



Transformation: Cultural sensitivity with specific reference to race and language

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THE FOCUS

- Race relations is a double-edged sword and racial prejudices always has two sides to it.
- Due to time constraints this presentation will focus on the challenges and the perceptions facing the legacy of those privileged by Apartheid.

“Back to Basics”



- Everyone is influenced by the cultural (or “non-cultural”) environment they live in.
- Most people are very defensive of their accepted cultural heritage.
- The concept of cultural heritage is ever changing in line with a changing world.
- In South Africa, unfortunately cultural heritage cannot be separated from language and race.

South African Reality on Cultural heritage



- Cultural heritage has been used as a platform to promote superiority.
 - Initial “European” missionaries
Considering the indigenous “black” inhabitants as being heathen savages.
 - British colonialists
Considering the Dutch- Afrikaans Boers as uncouth and uneducated.
 - Nationalists
Considering themselves (White superiority) superior over other races/cultures during the implementation of Apartheid.



South African Reality on Cultural heritage

- This concept of superiority has left scars on the receivers(of this inflicted superiority) for many years to come.

Basics of “Apartheid” in South Africa

- One race, legalised by the predominately Afrikaans National Party Government, was elevated to legally superior to others.
- This superiority was promoted and implemented at all levels.
- Not only legal Apartheid but all an indoctrinated Apartheid into the very lives of both white and non-whites.

Effect on the Past “Superior ” People

- Legal & Formal Apartheid was stopped in 1994.
- All of us, however must still be sensitive to some practices and perceptions from the previous dispensation.
- A vulnerability promoting a lack of sensitivity, is aggravated by the deterioration of civil services and infrastructure.

Effect on the Past “Superior ” People

- Farm murders, BEE policy, quota system etc. further aggravates these perceptions.
- Resulting in the neutralisation of this indoctrinated Apartheid to be delayed by many years.

Effect on the Past “Inferior ” People

- Deeply personal, emotional and physical scars.
- Extreme sensitivity to any forms of returning to/reminder of, the inferior status.
- General distrust of the motives of the “past superior”.

Effect on the Past “Inferior ” People

- Aggravated in the “new” South Africa because of disillusionment felt due to slow or even stagnant upliftment.
- This leading to even more distrust of the “past superior”, who have partially maintained a privileged lifestyle.



Sensitive areas

- “Past inferiors” will not generally see slow progress to upliftment as a consequence of their own compatriots incompetence and corruption.
- Many are politically indoctrinated to put the blame on the “past superior” for hindering the pace of upliftment in turn increasing mistrust.



Sensitive areas

- “Privileged” position of Afrikaans during the CODESA negotiations now becoming an issue of contention.
- Many South Africans making little or no personal effort to get to know other cultures or the language of their compatriots.

Sensitive areas

- Rise of African Nationalism and restoration of traditional ownership which can result in the perception of reverse discrimination.



Self-derived concepts

- All said to now is fundamentally an issue of RACE and RACE RELATIONS.
- Much progress has been made but racism or perceived racism is still present in all cultures.

Self-derived concepts

- Afrikaans is unfortunately the target of the rising aspirations the majority of the persons who still see Afrikaans as the language of the “oppressor”.
- The “liberators” are still perceived as heroes, irrespective of the present actions of their leaders, because they initiated an end to Apartheid.

Select advice to “past superiors”

- Accept that they are not the rulers anymore but have now to subject themselves to legal and constitutional leadership.
- Part of the Constitution is to “correct the injustices of the past”, accept this and get your mindset around this; whether you agree or not.

Select advise to “past superiors”

- Make a concerted effort to understand the deep rooted feelings (yours & theirs) of many of the up-and-coming generation.
- Do not use or permit the use of derogatory language, jokes, stories, commentary of any person or group (not even, in the sake of humour).

Select advise to “past superiors”

- Be careful of generalisations e.g. if a few thugs kill a farmer don’t generalise by blaming a entire race or culture.
- Must learn to keep your own perceptions to yourself – remain neutral and fair to all in your professional and personal life while you are an educational leader.

Select advise to “past superiors”

- Be careful of anything that could be perceived as forced segregation on racial or cultural lines – even if it appears to be in “educational interests”.
- 2 white or 2 boys of colour fight - no issue. If a white and boy of colour fight its perceived as racism. Very unfair but true to perceptions? So manage carefully and plan accordingly.

Select advise to “past superiors”

- Careful of body language. All people are much more sensitive to the body language of different cultures or race than their own.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Again emphasise “that we are in a very sensitive stage of the ‘rehabilitation’ i.e. *the rainbow nation* is in danger of crumbling into division and strife.”
- Educational leaders will have to get us through this period. Political leaders will only continue to use Apartheid and its legacy as a scapegoat to gain voters.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Educational leaders of all races and cultures will have to develop sensitivity to all and be much more informed of the present political environment.
- Have a well thought out contingency plan in place to handle the perceptions, undertakings and comebacks of incidents.
- Always turn it around to **MANAGE** the picture.



FINALLY

- KNOW & UNDERSTAND - everyone in your school community or future school community.

GOOD LUCK & GOD BLESS

THANK YOU
DANKIE