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Self-efficacy enhanced in a cross-cultural context through an initiative in under-resourced schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Marguerite Maher is Dean of Education at the University of Notre Dame Australia. Most of her research is undertaken in partnership with Indigenous leaders in communities and in education, focussing on factors in cross-cultural and intercultural settings that enhance the learning outcomes of school students. She also teaches into mathematics papers in the undergraduate programs at her university and she supervises post graduate students undertaking Master's and Doctoral study.

Abstract

This paper discusses the *Khanyisa Programme,* an initiative in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where learners from under-resourced schools are supported by teachers and high achievers in Grade 11 and 12 from a previously advantaged state school under apartheid. A qualitative evaluative study was undertaken that identified key elements important in the ongoing success of the programme and participant suggestions for improvement. Findings, discussed

within the framework of self-efficacy theory, included enormous gains by Khanyisa learners leading to vastly improved career prospects.

Key words

Self-efficacy, collective efficacy, intercultural programme, poverty in education, KwaZulu-Natal education

Introduction

First the context within which the current study took place and a description of the Khanyisa Programme are provided. An overview of the methodology utilised is then set forth including the theoretical framework within which the findings were analysed. Finally, participants' views on the key elements for success of the programme and the areas for improvement that they identify, are explicated.

Post-apartheid education

The first free and fair elections in South Africa took place in 1994 with the African National Congress (ANC) becoming the ruling party. Major reconstructing followed: schools were racially integrated by law, although many Black schools remained Black and the Khanyisa schools in the current study all had 100 per cent Black enrolment. Restructuring saw 19 different departments of Education reduced to nine provincial departments and one national department. The national education department saw its primary role as that of attempting to promote equity with the reprioritisation of resource allocation across and between provinces.

The empowerment construct was popular in all spheres of government including education. Despite ideals, ideology, and fervour amongst policy-makers, school enrolment increases were minimal, running at 3.5% per year (Chrisholm 1995). The newly-formed National Education Department focused primarily on a more equitable redistribution of resources,

deracialisation of education, and development of educational policy. In 1994, student-to-teacher ratios in rural areas at times exceeded 100:1 often because of the shortage of classrooms. This has not changed in all instances as evidenced in the current study where teachers in Khanyisa schools in 2014 report having 80 learners or more in Grades 8, 9 and 10.

Fullan (2003) describes educational change as being fraught with problems, as ideals and philosophy need to be owned by teachers in the classroom before there is any real change for students. He notes, furthermore, that "most schools suffer from innovation overload" (Fullan 2003, 34) and that these innovations can collide. A priority remained to maintain high standards in the previously advantaged schools and to bring previously-disadvantaged schools up to that level. Every effort was made not to allow all education to even out at the lower levels experienced in previously disadvantaged schools.

Ten years after democracy a revealing study (Zulu et al. 2004) on the current state of education utilised a random sample of 288 students, drawn from a possible 14,400 in 15 high schools in the KwaMashu area of KZN. Some of the findings were that:

- "76% of respondents had witnessed a physical attack on a fellow learner

- 38% had witnessed such attacks on an educator

- 64% of students bring weapons to school

- 60% of respondents' parents or guardians were unemployed" (Zulu et al. 2004, 172).

These authors argue that overcrowding and overage learners contribute to the culture of violence, as do poverty and the lack of parental support for academic endeavours. They maintain that a positive culture of teaching and learning, epitomised by "a spirit of dedication and commitment" to school which is achieved through cohesion in school management and teacher input, positive personal characteristics of students, supportive factors in the family

life of students, "were, sadly, absent in the case of the 15 schools investigated in this project" (Zulu et al. 2004, 174). They conclude, therefore, that violence with its various causes, is exacerbated by social factors and is a key impediment to a culture of learning and teaching, leading to teachers losing control and feeling fearful.

The ideal with the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in the form of *Curriculum 2005* (Department of Education 1997) was to emancipate the majority of learners who had not been well-served in the past. It was posited that by introducing OBE "doors of opportunity may be opened for people whose academic or career paths have (previously) been blocked" (Van Wyk and Mothata 1998, 4).

Soon after the implementation of OBE in 1997, however, the way it was implemented proved problematic. Jansen (1998) noted that the language used in the documentation around OBE was too convoluted, complex, and at times contradictory. "The language of OBE and its associated structures are simply too complex and inaccessible for most teachers to give these policies meaning through their classroom practice" (Jansen 1998, 323). In summary, OBE "was a monumental failure" (Chrisholm and Wildeman 2013, 89), and it was officially abandoned in 2010, replaced with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) which is a revision of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The feeling of current teachers is that this, too, might be a transitory phase and question whether it is worth their while to engage fully in becoming completely au fait and confident with this new curriculum.

In 2005 a United Nations Report stated: "Poverty remains a major barrier to schooling and gender discrimination is a factor as well. … The important challenge, apart from achieving education for all, is ensuring the provision of a quality education" (United Nations 2005, 14). This is not helped by the reality that "South African households are characterised by a lack of learning materials and educational toys, [and] high rates of parental illiteracy" (Vally 2012,

624). At the end of apartheid, engagement at university ran at 9% for Blacks and 70% for Whites. By 2005 there has been some movement but nowhere near representing the demographics of the country with 12% of enrolments being Black and 61% being White (Favish and Hendry 2010). Specifically, it should be noted that "poverty remains race bound with the vast majority of poverty existing amongst Black South Africans" (Collins and Millard 2013, 70). Education in South Africa does not adequately take cognisance of the needs of the country, specifically in relation to disadvantaged youth (Favish and Hendry 2010).

Implications for learners

The sociocultural milieu for learners in under-resourced schools is one that requires them to step into and up to expectations of a largely Western curriculum. Wojecki (2007, 173) describes the "narrative construction of identity" which aptly describes learners' engagement in their learning being influenced by their previous experiences, which in turn has an impact on their self-efficacy. Teachers who are confident and motivated are essential to the achievement of these learners for whom educational success is their only means of escaping the poverty trap. Learners in the current study valued the experience of learning and teaching at the cultural interface exemplified in this programme.

The Khanyisa Programme

Rationale for the Khanyisa Programme

Twenty years after the demise of apartheid, there is still a dispiriting disparity in achievement between learners in previously advantaged schools and those in previously disadvantaged, and currently still under-resourced, schools. The high-stakes "matriculation" examination at the end of Grade 12 sees previously advantaged schools getting nearly 100 per cent pass rate, year after year, while the pass rate in some under-resourced schools is barely 50 per cent.

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Additionally, "learners are routinely asked to enrol as private candidates, are encouraged to take softer subject options, and Grade 11 hopefuls (who are considered risky prospects) are not promoted to Grade 12" (Chrisholm and Wildeman 2013, 94).

Higher level mathematics, as opposed to mathematics literacy, leads to science, engineering and technology studies at tertiary level. Of half a million learners sitting the matriculation each year, in 2008 there were 300,000 enrolled in the higher level mathematics; by 2011 this had decreased by 25 per cent (Department of Basic Education 2011).

In an effort to counter these inequities, teachers and grade 12 learners in a well-resourced school, with around 80 per cent White student enrolment, instituted the Khanyisa Programme comprising tuition sessions on Saturdays for learners from under-resourced schools in the outlying areas of Pietermartizburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The Khanyisa programme in detail

The programme known as Khanyisa (lighting up learning), in its sixth year of delivery; it is run from an advantaged school on Saturday mornings and has seen the mathematics, science and business studies grades of learners who participate in the programme increase substantially – in some cases from around 30 per cent to over 80 per cent. There are four complementary components of the Khanyisa programme that have led to these improvements: firstly, learners are provided with travel money and food on tuition Saturdays; secondly, a number of teaching sessions over two years are provided by some of the most successful teachers at the advantaged school; thirdly, learners are offered one-on-one peer support from top academic Grade 12 learners from the advantaged school on Saturdays and through a social media site in between; and finally, teachers from the under-resourced schools also attend, as professional development, the teaching sessions on Saturdays so that when

teachers and learners return to their home school from Monday to Friday, they are all covering the same content in the same way.

The first iteration which has changed in more recent offerings, comprised a cohort of 20 teachers from under-resourced schools in the outlying areas of Pietermaritzburg who attended professional development sessions at the advantaged school once every nine days to fit into the school timetable. That was 6 years ago. At end of that first year of the two-year programme, Khanyisa teachers requested that revision lessons for their learners be provided by the Khanyisa Project Co-ordinator and facilitator. This suggestion was trialled and direct teaching of Khanyisa learners began and has continued. The initial revision sessions ran for one year and while improvement in learners' achievement was incremental, the Project Co-ordinator realised that if the learners could have two years of input the improvement was likely to be more marked.

By the end of second year, the Project Co-ordinator had forged a bit a path with mathematics and consequently the programme was able to include business studies and physical science teaching sessions. With the expansion of the programme, Khanyisa learners come to the advantaged school for six out nine Saturdays each term (two for each subject area) for two full years – their Grade 11 and 12 years. An unlooked-for advance has been the pupil-driven peer-tutor scheme. When there were insufficient Khanyisa teachers attending Saturday sessions to provide one-on-one assistance that learners need, boys from the advantaged school committed to fulfil this role as peer tutors.

Theoretical framework for interpretation of the data

As noted by Darling-Hammond (2003), "reforms, we have learned over and over again, are rendered effective or ineffective by the knowledge, skills and commitments of teachers and other professionals in schools. Without know-how and buy-in, innovations do not succeed"

(75-76). In the current study, there is synergy with this view explicated in the discussion later around disparity of commitment to the Khanyisa Programme between learners and teachers.

Furthermore, this links to efficacy and attribution theory (Weiner 1995) where, if people attribute their efficacy to internal factors over which they have control, they (teachers) are likely to be motivated to embrace changes they believe will enhance their performance. If the attribution of efficacy is to external factors, such as training, and small classes, over which they have no control, they will be less likely to be motivated to embrace change. Consistent with self-efficacy theory (Bandura 2001, 2002; Bandura et al. 1996), such teachers do not believe they can meet the learning needs of the learners in their classes.

"Social cognitive theory distinguishes among three modes of agency: direct personal agency; proxy agency that relies on others to act on one's behest to secure desired outcomes; and collective agency exercised through group action" (Bandura 2002, 269). Learners' academic gains and empowerment through the Khanyisa Programme are discussed within this framework, specifically in relation to personal agency and collective agency.

One key factor in learner success is persistence. The literature in relation to persistence, however, is not in accord. To provide concrete examples, in their study, Martin, Galentino and Townsend (2014) found that while poor academic preparation frequently leads to low graduation rates, under-preparedness can be overcome by a motivated, self-empowered student. Supporting this view, McCormick and McPherson (2003) found a strong connection between learners' self-efficacy and their actual performance. Indeed, Rosevear (2010, 18) goes so far as to assert that "self-efficacy beliefs play a causal role in students' achievement and are predictive of students' effort and persistence". In contrast to this, Burrus et al. (2013) found that motivation is less important to student persistence than academic success.

Fortunately, both elements – enhanced self-efficacy and academic success – were pertinent and reflected in the views of participants in the current study.

Methodology

The aims of the current study were two-fold. The first aim was to ascertain what aspects of the Khanyisa Programme were considered to be working well and should definitely not be changed. The second was to ascertain to what extent participants thought that improvements could be made and what these might look like.

The present research was a qualitative study in the paradigm of interpretivism "which takes the position that social and cultural phenomena emerge from the ways in which the actors in a setting construct meaning" (Schensul 2012, 75-76).

The interpretive nature of this present research was motivated by a belief that there is not just one reality, but that reality is multi-dimensional and ever changing (Merriam 2009), and is interpreted differently by individuals depending on their connection with the issues at hand. The aim was to "portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail" (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh 2002, 423) so that someone who was not there could understand the experience of someone who was.

The interpretive theory on which the present research was based "is characterized by a concern for the individual … to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2011, 17). Interpretivism considers realities to be multiple, and looks particularly at the context in which the behaviour takes place in order to try and understand it (Ary et al. 2014).

The advantages of working within the theory of interpretism were as follows:

1. It was possible to give a voice to the participants, to answer the questions which were spawned by the literature, and to present an interpretation of their reality within that framework. Voice was significant in this study as it sought to present the participants' reality in their terms and within their frames of reference.

2. The participants' contexts would in all likelihood be idiosyncratic, multifaceted, and complex. It was necessary to work within a methodological approach that produced qualitative evidence to describe this adequately.

3. The researcher was interested in understanding "the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2011, 17) and would be able to interpret how they made sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.

4. While the researcher guided the interview, as some specific information was sought, participants would retain the locus of control during interviews.

Such research can uncover the implicit meaning, from one or more perspectives, in a particular circumstance. In the current study the "purpose [was] to understand the world or experience of another" (Ary et al. 2014).

The limitations of working within a paradigm of interpretivism is that "[t]here is a risk … that they become hermetically sealed from the world outside the participants' theatre of activity" and they are "critized for their narrowly micro-soiological perspectives" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 21).

By definition, interpretive research must be subjective, and potentially limited to the experiences only of the participants. The research is situated in both context and time. Individual perceptions determine what are considered facts, and what is truth is deduced by the researcher from a particular viewpoint.

To achieve validity and reliability in interpretive research, Richards and Morse (2013) maintain that rigour at all stages of the research is key, and highlight the following:

1. rigour in the design phase by working from the strengths of the researcher, having a comprehensive background to the study, working inductively, and using appropriate methodology and design,

2. rigour while conducting the research by using appropriate sampling methods, being responsive if strategies are not working, synchronising data collection and analysis, and coding reliably, and

3. rigour when writing up by providing an adequate project history and audit trail, and in linking findings to the literature.

All of the above were undertaken by the researcher in this current study.

This was an evaluative study and evaluation embeds the notion of judgement, whether one is referring to the subjective assessments people make informally during the course of their everyday lives, or whether one is referring to formal evaluation, such as specific inquiry. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011, 50) note key features of evaluation: "answering specific, given questions; gathering information; making judgements and taking decisions". These authors hold that educational evaluation is important in that it provides validation for improvements in educational policies and practices. In the current research, validation of practice and participants' experience provided a platform for decision-making in the schools where the research took place and in the wider context as well.

Participants

Overall there were 25 participants drawn from all stakeholder groups. These comprised Khanyisa learners ($n = 18$) noted as KL1 to KL18 in transcripts, Khanyisa teachers ($n = 2$) KT1 and KT2, peer tutors ($n = 2$) PT1 and PT2, Advantaged school facilitator ($n = 1$) KF1,

Project Co-ordinator and facilitator (*n* = 1) PC, and a past peer tutor (*n* = 1) PPT. Of these, 18 Khanyisa learners and two peer tutors took part in group interviews. The five adults took part in individual interviews. The researcher is noted as R in the transcripts.

Findings and discussion

Narrative, story-telling, and expressive language characterises learning and teaching in the Zulu culture. Consequently, in presenting the findings and discussion, I choose to quote fairly extensively from the interviews. This is deliberate as it provides the reader with a good sense of participants' proficiency in English, although for many of the Khanyisa learners and teachers English would be their second, third, or fourth language. It furthermore showcases their feelings of apprehension or exultation more effectively than any summary could.

Initial apprehension

Khanyisa learners' initial hesitancy and lack of confidence in their ability was expressed on various levels in all interviews. Firstly, they expressed lack of confidence in their ability to keep up in this new context specifically in the subject areas of mathematics and physical science. The following excerpts represent a majority view.

> KL4: I was quite nervous 'cos it was the first time here and I really hoped it would help me with, like, in terms of my education. I really prayed hard that it would help with my mathematics and science. (Transcript 2)

> KL3: That first day. Eish! It was like I was feeling very honoured that I was coming to Khanyisa for free to attend the killer subjects mathematics and physical science and to attend for free. (Transcript 1)

Secondly, they wondered about their ability to "fit in" in the extremely smart physical setting, very different from their own schools:

KL10: I was scared to come that first day. I have not been to … [advantaged school] before. I do not have the smart school uniform. At my school we don't have laboratories. We don't have the right facilities to learn. We try and the teachers they try, but we don't have the practical part. So that is what is really good about Khanyisa – we can do the practical in physical science, but at first I was nervous and embarrassed that I might do something stupid.

Thirdly, as evidenced in the following exchange, learners were anxious about their ability to work cross-culturally.

KL18: I was scared because at my school we are taught by the Black teacher and at Khanyisa we are taught by the White teacher and I was afraid to be taught by the English White teacher. They would only speak English and my teachers at my school, they talk a lot in isiZulu.

R: And how did you find it with all the teaching in English with a White teacher?

KL18: I am now better at mathematics and I can even help the other learners at my school. And it is good that it is all in English, because my English was bad and that was in the way of my learning with the text books in English. And now, eish, now my English is much better also. Not just my mathematics (laughter, general agreement). (Transcript 6)

It might be logical to think, given South Africa is a multi-cultural society, that learners would feel confident in relation to cross-cultural interactions. The reality for many of the Khanyisa learners, however, is that they have had minimal contact with any culture other than their own. Their lack of self-efficacy was heightened by their schools' poor performance nationally. The reasons for this, too, were explained by one Khanyisa teacher:

KT2:   We still have the big classes. We have sometimes more than 80 kids. We do

not have the whiteboard and the overhead projector. We do not have even the

photocopying machine that works so that we cannot provide even the handouts

for the learners. If the machine gets fixed, then we have no more ink. It is

frustrating. So, then we are chained to the text book. Like now. Now we want

to go through the old papers, the old trials papers. To do this we have to write

it up on the chalkboard. This is such a waste of time. It is not possible even to

do the graphs. It would take all lesson to get the graphs drawn up on the

chalkboard. Teachers are tired at the end of the week. (Transcript 12)

Additionally, another Khanyisa teacher noted reasons for poor attendance by Khanyisa
teachers at Saturday sessions:

K1:   Another reason is, the men, mostly the men, they will be the helpers in the

classroom where the woman is being the main teacher and that is not good for

them. Also, the teachers, they think the kids might ask a question and they do

not know the answer, then they will look stupid with the kids. (Transcript 11)

The lack of resources noted by Vally (2012) clearly persists in the Khanyisa schools,
supporting the view of Collins and Millard (2013) that poverty is race bound. While the
Khanyisa programme is meeting the needs of Khanyisa learners in spectacular fashion, the
same outcomes are not seen with all Khanyisa teachers. From the excerpts above, there are a
number of reasons for this that link back to the research and literature cited earlier: (a) social
conventions are getting in the way of commitment by the teachers because of the gender of
the facilitators and the teachers not wishing to be seen as in a support or subservient role to a
white woman (Collins and Millard 2013); (b) policy-makers with endless curriculum reforms
without concomitant funding for implementation are not taking cognisance of the needs of

the country (Favish and Hendry 2010); (c) outcomes in KwaZulu therefore mirror findings of Darling-Hammond (2003) where she notes that if there is not the buy-in to the reforms they will not be successfully implemented at school level; (d) as predicted by Fullan (2003), constant reforms lead to innovation overload and to teachers feeling disaffected; and (e) the resultant dispiriting lack of motivation, as noted by Chisholm and Wilderman (2013), will likely lead to continued failure.

The anxieties expressed by Khanyisa learners were soon allayed and they rejoiced in advantages they were gaining. This led to impressive commitment and persistence.

Commitment and persistence

When questioned about attendance, 100 per cent of Khanyisa learners had attended every single Saturday session, unless their school had required their attendance as noted in the exchange below:

> R: Have you been able to attend all the Khanyisa sessions, or have you had to miss some over the two years?
>
> KL11: Yes, all. No, I have been absent once when we had the revision at my school and my teacher said I have to attend at my school, but all the rest, ja, I was here.
>
> KL10/12 Yes/All
>
> R: And how have you managed that? There must be other things you want to do on a Saturday?
>
> KL12: Our teacher told us it is for special students so I use this opportunity to attend EVERY session

KL10: Because of what I want to achieve. If I didn't have the courage to come here I would be so sad because I cannot get in to study economics next year (at university). Now, I have this opportunity. Of course, I come.

KL11: I should say that education is my first priority. From the first day I came here, I get the most information, more than I get at school so I tell myself, 'this is what I do EVERY Saturday'. (Transcript 4)

This success and persistence demonstrated by Khanyisa learners over two years parallel the findings of studies showing success leading to persistence and commitment, which in turn lead to further success (Martin, Galentino, and Townsend 2014; McCormick and McPherson 2003; Rosevear 2010).

Cultural mores affecting efficacy

It was not only with male Khanyisa teachers that cultural mores impacted. Whilst both boy and girl learners in the Khanyisa Programme provided clear evidence of increased self-efficacy, linking back to the literature on the historic-cultural moment within which the study took place, there were elements noted in the interviews that were specific to KZN in 2014. The following exchange relating to gender in that context, was enlightening:

KL5: In this project so I was a little bit nervous. I had my expectations and I was wondered if it would help me and if I would be able to hear the teachers clearly, because at my school my teacher Mr …. I sometimes find it hard to hear what he is saying and I struggle to understand when I don't hear everything.

R: Why don't you hear everything?

KL5: There are some learners who do not want to do well and they just want to talk, and Mr … he asks them to keep quiet but they do not listen.

R: And are you the only one who is bothered by the talking?

KL5:   No, there are quite a few who, uh... wish they would keep quiet. We want to do well.

R: And can *you* tell the learners who are talking to keep quiet?

KL5:   No, it is the boys. I am frightened. Those boys, they are powerful. In my culture the females, we do not tell men what to do.

R: And can you hear the teachers when you come to Khanyisa?

All: Yes (general laughter)/ here we all want to work and do well/ it is good. (Transcript 2)

This conversation highlights again the cultural differences and poignantly shines a light for those outside their reality on the fear that Zulu girls and women live with on a daily basis, their self-efficacy affected by growing up and living in a society where violence is a reality and which is male dominated. Additionally, it reinforces the lack of control that teachers can experience if learners have little respect for them. Ten years later, this echoes the findings of the Zulu et al. (2004) findings discussed earlier.

Competence and confidence to assist others

Nevertheless, a dominant theme in interviews with Khanyisa learners was their mathematics and science being so much better that they feel empowered to help other learners. Khanyisa learners were deeply aware of what the opportunity to study at Khanyisa meant for them and their futures. What also came through clearly was the sense of responsibility they felt to assist, back in their schools, learners who had not been provided this opportunity. The following exchange highlights this:

KL7: I am enjoying maths, now I am getting 90%; before I was getting 30 and now 90.

KL9: I was getting 40, 50, but now it is much better, it is much better to share. I am the highest in my class, in distinction (80%+), so I also am helping my friends at school.

R: So you are teaching the other learners in your school what you have learned here at Khanyisa?

KL9: Ja, so I will get a distinction, but I am helping the others also to do better.

R: What has been the most beneficial aspect for you in regards to Khanyisa?

KL9: So, it is that I can learn, but teach too. Because I am teaching the other learners at my school, um, they can understand sometimes, but then some do not understand. So, then I must start again and think to find another way to say it. And I think it is the teaching that has made me to understand even better and I am so happy that I will do well, but it makes me more happy even that I can help some other people who did not come to Khanyisa. (Transcript 3)

In another interview, similar positives from the Khanyisa programme were emphasised by the learners:

R: How do you feel now, now you've come so often to Khanyisa?

KL 4: Mmm. I could say that now I am quite, very confident. Ever since I have started and up until now and I have seen the changes in the tests we write, that we wrote at school... and now I can even teach other children if, like, they ask me a question, about something in physics I am able now to explain that understanding and it is not even, it is not just pretending (general laughter).

KL6:   Ja, we can really face the challenges in mathematics and also physical science. 'Cos like before we were scared to, like, answer the questions, and now ja, now we can even talk to each other. We have met friends here, ja. And it is like very exciting, and even doing and writing a test – we get better marks than we were getting before.

KL4:   Sometimes even, if we do an old exam paper, then even, sometimes my teacher at my school cannot know how to do it, and sometimes then I can help out also.

KL5:   All I can say is that Khanyisa, it has been like a life-saver for us. It has been really good to us. It has helped us a lot. I am now even confident, like she said, to answer. I am now even excited to write my physical science paper, but then, before, I was even like too scared to know what was going to come out. I was like a-shaking in my paper, but now I am just relaxed and just understand things, not just memorise things and write it down and hope it is the best thing to write, like before. (Transcript 2)

When comparing learners' initial apprehension and lack of confidence with their current level of excited expectation and confidence, even extending to teaching others and providing advice to their teachers, it is clear to see their increased "direct personal agency" described by Bandura (2002, 269).

Collective agency

A good example of collective agency is provided by learner's enthusiastic discussion about the peer tutors and their developing relationships with them. The Khanyisa facilitators, the Khanyisa teachers and, most emphatically of all, the Khanyisa learners thought that the peer-

tutor scheme was brilliant. There was not one dissenting voice. The role of the peer-tutors is beautifully explained in this exchange:

> R: So how do you see the role of peer tutors?
>
> KL16: The boys [peer tutors], they are fantastic. They help us all the time if we get stuck. They know the work. They are studying it also. They are also in matric. So, if the teacher is finished teaching, then we have the task. And if we are not sure we put up our hands and the peer tutors they are there and they help us to get going.
>
> R: And are there enough peer tutors? If you need help, do you have to wait, or is there always someone to help you when you need it?
>
> KL16: Yes, there are always boys to help us. They are really good.
>
> R: And if you are back at school and you get stuck, who will help you then?
>
> KL18: So we can get help through that Facebook group. If we have a problem we post the problem and the peer tutor, they help us on Facebook.
>
> KL17: And we also help each other on the Facebook page. We do not all have the computer, but if we have, then we can help each other also. And the peer tutors also.

The Facebook page plays a greater role than simply answering problematic mathematics and science questions. It had led to the development of a community of learners with past and present learners and past and present peer tutors offering advice and encouragement to each other. Just before the exams in 2014, a past Khanyisa learner posted this encouragement to the current cohort – collective agency (Bandura 2002) epitomised:

Although I was enjoying getting those R30s [thirty rands to cover travel expense] and lunch sets in 2012 but I didn't forget about my books to make sure I get to varsity and study for the career of my dream. I have realised how important the khanyisa programme is, since it helped me to be where I am today as I am getting closer and closer to obtaining my BCom degree from UKZN. I would like encourage those sponsors to continue enriching lives of the disadvantaged matriculants, and it's a good investment to our own economy and its making a huge difference in people's lives. I really do not know how I can thank khanyisa for the difference it made in my life but in the possible future I never doubt that I'll be amongst those experts who will be sponsoring that programme to continue making a difference. Most importantly I'd like to wish all the best to matric class of 2014 for their final examinations, and you guys are very fortunate to have that opportunity so make something out of it and be successful.

Regards : [name provided]

Advantaged school peer tutors

The commitment of the peer tutors to the programme and their reasons for making this commitment are encapsulated in the following exchange between the researcher and the peer tutors:

R: What is your role in the Khanyisa programme?

PT2: I am the head peer tutor at Khanyisa. What I basically do is I have to make sure that we have a group of peer tutors who largely consist of Grade 12s at the moment … So I facilitate that whole part there. We have identified three subjects which are the problem subjects with the lowest marks and those are

accounting, mathematics and physical science. So we have to help out at those

subjects. So that is basically my role, as well as being a peer tutor on Saturdays.

R: Every Saturday?

PT2:   Every Saturday

R: That is a huge commitment on your part.

PT2:   It is a huge commitment, but for me, it is something that I am really passionate

about.

When asked about the "passion" referred to and their motivation for joining the programme the

following exchange highlights the philanthropic nature of their commitment with an element

of political motivation as they saw their contribution as benefiting Blacks in South Africa and

as benefiting South Africa by promoting Black achievement:

PT2:   Well, clearly I am Black, but I was fortunate to be born to wealthy parents who

could afford to send me good schools – a private primary school. As a family

we speak English at home and I have ended up being a prefect here at

(advantaged school). I have had every opportunity. It could so easily have

happened that I could have been born in a squatter settlement a few kilometres

from where I live and had only the education afforded these Khanyisa learners.

My passion is to help where I can. I mean these guys are clever. They would

not have got to matric with rather hopeless schooling unless they were really

smart. I just want to make a contribution – for them as individuals and also

because our country needs Blacks who excel.

R: And have you ever been short of peer tutors on a given Saturday – in rugby

season maybe?

PT1: (Laughter) No, each week there are enough. Well actually him and me (indicating PT2), we started last year and the group was smaller, so this year what he did, he interviewed people to see that they would be suitable. We had to, obviously we had to tell them what the programme consists of so that they don't, you know, join and then at the end of the day think no, this is not for me. It's all about investing back into your country. And we also need to be sure they are good academically so they can really help. (Transcript 8)

When asked what benefits they derived from their contribution to the Khanyisa programme, the peer tutors echoed the Khanyisa learners when they were talking about the benefit of teaching something increasing their own achievement and, thereby, self-efficacy, although this was not a motivation for these peer tutors to join the programme:

PT1: It also helps us in the long run, too.

PT2: Ja, it also helps in the long run.

PT1: As we study for finals.

R: So, you reckon that by being a peer tutor, and by teaching somebody whatever, the science or the maths, that helped you as well?

PT2: Definitely.

R: Ah, okay. That is very interesting.

PT2: I think it tests really how well you know your stuff. As they say, the best way for you to see if you know something is to teach someone else. And that really puts you under that test. And you end up knowing the stuff really well. (Transcript 8)

Khanyisa facilitators from the advantaged school

When asked how the Khanyisa programme came into being, the Project Coordinator and mathematics facilitator explained: "The Khanyisa programme got off the ground because I knew the Superintendent-General of Education, who at one stage had been in my Mathematics Methods class at the University. He was very keen that (advantaged school) should help teachers in the wider KZN context. … For me, I had just got tired of waiting for improvement across all schools as promised. I have to do what I can while I can" (PC, Transcript 10). When asked about the selection of learners for the programme, she went on to point out that the Khanyisa team knows that they can make only a relatively small difference in the overall context of KZN, but obviously with the level of commitment the project demands of them, they want the most positives possible to emanate from the project. When conceptualising the project, they considered the question, "Who do you target? The lowest achievers who are most in need, or those with the basics in place who will potentially make the greatest gains?" (PC, Transcript 10). The Khanyisa team chose to target those with seemingly the greatest potential and in this they rely on the Khanyisa teachers to make the selection.

The response of the Project Coordinator, when asked about the benefits to the facilitators themselves, highlights goodwill and selflessness for the greater good; in her words: "The benefit for facilitators is that you feel that you are making a small difference" (PC, Transcript 10). She also mentioned that they get extremely positive feedback, and that for the (advantaged school) boys, there must be some fulfilment too, which echoes what the peer tutors themselves said. The other Khanyisa facilitator responded by saying: "I love being part of this team. I love seeing the learners when their eyes light up as they do the science experiments. I am humbled by their drive to learn"(KF1, Transcript 11).

While the exchange with peer tutors and the facilitators, successful teachers in the advantaged school, evidenced elements of political motivation, in that they saw it as investment in the country and as the country needing Black academics, they did not emphasise the political – it was rather an oblique reference as noted in the quotes. For them it was enough to be making a contribution to the betterment of the lives of the Khanyisa learners.

Conclusion

The Khanyisa Programme is one example of the enormous goodwill that prevails in many spheres in South Africa. The advantaged school teachers and learners commit with time and effort to support learners and teachers from under-resourced schools through playing a facilitator and peer support role. An ongoing vulnerability includes having to use full-time (advantaged school) teachers as facilitators so they are in overload, doing the Khanyisa facilitation in their own time over and above their normal teaching load and commitment to co-curricular activities. A strong recommendation from this study is that funders make a long-term commitment to the Khanyisa Programme to provide assurance of its continuation, development and expansion.

The direct individual self-efficacy of the Khanyisa learners is clearly enhanced through the programme and their excellent academic results improve their career prospects exponentially. The improved self-efficacy and the growing relationship between the learners in the advantaged and under-resourced schools, sustained by the social media site, has seen a community of learners develop with increased collective agency. While teachers have benefitted through the programme, the economic and social factors of life in rural KwaZulu-Natal have impacted on their ongoing commitment to the programme. The Khanyisa Project Co-ordinator and her team continue to try to find ways to engage them further. Currently, the team is considering re-instating work-day professional development for teachers if funding

allows. Additionally, they are considering a model of bringing teachers from further afield for periods of time to extend the reach of the Khanyisa Programme. This model is relatively easily replicable if funding can be secured and if well-resourced schools prove willing to make the commitment.

Further research

At the time of writing, the Khanyisa Programme has begun its next iteration in 2015 with a cohort of Year 11 learners from 24 under-resourced schools. The programme is retaining the three subjects taught, but with no expansion due to funding continuing but remaining the same. Relying on people's goodwill is obviously not enough, nor politically effective and this could be fully addressed in the next research. Foci for the next research could include engaging in greater depth with both groups, those from advantaged and under-resourced schools, in critical discussions to know in more detail why or how they joined the programme, whether they had different or similar expectations, opinions, stereotypes and fears, how they felt during the process, and what they have mutually learnt at the end of it.

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