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## Developing the language of thinking within a classroom community of inquiry: pre-service teachers' experiences

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*We argue that the “community of inquiry” approach, using reading materials modelled on Lipman’s Philosophy for Children programme, is a theoretically justified and teacher-friendly means of promoting effective thinking skills. The stimulus materials, used by the pre-service teachers, consist of short stories of classroom life designed to elicit children’s ideas for further discussion as a community of inquiry. Research has shown that the community of inquiry approach to classroom discussion is perceived positively by educators and teachers and makes a difference to learners. This study explored how the Intermediate and Senior Phase pre-service teachers experienced a classroom community of inquiry by using a qualitative research design with 47 final year pre-service teachers. Data consisted of written reflections from the whole class and recordings of two focus group interviews with selected individuals from the group. From the analysis of the data, the following themes became evident: personal and professional development, changes in learners, contextual concerns, and curriculum links. We conclude that this approach is a valuable addition to the pedagogical strategies of pre-service teachers.*

**Keywords:** community of inquiry; philosophy for children; teacher development; thinking and reading skills

### Introduction

Recently there have been many published articles that discuss the South African literacy rates. The PIRLS 2006 Summary Report (2008:29) stated that internationally 41% of Grade 4 learners and 61% of the Russian Federation learners reached the High International Benchmark. In stark contrast, only 3% of South African Grade 4 learners achieved this. This test measured learners’ reading achievement on a variety of informational reading passages. Questions on the reading passages included learners’ ability to focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information, make straightforward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information and evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements. These four comprehension skills follow a hierarchy from easiest to more difficult, requiring the learner to perform increasingly more complex reading tasks. More recently, the Western Cape Education Department’s (WCED) 2011 Systemic Tests for Grades 3, 6, and 9 indicated the “Reading and Viewing” and “Thinking and Reasoning” pass rate given in Table 1.

The Western Cape Education Department’s (WCED: 2010) Diagnostic Assessment Results indicate that in 2009 the Grade 6 literacy rate was 48.6%. All these statistics indicate

that the majority of South African learners do not possess the basic reading and comprehension skills and strategies to cope with grade appropriate academic skills. However, it is interesting to note that the Grade 9 “Reading and Viewing” results for 2011 were higher compared to the Grades 3 and 6 scores. It may be assumed that their “Reading and Viewing” has improved with maturity.

**Table 1** WCED 2011 Systemic Tests for Grades 3, 6, and 9

	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 9
Reading and Viewing	26.0%	41.3%	80.3%
Thinking and Reasoning	44.4%	33.0%	27.6%

Reading is not simply a technical skill. Universities require students to be involved in many thinking processes such as taking up different positions in relationship to what a person reads, a position which is ultimately derived from values and attitudes related to what can count as knowledge and how that knowledge can be known (Boughy, 2009:6, Van Schalkwyk, 2008:43). In the previous South African National Department of Education, the Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2007:7) referred to ‘critical and creative thinking’ as one of the critical learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the recent Department of Basic Education’s South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011:8) states that “thinking and reasoning” is integrated into all four language skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lombard and Grosser (2008:562, citing Barnes, 2005) agree by arguing that “critical thinking has not only persisted, but has also inserted itself into the fabric and fibre of (educational) missions and practices”. As researchers and lecturers at an institution responsible for the preparation of teachers, we decided to make pre-service final year teachers aware of the need to take active steps to ‘teach thinking’ and to equip them with some basic skills to do so.

The community of inquiry approach, derived from Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Lipman, 1991; 1993; Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980), was introduced into the undergraduate teaching programme as one means of equipping pre-service final year teachers with a practical tool to encourage themselves and their learners to think more effectively.

The community of inquiry approach, using locally designed reading materials (see Appendix 1) modelled on the texts created by Lipman and his colleagues, is a theoretically justified and teacher-friendly means of promoting effective thinking skills. Giddy (2012:15) is of the opinion that the critical engagement in this case “comes precisely from the community of inquiry that is the classroom situation”. Furthermore, Giddy (*ibid.*, citing Ndofirepi, 2011) shows that a learner in this approach can transform unreflective systems of beliefs into more reasoned, objective and justified thoughts. Nonetheless, according to Amasa and Thokozani (2011:133) the approach

“has the potential to develop in young citizens the attitudes, orientations and dispositions that will enhance their lives as democratic participants by encouraging their active engagements in communal life”.

The authors believe that community of inquiry facilitates reflective thinking and social skills as well as attitudes necessary for democratic citizenship (*ibid.*). This approach has the potential to develop the language of thinking and enhances the reasoning skills which are reflected in the critical outcomes of the NCS. It was important, however, to explore its perceived value to

prospective teachers. The question which gave focus and drive to this study was “How do final year pre-service teachers’ perceive the use of community of inquiry approach in their language classrooms?”

To answer this, a qualitative research design was used. Forty-seven final year pre-service teachers used the community of inquiry approach during their final teaching practice experience in a language classroom. All pre-service teachers completed a final reflection on their experiences and eleven of them were purposively selected to participate in follow-up focus group interviews. The article is organised as follows: the first section is the introduction, followed by the theoretical framework and literature review, the research design, and finally the analysis of the results and the conclusions of the study.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Cognitive Developmental Theory**

Vygotsky (1962; 1978) suggests that reflective, reasonable adults do not develop by chance, or simply as a consequence of their genetic endowment. In all cultures it appears that mediation by more knowledgeable others who are often, but not always, adult caregivers, is vital. All human beings *acquire* the ability to make optimal use of the abilities made possible by the brain and nervous system. The primary means by which this happens is through language. It is believed that using language as a tool for thinking aloud together with others is a first step towards becoming able to think internally and privately (Cameron, 2001:38). Language eventually ‘goes inside’ to become thought. Conversations with others are the precursors of conversations with the self. Children can be supported to become aware of their own thinking processes and to name and apply them appropriately. In other words they develop meta-cognitive awareness and are thus better able to manage their own thinking and learning. They need, not only to engage in processes such as questioning, noticing, guessing, predicting, checking, and reasoning, but to know that they are doing this. If Vygotsky is correct, then educators have a responsibility to take active steps to help children develop as effective thinkers. This does not mean that children should be force-fed with knowledge. As Meadows (1993:238) explains, “cognitive development involves the internalisation, transformation and use of routines, ideas and skills which are learned *socially*, from more competent partners...” Philosophy for Children is a strategy designed for ordinary classrooms in order to help children to think more effectively.

### **Philosophy for Children (P4C)**

The idea of the classroom as a community of inquiry (Fisher, 1998; Lipman, 2009; Splitter & Sharp, 1995) is the foundation of the Philosophy for Children programme. Lipman (1993), a philosopher, designed the approach in response to his observation that his own children were not learning to think at school. He maintains that it is natural for children to wonder about many questions, including deep philosophical questions, as they try to make meaning out of their experience. He also maintains that even young children can be shown how to talk together using some of the thinking ‘tools’ or processes used by philosophers when they explore ideas together. In a classroom community of inquiry the teacher uses children’s own questions and concerns as the motivation to engage in shared dialogue. Lipman points out that this respectful acknowledgement of their personal opinions is an important way of building self-esteem and developing confidence. The children themselves set the agenda for their discussions. They may initially need help in articulating their thoughts, but can be encouraged to do so once an ap-

propriate climate of inquiry has been established. The stimulus material developed by Lipman and his colleagues consists of stories in the form of short vignettes of classroom life in which children engage with each other and with their teacher. They provide models of children thinking, wondering and talking together and, in addition, suggest numerous potentially philosophical issues that are likely to be of interest to children, such as the question of fairness. The story texts are intentionally written in a way that raises questions rather than providing answers.

Lipman (1993) hoped children will learn in the course of careful dialogue, while there may be no final 'right answer', some answers are more reasonable than others. It may be obvious for children to raise many questions that are not directly philosophical. The emphasis is on deeper exploration via the generation of further questions rather than the achievement of consensus about a correct answer. Sutcliffe (2003:73) describes "thinking moves" as questioning each other, asking for reasons for beliefs, building on each other's ideas, offering counter-examples to the hypothesis of others, pointing out possible consequences of particular ideas, utilizing specific criteria to make judgements, and cooperating in the development of rational problem-solving techniques.

Creating an appropriate climate for a community of inquiry involves the setting of 'ground rules' for classroom discussions. The children propose and negotiate their own rules, although the teacher may have to offer discreet guidance. Simple rules such as 'we listen when someone is speaking'; 'we do not laugh at each other'; 'we say if we agree or disagree' and 'we give reasons for what we say' are typical of an early classroom community of inquiry. A community of inquiry is characterized by respect for persons, for truth and for the procedures of inquiry. It does not develop overnight, but is built by regular experiences of safe shared exploration of ideas. Respect for truth implies that, while certainty may seldom be achievable, there is a group commitment to finding the 'best' answer and identifying what *cannot* be true. Children learn that it is part of the process to change their minds in the light of the points of view put forward by others and that to acknowledge oneself to have been at times in error is an acceptable and necessary part of the process. Respect for the procedures of inquiry implies that children learn some of the words and phrases that reflect the thinking processes used by philosophers, and become able to use them automatically and flexibly when they inquire together.

### Philosophy for Children in South Africa

Lipman's practice is highly compatible with current beliefs about cognitive development and there is research evidence to suggest that it enhances language and thinking (Sutcliffe, 2003, Amasa & Thokazani, 2011:127). The notion of a classroom community of inquiry translates easily into the South African context but his story texts, which reflect the realities of North American classrooms and the concerns of North American pre-service teachers, are not appropriate or affordable in all local contexts. For this reason local story texts (see Appendix 1) were developed in collaboration with local educators. A professor from a local university, who was trained in the facilitation of a community of inquiry approach in the classroom, assisted the local educators. To date there is some research evidence that in-service educators find the approach of value (Borman, 2005; Green, 2006, 2009; Roberts, 2006). Nevertheless, this article is an original and independent research project aimed to explore the perceptions of pre-service educators regarding the value of this modified version of Lipman's practices.

Final year education pre-service teachers were introduced to Philosophy for Children and the locally developed materials as part of their compulsory Professional Studies module. The

intervention period, at the university, ran between May and August 2009 with 13 hours of input over a period of six weeks. During the five weeks before their July/August teaching practice, the pre-service teachers were familiarized with the community of inquiry approach and practised it during the lectures. They then taught as many language lessons as they could using the inquiry approach to Grades 4 to 9 learners. Where possible, students were encouraged to observe each other's lesson, and comment on them in their written reflections. Subsequently they reflected, both in the focus group discussions and in writing, on only their classroom teaching experiences and observations and this information was used for this research project.

### Research design

This research project was situated within an interpretivist research paradigm with its emphasis on the deep interpretive meanings. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:20) describe interpretivist research as looking for frames that shape meaning within social contexts. This study attempted to access the meanings that pre-service teachers constructed with regard to the community of inquiry approach as they used it in their language classes. It used a phenomenological interpretive qualitative research design (Meyers, 1997) in order to provide better understandings and answers to the research question, *What are the final year pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the community of inquiry approach?*

The sample consisted of one class of 47 final year pre-service teachers being trained to teach Grades 4–9 learners. Although the institution's official language of instruction is English there were 23 English first-language speakers, 11 Afrikaans, and 13 isiXhosa first-language speakers in this particular class. During their final four-week teaching practice the pre-service teachers elected to teach in a variety of schools such as ex-model C schools, private schools and township schools with different media of instruction. During this time they were asked to teach as many Philosophy for Children lessons as their teachers would allow. Data were collected from two sources, the pre-service teachers' written reflections of their teaching and observations and two focus group interviews. The two focus group interviews were undertaken, with five and six pre-service teachers, respectively. The interview participants were purposively selected to include a variety of school experiences. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2008: 376) state that focus groups are contrived settings, bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular theme or topic where the interaction with the group leads to data and outcomes. All students' written reflections were used in the data analysis. The instructions given to the 47 pre-service teachers for their written reflections and observations were to complete a three-page reflection using the following subheadings:

- comment about what you noticed when you observed a community of inquiry in action;
- refer to class input and/or the readings provided where appropriate;
- give and reflect on your thoughts about the possibilities and challenges of this approach for classroom use; and
- reflect on your own ability to identify important *thinking moves* (Sutcliffe, 2003:73), organise your ideas logically.

The data from both the written reflections and the focus group interviews were separately inductively analysed embracing a phenomenological approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008:471). The process involved doing a detailed systematic analysis. Transcripts were read and examined repeatedly to get an overall impression of the pre-service teachers' phenomenon. Then the perceptions and experiences were coded according to discrete units of meaning which we felt were related to the research question. That is, the units and meaning were delineated

that were relevant to the focus of the study. Superfluous data were eliminated. The units of meaning were coded, extracted and clustered in a meaningful way. Thereafter super ordinate themes were developed by looking at the relationship among the codes in the cluster (Henning et al., 2004:104-106; Cohen et al., 2008:471-472).

## Findings

From the analysis of the data collected from both sources the interviews and the written reflections of the students' experiences of teaching the community of inquiry during their four-week teaching practice, the following themes became evident:

- Personal and professional development;
- Changes in the learners;
- Contextual concerns; and
- Curriculum links.

### Personal and professional development

The pre-service teachers participating in the study realised the personal and professional development possibilities of the approach and certain cognitive moves were noted during the interview. Within this theme interest, metacognitive awareness and the use of thinking moves (as described by Sutcliffe, 2003) were identified.

### Interest

According to the participants it was interesting to be part of a community of inquiry because they had an opportunity to see how others think about issues and what sort of arguments they could bring in. Some of the participants said in their interview:

*It was interesting to see what other people thought about issues ... just listening to the opinions.*

*It was interesting to see that other people's thinking did not match with their personality ... it was really surprising but interesting. Many people would talk if the topic is interesting...*

However, while the student participants found the approach interesting, they also noticed some challenges. For example, some of the participants were not familiar with the platform which they had to use in their discussion. One of the participants said:

*...it was a challenge in that some of the platforms we were given to use in the discussion was not very familiar and to initiate that was a bit of a problem because we come from different backgrounds some of the discussions branched off to really interesting issues...*

The process captured students' interest by encouraging them to generate their own questions and offering opportunities to engage in dialogue with others in a safe environment. The importance of active engagement is central to constructivist views of knowledge acquisition and it is generally agreed that motivation is enhanced if participants perceive topics to have relevance to their own lives and concerns. Lipman (2009) expands this view. He believes that good thinking cannot develop independently of passion. Philosophical dialogue about an issue of genuine concern enables participants to gain meaningful practice in thinking and reasoning using certain "tools" or "moves", as opposed to learning about decontextualized "thinking skills". The fact that students came from different backgrounds was an advantage, not a problem, although the student who mentioned this may have been referring obliquely to differences in confidence.

### Metacognitive awareness

Not only were the pre-service teachers interested, but they began to reflect on their own thinking as the following examples illustrate.

*You cannot just expect your learners to be critical thinkers if you yourself are not, reading will help you to be critical thinker...and if a teacher does not read how he/she can expect their learner to read more.*

*I didn't know I could think in a critical way like that...someone comes up with a point and it triggers you to think.*

*It [Philosophy for Children] has helped me improve my essay writing skills whereby I need to back up my ideas with evidence or interpreting stuff in a logical manner and be able to remain on the topic.*

*...because you can't just say without substantiating there is always the advise factor 'why' and the thinking moves really direct your thought process they direct what you want to bring across there is logic sequencing or follow up...it is just a natural flow ...because if you disagree you need to convince others why you disagree to make it sense.*

The participants reported further that they developed their abilities to listen, speak, and to think critically in a conversation. Some of the participants had the following to say:

*It was also surprising that as I listen to other peoples opinion made me question what I was thinking and actually the opinion forced me to change my thinking.*

*I think you become more respectful...because we've gone through the processes and we have taught the processes to the children...and we just naturally tend now listen to what the people are saying and you are able to respond but you first critically think about what you are thinking.*

*... there is an elevated awareness of not [all laugh]...because you can't just say without a substantiating there is always the advise factor 'why' and the thinking moves really direct your thought process they direct what you want to bring across there is logic sequencing or follow up*

The analysis of both the focus group interviews and the reflections by the pre-service teachers in class show that the community of inquiry encouraged the individual participants to organize ideas logically. The participants noted that:

*you are almost forced to sequence your thoughts so as to stick to a specific issue at hand and not be drawn away so I think that helps our ability to logically sequence and organize our ideas before we actually opening our mouths...*

*if you think more about what you gonna say then you can say what is the essence of what I gonna say because sometimes when people speak they repeat themselves and the people get distracted wondering what is it that he want to say ... so you think about it, what is that I gonna bring across, how I am going to.*

*I think that to develop further in this skill is by application. It is a powerful tool that can be used in the staff meetings next year and in other important meetings that I might find myself in my teaching career.*

### The use of thinking moves

The interviewer (one of the authors of this article) noted that students used community of inquiry thinking moves in the two focus group discussions. They listened carefully to each other; they noted and articulated agreement — “*I agree ...*” with each other and they built on each other's ideas — “*I want to add ...*”

Olsholt (2009:639) writes that “The philosopher’s task is to make the participants conscious of themselves in the austere and not so magic light of reason”. The importance of understanding oneself and one’s thinking processes is also emphasized from the perspective of psychology. Authors such as Feuerstein, Klein & Tannenbaum (1991), Haywood (1993, 1997) highlight meta-cognitive awareness — the ability to think about one’s own thinking. The students in our study appeared to be developing and applying this awareness, which is important for their own development and essential if they are to mediate thinking to the learners in their care.

### Changes in the learners

The participants in the study had a chance of using the community of inquiry approach in real classroom situations in a variety of settings. They noted positive changes in their learners as they used the approach. According to the participants, there were some behavioural changes in their learners. The participants believe that the approach could encourage learners to participate actively in class as well as modelling good thinking moves. Some of the participants observed that:

*those who never talked in class get to talk because they wanted their points to be said as well*

*they liked beginning with the agree and disagree maybe because they were Grade 6’s*

The pre-service teachers in both their class reflections and interview conversations noted that the approach encouraged learners to respect other people’s ideas and who they were. They also noted the learners responded critically and related the conversation to life in their societies. For instance the inquiry opened up:

*the platform where the children can express themselves and develop self confidence...and also just initiating social ills happening in their society and being bold enough to talk about those issues and make them known to people that such things are happening...*

It could hardly be expected that one or two lessons would show significant changes in learners but student educators noted some small differences and believed in the potential of the approach to facilitate classroom interactions. Research referred to previously (Sutcliffe, 2003) suggests that ongoing experiences of community of inquiry classroom dialogue influence both behaviour and attitudes. A recent study by Marsal and Dobashi (2009) is particularly relevant. These authors conducted a quantitative study that compared 8–10 year-olds’ attitudes towards foreigners and found more favourable attitudes in the group that had engaged in a philosophical inquiry. If this is possible, it is something for South African teachers to consider.

### Contextual concerns

While the community of inquiry approach was perceived as one of the best methods a teacher can use in a classroom situation, there were concerns attached to the approach. The participants reported that they faced a number of challenges when they used the approach in their classrooms. Among the challenges were:

- **classroom size** which could not allow the group to form a circle;
- **language issues** which turned out to be a determining factor of whether the learners understood the story in order to begin a conversation. Participants indicated that if the medium of instruction was not English language became a problem:

*I had to explain things in Afrikaans because the learners dominantly speak Afrikaans depending on the group of children you have and the reading that you give them, this*



*could be a language issue as well... [the] story would affect them whether they would be able to express themselves or even understood the story in order to start the whole creative thinking process*

- **the approach being time-consuming.** Due to language problems it was not easy for the learners to read the stories in English and understand them within a short time. When they had to read the story it took them about 45 minutes and were still on the first page...so I had to read it to them

Concerns regarding space and numbers reflect the realities of local classrooms and cannot be ignored. Teachers who use the approach have to be flexible enough to modify some of the original demands, with some consequent disadvantage. For example, if children cannot sit in a circle it is more difficult for them to address each other directly. If classes are large, children do not easily listen to each other, and attention is difficult to manage. But teachers who see the value of a classroom community of inquiry have found ways to approximate one. Concerns regarding language reflect some students' misunderstandings. It is not essential for children to read the material themselves. The story texts are intended to stimulate thinking and can be read to them by a teacher if that is found to be the most appropriate strategy. The only important issue is that they understand the story sufficiently to be able to comment and ask questions. Students also tended not to distinguish between different possible uses of the texts. Children who are relatively fluent in English can follow the original practice and be asked to generate their own questions. If children need encouragement to practice spoken English a teacher can use a small section of a story and conduct discussion at a more elementary level. Translating a text is another acceptable option.

### Curriculum links

From their experiences, participants reported the connections between the community of inquiry approach and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Among other things, the participants saw the approach promoting: thinking and reasoning, and learning about values. Participants in the focus group interviews also reported that:

*I saw connections to English like speaking and listening and LO [Life Orientation] personal self-esteem issues...and I think if you use any reading piece you can get questions which can be discussed over in any other subject area.*

*...also integration of the other subjects, ...they are learning from each other, they are learning skills to debate...They are also learning about values like cause and effect...and morals like respect for one another*

Emphasizing the curriculum links, one of the pre-service teachers argued as follows:

*Looking at the NCS it is negligence if not applied in my lessons. I need to stimulate their thinking and reasoning to process the information that they have in their minds and use language to interpret their thoughts. It is very clear that P4C is connected to Learning Outcome 5 for language.*

Most pre-service teachers in their reflections and interviews thought that through the community of inquiry, learners were able to make connections and links across different areas of the curriculum. Literature has also shown that Philosophy for Children enhances language and thinking (Sutcliffe, 2003, Amasa & Thokazani, 2011), which is important for all learners in South African schools.

## Conclusion

In conclusion the community of inquiry process empowers pre-service teachers to develop the thinking skills and habits that underlie effective reading and thinking skills in their personal and professional lives as well as in the children that they teach. The most striking finding was the value of this approach for the pre-service teachers themselves. If teachers are not thinkers themselves it is not possible for them to develop their children as thinkers. These were final year pre-service teachers who could have been expected to have developed mature thinking skills. Although they were surprisingly enthusiastic about the process it seemed that they had had few opportunities to critically explore their own opinions and reflect on their own thinking in a safe environment. These students had been together for the past four years and yet it appeared they had never shared their opinions with one another in this manner. This research project provided them with an opportunity to develop attitudes where they learnt to think for themselves, be more respectful and caring of other people's thinking processes, develop more logical and sequential thinking patterns all of which are necessary skills for a democratic citizenship.

Although they were enthusiastic about the approach the students did express concerns, some of which showed insights and some of which revealed misunderstandings. The pre-service teachers recognized genuine constraints and limitations in their classrooms. Many students were unfamiliar with their learners and their surroundings when they conducted these lessons. Some classroom sizes could not accommodate circular seating for the learners which interrupted the flow of discussion. Another limitation was the use of language. If the medium of instruction was not English the students felt they needed to translate the stories and this was more time consuming than they had planned.

We argue that training in the community of inquiry approach is one valuable means of preparing teachers use of spoken and written language in the classroom to mediate thinking skills and dispositions. It will not guarantee that schoolchildren attain the Critical Outcomes specified in the National Curriculum Statement, but it offers a practical means of mediating and teaching thinking. We acknowledge a limitation, in that (Burden, 1998) brief exposures to approaches to teaching thinking as a pre-service or in-service teacher is unlikely to be sufficient to sustain the initiative if there is no support within the school, together with insufficient training and mentoring. For the community of inquiry to be sustainable in a university, there needs to be sufficient training for the pre-service teachers to have internalized the concept of a classroom community of inquiry.

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**Appendix 1 An example of a locally designed reading passage****Rules are rules**

Mrs Van Schalkwyk unlocked her classroom early as usual. The first thing she saw when she went in was the broken window. 'Not again,' she thought, as she pulled out a piece of cardboard from behind the cupboard. 'I'm getting sick of these people who do whatever they like. Last week they stole all our light bulbs. What next, I wonder?'

It always took a long time to get windows fixed when the Department had to do it. She hoped that Michaela's father, who was a builder, would again come to the rescue. The classroom got very cold when the rain and wind came in and the children sometimes shivered so much they had to do exercises, especially if they could do them to music, but there was a time for everything, she thought, and now it was time for the lesson she had planned.

Luckily the burglar bars on the classroom window had not been broken so nothing had been stolen. As she was sweeping up the broken glass, the class filed into the room.

"Miss," look at the broken window." called out Ricardo.

"Yes, I've seen it," said Mrs Van Schalkwyk. Sometimes Ricardo could be very annoying but she tried to be patient.

"What happened? How will it get fixed? Will Miss tell the police?" burst out Michaela.

"Jislaaik, its cold, man" complained Candice, hugging her jacket closer.

"Miss," said Siphso, "there might be fingerprints on the glass. Be careful. It could be evidence."

"You have been watching too much television," laughed Riyaad.

At last the class settled down for the lesson. Everyone had to bring something from the newspaper. When Joseph looked in his bag his piece of newspaper was not there. He had left it on the kitchen table. Mrs Van Schalkwyk asked Candice to begin.

"I brought something that I think is really unfair," she began. "Gavin Jones was not allowed to play in an important soccer match just because he stayed out late the night before." So his team lost the match. Can you believe it?"

Shafiek said, "But he shouldn't have done that. The coach has rules for the players."

"Yes, but just for once....?" answered Candice.

"I think Shafiek is right", interrupted Siphso. "I agree with him. If there are rules you have to obey them."

Shariefa said slowly, "I don't agree with you boys. There could be a rule that I don't want to obey."

"Well I don't agree with you," said Siphso. "You can't ignore rules just because you don't like them."

"My mother says I have to obey her rules whether I like it or not," added Thendeka, who had been listening carefully. "I have to do my chores and go to bed at the right time."

"What do you think, Nomsa?" asked Mrs Van Schalkwyk. She could see that Nomsa wanted to say something.

"I am not sure," said Nomsa. "I'm wondering about who makes the rules and why they make them. Do we really need to have rules?"

"Well you can't have a game without rules," said Shando, who loved sport.