

Reflection is the latest buzz word

WHILE the idea of equipping students with the skills to operate globally is not new, there is always more that can be done, says Prof Wim Gevers, associate director: academic at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB).

"We've been adjusting our curriculum for more than 10 years. Our learning materials are international; students are working in international environments and can transfer the skills they acquire in SA to any other country. But we must not be complacent; we need to make sure we're developing leaders according to the latest thinking."

He says reflection is a recent approach to leadership thinking that has business schools sitting up and taking notice.

"It encourages managers to consider the effects of their situations and actions and equips them to adapt to new environments.

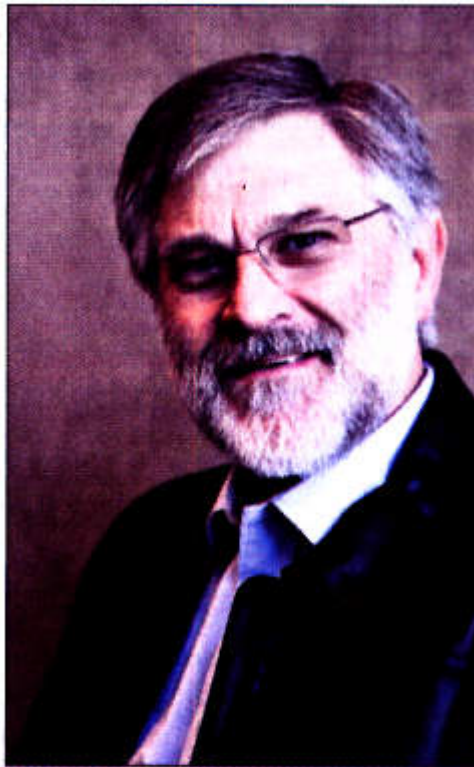
"Reflection teaches you a lot about yourself as a leader. You may be confronted with a situation where you discover what you thought was the correct way of doing thing is, in fact, wrong. It's only when you start reflecting on your experience that you begin to take note of how things were derailed."

He says cultural diversity is also important for preparing students for the global stage. "It's about becoming schooled in accepting that there are major cultural diversities across the globe.

"Every new country you visit requires you to acquaint yourself with the local environment. We cannot include all that in our programme, but we can impart an understanding of the importance of familiarising oneself and adapting one's behaviour."

For this reason that participating in programmes that have an internationally diverse student body is enormously valuable.

"You get to know about the different environments in the global village by interacting with one another in the classroom. In addition, working with international faculty brings a wonderful international flavour to classes. Every year



LOOKING BACK: Prof Wim Gevers says it's only when you reflect on your experience that you begin to take note of how things were derailed.

we invite a number of well respected international faculty to teach on the MBA programmes and they bring their different viewpoints across and the students find this extremely beneficial. All this contributes to developing a global mindset."

The USB also sends its faculty abroad to teach at other schools, as do other South African institutions.

"There they meet their counterparts and get to know how they do things so they can feed this back into the system in SA.

"Participating in learning activities in different cultural environments expands their minds tremendously," he says.

