

# Management & Leadership

POLICY ■ LEADERSHIP ■ MANAGEMENT ■ GOVERNANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

## A time for reflection

The end of the second term is always a good time to reflect on the progress that you are making in achieving the goals that you may have set for your school at the start of the year. For most schools, subject marks from internal examinations and CASS marks, if included, will have been collated and will provide useful detail on the performance of each individual learner as well as on the performance of class and grade groups. At high schools leadership teams will have pored over the results of their Grade 12 learners in an effort to assess their likely performance in the end-of-year NSC examinations, while at the same time looking to identify candidates who may be in need of additional support. In those provinces and districts where the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results have been released to schools, these will have been used to benchmark the school's own internal assessment with appropriate adjustments being made where necessary.

Claremont High School, which enrolled its first cohort of learners at the start of this year and whose progress we have been chronicling, shared common mid-year examination papers with Westerford High School. Westerford is acting as its 'mentor' school with principal Rob le Roux taking responsibility for the principal's duties at both schools. We were keen to learn whether this arrangement was working in the way the WCED had hoped it would when it embarked on this experiment, and with the co-operation of the two schools have been able to bring you a comparative analysis of the mid-year results of their Grade 8 and 10 learners. As you will see from the article 'Claremont High School: June 2011 report card', the new school is making good progress.

We also carry a full and fairly detailed summary of the Report of the National Planning Commission, which provides the commission's view of the state of this nation. What we liked about the report is its honesty and we would encourage those of our readers who have the time to read the full report. Its views on the current state of public education are frank and fair and the commissioners make it quite clear that the underperformance of our schooling system is hampering the economic development of the country and that if the economy of the country is to grow as it should, schools will need to do a better job in delivering quality education to all children but particularly to those who are poor.

Towards the end of last year the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Managing Education Quality (SACMEQ) released its third project report that provides information on the reading and Mathematics performance of Grade 6 learners from across the region. The data that it provides on the performance levels of the sample of learners it tested from South Africa confirms the views of the National Planning Commission, that the quality of education provided by those schools that are serving our poorest communities is not what it should be.

Also in this issue we introduce you to the writing of Erich Cloete, principal of Laerskool Westerlig, whose article on visionary leadership 'Quality education – go beyond the obvious ... go where nothing is beyond your reach!' we are sure you will enjoy. We plan to include more articles by Erich in the future and would like to encourage our other readers with an interest in writing about issues of educational leadership and management to contribute material to *School Management & Leadership*. ■

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## SM&L

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# Claremont High School: June 2011 report card

## Our report card on the academic performance of Claremont High School to June 2011

As our readers will know, we have been following the performance of Claremont High School since the idea of the school was first mooted in 2010 by the Head of the Western Cape Education Department. The school opened its doors to its first intake of learners in January this year and these learners wrote their first full set of formal examinations towards the end of May. The school has 101 learners enrolled in three Grade 8 classes and one class of 27 learners enrolled in Grade 10. What is unique about this new school, is that it operates under the leadership of Principal Rob le Roux, who is also the principal of Westerford High School.

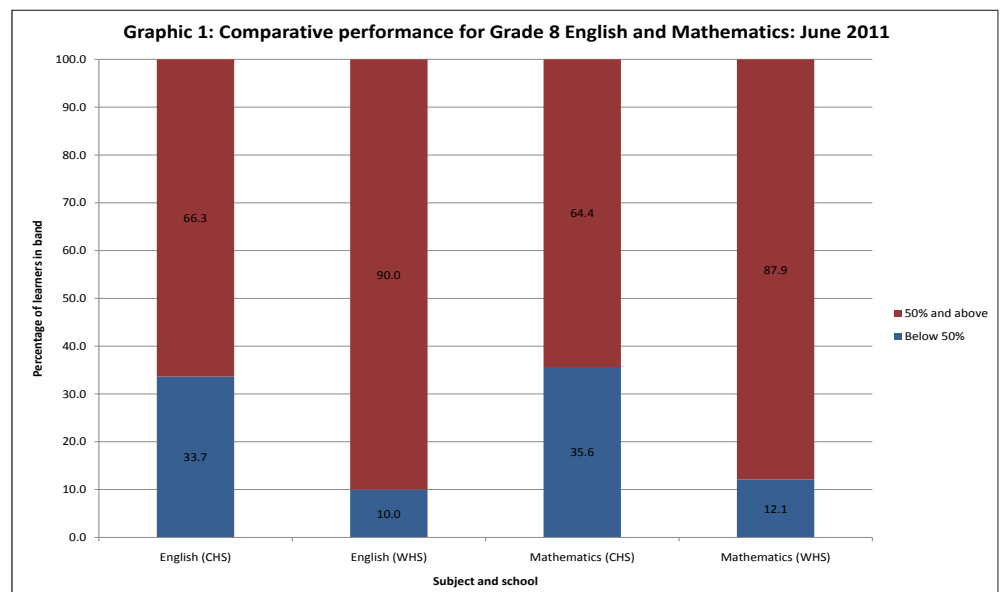
One of the decisions made right at the start by Mr le Roux and his leadership team was that the Claremont teachers would work closely with the Westerford subject teams and under the leadership of the Westerford subject heads. Although this has involved some logistical problems, as the schools are about 2 km apart, all Claremont teachers meet weekly with their Westerford counterparts. It was also decided that learners from the two schools, at least initially, would write common examination papers and that the setting and marking of these papers would be monitored and moderated by Westerford subject heads. The main purpose of these decisions was to ensure that the performance the learners at the new school would be assessed at an appropriate standard and that their marks would represent a valid and accurate measure of their performance.

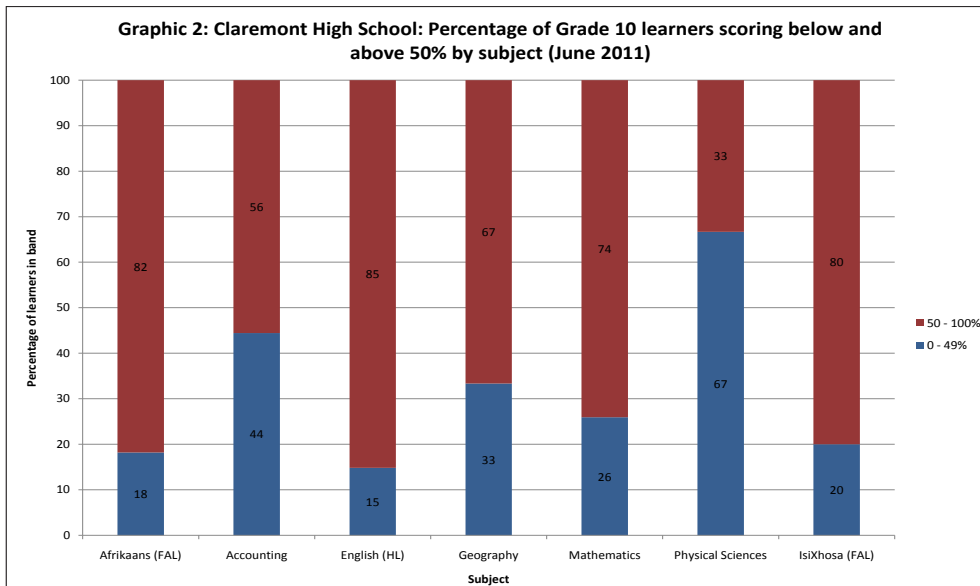
Mr le Roux has kindly provided us with the June results of both schools. We have used this data to make a reasonably detailed analysis of the comparative performance of

learners from both schools and we were most impressed with what we found. Given the fact that Westerford is widely recognised as one of the top academic schools in the country in terms of the performance of its learners in the NSC examinations, one would have expected the results of Westerford's learners to have been significantly better than those of the learners from Claremont. We have prepared the accompanying graphics to illustrate the relative performance of the learners from the two schools. While it is clear from these graphics that Westerford's learners have generally performed better, the results of the Claremont learners clearly show that things are going well and learner performance is already better than at many other schools in the province. This encouraging performance is well illustrated by Graphic 1 and 2.

Graphic 1 compares the performance of Claremont and Westerford Grade 8s in English Home Language and Mathematics. The two coloured sections of each column show the proportion of learners (as a percentage) who scored less than 50% (in blue) and more than 50% (in maroon).

Graphic 2 shows the same breakdown for all Grade 10 subjects offered at Claremont. It clearly illustrates that the majority of learners scored more than 50% in every subject except Physical Sciences. In Mathematics, which is compulsory at the school, 74% of learners scored more than 50% and this is certainly a positive omen for the future for the school, which has been established as a specialist centre for Mathematics and Sciences. It is also worth noting that a mark of 80% in Grade 10 Physical Sciences was achieved by a Claremont learner.

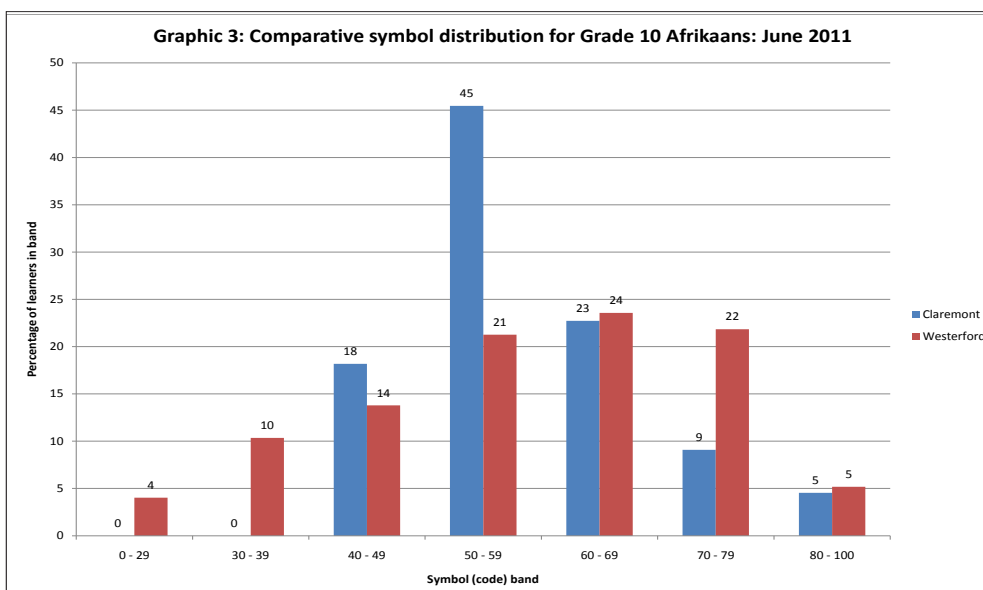


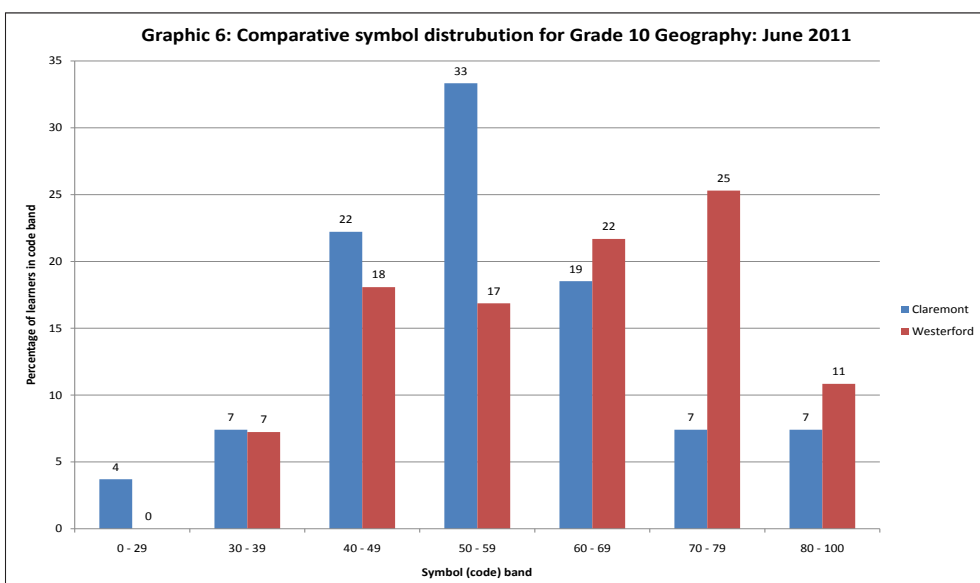
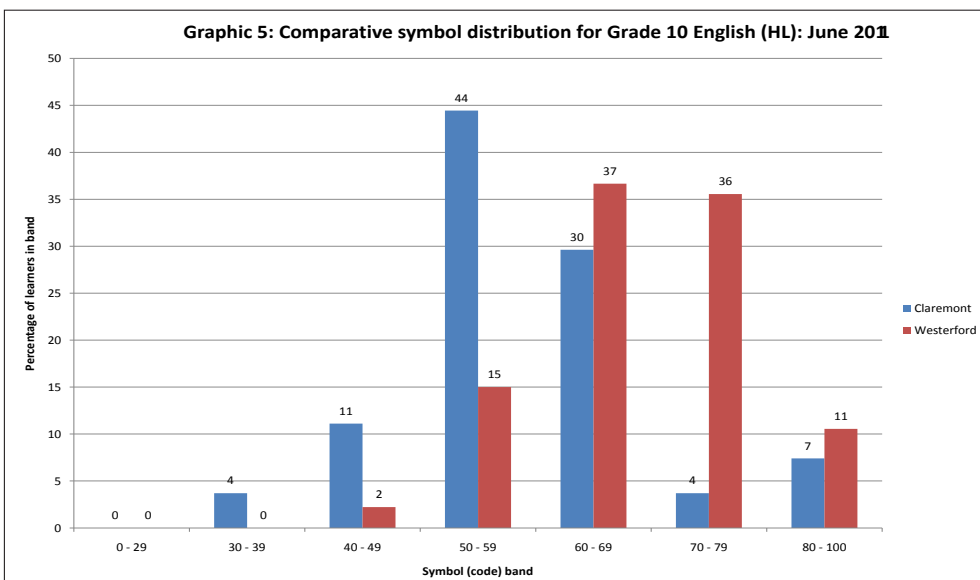
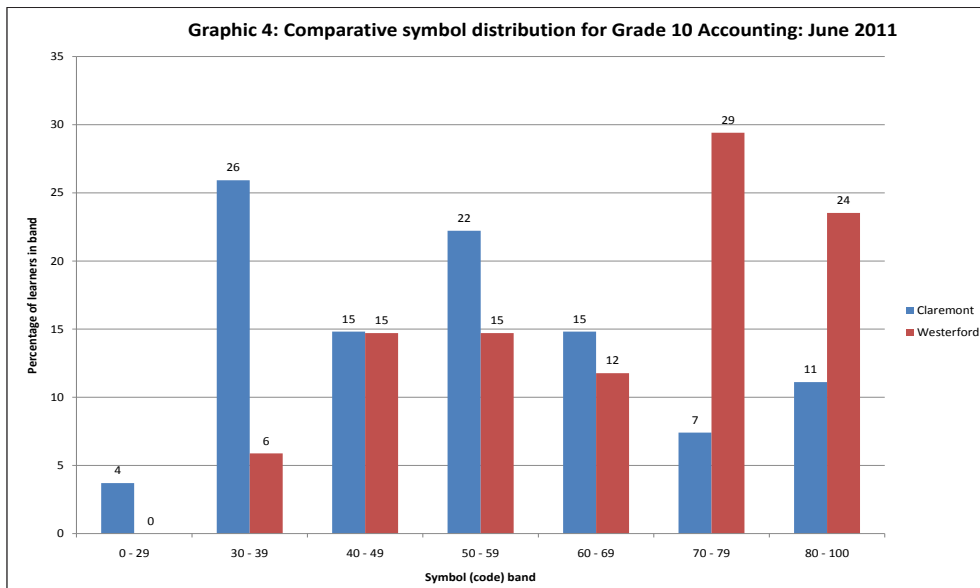


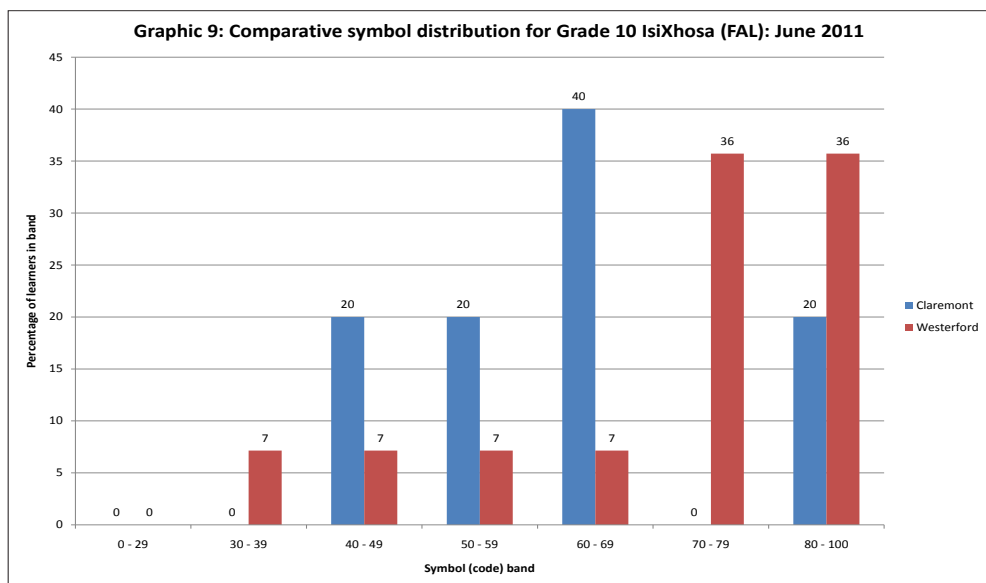
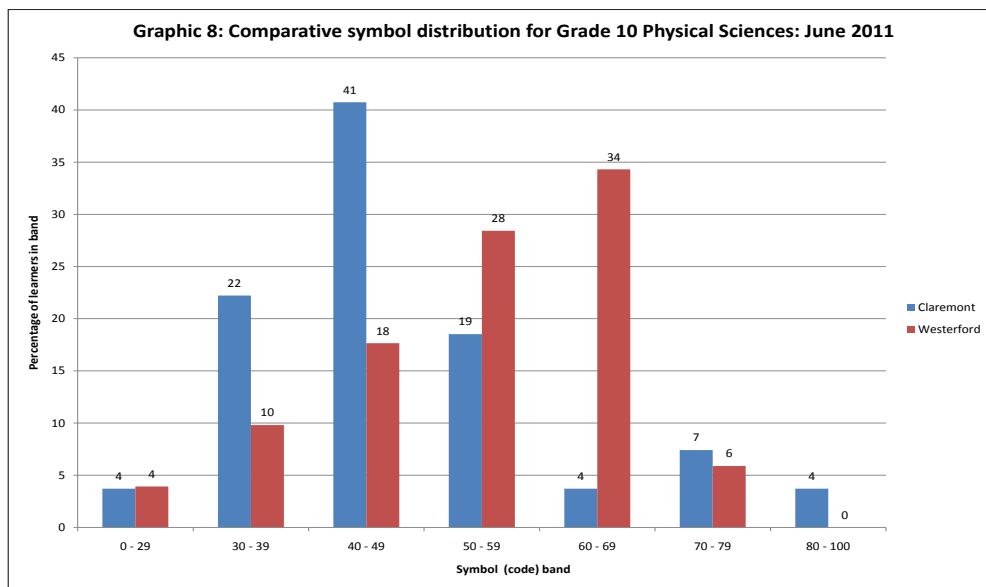
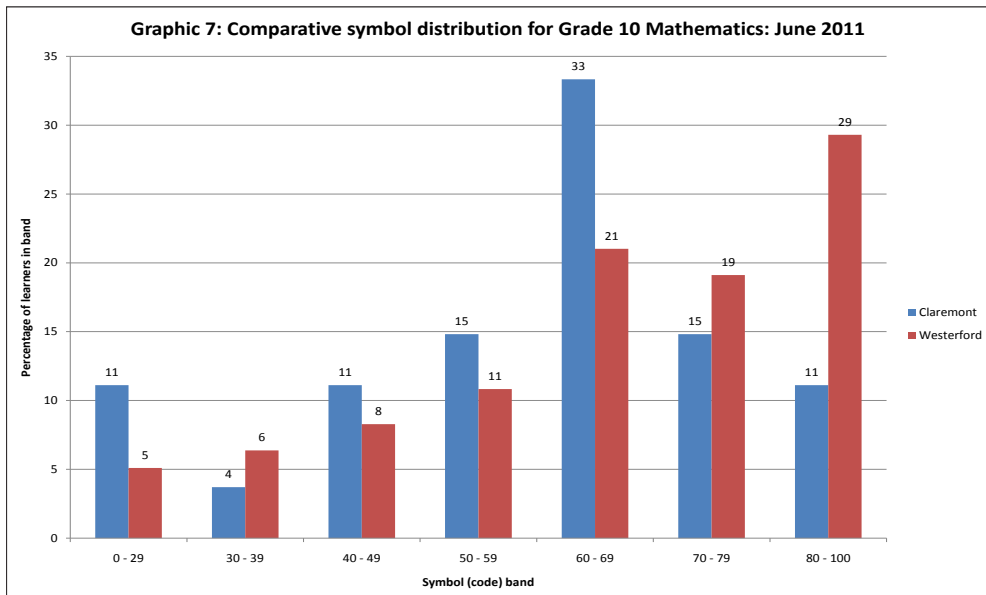
The other graphics (Graphics 3–9) illustrate the comparative symbol distributions for the other subjects offered by Claremont at Grade 10 level. They all show good, solid performances from the majority of Claremont learners with some producing excellent marks in all subjects.

These results, and the manner in which the two schools are working together, are testimony to the benefits and value of this kind of co-operative arrangement between an established, highly functional and successful school, and a school that is just starting out. It is a process that is

likely to ensure that a solid foundation of good practice, rigour and high academic standards will be established at Claremont High, key elements in ensuring that the good progress that it is making will be sustained and its longer-term success assured. It is a model that could and should be used for all newly established schools. It is also a model that, in other parts of the world, has proved to be successful in turning around dysfunctional and underperforming schools. We trust that this will not be the only project of this kind and that the process will be repeated for other new schools and as a mechanism for turning around underperforming schools. ■







# Claremont High School: Reflections on the first few months

Over the past few editions we have been following the progress of Claremont High School (CHS), a new school that opened its doors for the first time this year in the Cape Town suburb of Claremont. What has been different about the founding of Claremont High is the manner in which the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has gone about establishing this new school. What the WCED has done, at least initially, is to establish the school as a kind of satellite campus of Westerford High, which is situated just a few kilometres away. Rob le Roux, the principal of Westerford, is also the principal of Claremont, although the daily operations of the school are the responsibility of Claremont deputy principal Murray Gibbon, who is the most senior member of staff at the Claremont campus. At some time in the future – the time and date have still to be decided – Claremont will get its own principal and will break free from Westerford to operate as a separate and independent entity.

The essential purpose of this innovative initiative is an attempt by the WCED to ensure that the newly evolving school adopts and adapts the systems and good practices that are the cornerstones of Westerford High School and other similar highly successful schools. In early May we met Principal Rob le Roux to find out how things have been going and if there were lessons to be learned from the process so far.

Mr le Roux is extremely positive about the progress that Claremont High has made since it opened in January and particularly about the way in which Murray Gibbon and his staff are working to create a separate identity for the school. The school, which has no sports facilities to speak of other than a small swimming pool, has opted to integrate its extramural programme into the school day, a day that starts at 07:30 and ends at 16:30. All learners and teachers are expected to be at school during these times. The formal academic day is similar to that used by Westerford, starting at 08:00 and ending at 15:00 with 11 30-minute periods and two breaks of either 30 minutes or an hour.

*Given the many challenges that new schools face, particularly those that are built to provide schooling to the children of families that inhabit the sprawling townships that form the urban edge of most of our large cities, it would seem sensible to provide them with the kind of support that Claremont gains from its partnership with Westerford.*

The additional time, from 07:30 to 08:00 and from 15:00 to 16:30, is used for a range of activities including sports and cultural activities, homework classes and academic support for those learners who may need it. Senior learners from Westerford have been actively involved in the presentation of these programmes, including the coaching of sports teams and in taking a lead in the various cultural activities that form part of the programme.

Claremont has also had good support from the Westerford parent body and Claremont's provisional SGB is made up of Westerford parents who have volunteered their services until such time as Claremont is in a position to elect its own representatives. The school has already established its own library courtesy of a Westerford parent volunteer who catalogued the book stock that was provided by the WCED and who also offered her services as the school librarian. The school also has a tuckshop run as a private venture by a parent.

Claremont's academic prog-ramme is closely linked to that of Westerford with Claremont teachers essentially operating as members of Westerford subject teams who meet weekly under the leadership of their Subject Head. The Subject Head is responsible for ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is of an acceptable standard in their subject at both schools. Claremont learners wrote the same mid-year examinations as Westerford learners and their examination scripts and marks were moderated using Westerford's systems and processes. Continuous assessment tasks are also largely based on those used by Westerford. The results that the Claremont learners achieved in this their first set of formal examination have provide some useful data about how they are performing (see 'Claremont High School: June 2011 report card' on page 2).

While Mr le Roux was full of praise for the good work that is happening at Claremont he also identified a number of challenges that he and the school faced from



the time when he was first approached to become involved in the project. Many of these challenges will not be unique to Claremont High and we hope that the lessons to be learned from this experience are helpful for those involved in the founding of new schools.

### Some lessons

Listed below are some of the obstacles and challenges that Mr le Roux and his staff and Claremont and Westerford have had to deal with since they first became involved in the project, together with suggestions on how these could be dealt with.

#### 1. Start sooner.

Good and timely planning is an important element in the proper functioning of any school but for a newly to-be-established school it is essential if the school is to start on the right note. This applies not only to things such as the appointment of teaching and support staff and the allocation of budgets but also to basics such as the installation of telephones and the provision of basic cleaning materials and equipment. It was fortuitous that we happened to be in contact with two newly established schools from the start of 2011, one of which is Claremont High and the other a school that has been established for some time but that has been operating within an FET college. The College of Science and Technology (COSAT), which became a fully-fledged WCED school with new school buildings of its own from the start of this year, experienced similar problems to those of Claremont High. What was different was that COSAT was already established as an institution while Claremont was doing everything for the first time. What COSAT did not have, however, was the luxury of the kind of support that Westerford has been able to provide to Claremont.

#### 2. Determine the new school's establishment and appoint staff at least a term before the school is scheduled to open.

Although the principal, or in the case of Claremont, the deputy principal, of a new school is normally appointed six months before the school opens its doors, the process of advertising, selecting and appointing the remainder of the teaching and support staff of Claremont High took place only in the fourth quarter. A consequence of this kind of delay is that some appointees may not be able to start until the beginning of the second term because of their need

to give a term's notice. This limits the time that is available to the principal of the new school to work with his staff in planning and preparing for the opening of the school and for curriculum planning for the new academic year. The reason for the delay in making these appointments apparently relates to reluctance on the part of departmental officials to commit themselves to a specific staff establishment before they are sure of the school's enrolment. It is an understandable dilemma but one must assume that the decision to establish a

new school at a particular location was based on some kind of projection of likely learner numbers. It would seem sensible, therefore, given the huge cost of building a new school, for those officials to have faith in their projections and to use the projected learner numbers as the basis for the staff establishment for the first year.

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In the case of Claremont, a principled decision was made that in its first year the school would operate with three Grade 8 classes and one Grade 10 class with 35 learners per class to give an total enrolment of 140. Yet even this was apparently not sufficient to persuade the official responsible for determining the school's establishment to make a determination to allow for the advertising of posts. For 2012 the school plans to repeat the same process admitting sufficient learners

for three Grade 8 classes and one Grade 10 class and Mr le Roux is hoping that he will be able to persuade the department to approve the school's 2012 establishment in time for him to make appointments so that newly appointed teachers can start from the beginning of the 2012 school year.

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#### 3. Provide adequate seed funding three months before the school opens.

New schools need two budgets, one to purchase the basic items of stock that they need to operate effectively from the first day as a fully functional school, and another to cover their operating costs for their first full school year. The trouble for new schools is not only that budgets are based on learner numbers and the Norms and Standards-based quintile allocation but also that the first funds from this allocation only become available to the school sometime in the second term (much, much later in some districts and provinces!). The result is that unless the school is provided with at least some initial seed funding it will, in the case of new no-fee schools, have no access to funds until well into the school year.

Claremont High discovered only after the start of the school year that there were indeed 'seed' funds available for the purchase of equipment and materials, although no guidelines were provided on the kinds of things that would be needed or on the quantities that should be ordered.

Even with the money available it was not simply a case of placing the orders for the equipment and materials because financial regulations stipulate that three independent quotes are required before buying most items, which creates an additional administrative burden for the principal and staff of most newly established schools at a time when their focus should be on other more important aspects of their job. The equipment and materials that needed to be ordered included basic cleaning and maintenance materials, chemicals and laboratory equipment as well as such things as stationery, files and duplicating paper. For Claremont High this was one of the many times when having links to an existing well-functioning school was a boon. The task of determining what was needed and in what quantities, of getting quotes and of placing orders was simply handed over to the Supervising and Administrative staff at Westerford. Claremont was also helped by the fact that it elected to be a fee-paying school and has been placed in Quintile 4, which meant some school funds were available from the start of the school year. Other new schools do not have this luxury and the process of making sure that the school has adequate resources when it starts must be a huge nightmare for the newly appointed principal whose main priority should be establishing a solid foundation of teaching and learning.

**4. Provide specific detailed guidelines on the physical resources and consumables that the school will need to function adequately.**

As has been mentioned under the previous point, the process of acquiring the essential equipment and stock

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*The process of acquiring the essential equipment and stock that a school needs to function effectively is onerous and time-consuming. To expect a newly appointed and inexperienced principal to take responsibility for this kind of administrative task at the same time as he or she is working to establish a proper teaching and learning environment at the school is not only unreasonable but may also be counter-productive.*

that a school needs to function effectively is onerous and time-consuming. To expect a newly appointed and inexperienced principal to take responsibility for this kind of administrative task at the same time as he or she is working to establish a proper teaching and learning environment at the newly established school is not

only unreasonable but may also be counter-productive. It is the sort of job that local district officials who deal with these kinds of matters on a regular basis would be better equipped to manage.

Education departments should also be in a position to provide new schools with some form of reliable checklist of the basic items that the school will need together with formulae to assist in determining the quantities that should be ordered.

**5. Refine and repeat this schools mentoring schools model for all new schools.**

The model of using experienced and successful principals as mentors and coaches for principals of underperforming schools has been widely and successfully used in England (See the article 'Schools leading schools – a better approach for school improvement' in SM&L Volume 4 Number 7 & 8, for more about this). We have, however, not been able to find examples of the kind of arrangement that is in process at Claremont High where the principal and staff of an existing established school is used to manage and mentor the staff of a newly established school. It is a model that seems to make logical sense and which at this stage also appears to be working in practice. Given the many challenges that new schools

face, particularly those that are established to provide schooling to the children of families that inhabit the sprawling townships that form the urban edge of most of our large cities, it would seem sensible to provide them with the kind of support that Claremont High School gains from its partnership with Westerford High School. ■



# National Planning Commission: Diagnostic overview and the state of public education

The National Planning Commission's detailed diagnostic report 'Diagnostic overview' released on 9 June provides a valuable and informed view on the state of our nation and in doing so identifies the parlous state of public education as a significant obstacle to this country's ability to secure a better future for all of its citizens.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) was appointed in April 2010 by President Jacob Zuma with the mandate to take a 'broad, cross-cutting, independent and critical view of South Africa, to help define the South Africa we seek to achieve in 20 years time and to map out a path to achieve those objectives'. The commission was expected to put forward 'solid research, sound evidence and clear recommendations to government'.

The commission consisted of 25 part-time commissioners appointed because of their 'expertise, experience and ability to contribute to a dynamic development plan for the country'. It was expected to work with broader society, to draw on the best expertise, to consult stakeholders and to help shape consensus on what to do about the key challenges facing the country. In his address at the inaugural meeting of the commission, President Zuma described the establishment of the commission as 'our promise to the people of South Africa that we are building a state that will grow the economy, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of our citizens'.

The commission itself is an advisory body that is expected to prepare recommendations for Cabinet on factors affecting South Africa's long-term development. More specifically it is expected to:

- Draft a vision statement for 2030
- Produce a development plan setting out how this vision can be achieved
- Present reports on issues affecting long-term development, such as infrastructure investment, water resources and inequality.

In its report the commission acknowledges that because it is a body that has been established to give advice to those who must make decisions, it will need to develop the capacity to convince Cabinet and the country that



the advice it gives is objective, based on sound evidence-based research and that it has been tested with both the public and with experts. Its mandate expects it to be objective and allows it to be critical but notes that this criticism needs to take cognisance of the historical contexts within which the government operates and to acknowledge that the progress that has been made has been driven by a commitment to do better, to fix what is wrong and to 'deliver a better life for all'.

## National Planning Commission: Commissioners

Trevor Manuel, MP Chairperson  
 Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy Chairperson  
 Miriam Altman  
 Malusi Marcus Balintulo  
 Hoosen (Jerry) Coovadia  
 Anton Eberhard  
 Tasneem Essop  
 Bridgette Gasa  
 Trueman Thandabantu Goba  
 Robert Michael Godsell  
 Noluthando Primrose Gosa  
 Phillip Harrison  
 Mohammed Karaan  
 Vuyokazi Felicity Mahlati  
 Malekgapuru Makgoba  
 Christopher Malikane  
 Vincent Maphai  
 Elias Masilela  
 Pascal Moloji  
 Jennifer Balatedi Molwantwa  
 Michael Arnold Muller  
 Joel Netshitenzhe  
 Ihron Rensburg  
 Vivienne Taylor  
 Jerry Vilakazi  
 Karl von Holdt

### References

*Diagnostic Overview* Cover was sourced from <http://www.npcnline>.

### NPC vision statement elements

The 10 vision statement elements are listed below. The commissioners drew inspiration from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in articulating these elements.

- A democratic state, rooted in the values of the Constitution, working with all sectors of society to improve the quality of life.
- People are united in diversity, recognising the common interest that binds us as a nation, and we have achieved greater equality for women in all aspects of life.
- High-quality education and health care, and adequate provision of housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport, give impetus to human development.
- Comprehensive social security covers all citizens in need.
- Natural wealth is harnessed sustainably, in a way that protects our environment, using science and modern technology to ensure a growing economy that benefits all.
- People who are able to work have access to jobs, workers' rights are protected and the workforce is skilled.
- Business is afforded an environment to invest and profit while promoting the common interests of the nation, including decent work.
- An efficient state protects citizens, provides quality services and infrastructure, and gives leadership to national development.
- Individuals and communities, at work and at play, embrace mutual respect and human solidarity.
- Government, business and civil society work to build a better Africa and a better world.

The NPC is also expected to help mobilise society around a vision and development plan and in doing so is expected to represent all South Africans and to consider their diverse perspectives irrespective of their political outlook and affiliations. According to the report the commission plans to begin the public consultation process from June 2011 starting with the release of 'elements' of a vision statement and the release of the diagnostic document for public comment.

The principles of the 2030 vision statement, which will be drawn mostly from the Constitution, will provide the framework for the development. The target date for the release of the 2030 vision statement and of the development plan derived from it, for consideration by Cabinet, is 11 November 2011.

The overview document itself is a detailed diagnostic report that sets out the challenges faced by the state in confronting the issues of poverty and inequality and in attempting to achieve the objectives set out in the Constitution.

The authors of the document note that their one implicit conclusion is that a business-as-usual approach will result in South Africa failing to meet a great many of its objectives. The document highlights the main reason for this. They do, however, express optimism that the country has the ability and capacity to tackle these challenges but that this will require 'leadership and the support and determination of all South Africans and sectors of society'.

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In order to ensure that the document represented a valid, current and objective view of the state of the nation, the commissioners drew on a range of resources including:

- A thorough review and rigorous engagement with existing research and analysis
- The commissioning of additional research and analysis where they felt this was needed
- Engagement with experts from both the public and the private sector as well as with civil society
- Discussions with government departments, agencies and institutions
- The hosting of a week-long online discussion forum that encouraged young South Africans to discuss nation building. An average of 5 500 individuals participated in this discussion each day.

The commissioners identified a number of significant factors, both internal and external, that are likely to shape South Africa's future. These 'key shaping forces' include:

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#### • **The global economy**

The recent international downturn, particularly in the economies of the developed nations is likely to affect Europe and North America, two of South Africa's largest trading partners, in the short term. The report suggests, however, that in the longer term there is likely to be a significant shift in global economic power from these established economies to the rapidly developing economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China, the so-called BRIC countries. This change is expected to have major implications for the economy of South Africa.

- **Energy transitions, food security, climate change and new technologies**

The cost and availability of energy and food is likely to significantly affect the way that societies function. This together with the threat of climate change will result in increased demand for both food and energy security. These drivers are likely to have a ‘profound’ effect on the economy of the country and on society. These challenges pose both threats and opportunities. Many of the opportunities will be linked to the development and practical application of new technologies, particularly in the fields of energy, nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science and the convergence of these technological fields.

*‘Central to addressing these challenges sustainably over time is our ability to create jobs for more people and to improve the quality of education, especially for poor black people.’*

- **African development**

There has been strong economic growth in the Sub-Saharan region over the past few years and although this is off a low base it is likely that South Africa will lose its regional dominance in the coming decades if this trend continues. Nigeria, Angola and the East African region are all already providing strong economic competition for South Africa.

- **Demographic change**

Most of the children who will become parents between now and 2030 have already been born so it is possible to predict the size of the country’s population fairly accurately. While the population is expected to stabilise during this period what is not easily predictable is how the population is likely to be distributed. Population distribution is affected by economic factors and policy decisions. International migration is also difficult to predict as it is often influenced by both political and socio-economic factors.

While the commissioners see these shaping forces as the key drivers of change they, have yet to develop the conceptual framework on how to address the challenges and opportunities that they provide. Their view is that further research and work will be required before they are in a position to provide the more detailed projections that are needed before they are in a position to provide the guidelines that are needed for the processes of planning and policy formulation.

## The diagnosis

The ‘diagnosis’ is essentially the commission’s considered view on the current state of the nation with explanations about the why and how of our present position, which is described under nine headings that provide details of these ‘cross-cutting issues’.

The introduction describes the progress that has been made by the present government since 1994 but is also candid in identifying some of the continuing challenges. The ‘continued social and economic exclusion of millions of South Africans, reflected in high levels of poverty and inequality’ is seen as this country’s biggest challenge. It goes on to note that ‘these high levels of poverty and inequality have a historical basis in apartheid and are driven principally by the fact that too few people work and that the quality of education for many black people remains poor. Central to addressing these challenges sustainably over time is our ability to create jobs for more people and to improve the quality of education, especially for poor black people.’

The report also makes it clear that freedom and political change do not guarantee social, economic and political progress, citing as examples the Hapsburg Empire in Europe, Argentina in Latin America, and some post-colonial African states. There are indicators associated with these failing states that the report identifies and which it acknowledges are already present in varying degrees in parts of this country and some of its institutions:

- Rising corruption
- The weakening of state and civil society institutions
- Poor economic management
- Skills and capital flight
- Politics dominated by short-termism, ethnicity or factionalism
- Lack of maintenance of infrastructure and standards of service.

## Nine key cross-cutting issues

### 1. Too few South Africans are employed.

Our poor employment rates are largely a consequence of our colonial past and apartheid, which denied African people access to quality education and which severely limited their ability to accumulate assets, to do business and to develop the skills they needed to operate in a modern economy. The country’s economic policies for the period 1970 to 1994 were largely isolationist and capital intensive. Economic growth was slow and while the population doubled during this period, employment grew by just 17.6%. While there has been an increase in job creation since 1994 this has not had a substantial impact on unemployment rates because of the existing high numbers of unemployed individuals in absolute terms and because a large cohort of young people enter the labour market each year.

## **2. The quality of education for poor black South Africans is substandard.**

Despite substantial improvements in access, infrastructure and support including such things as the provision of learning and teaching support materials, funding for early childhood support and school feeding, there has been little improvement in the quality of education provided by most schools. The report relates it thus: ‘Efforts to raise the quality of education of poor children have largely failed. Apart from a small minority of black children who attend former white schools and a small minority of schools performing well in largely black areas, the quality of public education remains poor. Literacy and numeracy test scores are low by African and global standards, despite the fact that government spends about 6 percent of GDP on education and South Africa’s teachers are among the highest paid in the world (in purchasing power parity terms).’

*Despite substantial improvements in access, infrastructure and support, there has been little improvement in the quality of education provided by most schools.*

The report identifies teacher performance and the quality of school leadership as the two factors that have an impact on learner performance – ‘without dismissing any of these factors, our conclusion is that the main problem lies in teacher performance and the quality of school leadership’. Evidence from research into poor learner performance found that teacher-related factors contributing to this poor performance include:

- Teaching time: teachers spend too little time in contact with learners.
- Inadequate subject knowledge and pedagogical skills: Teachers do not have the necessary subject knowledge and pedagogical skill to be effective (particularly in the languages, sciences and Mathematics).
- Poor administrative support for teachers: The Education Department and districts do not provide teachers and schools with the administrative support that they need.

In terms of school leadership, the report notes that studies have shown that where learner performance has improved in schools in poor communities the ‘presence of a good school principal is critical’. These principals run schools that are ‘efficient and disciplined’. They ‘support their teachers, mentor less experienced staff, involve parents in the education of their children and constantly seek opportunities to promote their schools in the broader community’.

## **3. Poorly located and inadequate infrastructure limits social inclusion and faster economic growth.**

Our failure to invest in and adequately develop our infrastructure over the past ‘generation’ has resulted in

us falling behind other similar developing economies. Infrastructural development greatly improved efficiency, particularly in parastatals such as Transnet, in terms of logistics and the movement of freight within the country and is critical to the country’s future growth and competitiveness.

Other areas that require substantial investment and the need for greater public-private sector co-operation include the provision of power, ICT, where we have fallen behind countries like Malaysia, Turkey and Korea, and the management of our scarce water resources.

While our economy is currently geared to service its major trading partners in Europe, the Americas and Asia, there is a need to realign some of our infrastructural development to service the growing African regional economies.

## **4. South Africa’s growth path is highly resource-intensive and hence unsustainable.**

South Africa’s economy is largely resource based with the mining and export of minerals, particularly coal providing the funding for our imports. The availability, costs and environmental impact of the use and transport of these resources is likely to result in reduced demand in the future with significant consequences for this country’s economy. There is a need therefore to move away from a resource-intensive economy to one that is more knowledge-intensive or labour-intensive and that is able to adapt to a low-carbon future.

## **5. Spatial challenges continue to marginalise the poor.**

One of the legacies of apartheid is that the rural poor live far from centres of economic activity while in the cities the poorest people live far from places of work. Addressing these problems offers some interesting and challenging alternatives. Is it better to create infrastructure and work opportunities for the rural poor where they are currently located or should they be encouraged to migrate to the cities and other economic hubs? Should the poor in cities be moved closer to the centre through the provision of affordable housing in these areas, which is costly, or should there rather be a focus on providing affordable and efficient systems of public transport?

Dealing with these challenges will require better and more co-ordinated planning, particularly between the three tiers of government, than has been the case up to now.



## 6. The ailing public health system confronts a massive disease burden.

South Africa has a disease burden that few outside of the health sector fully appreciate. As the report notes, 'The rise in total deaths, low life expectancy and high infant mortality are all evidence of a health system in distress. The overall picture is one of a country going through a devastating set of epidemics – the increase in deaths is as large as the number of deaths in the baseline just ten years earlier.'

This high death rate is mostly as a result of four factors:

- The HIV pandemic
- Injury, both accidental and non-accidental
- Infectious diseases, the most important of which are tuberculosis, diarrhoea and pneumonia, which are closely linked to and exacerbate the effects of HIV
- Lifestyle diseases, including coronary heart disease, cancer and diabetes, which are associated with relative affluence

The following statistics taken from the report provide dramatic evidence of this:

- South Africa has 0.6% of the world's population but 17% of the world's HIV infections and 11% of the world's TB cases.
- Trauma from violence and road accidents are 158 per 100 000 which is nearly twice the global average.
- Infant mortality rates at 43 per 1 000 live births and maternal mortality at 625 per 100 000 live births are far higher than other middle-income countries.
- Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease showed a five-fold increase between 1997 and 2004.

## 7. The performance of the public service is uneven.

The report explains the poor service delivery by the public service as a consequence of a range of interacting factors:

- While we have a good and progressive constitution and body of laws designed to protect the rights of citizens there is a significant gap between policy and implementation.
- There has been policy instability as a result of the move from a previously divided and fractured public service to a new unitary public service, serving all citizens.
- Organisational instability as a result of disjunctures at the political/administrative interface. The problems partly stem from political heads interfering in the day-to-day functions of the administrative heads.
- Uneven capacity leads to uneven performance. Skills shortages and a poor understanding of powers and functions, particularly in the poorer rural municipalities has limited their capacity to deliver

on their mandate resulting once again in the poorest of the poor being the recipients of inadequate services at almost every level.

- The erosion of accountability and authority structures. Accountability measures are often not implemented partly as a result of political affiliations but also as a result of trade unions and staff deliberately undermining the authority of managers as a means of escaping accountability measures.

## 8. Corruption undermines state legitimacy and service delivery.

One of the severe consequences of the breakdown of accountability measures is that it allows space for corruption to flourish. The report notes that 'the levels of corruption are worryingly high' and that South Africa is rated 54th out of 174 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. The country ranked 1 is perceived to be the least corrupt and the country rated 174 as the most corrupt. The Special Investigating Unit has estimated that 20%–25% of state procurement expenditure is wasted through overpayment each year, which represents an amount of approximately R30 billion a year.

Corruption, the report notes, 'is not only an institutional problem, but also a moral and political one. It will not be easy to eradicate corruption from the public sector if the problem is not addressed at a political level'.

*'Our conclusion is that the main problem lies in teacher performance and the quality of school leadership'.*

## 9. South Africa remains a divided society.

While this country has made significant gains in uniting its people since 1994, resulting in a significant decline in racism and prejudice, the country remains divided with race continuing as the major dividing line. The need for trust is seen as critical and as the key contributor to the process of healing and nation building.

The report suggests that there is a need for a broad social compact that will give the government the legitimacy to implement difficult socio-economic policies which, although resulting in initial hardship, lead later to positive long-term benefits for the entire nation. A social compact of this kind has the potential to:

- Build and maintain trust among all social partners
- Create a shared analysis of the problem and a mutual recognition that all stakeholders need to commit to find solutions
- Define a clear vision of what stakeholders are aiming for, and a set of manageable objectives
- Inspire leaders to accept responsibility and take risks.



In their conclusion the commissioners eloquently set out how they see what needs to be done in the following extract:

‘Our society needs to make significant progress in all of these areas if by 2030 we are to be much closer to the promise of an inclusive society as envisaged in our Constitution. If we do not tackle these challenges, there is a real risk that the gains we have made will be reversed and our goals will become even harder to achieve.

‘We need leaders and citizens to commit to a bold programme to build a better future, based on ethical values and mutual sacrifice. The leadership required will think and act long-term, rising above short-term personal or political gain. We will think and act in the interests of the nation as a whole, and avoid promoting the interests of one group of South Africans at the cost of others.’ ■

### **SM&L Comment**

*Our article summarising the major findings of the National Planning Commission report is far longer than the articles that we normally run in SM&L but we decided to provide this fairly comprehensive summary of the report because we feel that it is an important document. It is important in our view for several reasons.*

*Firstly, it paints a clear and well researched picture of our blemished and highly divided nation. Its candour is refreshing as is the fact that it has refrained from politicising issues and pointing fingers. Understanding what is wrong and the nature of the problems that we face is always the first step of any journey of improvement.*

*Secondly, it is a good example of honest reflection. We have in the past written about the need for leaders to face themselves in a mirror as part of the process of honestly and critically appraising their own performance. This report provides a good example of that kind of critical appraisal and one that principals*

*should emulate when they undertake the assessment of their own schools and the extent to which the manner in which they have exercised their leadership and management duties has contributed to its success or failure.*

*Thirdly, the report should be a call to action for all who occupy leadership positions in this country but more especially to those who lead and manage our schools. School principals have, rightly in our view, been fingered in the report for failing the children of this country and the communities that they are meant to serve. The leaders of underperforming schools, which are in the majority, need to ask themselves some hard questions about their own commitment to doing what it takes to ensure that learner performance improves at their school. Leaders of successful schools need to be honest with themselves about the extent to which they and their school community are contributing meaningfully to improving the quality of schooling generally and at a societal level bridging the many divisions that are dividing our society.*

# SACMEQ III

The results of the latest research project, SACMEQ III, published by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), show that the performance of Grade 6 learners in reading and Mathematics remains poor.

Towards the end of last year the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) released its third research project, SACMEQ III. SACMEQ’s main purpose is to undertake research and training activities that will provide educational planners and researchers in the ministries of education of member countries to develop the technical skills that they need to monitor and evaluate the conditions and quality of schooling in their own countries. It also aims to undertake research that will generate evidence-based information that can be used by the decision-makers of member countries to develop appropriate improvement strategies.

As its name implies, SACMEQ III is the third in a series of projects designed to assess the conditions of schools and the quality of education at primary schools of member countries. A brief summary of each of these projects is given below.

### SACMEQ I (1995–1998)

Seven ministries of education – Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Zambia and

Malawi – participated in this project that used national surveys to determine:

- Baseline indicators for educational inputs
- The general conditions of schooling
- Equity assessments for human and material resource allocations
- The literacy levels of Grade 6 pupils.

Approximately 20 000 pupils from 1 000 primary schools were involved in the study.

### SACMEQ II (1998–2004)

Fourteen ministries of education participated in SACMEQ II, namely Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar), Uganda and Zambia. The national reports provided measures of change in the general conditions of schooling and pupil attainment levels between 1995 and 2000 for six SACMEQ countries. Approximately 40 000 pupils, 5 300 teachers and 2 000 principals from 2 000 primary schools participated in SACMEQ II. We covered some aspects of this report and the work of SACMEQ in SM&L Volume 4, No. 7 & 8. (2010).

Table 1: SACMEQ III: Pupil reading and Mathematics Scores for 2000 and 2007<sup>1</sup>

Country	Pupil reading score		Pupil Mathematics score	
	2000	2007	2000	2007
Botswana	521.1	534.6	512.9	520.5
Kenya	546.5	543.1	563.3	557.0
Lesotho	451.2	467.9	447.2	476.9
Malawi	428.9	433.5	432.9	447.0
Mauritius	536.4	573.5	584.6	623.3
Mozambique	516.7	476.0	530.0	483.8
Namibia	448.8	496.9	430.9	471.0
Seychelles	582.0	575.1	554.3	550.7
South Africa	492.3	494.9	486.1	494.8
Swaziland	529.6	549.4	516.5	540.8
Tanzania	545.9	577.8	522.4	552.7
Uganda	482.4	478.7	506.3	481.9
Zambia	440.1	434.4	435.2	435.2
Zanzibar	478.2	533.9	478.1	486.2
Zimbabwe	504.7	507.7	–	519.8

### SACMEQ III (2005–2010)

All of the 15 ministries of education that make up SACMEQ participated in SACMEQ III, which set out to track the changes in the general conditions of schooling and of pupil achievement levels between 1995 and 2000 for six ministries of education; and between 2000 and 2007 for 14 ministries of education. The project provides data about the knowledge levels of pupils about HIV and AIDS and also assessed the reading and mathematics levels of Grade 6 pupils. Data was collected during the last quarter of 2007 from 61 396 pupils, 8 026 teachers and 2 779 schools.

### Some SACMEQ III findings

The test scores that pupils and teachers achieve in the SACMEQ studies are statistically manipulated to produce a mean (average) score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. A standard deviation of 100 means that approximately 68% of those tested will have scores of between 400 and 600 (100 units on either side of the mean score of 500). Table 1 on the previous page shows the average reading and Mathematics scores for pupils

*Despite the fact that South Africa is the economic powerhouse of the region, the performance of our education system was below the average in comparison to our southern and eastern African peers.*

from each of the countries that participated in the study. Despite the fact that South Africa is the economic powerhouse of the region, ranked 28th in the world in 2007 by the World Bank in terms of its gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>2</sup>, with a GDP of \$277 581 million, the performance of our education system was below the

average in comparison to our southern and eastern African peers. As can be seen from the table, our mean scores are below 500, which is the mean for all participating SACMEQ countries, in 2000 and 2007 in both reading and Mathematics. What this data also shows is that there was

virtually no improvement in our Grade 6s' reading scores between 2000 and 2007 and only a small increase in the Mathematics scores. Compare this to our poorer neighbours Swaziland and Zimbabwe, both of which score better than we do. More importantly, look at the excellent gains achieved by countries such as Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Tanzania and Mauritius and it becomes clear that we are not performing as we should, particularly given the relative size of our economy.

**Table 2: Socio-economic indicators for SACMEQ III participants and four other countries**

Country	GDP world ranking	Percentage of GDP on Primary Education per capita <sup>3</sup>	GNI per capita (\$US)	Adult literacy as a percentage of people aged 15 and above	Life expectancy (years)
	2007	2007	2009	2009	2007
Botswana	105	12.4	6 260.00	84%	55
Kenya	79	22.4	760.00	87%	55
Lesotho	156	26.1	980.00	90%	45
Malawi	142	-	290.00	74%	54
Mauritius	129	10.3	7 250.00	88%	73
Mozambique	120	14.8	440.00	55%	48
Namibia	127	18.3	4 270.00	89%	62
Seychelles	167	-	8 480.00	92%	74
South Africa	28	14.4	5 760.00	89%	52
Swaziland	148	16.3	2 470.00	87%	46
Tanzania	95	22.1	500.00	73%	56
Uganda	109	8.5	460.00	73%	53
Zambia	108	-	960.00	71%	46
Zimbabwe	146		390.00	92%	45
Singapore	41	8.4	37 220.00	95%	81
Finland	34	18.1	45 940.00	-	80
South Korea	14	17.2	19 830.00	-	80
New Zealand	51	17.7	28 810.00	-	80

For further comparative purposes we have produced Table 2, which provides some socio-economic indicators for the SACMEQ III participants as well as for four other countries, three of which (Finland, Singapore and South Korea) are consistently amongst the top performers in international benchmark tests of literacy and numeracy. Of these countries, only Korea has a GDP that is higher than that of South Africa. What is startling however is the large difference between the gross national income (GNI)<sup>4</sup> per capita of these four countries, in comparison to the SACMEQ countries, as is the difference in life expectancy. ■

#### References

- 1 This data was transcribed from the SACMEQ Policy Issues Series 2, September 2010. Downloaded from <http://www.sacmeq.org/reports.htm>
- 2 GDP, which stands for gross domestic product, is one measure of a country's wealth.
- 3 This data was accessed from the World Bank website <http://data.bank.worldbank.org/>
- 4 GNI per capita is the gross national income per capita and is an indicator of how productive a nation is.

## SACMEQ III: Our South African report card

**The results of the third project report of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Managing Education Quality (SACMEQ III) provide important detailed and useful information on how our education system is performing in the key areas of reading and Mathematics.**

The third project report of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Managing Education Quality (SACMEQ III), which was released towards the end of last year, provides important and detailed data on the performance of our Grade 6 learners



*To improve reading, classrooms should be text-rich like this classroom at Imekhaya Primary School in Mossel Bay.*

in reading and Mathematics. What is useful about the data provided in this report is that it includes important details on the performance of the learners in different subgroups within each country based on additional data that was collected as part of the project. We have analysed this data and have used it to generate the charts and commentary that follow.

Perhaps the most useful element of the data from this third project report is that the performance of the learners tested has been classified into eight competency levels on the basis of a skills audit of the test items. More importantly, and adding immensely to the value of the report, is the inclusion of descriptors that define the skills assessed at each level, together with three examples of test items. We have provided copies of these descriptors

in the adjacent boxes because we believe they have value in helping teachers to understand the kinds of skills that learners must acquire if they are to develop the competency in reading and Mathematics needed for future academic success. These descriptors will also make the charts more meaningful.

Data provided by the learners, and the schools of the learners who participated in the project, made it possible to disaggregate the data and to use it to compare learner performance on a number of dimensions, including:

- Gender: the comparative scores of boys and girls
- Location of school: whether urban or rural; and also by province
- Socio-economic status: High socio-economic status (High SES = top 25% of population) vs. Low socio-economic status (Low SES = bottom 25% of population).

In our view Chart 1 is the graphic that best represents the extent to which our schooling system has failed the poor. It shows the distribution of reading competency levels for learners classified as Low socio-economic status (Low SES, bottom 25% of the sample population) and those of High socio-economic status (High SES, top 25% of the sample population). The differences between the two groups are remarkable and a terrible blight on our education system. How do you explain the difference of more than 60% in the percentage of learners who perform at competency level 4 or better, between these two groups? One is forced to question the quality of teaching in the five years of schooling leading up to Grade 6 if it leaves nearly 80% of this country's poorest children unable to read except at the most basic level. And what are the future prospects of these illiterate children?

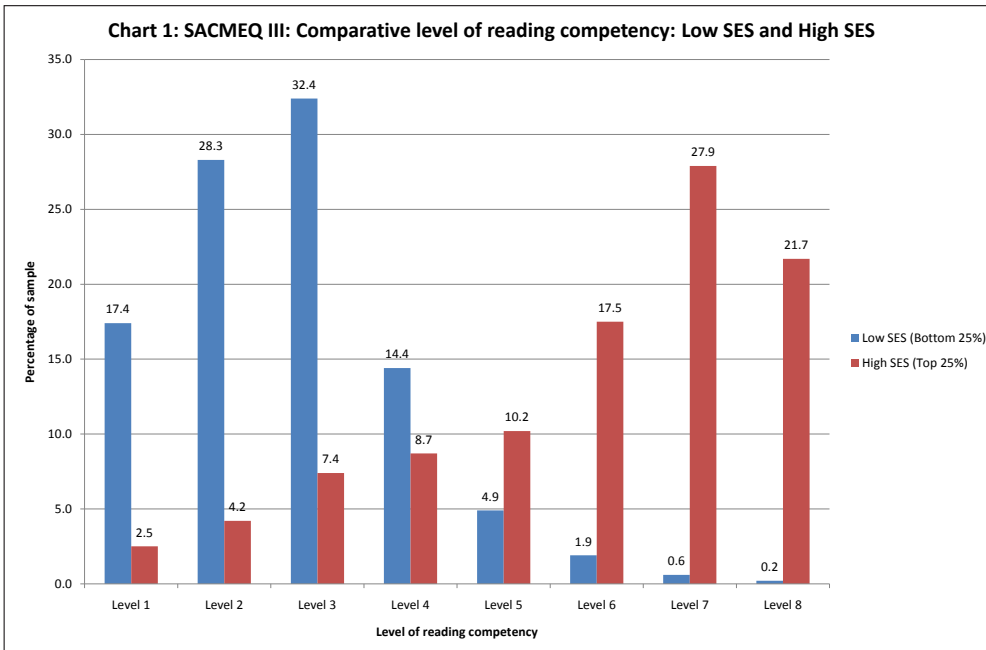


Chart 2 illustrates the comparative distribution of reading competency levels of learners from urban schools and rural schools. It shows a similar pattern to that of Graphic 1, confirming that poverty is the norm in most rural communities. It is also interesting to note that the reading competency levels of the urban schools is spread fairly evenly across the range from a low of 4.6% at Level 1 to a high of 17.9% at Level 7. This probably reflects the socio-economic diversity of the urban environment from shack-land to leafy suburbs. By comparison the distribution of reading levels for the rural schools is concentrated between Levels 1 and 4, well illustrating the extent to which our schooling system is failing the children of the rural poor.

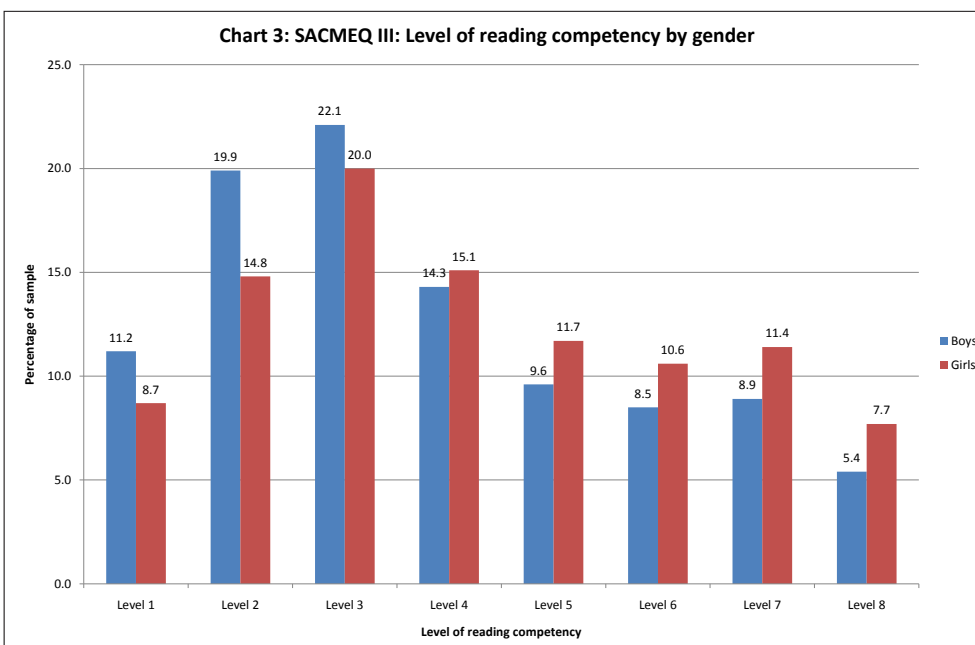
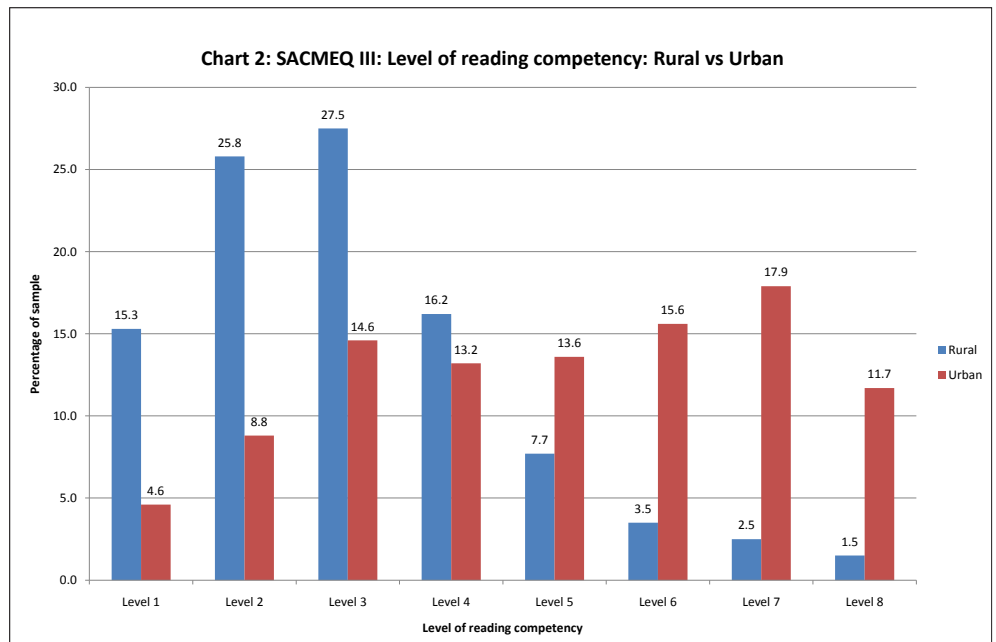


Chart 3 illustrates the distribution of reading competency levels by gender and shows that there is little difference between the reading competency levels of the boys and girls in the study. There is, however, is a small trend suggesting that a greater proportion of girls than boys read well. There is a similar trend for Mathematics, although we have not included the graphic that illustrates this.



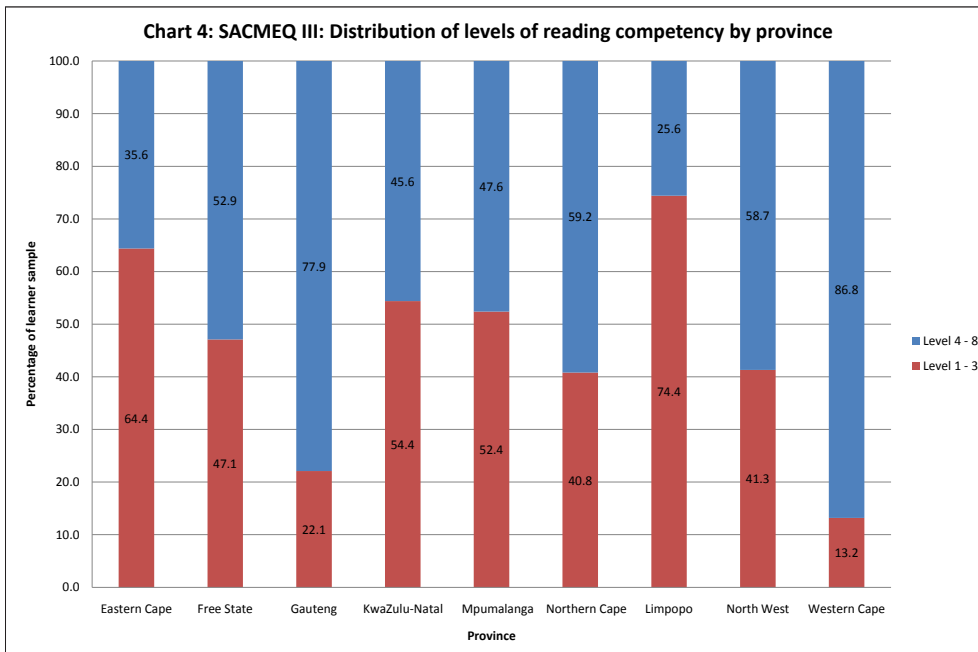


Chart 4 illustrates the distribution of reading levels by province. In this graphic, however, we have conflated the data into two levels representing a basic reading competency (Levels 1–3) and reading for meaning (Levels 4–8). The graphic shows quite clearly that the reading levels of learners in the Western Cape and Gauteng are far better than those of the other provinces and it is probably no coincidence that these are the two provinces that consistently produce the best NSC results.

Chart 5 illustrates the comparative distribution of mathematical competency levels for learners classified as Low socio-economic status (Low SES, bottom 25% of the sample population) and those of High socio-economic status (High SES, top 25% of the sample population). The trend is similar but not as marked as that for reading. What should be of concern is the low proportion of learners that perform well in Mathematics – just 2.2% of the group that were tested performed at Level 8 for Mathematical competency, while 21.9% of the same group performed at Level 8 when tested for reading competency.

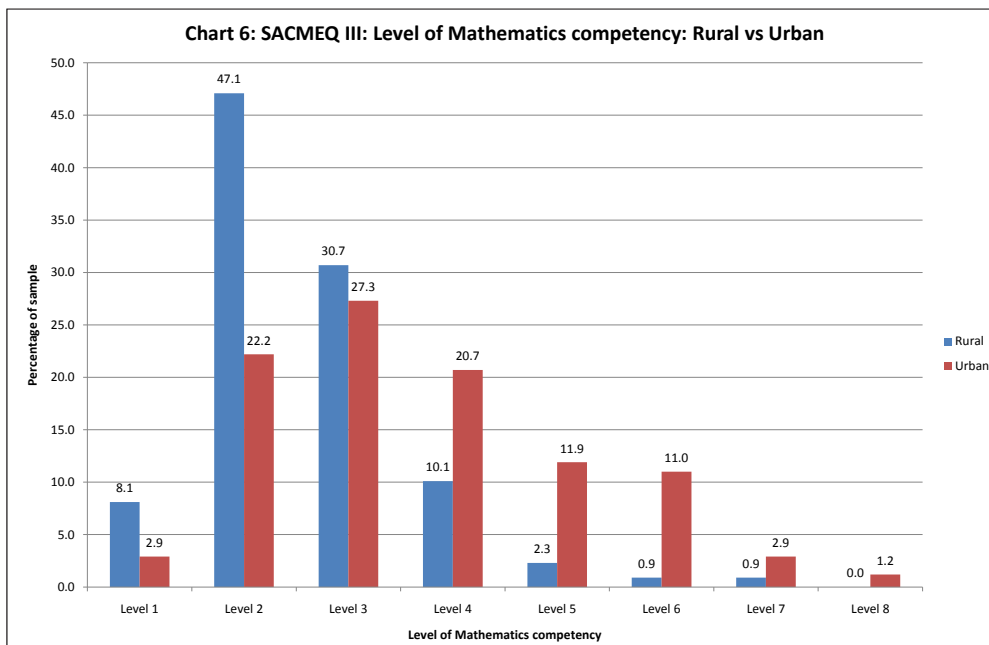
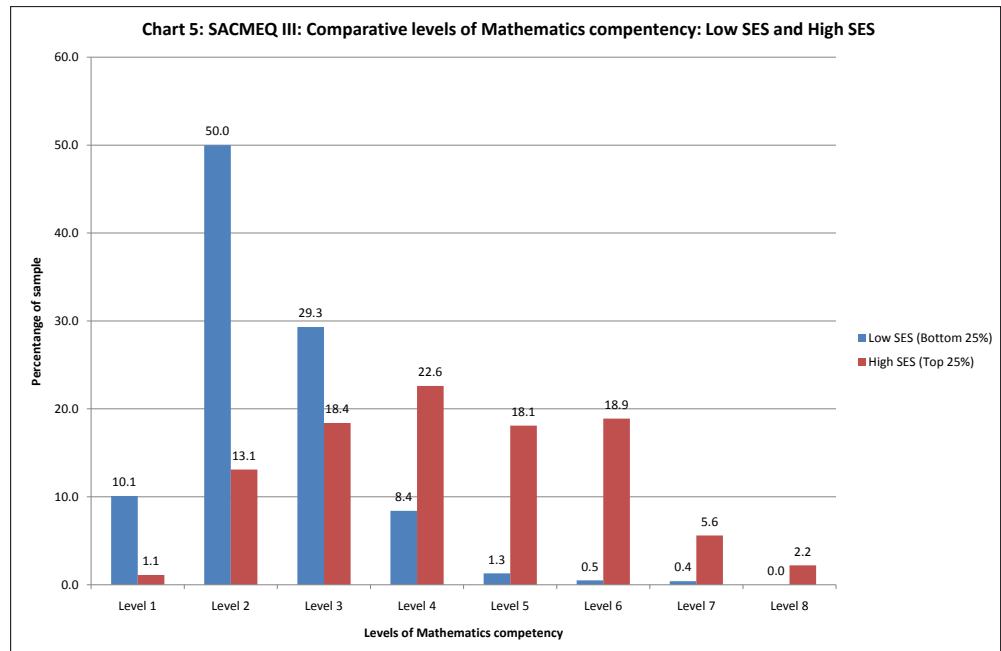
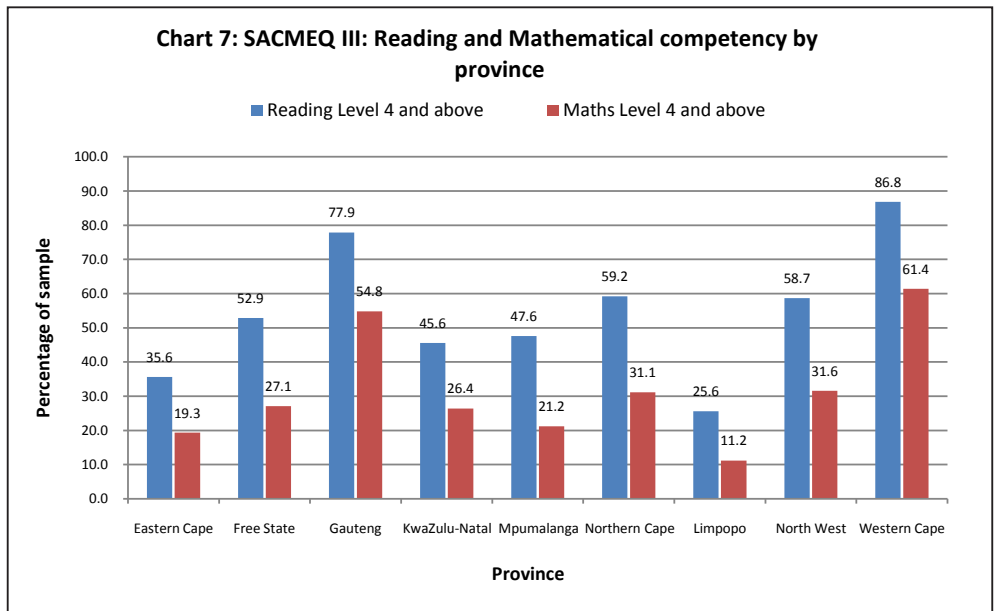


Chart 6 illustrates the comparative results for mathematical competency for rural and urban learners and once again shows a similar pattern to the reading competency results.

Chart 7 illustrates how reading and mathematical competency at competency levels 4 and above is distributed across the provinces. What is disturbing about this graphic is that it probably represents the proportion of Grade 6 children in each province who have the minimal basic academic competencies that they need to succeed at school. It may sound pessimistic but the hard reality is that the rest, those that have not yet achieved this level of competency in reading and Mathematics for Grade 6, are pretty much doomed to failure. The system provides very little support for them and they are likely to either drop out of school when they reach the higher grades or, if they eventually get to Grade 12, fail because they will not have sufficient basic language and numeracy skills to understand, interpret and respond to the questions that will appear on the examination papers. ■



### SACMEQ III: Levels of reading competency

#### Level 1: Pre Reading

Skills: Matches words and pictures involving concrete concepts and everyday objects. Follows short simple written instructions.

#### Level 2: Emergent Reading

Skills: Matches words and pictures involving prepositions and abstract concepts. Uses cuing systems to interpret phrases by reading on.

#### Level 3: Basic Reading

Skills: Interprets meaning in a short and simple text by reading on or reading back.

#### Level 4: Reading for Meaning

Skills: Reads on or reads back in order to link and interpret information located in various parts of the text.

#### Level 5: Interpretive Reading

Skills: Reads on and reads back in order to combine and interpret information from various parts of the text

in association with external information that ‘completes’ and contextualises meaning.

#### Level 6: Inferential Reading

Skills: Reads on and reads back through longer texts in order to combine information from various parts of the text so as to infer the writer’s purpose.

#### Level 7: Analytical Reading

Skills: Locates information in longer texts by reading on and reading back in order to combine information from various parts of the text so as to infer the writer’s personal beliefs.

#### Level 8: Critical Reading

Skills: Locates information in a longer text by reading on and reading back in order to combine information from various parts of the text so as to infer and evaluate what the writer has assumed about both the topic and the characteristics of the reader – such as age knowledge and personal beliefs.

### SACMEQ III: Levels of Mathematics competency

#### Level 1: Pre Numerate

Skills: Applies single step addition or subtraction operations. Recognises simple shapes. Matches numbers and pictures. Counts in whole numbers.

#### Level 2: Emergent Numeracy

Skills: Applies a two-step addition and subtraction operation involving carrying, checking or conversion of pictures to numbers. Estimates length of familiar objects. Recognises common two-dimensional shapes.

#### Level 3: Basic Numeracy

Skills: Translates verbal information presented in a sentence, simple graph or table using one arithmetic operation is several repeated steps. Translates graphical information into fractions. Interprets place value of whole numbers up to thousands. Interprets simple common everyday units of measurement.

#### Level 4: Beginning Numeracy

Translates verbal or graphic information into simple arithmetic problems. Uses multiple different arithmetic operations, in correct order, on whole numbers, fractions and/or decimals.

#### Level 5: Competent Numeracy

Skills: Translates verbal, graphic or tabular information into arithmetic form in order to solve a given problem. Solves multiple-operation problems using the correct order of arithmetic operations, involving everyday units of measurement and/or whole and mixed numbers. Converts basic measurement units from one level of measurement to another (for example, metres to centimetres).

#### Level 6: Mathematically Skilled

Skills: Solves multiple-operation problems, involving fractions, ratios and decimals. Translates verbal and graphic representation information into symbolic, algebraic and equation form order to solve a given mathematical problem. Checks and estimates answers using external knowledge.

#### Level 7: Concrete Problem Solving

Skills: Extracts and converts information from tables, charts, visual and symbolic presentations in order to identify and then solve multi-step problems.

#### Level 8: Abstract Problem Solving

Skills: Identifies the nature of an unstated mathematical problem imbedded within verbal or graphic information, and then translates this into symbolic, algebraic or equation form in order to solve the problem.



*Games involving counting and guessing are good ways to develop learners' basic numeracy skills.*

# School inspection: The Flemish model

In SM&L Volume 5 Number 2 we covered the launch of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). Among the participants at the Inception Conference on 18 March 2011 was a delegation from the Government of Flanders, who gave input on their school inspection model and what it aims to achieve.

Individual schools in Flanders are granted a great deal of autonomy in the way that they run their day-to-day affairs and in the curriculum that they teach. This autonomy is guaranteed by the Flemish constitution. However, in a system of this kind there is a need to balance the freedom of action that this autonomy confers with a mechanism that allows the state to monitor performance and assure the quality of educational provision at individual schools. Although this autonomy grants good schools the freedom of action to excel, it also places vulnerable schools at greater risk of failure. It is important therefore to provide all schools, but particularly the more vulnerable public schools, with access to support systems that can help them to manage and monitor their own quality and that can, in addition, assist them when performance flags and quality becomes compromised.

Flemish education uses three agencies to deal with these issues. The first is a school inspectorate that is responsible for 'inspecting' schools to assess and evaluate quality and performance. The other two agencies that assist and support schools in managing the quality of their performance and output are the School Advisory Service and the Agency for Quality Care in Education and Training.

The Flemish School Inspectorate (Onderwijsinspectie) focuses its attention on two elements: the school's own performance monitoring systems and its effectiveness; and on learner performance data. Like our own education system, Flemish education has grappled with the issue of school context and the extent to which contextual factors, such as the socio-economic profile of the community that the school serves, may influence a school's ability to provide quality education to its learners. In 2009, in an effort to deal with this issue the Inspectorate took the decision to adopt a differentiated



*Mr Lieven Viaene, Inspector General:  
Government of Flanders*

approach to school inspections. This essentially entailed using an initial visit and the data gleaned from it to determine the extent and frequency of future visits. The initial visit focussed attention on the assessment of critical performance data, particularly learner performance-related data; and on the effectiveness and responsiveness of the school's own internal performance-monitoring systems. Decisions about any further inspections were then based on what their inspection revealed about the overall performance of the school and its capacity to manage and monitor its own standards.

Schools that are found to have the capacity to manage, monitor and quality assure their own performance, and where learner performance outcomes are good, are largely left to their own devices. On the other hand, schools with weak internal monitoring systems and that struggled to improve performance are scheduled for more thorough and frequent inspections.

It is a model that our education department could do well to follow given its size, in terms of school numbers, and the enormous disparities that exist between the relatively few good and excellent schools and the rest, many of which are barely functional.

What is also interesting about the Flemish model is that 'school inspection' and 'school development' are the responsibility of different agencies, with the Agency for Quality Care in Education and Training and the School Advisory Service providing support for the development component and the School Inspectorate doing the inspecting. Much of the debate at the NEEDU Inception Conference was about this issue – can and should NEEDU attempt to be both an evaluation unit and a development unit or should it simply take on the inspectorate role and allow another agency to take responsibility for developing schools? ■



# The Flemish inspection process

The Flemish School Inspectorate is an autonomous body established by the Flemish government and does not fall under the Flemish Ministry of Education, although it works closely with it. The Inspectorate, which was established in terms of ‘The Decree on Quality Education’, is required to perform two fundamental tasks:

- to provide advice to government on the registration of schools. School inspection is a requirement for the recognition of schools and all institutions of learning other than higher education institutions, by the Flemish government.
- to monitor and promote quality education including the principles of social justice and democratic values.

The inspection process for individual schools takes place in three phases – a ‘preliminary enquiry’, the actual inspection called an audit, and the presentation of a report on the findings of the Inspectorate to the Flemish government.

### The preliminary enquiry

The purpose of the preliminary enquiry is to allow the Inspectorate to gather sufficient data to be able to express an initial opinion on the quality of education provided by the institution. It does this using three processes:

- data analysis using data derived from three sources:
  - historical data held by the government, which is essentially statistical and administrative data provided by schools in their reports to government and will include such things as enrolment data, budgets and resources
  - data extracted from a questionnaire that schools are required to complete in preparation for the preliminary enquiry
  - data derived from previous inspection reports and reports conducted by other agencies.
- a school visit. A team of two inspectors visits the school for one day as part of the preliminary enquiry. The purpose of the visit is to observe first-hand the school’s operations, to conduct interviews and review and analyse the school’s internal documents and processes.
- a review and deliberation process, based on the information that has been gathered, to determine what to include in the follow-up and more thorough ‘audit’ phase of the inspection.

### The school audit

The audit phase takes from three to six days, and varies depending on the size of the school, the scope of the audit and the composition of the audit (inspection) team. The scope (depth and thoroughness) of the audit depends very much on what the preliminary enquiry reveals about the school.

### The report

The findings of the audit together with the advice to the school on issues that need to be addressed are written up as an ‘inspection report’. Once finalised, this draft report is discussed with the school board – a body equivalent to our School Governing Body – as part of a verification process. This is to ensure that the facts and assumptions as they are set out in the report are an accurate reflection of the data collated from the audit. Once the accuracy of the report has been confirmed by the parties involved, it is placed online on a website to which the public have access. Because the report is made available for public scrutiny it includes a section that provides a broad overview of its findings and that is designed to make its content easily accessible to the general public. This section, which is described as the school’s ‘quality profile’, includes the following:

- the result of the audit in the form of a rating – Advice 1 (Favourable), Advice 2 (Temporary favourable), or Advice 3 (Negative)
- the basis for the audit rating decision
- the strengths of the school
- the challenges and weaknesses that have been identified and which may need to be addressed.

Each report ends with a recommendation to the minister that is referred to as an ‘advice’. The advice can be of one of three kinds:

- **Advice 1 (Favourable)** indicates that the Inspectorate has full confidence in the school, in its ability provide education of a high standard and to monitor and manage its own performance.
- **Advice 2 (Temporary favourable)** indicates that the Inspectorate has identified some challenges and weaknesses – these may be structural or operational – that need to be addressed. The school is then given a specific time frame to remedy these shortcomings. A follow-up inspection towards the end of the allocated period is used to determine whether the school is on track with its remedial efforts. If the school has complied and is back on track the Advice 2 notification is changed to Advice 1 (Favourable). If not, the Advice 2 is changed to Advice 3 (Negative).



- **Advice 3 (Negative)** is an indication that the school has major deficiencies and that if these are not dealt with the school will be forced to close.

An Advice 3 recommendation marks the first step in the process of revoking the recognition of a school by the Flemish government, which is essentially a threat to close the school. Advice 3 schools are, however, always given an opportunity to rectify the identified problems but do need to apply for this. Schools applying for this stay of the revocation process are required to include with it a school improvement plan explaining how they plan to address the problems that have been identified. This school improvement plan, which must be submitted within two months of the release of the audit report, is then evaluated by the Flemish government to determine whether it is sufficient to address the issues. If the school improvement plan is acceptable to the government the process of revoking the school's recognition is then suspended. This suspension period is essentially a period of grace granted to the school to enable it to implement the improvement plan and, in so doing, rectify the shortcomings that the inspection identified. The suspension period normally varies from one to three years. Although suspended schools are not obliged to make use of external support agencies such as the School Advisory Service and the Agency for Quality Care in Education and Training, the School Inspectorate does have the authority to compel any school it feels does not have the necessary internal capacity to address their weaknesses to make use of these agencies. Suspended schools are inspected for a second time during the last three months of their period of suspension to determine whether they have progressed sufficiently for their suspension to be lifted. This second inspection is carried out by a different team of inspectors and they are required to investigate both the extent to which the school has fixed the problems identified in the first inspection, and its overall functionality and effectiveness. Based on what it finds the inspection team will make one of three recommendations:

- **positive:** The school's suspension is revoked and the school is once again recognised.
- **restrictive positive:** Most of the school's shortcomings have been dealt with but further

work is needed for it to receive recognition. A deadline is set for it to meet all the requirements for full recognition and a follow-up inspection will be done close to the deadline.

- **negative:** The school loses recognition and may no longer operate as a school.

The diagram below illustrates the evaluation framework used by the School Inspectorate in its evaluation process. The evaluation framework is made up of four major components:

**Context:** This is made up mostly of those elements over which the school has little or no control. These include things such as the socio-economic status of the community, the physical environment within which the school is situated and whether it is a public school or a 'private authority' (independent) school.

**Input:** This is made up of the personnel (teaching, administrative and support staff) and the learners, and the contribution that they bring including their talents, skills, expertise and commitment.

**Processes:** This component includes four major subgroups:

- **General:** This includes things such as leadership, vision, decision-making and quality assurance.
- **Staff:** This category includes Human Resource Management and professionalism.
- **Logistics:** This involves the management of infrastructure and equipment, as well as the financial management of financial resources. Processes used to assure the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff is included in this category.
- **Education:** This includes the curriculum, learner guidance, and the processes used to evaluate and report on learner performance.

**Output:** This has four subcategories:

- **Results:** This includes developmental objectives and overall objectives.
- **Outcomes:** This includes learner access to further education and training and employment opportunities.
- **Learner progress:** This is concerned with the within-school progress of learners as well as their access to further education.
- **Satisfaction:** Measures of the levels of satisfaction of learners, staff and other stakeholders. ■

Context							
Identification		Site		History		Legislative framework	
Input							
Personnel				Learner characteristics			
Processes				Output			
General	Staff	Logistics	Education	Results	Outcomes	Learner progress	Satisfaction

*The Flemish School Inspectorate's evaluation framework*

# Quality education – go beyond the obvious ... go where nothing is beyond your reach!

By Erich Cloete

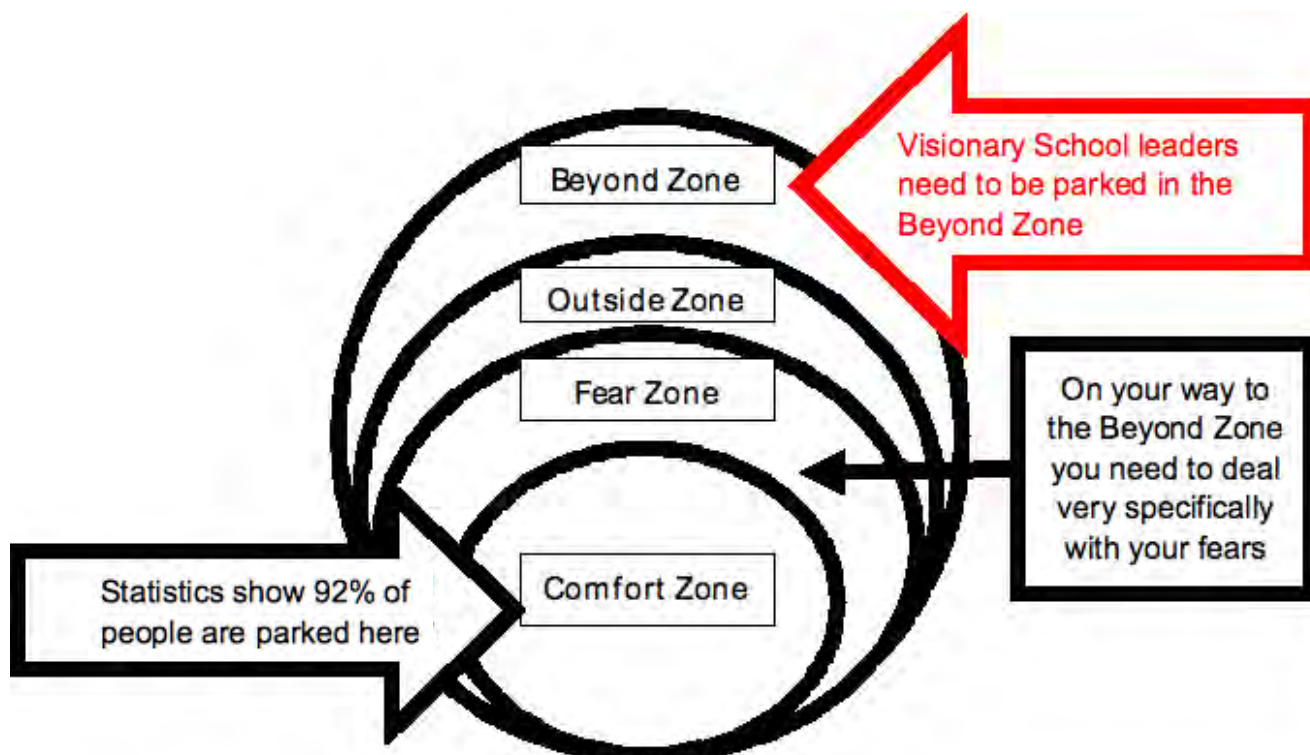
Many schools, including school leaders and managers themselves are kept prisoners by the absence of a vision that lives in their human hearts. The vision statements in our schools, hanging on the office walls, nicely framed, sometimes lack the ability to keep us focused while facing the brutal facts of our educational reality. As leaders we forget to focus on the summit while clearing the path. The result: Thousands of schools across South Africa are bursting with students who dream of being the accountants, engineers and doctors the country desperately needs, but our education system is failing the majority of children, those who are depending on it most to escape poverty. To turn this situation around, our school leaders and managers in South African schools need to become visionary leaders!

Dr Kobus Neethling, President of the South African Creativity Foundation and Creativity Expert, explains the following four places (zones) from where a manager could function:

As school leaders and managers in South African Education we need to function from the 'Beyond' zone and become 'Beyonders' if we would like to face the everyday challenges successfully, while delivering quality education to the learners of our schools. We need to create or re-create the vision of our schools in such a way that they come alive and live in the hearts of everyone involved. It is our responsibility as leaders to create a positive future for our schools and through the process of doing it improve education. The ultimate goal would be a school system that is trusted by our country to provide learners with a solid base, preparing them properly for further education and studies at various universities and colleges after school.

### How do visionary leaders react when they operate from the Beyond Zone?

- They are not afraid to face the brutal reality of their situation.
- They face their fears head on, think very specifically about them, and find practical ways to deal with them.



- They focus on what's possible within their current reality (possibility thinking) and/or find ways to make the impossible happen – they conquer their fear, find solutions and speak possibility language.
- They create a vision in which their staff can invest every ounce of themselves, one that will become their driving force, their life's work.
- They define reality for their people. They show them a better, brighter, more enlightened way to see the world, the education system, their school. Visionary leaders take the challenges at their schools, those their staff experience and reframes them as opportunities for growth, improvement and success.
- They constantly reaffirm their purpose, they offer their educators hope by showing them that a higher reality exists for them if they keep moving in the direction of the vision.
- They engage the hearts of their staff in what they do every day and they connect them to a cause higher than themselves – they give them a purpose. They teach them to see what the future would be for a Grade 2 learner who is unable to read and also show them the impact such an adult would have on the economic growth of our country.

When we are inspired by some great purpose, our thoughts break their bonds.

Our minds transcend limitations, our consciousness expands in every direction and we find ourselves in a new great and wonderful world. Talents come alive and we discover ourselves to be a greater person by far than we ever dreamed ourselves to be.

- They create passion, stay focused on the big picture and ultimately honour the lives of the people they lead by allowing them to manifest their highest potential through teaching and education.

David Grier is best known for the 2006 'Miles for Smiles' challenge in which he and Braam Malherbe ran, walked and climbed the entire 4 200 km length of the Great Wall of China in just 98 days and raised awareness and money for Operation Smile. Driven by passion, Braam

*Our education system is failing the majority of children, those who are depending on it most to escape poverty. It is our responsibility as leaders to create a positive future for our schools and through the process of doing it improve education.*

and David drew on their deeper self to fight the physical pain of running a marathon per day (42,2 km) over some of the harshest terrain on earth for 98 grueling days. With the hottest day of 41 degrees in the Gobi desert and minus 22 degrees in the high mountains, they covered 4 218 kilometers.

- In the Beyond Zone as a Visionary leader you do things you have never done before or at least you are prepared to do them.
- You lead and manage your school/department like you have never done it before. You lead with passion, you find ways to get results, you do it because the vision living in your heart drives you. You believe in making the impossible possible!
- You assume total responsibility and you push yourself to extreme limits!

All school leaders and managers need to 'drive' education at our schools to the benefit of our whole country, South Africa, from the Beyond Zone with the same dedication and commitment as David Grier and Braam Malherbe did. Why from the Beyond Zone? It requires a new, higher level of thinking, a completely new mental attitude that stems from the way you condition yourself.

Remember ... an attitude starts with a thought. Thoughts stimulate emotions which then result in an attitude which finally produces behaviour. Visionary leaders need to be aware of this in order to eliminate or decrease any toxic thoughts they might have and to keep their vision alive in their hearts.

Albert Einstein said, 'The world we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking at which we created them.' To solve and overcome our educational challenges our school leaders and managers need to function from a higher level of thinking, combined with the passion and emotional engagement that only a vision that's alive could bring. ■



David Grier (left) and Braam Malherbe on the Great Wall of China.

*Professor Tim Noakes of the Sports Science Institute of South Africa said before the journey: ‘What these guys are going to attempt is physically impossible.’*

*From David’s blog about the run:*

*‘With the 3 000 km mark drawing near and three months on the wall, it is really difficult to conceive what I have already been through. The desert seemed never ending as we travelled up the Hexi corridor along the silk route from Jauyigian.’*

*From Braam’s webpage:*

*‘Passion is the driving force of my life. It is real, tangible, I can taste it. It connects me to the greater whole, to the soul of things ... I passionately embrace change to prove that nothing is impossible ... There are no limitations except the ones we impose in our minds.’*



### **Profile**

Erich Cloete has worked in Education Management for the past 15 years. He was appointed Head of Department (1995), Deputy Principal (1997) and Principal (2003). He was one of the first principals to introduce the Kids Development Academy (KDA) programme in Pretoria. He was awarded the KDA Humanity award in 2003 for his efforts. Over the years he liaised with business people from various sectors to raise funds for better education, which resulted in multiple radio and internet-based interviews. He has a Higher Diploma in Education, a Bachelor’s degree, a Further Diploma and ACE in Educational Management and Leadership and has completed different curriculum-based courses. He is an accredited Whole Brain practitioner who profiles brain preferences of teachers and learners. In 2006 he appeared on SABC2 highlighting the benefits of utilising the whole brain in teaching and learning. He enjoys magic, loves to read and is happy to spend time with his family.



# Traditional lecture-style teaching strategies may do more good than harm

Recent research findings by associates linked to the Program on Education Policy and Governance, at the Kennedy School, Harvard University, suggest that the use of traditional lecture-style teaching methodologies does not harm and may do some good.

The introduction of Curriculum 2005 with its outcomes-based approach to curriculum delivery created a lot of hype around the role that teachers should play in the classroom together with a whole new vocabulary of terms and acronyms that were to be used to describe classroom practice. Out went pupil, student and scholar, the children who sat in your class were to be called 'learners'. Teachers were no longer teachers, they were to be called 'educators' and their job was no longer to teach, it was to 'facilitate learning'. Subjects were renamed learning areas and the need for an 'integrated approach' was stressed. Rote learning and lecture-style teaching were out, learners were to learn through processes of experimentation, discovery and most importantly group work. Written tests and examinations were out, be replaced by a range of continuous assessment tasks involving research and with the assistance of peers, computers, the internet and teachers, except of course for one final hurdle: the National Senior Certificate examination ...

Well, the pendulum is beginning to swing back. It is now okay to call teachers teachers, and to call subjects subjects. Of more interest from a methodological perspective are recent research findings that suggest that traditional lecture-style teaching not only does no harm to pupils but that the performance of some may even benefit from this approach. The debate of course is not new and the opposing views are sometimes poetically described as 'the guide on the side versus the sage on the stage'.

The research was undertaken by Guido Schwerdt and Amelie Wuppermann and published as part of a working paper series produced by the Program on Education Policy and Governance a unit of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The paper with the title, 'Is traditional teaching really all that bad? A within-

student between-subject approach'<sup>1</sup>, includes a great deal of complex statistical analysis that forms the basis of its findings but it also includes brief summaries of the results of other similar research that examined the effects of teaching styles on learner achievement. We provide a summary of their findings and some of the other research that they refer to in their report below together with our own commentary on the possible practical implications of these findings for classroom practice and the way schools manage and monitor classroom practice.

*Recent research findings suggest that traditional lecture-style teaching not only does no harm to pupils but that the performance of some may even benefit from this approach.*

For their study Schwerdt and Wuppermann used the United States country data from the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Although the TIMSS study tested Grade 4 and Grade 8 students in Mathematics and Science, Schwerdt and Wuppermann decided to only use the data

from Grade 8 students because Grade 4 students are mostly taught all subjects by the same teacher while in Grade 8 they are likely to be taught by different teachers for the two subjects. The 2003 TIMSS study included a teacher-questionnaire that required teachers to report on what percentage of time in a typical week students spent on eight in-class activities. These activities included listening to lecture-style presentations, working on problems with the teacher's guidance and working on problems without guidance. The two 'working on problems' categories were combined to produce a category that they labelled 'problem solving' and the percentage of time spent on 'problem solving' was compared to the time spent on 'lecturing'. They did this by the simple process of dividing the percentage of time spent on lecturing by the sum of the two percentages:

$$\frac{\% \text{ lecturing}}{\% \text{ lecturing} + \% \text{ problem solving}}$$

Using this calculation will produce a figure of 1 if a teacher spends all of his or her time lecturing with no



time allocated to student problem solving. The less time a teacher spends on lecturing, the closer the figure will get to zero. If a teacher spends an equal amount of time on lecture-style teaching as they allocate to learner-based problem solving the calculation will produce a figure of 0.5. It is important to note that this does not mean that other kinds of activities did not take place in these classes, it simply focuses on the proportion of contact time that teachers allocated to these two kinds of activities in relation to one another. It is a way of determining whether a given teacher mostly taught as 'a sage on the stage' or as 'a guide on the side'. This data was then correlated with the performance in the 2003 TIMSS tests of the learners taught by these teachers.

The authors of the article note that their literature surveys produced very little evidence linking differences in verifiable ('observable') teacher characteristics such as teacher qualifications or teaching experience to learner performance. Instead they found that it was the other, 'unobservable' characteristics such as teaching style and methodology ('technique') that appear to have the greatest impact on learner performance. These findings are supported by a study by Kaplan and Owings<sup>2</sup> that showed that it is *teaching* quality rather than *teacher* quality, that has the greatest impact on learner performance. They define 'teaching quality' as a teacher's ability to teach, as opposed to 'teacher quality', which are the qualities that a teacher brings to the classroom, including such things as the teacher's qualifications, professional preparation, gender, race, experience and so on. (A brief summary of these findings is provided in the adjacent box.)

Because the focus of the authors' research was to determine whether traditional lecture-style teaching had a negative impact on learner performance, their primary findings attempt to address that question. On the basis of their study that concludes that 'the high share of total teaching time devoted to traditional lecture-style teaching in science and mathematics instruction in US middle schools has no detrimental effect on student achievement. Our findings imply that simply changing the teaching method from lecture-style presentation to problem solving without

*Simply changing the teaching method from lecture-style presentation to problem solving without concern for how the methods are implemented has little potential for raising overall achievement levels.*

concern for how the methods are implemented has little potential for raising overall achievement levels'. While this statement may seem fairly bland in making its point that lecture-style teaching probably doesn't do any harm, the second sentence may help further explain why the implementation of Curriculum 2005 has been such a dismal failure in most schools. However, while this was the only finding from this piece of research that was supported by statistically significant evidence, there were also other findings that, although not as well supported, are certainly worth noting and are set out in their conclusion to the study.

**In their conclusion they note that:**

- 'A 10 percentage point shift from problem solving to lecture-style presentation results in an increase in student achievement of about one percent of standard deviation.' This conclusion suggests that teachers who use a lecture style approach to teaching are not just doing no harm as was suggested earlier but that learners may actually benefit from this approach. The comment of the authors is significant in this regard: 'This finding suggests that students taught by teachers who devote more teaching time to lecture-style presentation rather than letting students solve problems on their own or with the teacher's guidance, learn more.'
- 'Moreover, while newer teaching methods might be beneficial for student achievement if implemented in an ideal way, our findings imply that simply inducing teachers to shift time in class from lecture-style presentations to problem solving without concern for how this is implemented contains little potential to increase student achievement. On the contrary, our results indicate that there might even be adverse effects on student learning.'

So there you have it. Lecture-style teaching does no harm and may in fact be a better option than other approaches for teachers who lack the requisite subject knowledge and methodological expertise to properly exploit alternative teaching strategies. In the South African context this would apply to the majority of schools and teachers. ■

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## Literature on teaching practices cited by Guido Schwerdt and Amelie Wuppermann

### **An interactive teaching style produces better scores for Chicago primary school learners.<sup>1</sup>**

A 2001 study of primary school learners in Chicago showed greater improvement in their test scores when they were taught using an interactive teaching style rather than a didactic or review-orientated reading style.

### **Teaching style influences learner performance in science if it is adapted to the curriculum.**

A study in the 1990s<sup>2</sup> showed that the 10th grade maths scores of learners improved when teaching styles promoted by the National Science Foundation were adopted by teachers. These findings emphasised that the improvement was a consequence of a change in both the curriculum and in teaching style to ensure that there was a level of coherence between the two.

### **Literacy hour<sup>3</sup> improves the reading skills of low-ability learners.**

A study of the effect of the introduction of a 'literacy hour' in English primary schools in the 1990s showed that the literacy hour significantly increased the reading skills of low-ability learners but had little effect on the ability of high-ability learners.

### **Computer-aided instruction may improve maths skills but has little effect on reading.**

A study by Rouse and Krueger<sup>4</sup> in 2004 found that the literacy skills of 3rd and 6th grade learners in a large United States urban school district did not benefit from the use of a computer program for teaching language reading while another study<sup>5</sup> showed that computer-aided instruction did improve the maths skills of

learners.

### **Frequent testing improves learner performance.**

A study by Wenglinsky<sup>6</sup> showed that the frequent testing of learners is positively related to learner performance while another study that examined the differences between high performing, high poverty schools and other high poverty schools in Kentucky, found that the high performing schools paid more attention to student assessment than did the other schools.

### **The quality of assignments and the rigour of marking influences learner performance.**

A study in Norway<sup>7</sup> found that learner performance deteriorated when marking was lenient. Other studies<sup>8</sup> have shown that learner performance is affected by the quality of assignments that learners are asked to do.

### **Instruction in small groups and emphasis on problem solving results in lower test scores.**

A study<sup>9</sup> that controlled for learner background, previous performance and school and teacher characteristics found that instruction in small groups and emphasis on problem solving lead to lower learner test scores.

### **Lesson preparation and asking questions affects learner performance.**

An analysis of teaching practice and learner performance in Pakistan<sup>10</sup> found that learners performed better when taught by teachers who spent more time on lesson preparation and who asked more questions in class.

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## Teaching-related factors that have an impact on learner performance (Based on the findings of Kaplan and Owings<sup>1</sup>)

### Teacher quality

- Verbal ability
- Content knowledge
- Education coursework on teaching methods in their discipline
- Scores in state licensing examinations that measure both basic skills and teaching knowledge
- Ongoing voluntary professional learning
- Enthusiasm for learning
- Flexibility, creativity and adaptability
- Amount of teaching experience (once a teacher has taught for three or more years the differences associated with experience are marginal)
- Demonstrated skill in asking learners higher-order questions and in probing their responses
- Class size, planning time, opportunities to work with colleagues, curricular resources.

### Teaching quality

- The following teacher behaviours were seen as indicators of teaching quality:
- Attract learners' attention and interest in learning through creative and varied learning activities
- Provide direct instruction for specific skills and knowledge combined with engaging design qualities
- Provide ongoing and varied formative and summative learning assessments
- Align taught and tested curriculum so all learners have opportunities to learn content and skills on which their academic progress will be measured
- Use learner assessment data diagnostically to plan instruction for individual learners and the whole class, determine learner mastery, and provide feedback to learners that they can promptly use to increase learning.

The authors also state that one study<sup>2</sup> noted that 'the aspects of teaching quality measured in this study have an impact seven to ten times as great as that of class size'.

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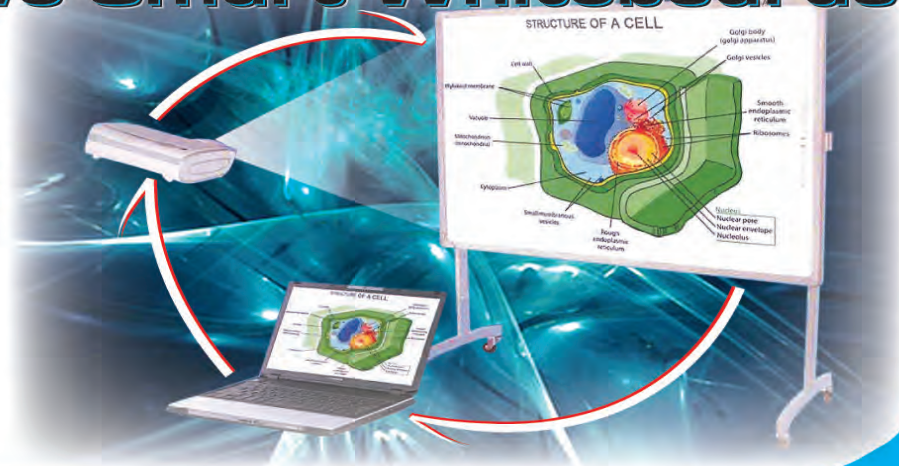
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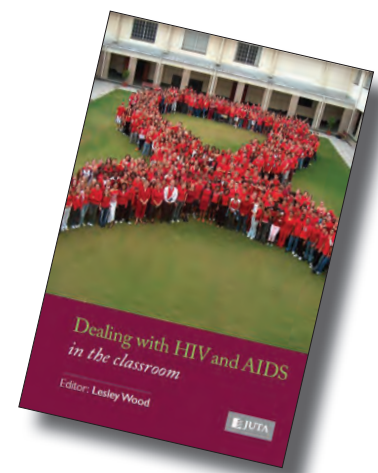
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## Book review



*Dealing with HIV and AIDS in the classroom*  
Edited by Professor Lesley Wood, Juta, Cape Town, 2008  
Price: R192  
240 pages  
ISBN: 978 0702176852

This is an excellent book and is one of those resources that should have a prominent place in the staffroom and on the bookshelves of every principal.

Where *Dealing with HIV and AIDS in the classroom* differs from many other similar books on the subject is in the useful and practical guidance that it provides on dealing with the host of HIV/AIDS-related issues that confront many schools throughout Africa on a daily basis. Most importantly its guidance is based on the practical experience and expertise of the 10 contributing authors, all of whom have first-hand knowledge of dealing with the impact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is having on learners and teachers, and the schools and the communities they serve.

The book is divided into three sections and 10 chapters. Section 1 covers the general background to HIV and AIDS in education in Africa and includes chapters on the nature of HIV and AIDS, the impact of HIV and AIDS on education in Africa, and the influence of socio-cultural factors on the management of the pandemic. The four chapters in Section 2, which focuses on the need to develop competent HIV and AIDS educators, deal in turn with the kind of action that needs to be taken to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS, the importance of developing resilient coping strategies, the need to provide leadership in managing HIV and AIDS in schools, and suggestions for innovative teaching strategies for HIV and AIDS prevention. Section 3 focuses on strategies to create a

healthy school environment and includes chapters on human rights, care and support, and sensible decision-making and problem solving.

Each chapter of the book includes a list of 'Learning outcomes' for the chapter and suggestions for teaching and learning activities, as well as suggestions for further reading and website links. The authors clearly understand the importance of perceptions, ignorance and prejudice in dealing with the disease. To encourage introspection and frank discussion on these issues most chapters include text boxes that promote 'Teacher self-reflection'. These include extracts of journals and interviews of individuals who are infected or whose lives have been directly affected by the disease. The self-reflection process forces readers to confront their own prejudices and demons in relation to the disease their response to it.

One of the great values of this book is that it does more than simply remind us of the terrible human cost of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly in relation to schooling. What it adds is a set of suggestions and tools that those involved with schools, and with the impact that HIV/AIDS is having on them, can use to manage their personal response to the disease while providing appropriate guidance and support to those who are most directly affected by it.

It is an excellent book that no school should be without. ■

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