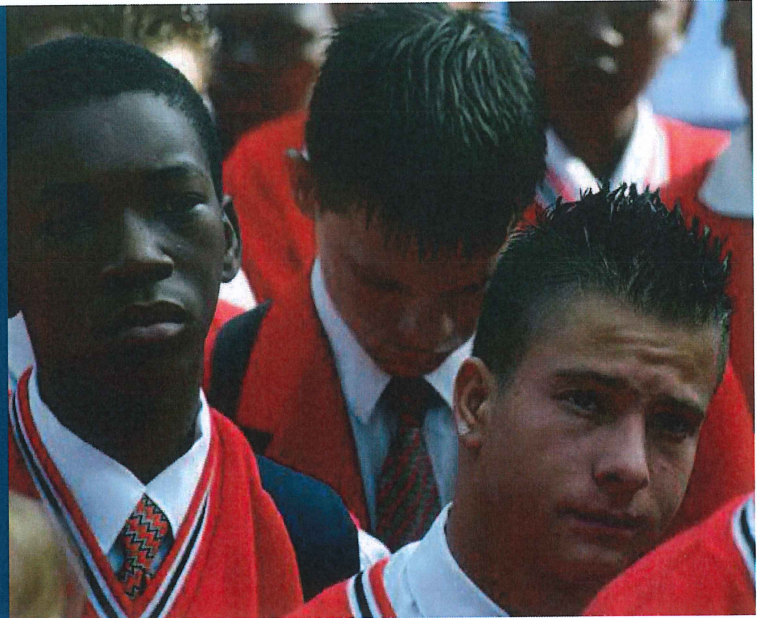


BRINGING THE SA RAINBOW INTO SCHOOLS



In October 2002, a range of institutions and collaborators identified three new areas for research into diversity in education: patterns of enrolment; representation in school textbooks; and how teacher education addresses diversity in schools. LINDA CHISHOLM and MOKUBUNG NKOMO present some of the preliminary findings.

With the support of the Mott Foundation, a range of institutions and collaborators from the Universities of Pretoria, Wits, Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and Harvard, the Centre for Education Policy Development, the Human Rights Commission, and others initiated the process. It began with a colloquium in October 2003, drawing together existing work in the area and stimulated new questions and approaches to issues of race, racism, diversity and integration in South African schools.

NATIONAL PATTERNS OF ENROLMENT

Tracking enrolments to establish the movement of black learners between schools, does not tell the full story of what happens inside schools. An analysis of 2001 data from the national Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) databases by Linda Chisholm and Mohammed Sujee of the Gauteng Department of Education, confirmed that there was more integration of African learners into schools previously defined as Indian and coloured than into white schools. Schools previously defined as white remained 59% to 70% white, although there are variations between provinces.

The statistics on race for the Western Cape provide an interesting anomaly, in so far as far more learners were defined as 'other' rather than black, coloured, Asian or white.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks, or learning support materials, played a powerful role in shaping the Apartheid curriculum in the past. To what extent have

they changed? In 2004, Carolyn McKinney analysed 61 textbooks used in South African primary schools, including Grade 1 reading schemes (51 readers, 111 stories) and 10 Grade 7 books on language and communication, and natural science.

The Grade 1 readers, in general, underrepresented rural, poor and working-class social worlds and presented gender stereotypes. They provided almost no opportunities to address racism, sexism, poverty, disability or other forms of social exclusion.

Males were generally over-represented in Grade 7 language and communication texts, whereas rural settings, poor and working class characters were under-represented.

Representations of gender, race, social class and rural/urban location (but not disability) were generally better in Grade 7 natural science texts, though still in need of improvement.

Disabled people were invisible in almost every text analysed. The study concluded that learners should be provided with more opportunities to explore social diversity and problems of exclusion.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Schools in South Africa have become more diverse, posing new challenges for teachers and teacher education. This diversity is multi-faceted, encompassing racial, class, gender, religious, linguistic, physical and other differences.

A recurring theme in the literature is the fact that deracialised enrolments are not matched by a more diverse teaching body. How are teacher education institutions responding to this dual challenge of preparing students for teaching in schools different from the ones they attended and experienced as learners? And how are they preparing them to deal with diversity and difference amongst learners?

A new study by Crispin Hemson from the University of KwaZulu-Natal examines this question through a focused look at how teachers are being prepared through the Postgraduate Certificate of Education at three universities that are very different in history and context.

The three sites include a former 'homeland' university, an urban, long-established liberal university, and a campus that was formerly a university which provided the intellectual foundations for Afrikaner political and educational thought, and is now part of a newly merged university.

The study reveals great unevenness. In all three cases the staff and student composition largely reflects the apartheid racial composition of the institution.

► The racial positioning of the former 'homeland' university continues to have a negative effect on staff and students. There is a strong sense of victimhood, issues of diversity are not engaged, and there is little

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- sense of urgency in meeting such challenges.
- ▶ In the dominant curricular approach, diversity is seen as a matter of relations between different racially defined cultures viewed as static.
 - ▶ Teaching practice does not prepare aspirant teachers to teach in formerly white, Indian or coloured schools.

At the Afrikaans-speaking campus, there were expressions of goodwill in dealing with the history of isolation from other groups, and a broadly inclusive approach. There is consciousness of the need to deal with racial, religious and sexual diversity.

But these efforts remain largely peripheral to the overall curricular process. There is an awareness of the ways in which social divisions affect schools, but these understandings are not brought to bear on the curriculum. There is a sense of isolation from the national debates on these issues.

Staff at the urban 'liberal' university engaged systematically with the issue of diversity, and this informs students' experience across the curriculum. The dominant curricular approach falls within a critical multicultural or anti-racist frame.

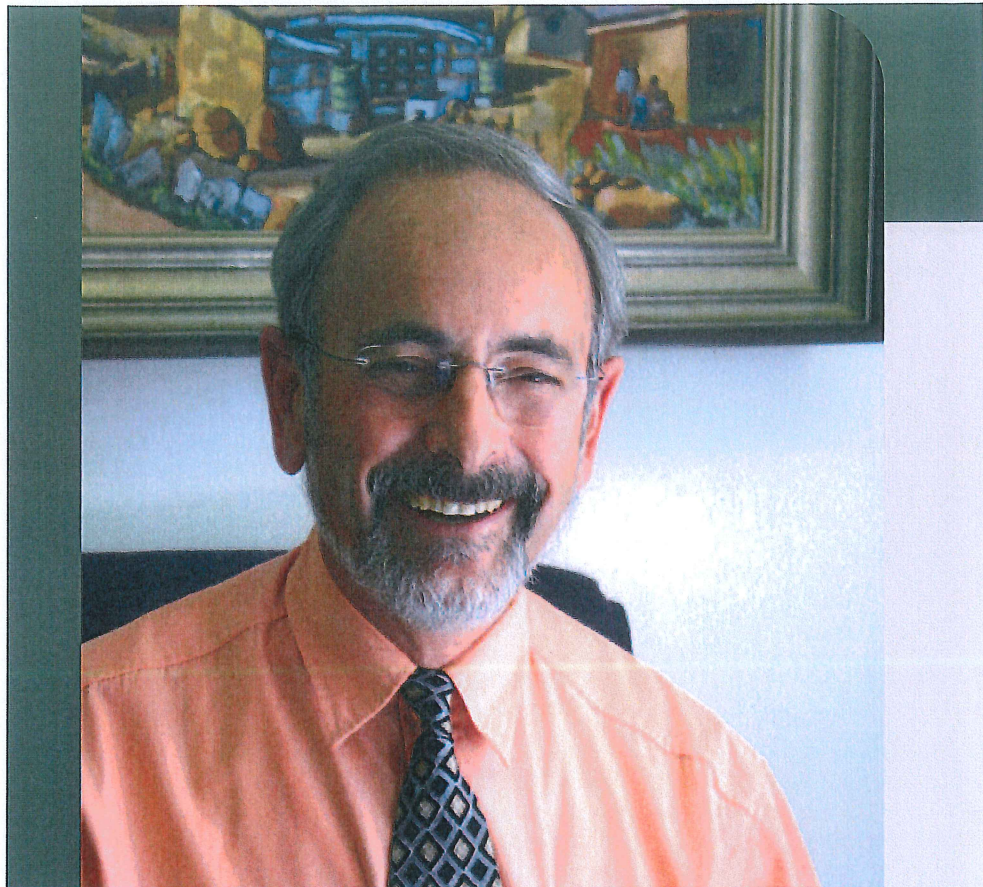
But in terms of teaching practice – as in the Afrikaans-speaking campus – the focus is on nearby well-resourced suburban schools rather than townships schools. Nonetheless, there is considerable coherence and common understandings of the purpose and processes of the qualification among staff and students. This differs markedly from the other two institutions.

Teacher education institutions need to become more conscious of the challenges of preparing teachers for diverse schools. They also need to recognise the extent of the task, to work within an all-inclusive framework, and ensure that courses give specific attention to issues of diversity.

These diversity matters should be connected with institutional vision and mission statements, address limitations in teaching practice and resources, enable communication amongst universities, and develop support materials for the task. •

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For copies of the reports, e-mail media@hsrc.ac.za.



Mike de Klerk is more than usually preoccupied. He has just been appointed Chief Operating Officer of the HSRC. For him this is a huge career shift, from a lifetime of research and dedication to rural economic development to taking charge of operational functions at the HSRC.

What is foremost on his mind is the responsibility of leadership and the challenges of management style. In an interview in Mike de Klerk's office in Pretoria, from where he has established and managed the Integrated Rural and Regional Development (IRRDR) Research Programme over the last four years, he ruminates on inclusivity and equality. A soft-spoken, humble man, his convictions stem from a deep Christian belief that God's grace covers all of humanity.

'If God in his wisdom sees fit to treat us all equally, and love us all equally, and we have the temerity to say, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done', that is what you've got to do! That is why I found apartheid difficult to live under. How could you possibly justify inequality if you believe in this God?'

De Klerk is the quintessential 'servant-leader', as described by Robert Greenleaf, who coined the phrase. De Klerk listens empathetically to his troops, carefully considers all views, and relies on his persuasive powers and the ability to conceptualise beyond daily realities to make decisions. Greenleaf calls this the 'ethical use of power and empowerment'. The servant-leader recognises both the top-down and bottom-up views of authority, and that leadership and following are interdependent.

In the words of Max Depree: 'The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant'.

Not that De Klerk would ever describe himself in such terms, and he has never read Greenleaf or Depree. He laughs and says, 'A great deal of management is about empowering colleagues to make up for one's own deficiencies'.

He grew up in Cape Town. His father came from upper-crust Afrikaner stock, and his Jewish mother – from the Sephardic, not the Ashkenazi branch, he points out – was a pianist.

De Klerk's philosophy on leadership and management style grew over a career of 37 years. As an economist, fresh from UCT, he met head-on with the realities of a harsh business world. After a spell at Rand Mines, followed by a few years as manager of five

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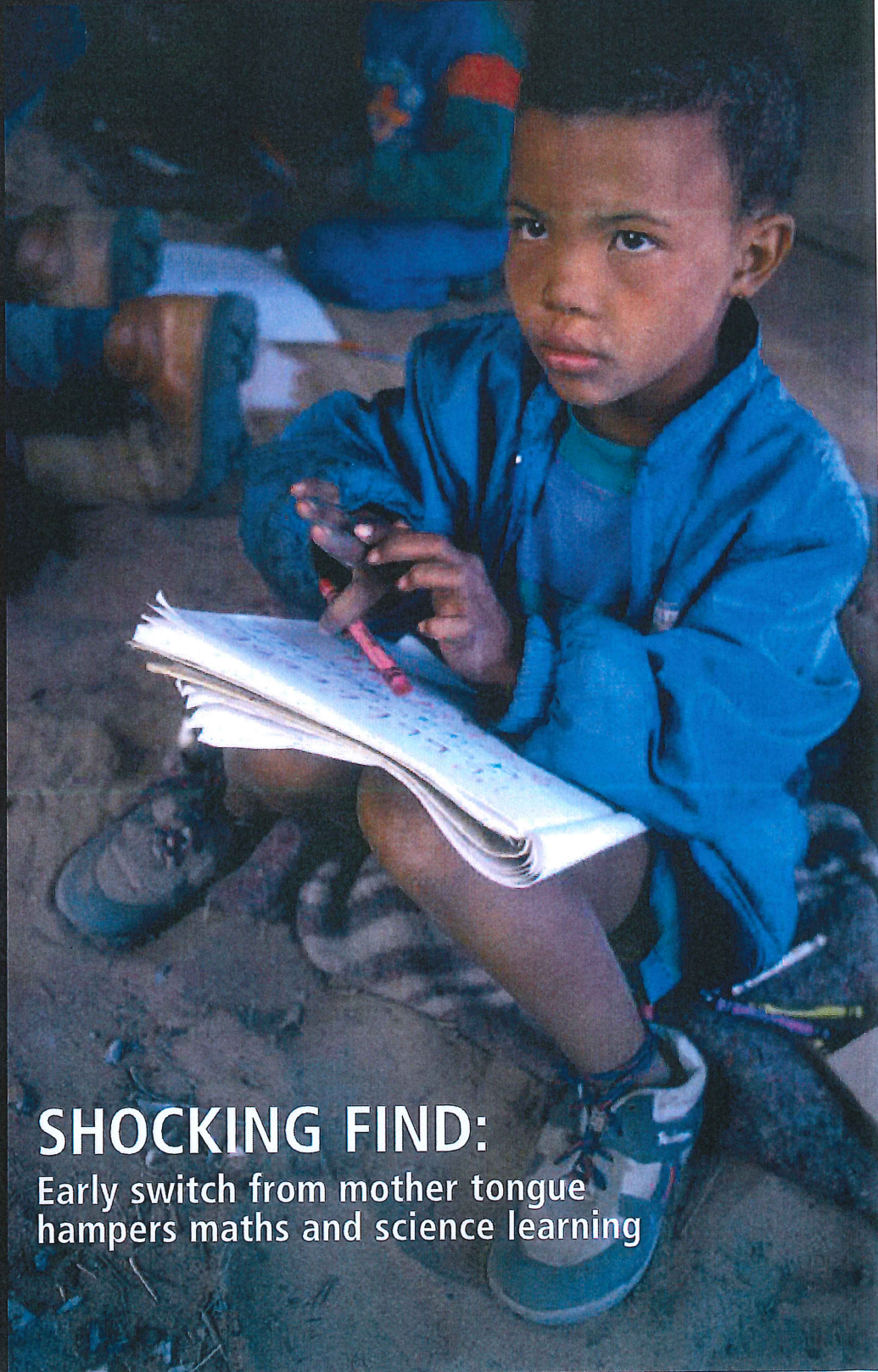
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SHOCKING FIND:
Early switch from mother tongue hampers maths and science learning