

# Using Media in Teaching

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*The SAIDE Teacher Education Series*

**Saide**   
South African Institute  
for Distance Education



# Using Media in Teaching

## Learning Guide

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**Using Media in Teaching**  
ISBN 978-0-9869837-2-6

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1ST EDITION SERIES EDITOR: John Gultig

1ST EDITION VIDEOTAPE: Kagiso Educational Television, with John Gultig and Peter Ranby

1ST EDITION AUDIOTAPE: ABC Ulwazi Educational Radio, with John Gultig and Mike Adendorff

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The first edition was funded by the WK Kellogg foundation. This digital version has been funded through the International Association of Digital Publications.

# SECTION THREE

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## Using popular print media in the classroom

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# What will we do in Section Three?

# 3.1

The term '*popular media*' describes a wide range of media, including magazines, newspapers, television and radio, whose main purpose is to inform, entertain or persuade. But popular media also carry resources designed specifically for *educational purposes*. Many teachers use popular media programming with clear educational *content* and *intent* – such as the SABC's *Learning Channel* or *Learning Zone*, or the teaching supplements carried in newspapers like *The Teacher* – in their teaching.

However, teachers don't tend to exploit the educational potential of *non-educational* popular media programming, such as soap operas (*Isidingo* or *Generations*), or soccer commentaries, or newspaper cartoons. In this section we will explore how popular *print media* – in particular newspapers and magazines – can be used to improve classroom learning and teaching. In Section Four we explore the educational potential of popular *electronic media* formats.



You should have spent about 12 hours studying this module so far. To keep to a 20-week schedule, you should now begin *Week 3* of your studies.



## Different popular print media formats

'*Popular print media*' is a term that describes a wide variety of media formats that include newspapers, magazines, billboards, and advertising flyers. Our focus will be magazines and newspapers, but even these are different enough to offer teachers a rich variety of potential teaching resources.

**First**, while both magazines and newspapers tell their (stories' using similar formats – words, photographs, diagrams, graphics, cartoons, statistics, advertisements, letters from readers, horoscopes and puzzles – they differ in important ways:

- In general, magazines are concerned with *entertaining* their readers, while newspapers focus more on *informing* readers .
- Magazines contain many in-depth 'human interest' feature stories: stories about places or personalities. Newspapers, however, carry mainly short, 'hard news'

stories with a few in-depth stories linked to the news and politics.

- Magazines make more use of photographs – colour fully and prominently – and carry more colourful adverts. Newspapers carry photographs of recent events, diagrams, graphs, maps and tables of statistics, weather, financial and entertainment information, and political cartoons and editorials linked to the latest news.

**Second**, not all newspapers and magazines are the same: they differ according to the kind of readership they try to attract. While many could be classified as 'general interest' publications – *Cosmopolitan*, *Bona*, *The Sowetan*, *The Star*, there are others that can be regarded as 'specialist' publications – *Business Day*, *New Scientist*, or *Getaway*, for instance. Specialist publications offer more in-depth articles that could be useful in teaching subject content. We also noticed that weekly newspapers – such as the *Mail and Guardian* or *Sunday Independent* – carry longer, more analytical articles than daily newspapers.

Publications in South Africa still tend to target racially-defined audiences. So, for instance, while *The Sowetan* may carry news that some would regard as being of interest to an 'African' readership (for instance, lots of soccer news), *The Star* seems to target a predominantly white audience (it carries lots of rugby news). Social class – or income – is also emerging as important in the kinds of articles carried by magazines or newspapers. A magazine like *Ebony*, for instance, seems to cater for a (younger) black, upper middle-class audience, while *Bona* seems to cater for a slightly older, less affluent black audience.

It is important to understand some of these differences, not only so that we can use popular print media appropriately, but also so that we become more familiar with the way in which the media work. This familiarity is called becoming 'media literate', and is regarded as an important learning outcome in new South African education policy. This can be taught through a 'media literacy' activity such as Activity 8 below.



This is a simple activity aimed at familiarizing learners with popular print media and introducing them to the idea of reading media more thoughtfully and critically. Later, in Section Five, we provide examples of other ways of teaching media literacy. You will notice that this kind of activity can be taught at differing levels of complexity. The complexity depends entirely on the kinds of questions and activities you, as the teacher, set the class.

### ACTIVITY 8

Divide your class into groups. Hand each group two different newspapers and two different magazines. Ask them to skim through them. As they do so, they should:

- Write down the differences they see *between magazines and newspapers*. Ask them to look at the kinds of stories (South African or international, about personalities or politics, positive or sensational news), the *length* of stories, the *language* used, the people featured (rich or poor, black or white), the use of photographs, etc.
- Write down any differences they see *between the two magazines* they have, and then *between the two newspapers* they have.

Then begin a class discussion in which you list the findings of the different groups on the chalkboard. Your role as teacher is to help learners organize their findings in order to develop a clear idea of some of the essential characteristics of magazines and newspapers.

**Third**, as we have mentioned, each magazine or newspaper carries a wide variety of formats within their covers: from adverts and cartoons through to statistics, photographs and good writing.

This variety – of formats used within publications, of differences between magazines and newspapers, and differences among magazines and newspapers – provides teachers with a rich pool of teaching and learning resources.



## Desired learning outcomes

In Section Three we provide a number of examples of lessons in which different popular media formats have been used to achieve these outcomes. We don't expect you to use the *same* news reports, adverts or photographs in your own teaching as we have used. Instead, focus on understanding the *principles* that are modelled in the various examples, and choose media more appropriate to the learning area and grade you are teaching. By the end of this section, you will be able to use popular *print* media to:

- **Supplement your teaching in different learning areas.** You will know how to use different newspaper and magazine formats to activate learner interest in the topic you want to teach, to contextualize this learning within their life experiences, to make abstract ideas more concrete and to update and supplement textbooks (Section 3.2).
- **Develop the reading skills of your learners.** You will know how to use newspaper and magazine formats to improve basic reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and reading more quickly and with better comprehension, as well as to summarize, improve vocabulary, and develop a reading culture in your class (Section 3.3).
- **Develop the writing and speaking skills of your learners.** You will know how to use newspaper and magazine formats to improve writing and debating skills. This includes developing basic writing skills such as presenting information in an organized and logical way, as well as more advanced skills such as writing persuasively and imaginatively. You will also learn how to use popular print media content to raise debate and develop learners' critical and argumentative skills (Section 3.4).



### Checking your learning:

How should you use these outcomes? You may find that they don't mean much before you study the section. That's *why* it is so important to check back regularly. Ask: 'Have I achieved any of these outcomes yet? What do I still need to learn in order to meet these outcomes?' Write down those things you still think you need to learn, and use them to focus your learning.

Sections Three, Four and Five carry text boxes that provide ideas on how to use particular teaching methodologies successfully. Section 4.4 contains tips about how to collect, evaluate, and store popular print and electronic media resources in an orderly manner. *Media literacy* ideas are discussed in Section Five.

## 3.2 Supplementing teaching across the curriculum

Popular print media cover a wide variety of topics, and generally they do so in a lively and accessible manner. Journalists also tend to write about the impact on society of things which might be dealt with in an abstract way in learning areas such as biology, science, or economic studies – thus demonstrating their practical usefulness.

In Section 3.2 we provide a range of teaching ideas in which popular print media are used to:

- activate learner interest in the topic you are trying to teach;
- contextualize learning by linking the topic to the learners' life experiences;
- make abstract concepts more 'visible' and concrete so as to improve learner understanding of the topic;
- update and supplement textbook knowledge.

We have chosen learning areas and levels randomly. Don't be concerned if the example isn't in the learning area that you teach. Rather, 'walk through' the teaching experience and try to understand the principles underlying the use of the media resource in each case. This is what we did. We observed teachers and spoke to them. In this module we present the lessons as we observed them and then provide our assessment of their usefulness. Enter into a debate with us!

### Activating learner interest

One of the biggest problems facing teachers is how to get learners interested in the topics and concepts they have to teach. Learners often regard school knowledge as having no connection with their lives. It is seen as something to be learnt and fed back to examiners. Because learners can't see any link between their schoolwork and their lives, learning often becomes boring and difficult. Let's see how a Johannesburg teacher used a soccer report in the newspaper to stimulate her class's interest in a geographical concept – map reading – that forms part of the Human and Social Studies learning area.

#### ***Using a soccer report to introduce map-reading skills: 'Finding the way to the World Cup'***

The teacher knew that almost all of the Grade 7 learners in her class were soccer fans. So she decided to hand out copies of a newspaper article which listed all the teams playing in the 1998 World Cup soccer finals, as well as a worksheet which she designed to go with the article. When she had handed these out, she displayed a mock 'ticket', saying: 'I have a ticket to the World Cup final. I will give this ticket to the person who can find his or her way to the World Cup venues most quickly!'

**COUNTDOWN TO THE WORLD CUP**

**Brendan the little terrier**

By Melissa Govan

While Brendan Augustine is one of the smallest footballers to grace the world stage, he has the biggest hearts in the game.

versatile midfielder. He enjoys playing behind the attackers and with his constant charging when his team loses possession, he is every coach's dream. Even with the soaring temperatures at the recent African Cup of Nations tournament in Burkina Faso, he worked

gambled by leaving South Africa for the Austrian first division.

Unlike in South Africa, where he was able to play and impress the microscopic eyes of the coaches week in and week out, his progress in Austria was never followed. He subsequently lost his place in the squad and was a notable omission from the country's victorious 1996 African Cup of Nations campaign.

power and competes in the air. He has good runs off the ball and his style of play is likely to attract Trossier," said Igesund.

However, the Rangers coach, who guided his team into the African Champions League, maintains Augustine needs to score more goals to create a bigger impact.

"He is so good in setting up player and creating chances for others on the edge of the box, but I think he needs to score more, especially if he is going to play in an attacking position.

"He has the right attitude and me approach and I think he could be one of our better players in France," said Igesund.

Bafana Bafana are up against hosts France, Denmark and Saudi Arabia in Group C of which only two teams will qualify for the next round.

With the French and Danes firm favourites to go through, it will require passion, courage and skill to enter the next phase of the competition. Hence the case for Brendan Augustine.

**WORLD ROUND**

September 14 - Saudi Arabia 2 - 0 Iran 1

September 19 - Iran 1 Saudi Arabia 1

October 3 - China 1 Saudi Arabia 0

October 11 - Saudi Arabia 1 Qatar 0

October 17 - Kuwait 2 Saudi Arabia 1

**GOALS**

6 - Khalid al-Mutairi

4 - Ibrahim al-Shahrani, Sami al-Dabbas

3 - Fahad al-Muballal, Ghazi al-Dabbas

1 - Khalid al-Tamari, Abdullah al-Ahmed al-Dabbas, Youssef al-Tajer

**STARTING APPEARANCES**

**FINDING OUR WAY TO THE 1998 WORLD CUP**

Worksheet

Read the newspaper article you have been given. Then answer the following questions:

- Find the names of all the countries that are playing in the 1998 soccer World Cup in France.
- Locate these countries on the map supplied. (Use your marker pen to highlight the name of the country on the map.)
- Label two major cities in each of the countries you named.
- Work out the direction of the following cities from Johannesburg:
  - Paris (France)
  - Buenos Aires (Argentina)
  - Tokyo (Japan)
- Imagine you have arrived in Paris and have tickets for matches in the following French cities: Marseilles, Toulouse and Lens. Tell me what distance (in kilometres) you will travel if your bus took you:
  - from Paris to Marseilles;
  - from Marseilles to Toulouse;
  - from Toulouse to Lens; and then
  - from Lens back to Paris.

You should use the scale provided on page 71 of your atlas to calculate this.
- How long would it take you to do this journey if your bus travelled at an average speed of 120 kilometres per hour?
- Do you think South Africa should host the 2006 World Cup? Discuss all the advantages and disadvantages that holding this competition can bring to a country.

Reproduced from The Star newspaper, 22 May 1998

### What did we think of this lesson?

This lesson engaged the interest of the Grade 7s, which is always a good start to learning. Furthermore, they could relate to what they were learning. It seemed that even though the learners knew that the 'ticket' to the match was not a real one, the process of mapping the routes to Paris, and to the various matches and competing countries, aroused considerable excitement. They could see the potential benefits of map reading because this skill, which might otherwise have seemed abstract to them, was located in the context of a topic of great interest, and linked to the idea of a real-life use.

In addition, the Grade 7s learnt a number of map-reading skills, such as using the *compass* to calculate direction and *scale* to measure distance. The need to convert distance on the map to real kilometres also allowed them to practise basic mathematical skills.

Finally, by inserting an 'open' question at the end, the teacher encouraged the learners to present their own opinion, and she provided a *challenge* which 'extended' them by requiring them not only to think of *arguments to support claims* in favour of South Africa hosting the World Cup, but also to think of arguments for the *opposing point of view*.

We saw a Soweto teacher play a similar game with his class using South African soccer. The strength of his lesson was that he used a local Johannesburg map and got learners to plot the route, and then measure the distance (using the scale on the map), from their homes to the Johannesburg Stadium. This local context was likely to give learners a much better understanding of what a kilometre actually is because learners had actually experienced walking part of the route on the map. Learners using international maps often convert the map scale into real kilometres mechanically because they have no real-life experience of the distance denoted by 'a kilometre'.



Spend about 40 minutes on this activity. You should try to do it with a fellow teacher. You might also want to glance back at Section Two for ideas about how one develops conceptual depth in a series of lessons.

In Section Four, on pages 103-105, we provide a radio-based activity to develop learner interest and skills in map reading.

### ACTIVITY 9

Watch part 2 of the video. Jane Roach teaches a similar map-reading lesson using a *television* soccer commentary. Make notes as you watch, then answer the following questions.

Can you think of any ways to *extend learning* in these lessons? Think of:

- a how you would increase the depth of the geographical skills learnt, such as direction-finding or calculating distance;
- b how you would *broaden the scope* of the geography or Human and Social Studies content knowledge to be learnt.

### Ways in which these lessons could be extended

Both teachers focused only on scale and compass directions. We felt that they could also have introduced (probably in a later lesson):

- *more depth* by asking the learners to calculate the directions from the cities *back* to Johannesburg (i.e. for the return trip – there would be 180° difference between these and the answers to worksheet question 4, for instance);
- *more breadth* by using *relief* or *road* maps. This would have allowed the teachers to develop further skills in map reading by asking learners to describe, for instance, the *kinds of terrain* over which they'd have to travel to get to the various cities mentioned in question 5. The use of relief or road maps would have introduced them to new kinds of map symbols.

We also felt that question 7 was so open that it became vague, and lost some of its educational value. It would probably encourage more valuable learning if the teacher also provided a number of articles on South Africa's economy, climate, and politics. These would give the information learners would require in order to begin making thoughtful decisions. The teacher could also have used some of the many articles that appeared in newspapers during the debate about South Africa hosting the Olympics.

## Contextualizing school knowledge

Another way of engaging learner interest is by teaching in a way that demonstrates how the knowledge being learnt is genuinely useful. Learners are more prepared to learn something that they can use.

Do you remember how Nomsa taught history? She used a mixture of games (the detective /investigative game), and a simulation of historical research, to demonstrate the practical usefulness of school learning. Role-plays and simulation games are powerful teaching tools. Here is an example of a relatively simple *shopping* simulation that makes use of a freely available advertising flyer to teach basic numeracy.

### Using advertising leaflets to teach basic numeracy: 'The Shopping Game'

Mrs Bophela, a Foundation Phase teacher of numeracy and mathematics in Mpumalanga, collected a selection of advertising leaflets from her local supermarket in Nelspruit and used them as the basis for an arithmetic lesson. Here is her story:

*'I was faced with a problem. The children in my class were getting bored by just doing pages and pages of addition and subtraction exercises from the textbook. When they were busy one day, a bright girl said to me: "These prices in the textbook are wrong. A litre of milk costs R3.00, not 83c." She was absolutely right, of course, and I thought how silly it was for them to be working with such outdated prices.'*



'It just happened that, the same afternoon, I went to the super- market to buy groceries for the weekend. As I was paying, I saw a whole pile of advertising leaflets that had pictures of lots of groceries and their prices. I asked the manager if I could have a pile of these to use at school. He was pleased to let me have the leaflets.

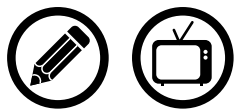
'I looked at them carefully to see if they contained enough food items for the activity I had in mind. I still wanted the class to practise their sums, but I also wanted them to link these sums to the world around them. I thought it would be a good idea to get them to use the prices on the leaflet in order to work out how much it costs to feed a family for one week. I thought I'd get them to **play the role of a parent** who had to develop a home budget.

'The next day, I handed out one supermarket leaflet to each pair. This created quite a bit of excitement. I told them that they had R300 to buy groceries for their family – two children, a mother and a father – each week. I also told them to cut out the pictures of the items they wanted to "buy", and to stick these pictures and prices on a piece of paper. Then I asked them to add up the prices of these items and see if they had any change from the R300.'

Note that Mrs Bophela's reason for using popular media was to **update her textbook**, which carried out-of-date and thus unrealistic prices, as well as to link the learning of basic arithmetic functions to life\_



One of the teachers who helped us to evaluate this part of the module was Mrs Masipho Meyiwa. She liked Mrs Bophela's lesson very much, and decided to try it out with her own class. We'd like you to turn to your video now, and watch her teach this lesson.



We suggest you spend at least 1,5 hours on this activity. Work on your own at first, but then share your ideas with a fellow student or teacher. If you are confused about the reference to conceptual depth and breadth, refer back to Section Two.

### ACTIVITY 10

Watch Mrs Meyiwa's lesson (part 3 of the video) twice. Take notes as you watch the second time. Then answer the following questions:

- Identify the different parts of Mrs Meyiwa's lesson. In other words, draw up the lesson plan you think she was working to.
- Now re-read Mrs Bophela's description of how she used the supermarket advertising leaflet. In what ways was her lesson different to the lesson that Mrs Meyiwa taught?
- Can you think of ways in which either of these teachers could develop this lesson further? Remember, they should develop both the conceptual depth and breadth of the learning area.
- Think about ways in which you could use an advertising leaflet in your own learning area. Write a short description of your ideas.

### What did we think of these lessons?

We liked the simplicity of the *simulation* and its immediate link to the concepts and skills being taught. In contrast to the soccer examples, the 'shopping' example links **directly** with the basic numeracy skills the teachers want to teach. The simulation also had appeal to the level of learners being taught. We decided that if you were working with older learners, you'd need to change the game in two ways.

**First**, you'd need to *increase the complexity of skills learnt*. Obviously, they would have to practise more advanced mathematical skills than addition and subtraction. You could, for instance:

- Increase the *breadth* of study by introducing the idea of *regular budgeting*. Groups could work out what money they would need to live on each month. This would involve them in *researching* the costs of other goods and *multiplying* these costs by the quantity they would need over a month. They would also need to *plan* how they could calculate the monthly cost of those services that are paid for quarterly (for instance, water), or on an annual basis (such as rates).
- Increase the *depth* of skills by introducing the concept of *interest* on hire purchase or budget accounts, and on investing money. Your learners would need to work this out and make decisions about whether to pay cash up front, to use budget accounts, or to invest money rather than spend it. A number of algebraic functions, as well as percentages and ratios, could be introduced in this kind of game.
- Consolidate learning by introducing articles clipped from the personal finances pages of newspapers that deal with *personal budgeting* and *investing*. This would provide learners with the information they need to make decisions of this kind. Clearly, the focus on personal finances would make these activities useful in either a life skills lesson or an economics and management sciences lesson.

**Second**, it would be advisable to *change the context*. While shopping is of interest to teenagers, we doubted whether they'd be interested in buying food for the family! We decided we'd probably use other kinds of adverts- for clothing, music, and other forms of entertainment - and a slightly different budgeting exercise. So, while the principles we want to teach remain the same, we would ensure that the information and contexts chosen are appropriate to the interests of our particular learners.



The same idea – of practising basic arithmetic and mathematical procedures in real-life situations – can be adapted in many other imaginative ways. For instance, teachers could use property and mortgage interest tables, in an activity where learners are asked to work out where they would be able to afford to live given a particular income. They could also work out how the overall price of a house will differ, depending on changing interest rates and the length of time they take to pay off their mortgage.

## Simulating real-life situations

### The Fruit Farmer

*Simulations* are teaching activities in which learners are placed in an artificial situation – for instance, as shoppers – that intentionally imitates a real-life situation – for instance, shopping. Simulations range from simple activities (such as the 'Shopping Game') and board games (such as *Monopoly*), through workshop activities for fairly large numbers of learners (with written instructions for participants taking various roles), to sophisticated computerized simulations that may be carried on the Internet.

Board games are an ideal form of simulation to use in large classes: they allow for individual and small group work, and keep learners in their desks, which most other role-play/simulation does not! Here is a board game designed to teach Intermediate Phase Human and Social Sciences and/or Economic and Management Sciences learners about the world of work.

#### Being an Entrepreneur: Playing the Fruit Farmer

- 1 Make sure that your group has a dice and each player has a pencil and piece of paper.
- 2 Write the heading 'Costs' at the top of your page.
- 3 Throw the dice to see who starts. The person with the highest number starts.
- 4 Take turns to throw the dice and move the number of squares indicated by your throw each time.
- 5 When you land on a square, read and follow the instruction in the square.
- 6 As you play the game, note the payments you have had to make under your heading 'Costs'.
- 7 Once you have 'made it to the market' - in other words, reached square 24 - add up all your costs.
- 8 Subtract this total from your selling price of R250 (you will see this in square 24).
- 9 The answer you get to is your profit or loss. The person with the largest profit is the winner!
- 10 When the game is complete, discuss what factors led to high profits or high losses along the way. In other words, discuss what good entrepreneurs need to do in order to win!

#### ACTIVITY 11

Play this game with another teacher. As you do so:

- a Discuss *what* this game teaches you about fruit farming as a form of economic activity.
- b Discuss *how* games of this kind teach.
- c Discuss how you would follow-up such a lesson. How would you create further depth and breadth in learner understanding?
- d Do you think you could design a board game to teach a concept in your own learning area?



Strictly speaking, role-plays and Simulations are different kinds of teaching activities. For our purposes, though, we don't make a distinction. The basic idea is to put learners into different roles in simulated life situations in order to demonstrate to them how school knowledge is useful in life. For good ideas about using role-plays and simulations in senior and further education phases, and in adult education, see Christopher and Smith. 1987. *Leadership Training through Gaming - Power, People and Problem-solving*. London: Kogan Page.

This game is taken from the April 1999 edition of *The Teacher*, a newspaper that often carries good educational supplements. You should systematically collect board games carried in newspaper supplements. Visit a shop that has a colour laser photocopier and spend a few rands duplicating the board game. Stick the copies onto cardboard and laminate them. If you do this, you will soon collect a cupboard full of useful and durable teaching resources, and will have paid very little for them.



Spend about 40 minutes on this activity. While we'd like you to enjoy the game, we'd also like you to concentrate on working out how board games teach. So don't skip the discussion!





© Junior Achievement Southern Africa

Enterprise Dynamics Series OUR COMABILITY: WE MADE IT TO MARKET! 151

### What can we learn about teaching from this board game?

This is a very simple simulation that any teacher could design. In order to design a board game, you must:

- Know what key points you want to teach. For instance, this board game introduces important factors of production (different kinds of workers, machines, etc.), shows some of their limitations (machines break, workers strike, etc.) and what the impact of these are on your profit or loss.
- Simulate the process you want learners to learn about. For instance, in this game learners realize that damaged fruit will lead to losses – if they land on square 23 they have to pay R50 – or that raises in worker salaries will eat into profits. (The International Trade Game on page 51 demonstrates this even more vividly.)

We thought Fruit Farmer was a little too simplistic and allowed learners little opportunity to make choices. For instance, in this version learners have no choice about how to react to a strike (square 8). They simply pay R20 (presumably an increase in wages) and move on. It might have been fun – and would have developed critical thinking skills and further understanding of collective bargaining – if the game had forced learners to choose what to do when a strike occurred. They could either:

- have paid a salary increase and so moved production forward quickly – the consequences of this action would be no delays and happier workers, but they'd have to carry higher wage costs and thus reduce their profit;

or

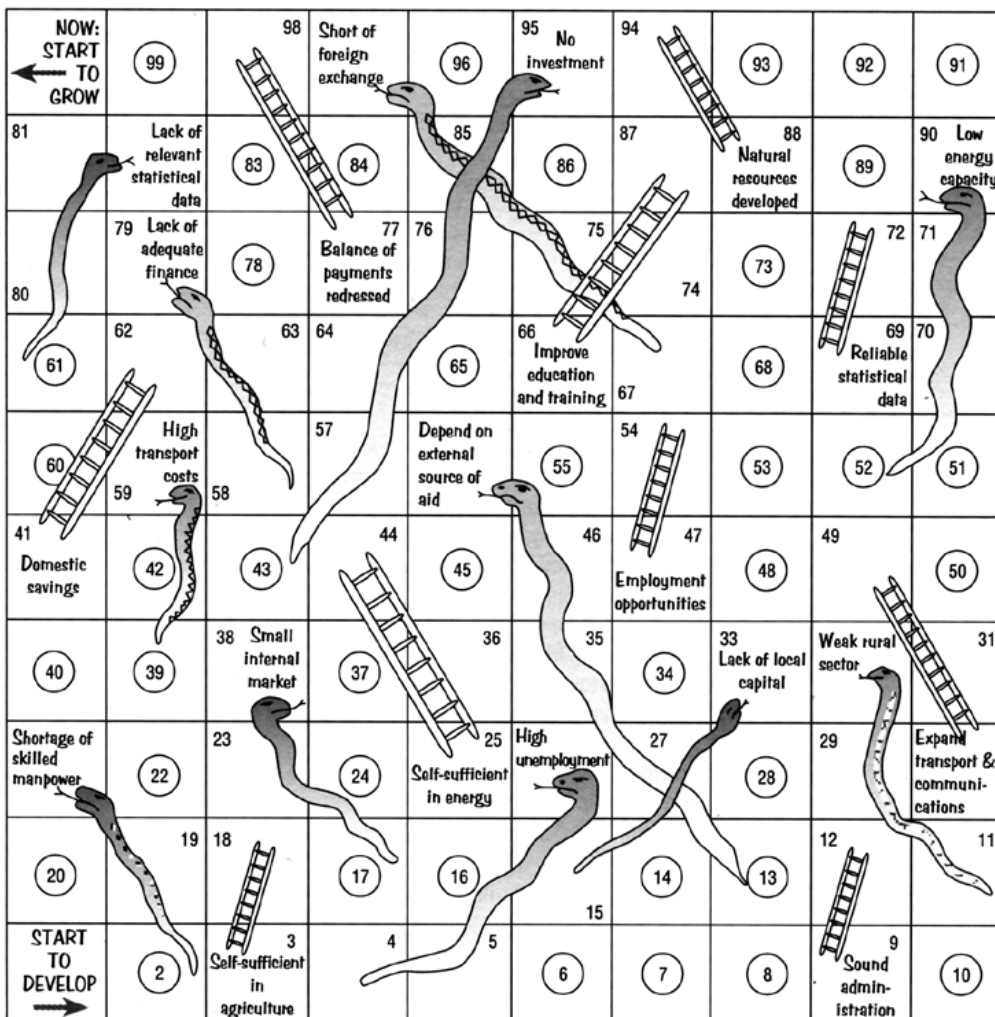


- refuse to pay higher salaries, and thus be asked to move backwards (simulating the delays in production that would ensue from such an action). But learners would realize that this choice – unhappy workers and delayed production – would save the longer-term costs of higher wages.

This would lead to a much higher-level debate. It would raise:

- *critical reasoning questions* (linked to knowledge): you could ask whether the decision would have been different had the goods not been perishables. Perhaps a quick settlement was necessary because the fruit would have rotted, which would not have occurred had the goods been non-perishables, such as shoes. Should management mechanize the process? Why, or why not?
- *ethical issues* (linked to attitudes and values): does management have a right to withhold salary increases? Do workers have the right to strike? Why? Does management have a right to mechanize?

## The International Trade Game



Here is another example of a board game. It is used in *Education with Production* schools in Southern Africa to teach key concepts in Development Studies. In this case, the game uses the design features of a traditional board game, *Snakes and Ladders*, to teach about the impact of foreign aid on local development. It is played with the same equipment as *Fruit Farmer*, this board and some dice.



G. Seidman & J. Stuart. 1990. *Working for the Future: A Teacher's Guide* has a number of exciting simulation games that can be used to teach Economic and Management Sciences and Human and Social Studies. You can order this book from the International Foundation for Education with production in Gaborone, Botswana.

You will notice that the game clearly teaches that:

- phenomena such as high unemployment will have a detrimental effect on a country's development (the game does this by 'punishing' learners who land on this square by sending them back to square 4);
- actions such as developing a sound administration will impact positively on development (the game does this by rewarding those who land on square 9 by sending them forward to square 12).

This is a much more effective way of teaching the requirements for development than lists of 'advantages' and 'disadvantages'!

### ***Using property pages to teach urban settlement geography***

Here is another example of the way in which a local newspaper can be used to make a conventional part of a Human and Social Studies lesson more relevant for learners. In this case, the teacher has used the property section of a weekend newspaper and a worksheet to introduce concepts in *urban settlement geography*. Read through the worksheet.

#### **Planning cities: Grade 9**

- 1 Make a copy of an outline map of Greater Johannesburg to show the names of all the suburbs. Put this on one side until you have answered the questions below.
- 2 Examine the property pages to answer these questions:
  - In what parts of the town can you buy factory space?
  - Where would you look for shops to let?
  - Name the suburbs where you can rent fiats.
  - List the suburbs where house prices are over R500 000.
  - Where are house prices the lowest?
  - In which areas are there townhouses for sale?
- 3 Use the information for the questions in 2 to help you draw a land use map of greater Johannesburg.
  - Find the locations mentioned in the property pages where you'd find factories, shops, fiats, expensive and cheap houses, and townhouses.
  - Mark these on the Johannesburg map. Mark each type of property in a different colour.
- 4 Examine your map. Do patterns of land use emerge? In other words, where are you most likely to find industrial property - in the north, south, central (etc.)? What kind of houses border these areas?
- 5 Discuss these findings with your group. Then write a page in which you advise a new investor where she should:
  - open a factory;
  - open the shop through which she'd sell her goods;
  - buy property.

Remember, you must give reasons why the investor should follow your advice. In other words, explain why this pattern of land use has emerged and what the implications are for her life in Johannesburg.
- 6 Now turn to page 23 of your textbook. Read from pages 23 to 26. Does this offer you any further ideas? Revise your page in light of the information you found in your textbook.

## Making abstract ideas more 'visible' and concrete

The activities mentioned already provide ways of making learning more meaningful. This will obviously make the often abstract school concepts more *concrete* and *visible* to learners. You will also have noticed how the 'Planning cities' worksheet turns 'urban settlement theory' into a problem-solving activity that locates new theory firmly in real life.

Another way of integrating 'real life' into school teaching is by organizing visits to museums, art galleries, factories, and so on. We strongly recommend that teachers design learning programmes that include visits to places like these.

But we realize that visits are difficult to organize. Popular print media allow learners to visit places *vicariously*: they can do so by being given the opportunity to 'see' strange places, people and things through the use in teaching of good television documentaries or radio interviews (see Section Four), or photographs, current stories or up-to-date graphics from magazines and newspapers.



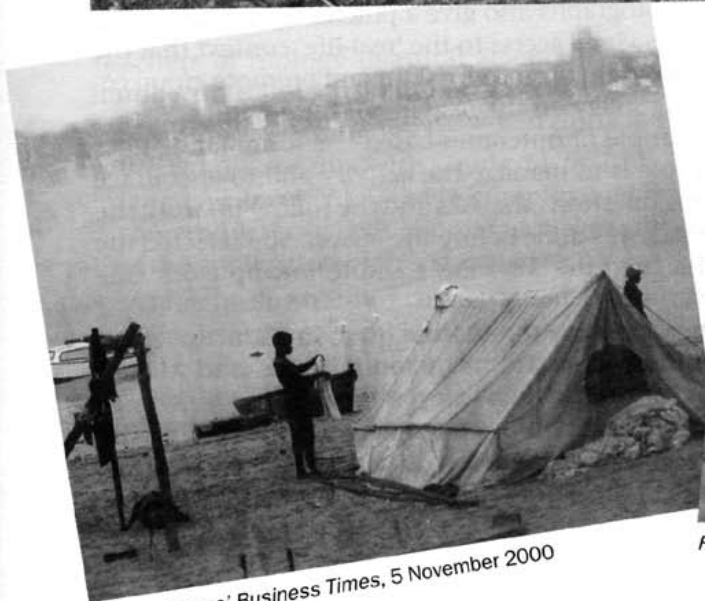
You should now have spent about 18 hours studying. To keep to a 20-week schedule, you should now begin Week 4 of your study.

## Using photographs

*The Sunday Independent, 5 November 2000*



*Fair Lady, 27 October 1999*



*Sunday Times' Business Times, 5 November 2000*



*Fair Lady, 27 October 1999*



Do this activity with a partner.  
Spend no more than 20  
minutes on it.

## ACTIVITY 12

Do this activity with a partner.

Photocopy enough copies of the photographs on page 51 (or similar images) for each pair of learners in your class to receive a pair of images. Divide the class into pairs and distribute the images, one image to each learner.

- a Write down a few questions that you would like to ask about your picture (10 minutes).
- b Swap your picture and your list of questions with your partner. Try to answer your partner's questions based on what you can see in his or her picture. Afterwards, your partner should try to answer the questions about your picture.
- c Discuss the questions each of you asked and your answers to each other's questions.
- d What are the lives of these people like? Are they similar? If not, how are they different? What causes the differences?
- e Discuss what kinds of things you have learnt from doing this activity.

Linda, the teacher who suggested this activity to us, justified it by arguing that it was a 'stimulating' way to introduce a new topic:

*'Good photographs evoke deep emotions and offer a number of possible interpretations. This is especially so when you provide **contrasting** photographs, as I did. This arouses learners' interest and gets them talking. By evaluating each other's questions and answers, the learners are forced to consider a **range** of possibilities.'*

*'This works so much better than my coming into class and saying, "OK, today we are going to talk about different kinds of communities in South Africa", and then going on to give a whole lot of economic and geographic details. By the time this lesson is over, I haven't directly **taught** much at all yet, but the class has **learnt** quite a lot.'*

Linda uses photographs mainly to evoke learner interest. Instead of a long-winded introduction, she immerses learners in a set of questions that actively engages them. But the photographs also give a potentially abstract topic meaning by allowing learners *visual* access to the 'real-life' context that the topic addresses. The questions develop enquiry skills and promote group co-operation instead of focusing solely on the relaying of information.

This lesson is a good example of outcomes-based teaching. Linda does little direct teaching. Her role is to manage the activity and to encourage deeper learning through the questions she asks and the follow-up work she designs. Most of Linda's work was done before the lesson. She selected the photographs, then she designed the worksheet and follow-up work. She *planned* well!

Linda explained that she would use this discussion to introduce a lesson about children's lives in different situations in South Africa (and Africa). Later she would ask senior learners to do *research* in a number of reference books to explore economic development in different communities. But she uses the photographs with intermediate learners too. Here she limits the number of reference books to a couple of selected newspaper and magazine articles and the prescribed textbook.

### Using specialist magazines

Good quality photographs also help teachers bring the outside world into classrooms in a highly visual way: they are a way to 'travel' without leaving the class. Specialist magazines, such as *National Geographic* or *Getaway* (a South African travel magazine), are rich sources of photographs for teachers of Human and Social Studies, Natural Sciences, and Environment Studies.

Specialist magazines offer a great deal more to teachers. For instance:

- *National Geographic* has become world-renowned because of its high quality fold-out maps as well as its beautiful photographs.
- Readily available magazines, such as *Time*, carry accessible articles that demonstrate how science, geography, history and biology knowledge is used in everyday life. You may remember, for instance, how Nomsa used *Time* to teach learners to think historically in her Human and Social Studies lesson earlier (see Section Two).
- Newspapers and magazines use lively and attractive diagrams and statistics to illustrate their articles (see page 56 for another example of this). These provide learners with far more 'visual' access to learning than a purely text-based book would offer. For instance, look through 'How to build a body part'. In particular, notice:
  - the drawings of cells and bones used in the text. Imagine these in lively colour. Illustrations of this sort create much more excitement among learners than the dull line drawings often found in textbooks. They give learners a more vivid idea of the concepts they are learning about.
  - the way in which theory about the cell- a common part of the school syllabus - becomes more meaningful as it is linked to real-life medical challenges.

### ACTIVITY 13

- a How would you use 'How to build a body part' to extend a biology (or a Natural Sciences) lesson in exciting ways?
- b What kinds of questions would you ask to link this article to school biology/Natural Sciences?
- c What level would you pitch your lesson at?

### What did we think?

Teachers of biology (Natural Sciences) will no doubt come up with a number of technical questions, depending on the grade that they are teaching. But, as non-biologists, we would think in the following way:

- We would use this with Grade 11 or 12 learners for two reasons: the language level is relatively complex *and* learners need to understand something about cells in order to make sense of this article, which looks at the application of this knowledge.
- While the illustrations could be used as an introduction to school topics, we believe the content is more appropriate for extension work. We would design a worksheet that includes two kinds of questions:
  - those that help learners link this article with the work they have already done, such as: What do you already know about cells that would explain how cells will do the work (of growing new tissue) for you if you treat them right?
  - those that assist learners to understand the new ideas in the article, such as: Why does blood pulsing against the walls of artificially-grown blood vessels 'gradually *strengthen* the muscle cells used? or What actually happens when new organs are *rejected* by the animals or humans into which they are transplanted?
- We would make a lot of use of the illustrations. We thought we'd probably enlarge them (through colour laser printing) and laminate them and use them as charts that we would display on the walls of our classroom. We'd probably make reference to them later as we try to explain how the school knowledge that we are learning is being applied medically.

Many foreign magazines are expensive. There are solutions to this problem:

- If your school has a library or media centre, and any funds at all are available for purchasing books, a subscription to magazines such as *National Geographic* would be one of the school's better investments. Special school discounts are offered.
- It is possible to buy old editions of magazines more cheaply. Second-hand copies can be bought at second-hand bookshops while new (but dated) editions can be bought at street markets and at shops that sell magazines by the kilogram.



The article on page 52 is from the March 8, 1999 edition of *Time*. If possible, try to get a copy of the original to do this activity. It will make your reading easier and will give you an idea of the excitement created by the colour illustrations. Do this activity with other teachers. Spend about 20 minutes on it. It doesn't matter if you aren't a Natural Sciences teacher: do the activity anyway!



SCIENCE

# How to Build a Body Part

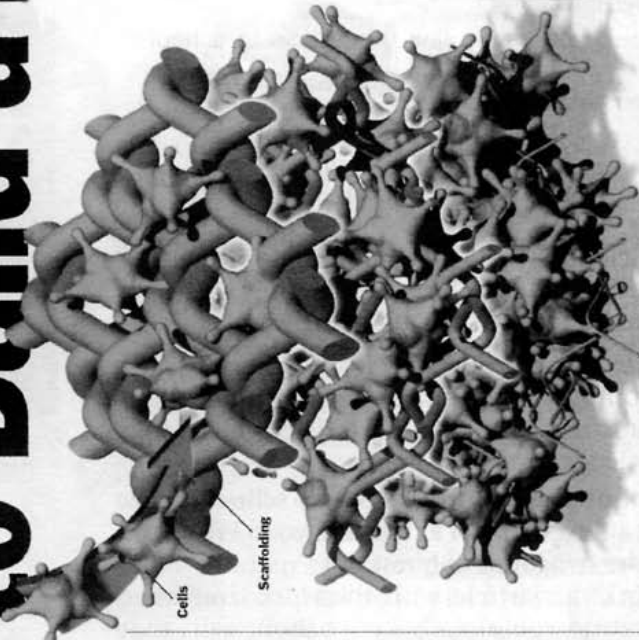
## Need a hand, or perhaps a liver? Scientists are finding ways to help you grow your own

By JOSH FISCHMAN

**T**HERE'S A HUMAN LIVER SITTING IN a lab dish in Madison, Wis. Also a heart, a brain and every bone in the human body—even though the contents of the dish are a few cells too small to be seen without a microscope. But these are stem cells, the most immature human cells ever discovered, taken from embryos before they had decided upon their career path in the body. If scientists could only figure out how to give them just the right kick in just the right direction, each could become a liver, a heart, a brain or a bone. When a team from the University of Wisconsin announced their discovery last fall, doctors around the world looked forward to a new era of medicine—one without organ-donor shortages or the tissue-rejection problems that bedevil transplant patients today.

Doctors also saw obstacles, though. One of them was a U.S. Congress skittish about research on stem cells taken from unwanted human embryos and aborted fetuses. Indeed, last week 70 lawmakers asked in a firmly worded letter that the Federal Government ban all such work.

Yet the era of "grow your own" organs is already upon us, as researchers have sidestepped the stem-cell controversy by making clever use of ordinary cells. Today a machinist in Massachusetts is using his own cells to grow a new thumb after he lost part of his in an accident. A teenager born without half of his chest wall is growing a new cage of bone and cartilage within his chest cavity. Scientists announced last month that bladders, grown from bladder cells in a lab, have been implanted in dogs and are working. Meanwhile, patches of skin, the first "tissue-engineered" organ to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, are healing sores and skin ulcers on hundreds of patients across the U.S.



**First, Make a Scaffold** Like gardeners training a vine, researchers build a coral or a special polymer. They seed it with cultured cells of the organ they're growing, which multiply, take the desired shape and become self-supporting. The scaffold then dissolves

How have scientists managed to do all this without those protean stem cells? Part of the answer is smart engineering. Using materials such as polymers with pores no wider than a toothbrush bristle, researchers have learned to sculpt scaffolds in shapes into which cells can settle.

The other part of the answer is just plain cell biology. Scientists have discovered that they don't have to teach old cells new tricks; given the right framework and the right nutrients, cells will organize themselves into real tissues as the scaffolds dissolve. "I'm a great believer in the cells. They're not just lying there,

cells, grow them in the lab and then injected them into a piece of coral fashioned into the shape of the missing digit. "Coral's got lots of interconnected channels for the bone cells to grow in," says Vacanti. It also degrades as bone replaces it. The patch was implanted back on the thumb a few months ago. "It looks like he's growing good bone," Vacanti reports. "He could get most of his function back."

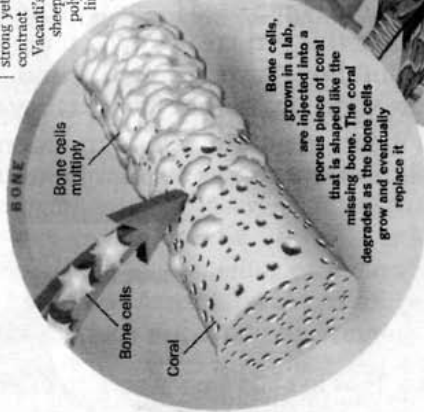
Moving from the thumb to other hand parts, Charles' brother Joseph Vacanti, a transplant surgeon and tissue-engineering pioneer in his own right, has

grown human-shaped fingers on the back of a mouse, demonstrating that different cell types can grow together. He and colleagues at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital shaped a polymer to resemble the end and middle finger bones. These shapes were seeded with bone, cartilage and tendon cells from a cow. Then the medical team assembled the pieces under the skin of the mouse—just like you'd assemble the parts of a model airplane," says Vacanti.

**VEINS AND ARTERIES.** Blood vessels present a special challenge: they must be strong yet flexible enough to expand and contract with each heartbeat. Joseph

Vacanti's group has grown a tube of sheep-muscle cells around a polymer, added closely packed lining cells to the inside and stitched it into a sheep's pulmonary-artery circuit.

Blood pulsing against the walls gradually strengthens the muscle cells, just as weight training builds vessels. To make smaller vessels, Laval's Auger bends a sheet of muscle cells



## New Seedbeds for Bone and Arteries

Given the right framework and the right nutrients, cells will grow together and function as organs. Research and pioneers are developing different strategies to grow skin, bone, blood vessels, internal organs. These efforts require both medical and engineering skills

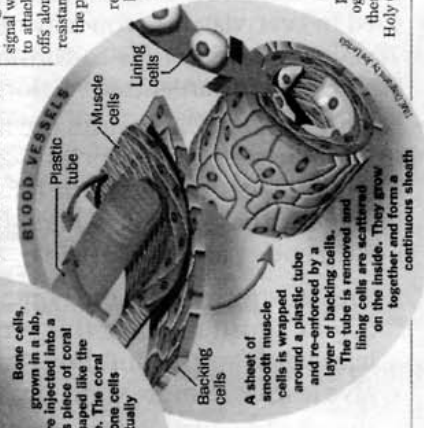
around a plastic tube and reinforces it with an outer layer of stiffer cells. Then he removes the tube and seeds the inside with lining cells, which soon grow together. The vessels have worked well in animal tests and in the lab have withstood blood pressure 20 times normal.

**LIVERS AND BLADDERS.** Anthony Atala, a surgeon who makes bladders at Boston's Children's Hospital, has taken muscle cells from the outside of dog bladders and lining cells from the inside and grown them in his lab. The cells, fed the proper growth-promoting chemicals, happily go forth and multiply. "In six weeks, we have enough cells to cover a football field," Atala says. He placed a few muscle cells on the surface of a small polymer sphere and some lining cells on the inside. When he inserted the sphere in a dog's urinary system, the artificial bladder began to function like the real thing. Biomechanic Linda Griffith at nearby Massachusetts Institute of Technology is doing similar work with rat-liver tissue.

**THE HEART—AND BEYOND.** One drawback with all these techniques is that it takes time, usually several weeks, to grow organs using the patient's own cells. Although using these cells sidesteps the rejection problem, time is a luxury many patients, particularly heart patients, can't afford. So Michael Sefton, who directs the tissue-engineering center at the University of Toronto, has proposed building a "heart in a box"—complete with chambers, valves and heart muscles—from cells genetically engineered to block the signal with which the body marshals cells to attack invaders. Sefton envisions spin-off, along the way—like immune-system-resistant replacement valves—to justify the project's \$5 billion cost.

Replacement hearts—or even replacement heart parts—are at least a decade off, estimates Kiki Hellman, who monitors tissue-engineering efforts for the FDA.

"Any problem that requires lots of cell types 'talking' to one another is really hard," she writes. Bone and cartilage efforts are much closer to fruition, and could be ready for human trials within two years. And what of those magical stem cells that can grow into any organ you happen to need—if the law, and biologists' knowledge, permit? "Using them," says Sefton, "is really the Holy Grail."



**'Knowledge maps':****Using wall maps to develop a 'visual' understanding of the world**

An important critical cross-field outcome is that we should develop lifelong learners. One way to achieve this is to develop classroom environments that are vital and alive: that demonstrate a *culture* of learning. A way of doing this is to link different topics taught in a learning area – or even across learning areas – through an ongoing learner-maintained classroom 'exhibition'. We have called this a 'knowledge map'.

'Knowledge maps' can be used in all learning areas. But their basic teaching aims remain similar:

- To link school learning and everyday knowledge through regular learner 'searches' of newspapers and magazines for relevant pictures, stories and statistics to make abstract knowledge more visual and concrete to learners.
- To link different pieces of knowledge – within and across learning areas – spatially and conceptually. This will provide learners with a more integrated understanding of school work, the world and our place in it.

An Eastern Cape teacher we spoke to showed us how she had used a wall map and newspapers in her Human and Social Studies teaching. On her back wall was a large world map which she had taken from a newspaper supplement and laminated in order to prevent it from going yellow. The map was surrounded by pictures of scenes from countries around the world. Each picture included a caption written by a member of the class. This caption explained the significance of the picture. The pictures were linked to the appropriate place by a piece of coloured string.

The teacher believed that keeping up to date with current affairs was an essential part of her teaching. In order to do this, she set aside one lesson a week during which learners were asked to pin up and talk about a photograph and news report they had cut from newspapers at home during that week. The teacher also provided her own pictures to brighten up the wall map.





While specialist magazines, such as *National Geographic*, provide high-quality pictures, these magazines aren't essential for this kind of learning. Newspaper travel supplements in particular, and newspapers more generally, also provide photographs of many of the people and places learnt about in school.



Spend about 30 minutes on this activity. Do it with another teacher who teaches in your learning area.

Although the manner in which photographs were collected in this class was rather random, the teacher said it had been exciting when, later in the year, she could point to an article about an earthquake in Japan as they studied volcanoes and earthquakes.

This teacher used *newspaper* travel supplements rather than glossy magazines because these were more accessible to her learners, but also because they carried a variety of photographs from around the world. An interesting idea was that she asked one group in class to track weather conditions around the world by cutting out weather reports in newspapers and pictures of snow or floods, etc., from the appropriate region. She says this gave learners a much better understanding of different hemispheres and changing seasons.

### **What did we think of this teaching idea?**

It certainly brightened up the classroom! But more than this, it seemed to lead to a class that was interested in world affairs and was constantly having to look at a world map to work out the position of places on this map. Learners told us that they found themselves visualizing the map when they listened to the news on television: they were able to 'see' the names of places (rather than just hear them) and were able to place them in relation to other countries.

Is this an option limited to Human and Social Studies teachers?

### **ACTIVITY 14**

Work with a fellow teacher and see whether you could use the knowledge map idea in your learning area. Have a look at its key learning outcomes to guide you.

We thought this was appropriate for many learning areas. After all, newspapers and magazines cover learning areas such as:

- *Language, Literacy and Communication*. The class could search for theatre, book, movie and music reviews; stories about writers, about communication, etc. Then they could plot where these came from (e.g. most of the movies we see are from California!) or where the stories come from.
- A *Natural Sciences* teacher said she would get her class to read magazines and weekly newspapers to keep abreast of scientific discoveries, technological innovations, ecological disasters or threatening disasters, and so on, and involve learners in 'marking' the locations of these on a world map.
- *Economic and Management Sciences* (business pages, labour news, stock market prices, etc.). One of the writers said he'd get his class to plot changes in South Africa's foreign trade regularly, and get the latest gross national product figures from newspapers, etc., in order for his class to realize just how unequal the world is.

These activities can be done as part of a particular class project within a single learning unit, or as an ongoing 'Current Affairs Watch' throughout the school year, with learners being encouraged to look out for news or articles relevant to the chosen theme.

## **Updating and supplementing textbooks**

Textbooks require lots of research and take time to write. As a consequence, the information contained in textbooks is often out of date even before the books are printed! This is an increasingly serious problem in the rapidly changing societies that we live in. If you'd like to work with up-to-date information, then supplement the information contained in textbooks with that carried in popular media.



### Updating economics textbooks

One of the writers told us a story of a teacher who had done this supplementing really well. He had to observe a student teacher assigned to teach an economics lesson on 'parastatal' organizations. The old, out-of-date textbook said that Telkom, Eskom, Iscor and Sasol were parastatals, but the daily newspaper carried stories about these organizations being 'privatized'. The teacher had a choice:

- Teach the textbook so that learners are prepared for the exam (but with information that is outdated); or
- Teach from the newspapers and so give learners up-to-date information *and* an idea of how things change.

The teacher used *both* the old textbook (to sketch the history of these businesses in South Africa), and newspaper articles (to provide up-to-date information on these organizations, and easily understandable articles on what 'privatization' meant). The whole experience generated considerable interest among the learners. They had to do a 'news hunt' in newspapers at home each day and bring along cuttings on the privatization debate. What could have been a dry and abstract economic concept had become real for all the learners as they read the ongoing arguments about these companies (in which some of their parents worked) changing their nature.

### Who are the environmental culprits?

#### Updating textbook statistics while developing a critical literacy

Specialist magazines, such as *New Scientist* or *New Internationalist* or even *Time* and the *Financial Mail*, will provide teachers with an ongoing supply of interesting, accessible, and up-to-date statistics, information and analysis – as well as photographs.

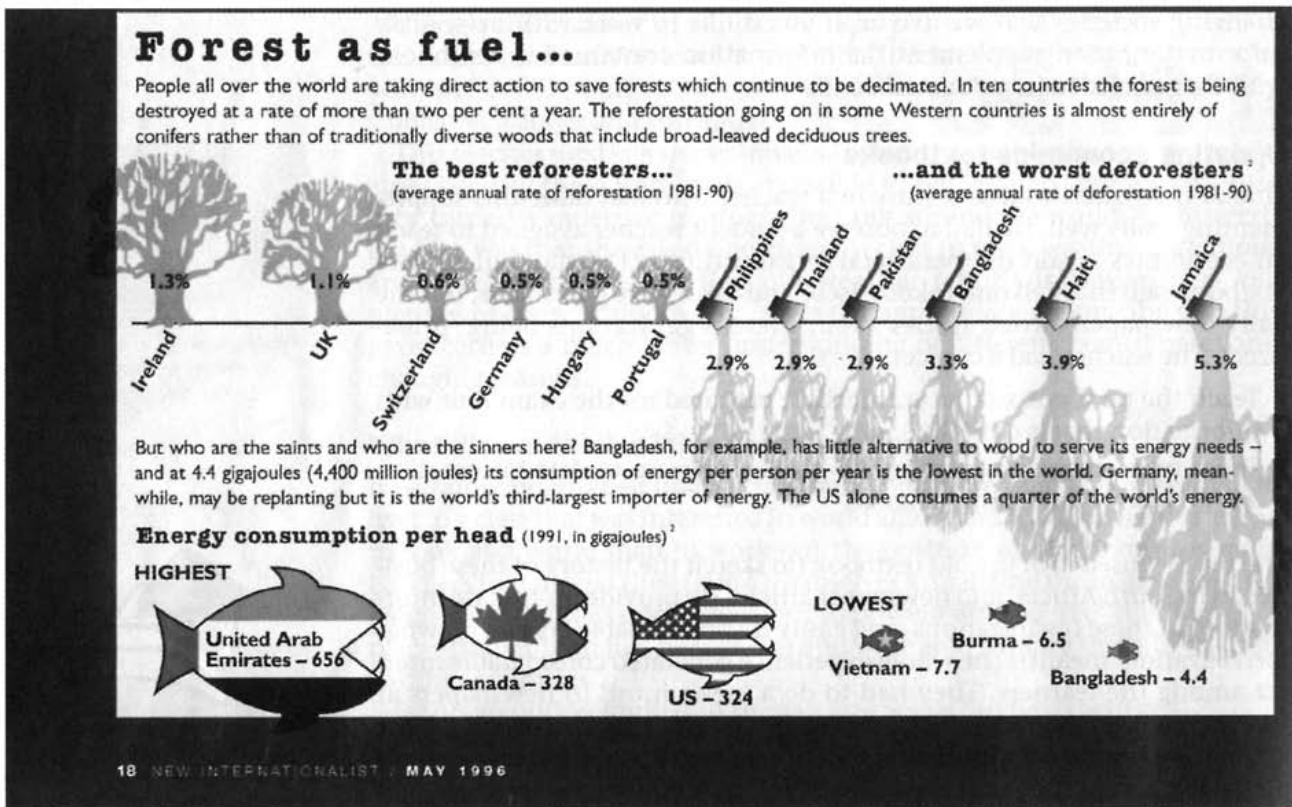
Because it takes some time to gather national and international statistics, those that appear in textbooks tend to be somewhat out of date. More recent statistics can often be found in some specialist magazines and newspapers. In many cases, these statistics are attractively and imaginatively presented. But the problem is that figures and graphs and statistics are often treated uncritically as 'the truth'. An important challenge for teachers is to develop a more critical understanding of these features.

*The New Internationalist* is one magazine that provides excellent photographs, graphics, statistics and articles dealing with development and environmental issues. It is a good resource for Human and Social Studies, Technology, and Economics and Management Sciences teachers. Particularly useful are the monthly 'Country profile' inserts, which provide up-to-date statistics on developing countries.

Here is an example of statistics presented in *New Internationalist*. How would you use these to teach?



It is a good idea for teachers or schools to subscribe to specialist magazines in their learning area(s). Instead of all science teachers subscribing to one magazine, perhaps you could decide on sharing a couple. And remember, these kinds of subscriptions may be tax-deductible!



Spend about 40 minutes on this activity. We suggest you do it with a fellow teacher. It doesn't matter what learning area you teach - do the activity anyway!

#### ACTIVITY 15

How would you make good use of this presentation of statistics, from *The New Internationalist* (May 1996: 18), for teaching:

- a about ecological issues?
- b how to interpret statistics (probably for Grade 10s and upwards)?

How would you highlight the fact that the blame for denuding the world's forests may not be a simple matter?

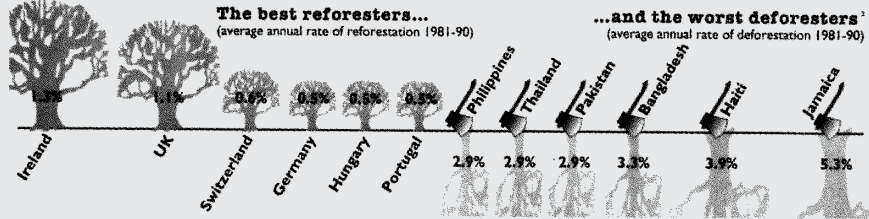
#### How we would use these statistics to teach

We split this feature, reproducing the top half of the statistics on one work-sheet (i.e. the introduction and the graphic showing the best reforesters and worst deforesters) and the lower half of the graphic on another work-sheet. Half the small groups formed in class received Worksheet 1, the other half received Worksheet 2. We explained the key problem as being the rapid deforestation of the world, and asked the groups to find the culprits and suggest solutions.

## Worksheet 1 Deforestation: Which countries are at fault?

### Forest as fuel...

People all over the world are taking direct action to save forests which continue to be decimated. In ten countries the forest is being destroyed at a rate of more than two per cent a year. The reforestation going on in some Western countries is almost entirely of conifers rather than of traditionally diverse woods that include broad-leaved deciduous trees.



- 1 What does it mean to refer to a country as a 'deforester'?
- 2 What do you think it means to refer to a country as a 'reforester'? And to say that a country (Ireland) has an average annual rate of reforestation of 1.3%? (What exactly does this mean?)
- 3 What general conclusion would you be inclined to draw about the kinds of countries that are good 'reforesters' or 'low deforesters'?
- 4 What do the 'reforesting' countries have in common, apart from being 'reforesters'? Locate them on a world map.
- 5 What do you think the 'deforesters' might have in common? Locate them on a world map.
  - Who is at fault?
  - What would you do to solve the problem?

## Worksheet 2 Deforestation: Which countries are at fault?

The modern world needs energy to develop. This energy has often been created through the burning of timber.

In turn, this has led to large forests being destroyed. Read these statistics and then discuss:

But who are the saints and who are the sinners here? Bangladesh, for example, has little alternative to wood to serve its energy needs and at 4.4 gigajoules (4,400 million joules) its consumption of energy per person per year is the lowest in the world. Germany, meanwhile, may be replanting but it is the world's third-largest importer of energy. The US alone consumes a quarter of the world's energy.

### Energy consumption per head (1991, in gigajoules)<sup>1</sup>



- 1 Who are the largest consumers of energy in the world?
- 2 How is this linked to the problem of deforestation?
- 3 What do the high energy consumption countries have in common? Locate them on a world map.
- 4 What do the low energy consumption countries have in common? Locate them on the map.
- 5 How are graphics used to visually reinforce the points being made about energy consumption?
- 6 What is significant about the energy consumption statistics being 'per head'? How else might energy consumption figures be presented?
  - Who is at fault?
  - What can we do about the problem?

The groups discussed this problem in terms of the information they had been given for about 15 minutes. We then asked them to give short reports on their 'findings'. Not surprisingly, we found that the groups came up with different analyses! Before the debate became too fierce, we asked groups to swap worksheets. They spent another 15 minutes in discussion before reporting back.

Why did we do this? Why didn't we simply hand out the same worksheet – with the entire graphic on it – to the whole class?

We wanted to demonstrate to learners – and not just to tell them – that analysis of statistics is often more complicated than it seems at first. They noticed this as they received new information, so their 'solutions' had to be adapted. This also pointed out that real understanding comes from knowing the relationship between issues – in this case, deforestation and energy consumption. Looking at just one of these issues on its own permits easy solutions. But, when you add both, the problem seems a great deal more complex. If we had given learners the entire graphic, we would not have set the scene for debate and for them to change their minds. On the back of their worksheets, they had one 'homework' question:

How would you categorise South Africa? Is it a reforester or a deforester? Is it a high or low energy consumption country? Would your answer differ on the basis of region or race group?

- First, answer this question on the basis of your experience. What do you think is the answer?
- Then, answer the question after you have done some research. Do your answers differ? Why or why not?

The above questions demonstrate what can be gained by making the effort to plan questions and tasks with care. They lead the learner towards an in-depth, critical understanding of both ecological issues and statistics. And the discussions they engender should point, if the teacher is alert, towards increasing depth and breadth in further lessons.

For instance, the teacher could provide a map showing relative economic wealth or production (from an atlas or a book on such matters), and ask the learners to locate the various countries mentioned on such a map, and then discuss what they have found. The teacher could also ask why it is important that both reforestation and deforestation statistics are based on information from the same years, or that on both sides the rates are annual. It could also be pointed out that these statistics do not touch on those countries where commercial logging is destroying vitally important rain forests, such as Brazil, the Congo Republic and Indonesia. Articles on this problem abound in the media (a good source is the Mail & Guardian), so it should not be difficult to get learners to find out whether reforestation takes place in these countries and, if it does, whether it helps to restore the ecological balance.

Almost all good teachers make worksheets for their classes – some occasionally, some almost every day. Because a badly thought-out or shoddy-looking worksheet is worse than no worksheet at all, you should have a clear reason in mind before starting to design one. As more improved, well-designed textbooks and other materials become available, it is foolish to waste time and effort on producing worksheets that do little more than duplicate what's already there.

## DESIGNING EFFECTIVE WORKSHEETS

- **Be clear about the learning outcome you want to achieve.** Find a way of indicating this to learners on the worksheet so that they will be clear about the purpose of the activity.
- **Think carefully about how you will assess learner competence on the basis of the activity, and set out the instructions accordingly.** Read them over afterwards to check that the learners will be clear about what they are required to do.
- **Try to engage, challenge and extend learners.** Worksheets should not simply be created to 'keep learners busy'. Questions should be 'problematic' so as to provoke debate.
- **Include an element of fun.** Structure the worksheet as a game or challenge that will exercise skills of problem solving and critical debate. At the Foundation Phase level, worksheets should allow for learners to develop observation skills and dexterity, and not just involve colouring in pictures.
- **The worksheet's appearance should be appealing.** Look carefully at the design and layout of magazines and advertisements, and adapt what you see in producing your worksheets.
  - Don't just arrange pictures in dull rows. Cluster them, overlap them, and arrange them in interesting 'shapes' across the page. Consider drawing a frame around them.
  - If available pictures are too big or too small, try to reduce or enlarge them on a photocopier.
  - You could superimpose comic-type speech bubbles on pictures, or cut/blank out significant shapes within pictures to create tasks for learners to complete.
  - Don't overcrowd the worksheet -leave sufficient white space for it to look attractive and professional.
  - If you have access to a computer, use different fonts for headings.
- You'll need:
  - a very fine-point black pen;
  - a good, sharp pair of scissors;
  - a retractable blade knife;
  - a ruler (preferably stainless steel);
  - a glue stick;
  - a plentiful and varied supply of old magazines, shop catalogues and other printed media;
  - a white correcting fluid pen;
  - access to a photocopy machine, preferably one that reduces and enlarges.

### Using newspaper reports to teach Technology

The problem of outdated textbooks was a problem faced by Sam Gumede, a teacher at a school near Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal, when he was told he had to teach Technology to Grade 9s. When he started the year, there were no Technology textbooks. So he had to plan his lessons from old metalwork and woodwork textbooks, general reference books on Technology, and worksheets that he designed himself.

He knew what he had to teach: one of the specific outcomes for Technology at Grade 9 level stated that: *Learners should understand and apply the technological process to solve problems and to satisfy needs and wants.* The range statement suggested that one of the themes this specific outcome could apply to was housing.

Sam thought a while and decided that his lessons needed to:

- *interest his learners.* 'They will learn nothing is this doesn't happen,' he said. This was one of the reasons why he rejected an article he'd found on British housing problems in the 1950s.
- *develop the learners' knowledge of housing.* This could include points about how houses are designed and built, but also ideas about why there is a shortage of housing (and so on ... Sam had a number of ideas).
- *teach this knowledge in a way which developed their problem-solving skills.* In other words, he had to get them to think about, debate, and apply their knowledge to solve housing problems.



Sam knew that South Africa had committed itself to building a million houses in five years. He was sure that there had to be articles in the newspapers about housing. Sam also knew that housing was a big problem in his area. It was a problem that affected his Grade 9 learners. He began reading through a pile of newspapers at the local library and came across this article in a supplement to a Sunday newspaper. It seemed to him that this article would link with their lives and stimulate interest in the learning outcome (technologies used to build) and in the theme suggested by the range statement (housing).

## Taking the cost out of building houses

### This cheap DIY home is made from mud

By ANGUS BEGG

Using no more than your own hands and the earth we walk on, it is possible to build an attractive and functional house for less than a fifth of the price of a conventional one. So says Australian architect and academic Brian Woodward.

He has just ended a second visit to an area near Rustenburg in North West Province. There he has been teaching rural people, with the assistance of local non-governmental Organisation the Thlolego Development Project, how to build these "mud houses". His own home, on the 300ha farm where he lives in New South Wales, is made of mud bricks - and would put many a Sandton stereotype to shame.

A beautiful, double-storey house with a floor space of 200 square metres, it has excellent lighting, built-in temperature controls and superb acoustics. The all-natural materials were obtained on-site. Earth was used to build the walls and floors, and wood and thatch form the roof. And he built it entirely by himself. Since labour can cost up to 40 to 50 percent on a house built by a contractor, this means he spent just over a fifth of the cost of a conventional house.

Woodward, an architect and lecturer with 20 years practical experience in environmentally sustainable, low cost building design and construction, is a member of an organisation called Earthways Sustainable Building Resource centre. He has been instructing people on how to train others to build dirt-cheap, good-looking houses



Brain Woodward's mud double-storey house in New South Wales, Australia

PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN WOODWARD

and his students hailed from Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Yet Woodward says the interest in such houses is not restricted to this part of the world, where low-cost housing is a perennial problem. He says it is verging on the fashionable with the other end of the socio-economic scale in Australia.

He says he moved into this line of work after periods at Oxford University in England and the University of New South Wales, because he felt "humans had lost the skills to build, getting contractors to build houses in-

stead of homes. A home is part of the people who live in it, not just a shell you inhabit".

Woodward says his houses are constructed according to the concept of "passive solar design", which allows a house to be cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Woodward considers the environment and sustainability of the lifestyle in these houses, with the result that easily recyclable materials are used. A grey-water re-use system is employed, as are composting toilets, the likes of which are now used in a number of exclusive game lodges in

the Sabi Sands Game Reserve.

The initial reaction of rural people to his mud-brick houses was "we don't want to go back to that". But when they saw pictures of his own house they sat up and took notice, he says. "This is far from a low-quality, dusty house," says Woodward. "It's actually a modern, almost futuristic concept in housing."

In concentrating on low-cost housing he has had to introduce the standards found in a "high-quality" house without the increased expenditure.

The windows are a case in point. Provision is made for a separate vent

for air and fixed glaze windows for light. "These are easy to make for someone with no carpentry skills, which allows for much bigger windows to be made, thus lending an air of affluence to the house because of the amount of light allowed in."

The biggest savings, says Woodward, are made on labour, because the owner builds the home by him- or herself.

"We've tried to use techniques and materials which increase the labour content, such as the walls, the material for which can be 20 percent of the total cost. We've replaced that cost with labour, as you make your own bricks of earth." Corrugated iron is used for roofing as it is the cheapest material available. On the next course, he says he is "considering using a thatch roof, especially as rural people have thatching skills and raw materials"

The only "negative" Woodward can think of in the construction of these mud-brick houses is physical effort and time. But he sees great potential for the project in South Africa. Some of the country's top building companies have expressed interest in the scheme.

"The ideal would be for a company to come on site with expertise and resources and set up a production situation where local people could use the facilities provided in exchange for their labour.

"A company could set up a mud-brick making facility at which locals could make the bricks for their own use, and in payment for the equipment, make bricks for the company," says Woodward.

Reproduced from the 'Reconstruct' supplement to the Sunday Independent

**SAM GUMEDE**  
**LESSON PLAN: GRADE 9 TECHNOLOGY**  
**RANGE STATEMENT: HOUSING**

**Lesson 1:**

1. *Begin lesson by talking about learners' housing (7 minutes). Ask them:*
  - *What kind of house do you live in?*
  - *Who built it?*
  - *What kind of house would you like to live in?*
  - *What do you know about how to go about getting this kind of house?*
2. *Then hand out article. Ask learners to read it (20 minutes). Questions to focus reading (write on chalkboard):*
  - *What for you was the most promising point about Brian Woodward's way of building houses as a possible solution to your housing problem?*
  - *If you had to use this method of building, on what do you think you would make the biggest savings?*
  - *How do you think a house could be designed to be naturally cooler in summer and warmer in winter?*
  - *Why does Brian Woodward suggest fixed windows that do not open? Where would you situate separate vents for air, and how would you make them?*
  - *What would be needed to make mud bricks strong enough to build a double-storey house and to last many years?*
3. *Conclude lesson with whole-class discussion around following questions (13 minutes). List learner responses on chalkboard.*
  - *What are the problems faced by people in South Africa in gaining access to housing?*
  - *Does Woodward's article suggest any possible solutions to these problems? Can you think of alternative solutions?*

**Lesson 2:**

1. *Re-cap ideas from previous lesson (5 minutes)*
2. *Introduce class project on housing. Hand out worksheet that includes main outcomes and 'tips' on how to proceed, as well as possible references (10 minutes). The first part of the project requires groups of four learners to:*
  - *Design and make a simple mud brick-making machine:*
  - *Decide on the kinds of materials they would use to make the bricks.**(Learners have to consult the article or books, fellow learners or community members if they need ideas.)*
3. *Class read through worksheet, begin planning, and ask questions of 'clarification' (25 minutes).*

**Stage 3 (four weeks):**

1. *Learner groups complete research (four lessons).*
2. *Learner groups present design plans. Class discuss and make suggestions for changes (three lessons).*
3. *Learner groups use their machines to make bricks (three lessons).*
4. *These bricks must then be used to build part of a simple wall at the school (four lessons).*

**Stage 4 (one week):**

- Each group to write a short report on their project. They are to be asked three questions:*
- *Describe your building process.*
  - *Was it successful? What were the weak points? What would you do to overcome these?*
  - *What did you learn about technology and housing?*

### What did we think of Sam's lessons?

Sam overcame a number of learning problems through the use of the newspaper:

**First**, he used newspaper information to 'update' his textbook. Old 'technology' textbooks focused almost entirely on classroom-based woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing activities, not social issues like housing. He had to find information elsewhere. Sam therefore carefully photocopied the article and stored it in a portfolio. He added any new articles he found on housing to this. He also managed to find more technical articles on brick-making and building from technical magazines which he used as a follow-up to the project. This allowed him to develop higher-level learning in the same area: he provided learners with new ideas for brick-making and introduced them to the ways in which commercial bricks are made.

**Second**, he managed to introduce relatively abstract concepts – housing, and the mechanics involved in designing a brick-making machine – through an issue with which his learners were familiar - a local housing project. He engaged with his learners. Most remained interested through- out and, because they used their knowledge in practice, they were far more able to remember important content.

**Third**, he integrated knowledge, skills and attitudes. Learners learnt from the newspaper about South Africa's housing problems and about ways in which bricks could be made cheaply. The project involved them in thinking about the need for, and then designing, a brick-making machine. They then had to make bricks and begin building a structure. This was a practical activity, but it was also one that took values seriously: it made learners more aware of social problems, involved them in a project that could assist the community (in this case, their school), and provided an excellent opportunity to learn how to work collaboratively.

Sam Gumede's teaching programme was designed so that competence in the areas of *knowledge, skills, attitudes* and *values* was developed in the learners. This is a good example of outcomes-based education. Popular media, because they are such a strong reflection of life, tend to reflect knowledge, skills and value issues in an integrated way.

Some of us wondered whether Sam Gumede's undertaking was too ambitious. But simple brick-making machines are not too difficult to construct if one has metal-work equipment, and it must be remembered that this was a project that kept the class busy for some weeks.



You should have spent about 24 hours studying at this point. To keep to schedule, you should now begin **Week 5** of your studies.



# Developing reading skills

## 3.3

One of South Africa's biggest challenges is improving the reading skills of its citizens. Our very poor reading competence as a nation impacts negatively on things as different as learner performance in international maths and science competitions, and the ability of factory workers to work productively. Yet, worldwide, *reading and information literacy* are becoming the skills essential for success in learning, work and life. South African education's critical cross-field outcomes emphasize the importance of developing learners who can read well, and who do so critically.

By using media in *all* the learning areas, we provide substantially more opportunities for practising reading. It is an obvious but important truth that we can only learn the skills of reading *by reading!* We can only communicate better by actually listening, talking and writing. Another simple but important truth is that language teachers who work alone will never develop in learners the level of language competence required.

Reading must become a cross-curricular activity. This becomes possible if teachers use more print-based media in their teaching. In other words, teachers need to create an atmosphere in class that encourages reading at school and at home.

In Section Six: *Using textbooks in teaching*, we provide evidence of just how serious this problem is. A worrying new trend in South Africa, though, is that not only learners but teachers are spending less and less time reading. This poses serious questions about their ability to teach reading.

## Developing a reading culture: Making newspaper reading a part of everyday life

This section provides a number of examples of ways in which popular print media can be used to improve reading skills. However, the best way to ensure that learners continue to develop as competent readers is to make newspaper and magazine reading a regular activity. Learners should start seeing reading as the logical way to learn, to find new information, and to be entertained.

How can this be done? The 'knowledge map' idea, and the 'newspaper hunt' which accompanies it (described in Section 3.2) } is one way to do this. This ongoing activity relies on *self-initiated home reading* (but reading that is encouraged and monitored by the teacher through the need for learners to contribute to the knowledge map), as well as *structured classroom reading time*. The learning focus is to develop competence in a particular learning area. But the process also places reading, rather than rote learning or teacher lecturing, as a central function within learning.

In order to make this work, you need to:

- *Make sure newspapers are always available to the learners in your class.*
  - If the school cannot afford a subscription to any newspaper, bring your own newspaper to class regularly, and encourage learners to do the same.
  - Arrange with newspaper companies – who are often willing to donate day-old newspapers to schools – to collect these regularly.
- *Establish a reading corner in your classroom.*
  - Buy a cheap pine bookcase and construct a 'box library' which you place in one corner of the class.
  - Keep recent magazines (especially specialist magazines) and newspapers, educational supplements, and alternative textbooks and reference books in this 'library'.
  - Encourage learners to contribute to this 'library'.
- *Make reading a conscious part of your teaching strategy.*
  - Refer to reports and photographs from newspapers in your teaching.
  - Spend regular time each day (or week) involving learners in newspaper 'hunts'

for news on particular things.

- Make home-based 'hunts' a part of structured learning.
- Set up a wall map or newspaper and integrate these articles into the map or newspaper.
- Encourage learners to use the box 'library' by setting research based on the publications, or by rewarding learners with reading time.

This will begin developing a culture of reading in your class and will impact positively on the learning of all subjects and learning areas. In addition, though, teachers can improve reading skills – such as skimming and scanning, comprehension, and vocabulary – by using popular print media in shorter, 'one-off' activities.

## Newspaper 'hunts': Learning to skim, scan and select information

Newspaper 'hunts' are games learners can play to familiarize themselves with newspaper formats, at the same time as improving their reading habits and speed. This newspaper 'hunt' was initially designed as a media literacy activity: its teaching intention was to familiarize learners with the conventional structure of newspapers. But, as you notice, it is an ideal activity through which to begin developing learners' abilities to *skim* and *scan* and thus *improve their reading habits and speed*.



Do this activity with a fellow teacher. Spend about 20-30 minutes on it, but limit your search time. An important learning outcome should be that learners realize they can't read the whole newspaper and so must scan it.

You can adapt this kind of activity for any grade. For instance, in a Grade 5 class you might use copies of only one newspaper, but in a Grade 10 class you might introduce three different newspapers. In the latter case, the learning focus would be on comparing newspapers with different target readerships, and discussing why such differences exist. Adapt the time taken for the activity according to the learners' prior experience of newspapers.

### ACTIVITY 16

- a Find a daily newspaper. Then - in no more than 10 minutes - look in the newspaper for each of the following kinds of newspaper texts and draw a circle around each:
  - *the main news story*
  - *a map showing the expected temperature for the area where you live*
  - *a letter to the editor*
  - *a photograph of an event in an overseas country*
  - *an article on a South African sporting event*
  - *an advertisement for a job*
  - *the current rand/dollar exchange rate*
  - *the editorial or opinion page*
  - *a graph or table which includes statistical information*
  - *a political cartoon*
  - *an article about an event in Africa*
- b Compare your 'findings' with those of your fellow learners. What are the similarities and differences in your findings?

### What can we learn from this 'newspaper hunt'?

**First**, the 'hunt' through a newspaper *within a strictly limited amount of time* should 'force' learners into *developing a better reading strategy*. They should realize quickly that they can't read everything, so they will begin reading only headings and sub-headings, glancing at photographs and illustrations in order to get a *general impression* of the newspaper's structure.

This is a useful introduction to an important reading skill, **skimming**, that learners should be taught to use when they begin reading textbooks and other, more advanced texts. The objective of 'skimming' is to gain a *general impression* of what is important and thus whether it is worthy of your further attention. The underlying aim of 'skimming', therefore, is to *save the reader time*. It involves paging swiftly through the publication, looking at headings, sub-headings and pictures, and perhaps reading *no more* than the first and last paragraphs of one or two articles or chapters.

In some cases, for instance searching for the rand/dollar exchange rate, learners would first need to find the appropriate article or section on the relevant page through a quick skim of the newspaper and then, second, *scan* through the article for the particular piece of information required. **Scanning** is aimed at *finding a particular piece* of information. You can scan a whole newspaper for a report on a particular event, or scan a report for a particular fact. Scanning involves looking purposefully for something, and not reading every line. When you recognize that even a whole section is not likely to be relevant, you ignore it and go on to the next.

Both scanning and skimming are skills that put readers *in charge* of their reading. When these become habits, reading speed and reading comprehension improve.

**Second**, as an *experienced* newspaper reader, you will probably have found the various items quickly because you knew, for instance, that sport appears at the end of most newspapers. Your **media literacy** is probably a good deal more developed than that of your learners. A newspaper 'hunt' provides a way to familiarize learners with newspaper formats – main news on the front page, sports news on the back page, editorial opinion and readers' letters near the middle of the newspaper - which is an important *media literacy* skill that we need to teach our learners as we introduce newspapers into our classrooms. Once learners have learnt the 'conventional' format of newspapers, they will be able to find their way around the newspaper quickly.

You could design a 'hunt' that enables learners to notice that certain pages do not carry 'objective' news – the editorial section. Instead, these pages carry articles that reflect the opinion of the newspaper. Learners won't simply 'notice' this. Teachers will need to develop activities and questions that allow learners to 'discover' this. They could, for instance, ask questions such as:

- Where in the newspaper do you find comment and opinion rather than news reporting? (What makes this page different from the rest of the newspaper?)
- What forms do the comment and opinion on this page take?

## The journalist's pyramid: Learning to scan, summarize and organize information

Well-written news stories are good examples of crisp, clear writing. This makes them good resources for teaching basic reading skills, such as scanning and summarizing. Their simple structure, easy reading style, and high interest value make them ideal for working on improving learners' reading speed. Here is one activity you could use to begin developing these skills.

### ACTIVITY 17

Give each of your learners a newspaper (or share one between two). Ask them to find the main news story and to read only the first two paragraphs of this story. Then answer the following questions:

- Who was the story about?
- What was the story about?
- When did this happen?
- Where did this happen?
- Why did this happen?



Do this activity yourself before you do it with learners. Don't spend more than 15 minutes on it. You could do the same activity with a radio news broadcast to improve listening skills.

Play part 4 of the video. Watch how Olivia Mbi teaches listening skills using a radio news broadcast.



### What did we learn from this activity?

**First**, we noticed that most of the important information – the answers to the five questions – is contained in the first paragraph or two. Journalists are trained to answer these five important questions – the '5Ws' – at the beginning of their article because newspapers are designed for quick reading. You can't leave the important points to the end because readers may not read this far! Only once these basic 'information' questions have been answered will the articles continue with explanation, supporting details and quotations. This is often called the inverted 'journalist's pyramid'.

Generally this later information is what makes the story interesting, but if you didn't have time to read it, you would still know the main details of the story. Unfortunately, newspapers tend to focus on immediate information and often don't provide structured explanations or arguments. Newspapers often even neglect to answer the 'why' question. But, by making learners aware of this structure and its strengths and weaknesses, you begin developing basic **newspaper literacy skills**.

**Second**, by limiting the time learners have in which to read an article, and by providing them with the five 'W' questions, you can begin instilling in them the good reading habit of *scanning*. These basic questions could form the guiding questions for most reading. Once this basic skill has been instilled, and once learners have practised scanning in newspapers, teachers could go further by showing them how to *use scanning* – where we know what *kind* of information we are looking for in order to develop good **summaries**.

This could be achieved by using the journalist's pyramid as a starting structure. But, as we develop learner skills, we could ask them to adapt and expand on these questions. Notice how one class we watched did exactly this as they read through an article on the claims Sophiatown families are making on properties that were taken under apartheid.

# Sophiatown families will be paid

By Joshua Raboroko

**S**OPHIATOWN. Johannesburg, families who lost their property and land under apartheid laws have been given the assurance that they will be financially compensated by the Land Restitution Court if they submit their claims before December.

Gauteng Land Claims Court commissioner Mrs Emma Mashinini told more than 500 families at a meeting in Diepkloof Soweto, on Sunday that her office has already received numerous claims from people who were forcibly removed from Sophiatown during the apartheid era.

Hundreds of families - mainly Africans, coloureds and Indians - who lost their property opted to make financial claims rather than have their land and properties back.

They welcomed the news that Land

Affairs Minister Mr Derek Hanekom had set aside R30 million for the restitution of land to those deprived during apartheid.

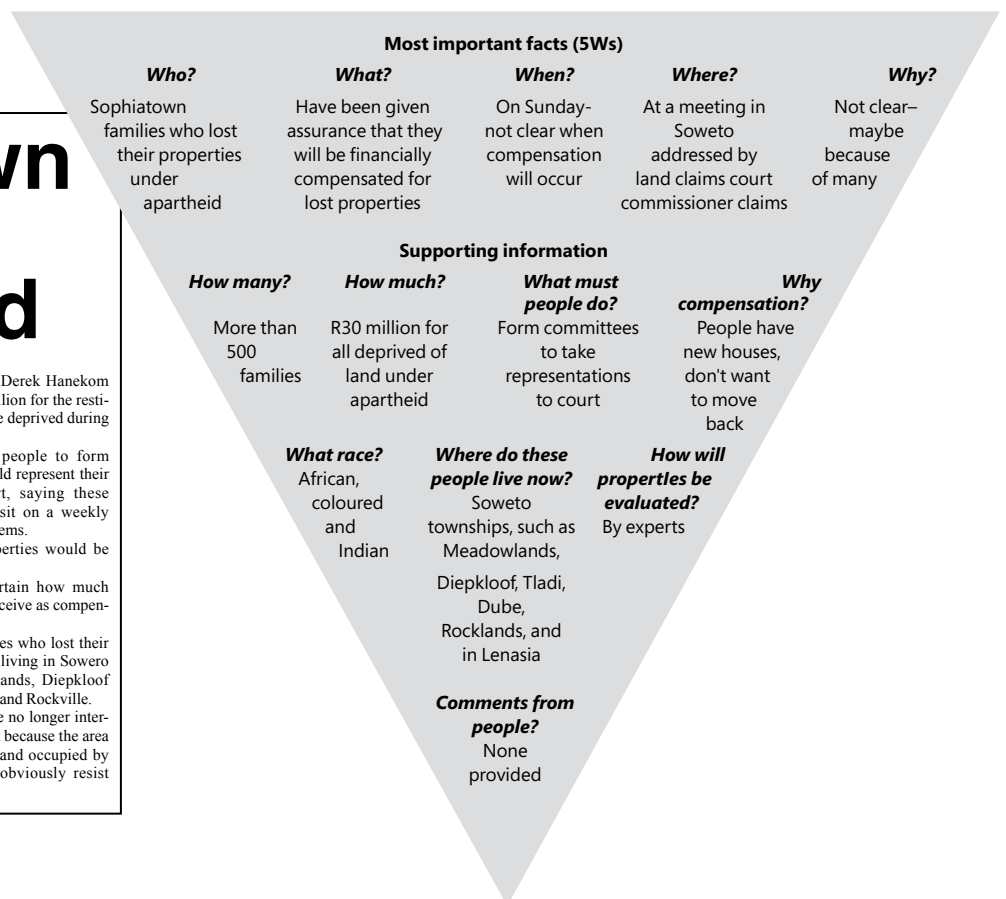
Mashinini urged people to form committees that would represent their claims to the court, saying these committees should sit on a weekly basis to discuss problems.

She said the properties would be evaluated by experts.

They would ascertain how much each family would receive as compensation.

Most of the families who lost their properties were now living in Soweto townships Meadowlands, Diepkloof Dube, Lenasia, Tladi and Rockville.

Most families were no longer interested in moving back because the area was now developed and occupied by people who would obviously resist their move.



You will notice that the essential details of the story are contained in the 'fat' top-end of the pyramid. But this *should* arouse in readers an interest in finding out more details. The details beneath our heading 'Supporting information' are not essential to the story, but they do increase our understanding and interest.

- Can you think of any other questions that are *not* answered by this reporter?
- Did you notice that the reporter uses no direct quotes from anyone?

The important point here is that learners now have a *structure* to guide their reading and, ultimately, how they organize information when they write and learn. It turns them away from unstructured summaries where important detail is often left out and unimportant information included!

Both 'newspaper hunt' and 'journalist's pyramid' suggest the importance of having **questions to guide reading**. Imagine if learners had simply paged through the newspaper. Do you think they would have learnt as much about the structure of the newspaper? It is certain that they would not have done – at least, not within one lesson. The same is true of the Sophiatown article: without the five 'W' questions, learners would have experienced more difficulty in interpreting the main points made by the writer of the article.

The *search* for information, and the organization of information initiated by the questions, directed and structured the learners' reading and learning in a *purposeful* way. This becomes even more important as reading becomes more complex, as it often is when reading textbooks. While some textbook comprehension exercises are excellent, many fail to 'connect' with the learners' worlds and interests. In order to overcome this problem, consider setting your own questions on articles and reports from the popular media.

Such activities need not always be 'full-scale' comprehension exercises such as we find in textbooks. Though in-depth analysis of a particularly significant passage is sometimes valuable, it is probably better for the learners to examine pieces of writing as a regular feature of their language class, answering only two to four meaningful questions rather than scouring passages to answer 10 or 12 questions.

We re-visit these ideas in Section Six when we provide ideas about how to get learners to use textbooks more effectively.

## Playing games: Using language games and crosswords to develop vocabulary

Poor vocabulary is as much of an impediment to quick reading and good comprehension as are poor reading habits, such as the inability to skim and scan. Vocabulary develops as a result of the learners listening, reading, speaking and writing. Consequently, teachers across the curriculum must provide learners with as many opportunities as possible to practise these language skills if they are interested in improving their vocabulary.

But newspapers and magazines contain an array of language games and crossword puzzles that provide teachers with entertaining ways of working on vocabulary.



MOB	LORE
ALOE	BORE
LO	BOER
LOVE	MOLAR
LOVER	MOVE
BOA	MOVER
MOLE	REMOVABLE ✓
LOAM	REMOVE
ROLE	EBOLA (VIRUS)
MORE	LOBE
VOLE	LO
BOLE	OR
ROB	ROVE
LOB	OVER
ROBE	O'ER

*Target is a game in which the aim is to make as many words as one can out of the nine letters supplied in a block. Each word must contain the letter that appears in the middle of the block. It is a syndicated game that appears in Independent Group newspapers.*

Games like these - as well as board games such as Scrabble and Boggle - are 'fun' ways of developing vocabulary. Target appears in newspapers on a daily basis with solutions often appearing in the same newspaper a day later. We would suggest that teachers collect these and:

- integrate them into a teaching plan where learners 'play' these kinds of games regularly in class. They can also be used as a quick 'test' of learners' vocabulary.
- use them to fill spaces at the end of lessons, or the ends of weeks. Obviously they could also be used to keep faster learners occupied once they have completed work. But remember, if this is their only use, you are probably teaching the learners who don't need this extra teaching, while those who do require it never get the chance!

The useful thing about these games is that they don't really need to be integrated into a lesson plan or worksheet: they can stand alone and be used flexibly. All that teachers need to do is collect them regularly and ensure that they file 'solutions' so that they can be found. It is also advisable to glue these to a piece of board and laminate them so that they last a little longer.

We are not convinced, however, that these games have great value in widening or strengthening learners' vocabulary if they are used in isolation. As we have said before, language is learnt best in a context. These games treat words in isolation of any context in speech or writing. Nevertheless, they may provide small 'spurs' to develop learners' vocabulary. ('Target', in particular, impresses learners with the number of variations that are based on one root word.)

### **Crossword puzzles**

Crosswords, if carefully selected by the teacher, can serve to increase learners' awareness of *synonyms* (many crossword clues are in fact synonyms).

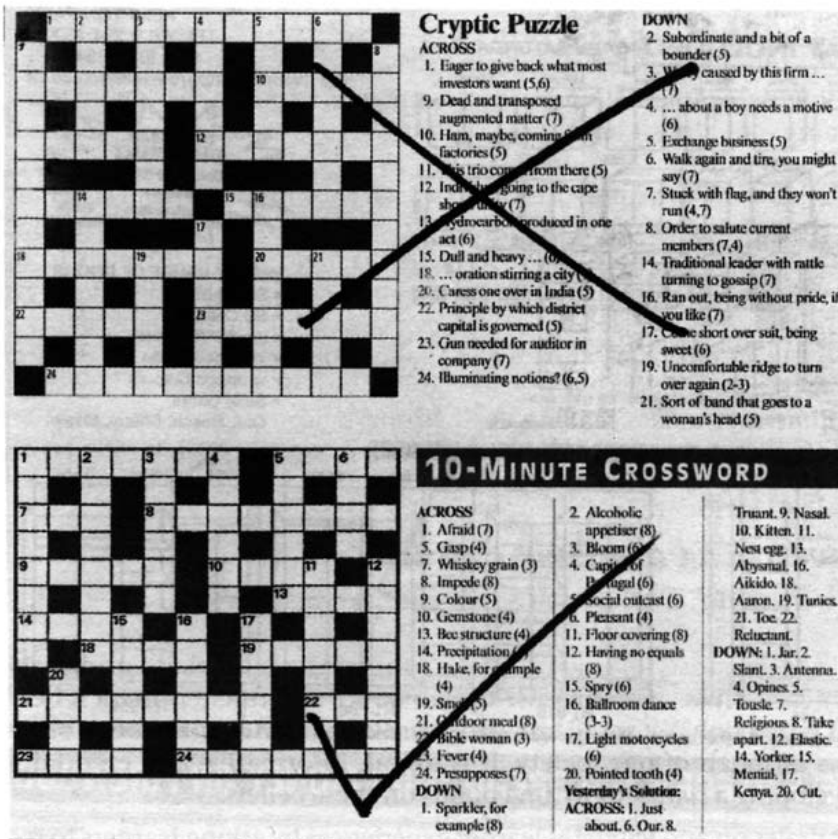
But teachers should be careful about their selection of crossword puzzles. Some are:

- *cryptic puzzles* and, while fun to do, probably don't much increase basic word power. However, strong language students may enjoy this kind of crossword puzzle.



- *general knowledge* kinds of crosswords. Again, while some people may enjoy doing these, they probably do not have much impact on vocabulary. They are also unlikely to be much use in developing useful general knowledge as they often focus on 'trivia'.

In the past, many teachers have drawn on the popularity among learners of crosswords, and developed their own to teach and test content knowledge. This is obviously an interesting alternative to worksheets and tests. But good crosswords take time to develop!



In order to have a variety of language and crossword puzzles available and re-usable, we suggest teachers:

- collect the puzzles and their solutions regularly;
- photocopy these;
- paste them onto cardboard with the puzzle on one side and the solution on the other;
- laminate these so that they last and can be re-used. Learners should use koki pens on crosswords so that their work can be wiped off.

# 3.4

## Developing writing and speaking skills



You should now be in **Week 5** of your studies. You should have spent about 26 hours studying.

The reading activities mentioned in Section 3.3 will go a long way to improving *writing* skills as well. Creating an atmosphere that encourages reading – of almost anything – will ultimately impact favourably on *all* language skills.

In this section we present some ideas of how to use popular print media for the specific purpose of developing writing skills, from basic skills – focusing on writing in an organized and logical way, through to more advanced skills – focusing on writing imaginatively and persuasively. Many of the activities will also have the effect of developing speaking skills.

But, again, we begin with an idea that will develop a more general atmosphere that encourages writing. It is our strong belief that if teachers develop a culture that makes reading and writing a normal and desirable part of learning – at home and at school- then language competence will grow.

### Developing a writing culture: Producing and publishing newspapers.

Writing in most South African classrooms is an artificial undertaking: learners do it because they are told to do so, and teachers mark it because that is their job. Yet we all know that writing – of different kinds – forms the basis of much of our society. It is useful, informative and entertaining. Developing a *culture* of writing builds on these beliefs:

- It draws on and validates learner experiences by asking learners to record these in a published form.
- It draws on the popularity among learners of popular media formats by using these as the form through which writing is done.
- It demonstrates that learners should write well because this increases the enjoyment readers get from a well-written article, rather than because of grammatical rules.

#### ***Developing a classroom-based wall newspaper***

Teachers have also used their noticeboards – and the *format* and *processes* of a newspaper – to encourage learners to write. How does this activity work?

- Some learners are assigned the role of newspaper 'reporters'. These reporters – who may have specialist 'beats' such as arts, sport, etc. – interview fellow learners, teachers, parents, local community people, and write up these reports. They may also be asked to summarize information from the mainstream media in order to develop a weekly 'current affairs' column for their classroom newspaper. Topics of general or special interest drawn from the local, national or international scene can be reported, as well as classroom debates or class outings.
- Other learners – assigned the role of sub-editors – will then sub-edit (in other words, correct) the reports and 'lay them out' on the class noticeboard in a format that resembles a newspaper front page.

Wall newspapers should look as much like the front page of a normal newspaper as possible. In a sense you are running a 'simulation' game in which your class play the role of reporters. It is thus important to make the activity as realistic as possible.





Grade 7 learners at a Durban school spent a day developing their wall newspaper, Sarnia Times

(Photo by Costa Criticos)

This photograph comes from Prinsloo and Criticos. 1991. *Media Matters in South Africa*. Media Resource Centre, University of Natal. The publication carries a fascinating report on using a wall newspaper to teach classes as young as Grade 4s.

In order to achieve a realistic look, teachers should encourage learners to:

- type or word-process articles on A4 sheets – these would then run like the columns of a newspaper;
- take their own photographs - you can buy very cheap cameras these days! – and have these developed in a large 'Jumbo' size so as to make them fit on the giant-sized wall newspaper;
- make up collages from existing pictures in magazines and newspapers to illustrate the front page;
- draw their own cartoons for the front page;
- practise their writing style by developing large, attractive headlines (these can also be developed on computer word-processing programmes).

Wall newspapers could take a number of forms. They could be produced as a once-off class project (around a particular theme), or be developed over a whole semester (where they change continually). Teachers could introduce a competitive edge – by running four or five classroom newspapers – and allowing each 'news team' to 'scoop' other teams by getting the 'latest' news. This would spur interest, as well as widen involvement of learners.

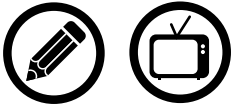
Visit a real newspaper and study newspapers, in order to develop learner interest and understanding of newspapers before you begin the process.

### Producing a 'real' school or class newspaper

#### ACTIVITY 18

Part 6 of the video is about getting learners to produce their own media in order to develop their media literacy and other important language skills.

- a When you watch this part, make notes of the main points made by the various teachers who are interviewed.
- b What ideas do these teachers provide about how to use newspaper and radio production to develop your learners' language and media skills?
- c Are there any constraints you can identify which would prevent you from doing these activities in your school? Talk to fellow teachers and see whether you can work out ways of overcoming any of the obstacles you identified.



Spend about 30 minutes on this activity. It is important that you speak to fellow teachers and try to identify constraints to using these kinds of activities in your teaching, as well as ways to overcome these constraints.

Developing a real school (or class) newspaper is a powerful teaching tool. But it is also an ambitious undertaking. The level of ambition can range from:

- a regular weekly, fortnightly or monthly newspaper, professionally designed using a desk-top publishing computer programme; through to
- an irregular publication that mixes handwritten and typed (or word-processed) articles and is cheaply photocopied and stapled.



Newspapers can range from the basic photocopied newsletter containing only type (on the left and far left), to another basic photocopied type-and-photograph newsletter (centre), to a professional DTP design and print version (on right).

Ultimately, the teaching power of this activity – in fact, all newspaper production activities – lies not in how professional the finish is but in the process that learners go through. They develop:

- *selection skills* as they decide on the content of their newspapers;
- *interviewing skills* as they gather information for their reports;
- *writing skills* – especially the use of direct and reported speech – as they write up their reports;
- an ability to *recognize and correct language errors* as they sub-edit their reports;
- an understanding of how language competence has practical benefits.

The editor of this module once used this technique with his learners. *The Eastwood Times* was the result. This is his opinion of this kind of teaching method:

*'I sometimes look back at this newsletter and feel embarrassed about how 'unprofessional' it was. But then I remind myself of just how motivated a class of Grade 10s became in doing it. Eastwood is a school in a working class "coloured" area. Many of the learners had little interest in schooling, or in English. This newsletter gave them enormous amounts of fun and confidence. I often saw them working at four in the afternoon! It also developed their ability to be critical: the principal ultimately "banned" the newspaper when it began investigating what they saw as school corruption!*

*'But, as a teacher, it allowed me to channel writing activities into a meaningful activity. I didn't have to mark meaningless essays on topics like "The Life of a Shoe". Instead I assessed the articles they submitted for publication. Good ones were published and poor ones weren't. In the end I didn't make this decision. Instead, I asked the editorial team to evaluate articles according to how interesting they were and how well they were written. They knew these were important criteria because other readers complained about badly written or boring articles! In the end I think this class learnt more about writing in English – and about newspapers and censorship – than I could ever have taught them through formal class teaching.*

*'The class also learnt some basic business skills. They had to raise money to print the newspaper and so tried to gather advertising from local businesses, charged fellow learners to place a classified advert, and sold the newspaper for 10c!*

Instead of forcing learners through often meaningless paragraph, letter and essay-writing routines, teachers could also aim at evoking authentic learner experiences, and getting learners to express these through media formats such as cartoons, letters to the editor, plays and short stories, and then publishing these. Publication can be achieved through submitting these to a real newspaper (letters to the editor) or by photocopying and then selling them to other learners and parents (cartoons, life stories).

## Learning to write in a clear, logical and organized manner

### **'The intrepid reporter': Researching and writing systematically**

Communicating information in an organized and logical manner is an important academic and life skill. It is also a skill that is often lacking among learners. The 'journalist's pyramid' (see pages 70 and 71) provides, in the form of the five 'W' questions, a basic structure for organizing writing. Here is an activity in which learners should be encouraged to use the 'journalist's pyramid' as a structuring device, once they have been introduced to the way in which typical newspaper reports are structured.



Try this activity out once yourself before you set it for learners. This will help you discover possible difficulties and pitfalls, placing you in a better position to assist learners. Spend about an hour on this activity.

### ACTIVITY 19

Pretend you are a reporter, and are sent either to:

- a laboratory where an important biological discovery has taken place. Maybe it is the discovery that the kidney purifies blood, Your task is to write a newspaper report for tomorrow's newspaper in which you explain the discovery (Sciences); *or*
- to cover some historical event. Maybe it's the bombing of Hiroshima. How would you report this to the world? (Human and Social Sciences - history); *or*
- to tell the story of Julius Caesar's assassination. Maybe you can convert the details of the Shakespearian play into a news report (English or history).

Write your report according to the 'journalist's pyramid' and limit it to 300 words.

### ***What did we think of this activity?***

**First**, we felt it was a *writing* exercise that could be used profitably across the curriculum. It would provide learners with an interesting way of revising their work, as well as developing writing skills such as summarizing and organizing information.

**Second**, we noted that the activity could be developed in different ways. You could sharpen learner skills by asking that they write a very short report of, let's say, 50 words. This would test their ability to distinguish between *essential* facts and *supporting* information. Once this had been completed, you could ask learners to pose further questions about the information they have: What more would you like to know? A second story, possibly a newspaper feature, could then be written.

**Third**, it provides ways for teachers to collaborate. For instance, learners could learn about newspaper formats in a language class, then do the basic research (in the guise that they are reporting on, let's say, the bombing of Hiroshima) in their Human and Social Sciences class. They could hand in the work done as part of both their language and Human and Social Studies assessment. Where teachers (including language teachers) set this activity *without* introducing learners to the basics of newspaper reporting, the written results are likely to be disappointing.

### ***'Sentence salad': Developing order and sequence in reading and writing***

Most of us recognize logical order when we read, though we are not usually all that conscious of it. In fact, we are most likely to think about logical order in what we are reading when it is *absent* – when some information which the writer seems to expect us to know is missing, or when the writer 'jumps' from one point to another seemingly unrelated point without signalling a link between the ideas. Here is a simple activity for Grade 4s in which an advert from the 'What's on' column in the newspaper is used to provide practice in ordering ideas logically:

**ACTIVITY 20**

This advert has been torn into bits. But I'd like to attend this event. Could you help me by putting the advert together as it initially appeared?

- Put the above sentences into an order which makes sense. In other words, re-write the advert.
- Can you explain what helped you to choose the correct order?
- Discuss your order with a partner. Is your order the same as your partner's?
- Now write your own newspaper advertisement. It could advertise an event that is happening at school.

**'Life Story': Another activity for developing order and sequence**

Somewhere between teaching the need for logical structure in straightforward passages like the one above, and the need for such structure and how to achieve it in more complex arguments, one can build learners' 'feel' for sequence through the medium of storytelling – especially if their attention is drawn to it explicitly. Logical sequencing is one of the basic skills of story-telling. It can be developed (also at about the Grade 4 or 5 level) by asking pairs of learners to construct the life story of an imaginary person (or someone they know) as in the following activity.

**ACTIVITY 21**

Hand out a newspaper or a magazine, a large piece of paper, scissors and felt-tipped pens to each person – or pair of people – in a class. Tell them that they are going to use pictures and information from the newspaper to tell the story of an imaginary person, from his or her birth to death. They will do this by cutting out information from the newspaper and linking it to particular ages in their imaginary person's life. Your worksheet might look like this:



Practise this activity before doing it with you learners. Spend about 15 minutes on it. Then try it with a class. Discuss your experience with fellow teachers.

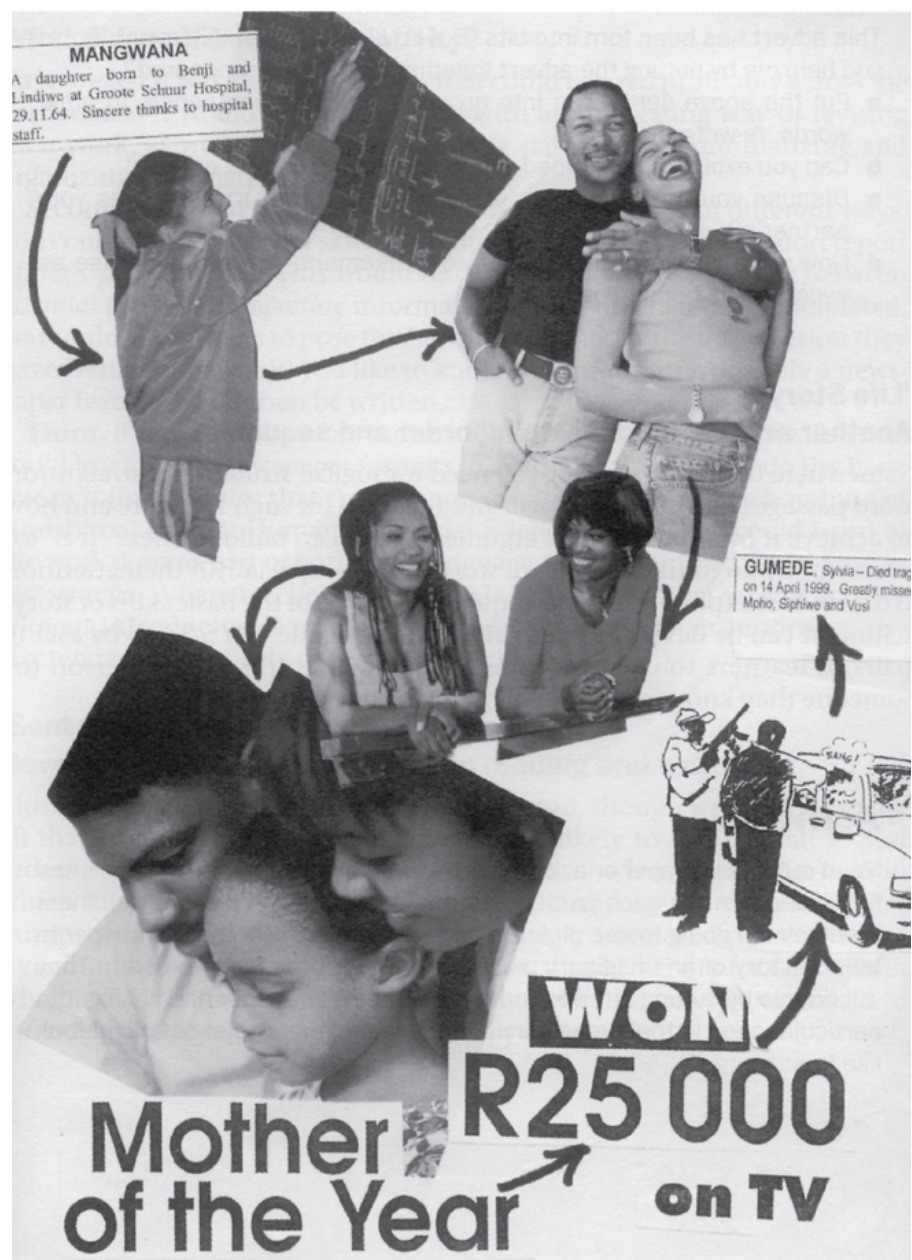
For such activities to have much effect on learners, similar activities need to be given to them quite frequently over a sustained period. Grade these activities so that they become more complex over time. For instance, this is a simple Grade 4 level activity, but the same principles can be used at more complex levels, for example by cutting up longer adverts or more complex magazine, newspaper or textbook articles. ('Ufe Story' is a slightly different example of this idea.)



Before you do this with a class, try it out with fellow teachers. Spend about an hour on the activity. This activity is adapted from the Education Foundation's *Newspapers in Education Guide*, 1994.



- 1 Decide whether you want to describe the story of a man or a woman.
- 2 Find the classified advertisement section of your newspaper and cut out one announcement from the Births column and another from the Deaths column. This will show the start and end of the life of the person whose story you're telling,
- 3 Search for and cut out pictures, headlines and parts of advertisements, or anything that can tell us something about this person's life story (pictures need not all look like the same person).
- 4 Plan your story by arranging the cuttings in a suitable order on the blank paper you have been given (do not be tempted to 'skip' this step - don't just start gluing straight away).
- 5 When you are satisfied, glue the cuttings onto the paper. Use a pen or crayon to draw arrows to mark the 'reading direction' of your story.
- 6 Share the telling of your story to the class.



This is an example of the efforts of one Grade 4 class.

Remember, the main reasons for doing the activity are:

- to develop the learners' sense of logical order (What comes before other things in one's life?);
- to develop their imaginative skills (Can I imagine my way into the life of this stranger? Can I make him or her interesting?);
- to develop learner familiarity with the structure of newspapers.

### **What will learners gain from these activities?**

'Life Story' develops similar skills to those developed in the 'sentence salad' activity, but adds more freedom and imagination to the activity. It also introduces oral presentation that will develop speaking skills.

Look back at activity 20. Learners are asked: '*Can you explain what helped you to choose the correct order?*' This question reflects the main 'learning' point of sentence salad activities. While learners should be able to get the advert into its correct order, it is even more important that they can explain why. They should be able to say: 'I placed the sentence *There will be drag cars, racing vehicles, street-rods, custom vans and kit cars on display before A group of Hatley-Davidson bikers and some stunt bike riders will also perform* because the second contains the word '*also*', which suggests something else has already been described'.

The teacher should move around among the learners to ensure that they do not skip stage 4 – the ordering stage – of 'Life Story'. At the search stage, the learners will find suitable pictures etc. randomly as they page through the media material, so this activity is very much about the storytellers 'making order out of chaos' - as happens in all creative acts.

You could extend this activity by getting the learners to *write* their own life stories. Emphasize the need to *order* the experiences recounted. This does not mean that everything has to be written in *strict chronological* order (writers could *start* where they are now, or in the future, and go back to the beginning, as many authors do). But they should make such decisions knowingly – breaks from an obvious order should be planned, not haphazard.

## **Learning to write imaginatively and persuasively**

While newspaper reporting is a powerful 'model' of simple and direct writing style, teachers will need to move learners *beyond* newspaper conventions and develop more advanced reading and writing skills. As we said earlier, newspaper reports focus on providing information, not argument; thus the five 'W's are more useful for organizing the key *content* of many kinds of writing, but they tell us little about ordering points in a logical *sequence* that will/take the reader with it. The 'inverted' journalist's pyramid does that, but suggests a structure that is suitable for little other than newspaper reports. So it is also important to provide 'models' of more complex structures, such as building an argument. We will now provide some ideas of how to develop more sophisticated writing skills – learning to write more creative, sustained and persuasive pieces of writing – using the popular print media.

Imaginative writing contains a clear writing style, and a logical sequence, but must also be absorbing and vividly written. Teachers need to convey to learners that 'using their imagination' in writing involves an intense effort of recreating from *memory* elements of real experience (their own, or the experience of others 'through the filter' of their own experience of events). These vividly-imagined or remembered *details*, when combined in a story about recognizable and quite familiar happenings, are what make successful stories.

This, together with a vocabulary that enables the writer to *invest ordinary details with emotional content*, is what makes the reader sit up and say, 'This is wonderful-I've felt just like that before!' And such a vocabulary does not need to include numer-



You should now be beginning Week 6 of your studies and should have spent at least 30 hours working on this module.



ous erudite-sounding, multi-syllabled words – or even a 'dictionary-full' of adjectives and adverbs. It does require a good stock of strong and subtle verbs and nouns, however. These are what will enable learners to develop a priceless ability – to express themselves and 'tell their own story' vividly, simply, and with conviction.

Popular media *formats* can provide resources for doing this in a number of ways.

### **Translating networks into popular media formats**

Reading good writing is one of the best ways of improving writing. But how can we get learners to read good writing?

Literature networks are supposed to fulfil this function. But they often don't. Learners regard them as 'difficult' or 'boring'. Teachers often contribute to this by making the study of poetry or Shakespeare into a mathematical exercise, rather than highlighting the joy that can come from good writing. This is particularly so when teaching Shakespeare to second language students, or to students who struggle with language.

'Translating' networks into popular media formats can be a challenging and exciting project that will develop a number of language skills. Here are some ideas capable of being adapted in many ways.

### **Re-imagining a 'classic' play**

Ask learners to translate a *scene* from a Shakespeare play – translating the entire play will be too demanding in most cases – into a local adaptation of that play. Learners should 'imagine' what the modern, local equivalent of a Hamlet, for instance, would look like and speak like. What would the Soweto equivalent of a castle and a lord be? (See pages 199 and 200 for an excellent example of a Northern Province teacher who does something similar.)

In other words, the task is to:

- translate Shakespearian English into, for instance, *Isi-kasi* (an urban mix of languages/township lingo);
- re-costume the character in a way the class imagines that person would dress if he or she lived in Soweto today.

In order to develop an understanding of *characterization* and *plot*, you should ask the class to keep these consistent.

This activity could be followed up by showing the class the different ways in which different directors have interpreted the same Shakespeare play. For instance, there is a Zulu version of *Macbeth* and, recently, a very trendy and topical (for South Africa) version of *Romeo and Juliet* was made.

As an alternative to producing a play, the class could be asked to develop a cartoon strip or storyboard for a film.

In Section Four we present a much more ambitious idea about how to teach Shakespeare. Turn to page 129.

### **'What if... 1' games: Turning a poem or short story into a news report**

Teachers could use the same principle – translating 'high literature' into popular media formats – in another way.

- Find newspaper reports of incidents such as a lover's tiff or 'triangle', or a crime mystery that has (or hasn't) been solved. Ask learners to read these (and remember the journalist's pyramid structure).
- Then point them to a setwork short story, poem or play. Ask them to rewrite these as dramatic news stories.
- An exciting variation of this could be asking learners to expand on the initial story, play or poem. Ask learners to answer questions such as:
  - 'What led up to the event described in the poem or story?
  - What happened next? What if this/that happens? (For instance, ask them to imagine how Romeo and Juliet would have ended had Romeo not died.)

Or else, ask learners to allow a literary character to enter our world. For instance, *what if* Hamlet found himself in Thabo Mbeki's cabinet and was put in charge of 'Safety and Security':

- Would Mbeki have liked Hamlet?
- What would they have spoken of?
- How would Hamlet have handled his portfolio?

An ongoing idea would be for teachers to bring to class newspaper and magazine stories that *illustrate* the key plot points or themes in literature. In the intense ANC-Inkatha struggles in KwaZulu-Natal, for instance, a number of stories have appeared about young people who have suffered as a result of loving someone in families linked with the opposing side. And the intrigue within government often resembles the moral dilemmas Shakespeare writes about in his histories and tragedies.

### ACTIVITY 22

Listen to Part 2 on your audiotape. On it you will hear a short excerpt from a Shakespearian play that has been adapted by learners and acted out. This is followed by teachers talking about the benefits of these kinds of activities.

- a** Make notes of the points made by the speakers
- b** Then, with a fellow teacher, choose a poem, short story, or excerpt from a play or novel and adapt or extend it.
- c** Once you have completed this activity, discuss with other teachers how it works as a learning activity.



This is a time-consuming activity but, if done well, it is very rewarding. Spend up to three hours on it. And don't forget to talk about what you learnt in the process of doing the activity.

### What will learners learn from these activities?

These kinds of 'translation' and 'what if?' activities – there are countless adaptations of the basic idea – are powerful teaching tools in that they teach language skills while introducing learners to models of good writing in a painless way. These activities will:

- familiarize learners with the setwork being studied;
- familiarize learners with the many different ways of telling stories;
- develop learner understanding of how key literary devices, such as character and plot, function to make a story or play interesting;
- provide valuable practice in writing ordered, coherent and imaginative narrative;
- improve acting and speaking skills when produced as a play or radio reading.

### Models from the media: discursive writing with a difference

The best way to learn writing skills is undoubtedly to write, and write regularly. But there is also much to be said for exposing learners to high-quality models of good writing. If they are occasionally set the task of analysing such a model in order to understand what *makes* it good writing, and what lifts it above the ordinary or dull, so much the better.

The essay or 'feature article' on page 83 appeared some years ago in *The Cape Times* when Dr Chris Barnard (the heart-transplant surgeon) was writing a regular column for the 'comment' page of that newspaper. We think it provides an excellent model of a well-written essay. Other feature articles of similar merit appear quite often in a variety of newspapers. Look out for the best ones and keep them.

You can do the following activity yourself, and set it for learners in Grades 11 or 12.



Do this activity yourself before giving it to learners. Spend about 40 minutes on it. See whether you can find other articles that 'teach' the same ideas about writing.

### ACTIVITY 23

Read the essay on page 83 twice (skimming it once and reading it more carefully a second time, or vice versa), then carry out the tasks that follow:

- a** Identify what makes the beginning and end of this essay so powerful.
- b** Why do you think it is so important to take care to begin and end an essay effectively?
- c** Try and think up a powerful opening and closing sentence (or paragraph) to an essay on 'Being a Teenager', 'Dating' or 'Writing essays' (or all three if you really enjoy this!).
- d** Number the steps in Chris Barnard's argument alongside the text.
  - How does he build up his argument before he finally convinces us of his case in the last line?
  - Does he simply state his opinions, or does he supply evidence to support them at each stage of his argument?
  - Does he take into account arguments that are opposed to his own?
- e** How does he bridge the gap between high-level medical and moral dilemmas and the ordinary reader?

### *What can we learn from this activity?*

An essay like this is easy to dissect in the ways suggested by the questions above, and vividly illustrates the following writing skills which would mean little to learners if the teacher simply talked about them in the abstract:

- thinking of beginnings and endings which have impact;
- quoting a well-known poem or other piece of writing;
- introducing anecdotes (a chat with a taxi driver, and the story of Eli Khan) to bring otherwise-abstract arguments 'down to earth';
- providing factual evidence to support assertions (the facts concerning brain death). Note that such facts do not necessarily *prove* beyond all doubt that a claim is valid; other facts may be produced to suggest that it is not. However, the point is *not* to make assertions that seem to have *no* support – it is finally up to the reader to decide whether to accept the argument as persuasive or not;
- building a clear, step-by-step argument that takes into account arguments that oppose the writer's own, thus making for a much more persuasive argument – opposing arguments can be presented and refuted one at a time, or they can be presented as a single argument and then 'demolished';
- 'bridging' paragraphs so that the reader can follow the argument logically, without having to 'jump' from one point to another point that seems unrelated to it. Words and phrases like 'However', 'On the other hand', 'In addition' and 'A quite different ... may be seen in ...' are important for this purpose;
- ensuring that the essay's conclusion *follows satisfyingly* from the arguments and evidence that precede it.

# We all have to go but death is not an enemy

"DO NOT GO gentle into that good night," a famous Welsh poet told his dying father in a poem which is now almost a classic affirmation of life in the face of death.

The poet was Dylan Thomas whose own flame of life was such that he burnt himself out in his early 30s, but not before he had left behind a wealth of poetry and prose that praised the life forces in all its forms.

## Real enemy

The real enemy, according to Thomas, wasn't death. It was all those creeping, petty betrayals of good, well-rounded living: the tickey-snatching lives of middle-class respectability; the neatly-ordered mind of the bureaucrat, the drunken and disorderly mess of existence lived by the truly poor, and in fact anything that inhibited a gut reaction to life and love.

I never met Mr Thomas who died some time during the 50s but I know I would have liked a man whose advice to the terminally ill was to "rage against the dying of the light", meaning not a niggling, complaining whine against illness but total defiance of all death can do until the last defeat pulls you down.

## Doctor's role

Yet Thomas and I would have sharply disagreed on my role as a doctor in the fight between life and death. I don't accept the common view that the aim of every doctor should be to conquer death, nor do I go all the way with Thomas's description of death as an adversary or an opponent. Too often have I seen it come as a friend, a welcome release.

Human impotence in the face of death was brought home to me by a New York cab driver. "Step on it," I told him. "I must be there by 8:15."

He eyed me in the mirror, shifted a fag-end from one corner of his mouth to another and spoke out of the side of his mouth.

"Relax, mister," he told me. "There are only two things y'gotta do. Y' gotta pay taxes and some day y' gotta die."

I've no doubt that he made the same crack to all his passengers but I've never forgotten that cab driver's over-simplification of what life is all about.

There may be some dispute about taxes but death for all of us is a certainty. From the instant of conception we are all dying. Each has a life expectancy which is programmed by the genes. It is finite and diminishes with every second that passes.

It is an awesome thought for the human mind to comprehend and everyone has their own formula for coping with it.

Some live it up. Others deprive them-

selves of all pleasures, possibly in the belief that if they suffer enough now they may not feel so much pain at the end. Many immerse themselves in work, politics, religion and sometimes activities which shorten their life span but seem to stop the pain of the inevitable from getting through.

Whatever they do, each person knows what quality of life is acceptable to

cools.

There can be few doctors who have not seen life become intolerable before the heart stops its spontaneous beating. The moment of intolerance is felt not only by the dying person and the doctor but all those – friends and relatives – who knew the patient's requirements for being alive.

## The Chris Barnard column



## Dilemma

This has become the physician's dilemma in an age of modern technology, an era in which "life" may be supported by heroic measures that can sustain but not cure vital organs. These measures may appear as almost miraculous but often they prolong the onset of death rather than the process of life.

Yet, as any doctor will confirm, the human ego is such that is can only feel a sense of guilt and defeat in the face of another's death.

The story of 78-year-old terminally ill Eli Khan makes the point better than I could. His last request to his hospital doctors was to be allowed to die with dignity – not like the man in the next bed who had "tubes sticking out all over". He did not want his children to remember him that way.

## Last wish

His doctors promised to honour his last wish but when the time came they could not resist the temptation to start intensive care which involved intravenous feeding and intubation to a respirator.

Later that night Khan awoke, reached out and switched off his respirator.

When his doctors went to see him again he was dead. On the bedside table was a note, scrawled in his uneven hand: "Death is not the enemy, doctor. Inhumanity is."

them and when this is gone they will reject mere existence or the pointless breathing in of air.

To me, the doctor's role is clearly one of maintaining the quality of life for as long as possible, not to beat death or even to stave it off. A good life deserves a good death – that "good night" of Thomas's poem.

Thousands of words have been written in an attempt to define the moment of death but it is important to recognize that death is a clinical impression it is diagnosed when certain symptoms or signs are present.

For hundreds of years English common law ruled that life does not end as long as breathing continues and the heart beats – an erroneous concept as the beating heart and the expanding lungs are there to keep the brain alive.

As the brain is the organ which determines the quality of life, the need for these functions cease when the brain has died.

The cessation of heartbeat and breathing may occur before (as in the case of a heart attack or electrocution) or after (as in the case of a head injury) brain death.

But once the brain has died there is no further need for these other organs and they die at various intervals afterwards. Total death of the body is therefore by degrees, as the lungs stop drawing in air, the heart ceases to beat, the circulation slowly trickles to a halt and the blood

## Using cartoons and photographs to stimulate and support writing

### Using graphic novels to model and Support good writing

Ever since the first comic books (graphic novels) arrived on the scene, they have earned the disapproval of some teachers. Many believe comics are aimed at unthinking entertainment, that their stories are obvious and predictable and their characters stereotyped, and the 'darker' comics present an undesirable world of violence and sex to 'immature' readers. The drawings of characters, and their language, usually lack subtlety, and are often sexist and racist.

Nevertheless, the graphic novel format has features that merit the teacher's attention. For a start, teachers today have little chance of influencing young people's values or getting them to think critically if they fail to engage with the culture of youth. Comics are an important element of youth culture in almost every country today, so teachers who capitalize on the appeal that comics have for many learners (rather than being judgemental) gain ready access to learners' interest.

For this reason, several South African organizations that provide health and other education to people with little schooling, have realized the ability of this format to communicate important information and change attitudes in a lively and accessible

Many public education campaigns in South Africa use cartoon formats to communicate their message. Here are two examples: on the left is *The Storyteller Group's Start-up: A Step-by-step Guide to Starting and Growing your Own Small Business* (1999); on the right is Soul City / Jacana Education's *Soul City: Violence: How can we stop it?*, page 20.





way. The best of these, for example the booklets produced by the Johannesburg-based Storyteller Group, feature sophisticated techniques of narration, illustration and education.

But, apart from using these kinds of comics to teach *content* – there are some excellent graphic versions of Shakespeare plays and South African novels available – teachers can adapt virtually any comic or cartoon strip to develop language skills.

Comics – carefully selected by the teacher – can provide an extremely useful resource for teaching reluctant readers, and readers still struggling to read and write in a second language. This is partly because of the 'support' offered by the pictures, and the 'comfortable' and undemanding nature of the format (i.e. the very characteristics that usually offend language teachers).

Short excerpts from comic books, or single cartoon strips from newspapers, can be used to enliven the teaching of a number of important language skills. For instance, teachers could blank out the words in the speech bubbles with a correcting fluid pen, and then photocopy the comic page or strip as a worksheet. Learners can then be instructed to do a number of different kinds of activities.

### Using cartoon strips to develop imagination and storytelling skills

- Learners are supplied with cartoon strips with the speech bubbles blanked out. They are asked to develop their own 'story' by supplying new words for the speech bubbles. You should persuade them to supply words that 'fit' with a logical 'reading' of the cartoon pictures.



The teacher finds a suitable cartoon, blanks out the dialogue using a white correcting pen, photocopies this (enough for each learner), and asks the learners to write their own dialogue.

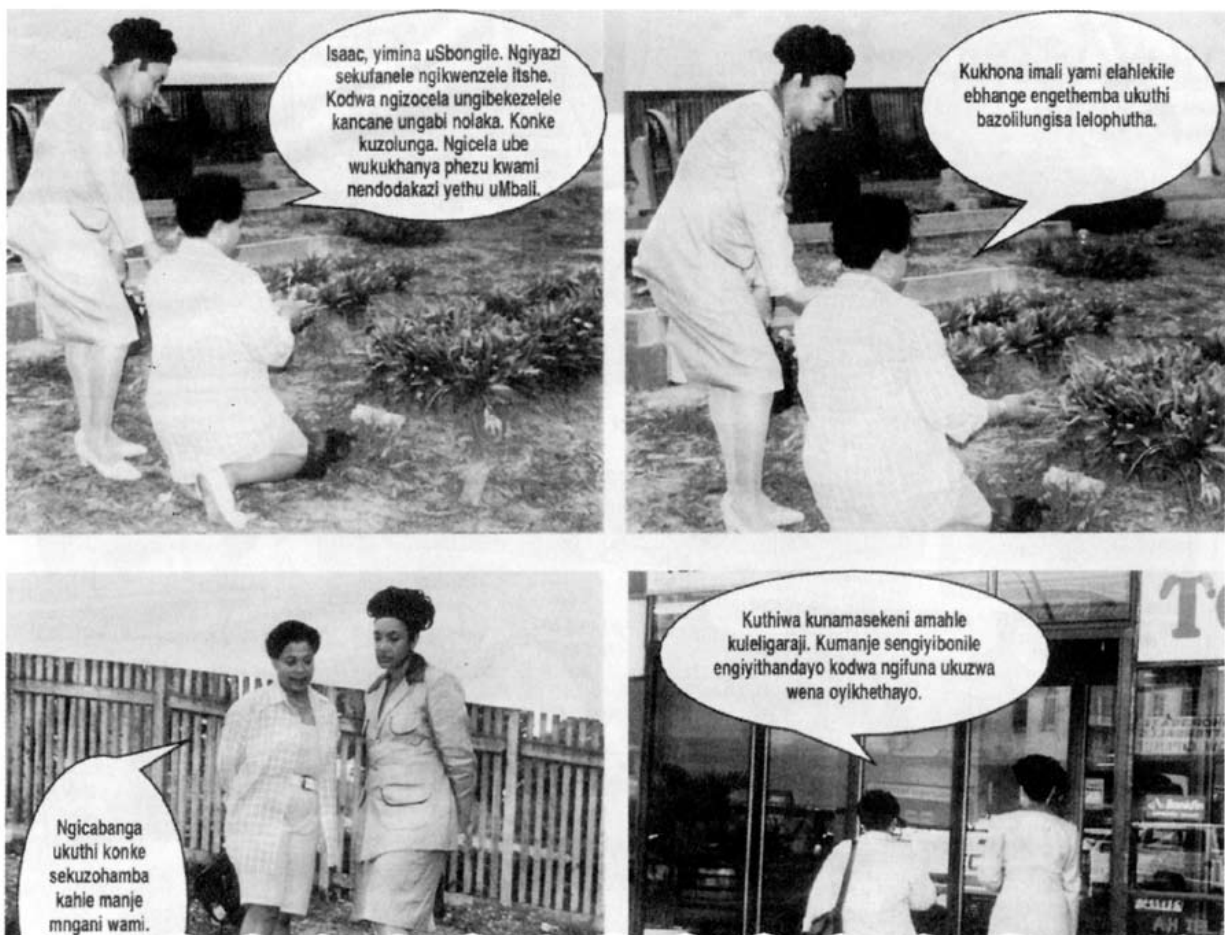


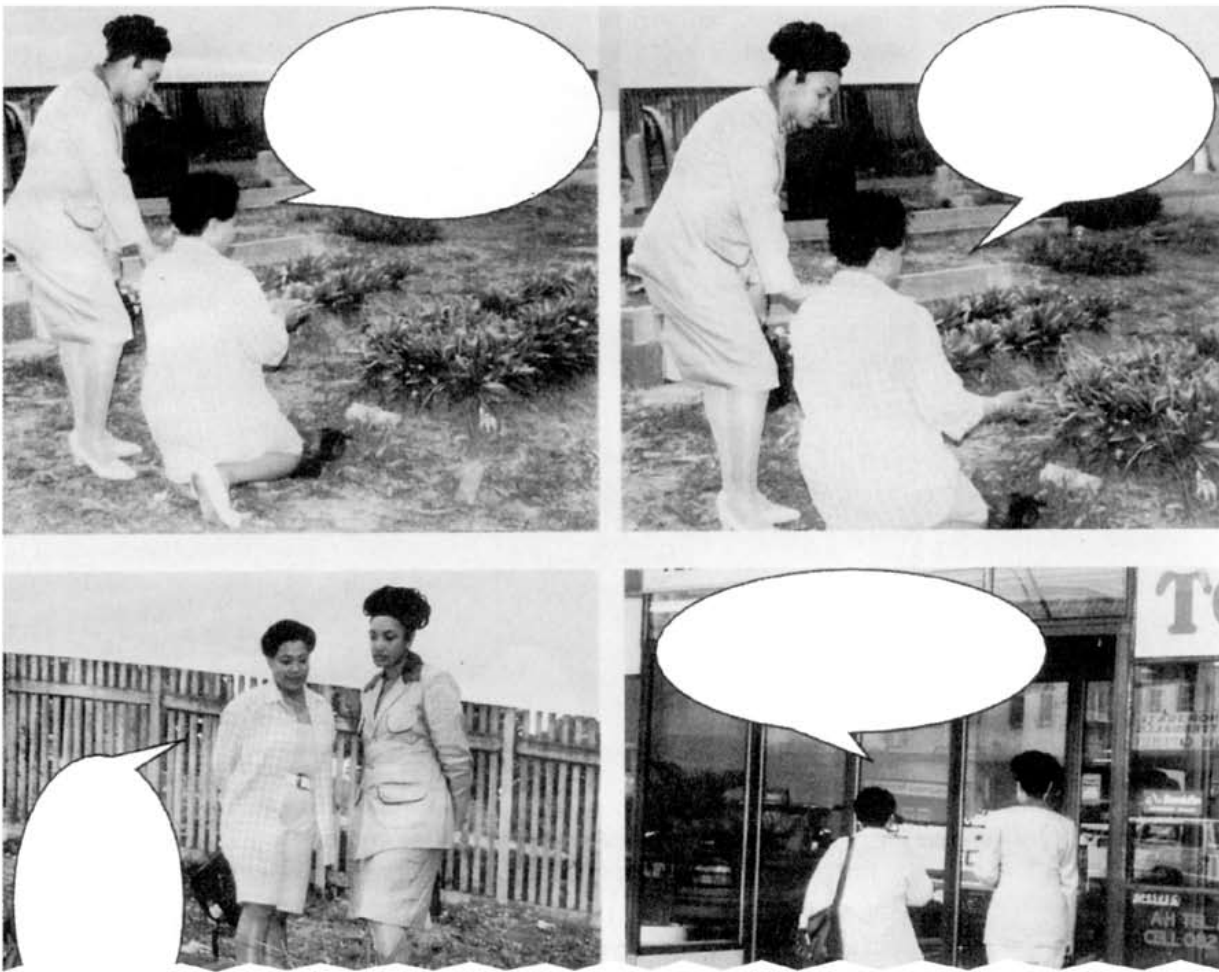


- Learners can also be asked to produce their own cartoons. Point them to an excerpt in their novel and ask them to develop a cartoon from this. Learners will practise reading and 'edit' the story into one told entirely through the direct speech of characters. Make the point that the quality of the cartoon characters is not that important; it is the story that IS important.

### **Using cartoon strips to develop multi-lingual writing and explanation skills**

- The teacher can copy a cartoon *twice* on the worksheet, with the speech appearing in the top copy – in any language. Learners are asked to fill in a *translation* of the words that appear in the top copy in one of the languages the learners are learning. (See below, and on page 87.)
- Pairs of learners – who must sit back-to-back – try to identify the ten details that differ in a pair of slightly different cartoons (for instance, in one a person's tie is spotted; in the other it is striped). Ask learners to question each other about the points of difference and come to an agreement about what they are, using the target language. Children's supplements sometimes carry 'Spot the difference' games, but you can easily make your own (especially ones that will appeal more to older learners) by using a correcting pen and a very fine black pen to change details on a photocopy of the original cartoon.
- Learners, again seated back-to-back, attempt to explain a cartoon to their partner so that the learner can draw this cartoon on another piece of paper without seeing the original cartoon. This is a challenging activity, so teachers need to maintain a reasonable level of order.



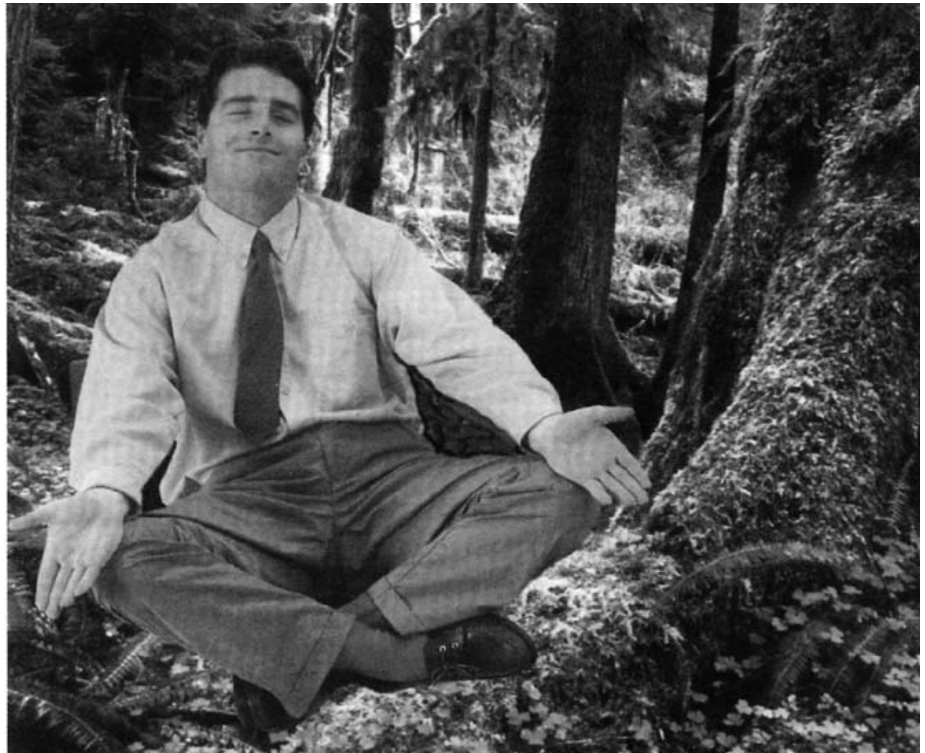


## Using photographs as a stimulus for creative writing

Ordinary images can be arranged together with captions or other images to provide stimulating writing tasks. For instance, a quite ordinary picture of a very 'ordinary' family group from an advertisement could be shown to learners, with the caption *What will happen when Sissy announces she is pregnant?* Or a picture of an elegantly-dressed person could be cut out carefully and pasted on a totally unexpected background (such as a piece of scaffolding high on a building, or a jungle) to present a bizarre image. The instruction would be: *How did he/she get to be here?* The important teaching action in all these cases is asking the right questions and getting learners to brainstorm ideas. Don't settle for the ordinary: push learners to think of the unusual.

For instance, for the picture on page 88, ask learners the following questions (and others you may think of):

- How did he get there?
- Why is he there?
- Where will he go next?
- What is he feeling?
- What will he do when he's told... ?



For a summary of key learning points and a summative assessment activity, turn to pages 133 and 134 at the end of Section Four.

Everyday media other than photographs can also be arranged with a little imagination to provide powerful stimuli for creative writing. For instance:

- Photocopy a page from the 'Flats to let' column of a newspaper, with a few of the adverts ringed with a felt-tipped marker. Ask learners to make up a story based on this. (Note that the 'Positions vacant' or 'Jobs offered' column could be used in the same way.)