

A young girl with dark skin is the central figure, sitting on a colorful mat. She is wearing a white headband with small circular patterns and a white tank top with horizontal orange and red stripes. Her arms are raised high in the air. The mat she is sitting on is divided into sections with large yellow numbers (8, 11) and letters (M, H) on a blue background. In the background, another child in a yellow and white striped shirt is partially visible, also with their arms raised. The setting appears to be a classroom or a play area with wooden shelves in the background.

South Africa



Social and Emotional Education in South Africa: Challenges of the Rainbow Nation

Peter Van Alphen

Abstract

South Africa has a unique history, in that democracy only came to the country in 1994. After the 18 years that followed, the challenges facing the country are enormous, due to 60% of children living in poverty, large scale social disintegration, the high rate of crime, and the backlog in teacher development.

The new government of 1994 was faced with the task of providing equal access to education for all children as well as designing a new curriculum worthy of Nelson Mandela's vision of a "Rainbow Nation". The government's response to these challenges in South African society, was to develop a comprehensive *Life Orientation* (a Life Skills) programme, which was launched in 1997. The main thrust of the *Life Orientation* programme is to care for the social and emotional education of children.

This chapter gives examples from the *Life Orientation* curriculum, which covers Grade R (children aged 5-6 years) through Grade 1 to Grade 12 (7-19 years), showing a sincere attempt to overcome the developmental risks children are exposed to. The curriculum gives details of the *content* that needs to be covered, but not *how* it can be effectively taught and learned by the students.

The teaching modes recommended by the South African government are based on the constructivist theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. However, due to the fact that many teachers went through their training during the *apartheid* time, they tend to fall back onto using 19th century, colonial style teaching approaches, which is mainly a teacher-centred, direct transmission style of teaching.

The chapter suggests that children learn best in *experiential* ways, and the constructivist approach could be enhanced through the use of imaginative learning, recommended by Kieran Egan and Rudolf Steiner (van Alphen, 2001). They advocate that storytelling, for example, engages the children far more readily than traditional modes of teaching. Three sources of stories that promote social and emotional wellbeing are described (Murris, 2009; Perrow, 2008; Perrow 2012; Donald, 2012).

Three case studies are included in this chapter. Case study 1 is of a government school, in which fairly traditional approaches are used, but the sincerity of the teachers does engage the children in the learning of *life skills* content.

Case study 2 describes a project in a rural area that works in local government schools. One part of the project uses storytelling and a variety of creative activities, and another part uses visualisation for the release of past emotions. The former can be done by teachers themselves, the latter requires a professional psychologist or similarly qualified person.

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Case study 3 describes two different situations, both basing their work on Steiner /Waldorf educational approaches: an early childhood centre for children from 6 months to 5 years in a poor suburban community, and an arts-based life skills programme in a well-established Steiner /Waldorf primary school. Both situations work on the premise that surrounding young children with human values, beautiful surroundings and creative education, lays down an all-important basis for social sensitivity and emotional wellbeing.

The paper then moves on to teacher education, and asks the question, “What kind of teachers are needed to bring healing and resilience to children, given the current state of affairs in South Africa, and even internationally?” A major shift in teaching needs to be made to make social and emotional education far more *effective* and *meaningful*.

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To achieve this, it is suggested that pre-service teacher education, and in-service teacher development, need to include creative ways of *experiential* learning: both imaginative ways of teaching and learning such as story-telling, story-making, metaphoric thinking, eco-thinking (van Alphen, 2011); as well as a broad development of artistic skills: singing, music, speech and drama, movement, drawing, painting and clay modelling (CCE, 2013), so that every teacher can use these to integrate cognitive learning with a more affective, emotion-rich component in learning the curriculum.

Finally, the paper suggests the action that needs to be undertaken in South Africa in order to educate and heal the upcoming generations of children in their social and emotional lives: the development of *human values-driven* and *quality care* of infants and toddlers through parent and baby-care education; caring and enriched early childhood education; *experiential* and *creative* learning approaches for children in primary schools. All these have the potential to improve social and emotional wellbeing *from its roots*: through children growing up surrounded by love, and having *quality* experiences in learning, a deep-seated appreciation and sensitivity in their social contacts and building up their own emotional lives. This will go a long way to ensure healthy and well-balanced citizens, the basis of a nation that facilitates freedom and empowerment in every aspect of its citizens' lives.

Peter van Alphen started his career as a music teacher, but was soon drawn to the creative approaches taken to teaching all subjects in Steiner/Waldorf schools. Then followed 16 years of teaching at Michael Oak Waldorf School in Cape Town, South Africa, as a primary school teacher. During the transition from the apartheid regime to a democratic South Africa, Peter pioneered a teacher enrichment program in the disadvantaged 'township' communities around Cape Town. This led to the establishment of the Centre for Creative Education in 1993, one year before the new democratic government came into being. The aims of the Centre are: to support the development of pre-school carers and teachers in holistic and healing approaches to working with children from 6 months to 5 or 6 years of age to provide teacher education in holistic and creative ways for primary school children between the ages of 6 or 7 to 13 years of age. As co-founder of the Centre, Peter was its managing director for 9 years and was responsible for the development of teacher education programmes. The early childhood work was developed by Ann Sharfman, an expert in this field. From 1997, Peter and Ann began part-time teacher education programmes in East Africa. These programmes have provided Waldorf schools and Waldorf-inspired schools in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with local teachers trained in Waldorf education. Peter specialises in the development of teacher education programmes, adult learning and teacher development in African settings. He was honoured for his work in the African communities near Cape Town by being given the African name of 'Sipho,' meaning 'Gift' in the Xhosa language. Still continuing his work at the Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town and in the teacher development programme in East Africa, Peter is also involved in educational research. He is passionate about introducing imaginative teaching to all schools, as a way of bringing human values into learning at schools.

Historical Background to South Africa

The earliest people known to have lived in the southernmost part of Africa were the San (in small groups, as hunter-gatherers) and the Khoi (pastoralists, moving from place to place to find grazing for their cattle). Various tribes of 'Bantu' origin are said to have settled in Southern Africa many centuries before Europeans rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487/8. They settled in the east and northern areas of South Africa, living as agro-pastoralists.

In 1652 the first European settlers – of Dutch origin – landed in the Cape and gradually began to claim more and more land that had been common land to the San and Khoi people. They brought in slaves from the East, especially from Indonesia/Malaysia, and other parts of Africa, and gradually employed ever increasing numbers of Khoi-San to work for them. Due to intermarriage amongst these people and with the growing white population, a new racial mix, called "Coloureds" emerged.

As the colonists moved eastward, they encountered the Xhosa tribes, and cattle raids and warfare ensued due to the threat of the presence of the colonists. The Cape was annexed by the British, and in 1820 large numbers of British settlers were positioned on the borders of the Xhosa nation to 'defend' the Cape Colony. Due to the British takeover of the Cape, widespread discontent was felt among the Dutch settlers, who formed their own 'nation' known as 'Boers' or 'Afrikaners'. Large groups of Boers left the Cape Colony and occupied 'vacant' stretches of land to the north and east of what was to become South Africa in later years.

Wars ensued between the Boers and the Zulu, and eventually between the British and the Boers, who had formed their own states in the areas they had occupied. Finally the British had the upper hand and created the

Union of South Africa in 1910, as a colony under the British crown. In 1918, the birth of the African National Congress (ANC) marked the beginning of resistance to white domination, seeing itself as part of the anti-colonialism movement in Africa. In 1948, the Afrikaners won the limited franchise elections of the Union and came into power, marking the beginning of the "apartheid" ("separate development") era in which people classified as Asian, Coloured or Black were excluded from voting, and treated as second, third and lowest class citizens.

During the 45 years of *apartheid*, education was split into different departments according to racial groupings. People classified as white received the best education, those classified as Asian and coloured a lesser, yet relatively good education, whereas people classified as Black, the great majority of the population (around 96%), received very poor education. In the late 1980s and early 1990s *apartheid* was gradually dismantled, making way for a relatively peaceful transition to the first democratically elected government under Nelson Mandela in 1994. (SouthAfrica.info, information accessed on 16/01/2013).

The roots of the past play a very important role in the make-up of and current trends in the South African nation. There was great hope for harmonious working together to form, what Nelson Mandela called the "Rainbow Nation," a nation with equal possibilities and rights for all. Although the advent of democracy brought hope for a New South Africa to emerge, many citizens are disappointed that the Rainbow Nation has not materialised. Political and industrial wrangling, persistent wide-spread poverty and rising crime are the main causes of disappointment.

According to the population census of 2011, there are 51.8 million people living in South Africa, of whom:

South African society still lives in largely separate communities, mainly due to the policies of 45 years of the apartheid government up to 1994, during which communities were forcibly kept apart.

- 79.2% are classified as African
- 8.9% are classified as Coloured
- 2.5% are classified Indian and
- 8.9% are classified as White (South African Government Information, 2013).

South African society still lives in largely separate communities, mainly due to the policies of 45 years of the *apartheid* government up to 1994, during which communities were forcibly kept apart. Integration has been slow, and a relative economic equality has not emerged. As most of the 79.2 % of the population have been the most disadvantaged both economically and in other ways, the new democratic government has attempted to bring about change through a Black Economic Empowerment policy:

South Africa's policy of black economic empowerment (BEE) is not simply a moral initiative to redress the wrongs of the past. It is a pragmatic growth strategy that aims to realise the country's full economic potential

while helping to bring the black majority into the economic mainstream.

Despite the many economic gains made in the country since 1994, the racial divide between rich and poor remains. As the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) points out, such inequalities can have a profound effect on political stability:

“Societies characterised by entrenched gender inequality or racially or ethnically defined wealth disparities are not likely to be socially and politically stable, particularly as economic growth can easily exacerbate these inequalities.”

“(BEE does not) aim to take wealth from white people and give it to blacks. It is essentially a growth strategy, targeting the South African economy's weakest point: inequality.”

(SouthAfrica.info, 2013)

Despite the many economic gains made in the country since 1994, the racial divide between rich and poor remains. (SouthAfrica.Info, 2013).

“South Africa’s economic growth (is) ‘well below full potential’.” (Business Day Live, 2013).

However, although the policy has benefitted the rising black middle-class, and a number of entrepreneurs in upper management, Ntsakisi Maswanganyi in Business Day Live (27 Feb, 2013) states that “South Africa’s economic growth (is) ‘well below full potential’”. This sentiment is echoed widely, as in the following analyst, Marian Tupy’s assessment of the situation:

South Africa today is economically freer than it was under apartheid, but its economic growth continues to be slow ... It is important to know rapid economic growth is possible. South Africa has the best infrastructure and banking system in Africa. It also has a stable and democratic government. (Tupy, 2004)

It is important to realise that economic development constitutes the largest challenge in South African society, either entrenching the enormous inequalities of rich and poor, therefore threatening the education, health, safety and well-being of the poor (through lack of economic development), or reversing the situation.

The white population mostly still lead privileged lives, and have access to good education for their children. There has been a growing middle class from the previously disadvantaged communities, and a small but powerful

upper class, also able to afford better education for their children. However, the majority of families struggle to make ends meet, and poverty (as will be explained below) remains an enormous challenge.

The Educational Challenges in South Africa

South Africa is in a unique situation, in that the transition from an oppressive *apartheid* regime, in which educational privilege was based on racial differences, happened relatively recently. In the 18 years that have passed since 1994, the struggle for democracy has turned into a struggle for good education for all South Africans.

This struggle has to be seen in terms of the country’s past, in which the great majority of the population was subjected to a very poor, old colonial-style education which did not allow learners to think for themselves, to have access to any knowledge beyond that which served the needs of the dominant ‘white’ minority, nor to become emancipated, self-confident adults in society.

Education in South Africa faces three major challenges:

- 1 The high rate of poverty
- 2 The social situation and high crime rate
- 3 Teacher development

... the majority of families struggle to make ends meet, and poverty ... remains an enormous challenge.

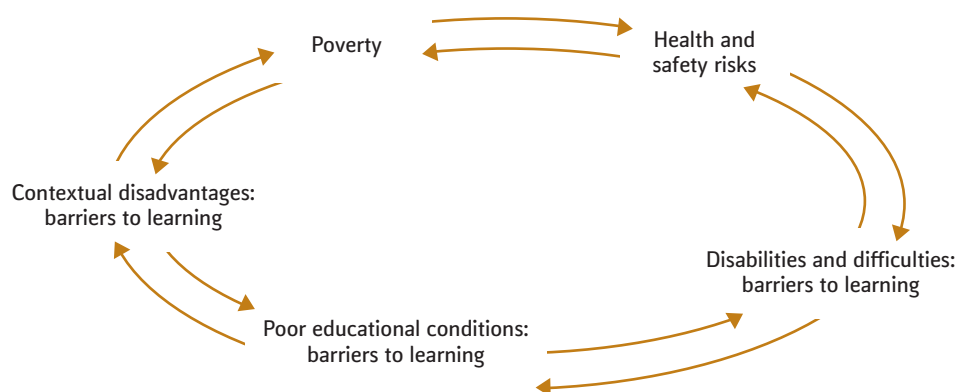


Figure 1: A typical negative cycle of poverty and barriers to learning

1. Poverty

Official reports maintain that approximately 48 % (24.2 million) of a population of 50.5 million, live in poverty. (SouthAfrica.com, 2008,2012) However, a newspaper report (Cape Times, 18 October 2012) quotes research done by the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town, revealing that 60% of South African children live in poverty, in households that earn less than ZAR 575 (approximately 58 euro) per month. Half of these children live with their mothers only, and a further 28% live with neither parent. In South Africa, 26% of children experience hunger. (Hall, 2012)

Children living in poverty are highly susceptible to health risks (e.g. infection and malnutrition) and safety risks (e.g. neglect, violence and abuse). These risks are considered the main environmental factors that cause

learning barriers and learning delays. David Donald (2010:156), a leading educational psychologist in South Africa and now Professor Emeritus of the University of Cape Town, describes how poverty tends to keep on “recycling” itself, in that children brought up in poverty will almost inevitably, when they are adults, bring up their children in the same way in which they were brought up, often under the same conditions.

Donald (2010:156) shows the effects of poverty on education as a vicious circle that continually feeds itself as follows:

The diagram above emphasises that learning difficulties can be caused or made worse by malnutrition (insufficient brain development), disease (HIV/AIDS or infections due to living in unhygienic surroundings), poor or unstable home conditions (the family may

... children brought up in poverty will almost inevitably, when they are adults, bring up their children in the same way in which they were brought up, often under the same conditions. (Donald, 2010).

move from place to place, or there may be domestic violence), bullying at schools, physical and/or sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, drugs, etc. The diagram also makes the point that in South Africa poor areas generally also have poor education, both in terms of a lack of skilled teachers and in terms of a lack of educational facilities such as equipment, textbooks, libraries, laboratories, etc.

The building of social and emotional development in state schools therefore needs to be seen in the light of the tremendous backlog of poor schooling infrastructure, provision of resources and teacher development.

dom find safety and security (including emotional security) in modern family life. Single parent households, families ridden by violence, and orphaned children without the support of the extended family or any kind of caregiver, are the order of the day The percentage of children in South Africa whose basic needs are not met is growing by the day. (Prinsloo 2005:33)

These factors have contributed to generally disrupted living and high crime rates. All sectors of society live in fear of attack, theft, the rape of women and children, and the threat of murder. The most affected by crime are

The most affected by crime are those living in poor communities.

2. The Social Situation and Crime

In addition to the high rate of poverty, which brings with it so many deficits, South African society is in transition. There are displaced communities, forcibly moved (and often dispersed) by the *apartheid* government's policies of 'separate development', causing the social structures that held communities together to be destroyed. Migrant labour, in which men had to leave their families in order to work in the mines and factories, was a major cause of breaking up family lives. The ever-continuing move to the cities, to find work and better education for the children, leads to the creation of huge informal settlements with challenges in respect of sanitation, clean water supply and overcrowding.

The vulnerability of the nuclear family in today's society has led to the general disintegration of family life. Children sel-

those living in poor communities. The statistics generated in recent years have brought huge concerns for the well-being of the population. Here are a few indicators of the extent of crime in South Africa:

The statistics below have to do with *reported* crime, and therefore are unlikely to reflect the real extent of criminal incidences. Interestingly, the neglect and ill-treatment of children has been drastically reduced. This is due to new legislation, restructuring and the services provided by the Department of Social Services (for further information, see Department of Social Services, 2003 and 2009).

In recent months violent incidents of rape, often ending in the murder of the victim, have brought about renewed outrage in the country:

Table 1: Extracts from *Crime Statistics in South Africa 2004 – 2012*: from website**Crime Statistics up to 2012 - South Africa**

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
Neglect and ill-treatment of children									
6,504	5,568	4,828	4,258	4,106	4,034	4,014	3,473	3,011	39,796
Total Sexual Crimes									
66,048	69,088	68,045	65,176	63,788	70,514	68,332	66,196	64,419	601,606
Drug-related crime									
62,689	84,001	95,690	104,689	109,134	117,172	134,840	150,673	175,823	1,034,711
Shoplifting									
71,888	66,525	64,491	65,489	66,992	80,773	88,634	78,383	71,844	655,019

(source: <http://crimestatssa.com/national.php>)

South Africa is one of the rape capitals of the world. Here are the scary stats: between a quarter and a third of men admitted to rape and in 2010, over 56,000 rapes were recorded at an average of 154 a day. And these are just the few women that report attacks to police – with the conviction rate for perpetrators so low and the emotional toll so high, most survivors stay silent. The Medical Research Council estimates that up to 3,600 rapes happen daily. A culture of abuse means that for many, rape is not seen as a crime but a daily occurrence. (Avaaz report 14.2.2013)

Most South Africans feel helpless about the extent of crime in the country, and their own and their children's vulnerability in daily life. "The statistics are stark. Around 18,000 murders were also reported in the same period (2010). This brutal violence disproportionately affects those who are not rich or middle class." (de Vos, 15.2.2013)

Unemployment, which again is worst in the poorest communities due to the lack of quality education and training available to them, is another factor that leads to situations of

crime and violence. Unemployment currently stands at 25.5%. (StatsSA, 2013)

The inequalities in South African society from *apartheid* times continue to exist. These express themselves in industrial action against government and business, recently (2012) erupting in bloody confrontations in the mines, in which striking miners were demanding a more liveable wage; 34 miners were killed in the incident. (For further details, see report by Democracy Now!, 21 August, 2012). The anger that rises, also in the demonstrations in 2013 by farm workers to be paid a liveable wage (see Cameron Jacobs, 2012), is indicative of inequalities that are not being resolved. Clearly, major change is needed in South Africa if it is to fulfil its vision of becoming a rainbow nation.

At present, South Africa seems unable to solve these issues. Perhaps it is due to a lack of understanding of what is needed to turn this situation around: the needs for restoration of human values, for development of quality education, for employment through post-school training. A good place to begin – in fact the most urgent place to begin – is the

well-being of children. In the words of Erna Prinsloo (2005:33):

The following actions serve as preconditions for self-fulfilment: a child must be actively involved in forming relationships with himself, his peers, parents, teachers and the community, as well as with ob-

Most teachers were educated in an old, colonial-style manner, based on 19th century education as practised in Europe. This form of education was brought to South Africa by missionaries and, later, by teachers imported from Europe. The changes in education that began in developed countries during the second half of the 20th century bypassed South Africa due to the

The great majority of teachers in South Africa ... have had little training in their profession, thereby recycling what they termed ‘gutter education’.

jects and ideas. He must experience joy and success in most of these relationships in order to attribute meaning to his world. Only through dynamic involvement, positive experience and sufficient attribution of meaning to the life-world will the child be capable of forming a positive self-image which in turn leads to adequate self-actualisation.

3. Teacher Development

The great majority of teachers in South Africa –those who had their teacher education before the transition to democracy in 1994– have had little training in their profession, thereby recycling what they termed ‘gutter education’. Today, eighteen years later, this legacy still haunts the efforts to provide quality education for all in South Africa:

Most currently serving educators received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the apartheid project and organised in racially and ethnically divided sub-systems. (OECD, 2008:84)

trade and cultural embargoes against the apartheid government, and so the great majority of teachers generally only use one mode of teaching: that of direct transmission of knowledge, commonly known as “chalk and talk.”

This old, colonial style of teaching operates on repetitive, content-driven, teacher-centred, direct transmission of knowledge. The Department of Education has attempted to change this approach, as well as to further educate teachers by means of a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Teachers are expected to fulfil 150 points of professional development over a three-year period (SACE, 2012:30) by attending accredited training units. The purpose of CPD is to ensure that educators:

- improve their knowledge
- improve their skills
- keep up to date with new research
- learn from colleagues

These purposes are easier to place on paper than to put into practice. University of South Africa and University of the Free State

researchers Matseliso Mokhele and Loyiso Jita (2012) in a study entitled *When Professional Development Works: South African Teachers' Perspectives*, have found that:

Despite the general acceptance of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes as essential to the improvement of education, reviews of professional development research constantly point to the ineffectiveness of most of these programmes. Furthermore, many teachers express dissatisfaction with the professional development opportunities made available to them in schools and insist that the most effective development programmes they have experienced have been self-initiated.

The researchers argue that CPD, however well-intentioned and executed, is received differently by each teacher as a result of their personal circumstances and investment in the programme. The researchers then conclude that the greater the unity between the personal circumstances and motivations of the teachers and those of the CPD intervention, the more likely the outcome will be meaningful for the participating teachers (Mokhele and Jita, 2012)

Other University of South Africa researchers Pitsoe and Maila conclude in their study that to improve CPD

It, inter alia, also calls for a dramatic shift in professional development focus, away from the transmission model of teaching towards one that is much more complex, situational/contextual and interactive. (Pitsoe and Maila, 2012:324)

Change, unfortunately, does not come easily, as will be seen below.

Addressing the challenges in South African Education

As soon as the new democratically elected government was elected, the first and most important task facing the Minister of Education at the time was to provide equal education for all South African citizens. Since *apartheid* times, a great deal of progress has been achieved in terms of universal access to education (OECD 2008:20), though provision of schools, facilities and well-educated teachers is still an on-going process at present. At the same time, a new South African curriculum needed to be formed that would answer the needs of the entire population, based on a far more holistic approach to educating children. Inevitably, the focus had to be on restructuring the entire education system.

The New National Curriculum

From 1994, the now democratic South African government turned to the developed nations for guidance in restructuring education. This resulted in the publication of the National Curriculum Statement in 1997 (RNCS 2002:2) modelled on Outcomes-Based Education, allowing teachers the freedom to design their own lessons towards fulfilling the *outcomes* stipulated for each year of education. Clearly the majority of teachers, due to their lack of training, were not in a position to use this complicated system, linked with large amounts of record-keeping, nor were they ready to design their own lessons creatively in accordance with the needs of the children in their care:

...the adoption of outcome-based education (OBE) was seen as an example of international "policy borrowing", with its roots in competency debates in New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Canada and – in limited circles – in the United States (Chisholm, 2005a, p. 86), but not suitable for the conditions faced by South

Africa's education system ... implementation was hampered by inadequate resourcing and insufficient regard for local realities. (OECD, 2008:170)

The NCS was revised three times (2000, 2009 and CAPS 2011) to make it more user-friendly and, in the words of the current Minister of Basic Education, Angelina Motshekga, to “provide clear guidelines to teachers on what to teach and assess on a term-by-term basis ... the simplification of the curriculum will go a long way in assisting with other barriers to quality education.” (Department of Basic Education, CAPS R-3, 2011).

In my view, CAPS 2011 is not generally helpful, as in practice children disadvantaged due to language and home backgrounds are asked to learn at a pace that does not allow sufficient time to consolidate basic concepts. Teachers need to keep up with the termly programme, irrespective of learner progression. Whilst CAPS 2011 provides a simplified framework to cover the content of the na-

own education and their teaching skills. This had to take place in addition to their teaching duties, in the form of in-service training. Currently, every teacher is required to attend 50 hours of in-service training per year (CPD, as described above) in order to upgrade their teaching skills, and salary scales reward teachers who are awarded higher teacher qualifications. In spite of all these efforts, there remains a challenge:

Quality education remains elusive. The schools are deprived of resources, facilities and qualified teachers. It is extremely unimaginable to have efficiency, effectiveness and quality in education under these circumstances ... the report points towards a schooling with high enrolment but poor quality education. (Department of Basic Education, 2010:74)

Clearly, the past is not easily dissolved and new approaches are not easily transferable by means of in-service training. Some good signs are emerging though, as in the ‘matriculation’ (final examinations for school leav-

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tional curriculum, the crucial issue is the manner in which the content is presented and subsequently consolidated (see section on Teaching Modes below).

Quality Education in Schools

There was a clear recognition from the beginning of the democratic era that the great majority of teachers needed to upgrade their

ing and university entrance) results of 2012, which an all-time high of 73.9% of matriculants passed (Mail and Guardian, 4-10 January, 2013:5).

However, what is hidden in these results? The *Mail and Guardian* (4-10 January, 2013:5) quotes Ruksana Osman, head of the School of Education at the University of the

Witwatersrand, as highlighting the need to analyse these results more closely to “assess where the weaknesses are.” An analyst from an NGO called Equal Education, quoted in the same Mail and Guardian article, referring to the fact that the poorest schools are in rural and township settlements, says that, “Because they remain under-resourced, they perform

pre-school education. The Reception Year (for children aged 5 to 6 years) is intended to be compulsory by 2025. The research reports that:

As schooling is compulsory until the age of 15 or the end of grade 9, the attendance rate decreases more steeply from age 16 on-

Cost of education is the main reason for non-attendance in the high school age group, followed by a perception that “education is useless”. Other reasons for drop-out are illness and exam failure. Pregnancy accounts for between 11% and 20% of drop-out amongst teenage girls not attending school.” (De Lannoy & Hall 2010).

more poorly than the wealthier schools It is unfair that the government doesn’t do enough to distribute enough resources to these schools.”

The article goes on to say that, “The published results show that 429 poor schools across the country achieved pass rates of 40% or less.” Equal Education points out that that of these, “95 schools ... achieved pass rates of less than 20%.”

Schools in South Africa

According to research carried out by Arianne De Lannoy & Katharine Hall of the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town (2010), 96.4% of children in South Africa (11,173,000), aged 7 – 17 years, attend primary and secondary schooling. Another 42% of children (just over 1.3 million) in the 3 – 5-year-old age group attend some form of

wards, with 92% of 16-year-olds, 87% of 17-year-olds, and 73% of 18-year-olds reported to be attending school. Cost of education is the main reason for non-attendance in the high school age group, followed by a perception that “education is useless”. Other reasons for drop-out are illness and exam failure. Pregnancy accounts for between 11% and 20% of drop-out amongst teenage girls not attending school.” (De Lannoy & Hall 2010)

The new structure of schooling introduced by the National Curriculum (1997) is as follows:

There are 26,000 schools (primary and secondary) for 12,2 million children. Two categories of schools exist in South Africa, ‘Public Schools’ (i.e. schools belonging to the state) educating 96% of children in school, and

Table 2. New Structure of Education and Training Framework in South Africa since 1997**Foundation Phase**

Reception Year (Grade R)	Children aged 5 turning 6
Grade 1	Children aged 6 turning 7
Grade 2	Children aged 7 turning 8
Grade 3	Children aged 8 turning 9

Intermediate Phase

Grade 4	Children aged 9 turning 10
Grade 5	Children aged 10 turning 11
Grade 6	Children aged 11 turning 12

Senior Phase

Grade 7	Children aged 12 turning 13
Grade 8	Children aged 13 turning 14
Grade 9	Children aged 14 turning 15

Further Education and Training

Grade 10	Children aged 15 turning 16
Grade 11	Children aged 16 turning 17
Grade 12	Children aged 17 turning 18

Compulsory Education

Grades 1 – 9
Grade R compulsory
for all children from
2025

The average learner-to-teacher ratio in state schools is given as 32:1. (OECD 2008:20). However, this ratio varies from school to school. In rural areas especially, this ratio can be considerably higher.

‘Independent Schools’ (religious, private and alternative schools), educating the remaining 4%. (OECD 2008:20). The state subsidises independent schools that provide education for poor communities and weights its subsidies according to those that charge the lowest fees. The remaining independent schools are self-funding.

Each category of schools is sub-divided into different types:

Public Schools:

- Government Schools: the majority of children in South Africa attend government schools. These schools are fully funded by the state, though parents are asked to pay fees for additional needs (for example, sports equipment).
- Model C Schools: these are government schools, but are administered and partly funded by parents who enrol their children in these schools. These are non-racial schools for parents who can afford to

contribute financially to enrol their children into these schools. Model C schools have superior facilities and better qualified teachers; additional teachers are employed by the governing bodies of these schools, as students generally come from more affluent, fee-paying families. (Roodt 2011))

The average learner-to-teacher ratio in state schools is given as 32:1. (OECD 2008:20). However, this ratio varies from school to school. In rural areas especially, this ratio can be considerably higher.

Independent Schools:

Independent schools, forming 4% of schools in South Africa, and regulated under South African law, fall into three broad categories:

- **Religious Schools:** Missionary and Church schools have existed from early colonial times. At present a wide variety of Christian denominations have schools, ranging from elite and wealthy to poor community schools. Islamic schools exist in areas where large numbers of Muslims live.
- **Private Schools:** generally high fee-paying schools for children from middle and upper class families
- **Alternative Schools:** Schools that use more creative approaches to teaching and learning, include Steiner/Waldorf schools and Montessori schools.

Independent schools have the freedom to establish their own class sizes and learner: educator ratios.

Social and Emotional Education

In 1997, the Department of Education sought to respond to the critical situation in respect of developmental risks which so many children in South Africa face, by introducing *Life Orientation* education into its National Curriculum Statement (NCS), in order to protect children and youth.

One of the major contributions of the first appearance of the NCS in 1997 was the re-designing of the curriculum inherited from *apartheid* education into Learning Areas that would serve the needs for an all-round education for all. The entire curriculum was drawn up through a process of public consultation and formalised by the Department of Education. Here, for the first time in South African education, *Life Orientation* as a learning area was introduced, the main component of which is the learning of *Life Skills*. The Life Skills component was very much influenced by the high crime rates in South Africa, with especial concern for the safety and health of children. South African society was horrified at the publishing of national crime statistics (see Table 1 above) and in general at the disintegration of discipline, large class sizes and poor parental participation in schools. (OECD, 2008:61) Accordingly, there is enormous concern that children need to be protected against sexual and other forms of abuse and from situations of violence and neglect. The Life Skills programme seeks to educate children in how to keep themselves safe at all times and in all places, and what to do in cases of emergency.

A few extracts, as typical examples of topics that the Life Skills curriculum addresses, follow (all classes, from Grade R to Grade 10 – ages 6 – 17 – receive life skills lessons):

The Life Orientation curriculum is a sincere attempt to facilitate the personal development of children and adolescents, as well as providing them with an awareness of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers that exist in society. It provides *what* is needed to be covered in order to achieve this, leaving it up to educators to decide *how* they will bring the learning material into their lessons. This is where the major problem lies: most educators have not been trained in modes of teaching that can effectively bring about

Table 3. Excerpts from Curriculum on Life Orientation: Life Skills component

Grade R/ Age 6 years (CAPS R-3, 2011:15-18)

Topic: my body - 2 hours.

- Identify and name body parts - include how many of each
- Functions of different body parts
- Who may or may not touch my body
- What my body needs to keep healthy

Topic: safety - 2 hours

- how to be safe at home
- Safe places to play
- Unsafe places to play
- Being safe on the road

Grade 3/ Age 9 years (CAPS R-3, 2011:54)

Topic: Feelings - 6 hours

- Things that make me happy and things that make me sad
- Recognising feelings - such as anger, fear, worry, loneliness
- Good ways to express what we feel
- Apologies - how to say sorry

Note: Use pictures, stories, rhymes, puppets and masks

Topic: Keeping my body safe - 6 hours.

- We are not safe with everyone
- Rules to keep my body safe
- Trusting 'Yes' and 'No' feelings
- How to say 'No' to any form of abuse
- How to report abuse

Note: This topic should focus on the prevention of physical and sexual abuse

Grade 4/ Age 10 years (CAPS 4-6, 2011:16)

Topic: Development of the self - 4 ½ hours

Emotions

- Understanding a wide range of emotions: love, happiness, grief, fear and jealousy
- Understanding one's own emotions: appropriate ways to express one's own emotions
- How to understand and consider others' emotions
- Weekly reading by learners: reading for enjoyment
- Reading about how people express different emotions

Topic: Development of the self - 3 hours.

- **Bullying:** How to protect oneself from acts of bullying
 - Examples of bullying
 - Appropriate responses to bullying: where to find help
- Weekly reading by learners: reading for enjoyment
 - Reading about appropriate responses to bullying

Grade 5 / Age 11 years (CAPS 4-6, 2011:19-20)

Topic: Development of the self – 4 ½ hours. Recommended resources: Textbook, books on coping with emotions

- **Coping with emotions:** empathy, compassion, anger, disappointment and sadness
 - Skills to manage emotions in a positive way
 - Significance of friends in times of sadness, tragedy and change
- **Reading skills:** reading with understanding and using a dictionary
 - Reading about friendships that are caring and supportive: recall and relate

Topic: Social Responsibility – 4 ½ hours. Recommended resources: Textbook, newspaper articles, posters on the forms of abuse, books on abuse

- **Child abuse:**
 - Different forms of child abuse: physical and emotional
 - Effects of abuse on personal health
 - Strategies to deal with abuse
 - Where to get help and report abuse
- **Reading skills:** reading with understanding and using a dictionary
 - Reading about ways to protect self and others from abuse: recall and relate

Topic: Social Responsibility – 3 hours. Recommended resources: Textbook, posters on violent situations, books on violent situations

- **Dealing with violent situations:** Identify potential violent situations at home, school and in the community
 - Responding effectively to violent situations
 - Ways to avoid and protect oneself from violent situations and where to find help
- **Reading skills:** reading with understanding and using a dictionary
 - Reading about protection agencies and places of safety for children: recall and relate

Grade 10 / Age 17 years (CAPS 10-12, 2011:12 & 15)

Topic: Development of the self in society – 3 hours. Recommended resources: textbook

- **Strategies to enhance self-awareness, self-esteem and self-development:** factors influencing self-awareness and self-esteem including media
 - Strategies to build confidence in self and others: communication, successful completion of tasks or projects, participation in community organisation or life, making good decisions and affirmation of others
 - Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of self and others and respect differences (race, gender and ability)
- **Definition of concepts:** power, power relations, masculinity, femininity and gender
 - Differences between a man and a woman: reproduction and roles in the community, stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities, gender differences in participation in physical activities
 - Influence of gender inequality on relationships and general well-being: sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, STIs including HIV and AIDS
- **Value of participation in exercise programmes that promote fitness:** cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility
- **Relationship between physical and mental health**

... most educators have not been trained in modes of teaching that can effectively bring about changes in behaviour, understanding of social and emotional issues and instil the do's and don'ts of keeping oneself safe and healthy.

changes in behaviour, understanding of social and emotional issues and instil the *do's and don'ts* of keeping oneself safe and healthy.

Universities, now the major providers of teacher education, include training in life skills as part of their Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes, so that new generations of teachers have more effective tools in making social and emotional education become an *experiential, process-based* learning experience for their pupils. However, the vast majority of teachers in the system are not undergoing a similar transformative re-training, and all too often continue to use old, traditional methods in conveying the content of the Life Orientation curriculum.

Teaching Modes

Concepts around the ways in which children learn best are gradually changing in South Africa. In designing the new National Curriculum, different modes of learning were strongly recommended, particularly based on the work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980), in terms of the need for learners to construct their own understanding of curriculum content, and Lev Vygotsky (1896 - 1934), concerning socially mediated learning, most importantly the use of interactive group work and a rich development of language to enhance thinking. (WCED, 2006: 4-15)

The promotion of constructivist approaches to teaching is an important step forward towards student involvement in learning. Teachers in South Africa are required to 'build up' new knowledge together with their learners, ask thinking questions and engage them in social learning. Class discussions and group work allow children and youth time to explore a particular topic, rather than listening at length to a teacher's delivery of content. This stimulates enquiry and provides learning with far greater meaning, because of the sharing of personal views in a social setting.

However, despite the recommendations made by the NCS, modes of teaching in schools have generally remained stuck in the past: most teachers tend to rely on direct instruction, and at best, ask their students questions about things they already know in order to build up their lessons. The application of different modes of teaching and learning in classrooms is still limited to exceptional teachers who embrace change in education.

Experiential learning is gaining conceptual ground in South Africa. However, Donald (2012) comments that university research has had little effect on teaching practice in schools, stating that, "... the topic of Life Skills, and its *meaningful* teaching ... is, unfortunately, generally rare ..." (*italics in original*).

Teaching from textbooks is regarded as the main form of instruction, guiding teachers and providing students with texts from which to learn. In 2010, the Minister of Basic Education, emphasised again the importance of textbooks in teaching and learning. (Department of Basic Education 2010: 57)

Further Development of Experiential Teaching and Learning

There are many different forms of experiential learning, best illustrated by a forthcoming international conference organised by the University of Cape Town for August/September 2013. It aims to “examine the theory and practice of teaching critical thinking, enquiry-based learning and philosophy with children for all phases of schooling as well as informal educational contexts.” (ICPIC, 2012) Included in the content of the conference is the use of storytelling and literature, and the visual arts, music and drama as ways of promoting critical thinking and enquiry-based learning. Sara Stanley (2013) states this in the following way:

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), the latest version (2011) of the NCS, suggests that Thinking and Reasoning needs to be taught in an integrated way when teaching literacy, numeracy and life-skills. Thiscan be done in an engaging, imaginative and kinaesthetic manner.

Important in this respect is the view that is held on child development and how children and youth learn best at each stage of development. In contrast to Piaget’s theory that children are *concrete thinkers*ⁱ up to the age of about 12 years, Kieran Egan, Professor of Education at Simon Fraser University, Canada, makes a case for children up to about age fifteen needing to be taught in imaginative ways:

Enormous emphasis has been placed on those intellectual skills that young children manage least well and develop only slowly – computational, logico-mathematical skills – with an equivalent neglect of what children do best – metaphoric, imaginative thinking. (Egan 1997, p. 52-53)

This view was held by Rudolf Steiner (1862-1925), founder of the Waldorf schools. He regarded imaginative teaching as a vital necessity for educating children. Imagination, the prime tool at work in storytelling and enriched teaching, is *experiential*:

Both Egan and Steiner argue that imagination is a heightened form of cognition, capable of transforming the knowledge and skills to be learned into enhanced experiences. These experiences stimulate creativity in thinking and involve the emotions of the learners, through which a more meaningful relationship is established with the learning material. (Van Alphen, 2011:1)ⁱⁱ

The Power of Storytelling

In ancient times the education of children and adults in the moral and cultural ways of leading their lives happened around the fire through the telling of stories. These stories were the rich treasures of the clans, tribes and early nations in pre-literate times, which sustained and continued their civilisation. The moral and cultural underpinnings of their lives were conveyed in symbolic form in the story, and never told *directly* as our ‘modern’ way of educating tends to do. Everyone, whether child or adult, understood the truths that shone through the happenings in a story, at a level that accorded with their age.

There is a growing recognition that social and emotional education can best engage children and youth in recognising moral,

interpersonal values and skills by means of storytelling and the reading of story books and novels (Karin Murriss, 2009)

Stories can also be used in dealing with the challenging behaviour of individual children as well as of classes in schools. The work of Susan Perrow, an Australian storyteller, is based on the Waldorf tradition of finding just the right story for a child whose behaviour or situation indicates the need for help in some or other way. Perrow has published over 100 of her own therapeutic stories, and more than 100 written by others, in her two books *Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour* (Perrow, 2008) and *Therapeutic Storytelling: 101 Healing stories for Children* (Perrow, 2012). She provides guidelines for parents and teachers to create their own stories according to the needs of a particular child.

David Donald (2012a, 2012b) writes stories for adolescents, arising out of real-life South African situations, to provide an engaging way of learning life skills: In *I am Thabeka*, a 20-year-old young woman who has lost all her loved ones due to illness leading to death, shows resilience, courage, determination and helps others; In *Gogo's Song*, a brave orphan who loses her mother to AIDS lives with her grandmother ("gogo" means grandmother in Zulu), and despite severe challenges finally graduates as a nurse.

Three case studies now follow, showing different approaches to the teaching of life skills. Firstly, a description of life skills lessons in an urban government school, in which teachers use some broader modes of teaching rather than traditional direct instruction. The second case study describes

In a classroom all the children benefit from a story told for a particular child, learning about social and emotional situations in an imaginative, absorbing way.

The child (or class concerned) must not know that the story is told for him or her in particular, and no explanation or questioning must be entered into, because "stories know the way" (Perrow 2012: xvi) and should be left for the children to absorb and learn from by themselves. In a classroom all the children benefit from a story told for a particular child, learning about social and emotional situations in an imaginative, absorbing way. These stories can be used in pre-school and also for primary school children up to about age 11. Stories of this nature can be used in a more conscious way with teenagers and adults in individual counselling, with good effect.

a non-governmental project providing innovative life skills lessons in a rural school. These lessons are based on experiential learning, using storytelling and visualisation modes to bring about healing and to provide the students with new insights. The third case study describes two situations where the principles of Steiner/Waldorf education are being applied: a "township" pre-school centre in a poor urban area, and a primary class in an affluent school. Both these situations base their work on values-education through the arts and storytelling.

Case Study 1: Life Skills Lessons at a Government Primary School

The school I visited is situated in a relatively poorly resourced area on the outskirts of Cape Town, and is attended by students of the surrounding Coloured and Muslim community. The school buildings are typical of Department of Education schools: rather bleak, grey school buildings, in long barrack-style rows of classrooms. Yet the teachers are happy in and dedicated to their work, and a pleasant atmosphere exists within the relatively strictly disciplined school (for example, the children greet a teacher who visits the classroom; they line up in an orderly manner; they speak respectfully to their teachers).

The Life Skills lessons in the younger classes (6 to 9 year-olds) take place daily for about 15 minutes, working on particular themes each week. The lessons I attended were on 'Self-Esteem'. In one of the Grade 1 classes (6 turning 7 year-olds) the teacher started with the reciting of a poem, relating to the theme of the lesson, which began with the words, "I am special ...". The children lit up, and enjoyed speaking the poem vigorously, with some actions. This was a wonderful activity with which to start the Life Skills lesson, energising the children, as it was already the second half of the morning.

This was followed by considering each other's names, and the meaning of these names, which most of the children were not aware of. The teacher then moved to the idea that we are all different in the features of our face, by asking, "What is special about you?" Some examples of children's responses: "I have beautiful brown eyes," "I have beautiful lips," "I have lovely round cheeks." Just when the class as a whole was starting to show signs of losing concentration, the teacher asked the class to say, "Wow! I am so special!" Moving on to a drawing lesson, the teacher then asked the

children to each draw his or her own face on a sheet of paper.

The Grade 6 teacher, working with 11 turning 12-year-olds, also started with speaking a poem:

I am a promise
I am a possibility
I am a promise
With a capital 'P'

After reciting this poem a number of times, adding actions expressing determination, the teacher spoke about reaching one's full potential, as a choice which each one has. The lesson then focussed on how every human being is the same in the way we all begin as a single cell and in that we all are given the same body structure. She said that this is what makes us equal as human beings, despite the differences in the way we grow and look.

Then a poster of the human skeleton and the muscles that cover it is pinned onto the board. The teacher asked the students questions regarding the poster, moving on to doing some movements to become aware of muscles and bones. She wanted to bring in feelings of gratitude and wonder about the human body, telling me "so that the children do not take things for granted."

The lesson concluded with groups of students looking at projects done by a previous Grade 7 class, in which they had followed the stages of development from being a single cell, to further development in the womb, birth, growth, adulthood, to finally old age and death, making a collage of words, drawings, photographs and pictures from magazines or the internet. The students were very impressed by these projects, reading and discussing them avidly.

I was struck, in the teachers' lessons I was privileged to attend, by their sincere wish to convey the social and moral aspects of life.

Regrettably, to date, there have not been any research projects to evaluate the effectiveness of Life Orientation/Life Skills lessons in schools, whether it has made a difference to students' lives, their social and emotional wellbeing, or whether it has improved the behavioural and learning climate in the schools.

Case Study 2: Living Healthy and Happy Lives - A Rural Development Project

Carmen Clews, a former business entrepreneur, living in the 'Garden Route' on the southern coast of South Africa, runs a proj-

noons, which more children than she can accommodate have asked to attend.

Carmen's approach is eclectic, using ideas from diverse approaches. In particular, her work is inspired by Marshall Rosenberg's *Non-violent Communication – a Language for Life* (Rosenberg, 2009) and Brandon Bays' *The Journey – A Practical Guide to Healing Your Life and Setting Yourself Free*. (Bays, 2003).

Non-violent Communication

Carmen found that the way children were communicating with each other, particularly at two of the schools in the area, was extremely reactive and violent. In seeking ways

As there is not enough time for intensive/fuller Life Skills sessions in the school timetables, Carmen has run voluntary groups ... in the afternoons, which more children than she can accommodate have asked to attend.

ect called 'Living Healthy and Happy Lives' that concerns itself with the wellbeing of children in the area. In this beautiful rural coastal Coloured and White families live in their separate communities.

Carmen offers 'Tree of Life' lessons (Clews 2011) to state schools in the area, in the local Coloured communities. In addition, she has been involved in training and assisting Life Skills teachers in these schools to run more *engaging and meaningful* Life Skills lessons. As there is not enough time for intensive/fuller Life Skills sessions in the school timetables, Carmen has run voluntary groups (once a week, in one school, for a period of 8 months in 2012) in the after-

of dealing with this challenging situation, she engaged in research, finding and studying Non-Violent Communication (NVC). Crucial to Carmen's work is the NVC principle that children learn to express themselves more mindfully by connecting to and expressing their feelings. This also has the effect of encouraging the other person to be more accommodating.

Carmen has been teaching NVC in four classes through role playing of relevant situations, which allows children to experience for themselves how non-violent ways of handling conflicts work and how effectively NVC can defuse potentially harmful situations.

'Tree of Life' Lessons

Carmen (Clews 2012) has created a long series of lessons (25 x 50 minute lesson plans spread over a school year) for covering the variety of life skills themes in the National Curriculum. These lessons use experiential approaches to exploring life skill topics, using storytelling, visualisation, and the arts to balance cognitive input and discussion with more emotion-based and creative activities. The aim is to involve the whole of the child, both in the thinking mind and in the emotions and feelings, to enable them to regularly express themselves emotionally in a safe and nurturing environment.

Specifically designed for 12- to 14-year-olds, each session consists of a selection of the following activities, depending on the topic:

- 'Energy activating' exercises which activate the vital 'chi energy' (found in acupuncture, martial arts, yoga, etc.) to flow through the body – this allows for better concentration and learning in class
- An input by the facilitator and/or discussion on a particular topic
- A visualisation of about 5 – 10 minutes to enter into a relaxed, restoring, quiet space and creatively imagine certain qualities on the session's topic (such as the importance of 'being brave' of 'being grateful', of 'being able to forgive'), developing a state of 'mindfulness' in the children.
- The telling of a story from a series commissioned by Carmen, all about the Tree of Life, in which the lesson's topic is woven into the story (available from carmen@1010creative.com)
- A creative activity e.g. collage, songs, role playing, so as to integrate the message with an activity that brings the concept into the students' own personal lives and situations
- Time for personal or group sharing
- Reflection on what was learnt in the

previous week's lesson. For example, if last week was about forgiveness – the students can give any examples of how they brought that into their day-to-day lives. Each week this brings about a development in conscious awareness to watch out for ways they can use what they have learnt in their day-to-day life.

Some feedback from teaching the 'Tree of Life' lesson plans comes from the principal of one of the primary schools, who said, "The children have definitely learned something from your classes. There have been far fewer incidences of petty crime and children have not been sent to the office as frequently for reprimanding." (26 October, 2012)

The Journey – The Conscious Classroom

Carmen assists a child psychologist, Carol Surya (2012), in running a 'Journey – Conscious Classroom' programme, based on the work of Brandon Bays (Bays, 2003) in the schools in which she works. Carol has been trained via Brandon Bays and 'Journey South Africa' (2010) as a Journey Practitioner and Conscious Classroom facilitator, to run the 'Kids Classroom Journey' programme in schools. As with all Journey process work, the approach uses a guided visualisation method. The Kids Classroom process allows one to work with groups of up to twenty students at a time, so that many more young people can be supported in their emotional growth, as every student is processing his or her emotions at the same time in a safe and 'held' space. The process includes uncovering and releasing past painful emotions, and internalizing positive, helpful resources, thus strengthening the students emotionally.

Given the huge need for healing of children in South Africa, and life skills development in schools, this approach could be a useful way to go. It is intended that life skills teachers and teacher psychologists attached to schools

could undergo a short and intensive training in this approach, and make use of it in their schools.

It is not possible to describe an entire session, due to its length. Here are some of its salient parts, from my observations:

I attended two Journey process sessions of the Conscious Classroom programme led by Carol. A class of 12-year-olds was brought onto the stage of the empty school hall, the only quiet and available space in the school. They are all Afrikaans-speaking students, and were sitting quietly and expectantly for the session to start. Clearly they knew that this was going to be something very different from their normal school day.

Carol started by introducing herself as a 'doctor of feelings' and doing a feelings elicitation activity. One student wisely told the rest of the class that she is a 'psychologist'. In introducing the subject of feelings, Carol drew four circles on the board. Taking one circle at a time, she drew the eyes and mouth of the "face", asking which emotion it portrayed. The first was happiness, followed by sadness, anger and fear. The children were right there with her, naming the feelings portrayed and on being asked, "have you had these feelings in your life?" answered with a very positive "yes".

Carol explained that we store our feelings, even if we have forgotten about them, somewhere in our body. This seemed to be a new idea to the students. Carol drew a human figure on the board, and asking them about sadness, anger, and fear in turn, "where do you feel this emotion?" Interesting responses came from the students, "in the heart, in the entire body, in the stomach" and so on.

These were then drawn as dark areas into the human figure on the board. Interesting responses arose from asking what students were afraid of: one child said "ghosts," another "dogs" and yet another referred to "snakes."

Finally, after telling the students that we need to cleanse our body of these old, 'bad' feelings, Carol explained that they will go on an inner journey into their bodies to find, using imaginary torches, such a feeling that has been hidden there from sometime from the past. As the group was too large, one half would do the journey first, the others going back to the classroom till it would be their turn. The half group (of about twelve students) were asked to spread themselves in the space available, away from each other. Carol asked them to whisper when asked to speak, so that their neighbours could not hear what they were saying. She explained to them that when they speak something, it can be let go of.

The stage curtains were drawn to create a mood of privacy and enclosure. The visualisation began as follows: "Well, this is a different kind of adventure ... a journey in which you will be making a journey right into your own body." They were asked to close their eyes throughout the journey, and to prepare themselves by taking a deep breath, in and out. This was repeated three times so that they could relax.

The visualisation led them to go into their bodies, feeling a light-filled warmth wherever they went. They are told they will meet a 'superhero' or angel of their own choice, arising out of their own imagination, who is waiting behind a door they need to open. Interestingly, a

few boys actually move their hands in opening their imaginative doors. Several children are completely relaxed, but a few are tensed up. Girl 1 is leaning back on her chair, with arms outstretched on her legs, her hands in fists. Boy 1 is sitting rather stiffly, with his arms folded against his body. Girl 2 is sitting hunched forward, and boy 2 is a little restless, rubbing his face from time to time.

They are accompanied by their superhero to find, somewhere in their bodies, a "bad feeling" and related hurtful memory from the past. The processing of this hurt is made easier by giving the 'younger' them (who experienced the pain) imaginary balloons which serve as internal resources which would have helped them cope better with the painful experience at the time, in order to strengthen them:

"Your superhero or angel presents you with a beautiful bunch of balloons, and each balloon is filled with a special gift of inner strength that would have helped you at that time. Let us see what each balloon holds ... what about love? Now (imaginatively) untie the knot of the balloon and breathe in deeply the love that is contained in it." The students all take a deep breath, drawing in the love, and let it out again. Then follow balloons with courage, the ability to speak, to be kind.

The students are relaxing now. Even those who were tense, relax to some extent. Girl 1 relaxes her arms, and her face looks less stressed than before. As the process proceeds, she tenses again, returning to her clenching position, but less tightly than originally. Clearly, things are moving inside her. In boy 1 the only visible change is one hand has moved to

his heart (everyone was asked to do this at a certain point) and has stayed there. Girl 2 is less hunched, and boy 2 is calmer.

Throughout the process the students are asked to "empty out" the feelings they experienced at the time by whispering. Carol keeps a check to see that this continues, as according to Brandon Bays' Journeywork approach, only when speaking it out can painful feelings of the past be released from the deepest level. If a student is no longer moving his or her lips, Carol whispers in the student's ear to keep on speaking it out, so that the body may be cleansed of this feeling. Only a few students need this reminder or encouragement to continue.

The process continues with the 'younger self' (who experienced the hurtful incident) re-experiencing the memory, this time with access to the internal resources they were given, by visualizing the event as if on a television screen. The students, accompanied by their superhero or angel, then allow their younger selves to meet with and empty out verbally their experience with the person that hurt them, around a campfire. They are guided to speak out the hurt that was done, and to realise that the person tried to do his or her best whilst in pain him or herself.

Through dialogue the younger self can come to forgiveness (or at least a level of forgiveness). Finally, they visualise the younger self merging with their present self and returning the way they had come. They hug their superhero and greet him or her, knowing his or her continued presence. They are then guided out of the visualisation and come back to normal life by opening their eyes.



Figure 2: Drawing of herself by a student in the class at the end of the visualisation process. First face: 'Voor; Ongelukkig' (Before, Unhappy); Second face: 'Na, Gelukkig' (After, Happy)

Clearly the students gained a lot from the visualisation. When asked if they would want to do it on a weekly basis, they enthusiastically said "yes!" Girl 1 looked particularly relieved and happy. Girl 2 seemed to be serene and Boy 2 is chatting happily with his friends. Now they were invited to draw 'before and after' visualisation pictures, in which each student showed a positive response to the session.

Carol walked over to Boy 1 to have a long conversation while the others were drawing. In cases where a student showed further need of counselling, this would be provided by Carol. She has offered counselling to students in more severely damaged communities in other parts of South Africa. A warm interchange happened between Carol and each student as they hand her their drawings, a little discussion taking place in each case.

It strikes me that there is an important place in schools for a professional like Carol, to whom the students are able to warm to so readily, and who has no previous history with any of the children, to provide them with this or a similar kind of self-exploration work. The students learn, from their own experience, that entering into one's own inner space and meeting feelings such as hurt, fear or anxiety is a healthy process and that by a process of 'meeting' these feelings, they can be released, bringing relief and healing. The students also become used to having access to their emotional lives, something that is mostly not learned at home or at school.

The Journey - Conscious Classroom Programme began in 2004. A formal evaluation was carried out by Dr N.D.Gopal, University of KwaZulu-Natal, during its pilot programme in 2004. Learners, educators, principals of schools and parents/caregivers were asked to answer questionnaires regarding their experiences of the programme.

The table below represents learner responses in percentages of their perceptions of themselves with reference to the Journey Programme. Sample of 376 learners, from Grade 4 - 7 (ages approximately 10 - 13 years) in KwaZulu-Natal Province. (Gopal, 2004)

Overall, educators rated the Journey Programme highly. One hundred percent of the educators had intensive training and the majority of the respondents are confident in teaching the programme and have a pedagogic understanding of the programme. The ma-

Table 4: Learner Responses In Percentages Of Their Perceptions Of Themselves With Reference To The Journey Programme (Gopal, 2004:13)

	No	Little	Some	Much	Big
To what Extent have your Academic Results Improved as a Result of the Journey Programme?	1	7	17	37	38
Relationship With Friends	3	3	10	32	52
Relationship With Family	2	3	7	17	71
Relationship With Educators	2	4	10	34	50
Per Learning Area					
English	1	8	20	41	30
Afrikaans/Isizulu	2	5	5	31	57
Mathematics	2	6	17	34	41
Natural Science 4 10 24 45 19	4	10	24	45	19
Economic Management Sciences	1	9	22	40	28
Human And Social Sciences	3	9	18	37	33
Life Orientation	2	7	17	32	42
Arts And Culture	5	9	17	33	36
Technology	4	6	23	35	32

The evaluation report draws the following conclusions:

Overall the Journey Programme impacted the learners positively. The majority of learners indicated that their academic results and social skills had improved tremendously. This augurs well for the Journey Programme as we are able to see the benefits on the learners, which far outweighs the disadvantages. (Gopal, 2004:13)

majority also found the manuals useful and the language accessible. All respondents believed that the Journey Programme should be included in the national school curriculum and the majority agreed that the Department of Education should take on the responsibility of training educators. (Gopal, 2004:9)

A further pilot project took place in 2007, involving 16,152 learners in schools, aged 6 to 18 years, across four provinces. The report

outlines the circumstances of children in the areas visited as follows:

At present South Africa has inadequate access to the healing process. A wide range of issues had been experienced by participants such as rape, murder, death of parents, HIV, abandonment, loneliness, etc. Some towns have approximately 60 deaths per week and as a result of this many children are left unable to support themselves adequately, attending school hungry, with feelings of not belonging and without choice in their lives. (Journey Outreach – Africa, 2007:6)

integrating intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual (i.e. that which brings about lasting values and meaningfulness in life) education from early childhood to adulthood.

In early childhood up to about 9 years of age, social and emotional education is not regarded as a separate development of skills to be taught and learned, but is intrinsically part of every aspect of the daily programme. All teaching is to be imbued with moral values, to be lived and felt by teachers and children alike, but not explained or taught. As Bo Dahlin (2008:20-22) states in relation to the case studies in his report:

In early childhood up to about 9 years of age, social and emotional education is not regarded as a separate development of skills to be taught and learned, but is intrinsically part of every aspect of the daily programme.

Schools in which the programme had taken place were asked to provide the results of students' improvements or lack of improvements in their exams after the Journey work they had been through. In Primary schools, the average percentage pass rate increased by 19.4% after the Journey Process (based on a sample of 2,668 learners). In Secondary schools the average percentage pass rate increased by 34.2% after the Journey Process (sample of 2,027 learners). (Journey Outreach – Africa, 2007:14)

... the Steiner Waldorf approach to social and emotional education would be classified as mainly indirect, emphasising values rather than particular skills.

The entire curriculum from playgroup (children of 2 and 3 years of age), kindergarten (4 to 6 years of age) to primary and secondary school (up to age 18 or 19) aims to develop human values and human feeling towards all that exists, as a basis for social and emotional sensitivity and wellbeing.

Case Study 3: Social and Emotional Education in Steiner/Waldorf Schools in South Africa

In Steiner/Waldorf schools, great importance is laid on the holistic development of children,

Steiner's theory of child development maintains that only from about 12 years of age, when a new developmental stage of intellectual awakening starts to happen of its own accord, are children ready to understand and

discuss issues in a more conscious way. Before this time, children are best left to learn about social and emotional learning in *indirect* ways, as mentioned above. (Steiner, 1996b:99-111)

This does not mean that *direct* interventions are not needed in the educational process. In South African society children need to be continually alerted to avoid getting themselves into unsafe situations such as molestation, rape, child trafficking and drugs from a very early age. Children may be subject to disruptions at home or in the community, breakdown in marriages, displacement, no regular home and lack of adequate parenting, etc., as explained earlier in the introduction.

Steiner (1996a, 1996b) emphasises that children between about 7 to 14 years need to be taught through “feeling” and “imagination”, recommending that teachers present

learning (van Alphen, 2011). The use of storytelling, metaphors, humour, artistic and hands-on craft activities have the potential to transform every aspect of the curriculum into positive, developmental ways through which children grow and learn.

This indirect approach to developing social and emotional growth is supported in every part of the educational process, engendering *habits* in children of always integrating positive emotion with their intentions and actions. Sensitivity towards self and others, flexibility and acceptance become a natural way of being.

Waldorf Pre-school Education

The Centre for Creative Education (CCE) was established in Cape Town in 1993, one of its main activities being to bring holistic and creative education to educare centres (i.e. centres that *care* for babies and toddlers as well as the *education* of three- to five-year-

Educare centres are mostly opened by concerned township women with no training in childcare and pre-school education, in order to care for young children whose parents are working during the day.

everything they teach to be full of feeling and presented in creative, imaginative ways. This is to avoid children learning with the *head* only, and ensuring that they learn with *head, heart and hands* in an integrated way. (van Alphen, 2011:24)

The work of Kieran Egan (1997, 2005) echoes that of Steiner, requiring the teacher to transform mere factual or mechanical learning into imaginative and heart-felt

olds) in *township* communities (both informal slum and built-up settlements) around the city. (Centre for Creative Education, 2013)

Educare centres are mostly opened by concerned township women with no training in childcare and pre-school education, in order to care for young children whose parents are working during the day. They cater for babies of six months to school-ready children. To date 305 women have qualified as early



childhood education carers and teachers, using Waldorf approaches. These qualifications are government approved, according to its Further Education and Training Standards. (Centre for Creative Education, 2012)

Ikwezi Lokusa Educare Centre

One such person who attended these training programmes is Zoleka Khutshwa, a dynamic person of her community living in one of the “townships” around Cape Town. She founded her own Educare centre in the year 2000, caring for and educating children from 6 months to 5 or 6 years, in four groups:

- 6 months – 2 years: babies and toddlers group (16 children, 2 carers)
- 2 – 3 ½ years: play group (36 children, 2 teachers, 1 volunteer)
- 3 ½ – 5 or 6 years: kindergarten (32 children, 2 teachers, 1 volunteer)

The volunteers are young students from Germany who work one year in an educare centre as assistants.

Zoleka (2013) describes the area in which she lives as follows:

The children need more security, they need love, they need a good environment, which they don't have at home. We are in a risky area. Crime is too much, gangsters are there, we find out they are shooting out of nowhere, the children are very afraid. Every day they need to feel they are safe here, have that love, because parents only are with them for a short time. We are here from 7 in the morning till 5 or 6 o'clock. We are trying to fill those gaps which the children don't have. The children are very much restricted at home. If they live in a shack area, they have to stay indoors for safety reasons. We want them to feel free here, to do whatever they want to do.

Most children come from shack areas, in some places every time there are fires, fighting (even if not in shack area) especially around the taverns, a lot of swearing. This is not a good way of living. If we raise our voice to a particular child, they are really scared. Some children see a lot of violence, also at home.

Against this backdrop, Zoleka and her fellow teachers provide an enriching programme in a safe, gentle environment.

In Zoleka's pre-school, indirect social and emotional education happens through:

“The children are very much restricted at home. If they live in a shack area, they have to stay indoors for safety reasons.” (Zoleka Khutshwa, 2013).



- **Providing beautiful, cared-for surroundings.** Zoleka's two classrooms are painted a beautiful orange colour, providing a warm and welcoming indoor environment for the children. A lot more is needed in the classroom, which will be added as and when finances allow (the centre is partly financed per child by the Department of Social Services, but for the rest by parent contributions and fundraising).
- **Children are guided and encouraged by the teacher to take part in caring for and beautifying their surroundings.** In Zoleka's educare centre, the children are involved in a gardening project. As their grounds are very small, the vegetable garden is small, and the soil is sandy and dry, but the fact is that the children experience the cycle of planting, caring for and finally harvesting vegetables. At present, spinach is growing, which the children themselves will be eating.
- **Continuous examples of positive human behaviour in the actions and attitudes by those who take care of children,** with the emphasis on respect for others, acceptance of differences between people and awareness of gratitude and wonder for all creation. Zoleka has been fully trained at CCE, and is partially employed to carry out mentoring of its trainees in other educare centres. The other teachers at Ikwezi Lokusa are currently in training. All are caring human beings, inspired by the ideals of positive human behaviour. The children seem happy and well, living without fear of being hit or shouted at. I saw loving attention given to them, allowing them to blossom and have faith in the goodness of their world.

I witnessed **story-time** at the end of the morning, before lunch was served. There was quiet anticipation as the oldest group



of children (3 ½ - 5/6 year-olds) lined up to go into the classroom. At the educare centre they live in a secure, daily rhythm of activities, so they know that story-time is a special moment of the day. The room has been prepared for the children before they enter, the chairs placed in a circle. The children are quiet and calm as they hear the story and watch the puppets being moved accordingly. At the end of the story, they remain sitting enraptured ... until the teacher starts to lead them outside.

- Later in the day, **arts and craft activities take place.** The emphasis is on creating *beautiful* items, having a soothing and healing effect on all children, and giving them a sense of achievement.

The working together of teachers and parents to create the best possible environment for their upbringing, given their circumstances, is crucial and community-building is at the heart of pre-school education, to try as far as possible to provide a continuous approach between home and school. Zoleka says:

It is not really difficult to work with children, the worst part is to work with their parents. They don't understand child development, what it is all about. I have to workshop them every time, they have to understand ... it is not just because they have to go to work, and their children

need looking after ... Sometimes we find that their child is having a really abusive time at home, and the parent does not understand that. They don't want us to visit their homes, you just have to go.

Some children come from reasonably good homes. Their parents are really supportive of the school. They also talk to the other parents. At the first parents meeting, these parents each sit next to a new parent. They help to explain how this educare is different from others. Some parents just send their children to school, but a few are really interested and very committed.

Zoleka involves the parents of the educare children as much as possible. She holds workshops in which parents are taught various crafts; when something needs to be fixed or when a building project is undertaken, parents not working offer to help; the fundraising group and board members are parents who volunteer their time and efforts to sustain the school.

Zoleka organises parent education by giving workshops on parenting and child development; clinic workers are invited to speak at these workshops about child health; there is a parliamentary worker, who ensures that the educare centre gains first priority in new parliamentary projects. Huge efforts are made to try to involve parents in the centre and get them to understand in which ways this educare facility is different from others.

The educare leaders and teachers live in dire circumstances, in poverty and in generally unhygienic areas. Yet, they are women with a purpose and a pride, and, using whatever meagre resources they can gather, take on the children in their communities to bring about change in their lives. They receive some financial support from government

The educare leaders and teachers live in dire circumstances, in poverty and in generally unhygienic areas. Yet, they are women with a purpose and a pride, and, using whatever meagre resources they can gather, take on the children in their communities to bring about change in their lives.

sources, so that they are able to feed these children one substantial meal per day. For the rest, the community has to support them financially, so that they can continue caring for and educating the young children.

The four-year part-time training at the Centre for Creative Education that these township women have gone through was designed by Ann Sharfman, early childhood expert and teacher educator, who created *experiential activities* for understanding the developmental stages of childhood. Through the arts and a philosophical exploration of what it is to be human, and what is needed by children to grow into moral, empowered adults, the women found their own self-worth and dignity as human beings. This ignited their passion to provide a healing and empowering education for the children in their own communities, overcoming the odds they have to face to do so.

A Waldorf Primary School

For this part of the case study I visited a school that caters for mostly advantaged, upper-middle class families, with plentiful parent interest and involvement in their children's education. It is a well-developed school, has been in existence for more than 50 years, and continues to hold an inten-

sive artistic tradition according to Steiner/Waldorf principles.

One teacher in this school, David Garb (2012), through his interest in social and emotional development of youth, began in the early 1990's to run workshops for adolescent students in the school. His concern for the emotional well-being of these students was dramatically intensified through an accident on a class camp, in which a 13-year-old girl in his class suffered severe head injuries and died shortly afterwards. David had to do extensive loss and grief counselling with the students of this class, the parents of the young girl and the parents of the students.

David's work arises from an understanding of adolescent needs,

in which a new awareness and an urge to explore is born in young people from age 13 onwards. They learn to deal with different events and pressures through hit-or-miss situations ... Many of the problems that arise during adolescence can be alleviated through providing communication and relationship skills learning for young people. Current research finds that workshop learning experiences are the most effective means

Many of the problems that arise during adolescence can be alleviated through providing communication and relationship skills learning for young people. (Garb, 2012).

of providing relevant social skills learning for adolescents.

The aim of these social skills workshops is to equip young people with skills that will enable them to effectively deal with relationships – with others, and with themselves – and to encourage them to show responsibility and independence in dealing with the social issues that arise throughout life. (Garb, 2012)

The students themselves, and their respective parents, find a great deal of value in these workshops, which take place as short, intensive one-week events once a year. His work was taken up by another innovative teacher, Leigh Whitesman, at a sister school, out of a recognition that all children, already before adolescence, need to develop awareness of their emotions and social interactions, and that they need to develop an extensive language to express these. Accordingly, children from about age 10 can participate in creative ways of exploring, discussing, drawing, dramatizing emotions and social relations.

This approach helps to prepare children for the turbulent times that pre-adolescence (12–14 years) and adolescence itself (especially 15–17 years) can bring, laying a foundation for emotional and social awareness. In view of the enormous impact of modern life, with the attraction of media, drugs and sexuality, it is felt that the Waldorf curriculum, though designed to support the process of individuation and a healthy emotional life through extensive use of the imagination and the arts in learning, needs to be supplemented with facilitating students to have a more conscious awareness of their emotional and social lives.

Yvonne Herring (2013), a parenting trainer, in collaboration with Leigh Whitesman, is the life skills teacher in the first school mentioned above, providing a one-lesson-a-week programme in Grades 4 to 7 (10 to 13 year-olds). Her work with this age-group culminates in Grade 7 with an intensive week's early morning programme in conflict resolution.

Yvonne walks into the Grade 4 class (10-year-olds) towards the end of a morning of learning. They are a little noisy and scattered, and she

... all children, already before adolescence, need to develop awareness of their emotions and social interactions, and ... they need to develop an extensive language to express these.



Figure 3. Two samples of posters displaying the drawings made by Grade 4 children

needs to somehow gather their attention. Surprisingly, her voice just reaching over the noise of the class, the children become quiet, wondering what will happen in this lesson.

Yvonne starts by showing the class the results of the two previous week's sessions, during which these children were introduced to social and emotional education for the first time. Yvonne seems to have the knack of doing things very simply, but effectively. In the first session she started by simply asking the class, "What are feeling words?" A class discussion followed about expressing feelings, and two examples of feelings, angry and sad, had been thoroughly talked about.

After the discussion, each child was given two paper squares to draw his or her idea of the two feelings they had explored: they were not allowed to draw any kind of person, but only choose a colour that expresses the emotion and shape it the way they feel it. In the session that followed the discussion went into further emotions, and the children now drew the feelings of happy, afraid and kind.

Yvonne had stuck all the children's squares onto large sheets of cardboard, as posters for displaying in their classroom. The children looked at their own squares and those of others. There was a lot of bubbly, excited talking, but soon they knew something different was about to happen.

Yvonne said that they would now mime "feeling words" and that each child would get a feeling word written on a piece of paper. The children were allowed to each choose a partner, and could only share their word with their partner, nobody else! Partners then were to discuss with each other how they could mime their word in front of the class. They could either mime a little scene together, or each do their own scene, and then the rest of the class had to guess the feeling word.

One child made moves to exchange her word for someone else's, to which Yvonne said a very definite, "no!" Soon hands were going up of those who were ready to start, the usual eager beavers. But Yvonne decides she will give quieter pairs a chance first, starting at the back of the class.

"So here we go! Shh!" The children have all decided to mime in their pairs, and although their miming skills are generally poor, with quite a number of children being unable to stop from being self-conscious and smiling, the class often got to the word quite quickly: they were good at guessing!

Words such as peaceful, sad, brave, selfish, being upset, irritated, bored, afraid, kept everyone on their toes for a long time. Gradually some children 'switch off' and start playing with their crayons, or talking to their

neighbour, and then as soon as a tough word is mimed, they suddenly look up. For example, their guesses:

annoying
angry
horrible

and finally the correct guess:

spiteful!

Yvonne managed to get through the presentations of the whole class of 26 children, which was a feat considering the short attention span younger children often have at the end of a morning's work. The lesson then ended. In the next sessions, Yvonne will be working on self-affirmation, starting by asking the children to draw self-portraits of themselves.

Teacher Development: The Way Forward

In the South African scenario, and the case studies described, the vital question is, "What kind of teachers are needed to bring healing

development are needed to empower all teachers to use *experiential ways* of facilitating the learning of life skills.

The largest difficulty in achieving this is the development of the needed skills in existing teachers, whose training in the past has been in the delivery of content rather than facilitating *learning experiences* in their work with children. Students in classrooms can best learn *from their own experience*: this means that teachers need to understand how to create these learning experiences. *Instructing* their students in social and emotional issues, is likely to cause both teacher and children to see these as a subject to be learnt (and subsequently forgotten!), like other subjects in the school curriculum.

In many cases, especially with adolescent students, whole class discussions with a teacher and group discussions with peers, help to make social and emotional issues discussible and therefore more effective. Experience shows, however, that sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, and social behaviour do not nec-

What kind of teachers are needed to bring healing and resilience to children, given the current state of affairs in South Africa?

and resilience to children, given the current state of affairs in South Africa?"

Clearly, schools have a vast role to play in the social and emotional education of the country's children, and yet only a few teachers, mostly in privileged schools, have the skills and insights that will enable them to do this *effectively and meaningfully*. Broader and more innovative approaches to teacher

essarily change, as students do not have a firm foundation of values from their families, peers and community, and so the cycle of the same issues often continues.

Teacher education for younger children - pre-school and primary school up to about 11 or 12 years of age - needs to include both imaginative ways of teaching and learning (story-telling, story-making, metaphoric

thinking, eco-thinking) as well as a broad development of artistic skills (singing, music, speech and drama, movement, drawing, painting and clay modelling) so that every teacher can use these to integrate cognitive learning with a more affective component in learning the curriculum. Teachers do not have to be experts in these artistic fields, but need to have enough experience themselves to be able to include artistic activities in their daily lesson plans.

Professor Karin Murris (2009) of the University of Cape Town is spearheading a multi-dimensional approach in teaching and learning for children: a new programme for educating teachers for the Foundation Phase (children from 6 to 9 years) is due to begin in 2014, focussing on the heightening and enhancing of cognitive learning through stories, imagination and the arts; the use of philosophy with children; and evidence-based learning and development of critical thinking.

An existing model of arts and imagination based teacher education for class teaching (all subjects, for 7 to 12 year-olds) has been running for 20 years at the Centre for Creative Education (2013), offering a government approved B.Ed. degree since 2004. Co-operation with Professor Murris's programme is in the pipeline.

Improved, more broadly skilled teacher education, as described above, will have a profound effect on the teaching of social and emotional education. Its contents and skills can then be learnt in experiential and truly transformative ways, aiding the progress towards a more emotionally sensitive and morally strong nation.

Conclusion

In South Africa, a greater vision in the field of social and emotional education is needed, starting from the earliest ages. Parent educa-

tion for the needs of babies to feel secure and fully loved, followed by caring and enriched early childhood education needs to become universal throughout the country.

The *experiential* learning of social and emotional education, as described above, is essential for bringing about the transformation that our society most urgently needs. From Case Study 1, we can see how the involvement in carrying out of *projects*, in which students can creatively describe and illustrate a particular life skills topic, inspires a younger class of students who were allowed to see these projects. One can assume that, given the great interest generated, these younger students will be looking forward to doing similar projects when they are in Grade 7.

In Case Study 2 we see the use of *storytelling* as a basis for conveying social and emotional topics, and the use of short, guided visualizations to adopt positive qualities such as 'being brave', 'being grateful' or 'being able to forgive.' A recognition of the need for skilled professionals, as seen above in the Journey – Conscious Classroom project, is very urgent, to bring healing to the upcoming generation while they are still open to change and transformation.

Case Study 3 illustrates the importance of creating a beautiful environment and an enriching curriculum full of stories and imaginative play, as a basis for the holistic development of children in early childhood (6 months to 6 years of age), particularly for children living in disadvantaged situations. For primary school children, the use of the arts as a means of learning about emotions in a more *experiential* way shows an engaging, child-friendly way of teaching life skills.

There is innovation and development happening in South Africa, but it needs to be recognised and promoted. Continuous

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers needs to focus on experiential modes of learning for children to become active learners, constructing their own knowledge of healthy and appropriate ways of leading their lives.

Professional Development (CPD) for teachers needs to focus on experiential modes of learning for children to become active learners, constructing their own knowledge of healthy and appropriate ways of leading their lives. This would require CPD programmes to be offered *experientially* and not through direct transmission. Initial teacher education would likewise need to move from excessively theory-based learning to arts-based and imaginative learning, so that the educators of the future may adopt these modes of teaching in educating children holistically.

Investment in teacher development, as suggested above, could bring both healing and strengthening of children's emotional and social development, as well as promote more effective learning in our schools. The benefits of such investment can bring savings to the country in reduced violence, mental and physical illnesses, a reduction in unemployment and a new level of resolving the issues that are of such concern to all.

Peter van Alphen started his career as a music teacher, but was soon drawn to the creative approaches taken to teaching all subjects in Steiner/Waldorf schools. Then followed 16 years of teaching at Michael Oak Waldorf School in Cape Town, South Africa, as a primary school teacher. During the transition from the *apartheid* regime to a democratic South Africa, Peter pioneered a teacher en-

richment program in the disadvantaged 'township' communities around Cape Town. This led to the establishment of the Centre for Creative Education in 1993, one year before the new democratic government came into being. The aims of the Centre are: to support the development of pre-school carers and teachers in holistic and healing approaches to working with children from 6 months to 5 or 6 years of age to provide teacher education in holistic and creative ways for primary school children between the ages of 6 or 7 to 13 years of age. As co-founder of the Centre, Peter was its managing director for 9 years and was responsible for the development of teacher education programmes. The early childhood work was developed by Ann Sharfman, an expert in this field. From 1997, Peter and Ann began part-time teacher education programmes in East Africa. These programmes have provided Waldorf schools and Waldorf-inspired schools in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with local teachers trained in Waldorf education. Peter specialises in the development of teacher education programmes, adult learning and teacher development in African settings. He was honoured for his work in the African communities near Cape Town by being given the African name of 'Sipho,' meaning 'Gift' in the Xhosa language. Still continuing his work at the Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town and in the teacher development programme in East Africa, Peter is also involved in educational

research. He is passionate about introducing imaginative teaching to all schools, as a way of bringing human values into learning at schools.

Endnotes

- ¹ Piaget maintained that children up to about age twelve are not yet able to think abstractly, and therefore have to be taught in literal, reality-based ways. This idea is opposed by Kieran Egan, who maintains that children have “metaphorical competence” and that the use of the imagination involves “powerful abstractions”. The emphasis on Piaget’s development of logico-mathematical thinking before the age of about twelve “has made the typical elementary classroom less intellectually rich than it should be.” (Egan, 1997:50)
- ² The reader is referred to van Alphen (2011), an article that compares the work of Kieran Egan, Professor of Education at Simon Fraser University, Canada with that of Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Steiner/Waldorf schools

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