Hope as a positive psychology outcome of an educational tourism programme for youth on Robben Island

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Abstract

The Robben Island Museum (RIM) Public Heritage Education Department presents a variety of education programmes on the island. The island is a national heritage site in South Africa and, with its rich cultural and political history, offers the ideal setting for learning experiences. Information regarding programme impact is limited and the System psychodynamic, SPD, wellness model (Henning, 2009) has not yet been applied in the context of a positive youth development programme.

Firstly, the purpose of the study was to explore the learning experiences of orphaned children from a community-sponsored school. Secondly, the study aimed to map the emerging themes onto the SPD wellness model (Henning, S), which integrates concepts from the field of Positive psychology and System psychodynamic theory. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to conduct a post-intervention assessment 4 months after the programme. The findings were categorised on three different levels of analysis. On the first level of analysis the identified themes were *Overcoming personal tragedies*, *Supporting others*, *Big dreams*, *Embracing diversity*, *Enrichment of knowledge* and *Isivivane at the Lime stone quarry*. On the second level of analysis the six themes were integrated into three pattern categories namely *Attachment*, *Creativity* and *Open-mindedness*. Finally, the third level theme *Hope* integrated all 9 pattern and coding categories and was presented in a conceptual framework. The learners perceived the programme as informative and thought-provoking as it inspired self-reflection and new perspectives on their lives. Selected concepts of the SPD wellness model were successfully applied to the data.

Key words

Hope theory; educational tourism; positive psychology; system psychodynamics; heritage

Introduction

There once was Hope. She lived everywhere but people ignored her and said she was useless. An old woman named Love, who had been lost for 2 years, saw Hope and asked her for guidance. They became close friends and travelled together. So everyone should Love Hope.

The essence of this article is captured in this quote by a 16-year-old learner after attending the 2 day youth development programme on Robben Island. The event provided a transformational space which enabled the girl and the other learners to re-author their story of hope. The narrative expresses the rediscovery of hope through meaningful relationships, the generation of future goals and opportunities through embracing new experiences in the journey of life.

Situated 10 km south-west of Table Bay, Robben Island is a part of the mainland and contains a collection of epic chronicles within its windswept boundaries of 518 hectares. For the first settlers in 1652, the island was a retreat which gave them peace of mind as it represents psychological wellness (Smith, 1997). The island provided a constant supply of food for the new settlers and a safe haven to which they could escape during tribal clashes on the mainland. An abundance of seals, penguins and sheep provided sufficient provision and saved the lives of many settlers and voyagers at sea (Smith, 1997). During the 17th century the island became a dumping ground for the socially outcast. Separated from their families, sufferers of leprosy, the blind, mentally disturbed patients and political prisoners were shipped off to the island in captivity (Smith, 1997).

The learners of a community-sponsored school in the Western Cape, South Africa, have limited family relations and material resources. All the children had lost both parents and their lives reflect desperate conditions devoid of love and hope. Spending a weekend on an island where its history of tragedy and triumph reflects many fragments of their own lives awoke a new appreciation of human relationships and positive future possibilities in the learners, as is evident from the research findings.

In 1999, the Robben Island Museum was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO on the basis of its cultural significance (Fleminger, 2008). As part of their strategic vision, the museum's Public Heritage Education Department aims to build psychological resources in learners. The facilitators encourage emotional and cognitive development with the underlying theme of *triumph over tragedy* and growing from *despair to hope* in all the programmes. Museums have the potential to play an integral role in formal education and, although they don't conform to formal teaching structures, they provide a space for experiential learning. According to Snyder and Lopez (2007), the combination of the resources of the environment and positive agents (caring adults) in the context of a positive youth development programme, could potentially lead to the attainment of some of the following positive outcomes: encouraged self-determination; higher levels of spirituality; a clearer and more positive identity; a stronger belief in the future and established pro-social norms. The value of a field trip is priceless in that it provides the learner with real experiences related to all areas of content. During the prison visit the learners could hear the sounds of the keys and doors and gates banging in the prison cells.

The purpose of the research was to conduct a post-intervention assessment 4 months after the event. The Robben Island Museum (RIM) management needed the information to evaluate the effectiveness of their programme as part of a continuous improvement strategic plan. In addition, the data was interpreted through the lens of selected concepts of the System psychodynamic wellness model (Henning, 2009) to assess its applicability in the context of a positive youth development programme.

From the above, the research question was stated as follows: how can Hope be conceptualised based on the experiences of the learners after the educational programme on Robben Island? In order to answer this question, the following objectives were stated:

Objective 1: to explore the experiences and perceptions of the children 4 months after their attendance of the programme; and
Objective 2: to map the findings to certain concepts of the SPD wellness model (Henning, 2009).

The findings were integrated in a conceptual framework that confirms the validity of the theory in the SPD wellness model.

Theoretical perspectives

Literature from both Positive psychology as well as System psychodynamics formed the theoretical perspectives of the research. These theories were the lenses through which the researcher analysed the data. Combined, they informed the conceptual framework.

System psychodynamics

A systems psychodynamic perspective is well-suited to describe the adaptive potential of humans as well as the 'below the surface' unconscious processes. System psychodynamics is in essence a fusion of systems theory and psychoanalysis, as it highlights the interplay between psychological and social forces that shape groups and the experiences of people within them (Henning, 2009).

From a psychoanalytic view, the work of Klein (1975) and Winnicot (1951) is expressed in Object relations theory. Czander (1997) summarised the psychoanalytical theory of object relations as the need to be attached, related and connected to other objects (Henning,

2009, p.9). From infancy, the individual, over a period of time, develops the psychological capacity to relate to external (real) and internal (fantasy) objects. The 'object' may not always be a person but can also refer to an organisation, a group, an idea, a symbol or parts of the body (Czander, 1997).

Systems theory is a science of wholeness and connectedness (Capra, 1996) where the interrelatedness of parts of the system is emphasised. Individuals can be viewed as holons of groups and groups can be viewed as holons of organisations and organisations are holons of society, all ranked in a hierarchical order (Koestler, 1964). The theory offers an organic view on human life and a philosophy of hope because of the underlying assumptions of continuous creativity, chance, endless variety, and rapid change (Henning, 2009). Furthermore, it displays an important parallel with the field of positive psychology where the adaptive potential of humans and their psychological adjustment, positive growth and concepts such as creativity, variety of experiences and hope are central (Henning, 2009).

Hope is therefore inherent in system psychodynamics as individuals graph their own developmental trajectory from stage to stage randomly and unpredictably through chance and choice. The concept Hope creates a bridge between System psychodynamics and Positive psychology and both theories are integrated in the SPD wellness model (Henning, 2009).

Positive psychology

Positive psychology provides a theoretical framework to explore the experiences of the learners. This emerging field focuses on the study of positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and the institutions that enable positive experiences and positive traits (Peterson & Seligman, 2006). It is much more than American-style "happyiology" where everybody lives happily ever after (Bieswan-Diener & Dean, 2007).

The theory has its roots in humanistic psychology (e.g. self-actualisation), behaviouristic psychology (e.g. self-efficacy) and psychodynamic thinking (e.g. hope and wisdom) (Henning, 2009). It can be defined as the study of optimal human functioning with the aim of changing the focus of theory and practices in some fields of psychology from preoccupation with disease and healing to well-being and the enhancement or fostering of strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2006). Positive psychology focuses on the study of positive subjective experiences, individual traits, character strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2006) such as hope.

The educational programme aimed to build psychological capital in the participants and to strengthen both intrapersonal as well as interpersonal strengths through the activities. Social strengths (interpersonal) have generally been looked at in a narrow way with a focus on emotional support, team building, and leadership, but virtues such as forgiveness and compassion have been neglected (Bieswan-Diener & Dean, 2007). These virtues can be defined as strengths of humanity. The historical background of Robben Island creates a particular awareness of these strengths. Also relevant are the strengths of justice which are citizenship and fairness. They exist in a social context and contribute to the welfare of groups (Bieswan-Diener & Dean, 2007). On the intrapersonal side, theories on hope are relevant and will be discussed in short.

Hope theory

The concept Hope is central in the field of Positive psychology and provides a perspective on human strength. Its meaning has a long history, figuring in Judeo-Christian discourse as one of the main theological virtues, along with faith and love (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 292). An understanding of existing theories of Hope is necessary to explore the experiences of the learners after the programme.

Snyder and Lopez (2005) talked to people about their goal-directed thoughts and, during their research, came to the conclusion that participants repeatedly mentioned the pathways to reach their goals as well as their motivation to use those pathways. Hopeful thoughts reflect the belief that one can find pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those goals. So defined, the authors proposed that hope serves to drive the emotions and well-being of humans.

The Hope theory that resulted from previous research comprises three main concepts, namely Goals, Pathways thinking and Agency thinking (Snyder & Lopez, 2005, p. 258):
Goals: the targets of mental action sequences, providing the cognitive component that anchors hope theory. They may be short- or long-term, must be attainable and contain some degree of uncertainty. Hope flourishes under probabilities of intermediate goal attainment.

Pathways thinking: in order to reach goals, people need to view themselves as being capable of generating workable routes to those goals, which are called pathways thinking. It is typified by affirming internal messages such as "I'll find a way to get this done". High-hope persons are very effective at producing alternative routes in cases where they encounter obstacles.

Agency thinking: the motivational component in hope theory is the perceived capacity to use one's pathways so as to reach the desired goals. It reflects the self-referential thoughts about starting to move along a pathway and continuing to progress along that pathway.

More recently, Carlsen, Hagen & Mortensen, (cited in Cameron and Spreitzer, 2012) studied 40 books and 100 articles taken from the Greco-Roman period, Judeo-Christian texts, the Enlightenment, psychoanalytic theory, and radical humanism and presented a new

view of hope in four enduring qualities. These authors posit that:

Hope is relational: Experiences of hope is intensely relational and may prosper when one places oneself in service to others. It may be a binding force in a community or society (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 292). In the SPD Wellness model (Henning, 2009) the concept Attachment describes relationships and the meaning they give to human existence and how it contributes to a good life filled with hope. Close relationships and social support are positively related to improved performance, coping skills and physical and psychological wellness (Henning, 2009).

Hope is generative: The authors stated that hope is a source of positive affect and actions and the engine of all human creativity and cultural development. Hope is most generative when it invites open dialogue and expands people's horizon's (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 292). In the SPD Wellness model (Henning, 2009) this is evident in the concept *Creativity*. The model explains that growth and the renewal of living systems provides hope through continuous movement, change, and unpredictability. Furthermore, it explains the adaptation skills of living systems that build strengths and skills to survive changing environments (Henning, 2009).

Hope is open-ended: Hope assumes a conviction that the future is open-ended, becoming, and that it can be influenced (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 292). Rather than being set on specific goals alone, it presupposes dynamic and improvisational imagination that anticipates a coherent image of the future. In the SPD wellness model (Henning, 2009) the concept Open-mindedness refers to the willingness to actively search for evidence against one's own favoured beliefs, plans, or goals. Knowledge has to evolve to keep the system alive and growing as old habits can prove to be inefficient (Henning, 2009, p.248). Individuals with the strength of open-

mindedness would probably endorse statements such as the following (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p.144):

* Abandoning a previous belief is a sign of strong character.
* Beliefs should always be revised in response to new evidence.
* People should always take into consideration evidence that goes against their beliefs.

Hope is sustained by moral dialogue: Hope is a source of moral vision that may point to possibilities for human betterment and dialogue sustains hope and high human ideals (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 292).

The results of Cameron and Spreitzer (2012) confirmed the theory on Hope that is contained within SPD wellness model (Henning, 2009).

The SPD wellness model has not yet been applied in the context of youth education as a lens through which to explore qualitative data. The model and theories informing it is appropriate for the context of the study. The learners on the programme experienced the struggle of the prisoners on the island, how they maintained their sanity and how they never lost hope (Fleminger, 2008). They experienced the value of human connectedness and virtues such as forgiveness, gratitude, compassion and the ability of humans to overcome difficulties in life.

A qualitative research methodology was appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the research participants (Henning, 2013).

Research methodology

A qualitative assessment of the programme impact provided data in the form in anecdotes, poems, sketches and personal experiences. Qualitative research is defined by Babbie (2007) as

the non-numeric examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. Fisher (2006, p.2) stated that "qualitative research is a reflective, interpretive and descriptive effort to describe and understand actual instances of human action and experience from the perspective of the participants who are living through a particular situation".

Qualitative research results should provide 'thick descriptions' so as not to remove context and meaning: "A thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. Voices, feelings, actions and meaning of interacting individuals are heard" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.105).

Data collection

The Bridges of Hope Academy hosted 60 learners of which 26 Grade 10 and 11 learners went on the educational programme. Purposive sampling was used as the sampling technique as all the 26 learners were included in the study. In qualitative research intentional non-random selection of participants ensure that individuals who will yield the most information about the topic under investigation are included in the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 152).

Open-ended questions were designed to encourage quality responses and the questionnaires were distributed to the learners in their classrooms. The learners were given an hour to complete the following 4 open-ended questions.

Question 1: Thinking of your Robben Island experience in October last year, what thoughts and feelings come to mind? You can draw, or write a poem or a story to express yourself.

Question 2: Thinking of what you learned during the weekend in October, what does the idea of "hope" mean to you today?

Question 3: You learned about the struggle of the political prisoners and the lepers on Robben Island. How do you perceive the idea of "struggle" in your own life?

Question 4: What was the single best experience you had during the week-end?

In total, 26 questionnaires were completed and deemed usable for analysis purposes. The use of open-ended questions with written texts as a data collection method allowed for freedom of expression as English was the second language of all the learners. The learners could write and draw pictures within a familiar and safe environment, which ensured quality data.

Data analysis

Discourse analysis is an umbrella term that describes a number of different strands of work (Henning, 2009) and was applied as an appropriate data analysis method. A principle that all discourse analytic approaches have in common is that texts are regarded as the primary resource for research (Fisher, 2006). The word text refers to a tissue of meaning on which one can place an interpretative gloss, such as words, actions, symbols and pictures (Parker, 2005). Discourse analysis is a relatively new approach to data analysis: "…the recognition that there can be order beyond the syntax of the individual sentence or beyond the single utterance is a relatively recent one" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 828). It has its roots in older and more established theoretical perspectives such as Wittgenstein's philosophy of language where the meaning of a word is related to its context of use (Fisher, 2006).

The data was interpreted in the context of the SPD Wellness model (Henning, 2009) as a theoretical reference point to ground the findings in literature. The original model consists of 40 concepts embedded in triangles to present concepts from Systems psychodynamics as well as

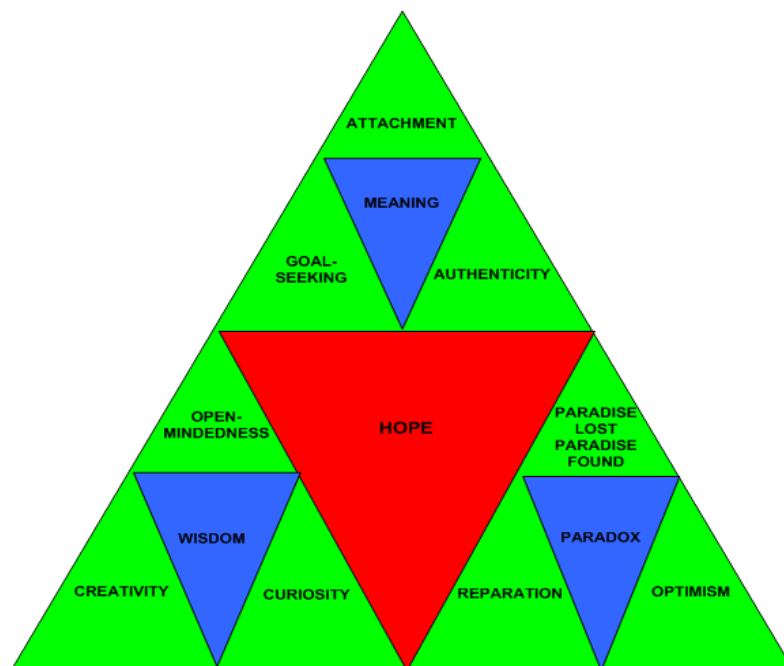Positive psychology in a visual presentation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1:   The Hope Triangle (SPD Wellness model, Henning, 2009).

In the SPD wellness model the green triangles refer to first-level analysis, the blue to second-level analysis and red to third-level analysis.

Finally, the findings were layered on increasing levels of abstraction from codes to themes to the interrelationship of themes into a conceptual framework (Creswell, 2013).

Three steps in the process of data analysis

Three different steps were followed in analysing the data and can be described as follows:

Step 1: Exploration of the data

The raw data were read and reread until a sense of the totality of the data was obtained (Fisher, 2006). During this step it was important to keep track of themes, hunches, interpretations and ideas – "you should record any important idea that comes to you as you read through and think about your data" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.131).

Step 2: Defining and preliminary labelling of data

The researcher continued the analysis by creating a list of preliminary coding categories. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) such a system is critical; without categorisation there is chaos. Simplifying the complexity of reality into some manageable categorisation scheme is the first step of analysis. Meaningful units of data are identified as a coding category. Different themes that emerged from the data are sorted under a particular topic which represents the coding category.

Step 3: Labelling of meaningful units of data

The preliminary labels were listed and those that could be grouped together were labelled. Initially, the data appeared to be without pattern. However, under closer

scrutiny, a tapestry of different patterns emerged. The task of the qualitative researcher is to look for convergence in this tapestry of patterns. This means the researcher must find out what things fit together by looking for recurring regularities in the data: "These regularities represent patterns that can be sorted into categories" (Patton, 1990, p. 403). Various interrelationships may exist between the coding categories and it is there possible that a single coding category may be placed in more than one pattern category.

Constructing the conceptual framework

Discourse analysis from a system psychodynamic rationale can occur on various levels of abstraction (Henning, 2009). Theoretically, the process of generating more qualitative themes can continue ad infinitum. Similarly, a hierarchical approach was followed to construct the conceptual framework for Hope, where themes on the first-Level are not disjointed fragments of higher level themes, but forms a network of mutual interactive themes, each valid in its own right. One level of analysis or theme is not more important or dominant as each contributes more or less equally to the overall impact (Henning, 2009). The three levels of analysis can be described as follows:

- First-Level analysis

The first-level themes are the least complex and most concrete and can be described by behavioural manifestations. All six themes on the first level feed into the second analysis themes which again feed into the third level theme.

- Second-Level analysis

The second-level analysis themes each consists of 3 themes, more complex and conceptually abstract than the First-Level themes. In moving beyond *exploration* and *description*, the third level analysis aims toward an *understanding* of the

reported lived experiences of the participants.

- Third-level analysis

The third-level theme is the most encompassing theme and exists at the highest level of abstraction. It denotes the highest form of complexity and consists of one main theme.

In total, 10 themes were identified during the discourse analysis and categorised in 3 different levels of abstraction. The 10 themes were shown in a venn-diagramm to present the conceptual framework.

Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of research results (Henning, 2009). It refers to the certainty that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context. The reliability of observations is influenced by four variables namely the researcher, the participants, the measuring instruments and the research context or the circumstances under which the research is conducted (Fisher, 2006). The researcher took all four variables into consideration in the execution of the research to maximise the reliability of the study.

The term validity is used in qualitative research to assess whether or not information of a kind necessary for answering key research question(s) has been obtained as well as the extent to which qualitative data accurately reflect what participants in the study feel, think or behave (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The findings obtained in this study were valid as it accurately reflects experiences of the learners and their thoughts and feelings after attending the educational programme.

Ethical considerations

The researcher was particularly sensitive to and thoughtful about potential harm she might cause participants because they

were children from a vulnerable population. All participants gave their informed consent to take part in the research. As added protection for the children, the Headmaster of the school that the children attended was present during the weekend programme as well as at all research-related activities. The researcher treated the data as confidential and respected the participants' right to privacy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) throughout the research process.

Findings: from Bars to Stars

The findings were presented in a conceptual framework of Hope as the themes emerged from the data and are depicted in Figure 2 below. The three different levels of analysis were presented in three different colours for greater clarity and differentiation.
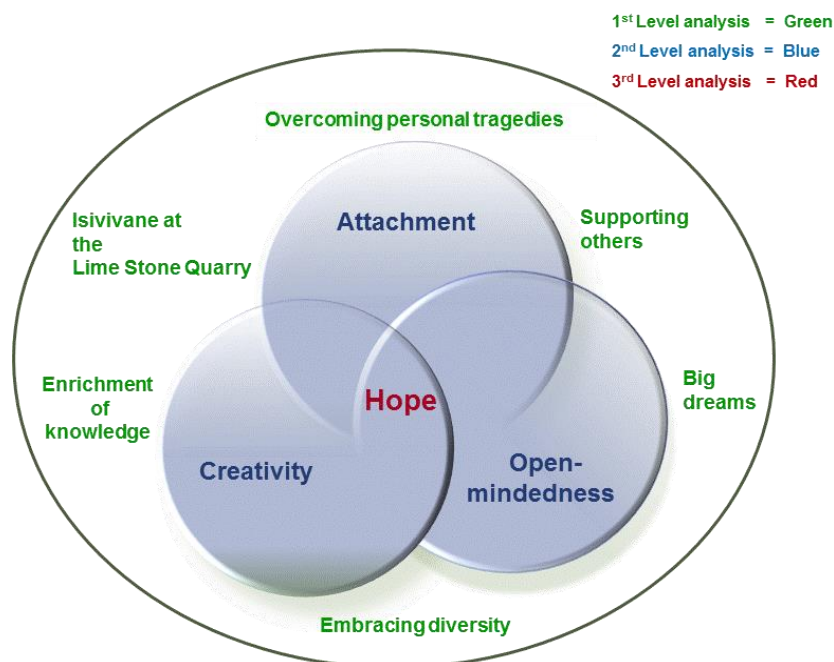

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of Hope

In total, ten themes were identified, as is evident in the conceptual framework. The Venn-diagram circles reflect First-Level themes in the outside circle, Second-Level themes are described in the inner circles and in the intersection of these three is Hope as the theme that contains all other nine circles within its meaning.

First-Level analysis:

In the First-Level analysis, common experiences within the participants' responses were explored and six themes were identified.

Embracing diversity

This theme contained all experiences of learners that describe inclusivity and unity. Descriptions that refer to equality between races and the colour of a person skin are relevant. Respect for all human beings was expressed within this theme.

"I learned that in this life I am now living in, I should be colour-blind and have peace with everyone around me".

The global human rights drive has led to the emancipation of previously oppressed race, gender, religious and sexual

orientation groups. This, together with the post-apartheid era in South Africa, has necessitated on-going diversity interventions in organisations to enable performance in the face of the diversity challenge (Coetzee, 2007, p.1).

"As South Africans we must love each other and work together to make South Africa better and be united as one".

One of the learners proposed his solution for this challenge in the following poem:

"Africa

Africa my land
Africa my inspiration
Africa where my roots are
Africa where I find unity
Africa Africa Africa
Let us be colour-blind
And only see what is good of this country"

"I learned that we as people should live in harmony and treat each other equally and love each other".

The acceptance of the "otherness" and differences between different races was often mentioned as the way people should relate to one another.

Enrichment of knowledge

The aim of the educational programme that RIM presents is to convey new knowledge to the learners. This theme contains all references made to the value of education and new knowledge:

"I have learnt that education is the most important weapon in life; it is the key to success".

"Most important is education, education, education".
"It was an honour for me to be able to actually walk where Nelson Mandela walked. I was so privileged to even have a tour guide who was one of the prisoners there".
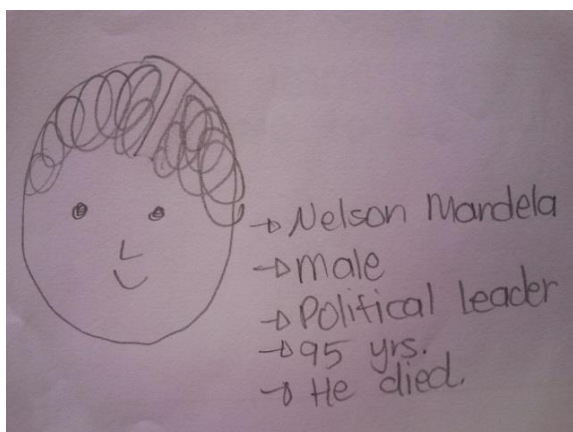

Figure 3: Portraits of Nelson Mandela

"I will always remember the time when we walked into Nelson Mandela's prison and when we learnt about how his book came to be published".

Experiential learning was of great value to the learners, as is evident from their responses:

"When I went to the prison and entered Nelson Mandela's cell – it was such an amazing experience. It's different seeing and hearing it. Because when I saw it a sensation just came over me. A feeling of mesmerisement [sic], a feeling of awe!"

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"Robben Island was not only a prison, but was also a place where people who were really sick were deposited".

The learners were surprised to learn more than what they expected such as the leper church and cemetery and their stories which none of them were aware of.

Overcoming personal tragedies

This theme contains all descriptions that refer to triumphing over life's obstacles. The learners reported in rich descriptions their intention to overcome and also how they plan to do it:

"Hope is to overcome".

"Hope is a soldier at war fighting a battle at the front, wanting to be a hero of all.

Many of the learners indicated that they would overcome their personal problems by practising forgiveness, perseverance, compassion and faith:

"I plan to overcome my struggles by forgiving others and not always putting myself before others because we are all equal; no one is better than the other".

"I also have the responsibility in making my own history, forgiving and having compassion".

"I got to learn how the people who were in prison here forgave and moved on. So I will also try to forgive and move on too. I will accept that I don't have a mother and God is my mother".

"It has made me to think of myself as better than all the problems that I face and that every hard situation has a solution. You must always aim for perseverance".

"I learned that you should fight for what you want in life".

"I learnt that a person should never ever give up until they have accomplished whatever they wanted to".

The majority of the learners reported that although they had personal problems, their experiences on the island taught them that they can be proactive and not reactive, that their outlook on life and choices matters and not their circumstances.

The *Isivivane* at the Lime Stone Quarry

The Lime Quarry is a site on the island where the ex-political prisoners laboured and experienced the harsh brutality of political imprisonment. The prisoners who worked there were those who were kept in isolation.

Isivivane is a Zulu word that refers to a concept found in a number of other African cultures. In Zulu, *Isivivane* literally means 'throw your stone upon the pile…' (Cougar & Banhegi, 2007). It refers to making a personal contribution to a great common task. This contribution is made in the spirit that everyone buys into and does their bit to create a motivating vision for the future.

One of the activities was the building of an *Isivivane*, a stone pile in the Lime Quarry with stones they picked up on the beach. On the bottom, the learners had to write a problem they are struggling with and on top they had to write the solution. These stones were then stacked in a ritual on a Bridges of Hope Academy pile and were very significant because of the history of hard labour and imprisonment at the quarry.
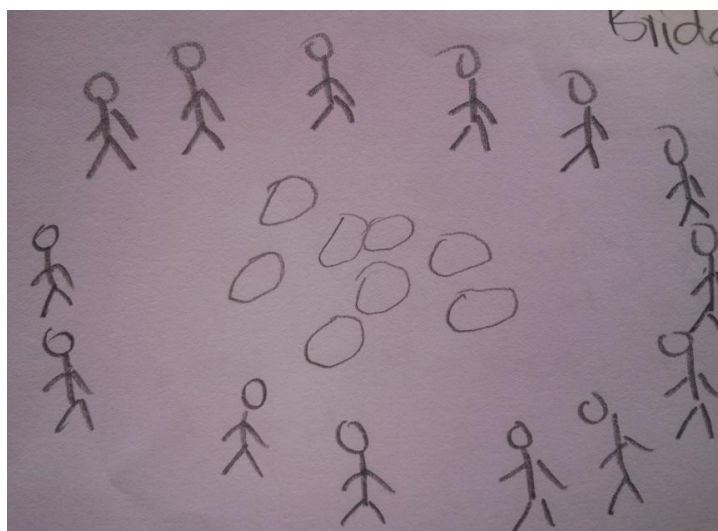
Figure 4: The Isivivane at the Lime stone Quarry

The learners reported that the activity had a special meaning to them as they feel part of the greater Struggle and also the possible triumph over desperate situations. In Figure 5 the stone quarry with a cave and the stone pile illustrated that this experience was the best of all the activities during the week-end.

"My wow experience was when we were at the Lime Quarry. We wrote our fears and how we would overcome them on a stone. It was a great wow experience because it was helpful and I realised that every problem has a solution".
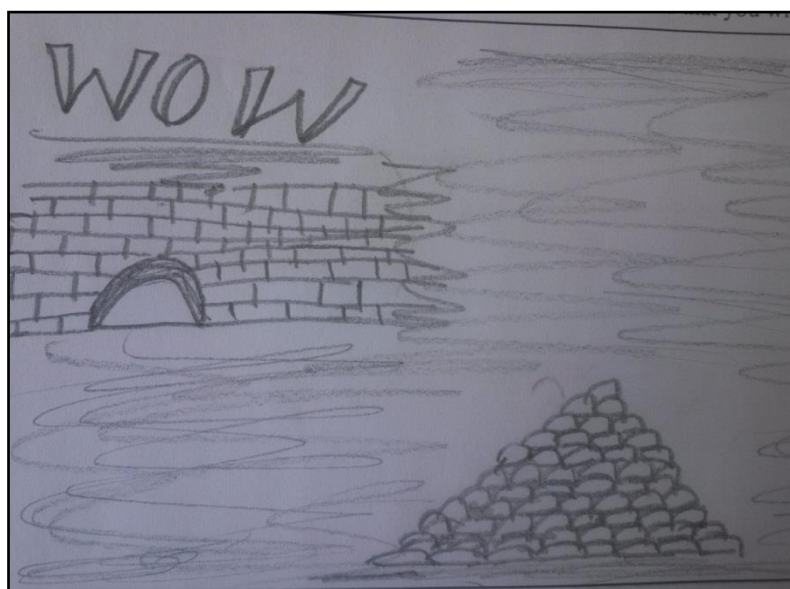

Figure 5: Wow experience at the Lime stone Quarry

Many learners drew sketches of their Isivivane experience instead of writing about it. The activity was emotion laden and it is possible that some learners were more comfortable to express themselves in images than in words.

Big dreams

This theme described all future goals and dreams. Aspirations to have a better live were described under this theme:

"We must always have a vision and dream big so that we can achieve big goals".

"During my time there I have learnt that our struggles are not there to stop us from doing whatever it is that we want to do only the sky is the limit. You can chase your future and make your way to success".

The learners reported their intentions to fulfil their dreams. The value of perseverance in attaining goals was expressed:

"Hope is when you believe something good will happen and hope is when you never give up in life".

"Hope is to believe in yourself and to aim higher and not to compare yourself to others, to be yourself and become what you want to be in life".

Dreams give life meaning while emptiness and despair flourish in their absence (Kets de Vries, 2007). The specific goals and dreams were not articulated although the learners indicated the will to actively reach towards a better life.

Supporting and teaching others

This theme describes descriptions of the need to support other people. Caring for or loving others is essentially non-judgemental, thereby transcending many cultural, race and relationship barriers (Henning, 2009). The following short story expressed this notion:

"I am the rock on the mountain when there is an earthquake, I stumble and pieces of me disperse. I roll down to different places, not landing on either of them, I disappear among bushes and pain of my struggles, finally I stop rolling and land on water where people can sit on me when they are tired on the beach and are crying because of struggles. After my hardships I managed to save a tired soul".

Frankl (1962, p.133) stated: "Being human always points and is directed to something or someone other than oneself. The more one forgets himself by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love, the more human he is and the more he actualised himself".

Despite the limitations in their own lives, some respondents expressed the need to provide, care and share their knowledge and love:

I have the responsibility to help mend broken hearts and souls. My responsibility is to use the opportunity given to me that other people didn't have.

"I felt that I have a responsibility. A responsibility of teaching people outside of Robben island of our legacy, people who do not have the opportunity to do so".

"Teaching our descendants the legacy of South Africa and letting them carry it as we did".

"As a citizen of South Africa I have the responsibility to vote, to take the lead, to help those who need help to set an example to be free, to be whatever I like".

From a psychoanalytic perspective Freud mentioned: "In the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if we are unable to love" (Freud, 1947, p.85).

Second-Level analysis:

This level of analysis identified similarities between the 6 First-Level themes and was integrated into three new pattern categories. The three Second-Level themes are *Attachment*, *Open-mindedness* and *Creativity* because they share an openness to acquire new knowledge and new relationships as well as the value of positive relationships.

Attachment

Two First-Level themes, namely *Embracing diversity* and *Supporting and teaching others*, were categorised within *Attachment* as they refer to patterns of relationships. Bowlby (1973) defined

attachment as the bond that ties the child to his or her primary caretaker and he considered attachment behaviours to be those behaviours that allow the infant to seek and maintain proximity to this primary attachment figure. *Attachment* is an important concept in the SPD wellness model (Henning, 2009): "secure and quality relationships gives meaning to human existence and contributes to a good life filled with hope":

Hope is an orphaned child at a centre hoping that someday a mother will come for her.

References to communities and family members were relevant. Close relationships and social support by family, friends and the community are positively related to improved performance and better coping skills with life's problems (Henning, 2009). The following quote expressed the need to act responsibly towards family and community members:

"As a citizen of South Africa I have the responsibility to make my family or my community proud, and not to lose hope of that".

Attachment serves an emotional balancing role by confirming the individual's self-worth and contributing to his or her sense of self-esteem (Kets De Vries, 2007, p. 26). One of the learners recognised her grandfather in a group photo of political prisoners in the Sobukwe House of the museum, which contributed to a new sense of belonging and pride:

"A wow experience that I will always remember would be when I saw a picture of my granddad there. His name is Ghost Ndindwa and he also was a political prisoner on Robben Island, he spent 10 years in prison here. I didn't expect to see a picture of him there but it's there and it felt great and I also got a bit teary-eyed. It's the best experience you could ever experience".

Snyder and Lopez (2005) proposed that the concept of relationship connection is a vital part of positive psychology. The learners became aware of their historical attachments to ex-political prisoners as well as between themselves through sharing the same struggles in life, namely not living with a mother and father as primary caretakers. They learned the value of human relationship and highlighted the importance of close relationships.

Creativity

This theme described patterns of generativity (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). From the First-Level themes, *Big Dreams* and *The Isivivane at the Lime quarry* resembled patterns of creativity. *Creativity* in the SPD Wellness model (Henning, 2009) refers to the ability of living systems to adapt to changing environments through the acquisition of new strengths and skills. Creative or adaptive behaviour is necessary to build psychological strength as this will enhance wellness and avoid harmful and destructive influences:

It made me realise that I should not allow my past to damage my future but I should celebrate my past and have hope and know that I have a bright future.

The positive attitude of the learners 4 months after the programme indicated the generative power of the experience they had:

"It was the best experience of my life and I will never forget it."

The learners became conscious that they should rely on their own inner resources as a stability structure since their family and societal structures lacked stability:

"I always thought that other people determined who you will be in life. I was actually wrong because you determine who you are. I learnt that I am the Captain of my soul and the Master of my fate".

All living systems have adaptation and evolutionary capabilities: "The universe is constitutive of itself, that is, it continually

creates itself creating itself" (Auerswald, 1992, p.28). In this regard, learners reported that they have to create their own future by letting go of the past:

Finally hope is anyone that knows that tomorrow will be better than today".

Creativity and adaptability in the face of challenges is a characteristic of a fully functioning person (Rogers, cited in Henning, 2009).

Open-mindedness:

Open-mindedness is the willingness to search actively for evidence against one's favoured beliefs, plans or goals and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The First-Level themes that were categorised within Open-mindedness were *Overcoming personal tragedies* and *Enrichment of knowledge*. In the SPD Wellness model (Henning, 2009) the self is seen as an open system. An open system has an exchange of input between itself and its surroundings. Knowledge has to evolve and change to rectify wrong perceptions. This ability to learn through openness for new experiences is evident in the quote below:

"The experience has changed my life and it has made me see things clearly. And this started the first day when we took the tour around the prison. Knowing that not only blacks were fighting for our freedom but there were whites that fought for our rights. That day I became colour-blind".

"It makes my struggle looks smaller than the struggles of the prisoners. Last months I thought it is good to be in jail but now I see it's not good at all".

According to Peterson & Seligman (2004, p.126) openness to experience is a higher order personality dimension involving receptivity to novel fantasies, feelings, ideas and values. They described curiosity, interest, novelty-seeking and openness to experience as characteristics

that represent one's intrinsic desire for experience and knowledge.

3rd Level analysis theme: Hope

The theme Hope integrated all the First- and Second-Level themes (9 themes in total) at the highest level of conceptualisation. Hope (Henning, 2009) entails a future-mindedness and contributes to positive feelings and behaviour for current contexts as well as future expectancies. Hope has been advanced as the common factor underlying the positive changes that happen in psychological treatments (Snyder, 2007).

The evidence from this study shows that Hope is relational and that a sense of belonging or being attached to a person, family, community or country contributes to hopeful feelings and thoughts. The hope that is in an intimate, personal and positive relationship was described though the use of the following metaphor:

Hope is a dog who guides his or her blind master to their destiny safely.

From the findings it was clear that Hope is generative. As a human skill, it creates new possibilities. The humanist Rogers was of the opinion that creativity and adaptability in the face of changes is a characteristic of the fully functioning person (Henning, 2009, p. 254). Growth and renewal of living systems provides hope through continuous movement and creativity (Bateson, 2000). In this regard, the concept of hope can be reframed by referring to dreams (Kets de Vries, 2007):

We must always have a vision and dream big so that we can achieve big goals. I mustn't look down on myself and think that I am too young to impact other peoples' lives.

New experiences and the expansion of the horizon of knowledge and skills provide hope. Erikson (cited in Henning, 2009) argued that the development of wisdom depends on a dynamic interplay between

openness and reflection, enabling the individual to draw on the wisdom of the past to solve the problems of the present. It is clear from the findings of the research that the programme created wisdom in the learners.

Hope is open-ended – the theme *Open-mindedness* is closely related to creativity as it implies an open mind to absorb new information, continuous renewal and new behaviour patterns while old habits are left behind. It includes a positive outlook of living life forward (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Optimism represents a cognitive, emotional and motivational stance toward the future and evidence from the data illustrated this.

To Lazarus (1999) hope is both an emotion and a vital coping source. It is inherent in the experience of self in the present of things future. Hope as an emotion and a coping skill is evident in the following verbatim:

"Hope is something that helps you to overcome other obstacles in life and the challenges you face. As long as you have hope in your heart it will pass through".

The research findings of this study illustrated that Hope is more complex than the seminal definition by Snyder (2007) of pathways thinking and agency thinking, that is, the routes to desired goals and the motivation to use those routes. Human relationships, the ability to generate new opportunities and keeping an open-mind also define Hope.

Conclusions, recommendations and limitations

The study aimed to explore experiences of learners of an educational programme on Robben Island. In addition, the Robben Island Museum management needed information on the effectiveness of the programme and the extent to which the programme made a difference in the lives of the learners.

The post-intervention assessment revealed that the program empowered the learners to create hope for themselves by taking up personal authority. An awareness of acting out responsible citizenship, thereby creating hope in others, was reported by the majority of the learners.

The findings were integrated into a framework that conceptualise *Hope* as a Positive psychology outcome based on the experiences of the learners.

The recommendation was made that the findings should be applied to market the youth programmes of RIM and showcase its effectiveness. In addition, future research could include both a pre-intervention and post-intervention assessment. A limitation of this study was the exclusion of a pre-intervention assessment which can be applied in future studies to establish a baseline from which to compare changes in thoughts and behaviours.

The educational programme aimed to fulfil the words of Emerson (cited in Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p.57): *So we shall come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect – what is Truth? And of the affections – what is Good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will.* The findings of the research illustrated that the programme reached its aim as is evident in the following quote:

I got to see the world and people through different lenses. I also learned that whatever challenges I may face, there is always a solution for it. Whether you are black; white; yellow; navy or orange – when the lights are out we are all the same.

Bateson (1972, p. 16) asked the following question: *"What pattern connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose and all four of them to me? And to you?"* As a systems thinker, Bateson explicated the connectedness and interdependency of all living creatures and

illustrated that there is a pattern that connects humans through their experiences.

In the same way that Robben Island is still connected to the mainland 30 meters below the surface of the ocean, humans are connected to each other through their experiences of hope and despair and of triumph over tragedies. Similar to the early settlers in 1652 to whom Robben Island was a retreat and a symbol of psychological wellness (Smith, 1997) the Bridges of Hope Academy learners were strengthened and empowered through new knowledge and hope for their futures.

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