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## INTEGRATING UBUNTU PRINCIPLES IN THE TEACHING OF FOLKTALES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Folktales generally have a simple plot, involving characters that serve as symbols for different kinds of people. These characters encounter situations and events that have relevance in the lives of audience members, even though they are often unrealistic like talking animals. The paper explores the characters as serving four functions in the development of the theme, in the first-year students' prescribed Setswana Folktale text, "Dipheko tsa Bantsho" in relation to Ubuntu principles being the key figure for the success or failure of good behaviour, for a reward and bad behaviour for punishment. The aim of the paper is to serve as a medium of moral education and a nudge to maintain conformity to accepted patterns of behaviour. Students are explored in the light of moral and ethical consideration based on the subsequent meaning-making discussions, where they are guided to perceive relationships between the imagined situations narrated in the folktale and the realities in their own environment. Folktales could be used to support students well-being in building bridges between cultures through the shared tradition of storytelling, to engage students' emotions, to help students to recognize the shared experiences and problems faced by people from different cultural backgrounds, to serve as a therapeutic effect by allowing the safe expression of emotions and allow students to confront fears and solve problems and to help students to make sense of their worlds.

**Keywords:** characters; folktales, moral education students, ubuntu principles.