

A Review of the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) in Malawi

Victor Y. Mgonezulu
Mzuzu University
mgomezulu.v@mzuni.ac.mw

Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to analyse the National Strategy on Inclusive Education 2017-2021 in Malawi for the language that has been used and the substance of the content. The author wanted to explore clarity of the National Strategy for stakeholders to understand. The review attempted to address issues of language and content and proposed approaches to reinforce it. The author argues that the language used in some sections of the strategic plan could be misleading to stakeholders. Further, the content was found lacking in some key aspects of promoting mindset-change and 'intermediality'. In attempting to add value to the National Strategy, the author proposes approaches of encouraging mindset-change and the notion of 'intermediality' among the learners that cannot be discriminated. The author also proposes approaches that could boost positive self-concept in learners that can be discriminated. Finally, the paper highlights the implications of the study in Malawi and other countries.

Introduction

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Children in Article 2 condemns discrimination and guides nations through the following statement:

The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis (United Nations Human Rights, 1989).

This is partly the foundation of the country's National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017), which sets out to promote access to equitable and relevant quality education for all learners in Malawi (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MOEST], 2007). The National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) aims to actualise the policy.

A strategic plan is a tool that is supposed to engender "fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it ..." (Bakhuya, 2015, p. 1). The assumption Bakhuya makes is that the strategic plan is so well crafted that every stakeholder fully understands what is expected of them. Common knowledge will inform us that there are some strategic plans that are formulated in ways that are misleading in terms of

content and language (Koseoglu, Barca & Karayormuk, 2009). Since a strategic plan is a document that every member of an organisation must understand, it has to be crafted in clear language so that future directions are clear and the resources can be targeted on a common goal (Obeng & Ugboro, 2006). It is against this background that the researcher decided to examine the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) in Malawi in order to establish if the stakeholders would understand it in a way that would allow them to subscribe to a common goal. The review was influenced by the broader Postcolonial Theory (Al Saidi, 2014; Childs & Williams, 2013; Jack, 2015; Kalua, 2017; Pradella, 2016) and developed its argument on the notions of 'self', 'otherness' and 'intermediality' (Al-Saidi, 2014; Brons, 2015; Hegel, 1807; Kalua, 2007; Mengstie, 2011).

Perception of the Terms *Self*, *Otherness*, and *Intermediality*

The concept of 'intermediality' is a notion that calls attention to the importance of embracing difference or otherness to address the barriers of categorisations such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religious affiliation (Kalua, 2017). 'Self' is a concept that identifies oneself and is usually used to present the 'self' as better than the 'other' person. 'Otherness' is a social construction that identifies other persons that are not oneself; it is a notion that is used to discriminate other people that are different from oneself (Brons, 2015). 'Self' can also be a positive concept that may empower people that can be discriminated.

Thoreau (Irish National Teachers' Organization [INTO], 1995) attests to this view and states that “Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion. What a person thinks of her/himself, that it is which determines ... her/his fate” (p.2). INTO (1995) further states that “individuals develop an attitude towards themselves, which is consistent with those expressed by others in the world. In other words, individuals value themselves as others value them and reject themselves to the degree that others demean or exclude them” (p.7). The two statements seem to contradict each other but there is truth in both of them. An individual’s self-concept can be influenced by what one thinks of oneself and in many cases this can be influenced by what other people think of and how they treat a particular individual (Wei & Marder, 2012). Although this may be true for all humanity, it is particularly so for people with some physical or mental-related challenges because they tend to develop low self-concept.

The terms ‘otherness’, ‘self’, and ‘intermediality’ (or in-betweenness) come from literature by people in the former colonising countries (like Britain and Portugal) and colonised countries, (such as Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique) that is usually termed the post-colonial theory discourse. The discourse was born of people’s frustrations about how the colonisers treated the colonised and how the colonisers misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented the culture and practices of the colonised with the aim of condemning their character and nature to the realm of inferiors (Meebelo, 1971). The colonised have since written not only to dispel the falsehoods but to sculpture a positive image of their own identity (Al-Saidi, 2014; Kalua, 2007). It appears that the colonisers had a well calculated plan of entrenching binary thinking (Hegel, 1807) not only in the minds of their own people, but in the minds of the colonised as well.

Hegel’s (1807) dialectic treatise presented the notion of binary opposition in which he argued that some terms make sense only in reference to the opposite term. For example, the term ‘other’ makes sense only when the ‘self’ is first identified. Based on the notion of binary opposition, the colonisers used it to create a social gap between themselves (the self) and the colonised (the others). In this scenario, the ‘self’ are the civilised, cultured, intelligent, moral, rational, and other positive attributes. The ‘other’ is foreign and must be discriminated so that the pure ‘self’ remains untainted. It essentially creates the superior ‘self’

and the inferior ‘other’ (Brons, 2015; Al-Saidi, 2014; Mengstie, 2011).

The notion of otherness is not negative in all contexts. For example, Hegel (1807) observed that consciousness of an object necessarily implies consciousness of a subject. In other words, noticing that someone (other) has visual impairment is based on realising that the ‘self’ does not have visual impairment (binary opposition). It is an important way of making meaning of what is in one’s environment. The danger of binary thinking lies in the tendency to treat the object or the ‘other’ in a manner that leaves him/her feeling less human and therefore less deserving (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Taking cognisance of the danger of binary thinking that can lead individuals to take extremist positions to benefit the ‘self’, some post-colonial theorists, (such as Homi Bhabha in her “The liminal negotiation of cultural difference” and Ngugi wa Thiong’o in his “Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature”) contributed to the construction of the concept of ‘intermediality’. According to Kalua (2017, 2007), ‘intermediality’ calls attention to the importance of embracing difference or ‘otherness’ as a way of addressing and transcending the barriers of categorisations. It is perhaps the reason why East Ayrshire Council (2002) emphasises that every child is special because each has special individual needs. The position taken by East Ayrshire Council tries to transcend the barriers of categorising learners by taking an ‘intermedial’ position. Kalua (2017) believes that ‘intermediality’ promotes respect and tolerance for difference. After all, these categorisations are only human constructions and they can be deconstructed (Kalua, 2017).

Although taking the position of ‘intermediality’ as an approach to how we treat “children likely to be excluded from and within the education system” (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) is ideal, the process of arriving at it seems to depend on the acceptance of ‘otherness’ or others. The critical question then is, how can the education system in Malawi promote acceptance of ‘otherness’? The fact that Malawi has developed an inclusive education strategy demonstrates a concern for inclusiveness. Therefore, constructive responses to the above question may be instrumental in having a generation of Malawians that can “reduce inequality within and among countries” (Sustainable Development Goal 10), to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development” (Sustainable Development Goal 16) (UNESCO, 2017, p. 30 &

42), that aspire for “a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development” [Aspiration 1] (African Union Commission, 2015, p.1-4). The legal instruments guiding practice in Malawi, like the Disability Act (Malawi Government, 2012) and the Child Care, Protection, and Justice Act (Malawi Government, 2010), try to operationalise the mentioned international conventions that promote acceptance of ‘otherness’ and to move to ‘intermediality’.

Much as it is very important to educate those that cannot be discriminated, it is equally important to educate those that can be discriminated. Every effort must be made to equip people who can be discriminated with skills to benefit from the opportunities that abound in many societies. This is particularly true because, if what the Irish National Teachers' Organization (1995) says is true that “people respond in completely different ways to events in their lives according to their level of self-esteem” (p.2), then people with low self-concept are unlikely to benefit from the opportunities that exist in different communities. It is in attempt to empower students that can be discriminated that this paper will propose approaches of enhancing positive self-concept.

Concerns from the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021)

This section deals with the concern about semantics, unclear focus on the target group, and mindset change.

Concern about Semantics

The National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) addresses eight key areas in order to realise inclusive education in Malawi. Of the eight key areas, this article dwells on Key Area 1, which is the Capacity for Inclusive Education. Table 3.1 on page 21 of the National Strategy (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) shows one strategy that sets out to create awareness in inclusive education. It is envisaged that the capacity for inclusive education will be achieved through six activities; two of which are of particular interest to this study. The interest is founded on the subject of semantics in Activities *a* and *b* as explained next. It is important to consider semantics as critical for deciphering meaning and therefore how a particular statement may be translated into action.

Activity a: Prepare inclusive education awareness raising tools, e.g., manual, brochures, radio/TV programmes. Activity *a* contains the term ‘inclusive’ that, upon reflection, is rather troubling in terms of what the intended meaning really is. Bullon (2006, p. 722) defines ‘include’ as “to make someone or something part of a larger group or set”. Therefore, the term inclusive as used in the National Strategy has the connotation of including the children likely to be excluded from and within the education system to the larger group (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017). Given the binary thinking that seems to be prevalent in some people, one cannot avoid but to conclude that the “larger group” is the ‘self’ and the “children likely to be excluded from and within the education system” (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) are the ‘others’. At this point, we may already be dealing with issues of superior and inferior classes of learners in the education system. The critical point worth recognising is that it is probable that some people may understand the term ‘inclusive’ in a negative sense. It would have strengthened the message of the National Strategy if language that does not leave room for multiple interpretations had been used, at least in its critical sections.

Activity *a* also intends to raise tools that can promote awareness. Bullon (2006, p.77) explains the term ‘aware’ to mean “realise that something exists”. It sounds trivial that the National Strategy would want the stakeholders to only *realise* that some children need greater attention from the education system. The desired meaning that should have been advanced would have been the need for change of mindset from binary thinking to intermediality. This, therefore, still leaves the interpretation of the National Strategy to possible confusion because the actors may not really be too sure about what needs to be achieved. A lesson from this review is that developers of important documents, like strategic plans, must pay close attention to issues of semantics.

Unclear Focus on the Target Group

Activity b: Orient teachers, caregivers, teacher educators, education managers, inspectors, advisors, Primary Education Advisors, community members and learners on inclusive education. Activity *b* lists all the stakeholders that would be oriented in inclusive education. In this list, learners are of particular interest to this study. The learners can be categorised into children likely to be excluded from and within the education system

Table 1

Children Likely to be Excluded from and within the Education System

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Children with disabilities | g. Children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS |
| b. The girl child | h. Teenage/adolescent mothers |
| c. Orphans | i. Children on the streets |
| d. Children suffering from chronic diseases | j. Child labourers |
| e. Children with albinism | k. Children displaced or affected by natural calamities |
| f. Abused and neglected children | |

Source: Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2017, p.15).

(Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) (see Table 1) and those that cannot be excluded.

According to Edmunds (n.d.), children with physical disability are likely to be excluded or at least face worse forms of discrimination than those without. In this case, children with disabilities, children with albinism, children suffering from chronic diseases, and children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS are singled out for the category that may experience worse forms of exclusion. This group of children would need a different approach of empowering them than, for example, teenage/adolescent mothers. Further, it is not clear who specifically the strategies will target between children likely to be excluded and those that cannot be excluded. For purposes of delivering meaningful content and realising high impact, targeting a well-defined group would be ideal.

Unclear Focus on Mindset Change

In attempting to provide clear direction, the National Strategy includes the following outcomes that the orientation is expected to achieve (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017, p. 21-25):

- i. Improved capacity for inclusive education
- ii. Improved governance and management in inclusive education
- iii. Enhanced skills in learner identification and assessment
- iv. Improved inclusive education management information system
- v. Improved teacher education and motivation for inclusive education
- vi. Improved partnership for inclusive education at different levels
- vii. Improved teaching and learning environment

- viii. Increased funding for inclusive education

It is rather troubling that the outcomes do not seem to reflect any expectation of change of learner mindset. The change of learner mindset is important because that is what would lead to intermediality mode, which would result in humane treatment of people who are different from them. In other words, changing their mindset promises a better future for the learners that can be excluded. Including an outcome that will entail investment into learner mindset change would have been quite beneficial to the cause of inclusive education in Malawi.

Although the Secretary for Education, Science and Technology acknowledges that inclusive education is important for both categories of learners, that is those that can be excluded and those that cannot (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017), the National Strategy is not clear about how the two groups, with very different needs, will be supported. It is clear that the content that would transform them cannot be the same because they have different needs. On the one hand, there is potential danger if the two groups are given different contents in that exclusiveness may be entrenched. It would be entrenched because of the physical divide that would be necessitated in terms of differences in the resources that would be required. On the other hand, offering them same content, in the spirit of not appearing to discriminate, may be ineffective in addressing their specific needs. For reasons of time and space constraints, this review has opted to focus on learners that cannot be excluded.

Approaches to Promoting 'Intermediality'

In an attempt to guide the process of reorienting the learners that cannot be excluded on how they should treat others (those that can be excluded), the study proposes the adoption and/or adaptation of

some approaches as a way of bringing about 'intermediality' amongst the learners that cannot be excluded. Because the curricula of many education institutions are already crowded, this paper proposes that the approaches should be embedded into the already existing content. The approaches target mindset change of the learners that cannot be excluded because they are the ones who tend to discriminate others with special needs. The expectation is that the approaches will transform them into more humane persons for the less privileged. The following are the approaches to instil a sense of 'intermediality' into the learners that cannot be excluded:

i. Absolutism and Relativism are almost opposite philosophical positions to the subject of morals. Absolutism believes that there is one right answer, independent of context or perspective. Relativism assumes that something is true relative to a point of view. In other words, what makes an action right for someone is because it is approved by that same person (Weist, 2016). Teaching the two philosophies can inform learners that their absolutist views about 'self' and 'others' may be out of sync with humaneness. 'Intermediality' is the reasonable position to take. In the case of Malawi, teaching these philosophies in secondary and tertiary institutions would be more appropriate than in primary schools because the concepts may be a little too abstract for their age.

ii. Multicultural education dictates that the school should provide an education that promotes social justice, getting to know different cultures and being unbiased toward them, and reflecting the effect of culture on the education environment (Yilmaz, 2016). Promoting multicultural education in schools can help learners appreciate that binary thinking is useful in several instances but it can be inhumane when it is applied to people who are different from them, like schoolmates with special needs.

iii. Citizenship education is a type of education that promotes the rights and obligations of an individual. It promotes the rule of law, fairness and respect for others. It promotes the relationship between the individual and society, and the international community (Sarno, 2011). This type of education can instil appreciation for diversity, a sense of unity with others, and a positive mindset for the less privileged.

iv. Constructivism as a paradigm of teaching and learning is a theory that advances the idea that learners can construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.

Learners use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge (Olusegun, 2015). Challenging learners to deal with problems of discrimination in their own environments can help them construct better understanding of how they should treat other people who may be different from them. For instance, learners can be challenged to undertake a project on discrimination of people with albinism and critique the beliefs surrounding the condition and let them draw moral lessons from it. The teacher could challenge them further to develop another project of how they would disseminate the moral lessons amongst the school community and to the wider society.

v. Cosmopolitanism is a theory that states that all human beings belong to a single community. It believes that community should be reconstructed based not on local traditions and allegiances, but on moral virtues and a love of humanity (Camhy, Garcia-Moriyon, Glaser & Striano, n.d.). If taught in education institutions, it can help learners understand the principle of 'intermediality' and promote love of humanity and a sense of common destiny that should translate to treating others humanely.

vi. Ubuntu/Umunthu is a moral disposition that embodies the idea that the humanness of a person is closely intertwined with the humanness of others. The following quotations explain this idea better; "I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1970, p.32). According to Tutu (2015) one's humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in others'. Ubuntu clearly advances 'intermediality' and discourages the notions of 'self' and 'other'. If this sense of oneness is promoted in learners who cannot be excluded, it would probably kindle a sense of empathy for fellow learners who may be less fortunate.

vii. Critical Diversity Studies are value-based approaches to the complexity of diversity. They deepen one's understanding of the dynamics of power acting upon various levels of interaction and how diversity issues play out in society; how differences or similarities are promoted, resisted, and reframed (Gotsis & Korte, 2015). Exposing learners in primary, secondary, and tertiary education institutions would help them to understand diversity of humanity and that there is strength in diversity in that people with physical challenges may have positive attributes that others do not.

Approaches to Promoting Positive Self-Concept in Learners That Can Be Discriminated

The National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) sets out to enhance the welfare of students who can be discriminated. It provides a number of strategies and activities to promote inclusive education. Of interest to this paper are the strategies and activities presented in Table 2.

The strategies and activities in Table 2 do not seem to provide a starter pack of approaches learners and teachers can use in promoting positive self-concept. There are four domains a learner needs to consider in constructing self-concept (see Leminen, 2002) and this study uses them as foundations for constructing the following approaches to promoting positive self-concept:

1. *Academic self-concept* includes the cognitive aspect of self-concept. A person evaluates his/her academic competence against other people's achievements and ranks him/herself. Because students with learning disabilities tend to have lower academic self-concept levels than average- and low achieving students without disabilities (Wei & Marder, 2012), one possible approach is to place high expectations of the students that can be discriminated. This implies a belief in the enormous capacity teachers would have in the learners and the learners would have in themselves. In this regard, teachers should continually affirm and encourage the learners. Teachers must constantly remind themselves that emphasis should be on effort rather than attainment and that they must value and respect the uniqueness of each individual, especially the learner that can be discriminated. In other words, behaviour which would diminish a person's level of self-esteem should be eliminated (INTO, 1995).

2. *Social self-concept* consists of person's ideas of their roles and positions in different social environments. The individual forms an overall picture of him/herself in relation to the significant others. It refers to people's perceptions of how liked and admired they are, but also to their social competence and social skills (Berndt & Burgy, 1996; Spilt, van Lier, Leflot, Onghena & Colpin, 2014). Assertiveness could help persons that can

be discriminated to claim their rightful place in society. Assertiveness is based on the belief that an individual has needs, rights, and something to contribute as others. Assertiveness also implies that individuals should defend their own rights without actually violating the rights of others. Individuals who are assertive are able to express their needs, wants, opinions and feelings in direct, honest, and appropriate ways (INTO, 1995, p.39). Goffman (1963) observes that the people, that cannot be discriminated, expect those that can be discriminated to act as helpless, and inferior. For instance, a person with physical disabilities must behave likewise. Those that can be discriminated must not accept this kind of paternalistic treatment. Goffman (1963), and Payne and Smith (2010) advise that they should try to help everyone to understand that people with disabilities are as human as everyone else. One technic is to 'break the ice'. When the stigmatized person finds that the people without disabilities have difficulty in ignoring their failing, they should try to help them by conscious efforts to reduce tension. The stigmatized individual may, for example, attempt to 'break the ice', by explicitly referring to their failing in a way that shows they are detached from their condition. They may even joke about it. This will put such people at ease before they have a chance to categorise them, and this places the person with disabilities in a position of control. All levels of education can promote assertiveness in all learners, especially in those that can be discriminated.

3. *Emotional self-concept* portrays a person's ideas of his/her inner self, his/her emotions, and characteristics. It also tells whether an individual sees him/herself as emphatic, fair, weak, reliable, and emotional, among similar attributes (Huitt, 2011; Berndt & Burgy, 1996). One's emotional intelligence is closely related to emotional self-concept. Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skills, and the ability to identify, assess, manage and control the emotions of one's self and of others. Of particular interest to this study is the ability to control the emotions of one's self which is also known as intrapersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal

Table 2

Strategies and Activities from the National Strategy on Inclusive Education

| S/N | Strategy | Activity |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Develop effective teacher and caregiver skills for inclusive education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review both pre-service and special needs teacher education curricula in alignment with the principles and practices of inclusive education • Develop inclusive education training manual for Early Childhood Development (ECD), primary and secondary teacher education. • Conduct continuous professional development for teacher educators in Inclusive education • Develop modules for inclusive education for ECD, teacher training colleges and universities. |
| 2 | Equip educators, caregivers, learners, school communities with knowledge and skills to support inclusive education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train teachers in inclusive psychosocial support, child protection and life skills development. • Orient learners on child safeguarding rights, life skills and protection issues. • Train learners and teachers on peer to peer learning and support. |

Source: Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017: 22-24

intelligence is the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears, and motivations. In other words, an emotionally intelligent person has a set of skills that meet the demands and pressures of the environment (Ferrer, 2012).

4. *Physical self-concept* includes a person's ideas of his appearance, body-image, physical competence, strength, and health (Esnaola, Infante, & Zulaika, 2011; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). Physical self-concept has been found to have a strong influence on general self-esteem. This is to be expected because the appearance of the body provides interface between the individual and the world. In other words, the body is the main means through which individuals communicate socially about who they are. This results in it playing a significant role in global self-esteem. The importance of the physical looks to self-esteem provides a rationale for using physical activity and exercise

interventions to enhance self-esteem. Positive forms of physical exercise instruction such as praising good performance and effort, providing technical instruction in a non-judgemental way, and encouragement lead to increased self-esteem. This was particularly the case for individuals who initially had low self-esteem. Environments where individuals are encouraged to focus on improving their own skills and performance rather than on comparison with others are associated with greater increases in competence and self-esteem (Edmunds, n.d.).

The approaches can be incorporated into several subjects such as English, Geography, Social Studies, and History at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Precedence was set when the Ministry of Education in 2002 required that every subject in the secondary school syllabus should include a component of HIV and AIDS as a strategy for reaching out to all the students to

educate them about the dangers of the disease (Kalanda, 2010). Kalanda's study revealed that this approach yielded significant behaviour changes amongst learners in primary and secondary schools. Consequently, he recommended that the HIV/AIDs content should be examinable so that the teachers and learners can take the content more seriously. If such an approach would be replicated, there is reasonable chance that discrimination against children likely to be excluded from and within the education system could decline, not as a token to complying with social expectation, but as a reflection of genuine mindset change (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017). Further, by empowering such learners, they would hopefully have achieved intermedial mindset in that they would have moved from the extreme negative self-concept to a position that is not egoistic either.

Implications for Inclusive Education in Malawi and Other Countries

The review presents a number of useful lessons for inclusive education in Malawi and other countries. The language in some sections of the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) in Malawi is rather problematic. The author hopes that the readers of this work will appreciate that it is very important that crafters of a strategic plan should apply their minds in using language that has little probability of multiple interpretation. This is helpful in that stakeholders will have common understanding and the resources can be directed at one cause for greater impact.

The essence of committing so much resource to inclusive education is, in part, to address two groups of learners (i.e., those that can be discriminated and those that cannot be discriminated) in terms of transforming them with respect to what they know and how they think. The National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) in Malawi is not clear about what the learners should know and there is little indication of focus on learner mindset change. Crafters of inclusive education strategic plans should recognise the importance of including outcomes that will attract resource investment into mindset change because that is usually the bedrock of genuine and lasting change.

Conclusion

This author argued that meaningful inclusive education in Malawi will be difficult to achieve if

the guiding documents like the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017-2021) (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2017) contain misleading language with multiple meanings and seems not to define particular groups as targets for specific strategies. The goals of the National Strategy on Inclusive Education will be hard to realise if the document is not clear about the strategies of transforming the mindset of the learners with regard to how they should treat learners that are different from them. The paper proposed one set of approaches that can discourage binary thinking and promote 'intermediality' in learners that cannot be discriminated and another set that can enhance positive self-concept in learners that can be discriminated. The proposed approaches have the capacity for double victory in that the learners that cannot be discriminated and those that can be discriminated would have acquired intermedial mindsets.

References

- African Union Commission (2015). *Agenda 2063*. Retrieved from www.un.org
- Al-Saidi, A. A. H. (2014). Post-colonialism literature the concept of *self* and the *other* in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*: An analytical approach. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(1), 95-105.
- Bakhuya, J. (2015) *Effect of communication strategy on strategic planning in African Banking Corporation Kenya*. (Masters thesis, University of Nairobi). Retrieved from erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/.
- Berndt, T. J., & Burgy, L. (1996). Social self-concept. In B.A. Bracken (Ed.), *Handbook of self-concept: development, social and clinical considerations* (p. 171-209). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Brons, L. (2015). Othering, an analysis. *Transcience*, 6(1), 69-90.
- Bullon, S. (2006). *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*. Cambridge: Longman.
- Camhy, D., Garcia-Moriyon, F., Glaser, J. & Striano, M. (n.d.). Cosmopolitanism in education: theoretical foundations of the new peace curriculum. Retrieved from <http://platform.europeanmoocs.eu>
- Childs, P. & Williams, R. J. P. (2013). *An introduction to postcolonial theory*. London: Routledge.
- East Ayrshire Council. (2002). *Promoting inclusion: a policy for all*. East Ayrshire Council.
- Edmunds, S. (n.d.). Building self-esteem and wellbeing through physical activity. Retrieved from <https://www.novacroft.com>
- Esnaola, I., Infante, G., & Zulaika, L. M. (2011). The multidimensional structure of physical self-concept. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 14(1), 304-312. doi: 10.5209/rev_SJOP.2011.v14.n1.27

- Ferrer, C. M. S. (2012). Influence of emotional intelligence in self-concept. *International Journal of Learning & Development*, 2(1), 232-240.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma*. London: Penguin.
- Gotsis, G. & Kortezi, Z. (2015). The rhetoric of diversity management: how critical diversity studies explicate organisational appropriation of differences. *Critical Studies in Diversity Management Literature*, p.33-44. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com>
- Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2008). (7th ed.). *Sociology themes and perspectives*. London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1807). "*Master-Slave Dialectic*" *Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated by J. B. Baillie (1967). London: Harper & Row.
- Huitt, W. (2011). Self and self-views. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/self/self.html>
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) (1995). *Enhancing self-esteem*. Belfast: Oval Printing Ltd.
- Jack, G. (2015). Advancing postcolonial approaches in critical diversity studies. Retrieved from www.oxfordhandbooks.com
- Kalanda, B. F. (2010). Life skills and reproductive health education changes behaviour in students and teachers: evidence from Malawi. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 5(4), 169-174.
- Kalua, F. A. (2007). *The collapse of certainty: contextualizing liminality in Botswana fiction and reportage*. (Doctoral thesis. University of South Africa, South Africa). Retrieved from uir.unisa.ac.za.
- Kalua, F. (2017). Intermediality: A paradigm for African identity in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 33(1), 24-41.
- Köseoğlu M.A., Barca, M., & Karayormuk, K. (2009). A study on the causes of strategies failing to succeed. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, 3(2), 77-91.
- Leminen, A. (2002). Self-concept of children in special and regular education. An unpublished report submitted in partial fulfilment as a requirement for pro gradu research in the Department of Special Education at the University of Jyväskylä.
- Malawi Government (2010). *The child care, protection and justice act*. Retrieved from www.ilo.org
- Malawi Government (2012). Disability act. Retrieved from <https://www.malawilii.org/mw/legislation/act/2012/10>
- Mbiti, J.S. (1970). *African religions and philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Meebelo, H.S. (1971). *Reaction to colonialism: a prelude to the politics of independence in Northern Zambia 1893-1939*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mengstie, S., (2011). Constructions of "otherness" and the role of education: The case of Ethiopia. *The Journal of Education, Culture, and Society*, [e-journal] 2, 7-15. Retrieved from <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/>
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2007). National education sector plan 2008-2017. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2017). *National strategy on inclusive education 2017-2021*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Obeng, K. & Ugboro, I. (2008). Effective strategic planning in public transit systems *Transportation Research Part E*, 44, 420-439.
- Olusegun, B.S. (2015). Constructivism learning theory: A paradigm for teaching and learning. *Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 5(6), 66-70.
- Payne, E. & Smith, M. (2010). Reduction of stigma in schools: an evaluation of the first three years. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 19(2), 11-36.
- Pradella, L. (2016). Postcolonial theory and the making of the world working class. *Critical Sociology*, 43(4-5), 573-586.
- Sarno, E. (2011). Geography and citizenship education: migrations and pathways of educational research. *Review of International Geographical Education*, 1(1), 72-83.
- Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Self-concept: validation of construct interpretations. *Review of Educational Research*, 46, 407-441.
- Spilt, J.L., van Lier P.A., Leflot, G. Onghena, P. & Colpin, H. (2014). Children's social self-concept and internalizing problems: the influence of peers and teachers. *Child Development*, 85(3), 1248-56.
- Tutu, D. (2015). Striving for ubuntu. Retrieved from www.tutufoundationusa.org
- United Nations Human Rights (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org>
- UNESCO (2017). *Education for sustainable development goals*. Paris: UNESCO
- Wei, X. & Marder, C. (2012). Self-concept development of students with disabilities: disability category, gender, and racial differences from early elementary to high school. *Remedial and Special Education* 35(4), 247-257.
- Weist, D. (2016). *Classification: absolutism vs relativism*. (Master of science in computer and information science. University of Michigan, USA). Retrieved from <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu>
- Yilmaz, F. (2016). Multiculturalism and multicultural education: a case study of teacher candidates' perceptions. *Cogent Education*, 3, 1. Retrieved from www.tandfonline.com