IPRPD
International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
ISSN 2693-2547 (Print), 2693-2555 (Online)
Volume 07; Issue no 06: June 2026
DOI: 10.56734/ijahss.v7n6a4

MIRRORING AND MODELING: WELL-BEING AS A FRAMEWORK FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

Young South Africans living in contexts of poverty face many challenges in their attempts to rise above their circumstances. The government has proposed that the education system needs to transition schools to adopt a culture of teaching and learning. However, adding support in the form of well-being teams has been successful in starting this cultural shift. Four different well-being teams participated in focus groups and activities. These teams consisted of teachers, learners, parents, and a mixed group with some teachers, learners, and parents together. Results suggest that, in an effort to level the playing field for young South Africans, the schooling system should continue to expand the well-being teams. This addition would help promote a culture of teaching and learning.

Keywords

Positive Communication, South Africa, Schools, Education, Culture of Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Parents, teachers, community members, and local culture play a significant role in shaping youth. In South Africa, schools play an important role in fostering well-being and support. The challenges in South African communities—such as gangs, crime, drug addiction, and parental absence/abuse— create obstacles that threaten young South Africans' (YSAs) futures (Savahl et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Despite government-sponsored initiatives and legislation, educational statistics for YSAs are grim. South Africa ranks 128th out of 137 countries for its math and science education, and in 2025 over 60% of YSAs aged 15-24 were unemployed (Republic of South Africa, 2025). The term coined by the government to refer to these YSAs is NEETs, not employed, in education, or training (Higher Education and Training, 2017), which includes about half of all YSAs.

Education and parenting are key factors to breaking systemic poverty and ensuring that YSAs gain necessary skills for their futures. In 1994 the World Health Organization (WHO/AFRO, 2013) designed a program, Health Promoting Schools (HPS). These schools are designed to foster health and well-being. They encourage collaboration between teachers, parents, learners, the community, and government officials. However, insufficient resources cause this approach to lean toward addressing ill-being in the form of physical and behavioral issues, not enhancing well-being.

Rationale

In South African communities fraught with limitations, schools can be environments that support and enhance well-being (Ashley-Cooper et al., 2019). According to McNab (2013), the effectiveness of the South African Schools Act (1996) and HPS relies on changing mindsets. Thus, for substantial changes to occur within a culture of teaching and learning (CTL), all stakeholders benefit from developing healthy, positive perspectives that align with definitions of a CTL.

Since resources are not always readily available--especially in low-income neighborhoods—it makes sense that collaboration between stakeholders is key. It is important, then, to facilitate positive interactions amongst these stakeholders. This interpretive descriptive study examines how communication may enhance a group of South

African teachers, parents, and learners' ability to implement a CTL with the overarching question, "What communicative strategies are parents, teachers, and learners using that enhance or undermine successful implementation of a CTL?"

Literature Review

Being educated implies awareness of and engaging with one's own communities. Poor quality schooling significantly impedes the ability of YSAs to take advantage of later opportunities. However, fostering certain environments primes people to engage in specific ways (Prilleltensky, 2012). Schools play an enormous role that extends outside of school.

Culture of Teaching and Learning in South Africa - Then and Now

Governmental agencies outlined plans to improve the quality of education. Policy changes have been driven by the government's goal to "redress past injustices in educational provision" (Department of Basic Education, 1996, p. 1) but have not succeeded. One issue involves the provision of education and access to education and how people use their education later in life. Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan asserts that eradication of poverty and inequality by 2030; however, according to some experts this vision is nothing more than a pipedream.

A main goal of education has been to restore a CTL in South African Schools. This culture focuses on learning through engagement. The dynamics of a CTL include a strong sense of positivism, purpose, achievement, and acknowledged success. Teachers and other stakeholders must model the required cultural determinants for learners and bring meaningful social interaction that establishes a learning classroom community (Weeks, 2012). A CTL should enable learners to learn from one another, not just the teacher.

Few people would argue that teaching is nothing without the formation of relationships. Caring relationships are critical elements of school cultures. Education experts agree that teachers' ideas about teaching and learning affect pedagogy. Many teachers are unsure of what a CTL means or how to bring it into the classroom, or they are accustomed to managing their classroom in a particular way.

Many teachers still prefer teacher-centered strategies. Several factors contribute to teachers' inability or unwillingness to change their style. First, teachers' ideas about teaching and learning can be a barrier to change. Second, some teachers may be uncomfortable encouraging dialogue and openness when they do not have answers.

Another factor involves integrating YSAs in the schools. Some researchers have found that a majority of teachers expressed apathy toward creating a welcoming environment. South African teachers often teach to a particular ethnic group of students, reinforcing differences between learners (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). This practice may blind teachers to individual learners' needs.

Despite the abstract nature of a CTL, some concrete suggestions have been offered. Monyai (2018) suggested: 1) to encourage acquiring contextualized knowledge, 2) to teach so that learners connect knowledge, and 3) to promote collaborative learning. Other researchers have discussed a culture that allows learners to make mistakes, bounce back, and learn from those mistakes. However, much of the advice for CTLs does not explain how to intentionally create such a culture and who is responsible for creating it. Mere statements of intent to establish a CTL, without giving expression through active learning classroom experiences could explain the failure for many schools (Weeks, 2012).

A bottom-up approach in co-creating this CTL means that students also would be involved. However, students have not necessarily bought into this desired culture. For example, high absenteeism and tardiness, a lack of commitment to learning, low morale, high failure rates, sexual harassment, and early dropout rates. Part of creating a CTL requires changing the mental models regarding what constitutes appropriate behavior. Some schools have succeeded in achieving core CTL responsibilities and have created a context where values such as neatness, good attendance, and punctuality are the norm (Grant et al., 2010). Therefore, models exist.

Culture of Parenting in South Africa

Parenting makes emotional demands, and it requires interpersonal skills. Parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children to prepare them to realize their full potential and to transmit cultural values. This transmission often is passed through communication and imitation. Most parents learn parenting skills from their own parents. This means that as parenting methods are passed intergenerationally, both desirable and undesirable practices are adopted (Amos, 2013).

The practices that comprise parenting are dependent on several factors, including well-being and relational quality between parents and children (Ward et al., 2015). Poverty often limits a caregiver's ability to engage with children and may result in children receiving less stimulation and parent-child interaction (Ashley-Cooper et al., 2019). Competing forces from media provide limited information regarding African cultural values or proper traditional parenting.

Adolescence changes parenting as YSAs expand their media usage and social networks, and they experience rapid brain development (Blum, et al. (2014). Still, parenting remains critical to young people's sense of

belonging, sexual identity, interaction with society, and safety. Therefore, parenting during adolescence impacts YSAs' transition into adulthood.

Societal expectations significantly influence people's educational decisions. Gender expectations often play a big role in education. For instance, in some areas, women believe if they are too educated, they may not get married, and men may fear that educated women will not submit to them (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005). These social expectations often come from family, and expected participation in household labor may limit education (Monyai, 2018).

Other factors also impact youths' likeliness to succeed educationally. This includes appropriate nutrition, healthy parental attachment, cognitive parental stimulation, positive parenting, and limit-setting and impact children's development into healthy adults (Ward et al., 2015). These factors also tend to be related to decreased engagement in risky sex, decreased substance misuse, and decreased violent/criminal behaviors.

Poverty can make parenting difficult. For example, poverty increases parental stressors. This stress can make parents more emotionally distant, harsh, and inconsistent (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Additionally, single parents are more likely to be living in poverty and to experience additional stressors (Ward et al., 2015). Father absence also affects children, and engaged fathering has an independent, positive effect on children (Sarkadi et al., 2008).

Teen parents also face difficulty in parenting. More specifically, the push to complete schooling may limit teens' ability to care for their own child (Ward et al., 2015). Parental mentoring helps teens carry out parental responsibilities and increases the chances educational and work prospects (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). This support impacts the teen parent but also sets a path for the child.

Despite the importance of parenting, practical resources are limited. For example, although a 2013 White Paper on Families in South Africa was approved by Parliament, no instruments nor funds exist to implement the recommendations. Some home-visiting or group-based services exist for at-risk parents which focus on improving parenting skill, avoiding parental violence, and nutrition education, but they are not offered on a large scale.

Interdependence between Parent, Teachers, Learners, and Community Members

A CTL emerges through collaboration and the sharing of ideas, values, and beliefs between stakeholders. Relational coordination theory (Gittell; 2002, 2011a, 2011b), posits that coordination of social relations focuses on three dimensions of these social relationships - shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect. The development of partnerships among stakeholders facilitates working together towards a shared vision.

Discrepancies between theory, policy, and practice make it difficult for teachers to navigate boundaries about disciplinary action. Legislation dictated that corporal punishment is unacceptable -- teachers have the right to discipline learners, but the discipline ought to be corrective and educative (Department of Basic Education, 2010). Many teachers are afraid to discipline learners for fear of violating learners' human rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

Legislation also includes parents. Section 20 of the South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) states that parents have a say in the governance and ethos of schools. Suspicion of education leads to very little involvement in such initiatives; yet, it creates a perception of government neglect. Many parents tend to remain detached from the schools. They often fail to instill discipline at home and are oblivious about their children's school behavior. This failure may influence behavior at school.

In some places, teachers serve as "stand-in parents," referred to as "in loco parentis" --meaning that in the classroom, teachers fulfill the role of parent. In theory, parents accede to teachers the right to discipline and to ensure the safety of learners (Mitchell et al., 2011). Some teachers cite they are being asked to perform too many roles. More specifically, one 27-year veteran teacher lamented that teachers must play the role of parent, priest, provider, and counselor, leading to burn-out (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018) and that disruptive behavior takes too much of their teaching time.

Learner disrespect for teachers is evident. Marais and Meier (2010) found that this disrespect originated from home – those same learners disrespected their parents. Many teachers feel disempowered to enact discipline and that alternative strategies are ineffective. Both the human rights legislation and the teachers' lack of knowledge of human rights may handicap teachers and undermine their well-being (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018).

Worse yet, many teachers fear for their own safety. Learners have attacked teachers, challenging loco parentis. Local media caught a learner on camera attacking a teacher with a broom (Ngobeni, 2013). Another learner shot a teacher (Pretoria News, 2013). Such incidents create an obvious threat to teachers' ability to discipline, to create a safe class environment, and to protect themselves.

The Role of Well-Being

Worldwide, people experience threats to well-being that stem from poverty, violence, and other crises. Prilleltensky (2014a) defined well-being as a "positive state of affairs, brought about by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of diverse objective and subjective needs of individuals, relationships, organizations, and communities" (p. 7188). Well-being results when people have stable relationships and fulfillment of their needs.

A Positive or a Negative Frame

Positive communication gives equal attention to what is going right in relationships and social systems, as well as what needs improving. "High-quality supportive interactions positively influence psychological, physical, and relational outcomes immediately and in the long term" (MacGeorge et al., 2012, p. 224). This language parallels CTL, where adults talk with, not at, YSAs.

Method

Interpretive Descriptive Design

This study employed a qualitative design, which is appropriate for exploring lived experiences. Based on Creswell and Poth's (2018) criteria this inductive, interpretive descriptive design makes sense since a major goal was to gain insight into the culture of schools and parenting. This design allowed for inquiring about the experiences of teachers, parents, and YSAs that enhance current and future success in school and at home. This method allows group members to mutually influence each other, and the interactions enhance data quality.

Participants

The population from which the sample was selected is sixty public primary and secondary schools in the Cape Winelands School District in the Western Cape Province. Six schools (two secondary and four primary) had been involved for two years in a project of the Rupert Education Foundation and volunteered as members of Well-Being Coordinating Teams (WCTs). Members of each WCT (parents, teachers, learners) included three to five people at each of the six schools. Thus, after combining all six schools, groups of 18–30 parents, teachers, and learners were involved. The main goal of the WCTs is to strengthen well-being and promote human development. Drawing from the six schools, 5–10 individuals from each team volunteered for this project.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals were granted by two institutions. The IRB approval, which also included consent forms from the author's university and the host's university.

Procedures/Data Collection

Focus groups enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences. Focus groups can be collaborative and empowering. The focus groups began with a series of interactive communication activities. Each activity was selected based on the group of participants (i.e., teachers vs. learners). At the conclusion of the activities, each group convened for the focus group discussion. A moderator guide helped direct interaction, providing structure while leaving room for group members to direct topics and included the moderator writing session observations and reflective notes during and immediately after the activities and focus group discussions (Billups, 2019). Participants could respond in English or Afrikaans (an Afrikaans speaker sat in and interpreted).

Adhering to processes outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), all audio-recorded focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. The symbol [sic] verifies participants' verbatim responses. Transcribed interviews resulted in 29 pages of single-spaced data. During the activity portion, conversations were not recorded. This is due to several factors. For example, at times, participants first worked individually completing a handout, and at other times they paired up to discuss one of the activities. This is where the field note-taking became particularly beneficial. Participants also submitted written materials they completed during the exercises. The average length of the focus group interviews was 36 minutes, with a range of 26–47 minutes. However, the average length of time for each entire session (including activities and exercises) was 1 hour and 24 minutes, with a range of 70-115 minutes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis involved the six-step process created by Braun and Clarke (2006) by assigning codes to pieces of data, exploring for common themes, and naming themes. More specifically, transcriptions were reviewed repeatedly to gain familiarity and then to generate initial coding categories. Upon identifying a relevant text segment, the researcher assigned a code and compared subsequent segments to the first code, resulting either in applying the existing code or creating a new one. Then similarly coded categories were grouped. The process of continuing to further organize categories into overarching themes ensued, resulting in naming them and choosing exemplars.

Researchers are strongly encouraged to take field notes to enhance data and provide rich context for analysis. Field notes are considered so essential that standardized criteria for qualitative research reporting encourage researchers to include a statement of collection of field notes in manuscripts (O'Brien et al., 2014). Field notes served to: prompt close observation of the environment and interactions, increase rigor and trustworthiness, and to provide essential context to inform data analysis (Phillippi & Lauderdale 2018).

Results

The emergent themes include: building basic social skills that avoids corporal punishment, self-reflection and confidence in trying new tactics, open communication, increased empathy, and creating buy-in. These themes demonstrate positive changes occurring in the schools through WCT participation that can help develop and sustain a CTL. The remainder of this section will demonstrate these themes.

Building Basic Social Skills That Avoids Corporal Punishment

One prominent theme was the need to learn or build fundamental social skills despite the desire to use corporal punishment. All groups demonstrated a lack of vocabulary for basic social skills; however, it was most evident with parents. For example, I asked parents to identify a skill they wished their children would do better. They struggled to identify a behavior. When provided with a list of social skills, the greatest number of them wanted their children listen better. One of the prepared activities involved following MODELING (Make choices, Organize the behavior, Demonstrate the behavior, Encourage the student to imitate, Link the behavior, Integrate into classroom routine, Notice the behavior, Generalize the behavior; Campbell & Siperstein, 1994). Parents could talk at length about their children's poor listening skills, but during the activity, parents struggled to identify specific behaviors that demonstrate good listening. Parent C still struggled, saying "I always tell my kids if I talk to them and they don't listen, I will also not listen to them when they talk to me. So I am getting them back."

Teachers also discussed the importance of building listening skills. They identified the reciprocal listening to build rapport. The teachers tended to focus on how they have increased their nonverbal skill by paying more attention to cues than they had prior to being in the WCTs. Teacher C added:

You have to think about what you're saying and how. Because once the words are out there, they can never be taken back. So if your words were related to anger, hurt, or they cause pain… you can never predict the way that person is going to feel.

Learners also recognized the role of the WCTs in gaining social skills, especially with verbally and nonverbally. For example, Learner A said:

> I think, um, the words that you use – I think someone will be able to notice what type of person you are through the way you speak and nonverbal communication, tells people, um, like without using words, how they feel about you as a person.

Many learners are more focused on nonverbal communication, mentioning that they are paying more attention to the cues they project and the feedback they receive.

Parents expressed the desire to use corporal punishment, and some did use it. However, many parents hesitate based on their children's awareness of their rights. Parent B said:

> I always use examples where I tell them if you were born in my time, everything was a bit strict. But now if you want to hit them, they will threaten to say that they will go to the police station. These threats are even more severe for teachers. For example, Parent B added, "I am a parent and teacher here, and teachers are not allowed to do anything to children. They can't even point at them."

Self-Reflection and Confidence in Trying New Tactics

The teachers and parents were especially positive about learning new practical skills. At times they disagreed. For example, Teacher E indicated that one of the teacher activities would be helpful for parents but to "skip all the role playing" but Teacher A said, "No… monkey see, monkey do."

Several people mentioned experiencing increased gratitude. For example, Learner A discussed becoming aware of how many other YSAs at school do not have food at home and that they had always taken regular meals for granted. Learner A also spoke with regret when they remembered not helping a peer, "And it was like late at night, and I wasn't in the mood to do it. So I ignored… if I could do it over again, I would actually try and help them." Learner C added, "I've learned a lot about myself… I learned that I work well with people, and I've learned that two minds are better than one."

Teacher G said they have some learners that keep asking the same questions, but sometimes they're tired and irritated. Recently, they tried a new tactic. "But um, after this what stuck with me is that without judging them for their questions… rather ask somebody else to give the answer." Teacher A said that "I can use a different gauge… I'll praise the person who shows improvement. Or I praise someone who hadn't been turning in homework who has started to turn in homework."

Teachers talked about taking advantage of situations they would not have before. For example, Teacher B talked about the importance of small interactions: "I found for me personally, um, that doesn't need to be a big thing in order to make a difference… just having a quick conversation with a learner while walking in the hall." Other teachers talked about finding new ways to connect, like inviting a learner to have lunch or a cup of tea with

them. Faculty members tended to act with more "grace" and "less anger" because "Children must make mistakes. They learn from their mistakes."

Open Communication

Teachers also discussed a newfound appreciation for open communication so that "we all know we are all on the same level or not on the same level." In fact, Teacher B cited the biggest obstacle with open communication was "a lot of the time, the teachers" They added, "It's more like I'm – I don't want to offend you. So I don't say to you what the problem is." Teacher D also added, "You know, that happens especially with younger teachers… They afraid [sic] to ask because they feel embarrassed." Teacher D mentioned mentoring new teachers. "You know, you would go and check up."

A more experienced teacher F said they tell newer teachers stories about their botched "first times," but some of the older teachers feel offended when someone new comes and takes over what that teacher had built up over time. They also discussed their "sales pitch" to teachers to join the WCT:

> I'm amazed at how much better I feel when I leave. And I think that it's possible for anybody. You know I've been in the teaching profession for so long and yet I've learned something new! So please do come.

Learner A discussed more open communication in the classroom so that learners could get to know their teachers and peers more as "people" and to disagree in supportive and respectful ways.

Increased Empathy

Members of all groups discussed how participating in the WCTs increased their empathy with all stakeholders. Parent D said, "We, as parents, say that 'but yes, the teacher is doing nothing about it', but what are we as parents doing? Go and sit in class and listen to what is happening." Parent E said:

> I learned to respect the teachers more because, um, I was put in a role as a teacher for a whole week, and I never knew what the teacher went through… I can tell the other parents… The teachers are playing the role of a mother as well as being a teacher at the same time.

Other parents discussed the need to persuade parents who are not part of the WCTs to defend and support teachers over their own children. Parent A said:

Sometimes what I notice is that parents don't listen to the teacher. They jump to conclusions and shout "You must leave my child alone." We must not do that because children are very naughty when they are in groups… parents should not protect them in front of the teacher.

Teachers also discussed being nonjudgmental and empathetic in terms of reaching YSAs where they are. For example, some teachers discussed that the YSAs get tired and frustrated and that it was important to put themselves in the YSAs' shoes. Teacher H shared:

> In the past, I've got this child was neat [sic], but the work was so weak, and then she was for a few days absent. Then I go visit and it was so, I don't, I never see a house like that [sic]. There was no bed to sleep on. There were no lights.

Teacher H also began complimenting the learner's neatness and sometimes provided extra food.

Some teachers discussed when they did not behave empathetically. Teacher G said:

> Specifically this afternoon, um, one of our colleagues. She didn't have a good day. And my plan was to go and talk to her… You have to be "that person" even if you have your own problems.

Similarly, Teacher F regretted lack of empathy for a learner, "I was thinking back that I could have done that differently, that my learner must have felt humiliated, although he was wrong."

Some teachers wish for more empathy, especially from parents. Teacher F said, "As teachers, uh, in the class I have to sit with 50 different personalities when they only have to put up with me. But on a daily basis you go through at least 120 different personalities."

Creating Buy-In

Participants used a variety of strategies to create buy-in for learners and for getting others to participate in the WCTs. Teacher C discussed her motto at school, "Every year is a new year. So we leave the past behind… we're molding them as adults, so we don't go back to what they've done wrong."

Many teachers focused on making a more cooperative environment and creating agency for learners. Teacher C explained, "I try to always remind my students that it is a two-way process. I can meet you halfway.

Have you taken a step toward me?" Teacher B added, "I think when they can do stuff where they can engage with, with the teacher and their classmates." Teacher B noted, "It's a new page with mine starts immediately. We discuss it, we say why it was wrong, what we can do to fix it. We move on. Done. No grudges." Teacher F volunteered, "But they actually know *why* they have to do it. It's not just because you're the boss, and they have to do what you say."

Learner C talked about meeting people halfway. "I see a child that just hanging [sic] around on their own. I know they want to have friends, but they can't. So, a little smile is kind of meeting them halfway." Learner C added, "Some children would find it offensive if you offer them help. So instead of doing that, you could ask questions you think they want to ask."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers, parents, and YSA learners living in contexts of poverty to understand better how their school communities can create and sustain a CTL that promotes well-being. Five themes emerged from this study: building basic social skills that avoids corporal punishment, self-reflection and confidence in trying new tactics, open communication, increased empathy, and creating buy-in. These school communities have been participating in a holistic well-being approach that pays attention to the promotion of individual, relational, and collective well-being (Kitching & van Rooyen, 2019). The results suggest that this approach is tied to the objectives outlined for a CTL. A well-being approach that focuses on positive communication is an appropriate framework to analyze these themes because it draws from positive psychology and resilience (Polk & Pollino, 2020). The findings suggest that emphasizing the benefits of positive communication as a function that promotes well-being, health, and increased prosperity for everyone.

The first theme of building social skills while avoiding corporal punishment emphasizes socialization. This research aligns with Kitching's (2019) work on how adversity in South African communities is detrimental to well-being and points to areas where efforts to create a CTL have not been successful. YSAs cannot engage in prosocial skills without models. Additionally, teachers face limitations in trying to teach the curricula, engage in loco parentis, and teach basic social skills. This limits the entire community's ability to operate cohesively and create a CTL.

These findings suggest that participation in the WCTs increases everyone's awareness about the importance of social skills and how to model and mirror those behaviors. In addition, the results point to, as Ward et al. (2015) suggested, the need for larger scale parenting workshops, alternative parenting strategies, and teaching adults the basics of recognizing the unique abilities and constraints of each child.

Teachers also would benefit from better clarity of what constitutes proper discipline of learners, perhaps in workshops on how to handle bad classroom behavior. YSAs also need to understand that there are limits of their rights.

The second theme of engaging in self-reflection and having increased confidence in trying new tactics is understandable. The saying that "awareness is half the battle" exists for a reason. Teachers, parents, and YSAs cannot engage in behaviors that promote well-being and help create a CTL when they are unaware of their own behaviors and how they affirm or contradict those behaviors of a CTL. This idea supports relational coordination theory (Gittrell, 2002, 2010, 2011) --focused on shared goals, knowledge, and mutual respect, which may help foster a CTL. Additionally, Polk and Kitching (2016) found that YSAs struggle with support inconsistency but are more inclined to repeat behaviors that elicit positive results.

The third theme of open communication supports the role of positive communication as an important form of support. These results suggest that some participants shifted their perception so that they understood that how they spoke up mattered. They also recognized open communication as necessary to ensure clarity on goals and expectations. These findings support existing research regarding the importance of stable, ongoing support structures. The most helpful support often tends to be small, ongoing interaction.

The fourth theme of increased empathy supports the first three themes. To create a CTL that enhances well-being, stakeholders must know all stakeholders' rights and responsibilities and have tools to behave responsibly. This helps clarify everyone's individual roles and collective roles. This theme also supports the goals of a transition to a CTL, especially in terms of each stakeholder advocating for a shift away from outward behaviors to what motivates those actions. For YSAs for example, poor performance in school and/or bad behavior often indicate stress at home. These results suggest that, sometimes, a powerful way to build empathy is physically to go into one another's environments. This supports the complexity of home and school environments.

The final theme involved creating buy-in. These findings suggest that the WCT members are shifting to a CTL by using a bottom-up approach. Including learners' voices in decision-making gave them agency. Collaboration fosters CTLs.

This growing list of worthy but lofty goals – teaching social skills, interpersonal relationship development, YSA welfare, and interactive learning – not to mention required curricula – has to develop from teamwork and cooperation. It simply is too much for teachers to be solely accountable for all these things on a daily basis, so it is

necessary to look at developing a CTL from a holistic perspective. These WCTs seems to be a core component to this cultural shift.

Disclosure of Interest

The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This manuscript has not been published previously.

Funding

The author received University funding for the lead author's flight to South Africa and for lodging provided by a grant earned by Dr. Elizabeth Kitching while in South Africa.

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