

# Welcome

TO THE FIRST EDITION OF

# MAKHANDA

EDUCATION MATTERS

**Education does indeed matter in Makhandla.**

**Despite our many challenges, our community is full of inspiring educationalists and is a powerful engine of educational research and innovation.** ”

Long-term partnerships between Rhodes University, excellent educational non-profits, dynamic civic associations, some outstanding private and public schools, and rapidly improving no-fee paying schools led by some exceptional principals, are culminating in noticeable performance improvements.

The Rhodes Education Department started this newsletter to share:

- a wide range of educational, community and research stories;
- news about events, such as exhibitions and workshops;
- links to useful educator resources; and
- our successes and challenges.

We hope that this sharing will help activate local educator networks that facilitate communication, connection, agency and hope. We aim to use accessible language and, in future, hope to celebrate our linguistic diversity by publishing contributions in Afrikaans and isiXhosa, as well as English.

We are producing the newsletter in conjunction with the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes. And, with their help, we aim to distribute the newsletter on a range of digital platforms to engage with local educators and elicit feedback from them.

Unsolicited new stories and feedback that build on the core purpose of the newsletter are welcome and can be sent to [memeditorial@ru.ac.za](mailto:memeditorial@ru.ac.za).



**Nhlanhla Mpofu**

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# ONLINE AND IN THE CLASSROOM,

## COVID-19 HAS PUT NEW DEMANDS ON TEACHERS

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced teachers to move from a space in which they had years of experience to the unknown and challenging world of online, remote, correspondence and socially distanced teaching.

The Department of Basic Education produced a COVID-19 guide for teachers focused on creating learning environments using technology. In practice, this meant the teachers needed to facilitate learning with the help of digital tools such as e-learning platforms, online videos and audio tutorials.

But the guide wasn't enough. Teachers had to teach with limited support and skills. My experience as a teacher educator, a researcher in teacher education and as a former high school teacher point to the fact that teachers are woefully underprepared to deal with the current situation.

The average age of South African teachers is 43. This implies that many left teacher training over 20 years ago and might have limited knowledge of designing learning that differs from face-to-face classroom methods.

### VISION FOR TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology to design and transform learning and assessment has been a strategic goal for some years, as captured in the 2004 White Paper on e-Education. Over the years, the Department of Basic Education has added detail to its vision in documents such as Guidelines on e-Safety in Schools: Educating Towards Responsible, Accountable and Ethical Use of Information and Communication Technology in Education and Guidelines for Teacher Training and Professional Development in Information and Communication Technology.

But the department has experienced several challenges along the way. One main challenge has been the expense of investing in technology, and whether it's justified by the return. Even before the pandemic, there were challenges with the use of technology in public schools that included inadequate infrastructure, poor internet connectivity and lack of digitally competent teachers.

During the lockdown, this reality was made more evident as many public-school teachers who didn't have the experience, knowledge or infrastructure to facilitate online learning found it challenging.

Based on earlier research, it's much more likely that they didn't use the technology to its full capacity. For example, previous studies showed that teachers didn't use technology to help learners produce knowledge.

There's also the fact that the teacher workforce is mostly ageing and technophobic. The instructional methods in an online learning environment differ from the face-to-face classroom that most teachers use. The online ways of supporting learning and attending to different learning styles require skills that teachers from traditional classrooms don't have.

Added to this is the fact that there is uneven access to digital tools across the country.

### THE NEW CHALLENGES IN TEACHING

The pandemic has taken the known interactive, collaborative and cooperative classrooms and predictable timetables from teachers and replaced them with uncertainty.

These are perilous times, but teachers are transforming and adapting their knowledge to ensure that learning takes place. Research shows that teachers can reshape their knowledge and dispositions to function and respond to any challenging situations.

There is no manual for this situation. But there is an opportunity to rethink and redesign what it means to teach and learn during and after the pandemic. Importantly, it's a chance to address the gross inequalities and inadequacies in South African education.

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**The Department of Basic Education produced a COVID-19 guide for teachers focused on creating learning environments using technology.**

”

Nhlanhla Mpofu

# ESTABLISHING A LOCAL CIRCLE OF CARE AND EDUCATION

Lucy O'Keeffe



Second meeting of the Makhanda Circle of Care and Education Project background

The Ezinkwenkwezini project is a collaborative community project being developed and implemented by the Centre for Social Development (CSD) in partnership with ECD Centres, Primary Schools and a range of other stakeholders in Makhanda in the Eastern Cape of South Africa with funding from the HCI Foundation.

We are using an appreciative inquiry approach to explore the concept of quality early childhood development from the perspective of people 'on the ground' - ECD practitioners, parents and primary caregivers, amongst others. In phase one of the project, (which began amidst the disruption and uncertainty of 2020), we worked with practitioners and primary caregivers to identify the best of what already is within 11 ECD Centres in the Tanty and Middle Terrace areas of Makhanda. These existing strengths form the building blocks on which we aim to work together towards an inspiring future vision of quality ECD in our city.

## CIRCLES OF CARE AND EDUCATION

From this initial phase we began to develop a map of what quality ECD means both in terms of the broadly agreed constituents in policy and research, and the specific context in which we are working. Drawing on the ecological systems and settings models of Bronfenbrenner and Britto, Yoshikawa and Boller, we developed our own conceptual map of 'Circles of Care and Education'.

The care and education of the child (at the centre) is affected by a complex system of relationships, including interactions with adults (parents and primary caregivers, practitioners and teachers, nurses, social workers etc.); their settings (including the home, ECD centre, school, neighbourhood, clinics, churches, NGOs etc.); and the broader systems within which they exist (different levels of

government, policy, networks of support, public funding for ECD, social grants, cultural norms and values etc.).

### Establishing a local Circle of Care and Education

In the second phase of the project, we are embarking on the establishment of local 'Circles of Care and Education' as community-based collaborative structures to facilitate and support the process of moving towards a shared vision of quality ECD in Makhanda. This is a very exciting stage of the project, (delayed due to the COVID pandemic and resultant lockdowns), in which we are bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders to contribute to the conversation around quality ECD and to catalyse collective action for change. Initial meetings were held in the two local project areas in May this year, bringing together ECD practitioners and supervisors, local NGOs, churches and government representatives.

At these meetings the Ezinkwenkwezini project was introduced along with the concept of 'Circles of Care and Education' and there was overwhelming support for the idea of developing a collaborative structure. It was also decided that it would be more effective to merge the two neighbourhood Circles into one combined structure given the close geographical proximity and the overlap of key stakeholders between the two areas.



Circle of Care and Education



## Understanding each other & building relationships

At a second workshop in June, we started off by reflecting on the diversity of the group - made up of people from a variety of different backgrounds, sectors and areas of expertise. To explore this further, we shared the assumptions, stereotypes and generalisations we commonly hold about people from the different groups represented in the room. Examples offered by the participants were:

- ECD Practitioners are nannies, they just look after children, they don't educate'
- People from local government are lazy and don't keep their promises'
- Primary schools don't want to work with ECD Centres'
- NGOs are only interested in getting funding'

Participants reflected that it felt like a release to talk about these negative assumptions and that it was also eye-opening to hear what others thought about people from their sectors. In discussion we reflected on how these preconceived and generalised ideas could be obstacles to working together and how we needed to come into this collaborative space with open minds, expecting the best of each other and ourselves.

Hearing from the different individuals and organisations, what stood out was the richness of the existing relationships within the room and the opportunities to strengthen these bonds, as well as to create new partnerships.

## ASSET MAPPING

On the same day we introduced the appreciative inquiry approach. We asked participants to think about what it would feel like to spend the next hour talking about the problems and challenges in relation to ECD in Makhandha ('heavy, depressing, low energy'); and in contrast, what it would feel like to talk about the strengths and resources ('inspiring, positive, motivating'). We introduced the appreciative inquiry principle that 'what we focus on becomes our reality' and how focusing on what works within a system generates energy for positive change. We agreed that this approach was not about ignoring challenges, but about identifying 'the best of what is' as the powerful first step in moving towards 'what might be' - a journey which implies addressing the obstacles in between.

With this in mind, we used the asset-based community development (ABCD) technique of asset-mapping to start to generate a picture of the strengths, resources and assets within our community in relation to ECD. As a prompt, we used five categories of assets:

- HUMAN - all forms of knowledge, experience, skills and qualifications etc.
- SOCIAL - relationships, trust, networks, reciprocity, etc.
- PHYSICAL - buildings, equipment and infrastructure.
- FINANCIAL - funding, fees, grants, donations, sponsorships etc.
- NATURAL - outdoor spaces, land, water, natural environment, etc.



We posed the question, 'Thinking about the community in which you work, what are the existing resources, assets and strengths that you can identify?' and then asked participants to draw and write their responses on the large 'Circles of Care and Education' map on the wall.

Below is a picture of what was captured on this first occasion; our intention is that this is a living map that we return to and continue to populate as our process unfolds further:

In reflection and discussion afterwards, one participant remarked on the enormous opportunity that Makhandha's relatively small size and geographical closeness represents: how affluent and disadvantaged areas and communities exist in close proximity, facilitating engagement, outreach and collaboration in a way that is a unique strength. We spoke about how the map showed the wealth of activity at the level of 'settings', reflecting Makhandha's strong and active civil society. Around the centre of the map someone had drawn a chain symbolising the linkages between different resources and actors, the existing collaborations and the importance of working together to support the care and education of our children.

## NEXT STEPS

There was a buzz and a palpable sense of positive energy as our second Circle of Care and Education meeting came to a close. The session had helped us all to recognise the existing strengths within the structure and to inspire a sense of the powerful potential for collaborative action. We agreed to meet every two weeks to start to develop a clear vision of what quality ECD in Makhandha could look like, a road map for the way forward, and to identify practical areas of focus and collaborative action.

A milestone along that journey will be a showcase event at the end of July, which will give everyone involved the opportunity to demonstrate what is already taking place in relation to ECD in Makhandha. This event will also be an opportunity for grassroots advocacy - communicating the importance of ECD and serving as an invitation to others to join our Circle of Care and Education.



MAPPING OUR  
EXISTING ASSETS FOR ECD

# ONE OCEAN HUB

## SUPPORTING NETWORKS

### FOR COASTAL JUSTICE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

In 2019, the One Ocean Hub based at the Environmental Learning Research Centre, toured an Empatheatre play in collaboration with the Urban Futures Centre, at Durban University of Technology.

Empatheatre is a novel methodology developed by Dr. Dylan McGarry at the ELRC, alongside Neil Coppen and Mpume Mthombeni, and emerged from the t-learning research network hosted by the ELRC.

The play theatrically represented ethnographic and oral history research done with coastal communities and small scale fishers. The production *Lalela Ulwandle*, or *Listen to the Sea*, traced the intergenerational stories of three characters from culturally diverse groups in South Africa. The play raised tangible and intangible heritage practices (a central research area in the One Ocean Hub) that link local and indigenous ways of knowing with the ocean. It interrogates the violence of apartheid, colonialism and even modern-day science, which blocked access to the sea to black South Africans.

The stories weaved around each other finding empathy and connection amongst radically different experiences and positions in the socio-ecology of the ocean.



Showing its relevance and resonance in the current moment, the KZN tour of 14 shows followed by public discussion culminated a strong, grassroots-informed objection to off-shore oil exploration which had not sufficiently engaged with the public.

The dialogues hosted along the coastline proved that there were people who, despite the lure of jobs off-shore drilling may supposedly bring, dreamed and wished for other ocean developments.

**[Listen to Kira Erwin speak about this in a podcast For Water For Life: Empatheatre speaking about Lalela Ulwandle\); also listen to a radio play recording of Lalela uLwandle here](#)**

This combination of theatre as research dissemination, public dialogue, knowledge co-production, and participation in public participation processes relating to developments that are largely invisible from the public eye was a powerful mobilisation towards environmental democracy. It brought to life our national right to participate in decisions affecting our environment. This was just the beginning of joining the conversation circling around coastal justice.





## BOX ONE

### What is the One Ocean Hub?

The One Ocean Hub (OOH) is an independent programme for collaborative research for development, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

The Environmental Learning Research Centre within the Education Department, is one of the affiliate institutions, with Dr Dylan McGarry at the ELRC co-directing the OOH, and is the PI for Rhodes University. Other Departments at RU that fall under the OOH, include Ichthyology, Biochemistry, and recently ILAM and Musicology.

The hub brings together lawyers, marine scientists, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, civil society researchers/activists, community leaders, traditional knowledge holders and others together to support participative processes for transformative ocean governance.

The Hub is a community of scholars from 22 leading international Universities and Research Centres from the UK, South Africa, Ghana, Namibia, Kenya, the South Pacific and the Caribbean. The Hub works together with over 30 Project Partners, including UN Agencies, regional intergovernmental organisations, national government departments, community representatives, NGOs, charities and media organisations.

To learn more go to <https://oneoceanhub.org/>

## Jump to 2020

Understanding solidarity building and the work of making networks takes on importance in the time of COVID-19 as high-level ocean governance decision making that will impact local livelihoods continues.

At the same time, marginalised coastal communities are further marginalised by the effects of lockdown, economic hardship and the need to adjust to the responses required by us for the pandemic. For example, small scale fishers have faced increased harassment, and some have even been arrested for fishing, although small scale fishing was designated as an essential service. During this time, the fragmented nature of fisheries governance, and the deep lack of trust between local law enforcement and small-scale fishers have become starkly visible. Public participation processes related to oil and gas exploration on the coast and in the sea bed have been taking place online, meaning that local fishers and other rural community members are completely excluded, due to lack of internet and other technology.

Our long term goal to build a national coastal justice knowledge action network has in some ways been accelerated due to Covid19, as the need for supporting fisher leaders to communicate with each other became pressing. So we have responded by re-directing some of our budget towards data bundles and airtime for fisher leaders, and through establishing a 'small-scale fisher leaders' WhatsApp group. In this way, the impacts of Covid 19 has hastened our response, but the injustices and struggles that we are responding to precede Covid 19.



The coastal justice knowledge action network calls for a shift from research on the small scale fisher situations, to research with coastal organisers and activists focusing on the political ecology of coastal justice solidarity building and network, including a concern for governance and critiques of the blue economy. Importantly, this involves a return on the work of knowledge production itself and understanding how scientists and social scientists can work together more effectively on questions of coastal justice.

Our guiding questions are:

1. What factors contribute to barriers and constraints for participation in ocean governance?
2. What opportunities (especially in the time of COVID -19 on online platforms) does Empatheatre (now adapted into the forms of radio dramas, podcasts, and animations) provide for facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue for transformative South African ocean governance?
3. What are the critical concerns and issues relating to coastal justice, ocean governance and blue economy in the South African context that should be taken up in ocean-related research?
4. What methods, strategies and pedagogies are used to build solidarity and learning networks for coastal users? How can these be enhanced?
5. Furthermore, what pedagogies are needed to enhance researchers' capacity to take the critical concerns of coastal users up into their research? (i.e. what do researchers need to learn and do to take up the concerns of coastal users in their research)?

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Drafted by Anna James and  
Dylan McGarry 27 October 2020

# THE PEEPING LEARNERS



By Clemence Chikiwa

One mid-morning in September 2019, my colleague, Prof Marc Schäfer was visiting one of our Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Mathematics Methods Course students to assess his teaching practice.

About 10 minutes into his Grade 9 geometry lesson, a group of learners started peeping through the broken door and windows of the classroom. The student teacher, Mr Babalo (not his real name), had to attend to them for they were distracting others and disrupting the smooth flow of the lesson.

After Mr Babalo's short conversation with the peeping group of learners, they left and waited for him in the next classroom.

During the after-lesson discussion, Prof Schäfer asked about the group of peeping learners. Mr Babalo replied: "These learners belong to another Grade 9 class that I do not teach. They always come to ask for a chance to be taught by me and to use the materials I use in my Grade 9 class teaching. I thus take them for extra classes when I am done with my normal teaching."

Mr Babalo employed a variety of colourful, engaging teaching materials for every lesson with his Grade 9 learners. The learners in the other class noted this, and they were keen to experience these materials. Mr Babalo used to borrow the

materials from the SARCHI Mathematics Education Chair at Rhodes University

As a Chair, we had other programmes we were running in other schools in Makhanda but not at this particular school. The Chair looked beyond the act of peeping and saw an inherent quest by these learners to know more about mathematics.

This realization prompted us to establish the N2M Project that works with learners in this school.

Our goal is to expose learners to various exciting mathematical activities to boost their confidence and increase their interest in mathematics. Some of the activities these students have done are shown in the pictures below.

This project is run by PGCE students. They go to a selected school once a week from February to June of each year and work with either Grade 8 or 9 learners.

Learners who were consistent in attending have indicated to us how much they have benefitted from N2M activities.

Unfortunately, this year the programme was temporarily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are in place to resume the project in 2021 this time focusing on outdoor mathematics to promote social distancing and on the use of mobile technologies to learn mathematics. This use of mobiles has already been

piloted and has had exciting and successful results.

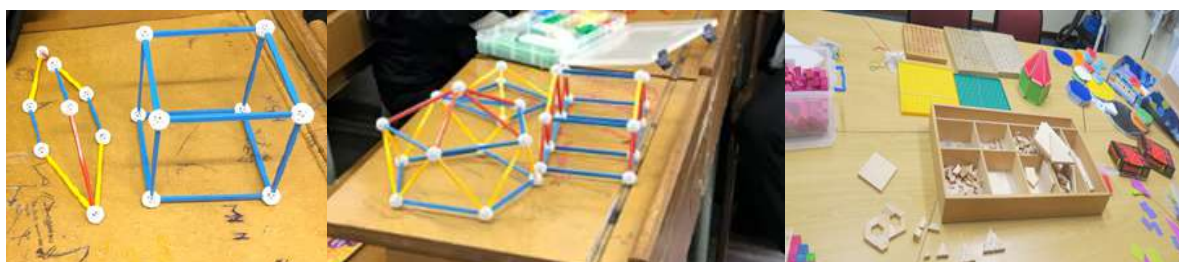
I recommend the use of various exciting manipulatives, approaches and initiatives, especially when teaching senior phase classes. There is a need to adapt to the 'new normal' of teaching mathematics.

To sustain interest in mathematics and any other subject, there is need to think outside the box, move away from the usual chalk and talk, and involve our learners in more authentic and real environments where mathematics is experienced and explored rather than transmitted.

The benefits of such approaches are long term and well documented in the literature. What remains is the actualization, especially in our township schools in Makhanda. We envisage a Makhanda where we will have a lot of Mr Babalos.

Secondary school mathematics teachers in Makhanda are welcome to contact us at Rhodes University about these and other initiatives we can together implement in our township schools for the continued improvement of teaching and learning of mathematics.

Dr Clemence Chikiwa is a lecturer in the Education Department and researcher in the SARCHI Mathematics Education Chair at Rhodes University. He can be contacted at [c.chikiwa@ru.ac.za](mailto:c.chikiwa@ru.ac.za), office telephone +27 46 603 7210.





# GREEN CAREERS

## A LANDSCAPE OF POSSIBILITIES

Ten years ago, green skills were in crisis. Organisations did not have the right skills to fulfil the environmental duties enshrined in South Africa's policies. Nor did employed people reflect the diversity of the rainbow nation. At the same time, young people with an environmental degree did not always manage to find work in the sector.

One factor in this skills crisis was that there was minimal green career guidance. Research led by WWF and supported by the ELRC, in 2011 showed that green careers are typically not well known, especially among black South Africans. Many township youth do not see environmental and conservation jobs as feasible options for themselves, perhaps due to past policies that alienated black members of society from conservation.

Our research showed that what green career guidance did exist, tended to focus on Grade 9 to Grade 11 learners. In colleges and universities, there was little to no information on environmental careers.

And so began a journey to attract diversity into environmental careers through several initiatives, including green career guidance. We used this research to

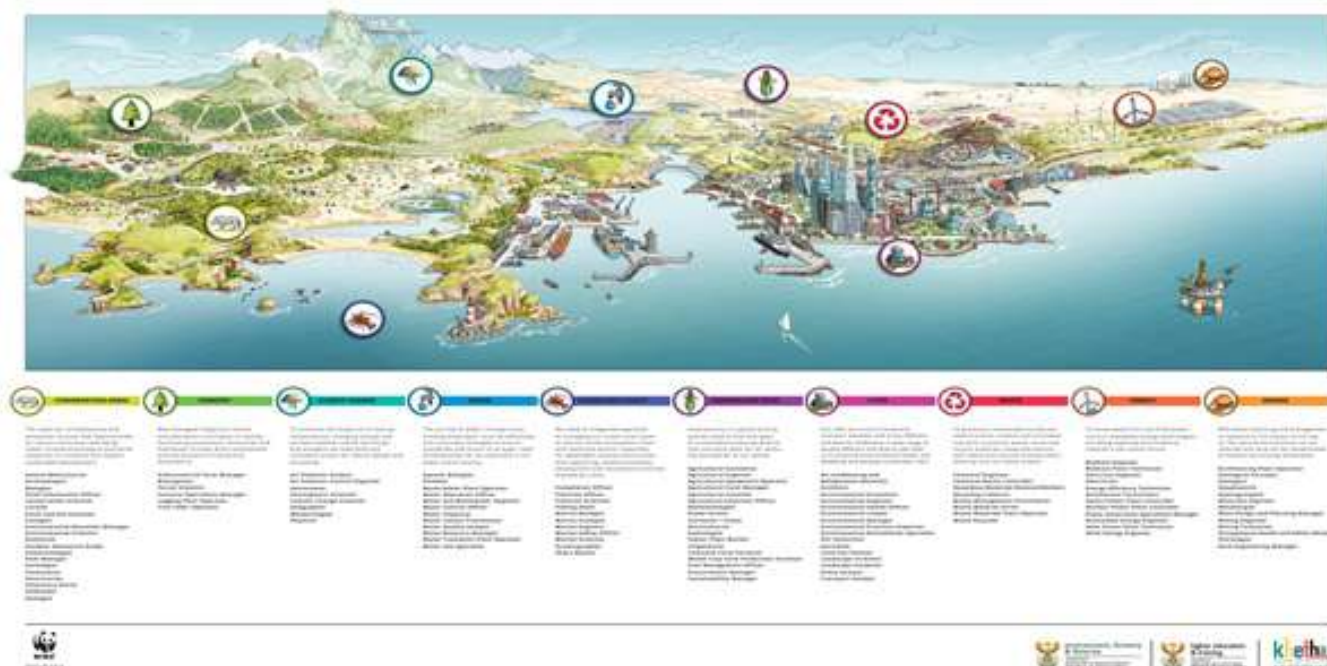
start up some new green careers initiatives. Recognising that environmental organisations were potentially losing an entire cohort of new entrants into the workplace, our priority was to develop green career materials for the university and college student. These materials were distributed across all 26 universities and promoted at 12 career fairs on different campuses. The feedback reflected the value of these resources and interactions in opening students' eyes to new career options.

We used this feedback to build out the Green Career Guidance project further, to provide a common framework of comprehensive and quality green careers information for all contexts from the early years of primary school through high school, into college and university and finally the workplace. We developed a set of resources for teachers, lecturers, career counsellors and HR practitioners to assist them in mediating good quality green careers information.

The 'hold all' framework is the green careers banner (see pic). The banner shows ten broad work contexts in which one can pursue green careers, such as agriculture and food systems, climate change, cities, oceans and coasts. It is available to be printed commercially or in-house in a smaller A3 size, for use in the classroom, lecture room, libraries or career centres. Related resources take the user through exploring the ten broad work contexts and exploring the details of each career in a card format. The career card provides a short description of the career, the typical work environment, associated skills and tasks, study pathways and potential employers.

By Dr Glenda Raven, World Wide for Nature, South Africa (WWF-SA)

### *Green Careers in a Landscape of Possibilities*



**Green Careers:** A Landscape of Possibilities is a culmination of ten years' research and practical projects to strengthen green career guidance for all South Africans. It shows the almost limitless possibilities for pursuing a career that offers diverse and exciting opportunities to work for a better world for all.

Dr Raven is a Cape Town-based Post-Doc Fellow with the Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) For more information, contact Prof Eureta Rosenberg at the ELRC (E.Rosenberg@ru.ac.za).

# LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM UNOPOTYI- THE TRADITIONAL THREE-LEGGED POT



**HEIDI KHUHLANE**  
PHD SCHOLAR

Family, societal, religious and international leadership was thrown an evolving curveball by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Unexpected and crushing, no number of contingency plans and strategic planning could have prepared organizational leadership for what was to come. Athi amaXhosa bekubotshwa inyanda yamathumbu. Imagine a stack of intestines (terrible imagery I know, hence they say isiXhosa asitolikwa - isiXhosa cannot be translated) to be whole human beings with flesh and blood and a cherry of emotions on top.

How do we lead at a time such as this? How can a vision be taken forward under these circumstances? Much like building a spaceship with opinionated and anxious passengers inside, right? How do we lead decisively and care tremendously with the same breath? Should leadership even be a concern at a time like this, when nature is calling for a redefinition of what is considered normal?

**What about the challenges that existed before the pandemic? Strife was rife in life. Terrible use of the dominant language I know, I couldn't resist sorry. Busekhona phofu ubunye? Is there still oneness? Is it possible to stand together at a time like this?**

Perhaps traces of possible answers lie in our ability and willingness to move forward as one. AmaXhosa, in times of great celebration and deep anguish, gather to lament or rejoice as one. Regardless of the occasion, be assured of the existence of unopotyi at the centre of the fire.

Unopotyi is a black pot used to cook outside in open fire. The size of unopotyi depends on the scale of the occasion, the scale of what brought the affected together. Unopotyi, regardless of its size, has three legs; each critical in the balancing of the pot and the preservation of its contents. Each leg stands graciously and firmly in the fire, as though aware that what is within is greater than the strength of the fire.

Perhaps more than anything this time has called us to see value in the collective: to be many, but one. To lead as many but be compassionate as one. Sibe ziziqu ezintathu, ezine nezininzi kodwa sibanye; to be many individuals, yet to stand as one. After all, the intensity of the fire strengthens not only the three legs but the flavour and palatability of the contents of the pot. To stand as individuals but unite as an Education Department. To stand as individual schools but unite as education stakeholders in Makhanda. To stand in our differences but unite as one sector. To stand, to stand, to stand together even in times of crises. To lead through the collective. In the sacrifice of three or more legs, the greater collective is nourished and developed.

To those who are leading and uniting by example; sithi Huntshu! For those who are still battling; Umntu ngumntu ngabantu; solutions are in the collective. After all, what is calling without sacrifice? Teaching is a calling, they say.

Heide Khuhlane is a PhD scholar, Teaching Practice Coordinator and Project Manager of the Namibian Project in the Education Department at Rhodes University

# AN ETHIC OF CARE



Dr Ellison Musara

Did you know that most learners are consistently citing caring teachers as the most critical factor contributing to their successful school experience?

In an earlier study I did on inclusive teachers in today's classrooms, the word "Care" kept coming up from almost all participants, who in this case were all teachers.

"Inclusive teachers care about their students," they said.

Then recently, out of sheer curiosity, I asked a group of 25 teachers I was working with to think back to their school days as students in primary/secondary school and write down the name of the teacher that has stuck with their memory to today. Beside the name, they wrote down one quality that made them remember the teacher fondly.

About 80% of the participants said they remember their teacher because they were "caring". Others used words like "loving" or "supportive". By now this result was almost predictable to me, but what caught my attention was that almost no one remembered their teacher for the way they taught math or history, or the way the teachers knew their subject. It was then I began to think deeply about the role of "care" in teaching and learning.

Ordinarily, most of us probably think of "care" in terms of that gendered relationship of nurturing (as mothers to children, or nurses to patients), but I think care is much much more than that. It is certainly not limited to the practices of women and nurses. As one scholar said, an ethic of care is a much more general stance and should be viewed as a broad public and political activity.

I agree with the notion that care is a critical moral value and a central aspect of human existence. Because of the way we are wired as humans, dependency on others is an inevitable condition of our lives. Although sometimes we don't realise it, all of us, young and old, are all implicated in the lives of others, whether it is because we live with them as family in communities, or through our participation in social institutions like schools and universities.

Care becomes critical in our lives when we begin to realise that we are all vulnerable and dependent on others as we live in a world which consists of networks of relationships with peers, friends, teachers and others.

We begin to realise that while we are individuals who want to believe we are autonomous, we can only grow and achieve fulfilment in association with others.

This is akin to what Archbishop Desmond Tutu called "Ubuntu" - a word which roughly translates to "I am because we are".

The big question for me now is, "How would an ethic of care make a difference for teachers in their daily work?".

It is my strong belief now that an ethic of care can significantly transform the way we do business as teachers. An ethic of care should open up new ways of seeing the learners we teach every day. When we begin to truly care about our students, we begin to recognise that vulnerability is a human condition and that some of the children before us are constituted as more or less vulnerable than others at different times and in different places.

We begin to take responsibility to ensure that all our students feel they belong and that their ways of being are as valid as anybody else's even though they might look different. We begin to pay attention to the whole child and not just the test scores they produce every day; their holistic well-being becomes vital to us.

When we use a framework of care, we focus more on each learner's potential and positive assets; not on their failings and their deficits. We begin to recognise and celebrate the uniqueness of each child. Because we become aware that our students come from diverse backgrounds, we begin to acknowledge that each one of them is differently located economically, socially, and culturally. This should bring with it an understanding of the different caring needs that each child might have. Teachers who care become attentive to the uniqueness of each child's position and to the actual needs of those that are marginalised.

Sometimes it's just emotional and psychological needs, and these kids just need someone who cares and is prepared to listen to hear their pain. When we fail to recognise these basic needs or ignore them, or we are insufficiently attentive to them, it is a moral failure.

Dr. Ellison Musara is a Zimbabwean based researcher currently working as an independent education consultant. His research interest is in the field of Inclusion and Social Justice. E-mail: [ellisonmusara@gmail.com](mailto:ellisonmusara@gmail.com)





## MAKHANDA FOUNDATION PHASE MATHEMATICS TEACHERS PARTNER WITH RESEARCHERS IN NATIONAL MATHEMATICS RESEARCH PROJECT

By Pamela Vale  
And Mellony Graven

Several Makhanda primary schools have played an important role in recent years in the development and piloting of the Mental Starters Diagnostic Assessment Project.

This project began in 2015 as a collaboration between the two South African Numeracy Chairs: Prof Mellony Graven (Rhodes University) and Prof Hamsa Venkat (Wits). The intervention promotes the teaching and learning of mental calculation strategies for addition and subtraction. These strategies are taught in a two- to three-week cycle of 10-minute mathematics lesson starters, starting and ending with a 10-minute assessment.

Makhanda primary school teachers were key to the process of developing these lesson starters through their willingness to participate in trying these teaching materials in their classrooms.

In September 2016, a large team of researchers from Rhodes and Wits, together with representatives of the Eastern Cape Department of Education and the Department of Basic Education, as well as two international numeracy experts, met to start the process. Six key mental strategies were identified that learners need to have developed by the end of Grade 3.

The team then began the long process of carefully designing assessments and a series of 10-minute mathematics lesson starters for each strategy.

The research team met in September 2016 to start the process of writing the materials.

It was important to test these teaching materials in the classroom, so in 2017 the team at Rhodes partnered with one Makhanda school and their Grade 3 mathematics teachers to test the first materials: the Bridging Through Ten lesson starters. Prof Graven, as well as three Grade 3 teachers, taught the series of lesson starters, and the teaching materials were then revised after what was learned from this process.

In 2017, another Makhanda school participated in trying the assessments and lesson starters. This time, Grade 2 and 3 classes tried the teaching materials, and we learned further lessons from the teachers' experiences and from the results of the learners' assessments.

In both cases, the feedback from teachers was positive, and the learners' results showed encouraging improvement: Grade 2 learners improved by 25.2% points, and the Grade 3s showed a 14% point improvement.

Grade 2 Learners  
improved by

**25.2%** points

Grade 3 Learners  
showed a

**14%** points  
improvement

In May/June 2019, the two South African Numeracy Chairs partnered with the Department of Basic Education to trial the lesson starters with a larger sample of schools, teachers and learners across three provinces.

Makhanda schools were again key to this research. In the Eastern Cape, Subject Advisors from Nelson Mandela Bay and Makhanda participated in one day of training at Rhodes with Prof Graven and Dr Pam Vale. These advisors trained Grade 3 teachers from nine schools in Nelson Mandela Bay, and nine schools in Makhanda, on how to teach the Bridging Through Ten lesson starters. They also administered the assessments, and these results were analysed by the Rhodes and Wits teams.

In total, 1889 learners participated in this pilot, and overall an encouraging 17% point increase was recorded. The Department of Basic Education is now planning for a final national pilot across all nine provinces and in all 11 official languages.

The two Numeracy Chair teams have continued to work on designing the assessments and lesson starters through 2020 and successfully completed writing the teaching materials for all six strategies in August 2020.

We are particularly proud of, and grateful for, the important role that Makhanda schools, both teachers and learners, have played in this process! We eagerly await the translations and the details for the 2021 national pilot, and the national rollout of these mental starters.



Eastern Cape subject advisors hard at work during their training at Rhodes in 2019.



Grade 3 Mathematics  
Mental Starters: Tasks and Assessments

Cover of the completed teaching materials

**In total, 1889 learners participated in this pilot, and overall an encouraging 17% point increase was recorded. The Department of Basic Education is now planning for a final national pilot across all nine provinces and in all 11 official languages.**

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# “Nqobile is good at adding numbers”

## UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' CALCULATION STRATEGIES

Lise Westaway, Education Department & Pam Vale,  
South African Numeracy Chair Project



*Nqobile is good at adding numbers. She uses different strategies to make adding easier. Try and think like Nqobile. Explain how she arrived at the number in the box. For example, when Nqobile says that  $3+4$  is the same as  $6+1$ , what numbers did she add to get six?*

$$3 + 4 = \boxed{6} + 1$$

Number sense is the ability to think flexibly when doing calculations and to be able to use a range of strategies depending on the type of calculation. Children who cannot yet do this might solve  $104-99$  by using the standard method (focusing on separating hundreds, tens and units). The standard method focuses on the digits in the calculation. In this example, the calculation would be:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 104 \\
 - 99 \\
 \hline
 \end{array}
 \longrightarrow
 \begin{array}{r}
 1^0 0^{10-9} 14 \\
 - 9 \quad 9 \\
 \hline
 \end{array}
 \longrightarrow
 \begin{array}{r}
 1^0 0^{10-9} 14 \\
 - 9 \quad 9 \\
 \hline
 0 \quad 0 \quad 5
 \end{array}$$

Children would be heard saying things like '4 minus 9' and '9 minus 9' as they work through the calculation. They are focusing just on the digits and not the actual number. '9 minus 9', shown in the middle and final steps is actually '90 minus 90'.

If children are only focused on this standard method, they may not notice that it is quicker to count on from 99 to 104 (...100, 101, 102, 103, 104), or that they can add '1' to both the '104' and '99' to change the calculation into 105-100, which is also easier. It is important for primary school teachers to be aware of how children are thinking while calculating if they are to develop children's number sense.

To do this, they need to be able to notice the strategies that children use when doing calculations.

We wanted to understand whether pre-service Foundation Phase teachers know how to identify common strategies that children use for addition calculations. To do this, we asked pre-service teachers at an Eastern Cape university to complete the Mental Computational Fluency with Addition (MCF-A) Assessment (Hopkins, Russo & Downton, 2019).

The table below lists each strategy, with an example of each.



Table 1: Examples of each type of strategy

Standard partitioning	Split	$32+16=(30+10)+(2+6)=40+8=48$	Both numbers are split according to their place value
	Jump	$32+16=(32+10)+6=42+6=48$	Only one of the numbers is split according to its place value
Compensation		$104+99=(104+100)-1$	The '99' is only one away from a 'friendly number', 100. The '99' is adjusted to make the calculation easier.
Non-standard partitioning	Bridging the 10	$8+17=(5+3)+17=5+(3+17)=5+20=25$	The '8' is split into '5' and '3' so that '3' can be added to '17' to make '20' which is an easier number to use.
	Near doubles	$25+26=25+(25+1)=(25+25)+1=50+1=51$	The '26' is split into '25' and '1'. Double '25' is '50' and then the '1' is simply added to the '50'
Re-ordering		$7+16+3=(7+3)+16=10+16=26$	The '3' and '16' are swapped round so that the calculation is $7+3+16$ .

Strategy	Explain how Nqobile arrived at the number in the box:	Possible explanation
Standard partitioning (splitting)	$21 + 26 = \boxed{40} + 7$	She added the '20' from the '21' to the '20' from the '26' to reach '40'.
Standard partitioning (jumping)	$28 + 13 = \boxed{38} + 3$	She added the '10' from the '13' to the '28' to reach '38'.
Compensation	$8 + 19 = \boxed{28} - 1$	She changed the '19' into '20'. '8' plus '20' is '28'.
Non-standard partitioning: Bridging 10	$4 + 28 = \boxed{30} + 2$	She broke the '4' into '2' and '2'. She added '2' to '28' to make '30'.
Non-standard partitioning: Near doubles	$36 + 37 = \boxed{72} - 1$	She took '1' away from '37' to make '36'. She doubled '36' to get to '72'.
Regrouping	$8 + 3 + 2 = \boxed{10} + 3$	She swapped the '2' and '3' around so that '8 plus 2 equals '10'.

In doing this work, we have learned that:

1. The pre-service teachers found it more difficult to identify the strategy as the numbers increased.
2. The pre-service teachers were able to identify standard partitioning strategies most often. They also appeared to be more familiar with the splitting strategy rather than the jump strategy.
3. The compensation strategy seemed to be the most difficult to identify.

These results are, in many respects, unsurprising. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Foundation Phase Mathematics highlights standard partitioning strategies, (referred to as 'building up and breaking down' and 'building up'). We suspect that there is little focus on compensation strategies in schools.

If teachers wish to develop their children's number sense, children need to be exposed to a wide range of calculation strategies.

Also, teachers need to be able to identify children's calculation strategies and know how to respond to them. The results of this study help us to understand the knowledge of pre-service teachers better. It also allows us to better plan the courses we run to prepare them for teaching Foundation Phase Mathematics in a way that allows children to develop a strong number sense.

#### References:

Hopkins, S., Russo, J., & Downton, A. (2019). Mental computation fluency: assessing flexibility, efficiency and accuracy. In M. Graven, H. Venkat, A.A. Essien, & P. Vale (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 43rd Conference of the IGPME (Vol.2, pp.376-383)*. Pretoria: IGPME.

Dr Lise Westaway is involved in primary teacher education. She is passionate about mathematics teaching and learning.

Dr Pam Vale is a senior researcher and project manager at the South African Numeracy Chair Project.

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# YOUTH AND WELL-BEING IN SEVEN CITIES

By Ingrid Schudel, Live Matiwane  
and Lona Musiyiwa

The Rhodes University Environmental Learning Research Centre is participating in an international research project called CYCLES, exploring young people's experiences of living in seven cities around the world.

Researchers from universities, research institutions and civil society organisations around the world have been funded through the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) at Surrey University by the Economic and Social Research Council in the United Kingdom to try and understand youth's experiences, perceptions and interest in change in their respective cities.

Makhanda is one of seven cities included in the study, and we have been fascinated to compare our small city with Dhaka in Bangladesh, São Paulo in Brazil, Jagdamba camp in Delhi in India, Yokohama in Japan, Christchurch in New Zealand and Lambeth (a London borough) in the UK.

Our international research teams held discussions with groups of youth about a day in their life - what their home is like, what they like to eat, how they get their drinking water, how they deal with waste, how they travel and what they do to relax. We also conducted a survey across all the cities; and, in Makhanda, about 250 youth responded to our questionnaire.

Our cultural uniqueness came through in the discussions, for example, with youth talking about their favourite seven-colour meals. Our small-town quirks were also evident with one young woman, naturally wanting to spread her wings, lamenting: "This is what I love and hate about Grahamstown. Everything is in walking distance". Yet our small town youth did not experience bad air quality like "feeling sick" when going for a run in Yokohama; or crowded transportation in big cities such as São Paulo. There were many similarities across the cities with youth explaining they had limited leisure time because of the pressure they had to study and do well at school. Girls reported difficulties with leisure time in that they were expected to do housework while boys were free to travel around the city.

The stories we were told revealed many hardships and joys. Different home environments were striking. One youth told us, "Home is where my heart is, and home is where my people are". Another felt that, "Home is a painful place as my mother and uncle are always fighting and when they fight we are chased outside even if it's raining."

When speaking about transport, one youth told us: "What I don't like is that when it's hot there is dust on my shoes and when it's rainy there will be mud, and every time I arrive at

school dirty."

Another, when talking about her bicycle told us: "It takes me where my heart leads me, I go to town and back with it, it doesn't get tired."

The stories also told us about big differences in the lives of youths. For example, a young woman in Dhaka was not allowed the same joy because, as she grew up, she was no longer allowed to ride her bicycle because this was considered inappropriate for a woman of her age. Youth in São Paulo reported being too afraid of traffic safety to ride a bicycle.

In Makhanda specifically, our survey told us that in terms of life priorities, 'good education' was seen as the most important for well-being (this was reported by 67% of youth). Other noteworthy, but concerning, results were that one out

of ten youth indicated that they do not always have enough food to eat, one out of five said that they are either sometimes or always worrying about money, and 52% were concerned about an unclean environment.

We were wondering about the way forward for our Makhanda youth and asked questions to give us a sense of how

empowered they feel about change. More than 75% of youth surveyed felt that they have the ability to make a difference. This is inspiring; however, we do need to pay attention to worrying concerns that there is less confidence in collective agency (only 61% felt that change could come from the city as a community) and 28% doubted 'trust amongst neighbours'.

We are looking forward to the results of the thesis of one of our research team - Lona Musiyiwa. Lona has taken up the challenge of building this critical sense of community by working on environmental projects with youth in EcoClubs in our town.

Ingrid Schudel, Live Matiwane and Lona Musiyiwa can be contacted through the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University. Email: [i.schudel@ru.ac.za](mailto:i.schudel@ru.ac.za)



Youth spending their leisure time skipping rope with friends



# THE 'MY BEST TEACHER' BOOKLET SERIES



**Team members: Dr Zukiswa Khulane, Ms Sarah Murray, Dr Anna Nkomo, Mr Ntsikholanga Kitsili and Ms Nomzamo Jack & Prof Callie Grant**

In 2015, Rhodes University launched a new 4-year full-time Bachelor of Education (B Ed) in Foundation Phase teaching. The programme, housed in the Education Department at Rhodes University, aims to prepare students to teach in a diversity of contexts, but especially in rural schools where isiXhosa is the language of learning and teaching

The 'My Best Teacher' booklet series was an exciting, novel and yet unintended output of the first-year B Ed FP course entitled Education and Professional Studies 1B: The Holistic Development of the Teacher. This course aims to help students understand what it means to be a teacher in a world that is changing educationally, culturally, socially, technologically and economically and the implications of this for ethical and professional practice.

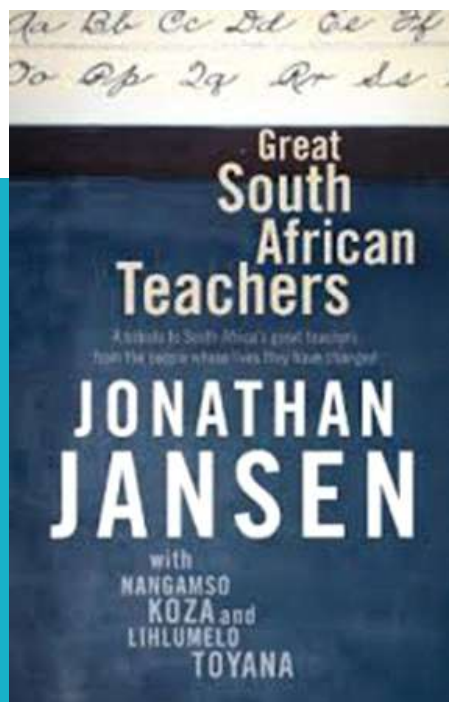
As part of this course, students were asked what they had learnt about teaching from their own schooling experiences, and they captured their memories in writing. With guidance, students analysed what they had written into positive and negative memories. They were encouraged to use positive memories as a stimulus to think about who their best teacher was and what made this person so special. In stimulating their ideas further, students read a selection of 10 stories from Jonathan Jansen's book, *Great South African Teachers* (2011). Students were encouraged to write in a similar genre and adopt the same format as the stories in Jansen's book. The questions which guided their stories included:

**Who was your best teacher and why? What sort of person was she/he? What values did she/he espouse? What did this teacher know and/or do that made him/her so good? Write a story about this teacher and why she/he made such an impact on your life and your decision to become a teacher.**

The stories published in the 'My Best Teacher' booklet series are the stories of the B Ed FP 1st year students from 2015 – to 2018; the pilot phase of the degree.

These stories are categorised according to themes;

- Love of the subject
- Foundation Phase stories & classrooms
- The inspirational teacher
- The unconventional teacher
- Mother & father figures
- Going beyond the call of duty
- Believing in all children, no matter their differences
- Teachers who stood out from the rest of the staff
- Special attributes
- Believing in all children and never giving up on them



Jansen, J. (2011) *Great South African Teachers: Tribute to South Africa's Great Teachers from the People Whose Lives They Have Changed*. Johannesburg: Bookstorm





The purpose in developing the 'My Best Teacher' booklet series was, like Jansen's, to counter negative descriptions of schools and teachers by identifying and paying tribute to good teachers. We wanted to continue his message of hope.

But, more importantly, we wanted to focus our gaze on the Foundation Phase as a critical stage of schooling which, until recently, has received little attention. We therefore felt it important to draw on the voices of our Foundation Phase group of student teachers and invite them to tell their stories. Although we did not restrict students to writing about Foundation Phase teachers, we were heartened to see that a number of students chose a Foundation Phase teacher as their best teacher, and we dedicated a section of the booklet to these stories.

Jansen acknowledges that a limitation of his book was that the advertising campaign used to seek out the stories privileged those of English speakers and people living in urban areas of South Africa. He explains how his team "could not penetrate all the small villages and towns of South Africa outside the reach of the English newspapers"

**...paying attention to the voices of our students and valuing their contributions, we are modelling good teaching practice.**

”

(2011, p. 14). We, on the other hand, are delighted that a number of our stories originate from the distant rural areas to which Jansen refers.

Finally, we believe that by paying attention to the voices of our students and valuing their contributions, we are modelling good teaching practice. We hope that when our students become qualified Foundation Phase teachers, they, in turn, will value the voices of their learners and encourage them to write about and reflect on their experiences.

Enjoy our students' stories. We are sharing two in this first edition. You may well recognise the teachers that are being discussed!

Callie Grant  
Professor and Head of Department: Education  
Rhodes University  
Makhanda



# A TRIBUTE TO MR NDABENI

OF NOMBULELO SENIOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
MAKHANDA

**TITLE: RELIVING HISTORY WITH MR NDABENI**

The teacher whom I looked up to at school was Mr Ndabeni, the Deputy Principal of Nombulelo Senior Secondary School. A fine teacher, respected by the whole school, he was my history teacher from Grade 10 until Grade 12. He was a job-orientated teacher, a humble man who had a high work ethic. He was dark in complexion, chubby and not that tall and he always looked very respectable. The school had a large number of learners, and most of the learners at the school were older than the average. Despite the huge numbers of learners, Mr Ndabeni built a relationship with each one of them.

Mr Ndabeni would always encourage us to do well in all our subjects at school. He would motivate us and tell all the learners that they had the potential of being anything that they wanted to be. There were older learners in the classroom who had been at the school for years, but he never looked down on them. He always saw potential in them, even though some teachers saw no hope for them at all. He would make time for us on weekends when we would revise all the work that we had done during the week. He knew every learner's strengths and weaknesses and had good relationships with all of us. His office was open for every learner at the school who had a problem.

Mr Ndabeni was also a Reverend at his church. He had our best interests at heart, teaching us how to become better men and women. I still remember the day when he told us that being a man is not just wearing pants and having been to initiation school; it is all about the way that one carries oneself. It is the decisions that you make that lead you to wisdom, which many men in our generation lack.

How he carried himself at school taught me a lot about how a professional teacher should behave. Whenever there were conflicts at the school, he would step in and resolve them. He had good relationships with our parents and made sure that they knew how we were all

doing at school. He always made history classes fun, as he would open up debates in the class where learners would discuss what happened in the past and the impact it has had on the world today. He encouraged us to read books and newspapers and also to watch the news so that we knew what was going on in the world.

**Mr Ndabeni treated all his learners equally, and he did not want us to look down on one another. He always wanted us to work together and help one another in areas where we had difficulties.**

”

I still recall that when I passed my test with 100%, he came to me and said that he would change it to 99% because he did not want me to be over-confident; I needed to work extra hard for that 1%. He then paired me up with learners who were struggling with history in Grade 10 and Grade 11. By the end of the third term, those learners I worked with had improved and had passed history. At the end of the year, all the history learners passed; Mr Ndabeni had 100% pass rate in Grade 12 that year.

Mr Ndabeni was a great teacher and very passionate about history. The great work that he did with his history learners motivated me to become a teacher. Even today, I still communicate with him, and he keeps on encouraging me to do well. I have learned a lot from him, and I want to influence the learners that I will teach in the same way that he influenced us.

FROM AKHONA MAZALENI





# A TRIBUTE TO MRS ARNOLD VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, MAKHANDA

**TITLE: THE 'ANGEL' WHO INSPIRED ME**

I was more fortunate than many other children to have started my primary schooling at Victoria Primary School, an all-girls school well known in the Eastern Cape and South Africa. I can still remember walking into my Grade 2 classroom in 2003. It was one of the brightest and warmest classrooms I have ever seen. I was a bit scared and anxious, not knowing what to expect. At the door, ready to start the year, stood Mrs Arnold, with red lipstick and the curliest, fuzziest hair I had ever seen.

She instantly captured my attention, and from that moment, I knew that I was going to enjoy being in her class. The way she smiled and greeted us made us feel she had known us all our lives.

She always had a smile on her face and never revealed that she had had a bad day. She would always notice when something was wrong and try to help you see the bright light at the end of the tunnel. She knew how to handle emergencies, never panicking and always helping us to remain calm.

Mrs Arnold had a way of keeping peace among peers. When my classmates had arguments or claimed that they 'hated' one of their peers, Mrs Arnold would call upon all the children who were involved and find a better manner to deal with their issues. What I valued most about her was that she would never leave things unresolved. I realised that many children appreciated her when my friend whispered in my ear, asking me if Mrs Arnold was an angel.

Not only did Mrs Arnold play the role of peacekeeper and mother at school, but she was also an excellent teacher. Her excellence lay in the teaching methods which she used in the classroom. Many children struggled to maintain their focus and attention, but somehow Mrs Arnold found the way to teach that would be most beneficial to all.

After each new thing she taught us, she would make a song about it and would even get up on the table and make us all dance and move around. This meant that there was no possibility that anyone would remain uninvolved. For my part, I could not wait to get to school each day.

Not only was Mrs Arnold my teacher but she was also my hockey, netball and tennis coach, so I spent most of my days and weekends with her, gradually getting to know her better and being able to have many open discussions with her. When we were travelling, she would also take us to her farm.

It was her effort and her caring that made me value her the most. When I felt that I could not do something, she would push and encourage me. Her encouragement awakened in me a realisation that I wanted to pursue a career in teaching; she had made me see how helping another could be beneficial to the person and me.

After I had completed my schooling career, I thought that she would have forgotten about me and was surprised when she recognised me. When I asked how she still remembered me after many years, she claimed that it was the unique footprints I had left, not only in the classroom but also in her heart. Up until this day, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to meet this phenomenal woman; she played a significant role in my decision to pursue a career in Foundation Phase teaching.

**I realised that many children  
appreciated her when my friend  
whispered in my ear, asking me if  
Mrs Arnold was an angel**

”

FROM NATALIE WILLIAMS





...inspiring  
educationalists...



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