A review of coaching and mentoring in South African schools & districts, and suggestions for the way forward

For internal review

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1. Introduction

Over the course of the last 20 years coaching and mentoring have become popular interventions in the business world. This growing interest began to influence the education sector in South Africa in the period 2003 – 2008. Currently several coaching and mentoring interventions - each with its own interpretation and approach - are being rolled out to either develop leadership, motivate teachers, or to do both. Considering these developments this paper asks: How effective have these coaching and mentoring interventions been in South Africa’s basic education sector? It further posits: Has the question of how to develop leaders specifically, and school improvement more generally, been framed correctly; and if not (or only partially) how should this framing change? To answer these questions, it takes a step back to examine the history and inherited legacy of education in South Africa with a view to developing recommendations for the way forward.
Part 1: Review of current approaches to coaching and mentoring for leadership development

1.1 What is coaching and mentoring?

Coaching and mentoring are relatively new phenomena, though they have long and diverse influences.¹ Consider these two definitions:

Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them. John Whitmore, in Coaching for Performance

A learning conversation for the construction, reconstruction and exchange of personally significant, relevant and viable meanings with awareness and controlled purposiveness” Harri-Augstein S and Thomas L., (1991, p. 27).

Three fields, it would appear, have most influenced the growth of coaching and mentoring - education (i.e.: learning), psychology and sports.² Definition 1 above could apply equally to sports and the business world, while the second one is drawn from learning.³ A quick scan of definitions from a google search would yield a range of other definitions. Despite these differences, there is broad consensus on one key principle: coaching and mentoring are facilitated learning conversations concerned with learning how to learn. They seek to facilitatively “pull” the motivation to learn out of clients by raising awareness and eliciting innate, yet dormant data primarily through open-ended question techniques that rein in on presenting issues (formative outcomes) that are relevant and important to the client, and create self-efficacy as a broad end goal (summative outcome). By focusing on what is relevant, meaningful and viable from the client’s perspective, coaching and mentoring are fundamentally intrinsically directed (pull-oriented), versus being directive and extrinsic (push-oriented). An effective coaching and mentoring intervention articulates the boundaries of the engagement (restrictions and special observations), how the process will unfold, the intended learning outcomes of the learning conversations and how these will be evaluated.⁴ They also must take contextual factors into account.

¹ While these definitions are useful, they also tend to be dominated by western perspectives. There is a dearth of other interpretations in the field. Many of the prevailing definitions assume that the coachee has undergone what can be deemed a normal development process and therefore is ‘ready’ for coaching and mentoring toward leadership. There is also a focus on the one on one relationships to the exclusion of others, although in recent years more research and work is beginning to focus on group and team based approaches.

² Most recognised and accredited coaching and mentoring programmes will acknowledge these influences.

³ Specifically, adult learning (andragogy). For more See Knowles M.

⁴ Best practice is to use agreed and transparent assessment criteria to measure the degree to which change and learning has taken place.
The ‘pull’ approach is an appeal to the belief that human beings have the intrinsic motivation, inherent potential and ability to resolve their own issues, and that the help of an interested partner who asks questions that enable one to rearrange thoughts, feelings and actions - taken in the recent past - facilitates this process. Coaches and mentors generally adopt these ideas as a positive philosophical choice (Kline, 2005) that helps them to offer unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1951) to their clients. By showing up with this intrinsic motivational stance, coaches and mentors model a way of being that inversely expands internally generated reward effects whilst restricting threat responses to refract hope and possibility to the client. In short, clients can draw on the tangible evidence of self-efficacy that the coach mirrors in their presence.

Minimal criteria

Given the diversity of ways in which these concepts are understood and applied, it is more useful for coaching and mentoring to embrace minimal criteria - a set of non-negotiable attributes that should be satisfied for any intervention to constitute coaching or mentoring - rather than fixed definitions. This need for attributes makes it imperative that coaching and mentoring processes be subject to justifying and evaluative arguments to give credibility and robustness to the interpretation that is used in practice. Contrary to this being a weakness, it is a strength. It allows for interpretations of

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5 Unconditional positive regard, a concept developed by Humanistic Psychologist Carl Rogers (1951) is the basic acceptance and support of a person regardless of what the person says or does, especially in the context of client-centred therapy. Its founder, Carl Rogers, writes: “The central hypothesis of this approach can be briefly stated. It is that the individual has within him or herself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering her or his self-concept, attitudes, and self-directed behaviour—and that these resources can be tapped if only a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.”

6 By offering focused attention, respect, equality and ease - qualities that create an embrace of safety, trust, non-judgement and optimal learning anxiety (Gallwey, Kline, Schein, 2010; Argyris, 1987). Some argue that coaching and mentoring must maintain non-judgement, while others acknowledge – correctly in my view – that maintaining a stance of ‘non-judgement’ is practically impossible to achieve. Rather we should speak of “suspending judgement.” The conscious effort on the part of the coach or mentor to ‘park’ judgements that naturally and constantly arise in this work.

7 This is not to suggest that coaches and mentors need to be perfect or free of their own problems. Irrespective of what is happening in the coach or mentor’s life, they need to demonstrate the skill of creating a safe space for the client to resolve their presenting issues. Paradoxically, interventions where the coach and / or mentor shares their own vulnerabilities and weaknesses can work extremely well, if rapport and readiness are factored in.

8 This does not mean that bosses don’t informally coach their subordinates. This type of workplace coaching does not constitute a formal coaching relationship. It is a boss-subordinate relationship even though the boss may use a ‘coaching management style.’

9 The importance of these criteria is underpinned by the need to professionalise these disciplines. For more see Freas and Sherman, (2004): “The Wild West of Executive Coaching,” HBR.
coaching to be contextually situated, furthering their meaningfulness, relevance and viability (Harri-Augstein and Thomas, 91). It also positions coaching and mentoring as a valuable practice-theory that is adaptive to changing circumstances and demands, whilst calling for situation-specific theory building research, such as unique case studies, to grow the field as a credible discipline.¹⁰

So, what are these minimal attributes? All interventions that can credibly be called coaching and mentoring should have:

1. Explicit criteria to explain the interpretation of coaching and mentoring ‘in this instance,’ how it is to be applied, and to what end(s);

2. A three-way partnership agreement, with psychological and explicit dimensions, between the coach or mentor and the client and the entity to be served, bound by a contract that includes protocols on expectations, shared accountability (i.e.: roles and responsibilities), transparency, confidentiality, duration & timing, and termination;

3. Clear rules of engagement, with the learning conversation at the centre. The conversation should be two-way, intrinsically oriented, open and safe.

**Differences between coaching and mentoring**

Having established that coaching and mentoring are both undergirded by learning conversations, that are undertaken in partnership, what are the differences between the two methods? Once again interpretations differ. In general, coaches do not have a direct job or role link with the immediate work context,¹¹ while mentors tend to be people who either have been in a role that the mentee is presently occupying, or has worked in’ elsewhere. The boundary issues are therefore different and potentially more challenging for the mentor role. Mentors tend to be a departure from the ideal, so they run into these boundaries more frequently than coaches. For instance, how long should the mentoring relationship last? Precisely what are the interventions to be undertaken by the mentor; and how free does the mentee feel to approach the mentor when there is a clear power difference between them? What ethical and practice implications does this present for the mentor? For these reasons, mentors are often under more pressure than coaches to ensure that they remain ethical, conscious and disciplined. They are also under more pressure to ensure that they are clear intended learning outcomes and that their interventions satisfy the minimal criteria. They require just as much supervision to ensure they facilitate and embody the values of intrinsic learning than coaches typically do, and to avoid the temptation of “telling.”

Coaching and mentoring should be predominantly formative. While intended outcomes (goals) should be explicated, process-wise, there must be non-attachment to the actual outcomes, in favour of fidelity to the intrinsically-oriented facilitated process that should produce those intended outcomes. In short, the transcendental mission of coaching and mentoring is to ‘trigger’ the clients’ will - self-belief – the capacity for attaining sustainable results. Too often, there is so much anxiety to achieve intended outcomes, that “push” or ‘coercive’ methods are substituted for intrinsic learning or “pull” approaches. In other words, survival anxiety is used instead of learning anxiety leading to the attainment of short-term results that cannot be sustained, versus achieving true efficacy for

¹⁰ The importance of coaching and mentoring as theory-building disciplines at the cutting edge of qualitative and mixed methods research is often overlooked. This is arguably the biggest growth area for this fledgling profession. In South Africa, there is still a dearth of post graduate programmes that offer this type of pedagogy as an explicit, all-embracing journey process.
individuals, teams and whole systems. This is singly the most challenging aspect of coaching and mentoring. They represent an urgent call for a return to the earlier paradigm of progressive learning in a world now dominated by extrinsically-driven perspectives.

1.2 Current interpretations and approaches to coaching and mentoring in the low resourced DoBE schools

Currently there are various coaching and mentoring approaches being used to advance leadership effectiveness of low resourced DoBE schools. Consider the interpretations below.¹²

Table 1: Current interpretations and approaches to coaching and mentoring in the DoBE sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Intervention methods and basic approach</th>
<th>Scope / footprint</th>
<th>Questions arising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>Training, group coaching/mentoring employing predominantly push, with growing pull elements:</td>
<td>1200 schools in rural and low resourced schools in KZN</td>
<td>How should these elements be combined and coordinated to impact schools optimally? (i.e.: How much should pace setting – a dissonant style be used, compared to coaching and in what ways precisely? What is a useful sample size for impacting the DoBE meaningfully?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- They use ‘pace-setting’ emphasizing curriculum coverage, and a directive approach to improving school outcomes.¹³</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Knowledge of schools and the context in which they operate is in-depth with experienced and concerned educators being used in the interventions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 2</td>
<td>Training, group coaching/mentoring: Doesn’t rollout its own programmes, but sponsors those of others.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Finding and coordinating arm of public-private partnerships to impact school improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 3</td>
<td>Mentoring using business people</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Despite obvious merits – commitment from business people; the inspiration factor and evidence of demonstrated leadership), the sustainability of this programme arises from the fact that interveners are from outside the education sector. Questions include:</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>This model involves business people committing to 12 months of engagement with a principal. They are part of a circle and meet with a “coach” 8 times per year to monitor how they are doing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- How is transfer’ to be achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Do the mentors have explicit mentoring skills beyond those provided by the peer? If not, they will struggle to resist the temptation to ‘fix’ – a direct challenge to sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Have the ethical issues (i.e.: worldview factors) been factored into the process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- How are intended outcomes to be measured?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Have low resourced school contextual factors been sufficiently considered in the duration anticipated to achieve change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 4</td>
<td>Coaching primarily with elements of mentoring and group coaching included.</td>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>This peer has acquired considerable experience with coaching at schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹² This is the author’s understanding of each of these programmes at the time of writing. Information on each of the peers above was obtained from publicly available sources. Names of the entities have been withheld, no interviews were conducted with the organisations mentioned above, nor was consent obtained from any of them. This information is published for educational rather than commercial purposes.

¹³ Using Goleman et al’s six leadership styles suggests that this peer stresses pace-setting most of all (a dissonant style) supported by coaching (a resonant style) to a lesser degree. Coaches on this programme have requested continuous professional development support.
In the schools’ context coaching and mentoring has largely been either used as a tool to improve leadership development, or to help teachers to more explicitly deliver school outcomes. Some organization’s focus on the school leadership level, such as peer 1 and SEED, while others focus on teaching and learning and seek to coach the school teacher to ensure that the curriculum gets covered. Research shows that if the curriculum does not get covered, it is unlikely that children will pass their various grades. This applies particularly at senior school level where the failure to cover the curriculum at grades 10 and 11 is directly correlated to performance at grade 12. The answer is curriculum ‘pace setting’ – an official improvement intervention by the DoBE. Though it offers explicit short-term benefits, pace-setting is also a high-risk strategy. It intensifies and directs energy to complete the curriculum using a nudging, dissonance approach that can easily drift into ‘pushing’ at the expense of the pulling, unless skillfully and consciously executed (Goleman, 2013). Recently, a SEED mentor and former school principal captured this issue recently when he said:

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14 Refer to findings of the CCM wave 1 2016 December.
15 Goleman et al speak of resonant versus dissonant styles, which closely parallel Heron’s facilitative versus directive styles. Resonant leadership styles include visionary, affiliative, democratic and coaching, while the dissonant styles (i.e.: those that can potentially create dissonance if applied clumsily) include pace-setting and commanding.
"...supporting schools to cover the curriculum through such methods as pace setting is great in the short term. However, these efforts are unsustainable on their own. Real change is required. But how does one achieve that?"

To bring about sustainable change, pace setting is best deployed within the embrace of a larger intrinsically oriented initiative in an 80% intrinsic to 20% extrinsic ratio to satisfy both immediate and long-term concerns.

While all interveners have different approaches, and have achieved some successes, the jury is still out on the overall sustainability of these efforts – hence the range of questions we have raised. What seems to be clear are the following points:

Mentors are often former principals and therefore know the school’s context. This is positive as they will have an educational frame of reference and even credibility with the mentee principal. On the other hand, they tend to be habituated in their approach - unconsciously competent - and cannot always translate their knowledge into explicit question frameworks that facilitate conscious and disciplined learning. In short, their practice is implicit - as is their awareness of some facets of how they show up - which runs the risk of producing unintended consequences. Where mentors are drawn from business, this is even more of a challenge, as they may have worldview blind spots - an ethical red flag given South Africa’s history. So, they need assistance with making their practice explicit and embodied.

Coaches training as currently offered, tends to be process-driven and context free. So, when conventionally trained coaches and mentors experience the low resourced education sector context they are often overwhelmed by the complexity. If they are not sufficiently adept at adapting their models, and have insufficient experience of working across diverse contexts – if their repertoires are not sufficiently broad and ‘practiced’ - they tend to stick to their approaches and discount the role of context. Their level of experience and learning across diverse areas plays a huge role in whether they can depart from their models to embrace context. Consider the specific findings of coaches and mentors challenges in schools from SEED’s Community Coaching and Mentoring programme:

- Moving from a theory of change (theory of action and or practice) to an integrated and fluent meta-model that can be consistently executed in practice is an area of development for many coaches;
- Guiding principles to implement a school change programme comprehensively (i.e.: coordinate all the interrelated moving parts) is a challenge. In-fact conceiving of how to change a school is an area requiring serious development;
- Becoming intentional is also an area of development i.e.: “Does the coach or mentor know what they are doing as they are doing it?”

In summary, the education sector is complex and normative coach and mentor training does not consider the contextual factors that practitioners will come across in the sector. This raises the need

16 Given the contextual complexity of the low resourced DBE sector, it is important that mentors can gain traction by having an educational frame of reference. At the same time, it is critical that these frames are not ‘frozen.’ They need to be able to depart from prior frames to allow the client to find their own path to resolving problems as opposed to inadvertently imparting their own interpretations.

17 Ethical blind spots refer to an inability to ‘walk in the shoes of the client’ even though one has good intentions. Results from the first year of the Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring (CCM) have alerted the assessors to the fact that even principals from the education sector - let alone people from the business sector – have a huge challenge with understanding the worldviews of clients from low resourced school contexts as they tend to be very different from those they have grown up in. So, sharing an educational frame of reference does not automatically mean one would be able to understand the realities of people with different lived experience. The effective mentor requires a repertoire that enables them to access both.

18 In part 2 we look deeper into the historical context of the education system to understand this better.
for inhouse leadership and educational development programmes that combine practice skills with contextual exposure.

Part 2: Reframing the challenge

While the coaching and mentoring efforts being conducted in the education sector are noble, the questions raised challenge helpers to look deeper into the question of how to bring about more effective schools. A longitudinal view is warranted! This section therefore asks: What legacy has informed the present set up and education challenges of low resourced schools in South Africa’s DoBE sector?

2.1 The historical context and current orientation of the DOBE

The black South African education can be understood through the lens of five historical periods:

- Indigenous education before colonialism (- 1652)
- Educational policy and practices under slavery (1658 – 1833) and after (1934 – 1953)
- The bantu education act 1954 – 1993

The influence of each period is briefly traced below to provide a context to present challenges that are returned to thereafter.

Indigenous African education before the arrival of the colonialists

Before the advent of colonialism, “traditional” African education was contextually informed - led by community elders through an oral tradition based on cultural transmission (stories) that were closely integrated with life experience,” including seasons, geography and social patterns (Jansen, 1990). Some aspects of this education would have been formalised, while other patterns were transmitted through ‘training’ with tools, methods, observation and rituals (procedures and consequences). These approaches were contextually rich and had the effect of locating Africans in their natural, special and relational reality.

Slave education: Educational policy and practices under slavery (1658 – 1833)

The arrival of the first Dutch colonialists, “introduced an era of slave education through an evangelical curriculum characterised by simple Christian religious instruction. (p.1)” It was aimed toward confirmation rather than secularism – a practice that was consistent with practices in their other colonial possessions such as those in Java. This was the basic pattern of instruction until the English colonial period that began in 1795. With this arrival pre-colonial modes of learning and existence were subject to increasing intrusion and challenge.19

19 It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace this intrusion. However, there are several historical sources trace this history and its effects.
South African basic education in the post slavery period (1834 – 1953)

With the discovery of gold and diamonds in the 1860’s South Africa began to rapidly shift from an agricultural to an industrial base with the following effect for education generally and curricula issues more specifically:

"[T]he general effect was to place whites and non-whites in a more accurately competitive situation, and education depending on its content and the extent to which it was made available to the different groups, might promote or prevent this competition. (p. 222; taken from Jansen 1990)."

Conscious of their strategic position in South African society the Afrikaners sought “to avoid being forced into subservience by the more sophisticated British settlers and from fear that blacks would compete with them for employment.” (p2). The need for an education system that would de-emphasise blacks’ industrial skills would afford them improved economic and political status over them. A consideration that only increased as industrialisation intensified (ibid. p2).

Native education – the differentiated curriculum 1910 - 1953

Driven partly by these industrial concerns and fears, the education policy was divided in two in the late 1800’s through to the formal inception of the union in 1910. At primary level Africans received an “inferior” curriculum, while whites received one that would secure their supremacy. 20The differentiated curriculum introduced in black schools in 1922 used vernacular as the medium of instruction and stressed practical skills such as hygiene, handwork, gardening, housecraft and needlework (ibid, p2). Though there was more uniformity in white and back curricula at high school level there was an emphasis on non-academic training remained. To illustrate, Jansen quotes from a columnist in the African Teacher (1943) objecting to the policy of the Orange Free State schools that insisted that courses on agriculture be offered in back schools, versus mathematics and Latin:

“the African is being converted into a good and useful kitchen and garden servant rather than a useful citizen of the country.” (ibid, 2).

Critically, the move to a differentiated education system was accompanied by a policy of allocating less resources and less qualified teachers to black schools. This quickly led to widespread systemic and structural weaknesses including weak infrastructure, lack of basic facilitates, insufficient space, inferior quality instruction and insufficient tools and equipment – a pattern that is still evident today.

The Education Act of 1954 – 1993

Fuelled by growing racism and accompanying rationalisation the differentiation of the education system was formalised in 1948 with the introduction of separateness; apartheid. 21 The position of blacks was seen as being natural and fixed in the socio-economic and political life of South Africa; and that education, therefore, should be seen as serving those pre-determined ends. In 1949 a commission was put together to draw up a new policy based on “proposing principles and aims...to prepare natives more effectively for their future operations.” The 1954 education act - the major education policy intervention of the period - was largely inspired by these ideas and drew the anthropological philosophies of WMM Eiselen, who in turn was influenced by the political and anthropological thought of his German mentor, Meinhof.22 Volkekunde, the philosophy he espoused

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20 The desire to remove an academic orientation to the education for blacks was challenged at almost every turn by blacks.
21 An accepted indicator of denial. There was academic and policy denial taking place. For more see Jansen 1990 p2.
22 Some argue that the development of a Bantu culture propagated by ethno- anthropologists such as Eiselen was “a commendable effort,” but it should have taken into consideration a number of additional factors. Culture cannot be restricted to specific racial groupings and should take into consideration universal phenomenon applicable to the whole human being. Culture involves factors such as language, socio-economic and geographical development, and philosophy and art (Abutt & Pearce, [S.a]:11). In his project on separation of the
used lofty language with implicit assumptions. It posited that people (natives) were complex beings who lead a creative existence, following their nature and character, in changing social-organic entities, called etniee (ethnoses), which are involved in a process of active adaptation to a complex environment existing in space and time. On this basis, the ideology proposed that mankind is divided into "volke" (nations, ethnic groups) and that each "volk" has its own culture. The "volkekunde" ideology further postulates that an individual is born into a particular "volk" and that its members are socialised into a particular "volk" personality (Coertze, 1966:4-11).

Removal of missionary schools

As part of the process of introducing the new educational system, the national government also destroyed the church and missionary schools in 1948 and 1953 that were critical to the education of many prominent Africans in the period 1890 – 1945, including Mandela. These schools gave attention to many aspects of academic development and Africans developed action for them, which lead apartheid architects to argue against through various self-serving justifications and rationale. “They took them away thinking that they had to control the education of black kids. That was a major, major error” writes Jansen (2015).

The collective inheritance

South Africa inherited an African education system with the following implications for educational policy and practice:

A system based on an approach to teaching that applies general rules, and standardised systems and procedures to carefully selected subject areas. It would employ rubrics that must be followed to attain outcomes while attaining concrete results justified and rationalises the efficacy of the system. Normal deviations, anomalies and exceptions tend to be experienced as shocks and cause distress. They must be brought back ‘into line’ or removed to remove dissonance as people desire to get back to correctness that provides temporary relief (avoidance) versus exploring pain and transforming it.

Group classification was reinforced by objectification of Africans. Being ‘objects’ they were divested of the subtler dimensions of full personhood and ‘experienced’ through concrete details in line with ethnos membership. - the ‘permission’ to explore personality was largely limited to the purview, and protection of cultural classification while opportunities to be confronted with cognitive dissonance (i.e.: venturing outside the group was an unknown risk and discouraged) were avoided by design - through imposed distance and filters and a body of knowledge. People could come to be known only from within the boundaries of the group to which they belonged while costs were imposed for venturing outside the groups ‘frames’ and worldviews – encouraging an insidious form of self-censorship and self-policing. Over time these patterns sedimented into predominant worldview.

Bantu people predominantly on the basis of cultural difference, Eiselen did not consider these factors. Others note the Nazi links of such ideas and the role of earlier influences such as Eugene Fleisher, eugenics and social Darwinism.

Some (Kuper 1988) argue that this was transference of the Afrikaners ideas onto the general population as these issues were of importance to the Afrikaners to preserve their group.


This aspect has been captured by Said E in his writings on Orientalism.

A given way of seeing, experiencing and ‘knowing’ the world.
The relationship of the designers of the education system to the recipients was inherently paternalistic. It was characterised by the twin approaches of “we will do to you” approach coupled by “we will do X for you,” rather than a “we will do X with you” which would have been more equal. A typical phase could be “Your personality is developing nicely;” language and syntax ascribed lower status to designated groups while at the same time proffering full individuality, complexity (i.e.: capacity for empirical reasoning, scientific rationalisation and technical capability) and nuance to privileged groups.

Regarding all these periods, Jansen (1990) asserts that the curriculum in black schools has largely been shaped by events outside the school; that is by South Africa’s socio-political context in two directions simultaneously – toward differentiation and toward stability. Even though policies have changed, the basic underlying patterns have transcended the period lenses.

“...there has been significant continuity (relative stability over time in the ideological and material assumptions governing the school curriculum) in the ideas governing the curriculum in black schools. (p. 1)”

Through such an approach to teaching and learning children were not encouraged or supported to really find and understand their true sources of motivation. The goal was to impose what Dweck calls a fixed mindset – progressive learned unconsciousness of intrinsic qualities and their import to learning over time. Gradually self-awareness and self-knowledge techniques are not easily accessed and individual problems requiring in-depth search are increasingly restricted to ‘stumbling blocks;’ shorthand for a ‘complex’ of factors that are undeserving of careful diagnosis. There is reflection and practice, but this is under-developed leading to a lack of growth and meta-cognition that can be explicat, articulated and consistently matures.27

The net effect of all this is that there are implicit and explicit cultural and structural patterns in South Africa’s basic education landscape that are not easily dislodged. While the effects of differentiated resourcing are explicit in material realities, the mode of instruction is inhabited by a swathe of implicit assumptions and brazen behaviours in the form of emphases, exclusions, syntax, distortions and rationales that reinforce the dominant narrative of the society through ‘alternative curricula rationales.’ Low-resourced schools have environments – contextual and material realities - that confirm to the people that ‘they do not matter.” (Kline, 2005). Put differently, the experience, knowledge and perception, on the part of blacks, of being less equal than others has the biggest effect on the quality of education.28 This is what coaching and mentoring interventions need to contradict most of all: the imposed bedrock assumption that they do not matter, can’t do it’ and don’t deserve any better. This requires that they do further that what classic notions of coaching and mentoring suggest. They need to address performance challenges, help people to re-locate themselves, help with reconstructing new worldviews and assist with unearthing resources to activate new modes of agency, empowerment and resilience.

27 It is important to recognise that while every human being has a process of reflection and practice, the issues here is that this is not benefiting from the benefits of learning to learn and cannot keep up with a changing context. Consequently, growth does not take place at the pace required of a changing environment, while maturity gets restarted to more basic levels. The extent of this challenge differs from person to person.

28 The Whitehall study confirms this. The reader should also appreciate that while this was the reality imposed on blacks, those in privileged groups were also directly affected by this imposition. It was not a one-way street, but multi-directional with complex feedback loops. Please enquire with the author at lesedi@trueconfidence.net for more information on this.
Post 1994 South African education

In 1994 the new government and new department of education was faced with the daunting task of reforming the basic education system. As far as Prew is concerned the South African government made three large errors, which Jansen corroborates. Firstly, they sought to almost immediately overhaul the flawed Apartheid curriculum with a new one. By way of this *tabular rasa* approach they effectively threw out the good things in the previously existing curriculum and lost the opportunity to gradually build. In Prew’s view “they confused syllabus reform with curriculum overhaul,” and inadvertently turned a daunting task into an even more gargantuan one with less prospects of success. Contrast this with the route Zimbabwe took, which Prew believes was the correct approach.

“Zimbabwe’s post-independence government immediately prioritised education, Prew explains. “They wisely took the strong system already in place and built on it, introducing gradual changes over the years,” he says. “Education was regarded as one of the most important aspects of national regeneration and progress. The cry was to strengthen existing schools, build new ones, and appoint competent teachers regardless of their former or current allegiances. Government motivated and inspired teachers by engaging teachers’ unions, focusing on the role of principals as critical managers, and made teachers and principals feel they were a crucial component in the building of the nation.” The initial curriculum and syllabi were maintained. “Instead of following the tabula rasa route adopted by South Africa, Zimbabwe gradually introduced a new curriculum over a period of about 10 years during the 80s. This created continuity and stability for teachers and pupils alike. Small but substantial changes were made to the various syllabi without dumping the curriculum, which of course is the whole school experience.

Secondly, they didn’t give enough time for the newly introduced curriculum to bed down. “It takes about 10 years to bed down a new curriculum,” he asserts. Removing the new one after 2 years had repercussions on teachers. “They had confidence in their ability but their professionalism was pummeled out of them.” His use of the word ‘pummeled’ is not accidental. It goes some way to capture how transformation was understood. According to Robbins and Finlay (1996), it can be described as an extreme form of coercive control, one that is akin to terror "Do what I say or you will die.”

In effect, this meant that teachers lost a great deal of their agency and will to learn – indispensable requirements for their inherently challenging profession. Consider this extract from Schon, 1974, 1983:

Part of the crisis for professionals arises from the fact that, very often, the ‘theory’ or rules espoused (‘espoused theory’) by practitioners are quite different from the ‘theory’ or assumptions (‘theory in use’) embedded in the actual practices of professionals. This is often because the ‘rules’ are limited in their applicability to specific situations, and because individual practitioners are not always aware of the myriad of different rules that might be needed to inform any one set of actions in a changing situation. They therefore need to reflect on the general rules to practise relevantly in any specific context. These general rules can be unearthed through a process of ‘reflection on action.’

The third onslaught was the closure of teacher training colleges, which, when combined with the low levels of commitment to teacher training provided at universities, and the low levels of funding, had the effect of sinking the teaching profession even more, showing that the current media coverage of incompetence, unethical behaviour, failure to attend classes, shocking results and below-standard qualifications is a reflection of several waves of failed transformation efforts (Prew; Kotter; 1995). On top of the inheritance of standardisation, classroom instruction was increasing characterised by outcome-oriented instructions – a further extrinsic emphasis that stressed the importance of getting a high score and not making any mistakes - caused participants to have a

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29 I acknowledge that there has been ‘some activity’ in the area of teacher development involving DBE, SACE and universities in the post 1994 period.
lower willingness to take risks, adding a further detrimental blow to the learning process (Liu and Jackson 2008).

Through these three methods teaching and professionalism were comprehensively disempowered and learners would be lucky if they got self-motivated teachers. But there was more. In governments push for change, compliance was retained in new guises with widescale politicization. The result is an education system practically on its knees, Jansen laments:

“For the moment, I don’t see education in South Africa going too far. If you think of education as 29,000 schools, 23 universities, and then technical colleges, (it is) not (going) very far at the moment because the politics of the public schooling is firmly retained by major trade unions, which do not care a damn about kids. They care about teachers, in a very narrow sense of their members. And if that means disrupting education for three months before an exam, so be it. That’s the kind of struggle that education has at the moment. Until we have a government and a political leadership that is prepared to wrest control of the public schooling (in the 75% of schools that are the most damaged), forget it, forget economic growth, forget public decency, forget democracy” (Jansen 2015).

Faced with a dire situation that required an increase in pace, it is understandable why this became the major response after 1994. However, aspects of intrinsic motivation, while understood and even inscribed in the preamble of the constitution, didn’t become instituted to the extent required, notwithstanding sincere attempts and considerable investment in the effort since 1994. The result is the contradictory ‘dumbing down’ (Jansen, 2016) and ‘bumping up’ pattern we see. At the very least, a pursuit of quality needs to take place with a pursuit of pace. (As mentioned earlier), while these goals would appear to oppose each other, they can work together. But for this to happen value innovation is required.

In summary, South Africa inherited an education system characterised by a medical deficit paradigm with distorted espoused ‘cultural’ values. This model overcategorized and differentiated opportunity based on perceptions of ability combined with ‘mainstreaming’ and too much control - an extrinsically orientated programme. Professor Henning notes that South Africa’s national curriculum, while excellent on paper, has negative effects. It is so extensive and tightly controlled that “…teachers need to follow it like a form of ventriloquist’s dummy, and they lose most of the kids along the way.” On the other hand, the bright spots tend to be at the provincial or even district level.” These successes are “about individuals, leadership and management,” she adds. As Einstein alerted us: The same thinking paradigm that caused the problem in the first place, cannot be used to resolve it.

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31 Institutionalisation is not weak in all cases. There are certainly pockets of excellence. However, judging by RSA’s ranking in the world competitiveness report of WEF on maths and science since the 1990’s, there is considerable room for growth. See “SA almost dead last in maths and science education – World Economic Forum Report, 2015, http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/SA-almost-dead-last-in-maths-and-science-education-WEF-report-20151001
33 Value innovation is about pursing both low cost and quality at the same time. It requires a break with traditional and conventional ways of approaching problems and the ability to see patterns that can linked together to create new value curves.
Part 3: Suggestions for the way forward

3.1 How should this legacy and current issues be resolved?

What should the future of South African basic education look like? Three principles appear to be critical for an education system that can respond to this legacy while advancing South Africa forward to become a competitive nation. Firstly, the education system needs to become learner-centred by forging a coherent growth orientation between learners and teachers. Secondly, an integrated strategic perspective and architecture is required to frame coherent conversation and enable cultural change. Thirdly, professionalism needs to be restored.

1. A learner oriented basic education system

In our view, it will take nothing less than a radical shift towards a learner-centred system underpinned by intrinsic motivation to address the challenges of the basic education system.

a. What is a learner-centred education system?

By an intrinsic orientation we are referring to a focus on core elements that places the learner at the centre of educational instruction (Witten, 2017). All other elements of the system should draw their focus and ultimate purpose from this singular focus. Such an orientation seeks to ensure that learners discover their talents and to develop these into meaningful and practical skills by learning how to learn to increasing levels of rigour, proficiency and maturity throughout their schooling experience. It is underpinned by a growth mindset, versus a fixed one, through which children draw meaning from school and are willing view challenges as opportunities rather than a threat to their self-concept (Dweck, 2015). It encourages them to put more effort in leading to increased self-regulation and ultimately to mastery – self-directed reflexive critical thinking.

Table 2: How an intrinsic focus is the foundation of an effective basic education system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Carefully balanced intrinsic and extrinsic qualities</th>
<th>Stage 2: Guides autonomy and increasing self-direction</th>
<th>Stage 3: Reflexivity and critical reflective practice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Children are ‘sparked’ to learn more about themselves, and their talents physically, emotionally and cognitively. This includes increasing ability to discern their limits and not to be unduly influenced by outside factors;</td>
<td>• Children receive support from teachers, parents, peers and the community that buffers them from pathological thoughts patterns and habits that may cause them to withhold effort;</td>
<td>• Increasing mastery and critical reflexivity - critical reflective practice: The basis of self-directedness;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children learn through diverse, distinct and dynamic experiences.</td>
<td>• As children progressively learn how to self-regulate (read: self-trust) and develop more differentiated attributions for their abilities, which must be matched by the teachers (and others) embrace. In turn, they are willing (have courage) to put in more effort to learn and grow</td>
<td>• Achievement is a bi-product of a deep and sustainable orientation to learning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improving ability to work well with others in various contexts.</td>
<td>• As part of this system, one must be careful not to disturb the learning process through too much application of standardised tests. Just like coercive leadership, they tend to create ‘dissonance.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35 These three descriptions of how children learn are from Robinson K’s TED Talk, 1999.
36 Children at younger stages of development do not distinguish between effort and ability. They tend to meet threats by withholding effort. The role of the teacher is to create an enabling and safe classroom context. At later stages, the teacher needs to provide relevant feedback that is important, while noticing positive and negative developmental patterns and ensuring that these improve. Their feedback to learners and parents need to be specific and timely.
37 See an interview with Chomsky for more on this.
An intrinsically oriented education system is characteristic of the most consistent and best performing education systems such as those of South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Finland that value engagement and accountability and emphasize effort over “inherent smartness.”

**INSERT: Do educators (learners, teachers & principals) really require intrinsic motivation? Aren’t we over complicating the issue?**

According to Pink, they do. Basing his argument on research by Seligman and others, he says what should guide one to decide what type of motivation would be more appropriate between intrinsic and extrinsic is the type of work. If it is routine, then “carrots and sticks” work well. But if it is non-routine, or heuristic, and the person doing it will encounter many unique situations, then intrinsic motivation is required. This is because they need to solve adaptive problems that require forethought, creativity and collaboration; that allow them to do things for the **satisfaction of doing them** rather than any (external) monetary reward or avoidance of threat. If preceded by a base of mastery, non-routine problem solving can go even further and generate **self-sustaining curiosity** and ultimately a **state of flow**.

**Regarding curiosity, Dewey (1933) writes:** “... [the child] has more than a desire to accumulate just information or heap up disconnected items, although sometimes the interrogating habit threatens to degenerate into a mere disease of language. In the feeling, however dim, that the facts which directly meet the senses are not the whole story, that there is more behind them and more to come from them, lies the germ of intellectual curiosity.”

Curiosity rises above the organic and the social planes and becomes intellectual in the degree in which it is transformed into interest in problems provoked by the observation of things and the accumulation of material. When the question is not discharged by being asked of another, when the child continues to entertain it in his own mind and to be alert for whatever will help answer it, curiosity has become a positive intellectual force.

Dewey also cautions what happens to children if this curiosity is not nurtured, highlighting the important role of the teacher and the broader school context, and the home environment:

“To the open mind [of the child], nature and social experience are full of varied and subtle challenges to look further. If germinating powers are not used and cultivated at the right moment, they tend to be transitory, to die out, or to wane in intensity.”

So education falls squarely into the non-routine category. Learners, teachers and principals, but especially learners should progressively encounter more and more unique challenges that require increasingly challenging cognitive processing, creativity, heuristics (strategies) and emotional regulation. However the lack of in built intrinsically directed motivation in an education system and the subsequent loss of a spirit of curiosity – can lead to our present challenges - high school drop-out rates, and for a considerable number of those who remain in school, withdrawal of effort and a struggle to perform. John Dewey (1933).

**When in flow, Cziksentmihalyi writes,** the individual operates at full capacity (cf. de Charms, 1968; Deci, 1975; White, 1959). The state is one of dynamic equilibrium. Experience seamlessly unfolds from moment to moment, and one enters a subjective state with the following characteristics:

- Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment
- Merging of action and awareness
- Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor)
- A sense that one can control one’s actions; that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next
- Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal)
- Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process.

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39 Flow research and theory had their origin in a desire to understand this phenomenon of intrinsically motivated, or autotelic, activity: activity rewarding in and of itself (auto self, telos goal), quite apart from its end-product or any extrinsic good that might result from the activity.
b. How to transition to a learner-centred education system

To transition the DoBE requires confronting the current reality and shifting this to an intrinsic orientation without completely ignoring the extrinsic. The alchemy of the solution is not found in a linear either-or separation. It is kindled in the interaction between these polarities. The figure below shows how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dimensions inform each other, and contribute to an integral experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984).

Figure 2: How intrinsic and extrinsic orientations co-jointly inform the integral experiential learning cycle

From an experiential learning point of view, extrinsic qualities correspond to an apprehensive management and administrative approach that under normative circumstances (i.e.: all things being equal) should produce continuous improvement. However, the cycle assumes that actors have normal adult learning behaviours and that the eternal environment is not changing quickly and disruptively. The current reality in South Africa cannot be characterised as normative given the extrinsic legacy and its consequences, and the fact that the external environment is changing very quickly. To change this reality radical and deep investment to bring about an intrinsic orientation is required.

A major attraction of the extrinsic methods is their directedness. They seek to produce a result through force of effort based on a quantitative view of motivation. They are also more concrete, tangible, linear and closed. They burn hot to boost momentum but are often short lived, like the fuelling of anger. Intrinsic methods on the other hand are open, subtler, more intangible, but speak to lived experience. They embrace emotions, are conscious, aware and resonate dynamically with all parts of a system to find their power, which is self-sustaining. The careful interplay of both can produce powerful transformation. What is required is an approach that is intrinsically underpinned and uses the extrinsic tools to deliver quick wins, build momentum and give traction. According to Goleman et al (2015) this can work well.

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40 This thinking is backed up by Goleman (2015) who advises that leadership should emphasise intrinsic factors and use the extrinsic with caution.
41 A quantitative view of motivation is one in which motivation has been described as the intensity of behaviour, the direction of behaviour, and the duration of behaviour.
c. The need for an 80:20 focus

In our view shifting the gears of the basic education system requires no less than an 80% intrinsic to 20% extrinsic focus. Intrinsic methods include the introduction of explicit learner-centeredness, predominantly facilitative teaching styles, the professional development of educator, peer support and democratic values. Some extrinsic methods that are already in place such as pace-setting for curriculum coverage, continuous assessment, compliance and adherence to rules and some command and control on the part of leaders, can be retained, but must align with the fundamental thrust of learner-centeredness. (Goleman, 2013; Davids and Waghid, 2017). This includes intervening to protect the intrinsic culture from undue influences that may steer it from wholeness and integrity such as opportunism, politicization and bias.

Figure 3: An 80% intrinsic to 20% extrinsic emphasis required to shift the education system to a learner-centred mode with the muster to address the DoBE legacy

2. A systemic and integrated perspective architecture to drive change

Up to now coaching and mentoring efforts have tended to separate leadership (and its development) from teaching and learning. So, in addition to learner-centeredness, an integrated perspective is required. Such a perspective must provide a framework for addressing many of the DoBE’s interrelated challenges.

We propose the adoption leadership pipeline logic adapted to the needs of the education system (Drotter, Charan and Noel, 2001). This idea assumes that any complex system – such as schools – require many moving parts to work together to deliver intended outcomes. More specifically it underscores the critical importance of each level of the school to function effectively. It provides a framework for seeing, assessing, diagnosing addressing and evaluating capacity concerns and speaking about them. The fundamental idea is that people’s perspectives - their work values, time application and required skills to lead, differ according to levels (and role) in an organisational hierarchy.

42 They make the crucial point about the need for teachers to tolerate ‘dissonance’ – being more of a learner-centred approach - in the classroom. Please note however, that when Goleman speaks of ‘dissonant styles’ he is applying the word differently from David’s and Waghid.
- **Skill requirements** – the new capabilities required to execute new responsibilities
- **Time applications** – new time frames that govern how one works
- **Work values** – what people believe is important and so becomes the focus of their effort

As one advances upward, these three elements need to change or transition to ensure that each level delivers what it should, and so overall organisational integrity is maintained. As Charon writes:

> “The challenge for organisations is to make sure that people in leadership positions are assigned to the level appropriate to their skills, time applications, and values.” (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2001, p. 20).

The leadership pipeline shows that there is no need for an atomistic and fragmented approach that separates principal development from teacher development and from school improvement through the avenue of the avenue of a cohesive school culture. A potential pipeline for schools in the DoBE sector could look like the one in the figure below.

### Figure 4: The Leadership pipeline for DoBE

There could be four macro levels\(^{43}\) at which leadership could be explicitly developed to serve the learner.\(^{44}\) A transition from each level to the one above corresponds with taking on responsibilities of increasing scope and interacting with more information and people, requiring a shift in:
- how one views one’s role (perspective on what is important in the role);
- how one applies themselves (practice and behaviour) and;
- the ability to search and acquire new skills to continuously improve personally and professionally.

These elements require critical reflective practice to simultaneously increasing leadership maturity and professional competence.

By making leadership development a stage-managed, quality focused process in schools, districts and provinces this *separation gap* can be eliminated. Such an approach will be growth-oriented, competency based and unified; a process of simultaneously shedding ego, defensiveness, conflict and turf battles, whilst increasing reflexivity, leadership maturity and system congruence. It could guide the transition from stage 1 teacher to principal and beyond to district, provincial and national officials. The table below shows how reflective practice can do this.

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\(^{43}\) At a micro level, the teacher level would be divided into different teacher levels based more on capability than on length of tenure.

\(^{44}\) We note that there would likely be current realty constraints that the DBE would have to confront for thus to work, such as the perspective of Unions and the need to shift the culture of entities (schools, districts and national department) to allow this to happen.
Table 3: The link between teaching & learning and leadership development for DoBE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching qualities required</th>
<th>Leader (Principal) qualities required</th>
<th>How the two correspond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching can create a safe environment for learning. They can “hold” the classroom and create a context for intrinsic learning and fostering a growth mindset; 45</td>
<td>Intrinsically motivate staff and guide the culture of the school through facilitative and directive methods;</td>
<td>Human beings learn from a wellspring of intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers facilitate classroom sessions and minimise rote instruction. 47 They vary teaching methods and use group, team and real-world experiences. Diversity, dynamism and distinction mark their teaching;</td>
<td>Principals constantly grow. They also have a growth mindset;</td>
<td>Reflective practice binds principals and teachers into a system of progressive complexity. This system needs to be made explicit and supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers provide specific and situational feedback to learners that becomes more differentiated at junior high school level as the children move past earlier development stages of foundation, junior and middle school.</td>
<td>Principals increasingly adopt critical thinking;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is personalised to match the multiple intelligences of the children, who can ‘locate’ (develop the intrinsic desire to learn) themselves. 50 Teachers learn the learning preferences of each child – even if there is a large group. They also know each child name and forge a trusting relationship with each one. 50</td>
<td>Principals have an appreciation of the complexity of schools and can pull the entire system together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are on a continuous development and learning journey. They constantly review themselves and use peer support and formal resources to reinforce this self-directed growth.</td>
<td>NB: To lead schools effectively Principals need to know all the stages of effective teacher development. This is so that they can diagnose and address problems or gaps timeously.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen there several common quality factors that underpin successful leadership as well as successful teaching. Principals constantly need to bring the various aspects of the system together, while teachers need to continuously keep abreast of new developments in their field, accommodate different children’s needs and update their classroom delivery. Leading is a progression in complexity from teaching. However, they are part of one system.

The above model offers a useful way of evaluating leadership development in schools. These roles would have to be sufficiently defined and a comprehensive framework developed to show how each level would support the next to create a culture that purposely influences and supports teaching and learning. 51

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45 In article 2 of this series, the above framework will be developed into a full model.
46 Reflective practice principles that don’t artificially separate the two.
47 A major assumption preventing this is that “it will take too long” to facilitate groups. However, this assertion is not backed up by research. Rather the level of learning uptake in a class (or even in workshops in other contexts) depends on the quality of facilitation. Quality of facilitation has a heavy weighting in determining the quality of teaching (Byrd, 1994).
49 I recommend Gardner H’s books on Multiple Intelligences, Frames of Mind and Five Minds for the Future, and his work on the ZERO Project.
50 Size of class is not an excuse to know each child. When teachers are oriented to know each child, their perspective adjusts to this need. Literally the apertures of their perspective adjust to see each child for the details of their learning style. This facilitates the detailed diagnosis of problems.
51 For more refer To Witten A, 2017.
2. Rigorous, self-directed and critical reflective practice.

To ensure sustainability of the above, the DoBE would require that schools become agents of comprehensive and coherent social reconstruction. For this to happen learners, teachers, principals or district official would need to become self-directed, autonomous, purpose driven individuals who can reflexively access various resources as they seek to ‘become’ into perpetuity. In short, this would require critical reflective practice which is:

“the ability to reflect on one’s actions to engage in a process of continuous learning. According to one definition it involves “paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively. This leads to developmental insight.”

Does reflective practice really work?

The ideas of reflective practice are not theoretical. They are proven and have a long history. Since the Leipzig school and John Dewey, there are many forms of progressive education that have sprouted over the years. These include Waldorf education, a ‘pure’ form of the progressive education, but include many variations with mixed progressive and classic forms. What is clear, is that for a system to be effective there must be a threshold of emphasis on the extrinsic, whilst combining this with other considerations.

These types of ideas strongly align with South Africa’s espoused human dignity ideals espoused in the constitution and bill of rights. What is therefore surprising is that in practice, south Africa deviated away from these proven principles and the goals that they captured in official documents and that South Africans embraced. Clearly goals do not correspond to intentionality (embodied ability to follow-through) demonstrating a critical emotional competency gap between espoused values and values in use. That this was such a pervasive blind spot also warns that overcoming South Africa’s gaps will need serious commitment – nothing short of a comprehensive programme of transformation.

For that to happen one would have to create congruence between espoused theory and theory in use which would require that we learn to learn: regularly and consistently undertake disciplined reflection on, in and of actual experience.

Critical reflective practice is the quality of professional identity that will restore the professionalism that has been lost over the years in the DoBE system.53 It holds the potential for creating an integrated, and inclusive education system characterised by integrated teaching and learning, full

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52 Argyris and Schon (1974) assert that people hold maps in their heads about how to plan, implement and review their actions. They further assert that few people are aware that the maps they use to take action are not the theories they explicitly espouse. Also, even fewer people are aware of the maps or theories they do use (Argyris, 1980). This is not merely the difference between what people say and do. Argyris and Schon suggest that there is a theory consistent with what people say and a theory consistent with what they do. Hence the concepts Espoused theory (the world view and values people believe their behaviour is based on) and theory-in-use (the world view and values implied by their actual behaviour, or the maps they use to act). This raises the question, if people are unaware of the theories that drive their action (Theories-in-use), then how can they effectively manage their behaviour? Argyris (1980) suggests that effectiveness results from developing congruence between theory-in-use and espoused theory. For more, see Argyris “espoused theory versus theory in use.”

53 We acknowledge that to get to this quality, serious challenges that block progress will have to be overcome through the negotiation and exchange that characterises learning conversations. Such conversations will need to be had with those with power – correction, force – such as unions.
recognition of equity and diversity and underpinned by rigorous and continuous professional development.\textsuperscript{54}

A key rationale for reflective practice is that experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning; deliberate reflection on experience as well as deliberate practice, is essential.\textsuperscript{55} Developing self-directed critically reflective practitioners of learners, teachers and principals requires coaching and mentoring, but also other complimentary methods such as effective facilitation (of principals and teachers); peer support and collaboration from a teaching collegiate, other principals, effective systems and empowering policies.\textsuperscript{56}

While an explicit reflective practice approach does not address all aspects of the school complex, it is the major integrating glue for bringing about real change via its ability to link what teachers do in the classroom, to the culture of the school and to leader’s messages, it fosters a common language about school improvement.

Small steps in the right direction

In hopeful and promising signals that the education phoenix can rise from the ashes of a difficult history, in 2010, the South African government launched the Funda UJabule School (‘Learn and be joyful’, in isiZulu) in Soweto\textsuperscript{57} and the Ndebele Teachers Training College at in Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga that commences in 2015. Though both still at a nascent stage, both use methods that explicitly and experientially convert theory into practice. Funda Ujabule takes a child-based approach that seeks to unlock the enthusiasm to learn in kids. As Prof. Sarah Gravett, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg says:

“What is unique in what we do, and what seems to be working very well, is that our programme is underpinned by the principle of child study. “We believe a good primary school teacher must have a sound understanding of child development, so they can adapt their teaching to children’s needs. And that underlies all the work we do.”

The South African government now needs to embed these methods, make them transferable and expand them exponentially. Because such methods gain leverage from a quantum paradigm,\textsuperscript{58} this process does not need to take long. The critical requirement is developing reflective discipline through a congruent programme(s).\textsuperscript{59} Coaching and mentoring are integral to the acceleration of learning, while wholesale cultural change is the promise that could start to show tangible results in

\textsuperscript{54} For more on these practices see State of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2012): Strength-based approach A guide to writing Transition Learning and Development Statements.


\textsuperscript{56} In the process of developing leaders, peer support for example, consistently scores higher than coaching and mentoring.

\textsuperscript{57} The school is a partnership between the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). This school opened its doors to the children of the area in 2010 with two grade R classes, one for children who speak isiZulu at home and one for Sesotho speaking children. The school will grow incrementally into a fully-fledged primary school.

\textsuperscript{58} A quantum paradigm refers to a non-linear and non-dualistic worldview.

\textsuperscript{59} The SEED – USB-ED Community Coaching and Mentoring (CCM) certificate course for the education sector is one initiative in this direction. Now in its second year, it has developed an explicit and transferable reflective practice methodology. The findings therein have informed the evaluation of coaching and mentoring in the education sector in part 1 of this article. Based on this pilot, the reflective practice is ready to roll out similar programmes for other sectors – recognising that the need for sound reflective practice is a need in many sectors in South Africa and beyond.
recipient schools within 9 - 12 months and throughout the country within 5 years. Hopefully the government is taking note. The challenge the government – and education - has, is to embrace reflective practice, as a worldview, frame of reference and legitimate education method. This is an uphill battle as it challenges long-held shibboleths, limiting assumptions, power structures (and patterns) of the educational establishment, and ideas of how to teach. Many in the current establishment were also not educated this way, so often they still speak of “training” as a route to solving the challenge. As Hays notes, while some authoritative voices in the education field recognise the need for a paradigm shift, “...there is little there is little discussion of how this could occur” (Hays, p36). For its own part theory into practice’s (reflective practice) challenge is to become more visible and translatable and to produce empirical research upon which to build credibility. It is also not so easy. It requires struggle. As Dewey (1933) conceded, it involves a ”willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance.” It causes us to focus on what Edward Shils (1997) called ”the control imposed by [one’s] own moral self-scrutiny and self- discipline.” Fortunately, these processes are self-evident and intrinsically developmental.

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60 This is based on the scientific evidence of how long it takes to bring transformation to individuals and organisations using well-crafted programmes of reflective practice.
61 Both Conroy (2008) and Landsberg (2008) argue that educators need support. Landsberg (2008) argues in favour of a paradigm shift, whilst Conroy (2008) supports the notion that the educators require more knowledge, there is little discussion of how this could occur.
Conclusion

South Africa’s basic education system has inherited a pernicious legacy. In addition to infrastructure issues that have fallen outside of the scope of this article, three pillars of the DoBE approach to education need to be addressed. It need become more learner centred, systemically integrated and underpinned by consistent reflective practice. These elements will provide an enabling environment for deploying coaching and mentoring effectively. Short of this full enabling framework, coaches and mentors can still make a significant contribution if they are reconceived as reflective practitioners. Graduating to explicit reflective practice approaches will help to clarify how best to position these interventions, how to develop the practitioners, and what their limits are, whilst opening opportunities for research and better evaluation. Most importantly, explicit reflective practice will help schools and the sector to cultivate a sense of genuine equality and importance, that can launch a direct assault to the bedrock limiting assumption62 that “blacks are not important” and can’t do it!”

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62 See Kline 2005.
Research has also shown that entering this state more and more can improve longevity.  

Endnotes

1 To make clearer the distinction between routine and non-routine problem solving, consider the following two problems. 1 Both are suitable for grade 3.

Problem 1: My mom gave me 35 cents. My father gave me 45 cents. My grandmother gave me 85 cents. How many cents do I have now?

Problem 2: Place the numbers 1 to 9, one in each circle so that the sum of the four numbers along any of the three sides of the triangle is 20. There are 9 circles and 9 numbers to place in the circles.

While routine problem-solving concerns solving problems that are useful for daily living (in the present or in the future), non-routine problem-solving concerns that only indirectly. Non-routine problem solving is mostly concerned with developing learners’ mathematical reasoning power and fostering the understanding that mathematics is a creative endeavour for example. From the point of view of learners, non-routine problem solving can be challenging and interesting – rewarding. From the point of view of planning classroom instruction, teachers can use non-routine problem solving to introduce ideas (SET SCENCE stage of teaching); to deepen and extend understandings of algorithms, skills, and concepts (MAINTAIN stage of teaching); and to motivate and challenge students. There are other uses as well. Having learners do non-routine problem solving can encourage the move from specific to general thinking; in other words, encourage the ability to think in more abstract ways. From the point of view of learners growing to adulthood, that ability is becoming more important in today’s technological, complex, and demanding world.

References


63 This is an emerging field of study.


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