

**TEXT 1****Rethinking the purpose of university education**

By Pedro Tabensky

- 1 Most philosophers of education in the past century and a half would agree that education should be the practice of freedom. Education should nurture the ability to wisely decide how we want to shape our lives and it should promote human independence.
- 2 Among these scholars, are some of the most influential theorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the American John Dewey, Brazilian Paulo Freire, and Indian Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Yet, there is little evidence that their views have played any significance in shaping the global education sector.
- 3 If these scholars are correct, universities and educational institutions do not always understand what they are doing. It is a shocking accusation levelled at the higher education sector. After all, educational institutions are in the business (or should be) of fostering understanding.
- 4 I have for many years been trying to make sense of education's purpose and wondering why there is such a great difference between what scholars of education have been telling us and what actually happens in the classroom. These authors believe that education should help to shape well-adjusted individuals who can contribute to the common good – as opposed merely, to lending a hand to the status quo. Merely lending a hand distorts independence.
- 5 Dewey thought that education should promote 'intelligent growth'. In Dewey's own words: 'Impulses and desires that are not ordered by intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances ... A person whose conduct is controlled in this way has the illusion of freedom. Actually, he is directed by forces over which he has no command.'
- 6 An educated person can adapt to life's challenges by critically and sensitively engaging with what is given. The alternative is what Dewey describes as someone 'whose conduct is controlled ... by forces over which he has no command' and hence lacks freedom. This is a person who is unable to develop a proper understanding of the forces that undermine freedom.
- 7 Sadly, it is this sort of existence that very many universities promote. Universities aim to produce competent professionals rather than individuals who are able to adapt to life's challenges and understand the forces that affect their freedom.
- 8 Universities follow on from high school by training students to be accepting robots. Students are trained to apply their intelligence in specific spheres of life and not to ask too many questions beyond their narrow scope of involvement. This sort of narrow thinking lacks the independence of the critical mind – a mind able to stand back, consider and influence action. It is this approach that the philosopher and linguist Noam Chomsky describes in an interview when speaking about the contrast between indoctrination and genuine education.

- 9 In an interview which forms part of the documentary 'The Lottery of Birth', Jeff Schmidt, a physicist and the author says: 'Professionals are deliberately produced to be intellectually and politically subordinate.' He illustrates this idea with the story of two young nuclear weapons designers working in a laboratory. When asked by a journalist, what was the worst part of their job, they responded that it was dealing with unstable computers lacking sufficient capacity. They were not, it seems, able to consider the higher purposes of the weapons they were creating. They were blindly serving, and the scope of their concerns was subordinated to the aims of others in power – their employers.
- 10 There are ways in which this approach to education can be challenged. At the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics, we have developed a programme called *liNtetho zoBomi* (isiXhosa for 'conversations about life'). It aims to complement the current university offering by fostering the educational ideals presented by these scholars. Service-learning activities are a core part of the programme. Students are encouraged to take the course only if they are interested in 'understanding how your life – including your inner life – is formed by the world you inhabit'.
- 11 Is it working? I hope so. But the growth we aim to foster is hard to measure.
- 12 What I can say, however, is that the effect of such programmes at any university would be far greater if there was more institutional buy-in than there is currently.
- 13 The idea that education is the practice of freedom cannot be separated from the idea that education should aim to equip students to engage critically and creatively with reality – to transform it for the better.

[Adapted from: <<https://theconversation.com/its-important-to-rethink-the-purpose-of-university-education-a-philosopher-of-education-explains-why-205253>>]

## TEXT 2



Centre for Child Law @UPChildLaw · Jul 21



👉 CCL Welcomes the 18th Constitutional Amendment 🇿🇦

South African Sign Language (#SASL) is now the 12th #OfficialLanguage! This development will positively impact deaf and hearing-impaired children, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities! 🙌🙌

[Source: <<https://twitter.com/UPChildLaw/status/1682322934726111232>>]

**TEXT 3****Sign language is official in South Africa**

Only 38 schools for the Deaf in South Africa use South African Sign Language (SASL) as the language of teaching and learning. While the aim is to ensure that the complete academic curriculum is taught, the feedback from teachers is that they are unable to finish the curriculum fully.

Teachers at these schools are not formally required to do SASL courses – only encouraged. Teachers pick up some SASL from learners as they go along.

This situation makes it clear why Deaf learners' education is considered sub-par. This quality of Deaf education has a domino effect on post-school opportunities and employment. Training entities – as well as employers – could decline SASL interpreting as they feel it is not practical or it causes an undue burden.

This constitutional amendment can empower the Department of Basic Education to make it compulsory for teachers to have specialist qualifications. The department must also strengthen SASL curriculum training and support, but this must be led by the Deaf.

Unfortunately, Deaf children come through a poor education system and do not always graduate with an equitable school leaving qualification or do not qualify for university access.

[Adapted from: <<https://theconversation.com/sign-language-is-now-official-in-south-africa-how-this-will-help-education-in-deaf-schools-207126>>]

**TEXT 4****The significance lies in a few exceptional milestones**

Achieving the exceptional milestone of SASL being adopted as an official language is due to at least three factors, namely a favourable socio-political climate globally around minority languages and the whole disability issue, sustained pressure from the Deaf lobby, and the active and decisive bottom-up actions by the role players.

International experts give three reasons why the officialisation of countries' national sign languages is significant:

- It can help to ensure that Deaf people have access to education, employment, and other services.
- It can promote the use of sign language and helps to preserve the language.
- It can raise awareness about the Deaf culture and the contributions of the Deaf.

Now that SASL is also a national official language, perhaps the opportunity has come for the inclusion of SASL as home language in all schools.

[Adapted from: <<https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item/campus-news/2023/july/the-significance-of-making-sasl-the-12th-official-language-lies-in-a-few-exceptional-milestones>>]

**The Discardment**

Alan Paton (1903–1988)

We gave her a discardment  
A trifle, a thing no longer to be worn,  
Its purpose served, its life done.  
She put it on with exclamations,  
Her eyes shone, she called and cried, 5  
The great bulk of her pirouetted  
She danced and mimed, sang snatches of a song.  
She called out blessings in her native tongue  
Called to her fellow-servants  
To strangers and to passers-by 10  
To all the continent of Africa  
To see this wonder, to participate  
In this intolerable joy.  
And so for nothing  
Is purchased loyalty and trust 15  
And the unquestioning obedience  
Of the earth's most rare simplicity.  
So for nothing  
The destruction of a world.

[Source: Anthology, Clusters, G.E. de Villiers]

<b>Strangers forever</b>	
Amin Kassam (1948 – )	
Each of us is a passenger seated in one huge compartment going we do not know where all strangers	5
thrown together by chance who travel without arriving; Who can read the whispers of your mind when they are hidden even from you?	10
Though you open a window in the chambers of your heart though you strive to say what you feel	15
and in striving reach a state of understanding there is still one part one small part that remains your own	20
one part that neither I nor anyone else will ever penetrate. Forever strangers.	25

[Source: Anthology, Clusters, G.E. de Villiers]

**Fear<sup>1</sup>**

Kahlil Gibran

It is said that before entering the sea  
a river trembles with fear.

She looks back at the path she has traveled,  
from the peaks of the mountains,  
the long winding road crossing forests and villages. 5

And in front of her,  
she sees an ocean so vast,  
that to enter  
there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.

But there is no other way. 10  
The river can not go back.

Nobody can go back.  
To go back is impossible in existence.

The river needs to take the risk  
of entering the ocean 15  
because only then will fear disappear,  
because that's where the river will know  
it's not about disappearing into the ocean,  
but of becoming the ocean.

[Source: <[https://yourdaily-poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem\\_id=3608](https://yourdaily-poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem_id=3608)>]

**Glossary:**

<sup>1</sup>**Fear:** The poem is a philosophical reflection on the nature of overcoming fear and the journey towards embracing change.

**Will it be so again?**

C. Day Lewis (1904–1972)

Will it be so again

That the brave, the gifted are lost from view,

And the empty, scheming men

Are left in peace their lunatic age to renew?

Will it be so again?

5

Must it be always so

That the best are chosen to fall and sleep

Like seeds, and we too slow

In claiming the earth they quicken, and the old usurpers reap

What they could not sow?

10

Will it be so again —

The jungle code and the hypocrite gesture?

A poppy wreath for the slain

And a cut-throat world for the living? that stale imposture

Played on us once again?

15

Will it be as before —

Peace, with no heart or mind to ensure it,

Guttering down to war

Like a libertine to his grave? We should not be surprised: we knew it

Happen before.

20

Shall it be so again?

Call not upon the glorious dead

To be your witnesses then.

The living alone can nail to their promise the ones who said

It shall not be so again.

25

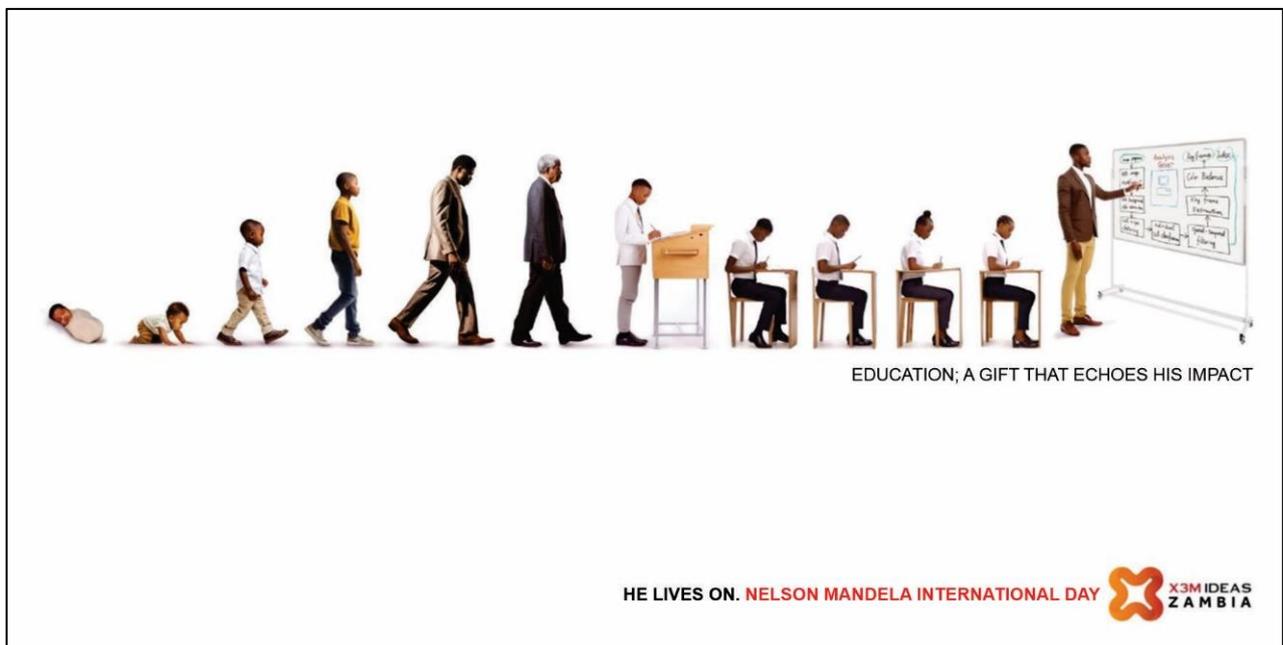
[Source: Anthology, Clusters, G.E. de Villiers]

**TEXT 5**



[Source: <<https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/he-lives-on>>]

**TEXT 6**



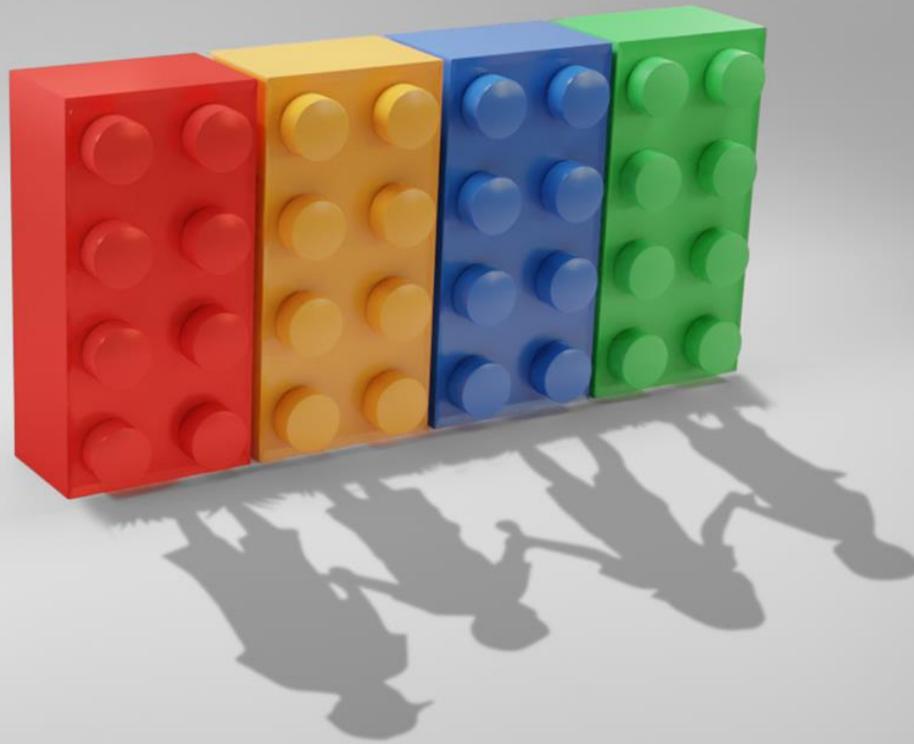
[Source: <<https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/he-lives-on>>]

**TEXT 7**



## **AUTISM IS DIVERSITY.**

Although people with Autism may share similar traits, they all have different strengths, abilities and challenges affecting their lives in diverse ways.



**Let's embrace the diversity within the autistic spectrum.**

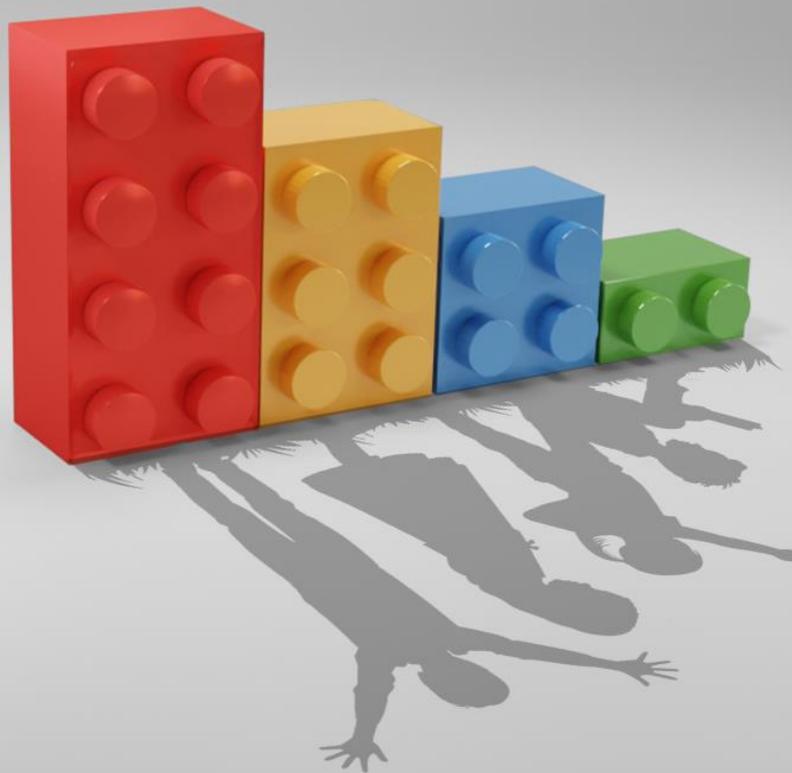
[Source: <<https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/autism-is-diversity-65aea98a-7d94-4035-a2cd-1d667af0fd72>>]

**TEXT 8**



## **AUTISM IS DIVERSITY.**

Autism Spectrum Disorder affects people of all ages, sexes, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups.



**Let's embrace the diversity within the autistic spectrum.**

[Source: <<https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/autism-is-diversity-65aea98a-7d94-4035-a2cd-1d667af0fd72>>]

TEXT 9

FRAME 1



FRAME 2



FRAME 3



FRAME 4



FRAME 5



FRAME 6



FRAME 7



FRAME 8



FRAME 9



FRAME 10



[Source: <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-06-02-nightmare-on-recycling-street/>>]