Face-to-face discussions had motivated interest even beyond the researched materials. Subsequent extracts give examples of some independent, self-directed learning that came about as a result of the first meeting:

F²: I heard something on the radio where they were talking about the same story. In fact it was a question, somebody was asking a doctor if you're a young woman and having a boyfriend with whom you are planning to start a family and therefore have to marry and plan to go for testing first. And the results come out one negative and the other positive. Then the question was: what are you supposed to do in that instance, do you continue with this person or you leave him or her? These caught my ear and I became interested and listened

R: does it mean you wouldn't have been interested had we not had the discussion?

F²: yes madam to an extent that I found myself asking people whether that programme plays every day at that time so that I could listen to it again tomorrow. It was so interesting (**TIL:** 2238-2254)

F⁴: hmm! It was an earlier version of the same magazine

R: how did you come to get hold of it?

F⁴: I got it from a private clinic in Maseru where I had gone for a medical checkup. Actually I kept because I wanted to use it to keep myself busy in the bus, as I was going to come here the following day and I didn't want to read text books. I know by the time I arrived here I had gone through all its chapters and there was nothing that much interesting

R: and now?

F⁴: and surprisingly when I went back to it after the meeting I discovered that it was very informative

R: what was it that interested you?

F⁴: actually the issue was about HIV, AIDS and TB for different settings and for the first time I realised that one has to be very cautious because it seems we are so much at risk of either HIV or TB or even both. I also learned that TB is the most common co-infection in HIV (**LCE:** 2606-2626)

F²: you know to be honest I would say yes because if I understand your question well, before we discussed this I never understood or realised the value of these things. Like I had come across copies of this book before but I don't remember seeing anything valuable in them, well I don't know, I don't know how I looked at it then. But now I realise it contains some valuable information (**NUL:** 3081-3087)

Some responses revealed that the message from article 5 was important and served to dispel myths about masturbation:

F²: I think, I can say since masturbation is one of those issues that is not publicly discussed I can say as an individual I still would like to know more about it and therefore, let me say I have an interest. For example I only learned that masturbation is safe and that it is not dangerous after reading this, yet I always thought it would make you become sick if you do. Therefore had I happened to come across this magazine and saw this title when paging through it, I would surely start with it, with this chapter looking at the title masturbation because I would like to know more about it (**NUL:** 627-637)

However, it seemed that the learner's acquired myths still compete with the learning potential of IEC materials. There were responses that exposed why young people engage in risky sexual activities, despite all the preventative educational efforts that were being undertaken in the country to inform and educate them about HIV:

M⁵: for instance it has proved to me that I won't have madness or blindness if I don't have sex

R: which means you used to worry over this?

M⁵: yes, but now I'm certain because I don't think a magazine like this could go all out to give propaganda (**LCE:** 3142-3144)

F⁶: fine. I feel I'll no longer be scared to masturbate

R: oh you used to fear it?

F⁶: yes, like I used to get so scared and so worried whenever I got those feelings, they used to come just out of the blue

R: what do you think made you feel that way, what made you fear masturbation

F⁶: I'm not sure. Maybe it's because when we grew up we used to handle it in a silly way, as if it happened to silly people only (**NUL:** 3437-3446)

Further discussion indicated that learners were nevertheless able to construct a second layer of understanding and interpretation accompanied by new learning that they gained from each other. The next section describes the learning that occurred as they attempted to construct meaning out of article 5.

8.2.2 *LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER*

There seemed to have been much mutual learning, as learners tried to interpret the signs that made up article 5, and the actions that they understood the article required them to take:

F²: and the blue stripes or are they decorations?

F⁴: no, no they are not decorations, read what is written there. I think they serve as a dictionary or vocabulary

M²: there's another title below the writing – 'it is normal'

F³: meaning the title says it all, see even if you don't read the whole thing (**TIL:** 1291-1298)

M²: you know I hate AIDS because our children are going to grow up knowing everything and in that way I don't think life is going to be as exciting as it used to be. Can you imagine how secretive we used to be about wet dreams and masturbation, it was such a big deal, but now with all these, ahh it's boring

F²: actually are the wet dreams the same as masturbation, also do girls also have them?

R: may I refer these questions to the house. Are wet dreams the same as masturbation?

M⁵: yes they are the same

M¹: no I don't think they are the same because wet dreams you do them or you have them unconsciously whereas with masturbation you're conscious of what you're doing and you can choose to do it or to ignore the feeling

F²: but don't they both satisfy a sexual feeling in the end

M¹&M⁵: yes / yes they do (**LCE:** 2528-2547)

The discussion not only promoted critical self-awareness among the learners, but it also helped them acquire new learning, which, in the process, appeared to have re-awakened their consciousness. The discussion equipped them with new understanding that masturbation is equivalent to the foreplay that they usually do as part of sexual intercourse where it was even recommended for 'sharpening the sexual appetite'. This is evident in the following quotation:

F⁴: apart from that it makes one feel better

F⁶: honestly it helps sharpen the appetite. Isn't what you do all the time or you like it when it's called foreplay?

F³: joo!

F¹: meaning they should have mentioned it here

R: what is it that they should have mentioned?

F¹: that it sharpens the appetite

F⁴: so there's really nothing wrong with it (**NUL:** 743-750)

There was an interesting exchange among NUL learners that reflected maturity because they appeared to be thinking beyond what was written in article 5. They suggested that if young people join youth clubs it would be easy to invite health educators to talk to them about health issues such as masturbation. Learners did not seem to have a problem discussing issues about masturbation in this kind of setting where they regarded themselves just as research participants. Even so, they could not deny that through the discussion they had acquired a lot of new knowledge on HIV and AIDS and, consequently, developed new attitudes towards the disease and towards related IEC materials. This emphasized the importance of dialogue in communicating HIV prevention information and education, highlighting that these learners would not have looked at the document (magazine) if they had not seen themselves as participants in the research project. Subsequent extracts reflect examples of how HIV and AIDS messages can successfully be relayed among young people:

F³: yes but not AIDS please

R: why not AIDS?

F²: yes because when they are busy with club activities somewhere, they won't have time for nasty things. They'll have direction, a purpose in life. They can even be able to invite people like 'm'e Sophie to come and talk to them about health issues like these

F³: yes but not AIDS please

R: why not AIDS?

F³&F²: oh we've had enough of it / it is boring, I can quit even if I was an earnest club member

R: why didn't you quit when I told you that I'm researching on HIV and AIDS issues

F³: no research is different; it's not like when somebody comes to lecture you on it (**NUL**: 154-166)

It was notable that HIV related IEC materials were understood by learners not to be informative any longer, hence they did not have any interest in them. However, by participating in the study, learners were able to link the IEC materials to their existing knowledge. It should be noted that an invitation to dialogue without the added incentive of participating in a research project might not have been so motivational. Nevertheless, although it could not be guaranteed that there was any lasting change in attitude, during the second meeting some learners promised that they would never ignore HIV related materials from that time onwards. This illustrated the importance of face-to-face groups engaging with the IEC materials in order to stimulate transformative thinking, new interest and new understanding:

F³&F⁵: yes mom I think we've developed interest / I've developed interest and I now look for the message in them unlike before where I just read or looked at pictures (**TIL**: 2185-2188)

M²: I think it has helped me to developed new interest in HIV related issues, especially in written materials as from now onwards I feel I'll never ignore them like I used (**LCE**: 2590-2593)

F³: I never had time for it because up to now I don't want to lie to you, I don't like AIDS related things

F⁶: hei it's too much. Its AIDS here AIDS everywhere. Me too I don't have time for anything that says AIDS or HIV

R: and now after your exposure to these materials would you say you still feel the same?

F⁶: I would say no. Because I remember I even picked up one pamphlet at the clinic, it's just that I haven't had time to read it. I wanted to see if I would understand it the same way with these ones or maybe the discussions opened my eyes, I don't know. They helped to make me realise that after all these things still contain some valuable information and can be interesting

F¹: yes if discussed (**NUL**: 3091-3105)

As with the other materials, the discussions appeared to have also stimulated an understanding of potentially negative consequences of ignoring HIV and thus inducing in the learners some feelings of fear, as is presented in the next section.

8.2.3 FEAR UNDERTONES

The male fraternity in Thaba-Tseka (LCE) were concerned about masturbation, seeing it as something which could be gender specific or result from cultural upbringing. Their concerns seemed to contain unspoken fears. They, as men, appeared to reject the issue of masturbation, despite the new learning that the discussion may have helped them to obtain. This is because several myths that they raised reflected a threat to male prowess. It was as if they were afraid that if women are able to satisfy themselves through masturbation, they would no longer need men, and thus men would no longer have the sexual power that they currently have over women, with a consequent loss of masculinity:

M4: yes but I'm talking in terms of people who are not yet married. I think it could have negative implications on my marriage because if I had been using it over a long period of time and then the girlfriend I get had not been using masturbation I'm afraid that our rhythm might not match and I might appear incapable to perform (**LCE:** 1735-1741)

M4: according to me I don't think it is necessary for people to become knowledgeable about it. You may want to know why I say so. I'm saying this because this can lead to some people deciding not to get into relationships and end up fearing people because he would have done this for some time and would not be sure whether he will be able to perform well when with the other person. Also I don't think it'll be necessary for one to marry if there could be an alternative way of satisfying one's feelings. The fact is, it is the desire to satisfy our sexual feelings that drives us into relationships or marriage (**LCE:** 1693-1704)

This respondent presented spurious arguments that did not reflect how people get HIV, or the purpose of the group discussion. Again, it appeared that some males may be rejecting the issue of masturbation because, like other sources of information, article 5 did not fully satisfy their concerns and their misconceptions, making them resistant to new ideas. Hence, some of their rationalizations sounded odd in their resistance to new ideas. For example, one of them was adamant that he had not seen or heard anywhere where it was indicated that masturbation has been scientifically proven to be a safe way to prevent HIV. His argument was that

masturbation was concerned more about sexual feelings, forgetting that people get into love affairs or sexual relationships for different reasons that include marriage, where they are expected to marry and have children. He, therefore, argued that if people are encouraged to use masturbation there would be no need for them to marry:

M⁵: yes. Because even when browsing through the internet I haven't seen anywhere or I don't remember seeing anywhere where it is indicated that masturbation is 100% or has been scientifically proved that it really is a safe way that can be used to prevent HIV (**LCE:** 1633-1638)

Although the respondents clearly recognised the potentially negative consequences of ignoring HIV, they continued to deny the reality of the situation about HIV and AIDS as is evident in the subsequent section.

8.2.4 DENIAL VERSUS REALITY

While it is true that masturbation does not prevent one from engaging in unprotected sex or having many partners, it looked as if a key element of the message may have been missing for some participants, who understood the concept of masturbation as a way of denying partnerships, believing that it could also break up relationships:

F³: of which is wrong because if I do it I would not need him as I would satisfy myself all the time, so do you understand what that means, in a way it'll encourage him to go out and look for somebody who can satisfy him. It'll encourage him to sleep around (**NUL:** 457-461)

So it seemed the meaning of the message itself could be said to change according to the cultural norms or perceptions of the participants, despite the fact that the message had clearly indicated that people could also help each other to masturbate. Learners sometimes had difficulty thinking beyond the immediate face value of the message, forgetting that people marry also because they want children or want to share their lives with other people:

F¹: ohh meaning it will also be against what the culture of marriage wants, because people marry mainly because of sexual needs. Remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs

F³: yes

F⁶: so it means it won't be necessary for us to marry anymore if we could be able to satisfy ourselves (**NUL:** 466-471)

Even though some responses portrayed a misunderstanding of the message, they indirectly implied that respondents were not prepared to change their behaviour, with the connotation that they were not going to stop “sleeping around” (having sexual intercourse with different partners), and would only use masturbation when shifting between these partners:

M³: and stress. I’ll be protected from stress because whenever she gives me headache, I get rid of her knowing that I have a trusted alternative
M⁴: exactly (**LCE:** 1871-1874)

These discourses of what should be in a public document reflected an element of ‘decorum’ regarding responsible imagery that influenced the learners’ judgments. They seemed to deny that for people in Lesotho to be able to win the race against HIV they will have to use all available communication channels to disseminate information:

M³: you know another problem with that kind of pictures is topics like this tend to turn people on, they turn to stimulate one’s sexual feelings because in order to understand what you are reading you visualize what is being said and the body reacts accordingly (**LCE:** 1840-1845)

In trying to make meaning out of the article, some responses reflected certain conservative or prudish attitudes towards the issue of masturbation being publicized. For example, reaction from one of the respondents at NUL adopted a particular religious discourse considering the whole chapter to be “an insult”. To her everything about article 5 was offensive, culturally not sensitive and against her religion as a Roman Catholic. This level of resistance recognised at NUL has to be acknowledged and considered in some way by IEC materials producers, because it revealed that insufficient situation analysis could hamper the expected learning from the materials. It reflected that churches need to have a say in how to portray messages for their members:

F⁵: because to me it’s like the whole chapter is an insult if I can put it that way, because it’s talking about masturbation. So to me everything offended me because it is not culturally sensitive. It is against my religion; I think these people were not consultative enough before they embarked on this, because if they were I don’t think any Roman Catholic would have agreed with them. In my view they’re wrong, so to me it not acceptable and I can say I’m highly offended (**NUL:** 3152-3160)

Having here presented and analysed the tertiary institution learners' responses to the comprehensibility of article 5 of the magazine, expressed as how they generally felt about it, the communication issues that appeared to have enhanced or hindered their learning from it and the impact of the discussions on their attitudes, the final theme presents suggestions that the learners made towards the improvement of this article so that it would contain accurate text and images for its targeted audience.

8.3 LEARNERS' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE MAGAZINE

As with the poster and the pamphlet, some suggestions for the improvement of the magazine's cover page and fifth article were semiotically based, while others were culturally specific. Some covered presentation issues in the design as well as the content. All these are discussed under the two subsections, namely, suggestions to fill the communication gaps and suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho.

8.3.1 SUGGESTIONS TO FILL COMMUNICATION GAPS

The purpose of the material (or genre, as a persuasive text) seemed not to be completely clear to the learners and, therefore, generated some dissatisfaction about the depth of article 5 and the expression too vague. Taking into consideration that there are two sides to everything, learners wanted the article to specify the disadvantages of masturbation as well as the advantages. This revealed a communication gap that should be filled in order for article 5 to achieve its intended purpose:

M³: yes madam. Even though my sister here indicated that she would be attracted to this chapter because of its length or because it is short, I somehow think it lacks some information. Since here it looks like they have tried to straighten out the myths and misconceptions on masturbation, I think people need to be told about its advantages and disadvantages and for instance at which age can someone start to masturbate if there's anything like that, what would happen if you do it every time you get aroused, like here it was said: you do not have to masturbate every time you're aroused. Yes they have advised us here in the last bullet that we can try to play sport or do something else to get rid of the feeling. Yes I understand the advice, but I would like to know why it is not wise to do it all the time, because to me it gives one a feeling of pleasure, therefore I don't think anyone would mind doing it all the time (**LCE:** 1749-1767)

F³: I don't like it because it's like they were writing for kids. We're not small children, if they wanted to write about masturbation I think it would have been better if they had gone all the way to show its advantages and disadvantages (**NUL:** 2829-2833)

Furthermore, there was a strong message that people need to feel they can identify with the images and this message was consistent across all three materials that were used for the study. Thus, some suggestions emphasized the inclusion of all Basotho in the images, in order for the magazine to have a closer cultural connection with people. This is discussed in the following section.

8.3.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF ALL BASOTHO

In this regard it was suggested that youth from other ecological zones of Lesotho, such as the shepherds from rural areas, should be represented on the cover page. Learners argued that it was as if the magazine was meant for those who live in urban areas only. As a result, it was suggested that the magazine should not just be particular about age range, but should reflect variety of location as well:

F³: just like with the pamphlet, it should include people from rural areas or traditionalists (**TIL:** 1525-1526)

F³: no. no, no, no yes. I don't agree with the fact that it seems to be for the Maseru children only

F¹: yes other children should appear hear too (**NUL:** 902-904)

Matters of inclusion also featured learners' notions of dress that signify or represent different sectors of society:

F⁴: from the rural ones. Yes I think such things should be looked at so that we can see that it is really meant for everyone in the country, not to certain ones only

R: such things like what?

F¹: say somebody with a blanket or 'molamu' (a stick people use for support when walking, but which Basotho men like to use as a weapon)

F²: or both

F⁶, F⁴&F³: yes / and somebody with gumboots / yes pure Mosotho (**NUL:** 390-399)

These suggestions also indicated that learners were conscious that not all Basotho are literate. Learners, therefore, suggested that pictures should be explicit so that the magazine would attract attention even of the illiterate:

F²: even those who cannot read. After all, the purpose of the pictures is to help those who cannot read to at least have an idea of what the document is about

F⁵: also if a picture of a herd boy is included and one of them comes across this magazine he would be interested to know what is written inside, then he can take it to someone to read it for him (**TIL:** 1531-1538)

Moreover, the learners indicated that IEC materials producers should differentiate between audiences. It was suggested that the magazine be categorised according to age (produce different copies according to age) to benefit people of all ages because its content of the magazine covered issues that should benefit a far wider age spectrum, as was indicated earlier:

M²: I think the only way that this can be made to suit everyone is by categorizing people according to ages in order to be able to discuss or give out certain information freely. I want to believe that the same information that my parent would shy away from sharing with me, she could freely talk about amongst her peers. Same applies to me. Therefore I'd suggest that people in groups be given information in age groups, rather than trying to give information to general public all at the same time (**LCE:** 1545-1554)

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and analysed the comprehensibility of the cover page and article 5 of the magazine, learners' reactions to the magazine and how they generally felt about it, communication issues that appeared to have enhanced or hindered learning from it, and the impact of the discussions on their attitudes.

The analysis was categorised into three sections organised around themes, namely, first impressions, meaning making and suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the magazine. Most of the chapter was about attitudes towards the message, rather than misinterpretations of the article. While respondents in all three institutions interpreted the issues on the cover page in more or less the same way, they reacted differently to article 5. The discussions appeared to have stimulated an understanding of the potentially negative consequences of ignoring HIV, and induced in the learners in Thaba-Tseka some feelings of

fear. Responses also demonstrated a denial of reality, that for Lesotho to be able to win the race against HIV, the country has to use open communication in all HIV prevention responses to inhibit rates of new infections. There were clashes in the attitudes amongst the learners when they related what is being conveyed through the topic to their cultural and normative beliefs. There were also strong gender differences in the mixed groups, showing that men and women reacted to the topic differently in Thaba-Tseka and Quthing. However, all learners were of the view that the topic of article 5, masturbation, should not be publicised.

Suggestions towards the improvement of the magazine related to design as well as the content, to fill the communication gaps and include the depiction of all Basotho from different contexts.

The next chapter discusses and interprets the findings in relation to the reviewed literature, including the concepts and theories that framed the study.

CHAPTER NINE: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter interprets and discusses the main findings of the study on the basis of three main themes constructed from data presentation and analysis (first impressions, meaning making and my suggestions and those of the learners for the improvement of the materials). The study investigated learner responses in three tertiary institutions (Technical Institute of Leloaleng [TIL] in Quthing, Lesotho college of Education [LCE] in Thaba-Tseka and National University of Lesotho [NUL] in Maseru) towards three print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials (text and images) that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho. These materials comprised a pamphlet that discusses the process followed in carrying out the HIV test, a poster and a magazine that are specifically aimed to inform, educate and communicate HIV and AIDS-related issues to young adults. For triangulation purposes, the discussion also includes a comparison with my interpretations of the materials as an IEC educator.

Multilayered methods comprising two different focus group discussions (FGDs) and two individual interviews were used to collect data from each institution. Twenty-two questions, through semi-structured interview guidelines, were used to collect data. These included a fifteen-item semi-structured interview guideline, which was used for all respondents during the first Focus Group Discussion (FGD I) to investigate the comprehensibility, attractiveness, persuasiveness, acceptability and credibility of the researched materials. This interview guideline was also used as a basis for my analysis of the researched IEC materials, before presenting them to the students to determine what messages the signs (text and pictures) could be portraying. The second semi-structured interview guideline, comprising five questions, was used to validate what respondents had expressed during the first group discussions and the follow-up individual interviews. This second guideline was also used for the purposes of triangulation, to duly confirm that the findings were a true reflection of the responses of the tertiary institution learners to the researched IEC materials.

The chapter is organized into three sections that emanated from the three thematic categories resulting from data analysis. These are: first impressions (9.1), meaning making (9.2) and suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the materials (9.3). The first two sections (9.1 – 9.2) interpret and discuss findings pertaining to the comprehensibility of the materials, learners' reactions on how they generally felt about the materials, communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from the materials and the impact of the discussions on learners' attitudes. The third section (9.3) interprets and discusses suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the materials. The fourth section (9.4) summarises and gives conclusions on the interpretations and discussions.

Section 9.1 interprets and discusses findings based on the first research question: What messages do the print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV convey to the learners? This question were designed to assess the comprehensibility of the materials through 12 sub-questions from the first interview guideline. This included six that asked to assess the clarity of the materials (What do you see in this material? What is the message that is being conveyed through this material? What does this message and picture mean to you? Does the message match the picture? What do you understand the function of this picture to be? Does the content match the title?). Two questions assessed the attractiveness of the materials (What in this material could make you want to have a closer look? What do you like or dislike about this material?). One question assessed the persuasiveness of the materials (What action(s) do you think the material wants you to take?). One question assessed the acceptability of the materials (Are there any offensive issues about the material (message / picture?). The last two questions assessed the credibility of the materials (What in this material do you disagree with? What benefits will you get if you follow the message of this material?).

9.1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This section consists of the theme, first impressions. It also includes some factors relating to attractiveness which inspired respondents to read the materials and some contradicting ones that discouraged the respondents from reading them. Also, in trying to interpret what they saw when they first looked at the materials, learners appeared to have reflected on some deeper

analysis and raised certain semiotic issues that seemed to emanate from their cultural background. Hence, they contextualized the setting for what is happening in the materials to what was happening in their own lives, which consequently seemed to shape their responses to gender profiles, especially in the poster and article 5 of the magazine. All these issues are interpreted and discussed under three sub-themes that form part of this section, namely motivating factors, demotivating factors and cultural issues. The section also includes two sub-headings under the sub-theme, cultural issues. These are contextual relevance and gender issues, which all pointed to the cultural context in which learners related to the materials. There were also some issues which made learners display a sense of confusion, and since I considered these issues to be detrimental to the educational purpose of these materials towards attitudinal and behavioural change, I discussed them under a third sub-heading, elements of confusion, still under the sub-theme, cultural issues.

The first impressions that the learners had of the materials were that all of them basically comprised of written words and pictures. Upon looking at them for the first time, my response was similar to that of the learners in that I noticed signs in the form of both text and images. We did not have any problems recognizing text and human images in all the materials.

Poster

With the poster, the learners recognized the human images even though there were some variations in their understanding of items that seemed to connect people in the picture to each other, as opposed to the text and the logos that made up the poster. These items were mentioned by respondents at all institutions. To me, these items represented lines. At TIL and NUL they were said to represent arrows, while at LCE they were referred to as lines, arrows and sticks. To confirm that people are only able to interpret or understand things when they are able to relate them to familiar “systems or conventions” (Chandler, 2007: 13), respondents were equally successful in attributing a relevant role to one of the pictures in the poster as that of a taxi driver, and the car itself was recognized as a four-plus-one (taxi) across all institutions, because of the ‘official’ yellow insignia that distinguishes these type of taxis from other vehicles in the country. This finding concurred with observations by Carstens

(2004a: 21) and Carstens, Maes, and Gangla-Birir (2006: 225) that people have no problem recognizing “analogous objects” that occur in their everyday lives. However, the roles of other people were problematic to identify because part of the scenes that form the settings to their images did not clearly represent who they are or what they do. Hence, I assumed that this contributory information comprised of things that could not easily be shown visually. It is, arguably, impossible to create an image or illustration that will be easily comprehensible or clear to every viewer, because the nature of visual signs is that “they are more open to diverse interpretations that all have significant implications for practice” (Taylor, 2008: 7), rather than other signs, such as linguistic signs (words).

Pamphlet

Learners all appeared to understand the signs on the cover page of the pamphlet in the same way. These signs included familiar plus (+), minus (-) and question mark (?) signs, although I could not make out what they meant in this context. My failure to comprehend these signs confirmed Chandler’s (2007: 9) argument that “the meaning of a sign is not in its relationship to other signs within the language system but rather in the social context of its use”. To learners, these signs signified information in youth slang, the meaning of which was that the plus sign (+) referred to HIV positive. The minus (-) sign represented HIV negative and the question mark sign (?) asked whether the person had tested for HIV or not, that is, whether the reader knew his or her HIV status or not.

Magazine

In the same manner, learners mentioned seeing a group of happy youngsters reflecting the title of ‘my *skeem*’ on the *cover page* of the magazine. Based on this title and picture, the connotation was that these youngsters were friends, since according to the respondents the word ‘*skeem*’ referred to friends. I did not know what this meant until I contacted the producer of this magazine, who told me that the title word ‘*skeem*’ refers to friends in slang. This reflects Fiske’s (1990:85-86) argument that people can only make meaning out of messages when they already have an idea of the content. Therefore, the title of the magazine means ‘my friends’.

Similarly, all respondents mentioned seeing text and a human image upon looking at article 5, and this image was generally pointed out as representing a health care worker because of the dress code. According to Steinberg (2007: 55), for recipients to understand the messages as intended, it all depends on the purpose of the communication and on the recipient. For example, understanding must relate to the recipient's attitude towards the communicated issue, the type and attractiveness of the channel for communication and the recipient's proximity of language use for the communication. Of all the materials tested, only the pamphlet and the magazine seemed to succeed in establishing this rapport with the learners' shared language and experiences.

I considered that factors that could motivate or demotivate learners to look at or read the materials would also form part of the first impressions that the learners had of these materials, as they appeared to have had a positive affective appeal for them, and thus influenced their attitudes towards the materials in a positive manner.

9.1.1 MOTIVATING FACTORS

Poster

Some features that related to attractiveness, or what could motivate learners to look at or read the materials, evoked positive reactions. This rendered all the materials as, according to Carstens and Snyman (2003: 129), "lookable". Language used in the poster seemed to appeal to learners at LCE and NUL, even though this did not necessarily mean that they were able to interpret what some of the pictures meant. Symbols that connect people with each other seemed to also promote the poster's attractiveness among some of the learners at LCE and NUL. Facial expressions of images were picked up during the first encounter with the poster and were interpreted as expressing various conditions. Some were said to reflect happiness, while others reflected worry. The lines or arrows suggested that people were connected and the text message suggested that these connections were risky, which all implied the risk involved in interrelationship affairs. So the worried expressions and the text together build the message about the connections being risky. Hence, worried faces implied that the characters already knew about their HIV status.

All these gave an impression about the seriousness of the situation with the connotation that people know that HIV is dangerous. In this regard, the poster illustrated efficiency in displaying one of the functions of factors that constitute an act of communication, according to Jakobson's model of communication, the emotive function. This function, according to Fiske (2011: 33) and Serban (2012: 839), includes such factors as the addresser's emotions, attitude, status and class. It is said to be orientated towards the addresser factor and serves to portray the addresser's expressions that are personalized in the message. In other words it is oriented towards the influence that the message has on the receiver.

Even though the font and the colour of the poster did not capture the interest of any of the respondents, to me this poster was readable and 'lookable' in that words were written in large enough font and the colours were generally bright, adding to its attractiveness (lookability). Thus, they inspired me to read the poster. Lookability, according to Carstens and Snyman (2003: 129), entails making sense out of visual information such as photographs, symbols and ability of the reader to link headings to these, among others.

The title was mentioned by learners at LCE and NUL as one of the factors that could attract them to look at the pamphlet. Besides this, there appeared to have been very few comments that indicated that the pamphlet had a positive affective appeal for the learners. Perhaps this was due to the claims that it conveyed a familiar message, meaning they may not have read it with interest. Actually, NUL learners agreed with and liked everything about the pamphlet including the font and the size, which had appeared to demotivate learners from TIL and LCE.

Magazine

The title, colour and the picture of the cover page were described by the learners across all institutions as the first things that could attract them to have a closer look at the magazine. The same applied to article 5, where learners seemed to be attracted by the title "masturbation" because it seemed to provide information about a topic that they were not too familiar with, while some were attracted to the article because they appreciated the picture of a nurse being a male. The length appeared to be one other factor that inspired learners to read article 5. It was commended for containing brief information, though still being informative.

There were however some contradictions related to attractiveness that discouraged learners from reading the pamphlet and the magazine. It was assumed that these elements are important for the IEC materials producers to consider, even though they may seem to have had a negative affective appeal for the learners.

9.1.2 DEMOTIVATING FACTORS

There were no factors that demotivated learners to study the poster and the cover page of the magazine.

Poster

In relation to the poster's communication value, to me it appeared that the viewer would already need to be oriented on HIV issues to appreciate the full implications of the intended message. For instance, the viewer would need to know how HIV is transmitted in order to infer what is happening in the poster. However, this did not seem to be a concern for the learners.

Pamphlet

The respondents at TIL and LCE claimed that the size of the font discouraged them from reading the pamphlet. They complained that it was too small and therefore not attractive. This appeared to have a negative effect in relation to the size of the document. My analysis also revealed that the pamphlet had too much information, which in turn affected the size of the font. Hence it was written in a very small font, thus making it unattractive.

Also, the sense that blood is associated with pain was felt by some respondents to detract from the idea that testing should be attractive, suggesting that images need to be kept 'tame' so that they do not instill fear in the readers, although this seemed not to be the case at NUL. From my perspective the message contained in this picture was not associated with fear. Perhaps this was because I understood the message contained in this picture to be explained by the title, HIV test (*Tlhahlobo ea kokoana-hloko ea HIV*). Depending on one's familiarity with signs that make up a message, van Leeuwen (2005: 229) clarifies that text can help people to make meaning out of pictures. Thus, even though text and image may appear to be

independent of each other, they should stand in a complementary relationship, and are both fragments, which together may form a syntagm (Moriarty, 2005, as cited by Arbuckle, 2014) and so each contributes in its own way towards a bigger message.

In my opinion the text (words) and pictures (faces of different people) did not complement the title, as the people depicted only ask questions presented in speech balloons and do not pictorially display what the text is saying. That is, they do not seem to add any value to the meaning of the text, except that they perhaps help to make the document attractive to make the reader want to read this pamphlet in order to discover what the people are saying.

Regardless of the fact that I had an idea of what the pamphlet communicated, still the intended meanings of some of the signs were not clear. Based on the main heading, I understood the tick to refer to the notion of ‘correct’, though it is not clear which part of the message the tick relates to. Also, the plus (+) and minus (–) can be understood to represent positive (HIV-positive) and negative (HIV-negative).

One other issue that seemed to demotivate learners from reading the pamphlet was attributed to the quality of how it is written. There was a sense that the material producers had not sufficiently edited the pamphlet, as there are some incongruities resulting from typographical errors and grammar mistakes. These incongruities pointed to the importance of ‘quality’ in the presentation of messages, in order for print HIV and AIDS related IEC materials to become more readable and attractive. This issue aligns with Berger’s (2004: 34) criticism of semiotics theory in that, “in its concern for the relationship of elements and production of meaning in a text, it ignores the quality of the work itself”. In this case, this was reflected in the learners’ complaint that the material producers appeared to have not paid sufficient attention to removing aspects that easily demotivate people from reading print IEC materials. For instance, respondents pointed to this material as having too many grammar mistakes and inconsistencies in the reference to second and third person. My impressions were similar to those of the learners on this matter. I also realized that the use of “u” for the second person and “o” for the third person is not consistent in the pamphlet. This showed that the material developers had not used language consistently so that the reader would feel that the material is

constantly communicating to him or her, rather than talking to or about a second person. This made me doubt the quality of services offered by the producers of this particular pamphlet, since they also offer HIV testing services.

The speech balloons look as if they come from an independent individual (images) who explains or answers what is asked or said within the content or paragraphs. The connotation was that the message is from the sponsors of the pamphlet, whose logos appear on it and, if that is the case, I guessed that these then lent an official credibility to the messages. Looking at the number of people involved in the speech bubbles, who were all giving out information, one tended to doubt the credibility of this pamphlet, especially because some of the information found did not correlate with the title. De Fossard (1996: 5), for instance, indicates that communication starts with a “climate of credibility” which is built by the performance of the source of the message. As a result of this perceived lack of credibility, I started to wonder how many people were going to go for HIV testing after interacting with this pamphlet.

With regard to language style and the factual question and answer approach, I found the pamphlet to be written in a simple and straightforward manner. Nevertheless, this conclusion would only be true for those who are literate and familiar with HIV issues. This is also true for the use of speech balloons, which make it possible for those who already have an idea of what is being communicated to attach the same meaning to all items involved in the communication processes as that intended by the material producer. Even though this pamphlet is written in the vernacular language and is meant for general public consumption, I found it not to be encompassing, as it seemed to cater for only those who can read or are able to interpret the written signs because the pictures alone did not seem to relay any message.

Regarding the attractiveness, the severely cropped half images of people made me lose interest in this pamphlet, and this seemed to impact negatively on the learners as well. They were distracted by having to work out details about the partially visible faces, which were actually unnecessary to the message of the material. For instance, it was interesting to see that irrespective of their age and level of education, learners wanted to see unambiguous images of men and women in order to associate the pictures with the message they expected. The

absence of such stereotyped images resulted in a remarkable confusion, especially at LCE and NUL, where respondents could not agree on which images represented males and which ones represented females with most of the pictures. For example, features of some images were so confusing that one respondent at LCE, who at first said she could see men only in the pamphlet, later referred to the pictures as “old ladies”. In NUL only one respondent was adamant that a certain image of a person with plaited hair represented a female, with the implication that it is only women who can have their hair braided, while the rest seemed not to share the same opinion and had simply decided that all images represented males.

I sensed that the presentation of images in this manner could be due to space constraints, due to lack of expertise or simply a deliberate attempt to make the design look modern or different. However, these design elements served no purpose in the promotion of the intended information dissemination or education. In any event, these people were not easily identifiable (whether they were men or women), and therefore did not make the pamphlet attractive. My assumption was that this could have a negative effect on the target audiences as well, especially if the viewer might think that the design results from a lack of expertise. If that were the case, the pamphlet would not only lose attractiveness, but would also lose credibility.

Magazine

Responses to article 5 revealed issues of congruence and some incongruities that led to variances in the manner in which the signs (text and images) that made up the magazine were presented. For instance, the picture of a nurse was pointed to by some learners as discouraging, because to them there was not enough anchorage or “linking” of word and image (van Leeuwen 2005: 229), so they complained that there was no obvious link between the meaning of the text and the picture. This meant that the way the materials are written is not helpful for viewers to link text and image, as print materials require the audience to take an active role in reading and interpreting.

In trying to interpret what they saw when they first looked at the materials, learners appeared to have reflected at a deeper analytical level and raised certain semiotic issues, such as those that are interpreted and discussed in the next section. These seemed to result from their

cultural context as Basotho, but not necessarily from that of their learning institutions. However, there were none highlighted from discussions on the pamphlet.

9.1.3 CULTURAL ISSUES

Poster

Fiske (2011: 2) suggests that, “communication is central to the life of our culture”. During discussions on the poster, there were several cultural issues that challenged some of the normative beliefs about who is attractive and who is not, including who looks responsible and who does not. These beliefs reflected assumptions among learners that low and high-risk behavior is associated with dress appearance rather than the issue that HIV can infect anyone. In accordance with Durojaiye (2011: 22), they were in a stage where they recognized the problem, but were not involved in the solution. They appeared not to perceive HIV and AIDS as a personal risk, thus preventing their commitment to attitudinal and behaviour change.

Their normative beliefs, influenced by certain appearances being interpreted as implying promiscuity, seemed to have been so strong that they blinded these respondents from seeing an alternative truth. These beliefs were so strong that learners failed to see that it is not only scantily dressed characters that sleep around, but even those who were so-called ‘innocents’ had numerous partners and could therefore be promiscuous as well. Respondents seemed to be misled by the appearances so much that they held on to the fact people, whose looks which to them appeared to be beautiful or handsome, are innocent and well-behaved regardless of the fact that the lines of connection indicated that they seemed to have more partners than the scantily dressed ones. The way people behave in regard to health related issues comes about as a result of culture (Tripper-Reimer and Afifi 1989). That is why health related behaviours may differ in different districts, as different ecological zones may have different cultures. It was therefore not surprising to see that some people did not notice the danger of judging images in the poster by appearances only. Although the respondents did what the material needed them to do to enable the message’s interpretation, it was evident that the way the images were judged by appearance reflected how the respondents would be likely to judge people in real life situations. This confirmed the views of Carstens (2004b), Tripp-Reimer and

Afifi (1989), Doak, Doak and Root (1996) and the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (1998), that the socio-cultural and demographic variables such as nationality, gender, dress, social customs and physical environment can influence the acceptability of a message, decrease motivation to read and hinder comprehension, if, for instance, the reader fails to interpret the new information or accept it. Thus, cultural backgrounds have the potential to enhance or hinder learning, as it seems people's understanding of IEC materials could be influenced by not only their ethnic backgrounds (Arbuckle, 2014, and Doak *et al.*, 1996), but by their geographical settings as well.

Magazine

There was an interesting observation where respondents saw the images in the magazine as reflecting wider cultural messages about people living together. For instance, they indicated that the picture on the cover page of the magazine meant that boys and girls should not only interact because of love affairs, but should 'grow up' as a community. In other words people do not only meet because of love affairs or sexual relations, and the learners' understanding was that the magazine was meant to make them aware that they need one another as friends and as people. It seemed to be highly appreciated that as long as they 'get together', perhaps as members of a youth club, it was important to discuss other health issues besides HIV and AIDS. The learners indicated that they were 'tired' of HIV and AIDS and 'stressed' by how boring it was to discuss anything related to the virus. Some even indicated that they did not mind becoming members of youth clubs, but would not hesitate to quit such clubs, if at any time they were required to engage with HIV and AIDS related issues. When I asked them why they continued as research participants after they were informed that the research was going to be on HIV and AIDS issues, they indicated that participating in the research was different. It was not the same as somebody lecturing them on HIV and AIDS. To show that they enjoyed the discussions, learners added that the difference was that they had time to discuss the materials and suspected that perhaps all HIV related materials would be interesting if they did not read them on their own, but had time to discuss them with other people. This confirmed the need and the importance of dialogue based around print IEC materials, if HIV education is to positively influence attitudinal and behavioural changes among youth in Lesotho.

The aspect of fatigue towards the topic of HIV and AIDS has implications for how IEC materials producers convey HIV and AIDS messages. This aspect was reflected in the fact that none of the materials that were used for the research had the AIDS symbol (red ribbon) to show that the materials were about AIDS. Even though the study did not enquire directly about the AIDS symbol (red AIDS ribbon), during the informal discussions (after the interviews), I learned that unlike in South Africa, where Marschall (2003: 45) found that “the South Africans perceived extensive use of the symbol necessary”, the tertiary institution learners in Lesotho did not appreciate the use of this ribbon at all. In contrast, learners indicated that the ribbon made them lose interest in anything that carried it. They explained that this was because they were ‘tired’ of HIV. The absence of the ribbon among logos that made up the materials indicated that the IEC materials producers are aware of the fatigue among people regarding HIV and AIDS issues, but the learner responses to the topic suggest that more should be done to address this concern.

Although article 5 appeared to have been the only document from this research that learners had reservations about sharing, their level of intimacy and identification with it was very high. It appeared to be the only document to which they attached age specifications, something which reflected an important cultural point (Tripper-Reimer and Afifi 1989), because masturbation related communication also seemed to depend on ‘who is talking to whom’ about it. Therefore, the approach, as well as the timing, for communicating masturbation related matters were deemed necessary considerations. In addition, the target audience’s views of circumstances surrounding them (Preece and Ntseane 2003) need to be considered during the development of related public messages.

Arbuckle (2014: 40-41) investigated visual communication and suggested “the viewers’ individual experiences, culture and social background influence the extent that they interpret or misinterpret an image”, hence “possible connotations of an image are reliant on cultural associations and social conventions”. In the case of this study, respondents seemingly criticized only certain issues as culturally disturbing (such as masturbation) and accepted those that they were used to (such as having multiple partners). This suggested a need for the

issue of masturbation to be extensively discussed before they could untangle their disorientation between culture, religion and the practical reality of their lives. For instance, it was evident that respondents had no problem with the cultural and religious taboo of pre-marital sex, which they so openly acknowledged to be doing throughout the discussion.

These discussions have implications for how HIV prevention messages can address cultural taboos, thereby obliging communicators to find ways to accommodate the realities of life. For instance, transformative learning, according to Mezirow (as cited in Taylor, 2001: 220), is the “social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action”. This is because, for people to construct new meanings they build on the knowledge that they already have. That is, the existing knowledge provides a platform for acquisition of new knowledge (Mezirow, 1991). Thus, in the case of the study, learners used the knowledge that they had on HIV to make meaning out of the health education that is being disseminated through the poster, pamphlet and the magazine in order to understand how they can cope with the challenge of HIV.

In view of these considerations, some overlaps of understanding were acknowledged, where a number of issues to do with meaning making and contextual relevance were more related to semiotics in terms of interpreting the signs and images, but others were about meaning making in terms of understanding the issue. In view of this, the next sub-section explores how learners associated the message from the materials with real-life scenarios under the sub-theme, contextual relevance.

CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE

It has been strongly argued that good communication should have an aim or goal (Shayo, 2012) and producers of messages always need to send out contextually relevant messages. It has also been suggested that IEC materials should not be presented in isolation (Arbuckle, 2014), where their meanings are not fixed and their interpretation is left solely to the reader. In other words, there is a need for some kind of anchorage, such as dialogue, as reinforcement and opportunity for clarification. But my findings indicate that these factors fundamentally also need an understanding and respect for the target audiences’ normative beliefs.

Poster

The circumstances that form a setting for what is happening in the poster seemed to emphasize what was happening in the learners' social context, since, in terms of semiotic theory, the way individuals make meaning depends a lot on their context and experience. Context and experience shape the interpretant, which in turn combines with the object (intended message) and the sign to influence the final meaning that is derived. Hence, the question *na u kena baneng?*, was meant to be closely connected to what is happening in their world in regard to HIV. Even so, in Quthing, the intention to attract "lovers" (*ho kena baneng*), meaning they liked 'nice time', seemed to be in the forefront of these learners' minds rather than the implications that may occur as a result of such relationships. They seemed to be less worried about HIV as a focus of attention.

This implied that learners were not prepared to let go of their existing behaviour no matter how risky it appeared to be. Likewise, when asked what the message and picture from the poster meant to them, responses reflected a broader social context of the learners' experiences of reality, encompassing pre-assumptions about everyday certainties and underlying beliefs that form a major part of peoples' knowledge systems (Ziehe, 2009). For instance, respondents seemed to realize the realities of life that anyone can behave unfaithfully irrespective of gender and age.

The issue of context was highlighted in different ways. One example related to issues of intergenerational sex that seemed to be popular across the three districts. Learners were of the opinion that pictures of mature adults be included in the poster, considering practices that promote intergenerational sex. They were concerned that mature adults be included so that it could attract their attention because of the practice. For instance, young boys go out with mature adult women commonly called sugar-mummies and young girls go out with mature adult men known as sugar-daddies. The learners deemed it essential that adults be equipped with this kind of information, also because adults were said to be the main financiers of 'nice times' because they have money.

However, some respondents looked at this point from a potentially educative dimension, where they suggested the inclusion of pictures of mature adults so that the same poster could be utilized beyond the immediate target audience. To this, learners raised a strong argument in favour of using the materials to start discussions in families. The assumption was that if mature adults are included in the picture, the picture could easily attract their attention and after being equipped with information they could share it with other people, including their grandchildren.

Furthermore, the respondents' perspective that IEC materials can be used to change peoples' values and to promote transformational learning towards the prevailing HIV scourge is supported by Arbuckle (2014: 61), who states that print IEC materials "have the potential to break down communication barriers between generations and to enable families to discuss sensitive subjects like HIV and AIDS or teen pregnancy, by acting as 'conversation starters' in homes". This shows that dialogue based around print IEC materials is not only valuable in focus groups, but can also be extremely useful in less formal settings such as family circles.

Pamphlet

On the other hand some comments indicated that the respondents' expectations of how these kinds of materials (especially in the pamphlet) should look were stereotyped. Even though Arbuckle (2014) investigated comprehensibility of health materials among people with low literacy levels and found that with print IEC materials, there is danger in making assumptions about what is appropriate for their users, it appeared that the same thing applied to people with higher literacy levels as well. According to Arbuckle (2014: 285), "participants' abilities to interpret the illustrations is influenced by a variety of contextual and experiential factors" based, among others, on stereotypes. It was evident, for instance, in the focus group discussions about the pamphlet, that people were unclear which of the pictures represented females and which represented males. These arguments caused some misunderstandings, which significantly portrayed the extent to which people are able to interpret text and images. These stereotypical discourses included deliberations that images can depict only good-

looking woman and that people should be ‘miserable’ in a health facility because they are supposed to be in distress due to pain or illness.

Magazine

There appeared to be clashes of attitudes amongst the learners when they contextually related the issue of masturbation to their cultural and normative beliefs. Great variation between normative beliefs and Christianity was observed, especially at NUL, where one respondent was consistently resistant (from the first meeting and throughout the second one) to the topic of masturbation being publicized. She regarded publication of masturbation as being “unholy”, “disgusting” and “wrong”. This respondent seemed to also equate the idea of masturbation with the issue of prevention for unwanted pregnancy, and was therefore completely against the Sesotho culture. However, another respondent in the same group appreciated the issue of masturbation being publicized because the article provided new information. Also, she could foresee the content being useful to other people.

Although not everyone may have been equally open to new ideas, and different people varied in their knowledge and attitudes, it was evident that most of the youth and young adults contextually appreciated the opportunity, among the confines of their peers, to discuss masturbation as a possible mode of HIV prevention.

Some gender issues also surfaced during the discussions that pointed to the social context in which the learners related to the poster and article 5. Disparities that were considered to be detrimental are interpreted and discussed in the subsequent sub-section because they appeared to result from cultural nurturing.

GENDER ISSUES

Strong intuitive understanding of the materials, that appeared to be influenced by gender surfaced among learners at TIL and LCE during the discussions on the poster and article 5. Although NUL learners’ provided useful feedback on other issues, they did not seem to raise the same concerns about power differentials as those of their counterparts. The variable

‘gender’ did not seem to have any direct bearing on their perceptions, perhaps because the group was comprised of females only.

Magazine

There appeared to be some underlying gender issue among the learners during discussions on, which showed that males and females react differently towards the issue of masturbation in article 5. The responses included a gender distinction, which showed that women were more prepared to accept male nurses. Responses from the male fraternity seemed to have a gender power dynamic that reflected that men think only women can be or are supposed to be nurses. They seemed to ‘selectively perceive’ what the picture was portraying and selective perception is an important issue that producers need to consider when developing IEC materials. All male respondents, except for one in Thaba-Tseka (LCE), appeared to think that men should be associated with a more powerful role that should put them in positions of greater power. The male respondent who did not have any problems with males being nurses, showed appreciation and indicated that he would be attracted to article 5 by the very picture of a male nurse, of which he was proud.

Other underlying gender issues across all institutions reflected aspects of gender relations and concepts of fidelity between partners. Gender, as a determinant of positioning and power among the Basotho youth, appeared to impede HIV prevention information, education and communication efforts intended towards desired attitudinal and behavioural changes, as articulated by Misselhorn, Quinlan, Chitindingu, Koseki and Katz (2012). Men seemed not to consider being faithful, even to themselves. Rather, they were content with condoms, because condoms helped them to comfortably pursue their practice of having multiple and concurrent sexual partners, no matter how risky the practice was. They gave the impression that they were not prepared to change this behaviour, because use of condoms is in itself a behavioural change (from a few years ago).

This confirmed that ignorance is not the only factor that influences the spread of HIV, but that HIV can, among other factors, spread as a consequence of certain behavioural patterns caused

by cultural attitudes towards gender (Das and Gupta, 2011; GoL, 2000b; Carstens, 2004b; Tripp-Reimer and Afifi, 1989; Doak *et al.*, 1996; and PATH/FHI, 2002).

Poster

Gender specific issues also came about as part of the discourse on sexual relations or behaviour that the learners attached to the meaning of the poster. Some female responses implied that women tended to also be mistrustful of men's attitude towards condom use. They argued that if their men knew that they were taking precautions about pregnancy, for example, using family planning methods like a pill, they would refuse to use condoms.

This suggested that some males have accepted HIV like any other disease and do not find it necessary to take precautions against it. However, although women were conscious about HIV, they seemed not to have enough power to convince their male partners to also take responsibility in preventing it. Hence, women have to retain a degree of deception because of their submissive positions in order to survive. That is why Preece and Ntseane (2003) advise that the HIV and AIDS preventive strategies should observe cultural concerns in order to stimulate awareness of the contradictions that otherwise may be obscured by whatever they aim to do. They recommend doing this through adult education theoretical and pedagogical perspectives, which are based on the principle of starting from the known to the unknown (that is building on existing meaning perspectives). To achieve this, they advise that producers have to use focus group discussions to generate data that would form the basis for designing these strategies and IEC materials. Use of such adult education theoretical and pedagogical perspectives, it can be argued, would also help IEC materials producers to produce quality educational resources. This is because I noted that learners, every now and then, reflected a loss of direction or confusion in trying to construct meaning or interpret the poster and article 5. These reactions to the content that indicated elements of confusion are evident in the deliberations that follow in the next section.

ELEMENTS OF CONFUSION

Illeris (2003: 399) is of the opinion that the endeavour of the learner, with any educational activity, is to construct meaning and to become able to deal with the challenges of practical

life and thereby develop an overall “personal functionality”. But materials that were used for the research, as educational resources, seemed to have had loopholes, whereby they failed to assist learners to smoothly construct meaning out of them. In other words, these materials alone did not give learners sufficient means to construct new meanings or perhaps change their existing attitudes on certain issues.

Poster

Incongruities, due to written text as well as punctuation issues, seemed to have caused some confusion as to what some symbols in the poster represented or meant. For instance, a lack of clarity regarding the Sesotho word ‘*ee*’, which can be translated as yes or a question ‘*ee?*’, is represented by two ‘*ees*’ not a single ‘*e*’ which appeared on the poster. I had assumed that illiterate people could easily make out the intended message from merely looking at the picture and reading the text in the poster, but it appeared that that was not the case.

There was also an evident confusion in the ideas or opinions that learners had, of the symbols that seemed to have made a ‘web’ that appeared to connect people in the picture to each other, during discussions on the poster. In Thaba-Tseka (LCE) the dilemma of what these signs represented was resolved after a symbol that represented an arrow was drawn on the chalkboard. The consensus was that the symbols in the poster did not represent arrows but lines. Although extra-pictorial (non-iconic) devices (such as movement lines or arrows) are commonly used in static pictures as carriers of dynamic health messages, viewers need to be familiar with and recognize the different elements, the situation and the events in the picture (Hoogwegt, Maes and van Wijk, 2009) and be able to relate them to their own world knowledge and personal situation. This was demonstrated in the learners’ argument that these lines or sticks must have arrowheads that indicate direction and relation in order for the poster to have meaning.

All these different elements of confusion suggested that simple and clear posters are required for their messages to become understandable and to attract people’s attention. While the fact that visual communication is naturally open to multiple meanings (polysemy) such as “change over time, pointing of direction, transformation causation, connection or drawing of

attention” (Hoogwegt *et al.*, 2009: 10), the confusion regarding the message and content could not be denied. Some learners came up with very interesting misinterpretations that usefully illustrated how different signs can influence misinterpretation and drive people to make interpretation of the picture difficult if there is not enough elaboration. Doak *et al.* (1996: 99) confirm that if the text message is not elaborated in the picture or the picture message is not elaborated in the text, this influences the “acceptability or unacceptability of a message” and sometimes hinders comprehension, thus leading to mixing up of messages and confusion.

Some responses across all materials pointed to communication gaps that illustrated how text and images can be misinterpreted or interpreted differently when there is not enough anchorage (van Leeuwen, 2005) in the message. For instance, it seemingly could not have been possible for the respondents to comprehend the poster without having discussed it with each other and with me. This indicated that the poster had no sufficient anchorage (text explanation) to limit or guide people’s interpretations. Lack of clarity about the relationships between the different elements, indicating insufficient anchorage of the intended meaning of the images by the text, appeared to cause lack of congruence between the different parts of the syntagm (the different signs or elements that complemented each other in order to build the overall intended message of the pamphlet when viewed together).

Magazine

The insufficiency described earlier again made learners fail to understand the meaning of the picture of a nurse in article 5. The argument was, until the text was read the article could be associated with any health topic, since the uniform denotes a health worker and the connotation was that the message has something to do with health but not necessarily with masturbation. Nevertheless, the connotation can possibly also depend on what the subject matter is and what can, perhaps, be shown visually. This again illustrated how images can be misinterpreted or interpreted differently when there is not enough anchorage in the form of a verbal message. These observations indicated that text and images that form print IEC materials do not have a uniform effect on the minds of different readers, emphasizing that

communication through print IEC materials that are used to curtail the spread of HIV should to be backed up with purposeful dialogue (Gravett, 2001) in order to close the apparent communication gaps.

Such comments suggested that these materials needed to be backed up with discussions where audiences do not just participate, but engage in active thinking that would help them break through to new insights (Gravett, 2001) to ensure that they clearly understand the meaning.

Other communication problems resulted in learners mixing up the messages, especially because AIDS seemed not to be the first thing that attracted learners to read HIV and AIDS related publications. Several responses indicated that these respondents read HIV and AIDS related IEC materials not because they want to know more about AIDS, but for other reasons such as wanting to see what celebrities (where materials entail use of images of famous personalities) may be saying or doing. For example, the use of a famous local DJ (Disc Jockey) in the poster appeared to encourage misinterpretation of the message, and learners seemed to have thought that the poster represented an advert for a social activity. This communication problem exposed the learners' lack of interest towards understanding the relationship between the pictures and the text.

The discussion process seemed to also be necessary in order for people to understand print IEC materials, because it appeared that without these discussions materials are misinterpreted and therefore learners get the wrong information. For instance, in relation to the masturbation article the respondents did not appear to equate masturbation with sexual practice in that one always has to control urges in different contexts, irrespective of what they are.

Having interpreted and discussed findings in response to the first research question that sought to assess the comprehensibility of the materials, accordingly, the next section deliberates on responses to the second research question, which assessed the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of the materials. This was examined through the five sub-questions from the second interview guideline to assess the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of the print IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV.

These included such questions as; How do you feel after the discussion? (1st FGD) What meaning did you attach to the material? Has the material raised any critical awareness to you? If yes, in what way? If not, why? Have you developed any attitudinal change towards HIV related issues after the exposure to the materials? Did the material offend you in any way? The following section, therefore, addresses the meanings that the learners constructed to show how they understood the messages that are being conveyed through the poster, pamphlet and the magazine.

9.2 MEANING MAKING

This section consists of the theme, meaning making. By building on their experiences, respondents were able to make meaningful deliberations despite all the confusion that was indicated in the previous section. Also, in trying to interpret the meaning of the materials, learners appeared to have engaged in some transformative thinking that re-awakened their consciousness. The discussion stimulated an understanding of potential negative consequences of ignoring information, education and or communication on HIV, and thus induced in the respondents a feeling of fear. Therefore, a sub-theme, fear undertones, forms part of this section. Since some learners also appeared to express denial of their feelings towards the prevailing situation about HIV and its consequences, a third sub-theme, denial versus reality, is included under this section.

According to Fiske (1990, in Arbuckle 2014: 20), “the semiotic approach to communication considers the production and exchange of meaning (as opposed to transmission) – ‘how messages or texts interact with people in order to produce meanings’ ”. This suggests that people discover meaning as they read or interact with text and in the process they sometimes acquire new learning. This is because being able to read does not necessarily mean understanding what is read. There are many different definitions of learning emanating from different theorists. However, for Behr *et al.* (1996), Rogers (2006) and Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005), learning generally involves an internal transaction resulting in acquisition of new knowledge and new experiences, development of new skills and change in, among others, the learner’s attitude, beliefs, values, and consequently, behaviour. To Mezirow

(as cited in Jarvis 2004: 133), the learning focus is on “meaning making” from experiences as a result of the learners’ previous knowledge, and learning is an interpretation of the meaning of an experience and a guide to future action. But it appears that one sentence can convey different meanings to different people. That is, different layers of meaning can be constructed from signs by different people at any one time. Barthes (as cited by Arbuckle, 2014: 40) refers to this “layering of meaning as: two orders of signification, denotation (the first order) and connotation (the second order)”. According to Arbuckle (2014: 40), denotation refers “to what or who is being depicted, or a sign’s literal meaning. Connotation [refers] to ideas and values that are expressed through what is depicted and the way it is represented, or the sign’s associated meanings”. This means that there are different layers or stages of meaning making and the learners’ discussions during the course of my research confirmed that not everyone reached the same stage at the same time.

Based on these explanations, this section specifically illustrates the meanings that the respondents constructed to show what they understood from the messages that were being conveyed through the poster, pamphlet and the magazine, and also what those messages meant to them particularly as tertiary institution learners. Patterns of interpretations that were highlighted during the discussions revealed the ways in which the learners derived and expressed semiotic layers of meaning out of the materials. These issues outlined the key semiotic concepts recognized in text and image relations and their functions, considering different ways in which the text and image influenced each other.

Poster

The discussions on the poster indicated an implied understanding with several meanings that the learners derived from the symbols that seemed to unite people in the picture. The denotation was that there are many different types of people in the picture, with many drawings or lines that go between them. The connotation was that these people liked having ‘nice time’ since they appeared to be linked in some way through one or more sexual relationships. Incidentally, this connection was understood to influence the high risk of HIV infection, as was implied in the text where it was explained that HIV enters ‘nice times’ with

those who liked them (*bona hee HIV e kenella le uena*). These connotations were reflected in responses indicating that there is a common element that binds images in the poster, showing that a person can have a sexual relationship with one or more people.

The meanings that the learners attached to the text and images that made up the poster, which were based more on Mezirow's (2000) view of meaning making, implied the need to establish new viewpoints. People make meaning with different dimensions of awareness and understanding because learning may happen in different ways. It can be "intentional, as a result of deliberate inquiry. Incidental, as a by-product of another activity involving intentional learning or mindlessly assimilative, meaning it can unconsciously be acquired during integration with any particular culture" (Taylor 2001: 220). Discussion seemed to have enlightened the learners, producing new ideas in them and potentially influencing their "sense of self and world views" (Merriam and Ntseane, 2008: 182). Hence, some learners appeared to transfer the meaning they derived from the materials to their own situations.

In my analysis, the message of the poster was constructed in such a way that its essence was elaborated in the picture and in the same manner the picture message was anchored and relayed in the title and subtitle to determine their meaning. This concurred with the learners' views. The web of lines between the pictures symbolizes what, in reality, happens with those who like 'nice time'. The 'web' is a metaphor for the way HIV spreads, indicating that each person shown sleeps with more than one person without knowing it. I understood the phrase 'nice time' to represent a euphemism for risky behaviour, mainly associated with unprotected sexual intercourse and HIV, especially because the title continues to point out that HIV enters 'nice times' with those who like them. Thus, the poster consists of vivid layers of meaning (Barthes in van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001: 94) that portray HIV related high-risk behaviour conducted by both males and females who look so ordinary and healthy. In other words, one cannot tell from merely looking at them, which one is infected with HIV and which one is not.

The benefits that could be reaped by following the message of the poster were clear and straight to the point in Quthing (TIL) for example. Learners here indicated that they would be equipped with knowledge that will help them to protect themselves from HIV. In Thaba-Tseka

(LCE) they appeared to project what is happening in the poster onto their own behavior, seeming to incorporate this new information into their existing knowledge structures and in the process constructing new meanings and new ways of thinking (Gravett, 2001: 20). In Maseru (NUL) some respondents understood that they too could be infected, but chose not to acquaint themselves with the message and, as a result, failed to detect the benefits they would get if they followed what is being conveyed through the poster. Instead they appeared to be angry at the disease and in the process created some blockages towards the message. It looked as if they were not prepared to let go of their existing behaviour, no matter how risky it may appear to be. This, therefore, indicated a different stage of meaning making. Dialogue education assumes an andragogical mode of learning, which observes all those who participate in a learning activity as independent individuals with the ability to decide what is best for them (Vella, 2002: 16). Hence, Rawjee (2003: 246) advocates for participatory communication planning, if HIV and AIDS education programmes are to be successful, because it does not only allow recipients of the message(s) to participate in the formulation of the message(s), but it also allows them to decide on what they want to learn.

Although pictures in all the materials appeared to be simple, they still seemed to place a heavy burden on the viewer, because the signs used and the messages are complex (Carstens *et al.*, 2006). Vast cognitive effort is demanded from the viewer in processing the existing subject knowledge in relation to the (new) topics. This was evident with the poster, because respondents were challenged to work out the meaning of the combinations of different sign types such as arrows, thought or speech bubbles, analogical depictions (of a face for example) and written text, all of which communicate in different ways but together make up the message.

There were also marked differences in the understanding of the benefits that could be reaped from reading the materials. This, it has been argued, is because people are guided by their perceptions of situations, which are not always accurate and their meanings are interpreted selectively according to “both individual and group psychological mindsets” (Cherie, Mitkie, Ismail and Berhane, 2005: 75). The differences in understanding could also have been

because the respondents' understandings were influenced by their tertiary institution environments.

In trying to construct meaning out of the materials, respondents appeared to apply certain discourses, reflecting their social practices (Fairclough, 1992) as members of a youth fraternity. For instance, in terms of reacting to the poster, according to their beliefs based on cultural and negative stereotypes about people in these groups, the students understood that if a person likes 'nice times' he or she is likely to sleep with different 'characters', such as prostitutes, lesbians and homosexuals. The thought not only disgusted them, but made them realize how much they would be putting themselves at risk of HIV. The discourse in this case reflected the way in which learners conducted and presented themselves, which shaped their world in relation to each other and the meaning they made out of the poster.

Pamphlet

In some instances, the meaning of the message of the pamphlet was mainly interpreted in view of facial expressions portrayed by images, as opposed to the verbal descriptions of feelings in response to the text. These facial expressions represented people's feelings to the learners, which reflected an interaction that occurred when the text and messages interfaced with the feelings or emotions of the learners and the values of their culture (Fiske, 2011: 81).

Based on this, the interpretations of the pamphlet included seeing people with relaxed and happy faces, suggesting that these people were happy because they already knew their HIV status or were not afraid to undergo the HIV test. Some of the characters in the images were pointed to as looking worried and scared, implying that they were afraid to undertake the test. One of the characters (first picture in the middle fold with the speech bubble, "*ho boleloa'ng ka tlhabollo le tlhahlobo ka boithaopo*") that inquired what is meant by counselling and voluntary testing) was even referred to as looking astonished, with the connotation that this person was ignorant about HIV testing. All these connotations gave an impression that the producers of the pamphlet included images with differing facial expressions, aiming to attract different types of people, be it those who are afraid or not afraid to test for HIV.

Benefits that could be reaped from following the pamphlet's message were interpreted beyond the pamphlet itself across all the institutions, showing an understanding that perhaps emanated from past experience. Thus, the pamphlet appeared to act more as a reminder, rather than giving first time information.

Magazine

When looking at article 5, some responses reflected why most tertiary institution learners are inclined to have risky lifestyles and why their world is shaped the way it is. They indicated that this could be attributed to their culture and certain 'discourses' as Basotho. As products of these discourses, learners seemed to conform to social norms regardless of the HIV education that they were equipped with. The discussion raised another level of meaning making (van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001) as respondents transferred the meaning of the article to their own situations (Carstens *et al.*, 2006), where the overall interpretation of the message was that the article was meant to encourage youth to abstain from sexual activities until they are married. This is because when people masturbate (as individuals, not when they help each other masturbate), they do not have to touch other people's fluids and in that way they avoid HIV. The learners in this case were therefore learning about masturbation as a guide to future action to prevent HIV (Mezirow, 2000).

In respect of all these meanings, respondents indicated that they gained some additional learning or new interpretations after their experience as research participants through transformative thinking. This enquiring thinking process seemed to have helped them not only to acquire new learning from both the materials and their peers, but it also re-awakened their consciousness towards HIV and AIDS related issues. There was an indication that the discussion had inspired and consequently helped them come to a better understanding of the issue of HIV.

In view of this, the next section interprets and discusses how their discussions helped learners to become critically reflective of their assumptions and those of others and how participating in the research exercise helped transform their thinking, thus yielding insights into learning based on

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000; Baumgartner, 2001; Cranton, 2006; Merriam and Ntseane, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Duveskog, 2011).

9.2.1 TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING

When Mezirow's theory of adult learning was first introduced (Mezirow [1978] as cited in Taylor, 2008), it helped explain how adults change the way they interpret the world around them and that it is because "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996: 162). Taylor (2008: 5) elaborates.

[The] transformative process is formed and circumscribed by a frame of reference. Frames of reference are structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual's tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions. It is the revision of a frame of reference in concert with reflection on experience that is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation - a paradigmatic shift.

The dialogue process and collective meaning making in a group discussion played a crucial role in helping learners understand the meaning of messages that the materials intended to communicate. This dialogic process reflected what Mezirow (2000: 14) says that Bellah (1985) and others refer to as "democratic habits of the heart that embrace self-respect, respect for others, willingness to accept responsibility for the common good, willingness to welcome diversity and to approach others with openness". In other words, the dialogic process enabled the respondents to participate equally in human communication, thus observing some of the generic principles for dialogue, that people should be given equal opportunity to participate and that there should be understanding and agreement to listen to conversations.

Poster

A marked change was observed during the second group discussions, indicating transformative learning through new levels of understanding and the acquisition of new attitudes (Cranton, 2006), especially towards print HIV related IEC materials. For instance, discussions played a crucial role in helping learners not only to understand the message that the poster intended to communicate, but also to go through phases of new understanding about

love and trust, factors which can be very detrimental to their life in this era of HIV. As a result, learners appeared to be more willing to consider issues of fidelity and self-respect as features of trust in relationships, despite some identified communication gaps where they claimed that the story in the poster was incomplete. They wanted the poster to also show what happened to these people after they had ‘entered the nice times’. This reflected a need for a dialogue to close any communication gaps that may exist in printed (IEC) materials.

Pamphlet

Discussions of the pamphlet also influenced learners’ thinking, helping them to develop an “enquiring thinking process” that inspired them to engage in a more critical awareness about HIV (Mezirow, as cited in Taylor, 2000: 291), despite claims that they were familiar with everything that was said in the pamphlet.

Magazine

Group discussions also revealed that learners learned considerably from one another. considerable learning from one another among the learners This implied that learners helped each other to construct meaning and make sense out of what was being communicated in article 5 (Fairclough, 2015), resulting in new understanding of the whole meaning behind the issue of masturbation. This could be detected through a new discourse that often appeared to have promoted increased confidence and new attitudes towards masturbation and intimate relationships (Gee, 1990). The second meeting discussions reflected a clear level of understanding from the learners of the materials’ message.

Nevertheless, some of these new understandings appeared to have less to do with behaviour or attitudinal change, but rather more with fear. For instance, with the poster this appeared to be the fear of negative consequences that may result from ignoring HIV. With the pamphlet, fear related to infection, while with article 5 the sense of fear seemed to have resulted from the fear of losing male prowess amongst the male fraternity of the respondents. The next section interprets and discusses responses that hinted at this fear.

9.2.2 FEAR UNDERTONES

Fear appeals to readers are normally meant to trigger their desire to eliminate the danger posed by the content of messages (Hale and Dillard, 1995). During discussion on the poster, learners indicated that they trusted condoms as a measure that could help eliminate the danger posed by HIV, and their prayers for a speedy discovery of a cure indicated their efforts to manage fear. Moreover, in trying to control their fear, learners tended to disown their feelings and related actions, projecting them onto other people (Rule and John, 2008), whom they labeled as being gays and prostitutes, instead of being realistic and admitting that they too can be infected (as they later said, AIDS does not choose). They therefore tended to deny the reality that through social circles they may be mixing sexually with a wide range of people.

In examining whether or not discussions on these three materials raised any critical awareness or not, it became apparent that both the information from the materials and the discussion helped learners realize that they may have put themselves at risk by taking HIV issues lightly. Consequently, the poster triggered the emotion of fear by pointing out negative consequences related to their behaviour (as articulated by Leventhal, 1971 in his study about fear appeals and persuasion whereby he assesses the differentiation of a motivational construct, cited in Hale and Dillard, 1995: 67). This was perhaps because of the realization that their past actions may have put them in situations where, though the outcomes were unknown, the risk was evident. Hence, most respondents seemed to accept that it is their responsibility to change behaviour and to comply with the materials' recommendations in order to reduce the negative consequences depicted in the messages. Studies on fear appeals may thus be trusted to effectively increase awareness and promote behavioural change in health-related issues. But because fear appeals can induce anxiety and consequently lead to message avoidance (Coulson, 2003), an alternative perspective is to use positive messages rather than fear appeals in trying to convince people that their current behaviour can be very dangerous.

Poster

It was noted that learning, in terms of sustained attitudes towards behavioural change, sometimes could not be ascertained, especially with the poster, since a majority of the respondents claimed that there was no action that the poster encouraged them to take. But the observation was that it was possible that some sort of denial caused this reaction, as if they did not want to know the message (as articulated by Rule and John, 2008: 79, in their study about unbinding the other in the context of HIV/AIDS and education). This was perhaps because the setting of the poster challenged their normative practices. This also suggested that they did not want to see the message because it meant a change of lifestyle for them and would challenge their desire to continue having a ‘nice time’.

The discussions on the poster suggested that this level of understanding of unpleasant consequences, occurring as a result of ignoring HIV-related information, education and communication, had not been brought home to the learners before. Some responses, for instance, illustrated that the poster and the discussion helped respondents (from all institutions) to understand the need to use condoms as protection from HIV.

Pamphlet

Discussions on the pamphlet appeared not only to have enabled learners to connect with the message of the pamphlet, but it also stimulated an understanding of the potential negative consequences of not knowing one’s HIV status and that it is their responsibility to go for testing. Since the issue of testing seemed to have also induced fear, this suggested that respondents were not as brave about testing as they claimed. Some of them even responded to the issue with so much emotion that they used the metaphor of HIV as a monster, as if they were so afraid of this disease that they hated to say its name.

Holtgrave, Tinsley and Kay (1995: 66) believe that this kind of fear can produce a certain “drive” among the beneficiaries of information, such as that provided by these materials. Drives are bodily states that Newcombe, Turner and Converse (in Holtgrave *et al.*, 1995: 66) say stimulate anxiety, which is expected to result in some positive response after the respondent’s interaction with a fear arousing content. Nevertheless, I really wondered how long this fear was going to last, as it looked as if some of the learners had accepted that HIV is

a long term reality and were seemingly prepared to live with it. Hence, they craved for a cure, rather than avoiding risky behaviour. With some, the fear could be sensed from wishful thinking, such as one person who wished he were born a hundred years earlier.

Magazine

Despite the new learning that the discussion helped learners to obtain from article 5, the male fraternity in Thaba-Tseka found the concept of masturbation problematic. Their concerns seemed to contain a different set of unspoken fears. This is because several myths that they raised reflected a threat to their male prowess. Their responses suggested they were afraid that if women were able to satisfy themselves through masturbation, they would no longer need men and thus men would no longer have the sexual power that they currently have over women and in that way they would lose their masculinity. As a result, the men appeared to reject the issue of masturbation. Although respondents could not deny the fact that all people are at risk of being infected with HIV, they appeared to be more concerned about the discovery of a cure than with the avoidance of risk-prone behaviour.

The next section specifically explores the different forms of denial that were evident in the learner responses, especially with the poster and article 5.

9.2.3 DENIAL VERSUS REALITY

Although the learners indicated that they had adequate information on HIV and AIDS, some of their responses still reflected a refusal to acknowledge the disease. Every now and then their attitudes indicated that the discussion reinforced an unacceptable truth, hence they tended to use denial as a defence mechanism against the reality of what is happening in their lives, consequently using “othering” strategies to disown and distance themselves (Rule and John, 2008: 79). Pointing fingers, stigmatization or negative constructions of the ‘other’ are common themes in the HIV and AIDS world. Consequently, “denial and distancing” (Rule and John, 2008:79) were pervasive strategies that learners used to show their fear of the disease. It was not surprising to hear some apparently absurd rationales for their denials, such as those interpreted and discussed in this section.

Poster

During discussions of the poster, learners raised some interesting interpretations when asked what the message (text) and picture in the poster meant to them, as if they were projecting their own behaviour onto the images. For example, in Quthing (TIL) there were indications that they thought they could be infected, but chose not to test for HIV or tell others. In Thaba-Tseka (LCE) they articulated some complex arguments during the second meeting, which reflected much more thinking and learning from one another. The materials and the discussions appeared to have inflicted self-critical awareness, making the material speak to them as individuals and as a collective and no longer something that happens to others. It could be detected from the debates that the discussions from the first meeting had opened their eyes. For example, they appeared to understand that they were all at risk of having already been infected with HIV, since they all had a history. They acknowledged that the materials and the discussions made them become aware that their present sexual partner was not the first person they had slept with, helping them to understand that they too might not be the first for their partner, which meant that they, metaphorically, had been sleeping with all those who had slept with their lovers before them.

In Maseru (NUL), however, they appeared to be angry at the disease and in the process developed some obstructions towards the message. Their responses sounded full of anger, implying that not only did they deny that the poster was addressing them, but the realization that it portrayed a vivid reflection of what is happening in their lives made them angry. Hence, they unleashed their anger at the producers of the poster, claiming, for instance, that what the poster portrayed could only be understood by prostitutes because they talked the same language as the producers of the poster (see chapter six). Thus, for the learners to acquire new learning, they had to interpret and make sense of their past experiences in relation to what is communicated in the materials. Hence, it is emphasized that it may be necessary for youth and young adults (especially at tertiary institutions) to change previously accepted rationales behind their thinking about the type of behaviour they are practicing because the behaviour that they adopt, may ultimately give them HIV related challenges.

Although for some learners the discussions and information from the materials may have had only a temporary influence (because the study did not necessarily look into data to support any long term changes), there were indications that they helped respondents to temporarily focus on the consequences of their actions. This is because they engaged in transformative thinking during their involvement in the discussions or constructive discourses. It is expected that this transformative thinking will, in the long run lead to transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), if they continue to interact with print IEC materials for HIV prevention. Their responses indicated that a minimal shift in thinking and a change of attitude towards risky behavior reduction (Aggleton *et al.*, 2011) occurred during their participation in the discussions. Berlyne (1974, in Doak *et al.*, 1996: 168) confirms that the content of a text is referred to as informative only if it is not already known to the reader and that people get interested in information about an uncommon factor or that contains an element of surprise for them. People do not make transformative changes in the way they think about something if the new learning already fits into their existing frames of reference.

Magazine

Article 5 appeared to be a good example in this study of this latter point, because information on masturbation was uncommon to the learners and it seemed to surprise them. Frijda (1993), in Carstens and Snyman (2003: 123), agrees that a disparity between information and knowledge or expectations generates curiosity, although Brock (2010: 123) argues that it is not what people ‘know’, but how people acquire the knowledge, which is important.

Having completed discussing and interpreting issues related to comprehensibility, the following section three interprets and discusses suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of these materials, so that they would contain accurate text and images for targeted audiences. This was examined through the third research question: In what way can the HIV prevention messages and outline of the print IEC materials used to prevent the spread of HIV be improved in order to influence positive attitudinal and behavioural changes among young adults? Three sub-questions from the first interview guideline were used to seek suggestions for the improvement of the materials (9.3). These included a question that was

asked to seek suggestions for improvement on the clarity of the materials (What is it that you would like to be included or deleted so that the materials convey the expected intention?). Another question sought suggestions for the improvement of the attractiveness of the materials (What would you like to be included or deleted in this material?) and the last question under this category was asked in order to obtain suggestions for the improvement of the acceptability of the materials (How should this material be made to suit the Basotho culture better?).

9.3 LEARNERS' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE MATERIALS

Small groups of adult students create a healthy learning environment that is considered to be safe, challenging and which facilitates demanding dialogical learning (Vella, 2002) that leads to clearly defined, easy to understand benefits of the learning activity. As with the materials, learners gained some additional learning and the dialogue helped them to think through issues, to enable them to come up with suggestions for the improvement of the materials.

Some suggestions were semiotic based and had to do with meaning that was related to the signs that made up the materials. These suggestions were specifically related to the principles that guide the use of text and images in communication and the manner in which these represent the content of the intended message. These included suggestions to fill the communication gaps identified in all three materials, suggestions to improve the attractiveness of the poster and the pamphlet, suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho in the poster and the cover page of the magazine, as well as suggestions for adjusting the diagram of the poster.

9.3.1 SUGGESTIONS TO FILL COMMUNICATION GAPS

Even though there was evidence that learners did understand the IEC messages, some of their responses indicated a need to fill communication gaps that address how the titles, content and the pictures complement each other more effectively to create a complete message.

Respondents argued that the present message of **the poster**, for instance, does not reflect what becomes of people who like 'nice times', since all people in the pictures look healthy, despite the fact that they can be assumed to have multiple and concurrent sexual partners.

The learners' understanding was that it is not a good thing to like 'nice times'. They maintained that arrows, rather than lines, would result in a somewhat better recognition of the poster's intended meaning. These assertions of the learners claimed that the inclusion of end results of the behaviour depicted in the material would not only help in completing the story, but would also help in attracting people to look at the materials.

Similarly, other suggestions indicated a communication gap and an omission in **the pamphlet's** overall message. Here, the discussions played a crucial part in assisting learners to make sense of the signs and their messages in the material. That is, the dialogue helped them to explore how the signs combine to shape a particular interpretation, perhaps through creating the opportunity to work with the factors that shape elements of the interpretants (Chandler 2007). Though the message may have been there implicitly (to the producers) and it might have been that the respondents did not pick this up, it is problematic to rely on messages that are assumed to be there, but are actually not explicit and rely on the viewer having certain knowledge or attitudes already to pick it up.

Respondents also indicated a need for the pamphlet to portray how people who tested positive are assisted so as to help them accept their status, since not all people test negative. The argument was that the present pamphlet's message and pictures do not seem to reflect any misery, as the normative expectation was that people who tested positive would sound and look miserable. However, this might have been a deliberate decision on the part of the developers (to leave out that part that reflects any misery) to try and lessen the stigma and fear associated with HIV testing.

There are some problems attached to this type of stereotypical depiction, even in a good cause. This is because the more negative images, as recommended by the study participants, can increase stigma of those who are ill, especially because not all people with AIDS present the same symptoms, as "different people present with different ailments brought on by AIDS" (Lyster 1995, in Arbuckle 2014: 141). Therefore, this indicated once more a need for dialogue to clarify such divergences. Negative images could promote false understanding with the way

people react when they first hear about their positive status, because people react differently to such information.

The purpose (or genre, as a persuasive text) of **article 5** was not completely clear to the learners and therefore generated some dissatisfaction about the depth of information it covered. Taking into consideration that there are two sides to everything, learners wanted the article to specify disadvantages of masturbation as well. Indeed some people may find this a bit odd, because in view of the purpose of article 5, knowing about the disadvantages of masturbation (if there are any) would not be of help. However, this response perhaps shows some resistance to the information based on the learners' prior attitudes or lack of knowledge. The response perhaps helped to justify continuing having 'nice times' with partners, or that they just wanted to justify not doing it or not admitting to it. This attitude, however, portrayed a communication gap that has to be filled in order for article 5 to achieve the intended purpose of communicating the information.

In my analysis, article 5 was very informative, attractive, persuasive, acceptable and credible, although it would have been more understandable if it had pictures that complemented the text so that the reader would know exactly where to touch him or herself or their partner. But since it was communicating a rather culturally sensitive topic, which makes it difficult to elaborate the message through pictures, as a Mosotho woman, I accepted it as it is. This communication gap, however, made the learners fail to understand the meaning of the picture of a nurse in the chapter, as there seemed not to have been enough of a supportive relationship between the text and this image. For instance, respondents claimed that until the text was read, the article could be thought to be about any health topic, because the uniform denoted a health worker and the connotation was that the message had something to do with health but not necessarily with masturbation. This lack of presentation of pictures that show where people touch themselves or one another in order to masturbate seemed to cause confusion amongst some learners, as they had initially wanted the article to show explicit pictures in the belief that it would help illiterate to get the message. This was, however, discouraged by others, as publishing such pictures was deemed culturally unacceptable and it was therefore agreed that the article should

be left as it is. Carstens *et al.* (2006) confirm that health messages are often personal and the subjects may sometimes be taboo, which makes IEC materials on health related communication sensitive and complex. Hence, the “real-life character of visual communication makes it all the more delicate”.

Although they had to choose between including explicit pictures that show where people touch in order to masturbate, or not including them out of respect for cultural dynamics, the discussion promoted new understanding about what can be presented in IEC materials and what cannot. In this discussion, producers of the magazine were commended for a job well done in giving people information without placing explicit pictures.

There were also suggestions that covered presentation issues in the design as well as the content, since comprehensibility can be enhanced by, among other things, features that contribute to the attractiveness of the materials.

9.3.2 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE ATTRACTIVENESS

Suggestions to improve attractiveness emanated from complaints about the materials’ layout, colour, illustrations and font size. Carstens and Snyman (2003: 115) suggest that since “beneficiaries of IEC materials are valuable resources in the design and presentation of messages, they need to be included in every step of the development of IEC materials including the pre-testing and evaluation phases of message design” to avoid such aspects that may later on negatively influence the acceptability of a message, decrease motivation to read and hinder comprehension. For instance, some learners complained about the thickness of the lines that seemed to connect people in **the poster**, saying it was small and therefore not legible enough to allow people to see them from a distance or to capture the message at a glance (especially if one is moving). This required people to get very close to it in order to make out what is written or what is presented in the picture, which is not suitable for a poster.

Other suggestions confirmed the way the pictures imposed a “heavy cognitive load” (Carstens *et al.*, 2006: 222) on the respondents because they attached more than one meaning to the materials, especially with the poster, which resulted in the possibility of misconstruing the

intended meaning. The intention with the poster, for instance, was to show how HIV could be transmitted through interpersonal relations. The reactions implied that static visuals are not able to express people's actions and fail to express the difference between deontic (deontic modalities – referring to what people *should do* to prevent HIV or to live with HIV as healthily as possible) and epistemic states of mind (representing theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity and scope) (Carstens *et al.*, 2006: 222). In other words, messages of static visuals fail to separate the differences between *what is*, as opposed to *what can* or *should be*, and hence the “static character of pictures often contrasts sharply with the dynamic nature of the message they are meant to convey” (Hoogwegt *et al.*, 2009: 276).

There also appeared to be false redundancy in the message portrayed by some of the images or “drawings” in **the pamphlet**, since no one understood what they represented, and where the use of additional sign types to reinforce a point did not add to the meaning but caused confusion. The incongruity seemed to cause so much confusion that learners decided that it would be better to remove those drawings.

Other suggestions were culture specific. These included suggestions that pictures should reflect Basotho in all the elements that represent their culture, although it is arguably impossible to include all segments of the population in one material, so IEC materials are developed for specified target audiences.

9.3.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF ALL BASOTHO

There was a general feeling that all sectors of communities should be represented in a single **poster** for it to suit the Basotho culture better. Responses revealed a need to make the poster representative of the people it is targeting. For instance, some respondents complained that it does not address people who are not represented in the picture, such as the very same respondents from the technical institution in Quthing, who are popularly known across the country to wear blue overalls for their uniform. As a result, these learners in Quthing (TIL) were concerned that without depicting somebody wearing their uniform, the poster was not ‘communicating to them’ as learners in technical institutions.

Respondents were also concerned that the youth from rural areas were not represented in the poster and as such, they could easily misinterpret the message, thinking that the poster did not signify danger for them but only relates to what is done by youth in the urban areas. Carstens *et al.* (2006: 222) support the opinion that some images can cause the unskilled viewer to miss the central focus of the visual, or to focus on incorrect or insignificant details, and so “visuals can be misunderstood due to differences in culture and background”.

Other responses suggested a need to make the poster representative of all people who possibly liked ‘nice times’. There was a suggestion for the inclusion of mature adults and people with disabilities. The argument was that such people are also susceptible to HIV infection, because they also like ‘nice times’, and so there is a need to equip them with information.

Responses further revealed that the Basotho culture was being constructed according to different geographical settings, which marked an existence of two different cultures, one rural and one urban. There was a concern that the poster would not appeal to audiences in rural areas, as it did not reflect their context or style. Furthermore, learners were concerned that the language (text) may not be understood by everybody, especially those from rural areas.

It was also suggested that youth from other ecological zones of Lesotho, such as the shepherds, should be represented on the **cover page** of the magazine, because as it is, learners argued, it was as if the magazine was meant for those who live in urban areas only. Considering that the study investigated a rather educated population, the warning by Carstens *et al.* (2006: 221) that “differences in literacy level also accompany differences in culture, attitudes and values” should be heeded. This view evidently suggests that IEC materials producers need to observe these differences in order to produce focused and independent materials.

Some suggestions were directed to the poster only. These advocated for the adjustment of the diagram in the poster, in the hope that this would make the message of the poster clearer and more appealing.

9.3.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ADJUSTING THE DIAGRAM

Learners suggested better ways of designing the diagrams, especially in **the poster**. There were also suggestions for the inclusion of pictures representing mature adults and people with disabilities in the materials. The argument given was that they are also susceptible to HIV infection because they might like ‘nice times’ like any other human being and therefore they need to be equipped with information.

The concern for the alteration of the diagram was strongest in Thaba-Tseka (LCE) where a complete change of the structure of the poster was suggested. For instance, some respondents commented that there should be an added circle, which contains the very same characters but with different looks resulting from HIV and AIDS. The added circle would enclose the present one. Others (still in Thaba-Tseka) suggested the use of a chain that connects the healthy looking characters to the sick ones, so that the infection process could have a beginning and an end. Some recommended that characters be put in a form of a tree instead of a chain or a circle in the opinion that a structure of a tree would show the end results well, while still conveying the intended message, because it has branches and would not be cumbersome if new pictures are included. With these changes it would be easy for the viewers to follow the actions of characters from when they entered the ‘nice times’ throughout the stages to when they became sick from infection, and this would complete the communication loop. This observation suggests that participatory visual methodologies, as part of the education process with dialogue, are a better route than materials on their own because they suggest that diagrams alone are likely to be very confusing without dialogue.

IEC materials producers’ perspectives are certainly not the same as those of the receivers of their messages (Holtgrave *et al.*, 1995). Hence, producers of materials for youth and young adults need to have a clear understanding of the targeted audiences’ level of knowledge in order to be able to address their decision-making perspective. That is why targeted audiences should be involved in all stages (planning, needs assessment, development and distribution) of materials development. My reactions alone indicated this is true, because most of the time I

failed to become aware of what the learners noticed or to interpret some signs in the same manner as they did.

It was therefore evident from this research that young adults need to be especially involved because of the complex contexts within which they are said to make choices regarding their vulnerability to HIV. They need to be acknowledged in the design and delivery of related IEC materials (thus supporting the findings of Cherie *et al.*, 2005). If such a participatory process is followed, it is argued, the developers' efforts could help the participants to acquire the intended knowledge, skills and attitudes that may have a greater chance of resulting in the desired behaviours. This is not to deny the fact that getting the message and actually changing behaviour are two different things and that one does not necessarily lead to the other.

9.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter interpreted and discussed findings using three main themes: first impressions, meaning making and suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the materials.

The materials have many connotations although the essence of the messages in the three materials is to prevent the spread of HIV. Discussion on the poster yielded the most effective communication. Besides its appearance, there was little deliberation on the pamphlet because respondents claimed that they were familiar with HIV testing and counselling issues.

Masturbation appeared to be a taboo among Basotho, and learners indicated that they are not free to discuss it openly. Suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the materials confirmed a need for dialogue as a backup to the print IEC materials.

The section on the first impressions included factors related to attractiveness, which inspired respondents to read the materials. In trying to interpret what they saw when they first looked at the materials, learners meaning-making from signs emanated from their cultural background. Elements of confusion suggested that simple and clear materials are needed to attract the attention of people.

Through discussions, respondents were able to make meaningful deliberations, despite all the confusion. In trying to interpret the meaning of the materials, learners appeared to have engaged in some transformative thinking that awakened their consciousness. While the discussion stimulated an understanding of potential negative consequences of ignoring information, education and communication on HIV it induced feelings of fear. Signs of denial of their feelings about HIV and its consequences were evident. However, the dialogue process and collective meaning making in the group discussion played a crucial role in helping learners understand the meaning of messages in the materials.

Suggestions for improvement specifically related to the presentation and design as well as the content to improve attractiveness, be more culture-specific. These included suggestions that pictures should reflect Basotho culture to make the message of the poster clearer and thus more appealing.

As research participants, learners gained additional learning on HIV issues, suggesting participation and dialogue as important complementary features to IEC activities rather than relying on print IEC materials alone. But my findings indicate, fundamentally, that these factors also require an understanding and respect for the target audiences' normative beliefs. Additionally, there is fatigue towards HIV/AIDS issues among young adults in Lesotho and symbols like the red ribbon to help people recognize HIV related materials, are becoming counterproductive. IEC materials producers must find other ways of disseminating HIV messages, because the rate of new infections, especially among youth and young adults.

The overall conclusion is that print IEC materials that were linked to discussions had a beneficial effect on learning and meaning making. I realized when comparing my analysis to the interpretations by the learners that I had not considered aspects such as the cultural issues. I did not contextually relate to my situation that which is conveyed in the materials. I also did not consider any gender issue contained in the materials and yet I used the same interview guideline for FGD 1 that the learners used to analyze the materials. My own analysis does not reflect most sections of this interpretation and discussion, because most signs in the materials seemed clear to me, until I listened to the learners' discussions. These sections include:

cultural issues, contextual relevance, gender issues and elements of confusion. My own meaning making led to some transformative thinking and helped me to make a few suggestions for the improvement of the materials, but I gained new insights during the discussions with the learners. Semiotic analysis can become more comprehensive if it is supported with a more dialogic process, rather than a self-reflective interaction with the materials alone.

CHAPTER TEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general review of the study, summarizes the nine chapters that make up this thesis. It further describes and discusses the findings of the study and concludes with analysis from the interviews with the research participants and my own analysis of the materials. Emanating from these conclusions, the chapter provides recommendations on what can be done to enhance interaction with print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and critical thinking. In addition the chapter makes recommendations for the future development of print IEC materials that can be used as part of the efforts to curtail the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) amongst young adults in Lesotho. The chapter closes with suggestions for further studies.

The population for the study was tertiary education students and the sample comprised 26 learners from three tertiary institutions. These institutions were chosen based on three different ecological zones; the lowlands (urban), represented by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) found in the Maseru District; the foothills (semi-rural), represented by the Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in the Quthing District and; the mountain areas (rural), represented by the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) satellite campus in the Thaba-Tseka District.

10.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study was motivated by ongoing concerns that HIV prevalence rates among people aged 15–49 years, is not declining (Nkonyana, Director MoHSW¹⁹ Disease Control and AIDS Directorate, personal communication, December 15, 2011 and MoH²⁰, 2015). This is despite all the educational efforts that have been and continue to be undertaken to equip people with knowledge and skill on how to protect themselves from HIV. A further incentive for the study

¹⁹ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

²⁰ Ministry of Health

was the fact that tertiary institution learners reflect the most vulnerable group because certain aspects of their social life place them at risk of contracting HIV. These aspects include “enhanced personal freedom coupled with the attractions by, among others, consumer goods and chattels, peer pressure, alcohol abuse, casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships which can all be a recipe for unsafe sexual activities and experimentation” (DSW²¹, 2014: 7).

The study evaluated the effectiveness of the print IEC materials by examining their comprehensibility, that is whether people are able to read and understand them and determine their credibility, and looking at how convincing the materials are to the reader. The study also examined the materials’ applicability, which is how relevant or appropriate these materials’ messages are to the reader, as well as how practical they are to young adults in the fight against HIV in Lesotho. The materials comprised a pamphlet that deals with the process followed in carrying out the HIV test, a poster and a magazine that are specifically aimed to inform, educate and communicate HIV and AIDS prevention issues to young adults.

The study was of utmost significance to me, as a health educator, and to other IEC materials producers, including the Ministry of Education and Training, in drawing wide attention to tertiary institution learners’ perceptions and their expectations of the print IEC materials involved in HIV interventions.

10.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one provided the background context to the study, giving the overview of HIV from different positions, globally, continentally and regionally. A brief outline of the history of HIV from its discovery in the 1980s included efforts that have been undertaken to prevent it, particularly states’ political commitments to a unified regional response against HIV and AIDS. SADC region has the countries most excessively affected by HIV and AIDS in the world: Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana (UNAIDS²², 2013).

²¹ Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung

²² Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

At the time when the study started, Lesotho health policy indicated IEC materials as the major weapon used to combat HIV in Lesotho.

Chapter two deliberated on the key texts and their arguments that informed the study. It provided a review of relevant literature in relation to the three thematic categories that emerged from the findings of the study. These were first impressions, meaning making and suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the IEC materials. Some of these studies reflected issues pertaining to the comprehensibility of the materials, learners' reactions and how they generally felt about the materials, communication issues that appeared to enhance or hinder learning from the materials and the impact of the discussions on the learners' attitudes. Others reflected issues in relation to the suggestions that learners made for the improvement of the materials. There was no evidence of studies on Lesotho that used semiotics or communication theory to explore tertiary institution learners and print HIV related IEC materials. Studies that explored the long term impact of HIV and AIDS education were of interest in order to explore what we already know how young adults have perceived the significance and appropriateness of the educational materials that were used over time. These were considered in terms of the communication strategies employed at different times, as well as research methods that had been used to assess and understand them.

Chapter three outlined the theories and concepts that framed the study. Communication theory highlighted that there are multiple communication models. Jakobson's model of communication was the most useful for my study. However, although this model appeared to be extensive, it still failed to show a feedback loop or indicate how messages are transmitted from the material to the receiver. Hence, findings of the study hoped to find a more effective communication model for health education and health promotion communication operations. Such a model would illustrate how print IEC materials should be developed and used, by providing a link between the material and its user.

In addition, this study also utilized a semiotic approach in an effort to find out what messages the materials conveyed to the learners, how learners perceived the significance of these materials in combating HIV and how these materials could be improved. It therefore expected

assisted me to gain a deeper understanding of which forms of communication most effectively contribute to learning in health education and promotion. In addition discourse analysis theory was also used, looking particularly at the works of Fairclough (2005) and Gee (2005), to see how the participants derived meaning from written and spoken language. The study therefore looked at discourse as a social practice. The concept of transformative learning from Mezirow's (2000) ten stage learning cycle complemented communication theory which, on its own, would have been insufficient to help me understand how the meaning people make out of the materials might generate attitudinal and behavioural changes. This led dialogic educational theory, since dialogue seemed to have a central role in the way learners responded to these materials.

Chapter four discussed the research design and methodology that were used for the study. To recap, the study adopted a comparative qualitative (exploratory, explanatory and descriptive) research approach through a case study of three forms of print IEC materials and the responses to them of learners from three different tertiary institutions. The interpretivist paradigm was appropriate to explore or build up an understanding of the meaning that the Lesotho tertiary institution learners from different ecological zones of the country attached to HIV messages in print IEC materials. Different methods comprising focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews were used to collect data from each institution.

My initial semiotic analysis of the materials was useful for further comparison, presented in Chapter five. This introduced and described the materials in detail, and helped me to clarify my own understandings of how meaning was made through images and text. The analysis helped to reveal the patterns that informed how IEC materials should be examined or thought about. All materials comprised signs words and pictures and vivid layering of meaning, denotation and connotation.

In Chapters six, seven and eight, data from the interviews and focus groups were analysed thematically in a descriptive and explanatory form and presented in paragraphs through verbatim excerpts over three different chapters according to the materials (Chapter six - poster, Chapter seven - pamphlet and Chapter eight - magazine).

Chapter nine provided a discussion of how the findings outlined in the previous chapters relate, according to three main themes identified: first impressions, meaning making and suggestions for the improvement of the materials, leading to this final concluding chapter.

10.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings were organized around three thematic categories that reflected the participants' responses, as individuals and as a group, towards print IEC materials. The first theme focused on first impressions, which encompassed what the respondents saw when they first looked at the materials. However, responses revealing learners' deeper reflections were grouped in five sub-themes, motivating factors, cultural issues, gender issues, elements of confusion, and mixed messages. The second theme in the findings was meaning making, with four sub-themes, namely, transformative thinking, missing messages, learning from each other and denial versus reality. The final theme covered suggestions that the learners made for the improvement of the materials in order for the messages to become 'complete' and attractive. These were discussed under the four subsections, namely, suggestions to improve attractiveness, suggestions to fill the communication gaps, suggestions for the inclusion of all Basotho and suggestions for the diagram structure to be modified.

It became apparent that print IEC materials alone, without the assistance of dialogue, are not likely to give the reader sufficient means to construct new meaning. Problems to do with meaning making and contextual relevance relate to semiotics, in terms of interpreting the signs and images, but other issues were about meaning making to do with understandings of the issue. When contextualizing the setting for what is happening in the materials, especially in the pamphlet, learners' comments indicated that their expectations of how these materials should appear visually were stereotyped. Their expectations depended on stereotypical discourses of the appearances of gender, attractiveness and sickness/health, and caused some misunderstandings. Thus, the extent to which people are able to interpret text and images is influenced by a variety of factors. These stereotypical discourses included deliberations that only good looking images can represent a woman and normative beliefs that people should be miserable in a health facility because they are supposed to be in distress due to pain or illness.

These contradictions to their expectations attracted some of the participants to look at the materials, and thus had some potential positive effects despite generally contributing to initial confusion.

Gender, as a determinant of positioning and power, seemed to impede communication efforts towards desired attitudinal and behavioural changes among young adults in Lesotho. Gender stereotypes that could be detrimental to the learning endeavours surfaced among learners at TIL and LCE during the discussions on article 5, where learners seemed to selectively perceive what the picture was portraying. They seemed to be guided by their perceptions of situations, which were not always accurate, and their meanings were interpreted selectively according to “both individual and group psychological mindsets” (Cherie, Mitkie, Ismail and Berhane, 2005: 75). The respondents’ understandings also seemed to be influenced by their environments as tertiary institution learners. Hence, I consider selective perception as an important issue that IEC materials producers need to consider when developing educational materials.

In this regard, learners raised some points, especially during discussions on the pamphlet, which were related to geographic settings that even though were not necessarily a focus of the materials’ message, became a focus of conversation about wider HIV issues. These suggestions went beyond the intended messages of the materials and were regarded as important to consider in the fight against HIV because they reflected maturity and caring about other members of the community. For instance, learners in Quthing (TIL) were concerned about the pamphlet being particularly encompassing, perhaps because they lived and were schooled with Bathepu students (Xhosa people, a minority group, found in the Quthing district).

In Thaba-Tseka (LCE), some responses during discussions on the pamphlet reflected maturity and more understanding. They appeared to consider HIV issues more seriously than their counterparts. They seemed to understand that it is not only those who volunteer to go for testing, but also people who have had unpleasant experiences such as being raped and or pierced accidentally from used needles or injections, who should be provided with guidance

from the pamphlet. To this end, learners made some commendable suggestions in order for the message of the pamphlet to be complete. These were suggestions for issues to be included in this pamphlet related to post exposure prophylaxis and prevention of mother to child transmission. These learners' maturity was attributed to the course of study they were doing (Diploma in Primary Education), because it included HIV and AIDS as a subject. Their year of study could have had some influence, since they were the only respondents who were in the third year of their studies. They were also slightly older than their counterparts from the other institutions.

When learners in Maseru (NUL) considered what might happen if people are too poor to eat well, since the pamphlet recommended HIV positive people should eat food with good nutrition, they suggested solutions such as helping or advising such people to grow their own food, and to rear chickens to get enough protein. These learners' maturity and care towards those infected with HIV was perhaps due to their environment, which granted them more opportunity not only to mix with people from different spheres of life, but also gave them access to more HIV related information outlets. Chandler (2007: 9) highlighted that, "the meaning of a sign is not in its relationship to other signs within the language system but rather in the social context of its use". In this respect, discussions on the poster revealed that these learners from NUL felt that people from rural or mountainous areas of Lesotho might not understand the meaning of the pamphlet in the same way that they did.

Discussions on all the three materials stimulated some new understanding on HIV related issues among learners, although this appeared to have less to do with behaviour or attitudinal change, but rather more to do with fear. For instance, with the poster this appeared to be the fear of negative consequences that may be brought about by ignoring information, education and or communication on HIV. With the pamphlet, fear related to infection, while with article 5 the sense of fear seemed to be brought about by the possibility of losing male prowess amongst the male fraternity of the respondents. All this suggested that this level of understanding of unpleasant consequences that may occur as a result of ignoring HIV related information, education and communication had never been brought home to the learners

before. This kind of fear, Holtgrave et al. (1995: 66) believe, can produce a certain “drive” among the beneficiaries of information such as that provided by these materials. But since fear appeals can induce anxiety and consequently lead to message avoidance (Coulson, 2003), an alternative perspective could be that it is better to use positive messages rather than fear appeals in trying to convince people that their current behaviour can be very dangerous.

The literature generally argues that good communication needs to have an aim or goal (Shayo, 2012) and that IEC materials should not be presented in isolation (Arbuckle, 2014) where their meanings are not fixed and their interpretation is left solely to the reader. However, my findings indicated that, fundamentally, these factors also need an understanding and respect for the target audiences’ normative beliefs to enable IEC materials producers to send out contextually relevant messages. That is, materials require readers to easily connect to what is happening in them. This is because all materials that were used for the study appeared to need some kind of anchorage, such as dialogue, as reinforcement and opportunity for clarification. This was confirmed by my analysis of the materials, as I realized only during the comparison of my findings with the interpretations by the learners, that when reading and analyzing the materials on my own, I failed to consider several aspects that the discussion seemed to have helped learners to identify. These were cultural issues, contextual relevance, gender issues and elements of confusion.

10.5 CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion that is drawn from this study and the responses of tertiary institution learners towards information, education and communication materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, is that print IEC materials alone as educational resources have loopholes and thus they fail to assist readers to smoothly construct meaning out of them. In other words, these materials alone do not give readers sufficient means to construct new meanings for themselves and perhaps change their existing attitudes on certain issues.

10.5.1 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE RESEARCH

PARTICIPANTS

The learners' participation in the research appeared to have increased their capacity to view the world and their position in it differently. Their interpretations revealed ways in which they derived and expressed meaning from what they saw in the poster, pamphlet and magazine that were used for the research. Likewise, the role of dialogue was vividly central to the way they made meaning out of the materials, especially the poster. Indeed, it was observed that it seemingly could not have been possible for the respondents to comprehend the poster without having discussed it with each other as part of the research project. Patterns of similarity as well as variations in the different learners' understanding of images and text that made up the materials were reflected during the discussions. Findings from the interviews also showed how the discussions helped learners to become critically reflective of their assumptions and those of others and how participating in the research exercise helped transform their thinking and thus yielded insights into transformational learning based on Mezirow's (2000) theory of transformative learning. The overall conclusions that can be drawn from this study are set out below:

- IEC materials producers and health educators need to be careful regarding the use of signs and should reflect on the role of dialogue as a means to ensure continuous dialogue that would enhance critical thinking among users of print IEC materials. Above all, engaging in dialogue would help promote participation, responsibility and ownership among IEC materials users.
- There is a need for participatory methodologies as part of the education process, with dialogue as a complementary resource rather than a reliance on print IEC materials conveying their message independently because being able to read does not necessarily mean understanding the meaning of what is read.
- Geographical setting does not have much influence, as the difference between participants from the rural and the urban settings was not as significant as expected, since participants from both rural and urban appeared to interpret or misinterpret the text and images that made up the materials in the same manner.

- Both motivating and demotivating factors in the presentation of material content are important because they determine the effectiveness of the materials' impact on the reader. That is, the findings indicated how producers should consider testing the materials and how the materials should be used to educate learners. Motivating factors were considered important because they inspire viewers to read the materials, while demotivating factors become important in that they help producers of the materials identify the weaknesses in their communication.
- Uncertainties make the materials less easy to understand. For instance, respondents were sometimes forced to make choices between two or more alternative understandings in trying to construct meaning or interpret it.
- Some confusion in understanding the relationship between the pictures and the text indicated that even a single Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material used to inform, educate and communicate HIV issues to young adults in the country must be accompanied by discussions, preferably in small groups, to ensure that the message induces the expected feelings that would compel the viewers to act accordingly.
- The target audiences' normative beliefs influence how they respond to and interpret messages within their contexts and this has implications for the content of IEC materials.
- The way the learners responded to the materials used in this study reflected the need for some kind of anchorage, such as dialogue, as reinforcement and opportunity for clarification for learners to be able to connect to what is happening in them.
- Discussions and group interactions maximized the potential for IEC materials to be accepted and understood by the target audience, because dialogue increased the respondents' engagement and learning from the materials and from others in the group. Through discussing their interpretations the participants were able to develop an accurate understanding of the materials, regardless of their different geographical positioning. The discussion also promoted transformative thinking to look at consequences and wider issues.

- There is AIDS information fatigue among young adults in Lesotho. Although the red ribbon is intended to help people recognize HIV related materials, respondents strongly indicated that they despised it and disregard everything that bears it. The awareness that something is about HIV and AIDS discouraged these young adults from reading materials, but dialogue seemed to overcome this reluctance to engage.

10.5.2 FINDINGS FROM MY OWN ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS

My response to the materials also confirmed that print IEC materials need to be backed up with discussions. This is because I only realized during the comparison of my findings with that of the learners that I had not considered several issues. All the materials had looked and read as clear to me, meaning that I did not encounter any elements that could confuse me, until I listened to the learners' discussions. Yet, I used the same interview guideline for FGD 1 that the learners used to analyze the materials. It is true that I considered the impact of the meaning making and transformative thinking and had made a few suggestions of my own for the improvement of the materials, but I suspected that had I discussed these materials with other people I would have learned and gained more new knowledge, as was evidenced during the discussions with the learners. In other words, I believe that, in my own interpretations, I could have contributed a lot more, if I had analyzed the materials through a dialogue.

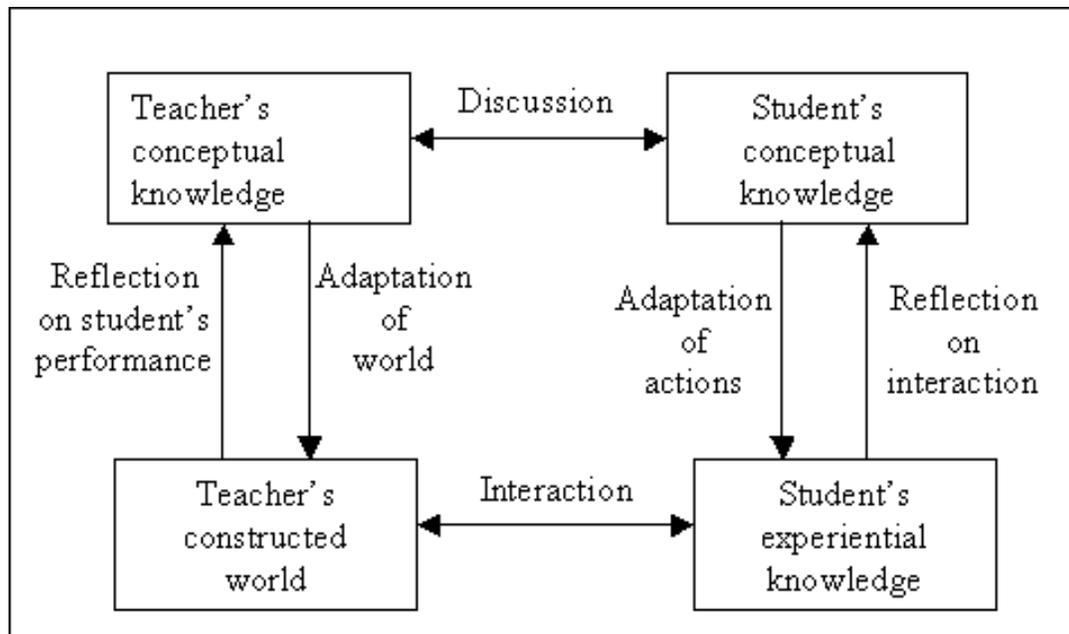
The findings of the study indicated that it is only by means of a model with evidence of interactive flow of communication through dialogue that the communication loop in health related print IEC materials can be completed, rather than by means of the existing commonly used one way communicator-to-receiver situation that is used to communicate HIV issues in Lesotho. This was revealed when learners complained that there was no obvious link between the meaning of the text and the pictures across all the researched materials. This indicated that the researched materials alone did not allow people to do their work of making that link without the dialogue. Hence, Laurillard's (1993) conversational framework was adapted in order to build on a suitable communication model to explain the process of feedback through dialogue. It was visualized that this new model would allow viewers and learners to take an

active role in reading and interpreting the materials in order to complete the communication loop.

Laurillard's (1993, in Lim Cher Ping, 2003) conversational framework is of interactive design which provides the reader with freedom to learn from the material, as well as from each other during the discussions. According to Lim Cher Ping (2003: 22) this framework consists of:

four components in the dialogue discussion, interaction, adaptation and reflection – and two levels in the framework, one being action on the world, and the other being talk about those interactions with the world. Interaction between the teacher and student happens at the action-on-world level, whereas discussion is carried out at the representation of the action-on-world level. Adaptation and reflection are conscious processes on the part of both the teacher and the student

Diagram 20: LAURILLARD'S CONVERSATIONAL FRAMEWORK

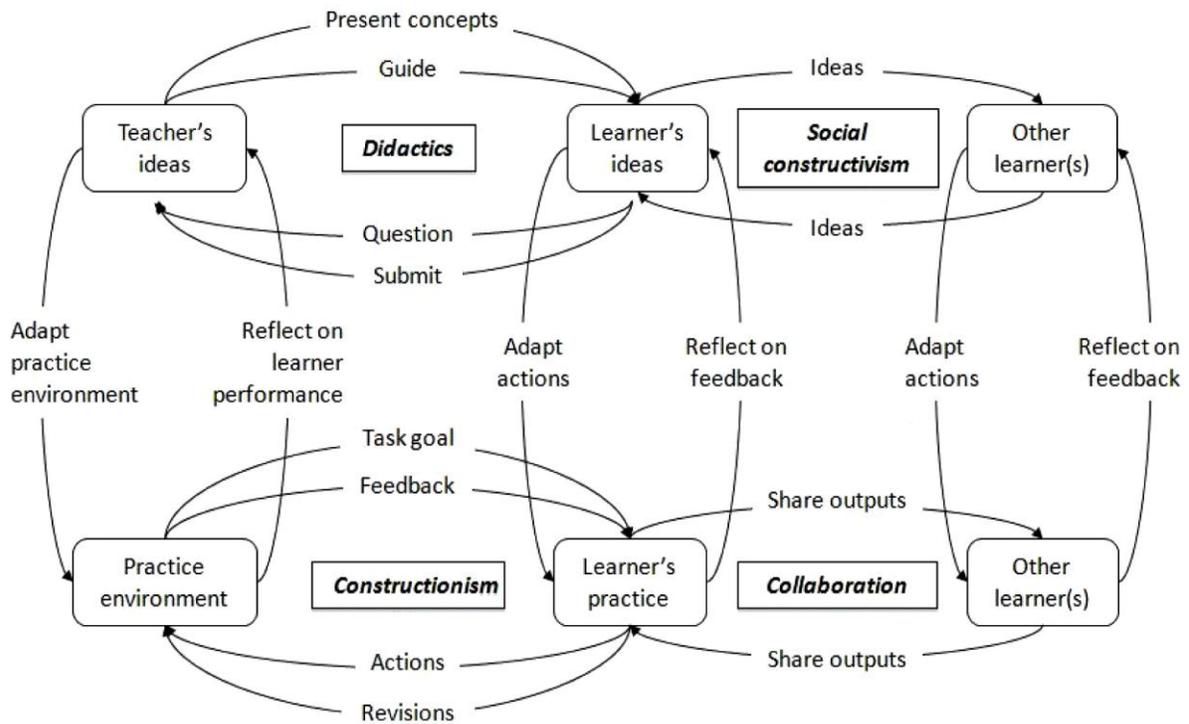


Source: adapted from Lim Cher Ping (2003).

Laurillard's original conversational framework is cyclic in nature, and in my opinion, has similarities with an action research cycle in that the first cycle informs the next one, and this could be helpful to describe action followed in the development of new materials. Although

action research used not to be appreciated by a lot of researchers, it is looked upon as more acceptable lately as “a valid research method in applied fields such as organisation development and education” (Nieuwenhuis, 2014:74). The subsequent diagram illustrates how the cyclical nature of Laurillard’ conversational model can be repeated or even continuous.

Diagram 21: THE CYCLIC CONVERSATIONAL FRAMEWORK



Source: adapted from Mellow, Woolis and Laurillard (2011)

According to Mellow, Woolis and Laurillard (2011: 52) the conversational framework characterizes:

the learning process as a series of activities by teachers and learners, cycling between theory (upper level) and practice (lower level) and between teacher (on the left, which could be a book or a website) and each learner, as well as between and among learners.

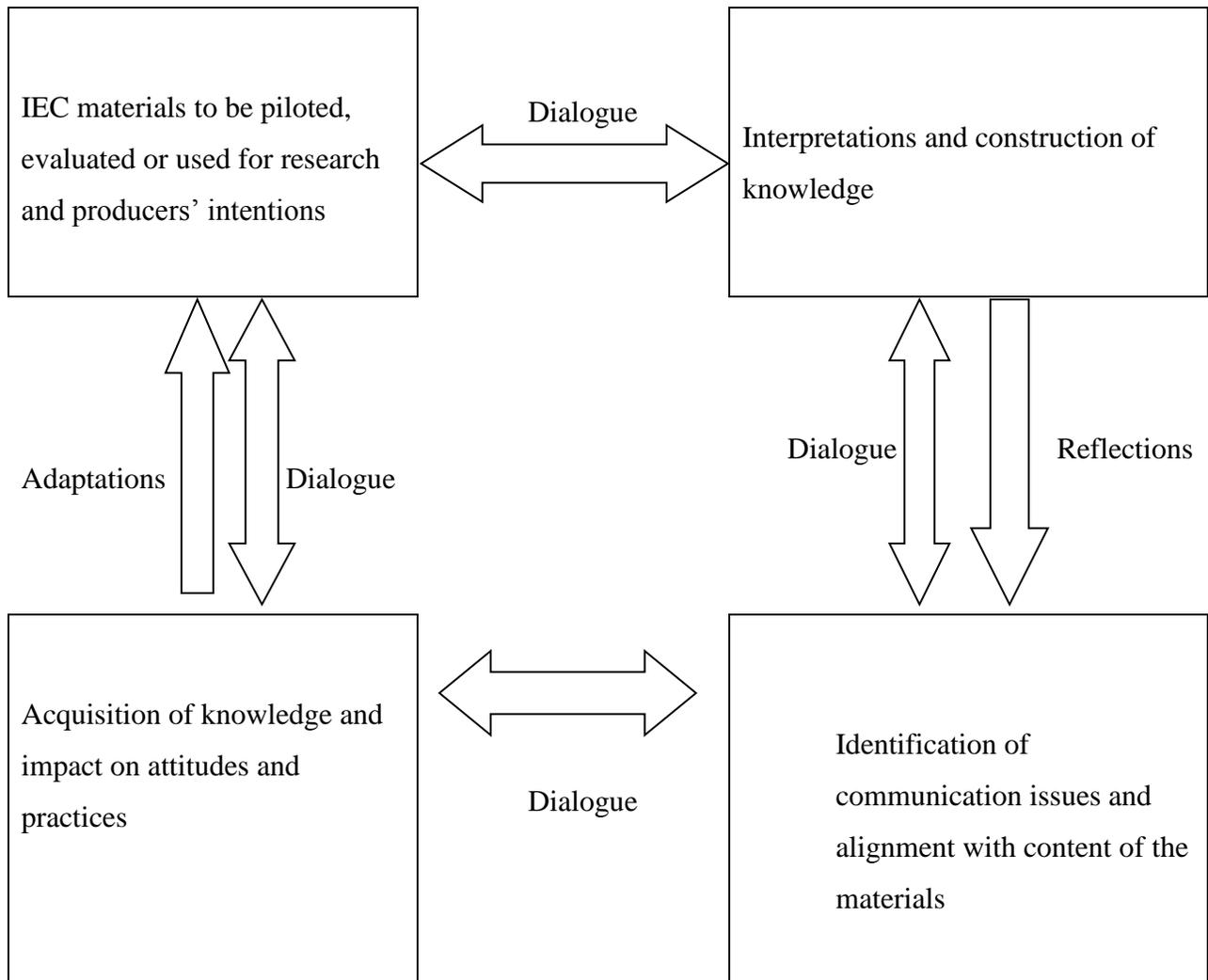
This framework has been widely used, (Laurillard, 2002; Lim Cher Ping, 2003; Heinze and Procter, 2004; Ravenscroft, Wegerif, Rupert and Hartley, 2007; Mellow, Woolis and

Laurillard, 2011; Britain and Liber, 2012), especially for describing the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in e-learning activities, it was however found to still be very relevant to describe an effective way to use print IEC materials in the context of Lesotho, whereby the traditional technology such as print materials is still widely used. Laurillard's original model appears to facilitate the acquisition of important cognitive skills required for effective analysis of conceptual knowledge gained from the discussions on the taught concepts, adaptation of required actions, resulting in acquisition of experiential knowledge, and thereby causing the reader to reflect on interactions. In other words, this framework facilitates dialogic learning.

Dialogic learning, according to Heinze and Procter (2004), is generally considered as a result of egalitarian or democratic dialogue. That is a dialogue in which contributions are recognised and valued against their validity but not associated with power or status of the person who makes them. According to Lim Cher Ping (2003: 22) dialogic process is crucial for people to learn effectively.

The envisaged communication model, illustrated in the following diagram, is based on the findings of this study. It considers the situation of dialogue in a learning environment that supports learner autonomy and represents the desired communication process. It demonstrates how people can collaborate to make meaning out of messages and how health educators can provide feedback to readers, as a way forward for future development and use of IEC materials.

Diagram 22: DIALOGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PRINT INFORMATION EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS



Source: *adapted from Laurillard's (1993) conversational framework.*

This dialogic framework describes stages that are recommended to take place for people to acquire intended knowledge from print IEC materials and alerts the print IEC materials producers to the readers' perceptions and expectations from these kind of materials.

Accordingly, the framework provides stages that are recommended to take place for the print

IEC materials producers to gain new and better facts towards improving their understanding about how IEC materials should be developed and tested.

The framework suggests that reading from the print IEC materials be blended with face-to-face discussions to enhance interaction and therefore stimulate critical thinking, because it seems that, individually, people tend to interact with print IEC materials with a closed mind. It advocates that communication through print materials should be done in the most engaging ways using participatory communication strategies that provide opportunities for provision of immediate feedback and allow people to become part of the solutions to related problems rather than just spectators or recipients of information. To this end, the framework advocates for dialogue as the most suitable communication strategy that can satisfy all these requirements. Also, dialogue does not only allow people to participate in discussions, but consequently helps them to learn from the information itself as well as from each other. Through dialogues people relate their contexts with the messages more easily. Upon trying to construct meaning out of the messages, discussions inspire them to engage in transformational thinking, thus, in the process they yield insights into transformational learning, which increases the likelihood that the communication may lead to desired attitudinal and behavioural changes.

The framework is cyclic in nature and has similarities with an action research cycle, in that the first cycle informs the next action on the development of new IEC materials or evaluation of already existing materials. It supports the reader autonomy and demonstrates how people can make meaning out of print IEC materials' messages through dialogue. The framework also illustrates how materials' producers can instantaneously provide feedback to the readers. These educational processes are all facilitated through dialogue, which serves as a complementary resource. The process comprises four interactive features or stages that are explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

IEC Materials to be Piloted, Evaluated or Used for Research and Producers' Intentions

The process starts with the print IEC materials producers' presentation of materials which are either in the process of development and need to be piloted or presentation of those that needs to be reviewed. The materials can also be used for research purposes like in the case of this study where existing poster, pamphlet and magazine were used as tools to establish responses of tertiary education learners towards HIV related print IEC materials. But depending on what one uses the framework for, the starting point is flexible, the process can start at any desired stage, and may precede the production of the materials.

Interpretations and Construction of Knowledge

The second step describes the readers' interpretations of messages, whereby readers describe their first impressions of the materials, or of the draft messages or content that is presented to them. That is they interpret the signs that make up the materials and message without necessarily explaining them (they mention what they see and think when they look at the materials for the first time). After having mentioned their first impressions, readers engage in dialogic interaction with the materials, with each other and with materials producers or researchers as well. In the case of this research study, this step was guided by the researchers concerns pertaining to the comprehensibility, design (attractiveness), persuasiveness, acceptability and credibility of the materials. That is, readers deliberated on their perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of the materials. Whilst beginning to learn from the materials as well as from each other, the dialogue also helped readers to reflect on the messages and attach meanings to the materials. During the study this stage provided opportunity for discussion on the materials between the learners and the researcher.

Identification of Communication Issues and Alignment with Content of the Materials

The third stage depicts readers' identification of communication issues that can enhance or hinder learning from the materials. Factors which could enhance learning include those that

can motivate readers to look at or read the materials. They are considered to have a positive affective appeal for the readers and thus influencing their attitudes towards the materials in a positive manner. Factors that can hinder learning include those that could demotivate readers to look at or read the materials. Much as these demotivating factors may appear to have a negative affective appeal for the readers, they are still considered important to the materials producers, as they could inform their future efforts on the development of the materials. Readers also continue to make meaning out of the materials at this stage. Using the example of this research, this stage also illustrated readers' reactions on how they generally felt upon or after interacting with the materials. These reactions included indications of such factors as transformative thinking, undertones of fear and denials versus reality. It is during this stage that the readers made suggestions for the improvement of the materials, if there be any.

Acquisition of Knowledge and Impact on Attitudes and Practices

This step gives account of the impact of the materials and that of the discussions on the readers' attitudes. It is at this stage that, ideally, the readers align themselves with information from the materials, act upon and adapt to actions that they understood the materials to encourage them to adapt or warn them to avoid.

This step does not only describe the impact of the materials and that of the discussions on the readers' attitudes, but it also portrays the impact of the discussions on the material producers' attitudes towards contributing to better development of print IEC materials. In the same manner, it is at this stage that the material producers ideally, align themselves with information they gained from the discussions. The information is expected to help them adapt their communication approaches to the materials' content and design so that they align with the readers' context and values, to make the intended messages more likely to be understood and accepted.

10.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Emanating from the conclusions above, it appears that the respondents, and I include myself among them, tend to interact with print IEC materials with a closed mind or as spectators.

This emphasized a need for print HIV materials to be blended with face-to-face discussions to enhance interaction and therefore stimulate critical thinking. Below are the recommendations:

- HED should consider using an action research approach, when developing print IEC materials in order to maximise the use of feedback, dialogue and reflection when planning new communication campaigns and materials.
- The print IEC materials producers need to conduct follow-up discussions on the materials to complete the communication loop that seemed to be necessary for a more dialogic research to ensure good materials, as well as a dialogic education process in the use of the materials. This seems necessary in order to ensure that the IEC materials convey the intended message, as sometimes when the text or the picture gives different messages to different people, it may also miss its target. Therefore, follow-up discussion will help material producers know that they are communicating to targeted audiences.
- The print IEC materials producers should conduct a comprehensive situation analysis prior to developing the materials to better understand and respect target audiences' normative beliefs. That is, they need to carry out an independent situation analysis that would inform each material prior to its development, in order to provide messages which are contextually relevant. This is because it appeared that even though various materials may be aimed at combatting the spread of HIV, their perceived virtue among people differed. The print IEC materials producers use pictures with explicit background details to help set a scene for readers' easy comprehension of messages.
- The print IEC materials producers need to reconsider the use of celebrities (for example of one of the local DJs²³ in the poster) more carefully, depending on messages that are being communicated and the target audience, as this appeared to encourage misinterpretation of the message during discussions on the poster.
- The print IEC materials producers should use pictures selectively and with caution. They need to attend to the comprehensibility of messages they create, but not use

²³ Disc Jockeys (people who operate recorded music for entertainment functions)

random decorative elements in IEC materials because these kind of elements can prevent readers from understanding the messages or demotivate them from reading at all.

- Health educators and health promoters who use print IEC materials should create follow-up opportunities for dialogue to ensure complete understanding of the intended messages among users of these materials, since people will contextualize what they read, see or hear according to their own experience and existing knowledge and attitudes. These culturally embedded issues can therefore not be avoided, but the discussion (dialogue) is what creates the shift in attitude and meaning making, since the learning focus is on making meaning by drawing on the learners' previous knowledge.
- The Health Education Division, as the overseer of HIV prevention information, education and communication activities in Lesotho, has to intensify its follow-up system on the effectiveness of the print IEC materials. There is a need to monitor the quality of messages, as well as introduce mediating strategies that could contribute to the effectiveness of programmes or materials that address the values and attitudes, peer norms, self-efficacy and life skills of youth.

10.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

On the basis of these research findings the following suggestions are made for future studies in the fight against HIV. It is suggested that the Health Education Division makes a qualitative study that looks specifically at attitudes to IEC materials in a wider range of contexts. This would include:

- exploring the responses of young adults with low literacy towards IEC materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho;
- exploring the emotions that people experience when reading or viewing HIV and AIDS related IEC materials; and
- assessing the impact of diverse cultural backgrounds in motivating learners about HIV issues in tertiary institutions.

It is also suggested that the Health Education Division undertakes an action research study that explores responses to different media used for disseminating HIV and AIDS prevention, which could investigate:

- existing HIV and AIDS policies and programmes in the country, especially among the tertiary institutions, before embarking on health education and promotion projects aimed at young adults;
- topics that young adults think could most appropriately help to convey HIV and AIDS preventive messages and why; and
- the impact of HIV and AIDS education through print IEC materials since they were recommended by Kimaryo *et al.* in 2004 (as indicated in Chapter one).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX (a)



14 February 2014

Ms Sophie Makonita Mahloane-Tau 212558020
Centre for Adult Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: H55/0077/013D
Project title: Responses of Higher Education Institution (HEI) learners towards Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho

Dear Ms Mahloane-Tau,

Expedited Approval

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Expedited Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/pk

cc Supervisor Professor Julia Pretz
cc Academic leader Dr MN Davids and Dr R N'udaly
cc School Administrator Ms Tongak le Kheng.

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag 2541, Durban, 4001, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 261 2667/6740 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 261 4609 Email: s.collings@ukzn.ac.za / s.collings@ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



APPENDIX (b)



Ministry of Health
PO Box 514
Maseru 100

September 20, 2013

Sophie Mahloane-Tau
PhD in Philosophy
University of KwaZulu- Natal

Dear Ms. Sophie,

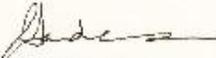
Re: Responses of Lesotho tertiary institutions learners towards HIV information, Education and communication materials (ID86-2013)

Thank you for submitting the above mentioned proposal. The Ministry of Health, Research and Ethics Committee having reviewed your protocol hereby authorizes you to conduct this study among the specified population. The study is authorized with the understanding that the protocol will be followed as stated. Departure from the stipulated protocol will constitute a breach of the permission.

We are looking forward to have a progress report and final report at the end of your study.

Sincerely,


Dr. Piet McPherson
Director General Health Services (acting)


Dr. Jill Sanders
Co-Chairperson
National Health Research and
Ethics Committee

APPENDIX (c)

Po Box 1360
Maseru (100)

12 March 2013

The Registrar
Lesotho College of Education
Thaba-Tseka Campus
Thaba-tseka

REQUEST TO USE LCE STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir

My name is Sophie Mahloane-Tau. I am an Adult Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. I wish to carry out a research project on the responses of tertiary institution learners towards information, education and communication materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, in order:

To find out the type of message(s) that the materials convey to the learners

To ask learners about the kind of meaning they attach to the materials

To discuss the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of these materials

To question the learners on what can be done to improve HIV prevention message(s) and outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence behaviour change among youth and young adults

I realized that no study seemed to specifically look at the tertiary institutions learners' responses/perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV or the learners' expectations on the type of IEC materials or the interface of youth discourses with IEC materials, though there are local and international studies that

appeared to be relevant. I do not deny the fact that the review may have been limited or was carried out before completion or publication of any study that may be investigating the same issue.

The main objective of my study is to investigate the responses of tertiary institution learners towards print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho, because higher education institutions constitute one of the essential components in developing a united and effective country response to HIV and AIDS pandemic because they cater for the at risk population. Also, because certain aspects of social life place learners at risk of contracting HIV, in view of the fact that enhanced personal freedom is coupled with the attractions and pressures of life can be a recipe for sexual activity and experimentation. Casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships are also common in tertiary institutions. Instances of offering sex in return for favors like promotions or good grades – which are euphemistically termed as ‘sexually transmitted degrees and diplomas’ – exist in some of these institutions. Commercial sex may not be uncommon as poor students seek to earn money too. I wish to focus on second year learners aged 18-30 years because they will still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials/programs but will have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to have adapted to the higher learning institutions culture.

May I therefore request that I use your students to fulfill the requirements of my study.

Hope my requisition shall reach your favourable consideration.

Thank you

Sophie Mahloane-Tau
Cell: 58745909 / 62745909
Email: smahloane@ymail.com

APPENDIX (d)

Po Box 1360
Maseru (100)

12 March 2013

The Vice Chancellor
National University of Lesotho
Box 180
Roma

REQUEST TO USE NUL STUDENTS FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Madam

My name is Sophie Mahloane-Tau. I am an Adult Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. I wish to carry out a research project on the responses of tertiary institution learners towards information, education and communication materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, in order:

To find out the type of message(s) that the materials convey to the learners

To ask learners about the kind of meaning they attach to the materials

To discuss the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of these materials

To question the learners on what can be done to improve HIV prevention message(s) and outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence behaviour change among youth and young adults

I realized that no study seemed to specifically look at the tertiary institutions learners' responses/perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV or the learners' expectations on the type of IEC materials or the interface of youth discourses with IEC materials, though there are local and international studies that appeared to be relevant. I do not deny the fact that the review may have been limited or was

carried out before completion or publication of any study that may be investigating the same issue.

The main objective of my study is to investigate the responses of tertiary institution learners towards print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho, because higher education institutions constitute one of the essential components in developing a united and effective country response to HIV and AIDS pandemic because they cater for the at risk population. Also, because certain aspects of social life place learners at risk of contracting HIV, in view of the fact that enhanced personal freedom is coupled with the attractions and pressures of life can be a recipe for sexual activity and experimentation. Casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships are also common in tertiary institutions. Instances of offering sex in return for favors like promotions or good grades – which are euphemistically termed as ‘sexually transmitted degrees and diplomas’ – exist in some of these institutions. Commercial sex may not be uncommon as poor students seek to earn money too. I wish to focus on second year learners aged 18-30 years because they will still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials/programs but will have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to have adapted to the higher learning institutions culture.

May I therefore request that I use your students to fulfill the requirements of my study.

Hope my requisition shall reach your favourable consideration.

Thank you.

Sophie Mahloane-Tau
Cell: 58745909 / 62745909
E-mail: smahloane@ymail.com

APPENDIX (e)

Po Box 1360
Maseru (100)

12 March 2013

The Principal
Technical Institute of Leloaleng
Box 212

Quthing

REQUEST TO USE LELOALENG TRADE SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir

My name is Sophie Mahloane-Tau. I am an Adult Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. I wish to carry out a research project on the responses of tertiary institution learners towards information, education and communication materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, in order:

To find out the type of message(s) that the materials convey to the learners

To ask learners about the kind of meaning they attach to the materials

To discuss the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of these materials

To question the learners on what can be done to improve HIV prevention message(s) and outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence behaviour change among youth and young adults

I realized that no study seemed to specifically look at the tertiary institutions learners' responses/perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV or the learners' expectations on the type of IEC materials or the interface of youth discourses with IEC materials, though there are local and international studies that

appeared to be relevant. I do not deny the fact that the review may have been limited or was carried out before completion or publication of any study that may be investigating the same issue.

The main objective of my study is to investigate the responses of tertiary institution learners towards print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho, because higher education institutions constitute one of the essential components in developing a united and effective country response to HIV and AIDS pandemic because they cater for the at risk population. Also, because certain aspects of social life place learners at risk of contracting HIV, in view of the fact that enhanced personal freedom is coupled with the attractions and pressures of life can be a recipe for sexual activity and experimentation. Casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships are also common in tertiary institutions. Instances of offering sex in return for favors like promotions or good grades – which are euphemistically termed as ‘sexually transmitted degrees and diplomas’ – exist in some of these institutions. Commercial sex may not be uncommon as poor students seek to earn money too. I wish to focus on second year learners aged 18-30 years because they will still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials/programs but will have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to have adapted to the higher learning institutions culture.

May I therefore request that I use your students to fulfill the requirements of my study.

Hope my requisition shall reach your favourable consideration.

Thank you.

Sophie Mahloane-Tau
Cell: 58745909 / 62745909
E-mail: smahloane@ymail.com

APPENDIX (f, 1)

LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Focus Group Discussions)**

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

Nº	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (f, 2)

LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Individual interviews)

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

N^o	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
1.		
2.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (g, 1)

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Focus Group Discussions)

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

Nº	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
1.		
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10.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (g, 2)

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Individual interviews)

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

No	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
1.		
2.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (h, 1)

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF LELOALENG

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Focus Group Discussions)

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

No	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
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8.		
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10.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (h, 2)

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF LELOALENG

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Individual interviews)

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the purpose of this study. I am aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and I'm free to withdraw at any time or any stage of the study without having to give reasons for doing so. I also understand that no incentives would be granted for my participation in this study.

Having fully understood the contents of the fact sheet as it was explained to me by the researcher, I freely consent to participate in this study.

No	STUDENT #	SIGNATURE
1.		
2.		

Assigned Teacher

Signed.....

Date:

Researcher

Signed

Date:

APPENDIX (i)

INFORMATION SHEET



Dear Respondent,

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ACADEMIC STUDY

My name is Sophie Mahloane-Tau. I am an Adult Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. I wish to invite you to participate in the study which I am doing as part of the requirements for a Phd. Education Degree. The aim of this study is to examine the responses of tertiary institution learners towards print information, education and communication (IEC) materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, in order:

- To find out the type of messages that the materials convey to the learners
- To ask learners about the kind of meaning they attach to the materials
- To discuss the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of these materials
- To question the learners on what can be done to improve HIV prevention messages and outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence behaviour change among youth and young adults

The population for the study comprise tertiary education students and the sample comprise from three tertiary institutions found in Lesotho. These institutions were chosen based on three different ecological zones; the lowlands (urban) which is represented by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) found in the Maseru District. Foothills (semi-rural) is represented by the Technical Institute of Leloaleng (TIL) in the Quthing District and the mountains (rural) which is represented by the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) satellite campus in the Thaba-Tseka District.

The study is motivated by the ongoing concerns that HIV prevalence rates among people aged 15-49 years, the age group under which the study population (youth and young adults), fall is not declining, despite all educational efforts that have been and continue to be undertaken to equip people with knowledge and skill on how to protect themselves from HIV.

The study evaluates the effectiveness of the print IEC materials, by examining their comprehensibility, which is whether people can be able to read and understand them. Determine their credibility, which is how convincing the materials are to the reader. The study also examines the materials' applicability, which is how relevant or appropriate these materials' messages are to the reader as well as how practical these messages are in the fight against HIV, in Lesotho. The materials comprise a pamphlet that deals with the process followed in carrying out the HIV test, a poster and a magazine that are specifically aimed to inform, educate and communicate HIV and AIDS prevention issues to youth.

Multilayered methods comprising two different focus group discussions and two individual interviews will be used to collect data from each institution. Twenty two questions through semi-structured interview guidelines will be used to collect data. These include a fifteen items semi-structured interview guideline which will be used for all respondents to investigate the researched materials' comprehensibility, attractiveness, persuasiveness, acceptability and credibility during the first Focus Group Discussion (FGD 1). The second semi-structured interview guideline, comprising five questions, will be used to validate what respondents had expressed during the first group discussions and follow-up to individual interviews. This second guideline will also be used for the purposes of triangulation, to duly confirm that the

findings of were a true reflection of the tertiary institution learners responses to the researched IEC materials. The same interview guideline for second focus group discussions will be used to conduct the individual interviews, to ask for clarification or elaboration on responses elicited from the FG discussions.

The study will be of utmost significance to me as a health educator and other IEC materials producers including the Ministry of Education and Training, in alerting all, to the tertiary institution learners' perceptions and their expectations of the print IEC materials involved in HIV interventions.

Participation in this study is voluntary (NO incentives would be granted for any one's participation in this study at any particular time and place); you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any point, without having to explain your *reasons* for such withdrawal or non-participation. The College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant.

For any further information that you may require concerning me as a student or the study please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, at the following contacts:

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL
Sophie Mahloane-Tau	58745909 / 62745909	smahloane@ymail.com
Professor Julia Preece	+27734657609	preecej@ukzn.ac.za

I want to acknowledge the time and effort it would take you to participate in this study and wish to express my gratitude in advance for your participation and contribution to the completion of the study.

Thank you

APPENDIX (j)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR 1ST FG MEETING

A. Comprehension

1. What do you see in this material?
2. What is the message that is being conveyed through this material?
3. What does this message and picture mean to you?
4. Does the message match the picture?
5. What do you understand the function of this picture to be?
6. Does the content match the title?
7. What is it that you would like to be included or deleted so that the material conveys the expected intention?

B. Attractiveness

8. What in this material could make you want to have a closer look?
9. What do you like or dislike about this material?
10. What would you like to be included or deleted in this material?

C. Persuasiveness

11. What action(s) do you think the material wants you to take?

D. Acceptability

12. Are there any offensive issues about the material (message / picture)?
13. How should this material be made to suit the Basotho culture better?

E. Credibility

14. What in this material do you disagree with?
15. What benefits will you get if you follow the message of this material?

APPENDIX (k)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR 2ND FG MEETINGS

- 1) How do you feel after the discussion (1st FGD)?
- 2) What meaning did you attach to the material?
- 3) Has the material raised any critical awareness to you?
- If yes in what way, if not why?
- 4) Have you developed any attitudinal change towards HIV related issues after the exposure to the materials?
- 5) Did the material offend you in any way?

Please note the individual interviews will use the same schedules but ask for clarification/elaboration on responses elicited from the FG discussions

APPENDIX (I)

Po Box 1360
Maseru (100)

28 February 2013

The Registrar
Lesotho Agricultural College
P/Bag A4

Maseru

REQUEST TO USE LAC STUDENTS FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Sophie Mahloane-Tau. I am an Adult Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa. I wish to carry out a research project on the responses of tertiary institution learners towards information, education and communication materials used to prevent HIV in Lesotho, in order:

To find out the type of message(s) that the materials convey to the learners

To ask learners about the kind of meaning they attach to the materials

To discuss the learners' perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of these materials

To question the learners on what can be done to improve HIV prevention message(s) and outline of print IEC materials in order to ensure that they positively influence behaviour change among youth and young adults

I realized that no study seemed to specifically look at the tertiary institutions learners' responses/perceptions on the significance and appropriateness of IEC materials used in the prevention of HIV or the learners' expectations on the type of IEC materials or the interface of youth discourses with IEC materials, though there are local and international studies that appeared to be relevant. I do not deny the fact that the review may have been limited or was

carried out before completion or publication of any study that may be investigating the same issue.

The main objective of my study is to investigate the responses of tertiary institution learners towards print IEC materials that are used to prevent the spread of HIV in Lesotho, because higher education institutions constitute one of the essential components in developing a united and effective country response to HIV and AIDS pandemic because they cater for the at risk population. Also, because certain aspects of social life place learners at risk of contracting HIV, in view of the fact that enhanced personal freedom is coupled with the attractions and pressures of life can be a recipe for sexual activity and experimentation. Casual sex and multiple sexual partnerships are also common in tertiary institutions. Instances of offering sex in return for favors like promotions or good grades – which are euphemistically termed as ‘sexually transmitted degrees and diplomas’ – exist in some of these institutions. Commercial sex may not be uncommon as poor students seek to earn money too. I wish to focus on second year learners aged 18-30 years because they will still be in the process of responding to institutional HIV prevention materials/programs but will have established themselves sufficiently in the institution to have adapted to the higher learning institutions culture.

May I therefore request that I use your 2nd year students to pilot the instruments that I’m going to use for fulfill the requirements of this study, in order to detect possible flaws in the measurement procedure and to identify unclear or ambiguously formulated items. The pilot will also give me the opportunity to notice non-verbal cues that may possibly indicate discomfort and embarrassment about the content or wording of the questions. It will also help to measure the length of time that will be required for the actual interviews.

Hope my requisition shall reach your favourable consideration.

Thank you

Sophie Mahloane-Tau
Cell: 58745909 / 62745909
E-mail: smahloane@ymail.com