AN EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AMONG
GRADE 12 LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS IN GA-MOLEPO
TOWARDS A MORE COMPLIANT YOUTH

by

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2010
Declaration

I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Masters of Philosophy in Environmental Law and Management has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

..................................................  ..................................................
Initials & Surname (Title)  Date

Student Number: ........................................
Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Zipho and my son Mpumi, my Dad Solly and Mom Johanna, my late father-in-law Tata, brother Mpho and sister Morongoa and the entire Hlabiwa and Mtshiza family for their support.
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To my sister, Salome who helped me in data gathering and analysis, and all my friends who gave me support, I would like to say thank you very much.

To Ga-Molepo High Schools, I am overwhelmed by the support you gave in this project. Thank you very much for being of great assistance to me. To all the principals and geography educators who gave me the opportunity and to all the learners who participated I would like to thank and hope that you continue to support future projects like this one.

I would like to thank the Department of Education, which granted me the opportunity to go and conduct research at schools in Ga-Molepo.

Finally, I appreciate the love of God my creator and His overflowing mercy and blessings upon me.
ABSTRACT

Environmental Education in schools is one of the vital means through which learners can acquire environmental literacy, which is vital for the protection of the environment. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of environmental literacy among Grade 12 learners based on selected issues namely: Acid rain, soil erosion and global warming. There is a need to encourage active participation in resolving environmental issues. This will in turn ensure compliance with laws of the country.

Environmental Education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitude necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness or interrelationships among people, their culture and their biophysical surroundings. Environmental education also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulation of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality (IUCN World Conservation Union 1971).

This research was conducted in five schools located in Ga-Molepo area. The Grade 12 geography learners were tested to determine their level on environmental literacy. This knowledge was tested by means of a questionnaire, which contained questions that tested the learners’ environmental literacy level. The level of literacy was compared between males and females. Their understandings of legal implications were also tested. Anderson & Arsenault (1990:170-179) states that questionnaires need no introduction. The advantage of questionnaire is that if properly designed, it provides a collection of reliable and reasonably valid data in a simple manner. Yet constructing a good questionnaire is a challenge and requires thorough thought, piloting, revision and reformatting.

85% of learners from all the schools indicated that they are aware of the causes and effects of soil erosion. 42% of learners understand what acid rain is and only 20% of them understand what global warming is. Learners must be educated on environmental issues in relation to environmental protection.
and improvement. Legal obligations and accountability under laws as well as
the need to comply with law must be part of all environmental education.

Hammond et al (1999:42) explains Coefficient of Variation (CV) as a
normalized measure of dispersion of a probability distribution. The Coefficient
of Variation was used where Tshebela high school got 33%, which indicated
that the learners level of understanding did not indicate variability. In the other
3 schools (Mamokgari, Mamodikeleng and Mmapadi) their level of
understanding did not indicate a high level of variation. The last school,
Mokwatedi indicated that the learner’s level of understanding indicated a high
level of variation which shows that their level of understanding is not good.

When coming to what the law requires of them it is clear that only 40% of
them understand the legal implications but the rest may harm the environment
as they use natural resources for their own benefit such as chopping trees
while not considering environmental sustainability and the people around
them. It is, therefore, concluded at the end of the research that environmental
laws need to be integrated into the learner’s knowledge as their opinions on
environmental laws shows clearly that they do not have knowledge and
understanding of the environmental legal implications.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem 6
1.3 The aims of the Study 8
1.4 The objectives of the Study 8
1.5 Location of Study 17

## CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Origin of environmental education 18
2.2 What is environmental education? 20
2.3 Environmental education in South Africa 24
2.4 Categories of Environmental Education 28

## CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Research Methodology 31
3.2 Research Design 31
3.3 Methods of Data Collection 33
3.4 Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation 34

## CHAPTER FOUR

Environmental Legislation and Education in South Africa 37
4.1 Punishment of Environmental Crime 40

## CHAPTER FIVE

FIELDWORK RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction 43
5.2.1 Findings and explanations 44
5.2.2 Testing learners knowledge 47
5.3 Observation 48
5.4 Analysis of fieldwork results 49
5.5 The ideal situations 49
5.6 Conclusion 50
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions 51
6.2 Recommendations 53

References 55
Appendix 63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPA</td>
<td>Atmospheric Conservation Act</td>
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<td>ARCPS</td>
<td>Action Research Community Problem</td>
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<td>CFCS</td>
<td>Chlorofluorocarbons</td>
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<td>DEAT</td>
<td>Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DWAF</td>
<td>Department of Water Affairs and Forestry</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Environmental Conservation Act</td>
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<td>EE</td>
<td>Environmental Educations</td>
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<td>EE&amp;A</td>
<td>Environmental Education &amp; Awareness</td>
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<td>EEASA</td>
<td>Environmental Education Association of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPA</td>
<td>Fire Protection Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEMA</td>
<td>Limpopo Environmental Management Act</td>
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<td>NEMA</td>
<td>National Environmental Management Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>NWA</td>
<td>National Water Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Communities</td>
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<td>SCA</td>
<td>Soil Conservation Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>State of the Environment</td>
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<td>SOER</td>
<td>State of Environment Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WESSA</td>
<td>Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSSD</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>World Wildlife Fund</td>
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