



Teaching Sensitive Material in the Classroom

An Additional Resource to Teaching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission





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Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
Wynberg Mews
Ground Floor, House Vincent
10 Brodie Road
Wynberg
Cape Town 7800
South Africa

++ 27 (0)21 763 7128
www.ijr.org.za

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Acknowledgements

In 2010, the IJR conducted a pilot research project with 25 Grade 12 history educators in the Western Cape on teaching the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission to their learners using the DVD series and Teacher Guide, entitled, *Truth, Justice and Memory*, developed by the Institute.

The twin aims of the research were, first, the design of lesson plans to provide content support in teaching a difficult and highly sensitive part of South African history; and second, to explore appropriate support strategies educators will need when mediating sensitive material in the classroom. The main output of the research aim was to produce this basic resource guide on classroom support strategies.

A selected number of educators were invited to an event hosted by the IJR where the insights gained from documenting teachers' and learners' experiences were shared, discussed and recorded.

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1. Introduction

South Africans are a multiply wounded people

– Dr Mamphela Ramphele

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process has been taught as part of the history curriculum at a number of high schools for more than two years. The reaction of teachers and learners to the twelve DVDs of the TRC process and the accompanying Teacher's Guide prepared by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) has been overwhelmingly positive. The consensus is that the visual material was of great value and that teaching the TRC proved to be very beneficial to learners' understanding of South African history and to their growth as citizens.

But some teachers and learners have also experienced serious problems, even trauma, while working with this material. This came to light at several workshops for teachers organised by the IJR and by the civil society organisation, Shikaya.

It emerged that many teachers and learners find the visual material of testimony at the TRC hearings very disturbing and difficult to process. Some teachers could not cope with all the emotion and anger as their own memories of the past came flooding back. Some learners even exhibited disruptive behaviour resulting from the emotions the material provoked.

As Nomfundo Walaza – a clinical psychologist, experienced trauma counsellor and CEO of the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre – remarked at an IJR workshop with history teachers and curriculum advisers: 'We're carrying a lot of scars as a nation. This was never going to be simple. We are not dealing with theory; we are dealing with something that happened here, to us, to our parents, to our teachers. These stories can add to the baggage the learners already carry. Many of our learners are traumatised by their lives. They must be helped to process this material, otherwise we will traumatise them even more. It can create great anger and even the desire among some to do something about it. At the same time, we cannot afford not to teach our learners about this time in the history of our country.'





This booklet draws from those workshops and other interviews with teachers and educationists and aims to help teachers deal with this sensitive material in the classroom. It adds to rather than replaces the IJR's original Teacher's Guide, called *Truth, Justice, Memory*.

The contributions/interviews were shortened and edited for the purposes of space and readability.



2. Case studies

Teachers' and learners' experiences, emotions and reactions

Teacher 'A'

Teacher 'A' is 46 years old and teaches at an urban school where all the learners are black. She has 27 learners in her history class. Her uncle was an anti-apartheid activist and disappeared without a trace during the 1980s. She says she 'experienced a lot of anger' showing the DVDs and teaching the TRC.

She cried when she first watched the DVDs during a session with other history teachers. She tried to deal with her pain and anger before she taught the first class on the topic.

But I don't want to lie. I still feel the pain since I could not find closure about my uncle's whereabouts. But it also taught me to be brave and to confront the learners by sharing my stories and telling them more about our past; how our brothers and sisters were brutally murdered by the white people. As I showed the DVDs to my class, I had hatred, mistrust, fear and emptiness within me. I think some of my experiences which were suppressed came to the fore, especially those of the 1970s and 1980s. The memories of people getting tear-gassed and beaten became very vivid and made me emotional. I was especially disturbed by the DVD about Simphiwe Mtimkulu where his parents had unanswered questions about their child. The bitterness, pain and anger they experienced when they were given a clump of their boy's hair were what I experienced too. I was bitter because the young boy was already emotionally dead from the poison they gave him, but still those adult white people were inhuman and they finished him off by killing him and burning his body. That was more than cruel; they acted like animals. They could have dumped his body somewhere so his family could see and bury their son's body.



I took my personal baggage, my anger, with me into the classroom. I needed to deal with myself first before I took the material to my learners, so I could convince them that we should not look backwards, but focus on correcting what is wrong. I had to face the reality that some of the families of victims were brave enough to look at the perpetrators and talk to them, ask them questions, cry and forgive so they could find closure.

But I could not hide my anger from my learners, and my bias allowed the debates in my class to turn to hatred of white people – forgetting that not all whites are racists or have done terrible things to our people. Anger dominated the lesson and we lost the focus on reconciliation. When my learners watched the episode on Simphiwe Mtinkulu and witnessed the police cruelty, they erupted, one learner even saying they should attack or chase away our white principal.

I think something else that added to the heated debate was when I told them that black teachers aren't employed in white schools, but white teachers teach at our black schools and get paid more than blacks, even when they have the same qualifications. I shared a story a coloured friend told me that when he started teaching, white teachers had separate toilets, which made me very angry.

I am still very bitter because of what apartheid did to my life and my future. It makes me distrust and dislike white people. Their lives have not changed since 1994, they now have their bread buttered on both sides. White people would never allow their children to go to a school environment like ours. We're supposed to be a democratic country, so the government first has to get all citizens on the same level before we can forgive and forget. The government should change their economic policies so they can bridge the gap between rich and poor.

The TRC brought us great hope, but because it wasn't a court where people could be judged and convicted, it ended up only bringing hatred, fear, bitterness, frustration and anxiety.

I used to be able to control my class. When I talked about the theory of the TRC, my learners were still controllable and didn't ask many questions. But when the DVDs were shown, the atmosphere changed very quickly. There were tears, especially from





the girls, and a lot of anger, especially with the episodes on Simphiwe Mtimkulu, The Breastfeeding Warrior and Brother against Brother. Some learners shouted insults and questions at the perpetrators on the screen. When there were victims saying they forgave the perpetrators, the learners would shout that they wouldn't have forgiven anybody. They also shouted answers to questions the TRC panel was asking of perpetrators.

I had to intervene because my learners could get themselves into trouble with talk such as chasing out the white principal and even chanting 'One Settler, One Bullet' and 'Kill a Boer, Kill a White'. They demanded answers from me to questions like, 'Don't you think it is time for our white principal to go back to his own brothers and sisters? We don't want whites here.' I told them our first president was never angry at any of the perpetrators and forgave them, even after sacrificing so much for 27 years in jail. But sometimes my reactions were very emotional because of my own past and my own anger.

It was clear to me that while my learners were shocked and angry when they learnt about the evils of apartheid, their reaction increased very dramatically when they watched examples of this on a television screen.

Teacher 'B'

Teacher 'B' teaches at a mostly coloured school with some black, white and Indian learners.

The fact that I lived through and experienced apartheid atrocities helped me teach the TRC process. But when I watched the DVDs the first time it was still a shock and filled me with anger, hurt and a need for revenge. I find it very difficult to forgive.

My learners could sense my feelings and I became a primary source of the story of apartheid, helping the learners to grasp it better. I tried to capture all my emotions and turn them into truthfulness so something positive could come from it.





It struck me that I was teaching people who are completely removed from the time we are talking about. We have to help them understand that it wasn't just fiction or painful stories, but reality. The DVDs are very powerful and brought the message home.

I wasn't actually prepared to deal with the raw emotions the visual material provoked. I realised that it was a mistake not to tell them beforehand what it was they were going to see.

Teacher 'C'

Teacher 'C' is 29 years old and teaches at an independent urban school.

Because I teach a very small Grade 12 class of only five learners, the mood of the lessons is often directed by individuals, including the teacher – whoever is the most expressive on a given day. The learners are four coloured females and one white male, which is an interesting dynamic. The white male tends to have an intelligent but detached point of view to apartheid history and to particularly confrontational material such as the TRC testimonies. He is very respectful of the material and very absorbed, but is always able to disengage freely from it. As a white teacher and a white male, I tend to be especially on the look out for his reactions to apartheid content, because I want to compare my view of whiteness with his developing one.

Teaching African and coloured learners is not easy for me as I am niggled by the inherent dishonesty of the scenario: an apartheid beneficiary teaching the evils of apartheid! I try to teach the requisite historical skills to my learners, but when it comes to emotional responses to material, I do my best not to bring my own influences to bear. This became particularly complicated during the lesson on the TRC. My emotional reactions to the DVD segments were overwhelming guilt and shame. I felt myself literally shrinking in my chair and I was quite afraid of facing the learners afterwards, not because of what they had to say but because of what my face or my body language might be saying about my shame. I felt vulnerable and weak and quite unworthy of conducting a review of the information.





The personal baggage I bring to the classroom is white guilt. I have often wondered if this is an emotion that should be taught, preached to the learners, especially white ones. Because the guilt is not negative if it is positively channelled; and maybe there should be some kind of method of teaching white learners to access guilt, to inherit it from their forebears and then to convert it into positive behaviours such as those highlighted in the TRC project.

On the other hand, perhaps it is not right to imprint the stains of your generation onto the new generation. In teaching the black students I am extra careful not to presume their point of view. If they do not want to talk about a particular issue, or if they lodge a particular objection which they don't see fit to substantiate, I am at pains to respect that and to comply with the desired direction of the discussion.

All of the above are baggage and burdens which I struggle against personally and which I try to counteract by sticking to the pure job of teaching. They were tested to the Nth degree during the TRC teaching programme.

I think these learners reacted moderately to the material because they attend a very comfortable school, far removed from the devastations of apartheid. Although they are mostly girls and are sensitive individuals, they have a wide range of preoccupations outside the classroom and even between classrooms. They were able to handle what is in the DVD segments; they can switch out of history-classroom mode as soon as the bell rings. However, they were never bored, uninterested or disrespectful during these TRC sessions, just affected for the time the lessons took.

Teacher 'D'

Teacher 'D' has been a teacher for 20 years and teaches at an Afrikaans-medium, rural school. She has 33 learners in her history class, mostly coloured, with one black learner.

I found it very difficult to face the past when watching the TRC DVDs. An emotion of guilt overwhelmed me. Not all of us experienced apartheid like those who were in the





Struggle. I felt ashamed, because I grew up very comfortably with my grandparents in a big house in an elite area. I did not feel the hardships and pain others had to go through and did not experience racism or discrimination. I wondered what I was going to tell my learners about my life and role during apartheid.

The day before I showed the DVDs to my class, my seven-year-old daughter was held hostage by a black man, but fortunately escaped. The thought of what could have been, stayed with me that morning. I showed my learners the DVD of Simphiwe Mtimkulu. Half way through our principal came into the class and told me that one of our learners, a 14-year-old girl, had just been raped and cut with a knife on her way to school. I told my learners what had happened and gave them time to deal with it before I switched on the DVD again.

Suddenly I burst into tears. For that moment I could not keep back what was so deep inside of me – anger, frustration, hatred, sadness. I was deeply moved by Simphiwe Mtimkulu's mother's pain and trauma and couldn't forget what had almost happened to my daughter. I stopped the DVD and walked out of the classroom. I just had to. When I went back to the class, I saw two learners crying. Others laughed; some just stared with dead eyes. One boy's legs shook so much the desk was bouncing up and down.

Eventually we talked about what had happened and why I had cried. The learners said blacks are still targeted and are still suffering from the past. They asked whether apartheid was to blame for the way people still behave; that killing is still a part of our daily lives. One asked whether the Struggle laid the foundation for the violence. I said it happened long before that, that colonialism, capitalism and World War II played the biggest part. I could see the anger towards whites in my learners' eyes. Most of them live on farms owned by whites. They believe the only way forward is to fight fire with fire.

I tried to tell them that learning about our history may help them – and me – to overcome the past. I told them not all white people were bad, nor all black people good. But it did worry me that something bad could happen because I didn't reach a child who was in an emotional state after watching the DVDs on the TRC.





The very next day our school's roof was blown off by strong winds. The teachers had an angry discussion about it, asking why 'gutter education' was still continuing. Learners started burning down the wind-damaged mobile classrooms. Two white teachers became scared of the learners' behaviour and had an argument with some of the black teachers.

Teacher 'E'

Teacher 'E' is a 36-year-old white Afrikaans male, who teaches at an urban (former 'Model C') school with mostly white and coloured learners with a smaller number of black pupils.

Every fault line in our society showed up when we dealt with the TRC DVDs in my history class. The easy way in which the pupils of all backgrounds mostly relate to each other disappeared in an instant.

Being white and Afrikaans myself, I felt very protective of the white learners in my class. I felt they were facing the anger and bitterness of their classmates for something they were not responsible for. I felt sorry for them because they have to carry the sins of their forefathers and there is nothing they can do about that. But I tried hard to hide my protectiveness because it has always been important to me not to be seen by my learners as a white man or an Afrikaner, but as a teacher and a citizen.

I expected the black learners to be angry after I watched some of the DVDs beforehand. I became angry too at what was done, much of it in my name. When I played the DVDs in the class, I could see the coloured and black learners were disturbed by the visual picture of brutality and cruelty of apartheid. I could also see that they tried to contain their emotions because they respect me and I'm also white. One or two of the white learners also showed their anger and surprise, saying they never knew it was like that, but the other white learners just sat there quietly.

The mistake I made was not to show the Introduction DVD first so learners could be prepared and able to contextualise. I talked earlier about the reason for the TRC and





the negotiations before 1994, but the audio-visual presentation is so much more powerful. I showed the Breastfeeding Warrior DVD first because it tells a fascinating story and then the DVD of Sipiwe Mtimkulu.

I found new respect for the black learners because they were really restrained in their reactions when it was time for discussions. But the anger did come through, especially at apartheid policemen who killed and tortured but walked free. They were saying that very little had changed since the apartheid days, that blacks were still poor and whites were rich and whites never changed their attitude. How can we still have Bishops court and Delft in one city after we have had a black government since 1994, one asked. Another black learner said he had white friends at school, but he can still sense an underlying sense of superiority from them. It didn't take long for the discussion to move away from the past and the TRC and to turn to the present situation in South Africa, and I had to gently insist that we deal with history first.

Only one white learner spoke up. He said he did not know that apartheid was really that bad and the police were so cruel, but explained that his father had told him South Africa could not become a democracy while the ANC was a communist organisation. He backed down when black learners interrupted him. He also made the point that he was born after apartheid had been abolished and that it was unfair to point fingers at all whites for the evils of the past. He said the ANC government was wasting money they could be spending on the poor.

A coloured learner asked why 'the fight' was always between black and white and why coloured people are again regarded as irrelevant. He repeated the saying that coloured were 'not white enough in the past and are now not black enough', and some of the other learners agreed with him. He asked why Africa was such a failure and said he was afraid the ANC was going to steer South Africa in the same direction. Black learners were very angry at this, saying he didn't know anything about black history.

The atmosphere in the class was unpleasant and it became clear the three racial groups were pulling away from each other. I felt a bit helpless and unqualified to deal with it and was very aware of being a white Afrikaner trying to steer the conversation.





I did bring the class back to the TRC and had some agreement from most of them that a good understanding of history was essential to understanding the problems of our country today. I asked the learners to participate in the discussions as citizens first rather than members of a racial group, but a black learner told me quite gently that it was impossible 'because my country sees me as a black person first'.

A very big problem of teaching the TRC is that we don't have enough time in our busy schedule. Learning and talking about something as sensitive as this takes a lot of time. I wanted to show the DVD on conscription next just to show that apartheid hurt everybody, but we didn't have time for that.

I regret not preparing my learners for the DVDs better. Next time I will pre-empt their anger, discomfort and their questions so the discussions could be easier and more meaningful. I also need guidance and assistance as to how someone in my position should teach this topic to a mixed class.

Teacher 'F'

Teacher 'F' is a 57-year-old female teacher at an Afrikaans-medium school in a coloured urban area.

I was part of the 1976 student uprising and as a coloured person was part of the oppressed. I found it difficult to be objective on the TRC material and to present historical facts to my learners without being prejudiced. I struggled to conceal my intolerance with white people and felt that the TRC presented the perpetrators with an easy route to escape the crimes they committed. The TRC was far too lenient and gave amnesty far too easily. Apartheid was a crime against humanity and murder is murder, irrespective of who gave the orders. The perpetrators should have been punished by a court.

I used my personal experiences and feelings as a primary source when teaching the TRC. I could give them first-hand information besides what is shown in the DVDs





and in textbooks. My learners could therefore form a better understanding of what happened and why apartheid was such an evil system.

Before I started teaching the TRC, I explained that the DVDs contained emotionally sensitive material and asked the learners to indicate when the visuals were too much for them to bear. I watched them closely and gave support to those who obviously needed it. I sometimes stopped the DVD and talked them through their emotions.

The learners showed little interest when I first showed the Introduction DVD. It was only when I showed the DVD on Simphiwe Mtimkulu and shared some of my own stories that they realised we were dealing with reality. Most of the learners live in economically deprived circumstances and have to fend for themselves, so they are emotionally very tough. They didn't show too much emotion because they didn't want to be seen as 'softies' because in their community it is truly the 'survival of the fittest'.

Teacher 'G'

Teacher 'G' has been teaching for 20 years and teaches at an inner-city school. His history class has 20 per cent coloured and 80 per cent black learners.

I experienced a number of emotions when working through the TRC material. Having been in the Struggle, it was difficult to remain neutral and unbiased. I relived the feelings of anger and frustration when watching the DVDs. I still feel that many of the perpetrators got off lightly and that the TRC was very lenient. The atrocities they committed were crimes against humanity. I explained my position on this to the learners during the presentation of the material, trying to make them understand where I was coming from. At times I shed tears and the learners noticed this, but I told them that showing emotions was OK as I could relate to the victims and their families.

Many of my learners live in the townships and could relate to the DVDs more than the coloured learners, but the coloured learners came to a deeper understanding of the suffering of blacks during apartheid.





Many of the learners were angry and confused and disgusted at the TRC for granting amnesty to the perpetrators. They were disgusted at the way the perpetrators were reacting. Many learners cried, but others laughed because they didn't know how to react to the visual material. Some learners stayed behind and wanted to see those segments not chosen for the class. There were discussions around forgiveness, reconciliation and compensation for victims.

Overall the visual stimulation accelerated the learning process about the theme, they learnt a lot more and understood better because of the audio-visual aids.

Teacher 'H'

Teacher 'H' teaches at a school with mostly black and coloured learners and a few whites.

I could not stop myself from letting my personal baggage interfere with my teaching of the TRC course. It brought back all the old memories, pain, anger and frustration. My learners must have sensed this because they reacted with more anger and hatred than I suspected they would. Some of the learners cried openly and I didn't really know how to handle the situation. Some of them were saying retribution against whites was the only solution that would kill the pain of coloured and black people. I tried to tell them about Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu's teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation, but I didn't think I was very convincing.

The DVD segment on white conscription brought an interesting response – with most learners sympathising with the young white men who had to go to the army.

The visual material is very powerful and made the past come alive. I don't think I would have been so successful in teaching about apartheid and the TRC if we didn't have these aids. I think after the initial anger had disappeared, my learners were able to deal with the past in a much more informed way.



3. Teaching approach

Input and advice from teachers, educationists and psychologists

Why is the TRC taught at schools?

The study of history at schools is an important tool to support citizenship in a democracy. It helps young people to understand and support South Africa's constitution and prepares learners for local, national and regional responsibilities as citizens and strengthens our democracy. It promotes a culture of human rights, dignity and respect through an understanding of the past.

This is the context in which the TRC should be taught. It is a crucial element of the story of apartheid and of the transition to democracy, of how South Africans arrived at where they are today. The TRC is not simply taught for its own sake.

Teachers should be properly prepared

No teacher should ever show the TRC DVDs to a class without having watched it beforehand and worked through all the issues and emotions they evoke. Many or most teachers have vivid memories of the dark apartheid era and the visual TRC material can be experienced as very disturbing.

- Watch the DVDs with fellow teachers, family or friends and unpack it for yourself before you share it with learners. If necessary, ask for help with ways of dealing with it. This kind of sensitive material demands that a teacher also be a therapist or psychologist, not a catalyst for anger. Avoid the victim approach.
- Don't let learners watch the DVDs without supervision.
- Make sure you don't take your personal baggage into the classroom and pass it on to learners – they have enough of their own. Try not to re-traumatise young people.



- The issue of race will always come up in discussions on the TRC. Keep your own feelings under control and try to stand outside your own ethnicity.
- Tell the learners that the TRC is an instrument we use to investigate the past. The TRC cannot be taught like other topics – teaching sessions have to be interactive. Methods like debriefing and journaling can be very helpful.
- It is crucial that teachers concentrate on helping learners process the TRC information and reactions properly, otherwise the opposite of what was intended with the TRC material will be achieved.
- If you find it difficult to cope with your own and learners' reactions, stop and only continue with the TRC classes once you are sure you can contain yourself and your class and establish the classroom as a safe, secure place.
- Where practical, liaise with other history teachers to get advice and support or even ask teachers of other subjects to sit in when you play the TRC DVDs.

Leading the class

Teachers should see themselves as mediators of knowledge. This does not mean you shouldn't share your own experiences and insights, but quickly return to the role of mediator, otherwise the value of the lesson could be lost and emotions take over. It is legitimate to voice one's own anger and frustrations of the past, but it has to be done in a controlled and sensitive manner that doesn't undermine your role as mediator.

Teachers have the responsibility to make sure their learners are in a safe, comfortable learning environment when teaching the TRC. Nobody in the class should be made to feel they're in the dock as the accused. The spirit of our constitution demands that teachers work with the concept of 'us' and avoid a strengthening of the idea of 'us and them'. This does not mean that you should gloss over any of the past injustices or continuing inequalities. Learners need to learn how to cope with this issue outside the class.

Teachers need to be very sensitive to the way learners from different class and ethnic backgrounds experience and react to the TRC. Be aware of this before you show the DVDs





and be prepared to cope with the different reactions and the dynamics this could bring to a mixed class.

One suggestion in dealing with white learners is that they be reassured that a reaction of paralysing guilt from their side wouldn't be desirable, but that it is very important for them to fully acknowledge what was done to the black majority during the apartheid era and that much of that damage still has an after-effect on society. Start at the present – an open democracy based on non-racialism – and work back to the past to see what it was like before.

It would be very helpful if parents could be informed before the TRC lessons start so they can contribute in the process of preparing and debriefing.

Explain the TRC first

Most of the several dozen teachers consulted on their experiences teaching the TRC reported that learners often became angry at the lack of proper justice; at the fact that perpetrators got amnesty instead of being sent to jail; and at the absence of remorse and apologies by perpetrators. Consequently, it is very important to explain the TRC and its legal mandate properly before the lessons start – the DVD segment 'Introduction' will help.

This means teachers should know all the facts about the TRC and how it came about before teaching it. If learners have this background, many of the angry questions won't arise.

These are some of the points that should be made:

- The TRC was born out of the political settlement of 1994. The political leadership decided that having Nuremberg-type trials (retributive justice) would undermine the programme to promote reconciliation, national unity and stability, and chose restorative justice, with the possibility of amnesty for perpetrators (there was also the problem of capacity to prosecute perpetrators in a court of law and the chances of conviction – much of the documentation and other evidence of human rights violations having been destroyed by the last apartheid government's security forces). The enabling legislation determined that the focus be on gross





human rights violations between 1960 and 1994: murder, torture, kidnapping and severe assault.

- Perpetrators of gross human rights violations could get amnesty from the quasi-judicial Amnesty Committee. They had to make a full disclosure of their crimes; prove that they had a political rather than personal motive; and prove that their crimes were proportional to the motive – for example, it wouldn't be acceptable to kill someone for not carrying a pass, even though the motive was 'political'. Perpetrators were not required to apologise or express remorse – it would have been easy to fake this anyway, cheapening the acts of those who had genuine remorse.
- The TRC's emphasis, as the name implies, was on truth and reconciliation. In many cases amnesty applicants revealed aspects of the truth about the past that would otherwise have remained hidden (the Phila Ndwandwe DVD demonstrates this clearly).
- The TRC was not 'the blueprint' for reconciliation. Reconciliation is a process, not an event. The TRC was merely a first step on the road to greater national unity and understanding. Discuss with learners whether South Africans have progressed on this road or not.
- The TRC investigated gross human rights violations from all sides of the conflict – the apartheid state's police and military, Umkhonto we Sizwe, the Azanian People's Liberation Army, Inkatha Freedom Party militia, United Democratic Front activists, right-wing paramilitaries. It acknowledged that the armed struggle against apartheid was a legitimate struggle, but made the point that even in a just war unjust actions can be perpetrated.
- Not all victims before the TRC were victims of the apartheid security forces, as the DVDs on white conscription and on the bloody conflict between the ANC/UDF and the IFP demonstrate. Victims of MK and APLA shootings, bombings and land-mine explosions also appeared before the TRC, as did victims and families of necklace murders that took place during the late 1980s.





Use the Teacher's Guide

The Teacher's Guide supplied with the DVDs is a very helpful guide in teaching the TRC. Don't go straight to the DVDs; work through the lessons, examples, cartoons, etc. in the Guide first.

Other thoughts

The continued national project of deepening and maturing our democracy demands that we familiarise our youth with our country's history and with the way we dealt with the gross injustices of the past once we had achieved a negotiated political settlement in 1994.

The teaching of the TRC process to senior learners is an important part of this. Experience has reminded all of us that this is not an academic issue; that teachers often have painful memories and learners are still faced with racism and inequalities in society. These realities make the TRC course a sensitive and often difficult one to teach.

The IJR workshops with teachers have been extremely valuable in learning the lessons of the failure and successes of teaching this sensitive material. Those experiences and the advice of experts form the basis of this booklet.

Some final things to consider:

- Carefully monitor every learner's reaction to the TRC class. Intervene if there is a suspicion that a learner, perhaps because of personal history or background or perhaps because of his/her particular personality, has the potential to act out his/her feelings of anger.
- Communicate with parents if a particular learner is showing extreme reactions of anger/bitterness.
- Discuss with learners how we honour other people's pain and what the skills of healing are.





- Ensure that educators understand the impact that this material may have on them as citizens, and that they take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and not unwittingly create a situation where learners feel justified to act out or take revenge for past injustices.

