

The Exploitation of Public Representations in the Tuition of History in a Post-Apartheid South Africa: Ecosystem

Chitja Twala¹ and Jacob Selesho²

*¹Faculty of the Humanities, Department of History, University of the Free State,
Bloemfontein, South Africa*

*²Faculty of Management Sciences, Vaal University of Technology,
Vanderbiljpark, South Africa*

E-mail: ¹<twalacm@ufs.ac.za>, ²<jmselesho@webmail.co.za>

KEYWORDS Museums. National Curriculum Statement. High Schools. History. Monuments. Segregation

ABSTRACT For many decades South African education and the teaching of History in particular, has been characterised by desegregation in an effort to accommodate the diverse nature of society. During the apartheid era, the decentralisation of education provided racially defined communities the legal means to preserve their privileges, that the teaching of a 'segregated' History in South African high schools was more successful at meeting the demand for racial desegregation than for achieving the ideal of social integration. The above is an indication that throughout the country's history, segregation has been a constant feature of South African society and therefore, of its education. To date, consensus has not been reached regarding the most effective ways in which high schools should address the issue of utilising public representations in the teaching, as well as in the learning of History as a school subject in post-apartheid South Africa. In attempting to bypass the above-mentioned challenges, the article presents an explanatory study and focuses on the perceptions held by History students in the five Mangaung High Schools on the utilisation of public representations in the teaching of South African History. Furthermore, through the experiences and observations by these learners, the article argues that if History is properly taught, for example, by utilising public representations as focus evidence in the reconstruction of the past, this could be a helpful tool for the attainment of reconciliation and nation building in South Africa. Through the observation by the learners sampled for this project, the researchers were trying to establish the impact of utilising public representations in the teaching of South African History and how often this method is used by educators.