



# Investing in EDUCATION

One of the main feature articles of this edition is our summary of the research report 'Platinum and Passes' published jointly by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Wits School of Governance, which evaluated the extent to which approximately R100 million in mining investments in education by Anglo American Platinum over a 10-year period, had an impact on learner performance in the targeted schools. Disappointingly the findings of the report are that this enormous investment over more than 10 years produced very little change and that the net effect of this investment was diminished by the proximity of the targeted schools to mines. For government officials and NGOs working in the schooling sector, there are a number of lessons to be learned from the findings of this report. Perhaps the most important of these is the need to focus on fewer rather than more interventions and to work at these until they are thoroughly bedded down within the school or schooling system. A second and perhaps equally important lesson is the need to include some form of performance monitoring system in the design phase of any proposed intervention programme. This performance monitoring system needs to be fully aligned with the intervention programme's goals and should be designed in a way that provides ongoing feedback on the extent to which progress is being made towards the achievement of these goals. In the case of Anglo American Platinum, in the absence of such a system it took the company nearly 10 years to learn that the R100 million it had invested in its school-based intervention programmes had produced negligible change.

One of the other feature articles is an opinion piece on the likely consequences of the DBE's proposal to

reduce the range of textbooks available for each subject to just one, meaning not only that teachers will no longer be able to use their professional judgement in deciding which textbook to select for their classes but that all schools will be forced to use the same textbooks. The draft policy document published by the DBE for public comment implies that this new policy is designed to promote 'redress and equity within the LTSM provisioning context' and to correct the injustices of the past. In our opinion piece we argue that the proposed policy is likely to have exactly the opposite effect.

This edition also includes news about a collaborative professional development programme initiated by the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV) and the Progressive Principals Association which saw the SMTs of four participating schools attend a weekend professional development workshop at the ATKV's Goudini Spa holiday resort not far from Worcester in the Western Cape. The ATKV, which has offices and resorts in several provinces, is looking to become more involved in education and particularly in the development of school leadership teams and it can only be good for education if similar workshops are offered in the other provinces where they have a presence.

As the school year rushes to an end most principals and their leadership teams start to think about their plans for 2015. In the article 'Get your school year off to a bright new start' we make some suggestions about things that you can do to help returning learners and teachers to view 2015 as a 'new' school year and not just a same-old, same-old extension of 2014.

Enjoy the read.

# Platinum & passes

'Platinum and passes' is the title of a research report (Research Report 16) published jointly by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Wits School of Governance of the University of Witwatersrand, in May this year. The full title of the report 'Platinum and passes: The impact of mining investments on education outcomes in South Africa'<sup>1</sup> clearly sets out its purpose together with the potential value of its findings and recommendations to government and to everyone involved in the mining industry in this country. The mining industry, and particularly the platinum mining industry, has been getting a bad press over the past few years, partly as a result of the tragic events associated with the protracted strike at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana in 2012, which resulted in the deaths of more than 40 people in August of that year.

The study on which the report is based attempts to assess the extent to which a \$14 million (approximately R100 million) education programme funded by Anglo American Platinum and implemented in the platinum belt, which stretches across Limpopo and North West provinces, impacted on learner performance in the public schools that were the recipients of targeted interventions that formed part of the programme.

The contribution of big business to programmes aimed at social upliftment in this country (including education) is very significant. The corporate social investment (CSI) spend of the major mining houses is of the order of R1 million per year and it is estimated that approximately 90% of all CSI from corporate South Africa goes to education partly because business sees this as likely to provide the best return in the form of a better informed and more knowledgeable and skilled workforce, a better educated citizenry and ultimately a larger and wealthier customer base for their goods and services. An example of the relative significance of this spend is the annual CSI contribution of Anglo American, which is greater than the contribution to these same causes in South Africa of any of the World Bank, the UN, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency and the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

Although the report gathered data for this study from programmes funded by Anglo American Platinum for the decade between 2003 and 2013, its main focus was on the period from 2009 to 2013

with a special focus on those interventions that targeted students in Grades 10 to 12, together with their teachers and schools.

## **Anglo American Platinum's interventions for Grades 10 to 12 (FET)**

### **1. Supplementary Saturday classes (2003 to 2012)**

In an effort to improve the Maths and Science results of learners attending schools in the education districts where the mines are located, funding was provided to two organisations (initially Radical Maths & Science Company from 2003 to 2010 and then the NGO Star Schools) to implement support programmes for selected learners from Grade 10 to 12. Radical Maths & Science Company selected approximately 400 learners from Grade 10 to 12 and then provided this group with additional half-day classes on Saturdays in Mathematics, Physical Sciences, business and social skills and English. Students were grouped in classes of about 40 individuals, based on their geographic location. In 2010 the contract was awarded to Star Schools, which trained 600 Grade 12 students from all of Anglo American Platinum's various operations in Mathematics, Physical Sciences and English.

### **2. Winter enrichment camps (2011 and 2012)**

In addition to the weekly supplementary classes, special workshops were provided for more than 900 students from the various mining operations during the school holidays. These programmes focused on Mathematics, Physical Sciences, English and Geography. Tuition at the camps was provided by local teachers and the camps usually lasted for five days. Teaching was directed particularly at addressing content knowledge gaps experienced by students, a consequence of poor teaching and insufficient coverage of the curriculum.

### **3. Teacher training (2012 to 2013)**

The teacher training programme was aimed at improving the content knowledge of the teachers teaching Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting at 27 of the high schools located in the mines' area of operation. The 60 teachers involved in the programme attended two weeks of workshop sessions during the June school holidays, with the training provided by the Centre for Research and Development in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education at the University of Witwatersrand's Radmaste Centre. The workshops were followed by a second two-day session in September. The programme was planned to run

from 2012 to 2014 but was terminated as a result of the tragedy of Marikana.

In addition to these three interventions, Anglo American Platinum provided funding and support for a number of other education-related programmes in its area of operation. These include:

- R25 million towards infrastructure support for schools, which involved building and rehabilitating schools; extending classrooms; the construction of administrative blocks and toilets, together with the necessary infrastructure for the provision of the water and sewerage facilities; the refurbishment of libraries; the outfitting of science laboratories; and the donation of computers, photocopiers and other equipment to schools, education centres and some education district circuit offices.
- R70 million for education support directed particularly at skills training and youth-targeted development. Programmes include Adult Basic Education and Literacy (ABET); early childhood development; primary and general education and training (GET); special needs schools; bursaries for university students; apprenticeships; and professional development for young technical and professional staff.
- R1 million towards the cost of Mathematics and Science equipment for all Dinaledi schools in the North West province.

The research team that collected and collated the data on which the report is based identified 137 schools in the Limpopo and North West provinces that, in one way or another, were the beneficiaries of one or more of these interventions over the past five years. These schools were grouped and labelled, for the purposes of the study, as Anglo American Platinum treatment schools.

In deciding how best to assess the impact of the interventions that were provided to these treatment schools, the research team engaged in detailed discussion, not only with Anglo American Platinum, but also with other mining companies, the local education authorities and a variety of other stakeholders active in the area in which the mines operate. From these discussions six questions emerged, which were then used to guide their enquiry. These questions are listed below:

- Were the education projects implemented according to plan? Were the beneficiaries and partners satisfied? Did the right stakeholders and groups benefit from the interventions?
- What impact did the presence of the mine have on schools in North West and Limpopo?

- Has the Anglo American Platinum education programme been effective in improving learning outcomes and pass rates (particularly in Maths and Science) in the targeted schools?
- What can be improved in future education investments and how can greater impact be achieved?
- What important lessons can the mining industry and other corporate social investors learn from the successes and failures in addressing education gaps in South Africa?
- What have been the most successful interventions to improve learning results that should be replicated and scaled up?
- What provides the best value for money when addressing education outcomes in South Africa?

In their search for answers to these questions the research team began the process by spending two months (October and November 2013) of intense observation and engagement with schools, education department officials and community representatives in the mine's areas of operation in the two provinces. This included direct observation of a sample of 22 of the schools from the treatment groups. These schools were selected because they were the beneficiaries of significant support from Anglo American Platinum. The research team focused their analysis particularly on education programmes implemented between 2009 and 2012. Besides the data collected from direct engagement with the various stakeholders, mostly involving informal question-and-answer sessions, the team also gathered empirical data, which included the NSC results. Other data gathered from schools included administrative and demographic data mostly derived from data provided in reports by Stats SA and by provincial education departments derived from their Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). These data sets were cross-referenced wherever possible to ensure that the figures were an accurate representation of the reality on the ground.

Most of the body of the report deals with the complex statistical methods used by the research team to analyse the data that they collected and to assess the extent to which the package of interventions that Anglo American Platinum had provided impacted on the quality of education provided by the schools and the performance of the learners and teachers who were the beneficiaries of these interventions. As our interest is in the findings of the report rather than the statistical processes that were followed to arrive at these findings we will refrain from commenting on these processes – they also lie outside of our field of expertise.

Although the findings of this study paint a bleak picture of the influence of Anglo American Platinum's mining operations on education in the areas in which they operate, the study does provide useful insights into why the many well-intentioned and costly interventions failed to achieve what they set out to achieve.

**A brief summary of the findings of the study is set out below.**

- The value and benefits of these interventions were appreciated by a few selected beneficiaries (learners and teachers).
- The extent to which these individuals benefitted from these programmes was too small to translate into gains for the general school system in the two provinces (North West and Limpopo).
- The Mathematics and Science interventions did not produce any significant improvement in the results of the beneficiaries' schools.
- The small positive effect of the interventions was outweighed by the large negative unintended effect that the presence of the mines had on schools surrounding the platinum operations.
- There is a strong negative correlation between the proximity of a school to the mine and a decline in Mathematics and Science pass rates, and this 'goes beyond the well-intended education interventions of the company and is rooted in the larger socio-economic challenges faced by communities living around mining areas'.

Probably the most important statement in the report for those who are involved in interventions that are aimed at addressing some of the many challenges of our education system is that Anglo American Platinum 'tried to do too many things in too small doses, thus reducing its chances of making a deep and lasting impact'. In our view this statement encapsulates almost everything that is wrong about the vast majority of education interventions that currently form part of the schooling landscape of this country. Almost everyone wants to help, some for altruistic reasons, others out of a sense of civic duty, while for some it is seen as a way to earn a living or turn a profit. However, most of these interventions, no matter how well-intentioned, appear to be implemented without any clear and deep understanding of the nature and context of the challenge that schools face nor with any form of theoretical framework to justify the structure, method and scope of their planned interventions. The result, in many schools, is a hotchpotch of sometimes conflicting interventions with few if any attempts to assess and evaluate the impact on school functionality or learner performance. The

following extract from the report provides clear guidelines on what needs to be done to put this right.

'Corporate social investments and education programmes must be planned based on evidence and rigorous research. Systematic and scientific monitoring and evaluation need to be embedded in all interventions. Monitoring and evaluation must be incorporated from the early design and thereafter in all decision-making stages.'

We could not agree with them more.

There was one other item of information in the report that caught our attention because it is evidence from education research that we were not aware of, and that is that the greater percentage of learning gains occurs in the lower grades and that it is therefore better to direct external interventions into the lower grades of schooling. Part of the reason for this is that schooling and social factors have less influence on older students whose habits and thinking processes are already well formed.

## REFERENCE

1. Neissan Alessandro Besharati, *Platinum and Passes: The impact of Mining Investments on Education Outcomes in South Africa*, SALLA and Wits School of Governance, May 2014.



# The proposed **ONE-TEXTBOOK-PER-SUBJECT** policy

## ***Is the DBE's draft policy for the provision of LTSM another OBE-type catastrophe in the making?***

There is a general consensus amongst principals, educators and educational commentators in this country that the introduction of Curriculum 2005's outcomes-based curriculum model was an unmitigated disaster for schooling and that its negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning at classroom level was most pronounced in schools that served the most needy children. We suspect that if the DBE goes ahead with the proposals contained in its recently published Draft National Policy for the provision and management of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) it will once again be learners from disadvantaged communities that bear the brunt of the misguided thinking of the DBE bureaucrats who drafted these proposals.

A call for written submissions from stakeholder bodies and members of the public was published in *Government Gazette* No. 37976 of 4 September 2014 on the 'National Policy for the Provisioning and Management of Learning and Teaching Support Materials for Grade R-12' and, although the proposed policy in Section 4 Guiding Principles suggests that the policy aims to achieve 'Redress and equity within the LTSM provisioning context', it is clear that the real purpose of the policy is an attempt to reduce the overall cost to the state of the provision of LTSMs and particularly of textbooks. Those who drafted the policy clearly believe that the best way to achieve this is to drive down cost by using the economies of scale. This will be done by selecting just one textbook in each subject for each grade. These books, which will include not only textbooks but also language readers, will then be listed on a national catalogue, with all schools then forced to procure their books from this list.

The policy includes whole paragraphs of instructions about the process that will be followed for the submission of texts by authors and publishers and of the selection process that it suggests will be conducted by a team of independent assessors as part of the quality assurance process, but the end result will be that only one book will be selected

and published for each subject in every grade and all schools will be forced to use the same book, and therein lies the rub and the muddled thinking of those who were responsible for the drafting the document. It is their misguided belief that the teachers and learners who populate the classrooms of this country's public schools are all the same and that a History or English or Life Sciences textbook that finds favour with highly qualified teachers working in urban schools serving middle-class communities whose home language is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) of the school, will be equally appropriate for the teacher who is poorly qualified in the subject and who is teaching in a rural school serving communities where parents are mostly barely literate and where the LoLT of the school is neither the home language of the teacher nor that of the learners.

What the DBE officials who drafted the policy document fail to understand is that while authors and publishers are keen to sell as many copies of their books as possible, they almost always write and design textbooks with a particular school profile in mind. As a former author of a successful series of Natural Sciences textbooks I am very aware of how this process works, with the publisher making it quite clear to me when they approached me to work on the series for them that the target market for the series would be schools and learners for whom English would be a second language. So keen was the publisher to ensure that the language level of the text was appropriate for second language learners that they insisted that the language levels of every chapter were analysed using software that assessed the complexity and age appropriateness of the reading level of the text.

So what can we expect for a History textbook that will be used by the more than 1 million Grade 9 learners who occupy approximately 25 000 classrooms in nearly 10 000 different schools each day. Many of these learners will never have travelled outside of their local village except perhaps to go to the nearest large city, will have little or no access to

television or the internet, and will seldom have seen a newspaper; while others brought up by middle-class professional parents will have ready access to all of these resources, are likely to have travelled widely and are likely to engage in discussions with parents and friends about current events, both local and international. It is simply wishful thinking that the same textbook will be of equal value to both groups.

The merit of a one-textbook-per-subject policy is also educationally questionable on a number of other grounds. Our schooling system, like most systems worldwide, is divided into a number of phases. In this country there are four phases – the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6), the Senior Phase (Grades 7 to 9) and the Further Education and Training Phase (Grades 10 to 12). Mostly when a school orders or purchases textbooks for a specific subject they choose a title from the same publisher for all three grades of a phase. This is because publishers tend to use the same author or team of authors for a particular textbook series. This is to ensure continuity of style and subject content across the three grades of a phase. In some schools this is taken further with the subject team selecting the same textbook series for all five grades in high schools. It's a sensible approach but one has to wonder whether those who will be tasked with the job of selecting the universal textbook for each subject will do the same or whether we will end up with a situation where the selected Grade 8 Mathematics textbook is one that has been put together by an author team from publisher A while the Grade 9 Mathematics textbook selected is the product of a different team of authors employed by publisher B? If common sense prevails and the decision is made to select a three-book series for the subject for a particular phase, there will be a windfall for the authors and publisher who win the contract but an outcry from those who lose out. The draft policy proposes that books will be selected for use over a five-year period. This would be very lucrative for those publishers whose books are selected, but for those publishers whose books are not selected, the results will be dire. Most of the smaller publishers are likely to go out of business, which is one of the reasons that the new policy has been vehemently opposed by the publishing industry.

The Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) submitted a 34-page written submission to the Minister of Basic Education setting out its reasons for opposing the draft policy.

### Executive summary of PASA's submission to the Minister of Basic Education

- The move provided for in the Draft Policy away from the historical policy of establishing a national catalogue comprising of multiple books per subject, per grade, per language with teachers being able to choose suitable books for their circumstances and those of their learners, to establishing a national catalogue comprising of one book per subject, per grade, per language chosen by the department, is a fundamental, significant and far-reaching change.
- The Department has not consulted with stakeholders in this regard, when this is required prior to such a fundamental change being made.
- The Department has not given any reasons, whether in the Draft Policy or otherwise, for such a proposed change.
- The Draft Policy will have serious implications for learners, teachers and the publishing industry in South Africa.
- PASA submits that the cycle of curriculum reform should be linked to the life of the National Catalogue and linked to the anticipated lifespan of purchased books.
- A move to one book per subject, per grade, per language will not advance the development of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises and historically disadvantaged individuals. In fact, it will achieve the opposite.
- If the aim of the proposed move to one book per subject, per grade, per language is to reduce costs, then there are other better ways, to do so.
- PASA submits that an open-ended submission and multi-book system in which all books, including sponsored and free books, are subject to the screening process, should be implemented, failing which, the current model of eight books on the national catalogue per subject, per grade, per language should be retained.
- The concept of a Minimum School bag should be included in the Draft Policy.
- The procurement, delivery and utilisation model with regard to the provision of e-books is an integral part of the DBE's policy provided for in the Draft Policy. The failure of the department to include it in the Draft Policy is a material omission that renders the Draft Policy incomplete and the process of obtaining public comment in relation thereto, nugatory.

PASA is the largest publishing industry body in the country and represents 141 different entities in the publishing industry.

While the likely demise of what is currently a reasonably robust industry with strong competition between textbook publishers for market share is not an issue that principals and teachers are likely to concern themselves with, the consequent loss of textbook variety will be a disappointment to the many good teachers who use the range of textbooks currently published in their subject as sources of ideas that can be used to enrich their teaching.

Perhaps the biggest misunderstanding of those who are responsible for the draft policy is their failure to understand that the problem with the current situation is not one of textbooks or of their procurement. The problem is a failure of management and accountability at all levels in the system but particularly at district and school level. This management incompetence was well illustrated by the now notorious Limpopo textbook saga. It was not a matter of chance that it was at Grade 10 level that the delivery of textbooks was most problematic. Grade 10 was problematic because this is the first time that learners make a choice of which subjects to follow and until they have made that choice and the school knows exactly how many

learners will be taking each of the subjects that it offers at Grade 10 level it is impossible to correctly place an order for textbooks. In many schools this kind of information only becomes available at the start of the new school year. In many cases this is because of a failure of school management. Schools, however, are required to place their textbook orders well before the end of the previous school year, usually in October or November. So what did these schools do? They guessed the figures. These kinds of failings are unlikely to change until principals and SMTs are properly trained and until systems are put in place to hold them accountable for the decisions that they take. This policy is unlikely to change that reality. Regrettably a likely consequence of the implementation of this policy is fewer and less innovative textbooks, probably also textbooks of inferior physical quality as publishers attempt to increase profits once their books have been approved by using inferior quality finishes and bindings, and ultimately a growth in the disparity between the quality of teaching and learning between rich and poor schools. This is because fee-paying schools will have the financial means not only to purchase additional textbooks from international publishers but also because their teachers will have access to an array of other materials including e-learning materials together with the knowledge, the inclination and the expertise to use the resources in their classrooms.



## ATKV supports professional development in the Western Cape

The Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV) is an organisation with a long history of promoting Afrikaans as a language and supporting the cultural heritage of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. The organisation was founded in 1930 in Cape Town and now boasts a membership of approximately 70 000 members and an involvement in more than 30 cultural projects each year. The organisation is also the owner of seven excellent resorts located in some of this country's most scenic regions.

Historically, the ATKV was actively involved in supporting schools, particularly Afrikaans-medium schools and this involvement included programmes to develop the leadership potential of learners from across the country. Recently we were pleased to discover that this cultural organisation is once again working at finding ways to become an active

player in schooling, with a particular emphasis on developing the management and leadership capacities of school management teams (SMTs) and district officials.

We became aware of their decision to once again work with schools when General Editor Alan Clarke was approached by Jerome Steenkamp, one of the organisation's Project Coordinators for Education, with a request for assistance in the development of a programme for the management teams of a group of schools mostly drawn from the sprawling suburb of Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town. The schools involved all have heads who are members of the Progressive Principals Association, an association of approximately 200 members based in the Western Cape. The Progressive Principals Association rose to national prominence towards the end of last year

when it joined educational activist Jean Pease in a court application,<sup>1</sup> which, if successful, would force the Minister of Basic Education and her department to more fully define the notion of 'basic education' as enshrined in the Bill of Rights. In addition the applicants asked the court, should it find in their favour, to force the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to fully set out the steps it would take, together with dates and deadlines, to remedy the situation and meet its constitutional obligations to provide free basic education for all children. More details about this court application are provided below.

### Jean Pease and the Progressive Principals Association's court challenge

The applicants focused particularly on four areas of deficiency that they considered require remedial action. These were:

- The provision of appropriate early childhood development programmes for all children;
- Mother tongue as medium of instruction in the Foundation and Intermediate phases of schooling for all children;
- The timeous supply and delivery of sufficient quantities of textbooks and other teaching materials; and that these be provided in the languages of instruction of schools;
- The professionalisation of teachers.

Interestingly the applicants also asked the court to implement a supervision order, which if granted would require either the courts or Chapter 9 institutions such as the Public Protector, to supervise and monitor the extent to which the Minister and her department were putting in place the programmes and process necessary to meet their obligations of a quality basic education.

Not surprisingly the Minister and her department vehemently opposed the application and suggested, according to a report in the *Mail & Guardian* at that time, that the applicants' case was 'legally misconceived' and 'constitutionally inappropriate'.

The matter finally came to court from 19 to 21 May this year, where it was heard by Mr Justice Nathan Erasmus of the Western Cape High Court. Judgement was reserved and both parties were invited to provide additional submissions where they felt this was relevant. The judge also indicated that the matter may well be taken on appeal should one or other of the parties feel aggrieved at the judgement and that the matter may well eventually progress to the Constitutional Court.

The judgement on this matter is still pending.

### What the Bill of Rights has to say about Education

Chapter 2 of the Constitution is commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights because it sets out the rights of all people in South Africa. The following sections of the Bill of Rights are pertinent to the application made by Jean Pease and the Progressive Principals Association to the Western Cape High Court.

#### Section 7: Rights

(1) This Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of democracy in South African. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

(2) The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.

(3) The rights in the Bill of Rights are subject to the limitations contained or referred to in section 36, or elsewhere in the Bill.

#### Section 8: Application

(1) The Bill of Rights applies to all law, and binds the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and all organs of state.

#### Section 29: Education

(1) Everyone has the right—

(a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and

(b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

(2) Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account—

(a) equity;

(b) practicability; and

(c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

(3) Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that—

(a) do not discriminate on the basis of race;

(b) are registered with the state; and

(c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

(4) Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.



The driving force behind the request for SMT training workshops was the head of Spine Road High School and it was through him that contact was made with the ATKV who then agreed not only to make their Goudini Spa resort and conference facilities available for the workshops but also to fund it.

The programme was designed and presented by facilitators Bruce Probyn and Alan Clarke from the Principals Academy Trust, an organisation that is working intensively primarily with principals but that also supports schools by providing ongoing training and support for teachers of these schools.

**The programme covered the following key topics:**

- Good management practice, which focused on the importance of establishing effective management structures, systems and processes, together with the management and monitoring of these;
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of the SMT, which focused on line management and delegation;
- Reflective practice, which dealt with the tough issues of managing self and others and included ideas for dealing with negativity and low morale in the workplace;
- Making the most of learner performance data, which examined ways in which schools could utilise learner performance data as both a diagnostic tool and an assessment tool.

Also included in the programme was an excellent presentation by Mrs Ansie Peens, principal of Sunward Park High School in Boksburg, Gauteng, which is at the forefront of the use of technology at every level in the school, including as a substitute for textbooks and stationery.

The programme was presented at the ATKV's Goudini Spa holiday resort near Worcester, which has excellent facilities for programmes of this nature with its famed hot springs available between work sessions for those who feel the need to relax. The workshop session took place over a weekend starting from late afternoon on a Friday and ending at approximately 17:00 on the Saturday afternoon with most of the delegates choosing to stay on and enjoy the resort's facilities before returning home on Sunday morning. The principals and SMTs from four schools – approximately 60 teachers in all – participated in the workshop sessions. What was rewarding from an outsider's and presenter's perspective, was the tremendous enthusiasm of the teachers present, particularly the younger teachers, who were all clearly committed to their profession and eager to grow their expertise as leaders.

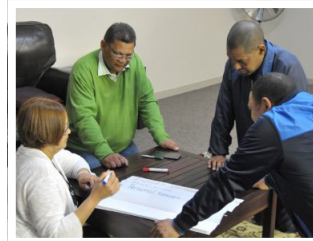
Several weeks later the resort hosted a similar but briefer workshop series using the same presenters for all of the officials from Metro District South, which is one of the Cape Town Metro's four education districts and the district in which the four schools are

located. The great value of this kind of arrangement is that the district officials, principals and schools are all exposed to a similar set of management ideas, tools and practices, increasing the likelihood of these schools implementing what they have learned and of their district officials supporting them in their efforts to improve the management practice.

ATKV needs to be commended for their initiative in promoting and supporting the development of what we understand was a pilot leadership development programme for SMTs and district officials. There is an enormous need for programmes of this kind and it is our hope that ATKV will build on this start by offering similar programmes to other schools and districts not only in the Western Cape but across the country wherever they have a presence.



*Bruce Probyn, one of the two workshop facilitators, makes a point in a workshop session that examined the issue of negativity in the workplace, together with strategies for dealing with 'toxic' colleagues. Bruce is head coach at the Principals Academy Trust. He and his team of coaches are currently coaching and mentoring the principals of 43 schools in the greater Cape Town area.*



*Greg Kannemeyer, recently appointed principal of Beacon Hill High School in Mitchell's Plain, working with his SMT to solve some of the challenges of leading schools serving deprived communities, which are often racked by drug abuse and gangsterism.*



*Carder Tregonning, principal of Pelican Park High School, at work with his SMT. The subject of this particular workshop was the 'Roles and responsibilities of the SMT' and included such topics as effective management structures and systems, delegation and accountability.*



*Alan Clarke, who co-presented the workshop sessions with Bruce Probyn, challenges some of the proposals put forward by the SMT of Pelican Park.*



*Representatives from each of the participating schools reported back on their proposals, which were then interrogated by SMT members from the other schools.*

**NOTES**

1. For more details of this case, including the Notice of Motion and Founding Affidavits go to the Institute of Accountability in South Africa website [http://www.ifaisa.org/current\\_affairs-education.html](http://www.ifaisa.org/current_affairs-education.html) where they are available as downloads.

# Try **PRIDE** before a fail

Written by Jonathan Jansen<sup>1</sup>

There is a reason Vrygrond is unsighted from the well-tarred M5 motorway that rolls past the picturesque Marina da Gama on the other side of the road towards the white sands of Muizenberg Beach.

It is an unattractive and difficult place marked by factional violence, substance abuse and hard living. A young man or woman born in Vrygrond usually gets stuck there, trapped in a life of grinding poverty and endless misery. So it caught me by surprise when a young woman covered the 1 000 km on her own to Bloemfontein with her suitcase to inform me that she wanted to study. 'I am from Vrygrond,' she said.

Shirley's (not her real name) school marks were not good. She would need to start in a university preparation programme before embarking on formal degree studies. The university's funds were already exhausted in favour of the many poor students with good academic results. But she was from Vrygrond, and I did not have the heart to send her all the way home. So we found some money somewhere and she made up the rest.

Through sheer grit and determination she stayed, overcoming academic deficits and financial hardships. I have no doubt that there were times when she had no idea where her next meal as a student would come from. But she pressed on.

Last week, I had one of my 'Talk to Me' sessions under a tree on campus and in the long line of students waiting their turn I spotted Shirley. Eventually it was her turn. She sat down, face drawn, and shared her academic successes for the year and how she got by financially. Then something happened that caught me completely off guard. Soft-spoken by nature, she looked me in the eye and calmly asked: 'Are you proud of me, Prof?' I muttered a few words and shortly afterwards rushed towards my car and drove to my office. Nobody was going to see me cry.



*The warm and caring relationship that Professor Johathan Jansen goes out of his way to cultivate with each of his students is well illustrated by this photography taken on the UFS's open day. It is very unlikely that the story that he related in this article would have taken place were it not for his willingness to listen to the individual concerns of his students and, in doing so, build the levels of trust that was required to make the events of the story possible.*

The deep need we all have for affirmation is often not met, especially among young people navigating their lives through poverty, violence and poor schooling in the hope of emerging alive and educated. Parents who did not experience the affirmation of a loving parent often find it difficult to convey that they are proud, even when they are.

For my generation you knew you were loved, but hugging and the expression 'I am proud of you, son' came only with the age of Oprah, when it became okay to share (and overshare) public feelings of pride in your offspring or anybody else.

Here then is a myth that must be countered. Students drop out of school and university not only because of poor teaching or unpredictable timetables or the lack of textbooks; it is, for many, also the emotional distance between teacher and learner that makes the struggle not seem worthwhile.

Most children in South Africa struggle to get to school and to stay in school; that much we know. But are those struggles acknowledged to those who yearn to hear the words 'I am proud of you'?

There is, of course, in Shirley a rare capacity to even pose the question. To articulate that question requires a maturity and insight into her own needs. It demands courage – asking a relative stranger to respond to an emotional need. And it involves risk; that question could be swiped aside in a clinical educator response that returns her focus to performance on tests and assignments rather than engaging in the uncomfortable business of emotions.

Teachers (and students) are not trained in 'creating emotionally literate classrooms', the title of Marc Brackett and Janet Kremenitzer's insightful book on the subject. Their 'Ruler' approach (Recognising, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing and Regulating, emotions in the classroom) enables teachers to create the conditions that draw out students like Shirley to express emotional needs in a safe environment. In a country with broken people, here is a need that bypasses all those standardised tests preoccupied with cognitive ability.

I know South African teachers are about to cringe but shouting and screaming in your classroom creates the opposite effect; such behaviour helps

produce emotionally disabled young people.

Shirley is waiting for my response. At first I try to avoid eye contact, revealing perhaps my discomfort with the emotion-laden question. Somewhere I find these unrehearsed words: 'My child, I am more proud of you than you will ever know.'

#### NOTES

1. This article was first published in the 24 October 2014 edition of *The Times*. Professor Jonathan Jansen is the Vice-chancellor of the University of Free State.

## Get your school off to a BRIGHT NEW START IN 2015



With the school year rapidly approaching its end, now is a good time to think about 2015 and the things that you need to get the 2015 year off to a bright new start.

As the year winds down and teachers busy themselves increasingly with the many administrative processes involved in the capture and moderation of marks, it is easy to put off the planning that needs to be done for the coming school year. Teachers also tend to be tired at this time of the year and as a result of this and the pressure of marking and meeting deadlines, show little enthusiasm when called on to become involved in planning processes, yet these processes are vital if the new school year is to get off to a good start. It is important, therefore, that principals and their leadership teams set aside time, not only for these planning processes, but also to give a thought to creating some sort of visual makeover for the school in readiness for the start of the new school year. This does not need to be anything spectacular, although we have reported in the past how the principal of Manyano organised a complete repaint of the exterior of her school during the five-week summer break, just sufficient change to make teachers, learners and parents realise that the new year had arrived and that they should not expect same old, same old.

A good place to start is to insist that the pin boards

in every classroom are cleared of all materials. The same rule should apply to staffroom and library notice boards, notice boards in the reception areas of the school as well as the notice boards in offices, including those in your own office. Once cleared, make arrangements with the caretaker and maintenance staff to check all boards for graffiti during the school holidays and to ensure that this is either removed or painted over.

To get some fresh ideas and as a way of viewing your school from a different perspective, try inviting several of your younger members of staff – those with initiative and who are willing to speak out – or some of your learners to take a walking tour with you through your school starting from outside the main entrance gate. As you walk, encourage them to talk about what they see and what they like and dislike. What do they feel about the appearance of the school from the front gate – neat, tidy and litter free, or unkempt and grubby? How inviting is it to visitors and does it suggest that this is an entrance to a place of learning, a place where children can feel safe and where they can take pleasure in both their studies and their play?

And what about the entrance to the school buildings? If there a different entrances for visitors, learners and teachers, which is the case in some schools, is each of these decorated in a way that suits its purpose? What kind of impression does the



main reception area of your school make on visitors and is it the impression you would like to create? Invite comments from the people who form part of your 'tour party' and take note of what they say. Better still, invite them to make suggestions about what should be changed and why. Invite those who show particular enthusiasm for making a change to become part of a redesign task team to put together a set of proposals for how things could be rearranged or changed in preparation for the new school year. If money is available, allocate them a small budget to fund those proposals that are likely to produce the greatest impact. Allow them to be adventurous where this is feasible and where you think their proposals will get people talking and thinking about the spaces that they work in.

Make some of the less savoury parts of the school a part of the tour. Most schools have places that they would prefer visitors not to see. What is the state of the learners' toilets at the end of the school day, or that stairwell or back courtyard where old desks and other broken furniture is stored, or the store filled

with old textbooks, examination papers and broken apparatus from years gone by? Or the corner of the school yard where the smokers gather at break time? Be honest and face up to what you find and then make some decisions about the actions you will take to address the shortcomings that you find. Don't try to do it all at once as that may well result in your failure to achieve anything. Rather choose to tackle one or two of the most prominent or obvious problem areas, those that you are sure you can deal with before the start of the new year.

Finally, if you do nothing else, make sure that you have put plans in place, working with your caretaker and cleaning staff, to ensure that the entire school is given a proper scrubbing down during the course of the long summer break. Make the approval of leave applications of your grounds and cleaning staff conditional on the completion of this work so that when everyone returns to school at the start of the new year, if nothing else, it is clean and welcoming.

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