

## TEACHERS MUST FOSTER HOPE IN OUR LEARNERS

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I HAVE never voted in a national election my life, and that is not to say I will not vote in future elections. I just believed in 1994, we, as the oppressed, gave too much away. The land and economy are still in the hands of our former oppressors.

When I meet people who were forced out of their homes by the dreaded Group Areas Act of 1950, most of them cannot forgive and forget.

My father, mother and my four brothers were forced out of our Claremont home in Matthew Road. We had to restart our life on the dust bowl that was the Cape Flats. We are still trying to get our land back in Claremont.

We refuse to accept the measly payout, which some people were forced to accept.

Some of the former residents took the money because they were struggling financially.

I am a proudly South African trying to fight with the majority for a South Africa where we can all share in the riches of our country.

I refuse to be labelled as belonging to any ethnic group because that divides us as a nation.

Imagine South Africa, where we are just human beings living on the southernmost part of Africa.

Imagine when there'll be a time when there's no question asking about your "race".

Imagine a country where all that matters is the social conditions under which you live so that government will know what you require to live a decent life.

I always referred to my students as human beings and addressed them every morning as "students of excellence".

To the principals and teachers out there try doing this, you will see a drastic change in the attitude of students.

Amid all the doom and gloom in education with the Covid19 pandemic exposing all the inequalities in education, all our teachers in the country must give of their best to our children.

Yes, we can blame the education department for a host of problems in education, but it is our political and educational duty to give of our best to our students across the length and breadth of our great country.

It is up to our teachers to teach honesty, even when some politicians steal and lie.

We must teach hope and that, through hard work, integrity, we in schools can achieve great things.

It is not only in schools of the wealthy that academic achievement can be reached, but it can and must happen in the schools of the poor.

After I left teaching, I went to teach at a school of the poor in Valhalla Park, Bishop Lavis.

I wanted to see if my philosophy of "no matter whether you teach at a school of the rich or of the poor, the students can do well if the teacher is prepared to put her/ his shoulder to the wheel" would work.

My 50 students in my Grade 10 class all passed, and many of them scored As and Bs in Life Sciences.

I just followed the teachings of one of the greatest teachers SA has produced, Dr Victor Ritchie, the former principal of Harold Cressy High in Cape Town.

It can and must be done, even when the education department fails us as teachers.

South African society needs the teachers to inspire and give hope to our nation as never before.