

Transformative Curricula, Pedagogies and Epistemologies

Teaching and Learning in Diverse
Higher Education Contexts

Michael Cross, Caroline Long,
Sibonokuhle Ndlovu and Phefumula Nyoni (Eds.)



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Transformative Curricula, Pedagogies and Epistemologies

African Higher Education

DEVELOPMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Transformative Curricula, Pedagogies and Epistemologies

*Teaching and Learning in Diverse Higher
Education Contexts*

Edited by

Michael Cross, Caroline Long, Sibonokuhle Ndlovu and
Phefumula Nyoni



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To Michael Cross
(1952–2021)



Contents

- Series Editors' Foreword IX
Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis and André Keet
- Acknowledgements XII
- List of Figures and Tables XIII
- Notes on Contributors XIV
- 1 Agency within the Context of Pedagogies, Epistemologies and the Transformative Curricula 1
Loïse Jeannin, Caroline Long and Phefumula Nyoni
- 2 Indigenous Culinary Knowledge, Culinary Curriculum and Students' Perceptions of Indigenous Culinary Knowledge 11
Mohlakoane Ledile and Hewson Daryl
- 3 Eloquence in African and Inherited French Teaching Traditions: Convergence and the Need for Transformative Pedagogy Inadvertent 28
N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba
- 4 Rwanda's Language-in-Education Policy Shift from French-Dominant to English-Only Medium: 2009–2017 Prospects and Implementation Success in Higher Education 47
Epimaque Niyibizi, Juliet Perumal and Rita Paradie Nimusabe
- 5 Collaborative Learning among Diverse Online Students at an Open Distance Learning Institution in South Africa: Pedagogical Considerations for Online Learning Development 72
Anneke Venter
- 6 Exploring Culturally Responsive Teaching amongst Pre-Service Teachers 96
Boitumelo Khunou
- 7 Coursework Assignments: Higher Expectations for Deeper Engagement 106
Caroline Long and Gift Cheva

- 8 Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instruction: What Lessons for Economics Lecturers in South Africa? 138
Loïse Jeannin and Emmanuel Ojo
- 9 Corporeity in PhD Thesis Writing: Rituals and ‘Writing Gestures’ 149
Elsa Chachkine and Anne Jorro
- 10 Supervising Doctoral Students in South African Higher Education: Pedagogy, Context and Agency 168
Michael Cross
- 11 ‘Assessment for Learning’ over ‘Assessment of Learning’: A Quest for Mastery Rather Than Performance Orientation in Postgraduate Research Degrees 194
Dennis Zami Atibuni
- 12 Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities: Patched onto the System to Access Professional Education 214
Sibonokuhle Ndlovu
- 13 Myths Surrounding the Extended Curriculum in South Africa’s Higher Education Sector 239
Phefumula Nyoni and Olaide Agbaje
- 14 In Retrospect: Context, Diversity and Human Agency Matter 254
Michael Cross and Sibonokuhle Ndlovu
- Index 265

Series Editors' Foreword

This volume is the first to appear after the tragic death of Professor Michael Cross, one of the series editors. We would like to offer this foreword in honour of Michael's life and work.

Michael was a co-founder and co-editor of this book series, "African Higher Education: Developments and Perspectives". He was the founding Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) at the University of Johannesburg, where the book series is hosted. The passing of Michael shocked South Africa and the higher education research community in different parts of the world and, as such, tributes continue to pour in from across the globe. He was a consummate academic, an accomplished intellectual, and a passionate scholar of education sciences who has published several scholarly works over the course of four decades of his academic career. He dedicated his academic life by engaging the critical education and socio-economic questions of our time. His research spanned various terms: academic leadership, academic performance of students, access, equality, social justice, political economy of education and the decolonisation project in higher education. Michael has left an indelible legacy and set a high bar for those who were fortunate enough to have known and interacted with him.

In the late 1990s, Michael was part of the heated debate on the politics of a national curriculum dealing with diversity in the South African education system. He emphasised the importance of open and genuine debate among educationists, policymakers, practitioners, students and people interested in exploring how education can overcome the legacy of differences engineered by apartheid. He also reflected on the role of inclusive and just education in reshaping the future of South Africa. Contributing to efforts to restructure the post-apartheid South African higher education system within the social justice framework, Michael advocated for epistemic access for students from a disadvantaged background. He was particularly concerned about how students from marginalised communities or historically underprivileged backgrounds negotiate their performance within a highly unequal and unjust university environment. His commitment to change and inclusive education included intellectual and advocacy work on major curriculum development and pedagogical initiatives at national and international levels. He participated in the development of training courses for school supervisors, headmasters, and principals of independent schools; and contributed to developing the teacher education curriculum for the African Virtual University. Further, he was part of the team on an international review of the liberal arts curriculum in 10 countries.

Michael has left a strong legacy in diversity scholarship and institutional transformation initiatives in African higher education by questioning the very

nature of knowledge production in African higher education. Besides the ongoing concern with the epistemological and theoretical hegemony of the West in African academic practice, he tried to understand how knowledge was produced and controlled through the interplay of the politics of knowledge and current intellectual discourses in African universities. In this regard, he called for African universities to develop a liberated epistemological voice more responsive to the social and economic complexities of the continent.

Michael published several academic works on issues of power and knowledge, contributing to the decolonisation debates in Africa. He theorised the dynamics and the politics of knowledge in the context of African epistemologies, asserting that the production and mediation of knowledge was a profoundly political process.

He is the author and co-author of several books, book chapters and numerous articles in leading scholarly journals. He has served as an education specialist in several major national education policy initiatives in South Africa, such as the National Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Committee on Norms and Standards for Educators. He shaped higher education research on many levels in South Africa for three decades and led several high-profile international research projects. For instance, Michael has been engaged in several activities conducted by CODESRIA, both as a grantee and later as a facilitator of many of the methodological and academic writing workshops that CODESRIA regularly convenes for academics from across the continent. He was a grantee of the seventh CODESRIA's South-South programme, a collaboration between the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), CODESRIA and the International Development Economic Associates (IDEAS). Through this grant, he published his work, *Steering Epistemic Access in Higher Education in South Africa: Institutional Dilemmas* with CODESRIA.

His passion for education research in Africa made him to embrace the complexities of post-colonial African realities, engaging in the broader contexts of Pan-African projects. This has been among the many reasons Michael established the AMCHES and led it with scholarly dexterity and proficiency. The Centre thus took shape as a pre-eminent Pan-African institution for scholarly research, inquiry, training and professional development in higher education. AMCHES developed as a knowledge hub for critical thinking and knowledge production that contribute to deeper understandings of strategic issues in higher education through multidisciplinary and policy-relevant research. To this end, Michael was committed to establishing this book series at AMCHES.

As the director of the AMCHES, Michael exhibited a productive charisma that brought together various scholars to develop research projects on higher education issues. Among others, he was the principal investigator of the ongo-

ing research project on understanding epistemic access and success in public universities in South Africa. The project explores how the knowledge question is being approached in post-apartheid universities and its implications for understanding the meanings of access and success. He was also particularly focused on advancing the excellence and intellectual contributions of African scholars and for this reason, he launched a new project with the aim of critically investigating, analysing and documenting the intellectual legacies of African scholars, leaders, and institutions. The project now hosts book initiatives, post-doctoral research projects and research collaboratives. As a result of Michael's hard work, AMCHES has recently launched a new book project on the future of African higher education, bringing leading scholars together. The book will be dedicated to Michael.

Michael's hearty laugh and generosity will be treasured moments as we move ahead, and it is part of his legacy and an education for us he left behind. His intellectual contributions will persist, but the loss of his remarkable ability to be a friend, a friend to many across time zones, generations, and decades, will be keenly felt.

There will be many tributes to his life, but it is doubtful that any can fully capture Michael's impact on African scholarship. We will continue the journey that Michael started to honour his vision and to maintain the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies as his living legacy. The Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies, on behalf of the University of Johannesburg, would like to express its deepest condolences to the family of Michael and appreciate the time spent with him, as well as the family's support following his passing. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to colleagues and friends from across South Africa and all over the world for providing support in diverse ways.

Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis and André Keet

July 2021

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We would also like to thank all the authors, colloquium presenters and reviewers, the blind reviewers who took their time to review the individual chapters and the manuscript, as well as Jill Fresen who handled the editorial and proofing work so meticulously.

Figures and Tables

Figures

- 4.1 Lecturers' perceptions on level of English MoI policy implementation success between January 2009 and December 2017. 62
- 4.2 Lecturers' perceived level of confidence in using/teaching through English by end 2017. 63
- 5.1 Illustration of different interaction modes on formal and informal learning platforms. 79
- 7.1 Relationship of assignment quality to student work. 126

Tables

- 4.1 Comparison between lecturers' perceived level of proficiency in English in 2009 and in 2017. 64
- 5.1 Some characteristics of student participants. 78
- 7.1 Supporting pedagogy for the assessment and evaluation module. 114
- 7.2 Instrument comprising two protocols. 116
- 9.1 Information about the participants. 154
- 10.1 Academic staff qualifications by race in South African universities in 2017. 173
- 10.2 Ranks of academics by race in South African universities in 2017. 174
- 12.1 Demographic information of students with disabilities. 218
- 12.2 Demographic information of DU staff members. 219

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Michael Cross

is the Founder and Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES). On 6 June 2021, Professor Michael Cross untimely passed on, as this book was at an advanced stage of production after having diligently led the editorial processes associated with it. Professor Cross began his career as a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand in 1986. He attained great achievements as an academic and mentor, and served diligently in various task teams on governance, transformation, programme review, and quality assurance. He served as an education specialist in several major national education policy initiatives in South Africa, such as the National Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Committee on Norms and Standards for Educators. He also served as a member of education evaluation teams in Africa, Europe, and the USA. Professor Cross was awarded teaching and research fellowships by several institutions including the Johns Hopkins University and North-Western University. He was a visiting scholar at Stanford University, Stockholm University and Jules-Vernes University in Amiens, and winner of the 1911–12 award, Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers in Africa from the Association for Educational Development in Africa (ADEA). Professor Cross authored and co-authored several books, book chapters and numerous articles in leading scholarly journals. He was also a co-founder and co-editor of the book series “African Higher Education: Developments and Per-

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Agency within the Context of Pedagogies, Epistemologies and the Transformative Curricula

Loïse Jeannin, Caroline Long and Phefumula Nyoni

This book is the outcome of what began as a research seminar arranged by the Ali Mazrui Centre, University of Johannesburg, in collaboration with the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers (CNAM), two distinctive institutions whose philosophical perspectives on research in higher education came together. The aim of the Ali Mazrui Centre is to build institutional capacity in order to produce scholarly research that is multidisciplinary and policy-relevant, and to promote critical reflection and dialogue. Ali Mazrui was a world-renowned academic with his roots in Africa. His work has indeed provoked critical thinking about the place of African academics in the world. Some of his statements resonate with the themes of this book. For instance, he argued that “to solve African problems we must think from the inside” (Lobakeng, 2017). He strongly believed that “cultures of diversity” were a “blessing and an asset”, and that a “really representative universal civilisation would incorporate much more of the heritage of the different cultures of the world” (Polylog, 2003).

The CNAM in Paris, and in particular the research centre Formation et Apprentissages Professionnels (Training and Professional Apprenticeships) led by Anne Jorro, has a pertinent research focus on the development of professional identity through experience. Such experience is interpreted subjectively and inter-subjectively. Researchers at the CNAM investigate training programme design, the transmission, and circulation of knowledge, the dynamics of identity, as well as the links between professional learning and activity in the workplace and in training. These are studied at three levels: learning and learning processes set in context, individual learning paths, and organisational and institutional aspects of learning.

Transformative educational practices are essential in contemporary higher education in the African context, and, we may add, in the world context. Too often, the voices of individuals are not heard; in fact, they do not speak, with the result that they do not benefit from opportunities to engage with the ideas that are offered. From the institutions’ perspective, there is little to be gained from a class of silent and acquiescent students who are seeking only to imbibe what is being offered. It is critically important to have a curriculum

that is relevant to their particular context – pedagogies that engage students in authentic interaction as envisaged by Freire and Dewey, and epistemologies that are reconceptualised to incorporate various sociocultural paradigms – if educators are to break the chains of “mainstream” education, not only in African contexts but globally.

How to transform practices, with this purpose in mind, is a real challenge for lecturers. The practices cannot be prescribed in a one-size-fits-all package, owing to higher educational institutional variations. The institutional differences reflect diversity in historical contexts and societal challenges, producing a wide variation of practices across countries and institutions. In trying to understand the dialogic and subjective nature of teaching, Higgins (2011: 1) notes that from the point of view of working teachers, there are days when one lives up to ideals, and other days when one falls depressingly short of hope. In this context, individual agency provides resources to overcome the daily challenges faced by lecturers who aim to provide contextualised teaching content and relevant pedagogies for a wide spectrum of students.

Agency is effectively promoted between students and lecturers where diverse pedagogical and epistemological practices are at play. The central role of agency has also been emphasised in culturally diverse environments where students and lecturers tend to adjust to new socio-cultural settings (Jeannin, 2018; Tran, 2011). Agency is an important lens in understanding the relations between supervisors and students, especially during the thesis-writing processes that engage both body and mind in navigating enabling and constraining contexts. Higgins (2011: 2) maintains that in order to promote selfhood in students, teachers ought to ‘bring to the table’ their own achieved self-cultivation, their commitment to ongoing growth, together with their diverse practices, styles, and tricks for dealing with the multiple forces that deaden the self and distract individuals from authentic and deep learning. Long et al. (2017: 6) support Higgins’ view, contending that education is intrinsically about self-cultivation of teachers as much as it is for learners. In essence, the teachers’ self-cultivation acts as a catalyst within the education process. Self-cultivation becomes crucial when one also explores how educators could possibly balance their obligations of self-regard with those of teaching, on one hand, and for students, how bodily dictates can be balanced with learning or thesis-writing processes on the other.

In this volume, we do not use the concepts of higher education and higher learning interchangeably. Biesta (2009) seeks to distinguish learning from education by emphasising the importance of being linguistically precise. The concept of education broadly denotes a set of activities, injunctions and content provided within an environment in which learning can take place. Learning

is viewed as an individual process, referring to the personal and professional development of each individual. This involves changes that are the result of engagement with people's environments, implying an emphasis on the experiential component of the learning process (Biesta, 2009). To explore the concept of education in relation to agency, it follows that, in as much as one can educate someone and equally receive education from them, it is impossible to 'learn' someone else, as reasoned by Biesta (2009: 368). Education therefore ought to be viewed as referring to a specific setting in which learning takes place, with a specific set of roles and responsibilities governing the relations between educators and students. Central to the arguments across various chapters in this volume is the concept of agency.

According to Etelapelto, Vahasantanen, Hokka and Paloniemi (2013: 48), despite the concept of agency gaining popularity in various disciplines and in policy circles, its core meaning is confusing and has not been explicitly defined. Etelapelto et al. (2013: 48) determine that the ideals of agency have been loosely associated with dynamic striving, initiative-taking, or having an influence on one's own life situation. In evoking Giddens' notions of agency as an act that is intentionally perpetrated by actors, Etelapelto et al. (2013: 49) add two conditions that need to be fulfilled: people must have the capacity to act upon their intentions, and they must have the power to evoke an event or to intervene in that particular event. Important in this approach to conceptualising agency is the consciousness of actors who can use their power to act differently and make a different choice. Adie, Willis and Van der Kleij (2018: 2) emphasise that agency is represented by a shift from focus on the rational individual as agent, to embrace the complex interdependence of individual agency and social contexts. In this view, agency is not something that people can have or possess but is rather to be understood as something that people do or achieve.

African higher education institutions in general, and South African ones in particular, are faced with new demands, challenges and expectations in terms of pedagogy and epistemology. These are informed by diverse practices in epistemological access, inclusive education, and projects of transformation and decolonisation in higher learning. It can be argued that South Africa's current education transformation agenda needs to be understood in the context of the persistent apartheid legacy which continues to cast its long shadow not only on transformation but also on the shaping of teacher agency (Long, Graven, Sayed & Lampen, 2017: 3). Relevant to the diverse viewpoints presented in this volume is the post-apartheid government's transformation plans (Long et al., 2017: 3) which have focused on introducing major changes in the area of teacher education governance and curricula.

The inevitability of diverse contexts points to the need of ensuring that the pedagogical approach used goes beyond notions of a 'normal' class or school, and provides for variety and change. This implies that the role of the teacher, researcher, mentor, or guide is not one that can be easily contained or prescribed. The student who comes into the higher education arena comes with a history, current constraints and opportunities, visions and goals. One view of the didactic contract (Brousseau) is that the professor's role is to make the student's voice clearer. Another view may be to work with the student's existing ideas and preoccupations and help the student contextualise these ideas into the larger academic space. Students expect to learn specific knowledge and develop skills that will prove useful in their professional and daily lives, learning through materials and pedagogies that are relevant to the environmental contexts in which they live (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b). Lecturers are expected to implement teaching pedagogies that promote social justice. Similarly, academics and emerging scholars pursue knowledge and pedagogies that are relevant to the diverse contexts within which they function. It follows that lecturers and researchers are expected to generate knowledge that will prove relevant for the socio-economic and cultural development of societies and for the reduction of historically grounded inequalities. This calls for authentic teaching and learning opportunities which are strongly expressed and grounded in the decolonisation movements in the African context at large, and specifically in South African universities (Le Grange, 2016).

In addition, the development of online programmes and teaching practices in higher education institutions that are designed for a variety of students, including those with disabilities, can bring about new learning opportunities (De Wit, 2011). The increasing diversity of university students (resulting from the massification of higher education and increasing student mobility worldwide) requires lecturers to develop inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices to meet the learning needs of all their students, locally and across Africa. This is expected to begin with teacher education in institutions of higher learning, hence the need to articulate how student teachers and academic staff respond to these pedagogies. To accommodate diverse learning expectations and to facilitate the development of new pedagogies, professional development programmes for lecturers are being developed (Amzat & Padilla-Valdez, 2017), while the conditions for their effectiveness are still debated. This book therefore presents insights concerning the regeneration of curricula and pedagogies in South Africa and beyond. These chapters reconsider the knowledge and pedagogies implemented at universities, scrutinising their relevancy for local and regional contexts. International trends and country-specific issues are also discussed. Researchers from different parts

of the world examine different conceptual frameworks, research paradigms, theories and content to derive relevant policy recommendations. Four subjects form an important foundation for chapters in this book, that is, transformative educational practices in contemporary pedagogical practices in diverse higher education contexts, professional encounters in contemporary higher education contexts and Epistemological access and extended learning opportunities for students with diverse needs.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are linked to the subject of transformative educational practices in contemporary higher education. This subject indicates that pedagogical practices and the curriculum environment in which the current interface within higher education takes place, can be described as an outcome of a dynamic contradiction between global priorities on one hand, and national priorities on the other. The key focus is to present insight on the nature of contemporary teaching and learning in its diverse forms. It follows that Chapter 2, by Ledile Mohlakoane and Daryl Hewson, sets the tone with arguments that focus on how indigenous epistemologies can be drawn upon by hospitality management in general, with particular reference to food and beverage operations. The chapter presents critical insights towards understanding how indigenous South African culinary knowledge can be used to inform culinary curriculum development in higher education. Through a student-centred perspective, a wide range of perceptions of indigenous culinary knowledge are presented. Using Guerrero et al.'s (2012) study of 10 dimensions of traditional foods as a guide, explanations are offered of the significance of indigenous food to the students, and these are used to interpret the process of culinary curriculum design from an indigenous knowledge perspective. The design follows the key aspects of origin, health, and heritage, in shaping the diverse pedagogical interpretations surrounding indigenous food.

In Chapter 3, N'dri Assié Lumumba challenges Africa's colonial legacies, indicating that these have been detrimental to the continent, and have had a lasting impact, particularly in higher education. She explains that this is evident in the conspicuous absence of a student-centred pedagogy and the deliberate development of autonomous and critical thinking that prevails in African universities. The chapter is a reflective piece on the paradoxical and inadvertent convergence of aspects of Africa's educational tradition and French cultural practices and legacy, especially in relation to the notion of eloquence in teaching. The author argues that African institutions of higher education that inherited a French academic tradition tend to endure the negative impact of the convergence of two mutually reinforcing traditions of teacher-centred pedagogy. The chapter critically examines the history of an aspect of French pedagogy with an imprint of past colonial policies and practices that

is inadvertently reinforced by an African pedagogy and its cultural values. In light of the contemporary African educational context advocating the promotion of democratic values, the author highlights an urgent need for transformation to a student-centred pedagogy, fostering critical thinking.

The use of language as a pedagogical tool through which teaching and learning is mediated is the subject of Chapter 4 by Epimaque Niyibizi and Juliet Perumal. In the Rwandan context where the medium of instruction for over a century was French, the shift to English in October 2008 as the sole medium of instruction is examined in terms of its advantages and challenges. With a focus on two universities located in the city of Kigali, the authors explore the perceptions of university lecturers and students regarding the prospects and challenges of implementing of the new policy between 2009 and 2017. Views that were expressed immediately after the announcement of the policy shift in 2009 are used in assessing notions of the policy's success in 2017, nine years after its implementation.

Chapters 5 to 8 focus on pedagogical practices in diverse higher education contexts. This subject explores the increasing complexity of contemporary higher education contexts, which necessitates to choose appropriate pedagogical approaches to embrace the diversity of students' learning needs and interests.

How pedagogical practices currently embrace the transition to online learning is therefore explored in Anneke Venter's Chapter 5. Using a social capital framework, the author research the nature of student collaborations in online learning and the potential benefits of such collaborations. Different forms of learning platforms are identified such as informal social learning platforms, social media, and external service providers, in addition to the use of 'myUnisa' as the official platform. The author observes that although students were initially hesitant to participate in the learning platforms, they reported positively on the benefits of collaborating with peers on myUnisa. The socio-affective benefits included the ability to develop confidence as a student, decreased feelings of isolation, boosting of morale as well establishing new networks. The chapter highlights how an imbalance in the socio-economic situations of Unisa students has resulted in an unequal distribution of resources in terms of access to materials and tutorial support, technologies, technological skills, and networks of learning. The conclusion of this chapter is that support is needed to integrate and strengthen the mechanisms that promote student usage of online platforms.

Boitumelo Khonou points out in Chapter 6 that the end of the apartheid era in South Africa necessitated the newly elected democratic government to create a more socially responsive education system in which all South African learners could access high quality, equitable and democratised education. The author

highlights the need to adequately prepare teachers for teaching in diverse schooling contexts, a consequence of the growing diversity of learners in South African schools. Using the concept of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), emphasis is placed on the value of acquiring more accurate knowledge of the cultural and pedagogical experiences and contributions of different ethnic and racial groups. The author stresses the need for the provision of resources to aid teachers in multi-cultural classrooms, particularly those in poorly resourced schools, and for pre-service teachers to be further equipped with the requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills for dealing with a variety of students.

Chapter 7, by Caroline Long and Gift Cheva, introduces the question of designing assessment protocol to assess the quality of student work submitted in completing the assignments. The authors discuss how to evaluate both teacher assignments and student work, while monitoring the psychosocial factors. In order to check the validity of the assessment protocols, the authors analyse three assignment questions and two sets of responses from a moderately proficient and a competent student. In the process, the authors reflect on the extent to which the classroom environment enables or constrains agency from the perspective of one lecturer and two students. While acknowledging that the quality of teacher assignments can affect students' intellectual work, the authors posit that the classroom environment can equally be a source of enabling or constraining agency. Through an ecological lens, they view agency not as an inherent feature of an individual, but rather as observable during interaction with the environment. Agency is therefore regarded as a necessary component of social transformation – which, in the case of teaching, is observed in the unfolding of the competencies and lives of individual students.

Loïse Jeannin and Emmanuel Ojo, in Chapter 8, explore the undervalued potential of CRT and differentiated instruction (DI) in improving economics teaching in South Africa. They contend that in the context of the ongoing debate surrounding the Africanisation of knowledge in South African universities, CRT and DI may enable economics lecturers to draw on the diversity of their students' own life experiences to anchor economics teaching in real-life problems and debates on authentic economic issues. Their call aims to strengthen the relevance of economics teaching at university. Through analysis of how the pedagogical principles of CRT and DI can be unpacked in the South African context, the authors pinpoint strategies to better engage learners in their classes by providing context-relevant content, authentic learning activities, and fair assessments. Drawing on students' intrinsic motivation, economics lecturers can thus offer a set of learning activities that can assist students to connect their learning to their socio-economic backgrounds and lived experiences.

The subject on professional encounters in contemporary higher education contexts, is covered in Chapters 9 to 11. It presents questions related to the engagement into learning (engagement of the body and the mind). In this regard, tensions between natural and social principles defining academic and professional experiences in diverse higher education contexts are captured. The contradiction's and complementary dimensions surrounding the philosophical and pedagogical experiences of academics and professionals are explored.

In Chapter 9, Anne Jorro and Elsa Chachkine explore the field of adult learning in terms of adults who are involved in studying for and writing doctorates. The authors offer insight into this experience, as being not just an intellectual engagement, but also involving the interplay of the body and emotions. In addition to exploring the role of emotions in helping students to cope at a physical level with PhD dictates, the authors conclude that the changes which PhD students experience while writing their theses are driven by psychosocial factors which include commitment, self-confidence, and strategies for arranging the writing space.

Michael Cross's Chapter 10 presents some insights into the various features associated with supervising doctoral students in South Africa's high performance universities. The notions of pedagogy, context and agency and their influences on PhD supervision are explored. Chapter 10 presents two main claims. First is the failure of the current supervision practice which fails to account for South African diversity and contextual complexity, in particular the circumstances of the students and the environment in which doctoral education takes place. Second, considering the profiles of current doctoral candidates, it becomes difficult to rely solely on conventional modes of supervision without embracing strategies such as extra coaching, mentoring, pastoral care and other forms of guidance and support. The chapter proposes an alternative framework for supervisor development programmes. The need for greater vigilance against the universal generalisation of supervision strategies, and a greater sense of ethical and moral responsibility is suggested.

In Chapter 11, Dennis Zami Atibuni contends that research can be viewed as a terminal assessment for learning. Drawing from literature, the author argues that postgraduate students who use mastery orientation in carrying out their research will engage in deep learning of both the theoretical and practical demands of the research process. In this case, what is learned is enduring. On the other hand, students who are performance-orientated in their research are likely to engage in surface learning, taking ethical shortcuts in order to have the work completed, presented, and passed. In this case, what is learned from the research process is not enduring, and the process serves as an assessment

of temporary learning. Among other recommendations, the author proposes that institutional policies and faculty practices regarding research conduct should engender deep learning through mastery orientation, as opposed to performance-orientated surface learning, to foster research as an assessment for learning rather than as an assessment of learning.

Epistemological access and extended learning opportunities for students with diverse needs constitutes is explored in Chapters 12 to 13. Chapters reflect how curricular and epistemological access, in addition to opportunities for teaching and learning, are provided for students in different African higher education contexts, and in South Africa in particular. The subject presents narrative work and critical reviews of existing accounts relating to theoretically and methodologically grounded epistemologies and pedagogies.

In Chapter 12, Sibonokuhle Ndlovu probes the question of inclusion in post-apartheid South Africa, having noted spirited efforts to include formerly underprivileged people from diverse backgrounds in both the education and employment contexts. Using decolonial theory, the author analyses specific opportunities afforded to students with disabilities to enable them to access professional learning at institutions of higher learning, while at the same time exploring instances when they remain excluded despite these affordances. Insights are offered into the persistence of low throughput for formerly underprivileged social groups in higher learning, and into the exclusion of persons with disabilities from professional employment. The concept of 'universal design in learning' is proposed as a way in which teaching and learning in higher education could be organised, so that students' diverse learning needs are embraced from the outset.

The issue of curriculum transformation to accommodate underprepared students in South Africa's higher education system is assessed by Phefumula Nyoni in Chapter 13. The chapter uses experiential data from a South African higher education institution to explore varied practices associated with extended curriculum programmes (ECPS) which the Council of Higher Education (2013) considers key in improving underprivileged students' academic access. Drawing from the view that individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged are less likely to gain access to and successfully complete any form of higher education – particularly in the absence of relevant forms of support – the author uses the concept of agency to show how myths and related perceptions in practices associated with ECPS have had constraining effects on efforts to assist underprepared students. In some instances, the myths and related practices have been detrimental to the successful implementation of the programme, harming the students and consequently impinging on the broader success of the transformative agenda in higher education.

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Indigenous Culinary Knowledge, Culinary Curriculum and Students' Perceptions of Indigenous Culinary Knowledge

Mohlakoane Ledile and Hewson Daryl

Abstract

Curriculum has the purpose of creating a “lifelong learner” who is confident, independent, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, and respectful of the environment and has the ability to participate in a society as a critical and active citizen. This chapter forms part of a broader study into understanding Indigenous South African culinary knowledge to inform the culinary curriculum development in higher education. The focus of this chapter is to present a students' perception of indigenous culinary knowledge. The study has gathered responses from culinary students currently registered for either the Food & Beverage Operations or Hospitality Management qualifications. These responses were coded using Guerrero's 10 dimensions of traditional food and the themes that emerged will be used in order to begin defining what traditional/Indigenous food means to them which will assist in the process of culinary curriculum design. Key findings revealed that origin and heritage were the most significant aspect of what informed students' perception of indigenous culinary knowledge.

Keywords

higher education – indigenous knowledge – curriculum – culinary knowledge – indigenous food

1 Introduction

Students have criticised the current higher education as not being accommodative of them (Heleta, 2016). Students have taken a stand against this situation, through movements such as the #FeesMustFall campaign. Such protests focus on how the current curriculum is highly Eurocentric and contains limited or no indigenous knowledge (Heleta, 2016). As a result, the students are unable

to relate to the content they are being taught. Applying indigenous knowledge in curriculum design is an emerging area of current curriculum research, as shown by Asafo-Adjei (2004). This chapter explores students' understanding and related experiences on indigenous culinary knowledge within the culinary curriculum in a university; located in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The research conducted in 2017 shows that the application of indigenous knowledge in traditional subjects should not ignore the rich socio-cultural contexts in which indigenous knowledge is embedded. Socio-cultural contexts were fundamental to Guerrero, Claret, Verbeke, Enderli, Zakowska-Biemans, Vanhonacker, Issanchou, Sajdakoska, Granli, Scalvedi, Contel and Hersleth (2010) study, which noted that defining traditional/indigenous food included a combination of diverse factors. Such factors include habit, heritage, made in a specific way, sensory properties, simplicity, origin, marketing, health effects. In addition, a definition of indigenous foods includes its ability to produce a variety of products that further reinforce the use of the authors' tool to create a deeper understanding of such contexts in this study. Knowledge about indigenous cuisine is crucial for the sustainability of indigenous rural communities and a key cultural emblem for national identity (Moyo, Ngulube & Mkhabela, 2016: 140). One of the biggest challenges about indigenous culinary knowledge is the absence of an agreed definition for South Africa.

Previous studies have generally highlighted South African student concerns on the isolation of indigenous culinary knowledge in the present-day culinary curriculum. Given that, the focus of this study is to explore student's perspectives on indigenous culinary knowledge and define what indigenous culinary knowledge is (Moyo, Ngulube & Mkhabela, 2016: 140). According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2010), the number of people in a qualitative study is usually small because the depth of information and the variation inexperience is the main focus. Hence, a more significant number is not practical of any benefit in qualitative research. The total target sample consisted of 31 students. Sufficient numbers when it comes to qualitative studies remain inconclusive. Morse (1994) suggests that for studies using grounded theory, 30 to 50 interviews would be required, whereas Creswell (1998) suggests 20 to 30 interviews. The researchers believed that 31 students would be sufficient to provide a variety of detailed information to assist with the purpose of the study. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2010) noted that such a sample size augers well with this study, which is aimed at capturing a diversity of a group's experiences in an in-depth manner. In this regard, the students were asked to explain their understanding and experiences with 'indigenous culinary knowledge'. It was a critical question to ask to be able to make changes to the culinary curriculum that were relatable to students. In Guerrero et al.'s (2010) study in this field, the primary

purpose was to understand how 'traditional' food was defined by consumers using 'association'. The present research sought to replicate this study by replacing consumers as a sample with culinary students. In addition, the study explores students' perceptions of indigenous culinary knowledge relating to 'consumer associations' used in Guerrero et al.'s (2010) study with 'traditional food'. Therefore, deductive analysis was applied and the data categorised based on Guerrero et al.'s (2010) 10 dimensions of traditional foods.

2 Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education

The present values of the South African education system are rooted in the values of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996. The Ministry of Education (2001: 111), cited in Msila (2007: 152), lists ten fundamental values, mainly social justice, equality, non-racism, ubuntu (human dignity), respect, and reconciliation. The new system strives to create an identity of South African-ness. Through education, South Africans yearn to affirm common citizenship and a sense of pride through commonly held values (Msila, 2007: 152). The South African education policy, states the objectives of the new curriculum in the following way: "a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilling lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice" (DoE, 1997: 1). This is in pursuit of the vision of a 'post-apartheid' South Africa as set out in the Constitution.

A critical element of reconstructing the school curriculum is valuing indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs). In the South African context, Van Wyk and Higgs (2011: 175) refer to IKS as "a body of knowledge embedded in African philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years". To solve global and local problems more effectively, the aim of [culinary] curriculum reconstruction should be for indigenous African knowledge systems to be given their rightful place amongst global knowledge systems (Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011).

Although some people associate indigenous (-ness) with non-white, non-western, or non-colonialist, the term 'indigenous' is used to relate/link the identity of a particular people or peoples to a specific area/locality, culture, tradition, and history Mapesela (2004: 318). Le Grange (2004) views higher education as a crucial social institution as it forms a space where the conceptions of reality go under construction, impartation, and builds on perceptions and practices. Traditional African ways of thinking have been marginalised due to South African research being dominated by Western ways of thinking.

Owusu-Ansah and Mji (2013) suggest that this is the consequence of indigenous knowledge has been mainly oral and therefore looked down upon compared to written knowledge. Emeagwali (2003) adds that because IKSS are people-centred, they are difficult to measure. Shizha (2014) proposes that a process of rethinking the African curriculum cannot ignore the role and the value of indigenous knowledge as a much-neglected part of Africa's educational reform. Ngcobo (2016) notes that existing research has shown that it needs to have an appropriate language and cultural context for education to be meaningful. Ngcobo's (2016) statement is based on the beliefs of indigenous communities as well as those of indigenous professional educators. Culture is the lens through which a person perceives, interprets, and makes sense of their reality. If one speaks of the inclusion of African indigenous knowledge, this would essentially refer to the African's perspective of the African reality. South Africa's new, revised education system aims to instill a sense of pride amongst those involved, creating a distinctly South African identity in them (Mslia, 2007).

The education policy as described by the DoE in 1997 states the objectives of the new curriculum in the following way: "a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilling lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice" (DoE, 1997: 1). The practical application of this broad objective for curriculum design and its implementation in tourism and hospitality remain under-researched, particularly within the scope of an indigenous culinary curriculum. Other studies show that indigenous knowledge within a formal education curriculum design speaks not just to the selection of indigenous knowledge according to its socio-cultural relevance but also that the source of this knowledge should also be authentic. Shava (2005: 79) states that members of the local community, specifically the elders are repositories of indigenous knowledge. Therefore, they play a crucial part in the inclusion of indigenous knowledge into the formal education systems by using traditional methods of teaching and learning (dominantly oral forms of knowledge acquisition). The use of oral tradition to identify indigenous knowledge in local communities creates access to indigenous knowledge and could also inform the transmission of knowledge in culinary curriculum design. While mainstream indigenous curriculum design theory acknowledges the importance of knowledge producers in the curriculum design process, it also positions the knowledge consumers as stakeholders.

Within indigenous curriculum design theory, the key to creating greater socio-cultural alignment is valuing indigenous knowledge systems. Zimbabwe can be used as an example of another African country experiencing the same issue as South Africa concerning the isolation of indigenous knowledge. A

question that stood out in Shava (2005) case on Zimbabwe was, “What is the Zimbabwean indigenous cuisine?” This question emphasises that South Africa is not the only African country trying to find its ‘food identity; other African countries are on a similar journey. The lack of indigenous textbooks that can be used in the formal education system and the school curriculum contributes to the marginalising of indigenous knowledge in mainstream education. However, knowledge of indigenous food plants opens up several possibilities for integrating indigenous knowledge into various subject areas. However, where integration exists, indigenous knowledge should be distinct to avoid it being subsumed into mainstream knowledge (Shava, 2005: 78). In this regard, it is crucial to explore Shava’s (2005) view on the need for indigenous culinary knowledge to be integrated into higher education institutional curricula and practices. Shava’s (2005) view extends to the idea that IKSS cannot adapt to new environments, with technology taking centre stage. While the use of indigenous knowledge can assist indigenous communities with regaining self-respect and self-reliance, it can also minimise the marginalisation of the users and holders of this knowledge (Castiano & Mkabela, 2014).

3 Indigenous Culinary Knowledge Curriculum

The Latin word *universitas* means ‘corporations’, states Mamdani (2016: 69). The term derives from the context in which the university institution developed. The pre-modern university was a ‘corporation’ of students and teachers whose position was defined by privilege and exemption, according to Mamdani (2016: 69). According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2002), as cited in Msila (2007), education and the curriculum are critical for learners’ full potential as citizens of a democratic South Africa to be recognised. Gamble (2006: 93) highlights that

any curriculum, whether academic, vocational or occupational, makes decisions about what should be taught (selection), the order in which things should be taught (sequencing), and how much should be taught in a particular period of time (pacing). Here, one can think about a class session, a term, a trimester, period year, or more than a year. One also decides upon the criteria to be used for evaluation or assessment (what counts as good work and what counts as poor work) and upon which forms of assessment to use.

What form of knowledge is used as the foundation to make these decisions concerning the general academic curriculum?

Food consumption is a complex process with biological, social, and cultural aspects, in that foods are consumed not solely to nourish the body. The origin of the product, the manufacturing process, and linkage to territories, functionality, and ethical values affect food consumption (Trichopoulou, Costacou, Bamia & Trichopoulos., 2003; Vanhonacker, Kuhne, Gellynck, Guerrero, Hersleth & Verbeke, 2013). Based on their personal experiences and upbringing, different people define what constitutes indigenous South African food differently. Indigenous knowledge is defined by Warren (2001, cited in Sharif, Nor & Zahari, 2013: 229) as “the knowledge generated by communities and ethnic groups that usually pass the knowledge from one generation to the next through oral transmission; it is focused on the microenvironment in which it is generated”.

According to Maundu, Achigan-Dako and Morimoto (2009: 66), indigenous food refers to the type of foods “known to be native to or to have originated in a specific geographical location”. In addition, Mnguni and Giampiccoli (2015) defined traditional [or indigenous] food as food that has been utilised for long periods and, therefore, becomes part of the local food habits, knowledge systems, etc., customs of the community. Cloete and Idsardi (2013: 2) combine aspects of these definitions, concluding that “indigenous and traditional food crops are defined as vegetables, fruits, nuts and grains that are native to the region and are consumed in line with the prevalent culture and heritage”. From their studies in European Union countries, Guerrero et al. (2010, 2012) define traditional food in 10 dimensions. These dimensions are “habit, special occasions, heritage (from generation to generation), made in a concrete, specific way, sensory properties, simplicity, linked to an origin, with an effect on health, influenced by marketing, and that provides a variety of products” (Guerrero et al., 2012). The dimensions mentioned earlier establish the array of factors that researchers may find in the context of traditional foods, although perhaps most important is this association in the mind of each individual.

There are various cuisine and rainbow cuisine and fusion cuisine examples of the different types of cuisine. Stano (2014) defines “fusion cuisine” as “a style of cooking combining ingredients and techniques from different foodspheres. Asian fusion restaurants, for instance, offer blends of various cuisines of different Asian countries and the culinary traditions of the places where they have become increasingly popular”. Rainbow cuisine is not as self-conscious a trend as fusion food, which is often *outré* in its combinations. Rainbow cuisine is a natural expression of the country’s history and of those who contributed to it, specifically indigenous Khoisan, Xhosa, and Zulu people, among others; the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French; and the slaves brought from Java, Sumatra, India, Indonesia, and Madagascar (Goldstein, 2008). Snyman (2004: 91) maintains that

... although it is important to review the impact of other nationalities who settled in South Africa on the local cuisine, most local research has overlooked the relevance of black cuisine to South African culinary history, and it has received scant coverage in cookery books.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (2017) defines ‘cuisine’ as the foods and methods of preparation traditional to a region or population. The major factors shaping a cuisine are climate, which in considerable measure determines the native raw materials available to the cook; economic conditions, which regulate trade in delicacies and imported foodstuffs; and religious or sumptuary laws which certain foods are required or proscribed.

A fear exists that if preservation and codification of indigenous cuisine are not undertaken, the next generation will lose this aspect of their culture. Snyman (2004) reports that institutions have been appointed to manage to document heritage in Zimbabwe; however, this has not been very helpful in preserving indigenous cuisine information. Snyman (2004) advises that because South African indigenous cuisine is multi-culturally rich, it is vital to revive its indigenous foods. Although South Africa is home to many cultures that might influence South African cuisine (Snyman, 2004), Lyons (2007) notes that most of the cuisines of indigenous people in Africa are primarily not recorded. There has been evidence of the loss of traditional knowledge globally, including in South Africa (Voeks & Leony, 2004; Gómez-Baggenthun, Esteve, Reyes-Garcia & Corbera 2010). The authors listed confounding factors for such knowledge loss, for example, acculturation, land use change, including agriculture intensification and mechanized land-use. Other factors include limited access to traditional resources, outmigration, industrialisation and modernisation, and changing climate (Atreya, Pyakurel, Thagunna, Bhatta, Uprety, Chaudhary, Oli & Rinmal, 2018: 742).

3.1 *The Student and the Curriculum*

South African students across the country took up the call for re-centring African knowledge systems and their campaign #FeesMustFall (Keane, Khupe & Seehawer, 2017: 15). One of the legitimate demands made by the students during this campaign in 2015–2016 was for a ‘decolonised’ education. According to Naude (2017), this claim is not specific to South Africa but links to a global concern with ‘colonial’ knowledge. The #FeesMustFall demand for a decolonised curriculum resulted in discussions in which most lecturers wanted to understand what the students wanted (Joseph, 2010). The South African Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2017) concludes that the students’ concerns relate mainly to how they are alienated from their studies in that content

does not reflect their real-world experiences. Msila (2007) points out that in the past, during the apartheid era, the South African curriculum was used as a tool of oppression. Mbembe (2016) observes that something is profoundly wrong when syllabuses that were designed to meet the needs of colonialism and apartheid continue well into the liberation era.

Further, the CHE (2017) states that the knowledge gained by these students does not address South African issues such as poverty, and therefore does not assist in addressing inequality and developing the economy. Keane, Khupe and Seehawer (2017) suggest that although the students may not know precisely what a decolonised curriculum entails, they are aware that there is an imbalance assumed in the worth of knowledge traditions. The CHE (2017) emphasises the importance of local knowledge being developed to address the needs of the students and the development of South African challenges while adding value to the global knowledge production from an African perspective.

The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, respectful for the environment, and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen (Msila, 2007: 151). As a consequence of the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge, this is not happening. Students are now viewed as consumers of their education, and courses are designed to offer the kind of skills and knowledge that attract students who anticipate having to compete in the labour market. Santich (2004) highlights how the current hospitality students will, over time, become managers. On reaching that stage, the way they respond to challenges relies heavily on their education in higher education institutions (Santich, 2004). Curriculum design undoubtedly affects the student experience with different curriculum framings, resulting in students graduating with various perspectives, attitudes and competencies (Tribe, 2002, cited in Chang & Hsu, 2010: 104). Santich (2004: 23) observes that

hospitality education must include a significant and relevant gastronomy component, in addition to practical and business or management courses, so that students develop an understanding of the history and culture of food and drink, and in particular, the history, culture and traditions of the products of their specific region or country.

It is essential to note that the current South African culinary curriculum is primarily designed to deliver the skills and knowledge that will make students competitive in a global culinary labour market. However, the notion of curricula as consumption reveals how social values have shifted towards the marketplace, which is seen by some as, in itself, offering the potential for empowering students or transforming higher education (Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011: 175). This statement highlights the vital role students could perform in

bringing indigenous culinary knowledge into the curriculum design process. The current student cohort is essentially representative of communities for whom indigenous culinary knowledge has been marginalised in curriculum design in favour of more European culinary traditional knowledge. But the students can also be instrumental in helping to create a greater socio-cultural contextual alignment between community, higher education and, by implication, the labour market.

3.2 *Student's Knowledge of the Indigenous Culinary Knowledge*

The South African higher education curriculum has been criticised as not being accommodative to the student (Heleta, 2016). To gauge students' understanding of indigenous culinary knowledge, the students were required to define the concept. Indigenous South African food is defined differently depending on personal experiences and upbringing. From Guerrero et al.'s (2012) 10 dimensions of traditional foods, the most common responses from students were linked to origin, simplicity, with an effect on health, heritage, and made in a specific way. The least used categories were special occasions, influenced by marketing, providing various products, sensory properties, and habits. The findings are discussed in terms of the most frequently used categories.

The majority of students (21 of 31) related indigenous culinary knowledge to the product's origin. In particular, they associated indigenous culinary knowledge with food that is grown in a specific place. In this context, it refers to food that is originally found and produced in South Africa. This echoes the findings of Cloete and Idsardi (2012: 2) in their definition of indigenous food: "Indigenous and traditional food crops are defined as vegetables, fruits, nuts and grains that are native to the region and/or that are consumed linked to culture and heritage". This was supported by a respondent who stated:

Indigenous food, in my opinion, is food that can only be located in one area and nowhere else. This is because that specific type of food has adaptability requirements and its characteristics that can only be adapted to its original home. These type of foods tend to be highly in demand in other countries that do not have it.

Another respondent said:

Many indigenous food are healthy and not from a certain country or continent. It is what differentiates a specific area from the rest of the world. It is the pride and joy of its nation that people all over the world come to experience its uniqueness.

The responses amongst the students were very similar to these examples. They used words such as “grown in a particular area”, “specific to South Africa”, and “specific to a certain area”. One student, however, stated: “Indigenous food is food that comes from all over the world, food that is made with ingredients from around the world”.

Indigenous food is linked to more than just its origin; it relates to identity in terms of culture and heritage as defined by Cloete and Idsardi (2012) and instils a level of pride in what the country offers tourists, which is a potential for food tourism. In addition, Moyo, Ngulube and Mkhabela (2016: 40) note that “Knowledge about indigenous cuisine is crucial for the sustainability of indigenous rural communities and a key cultural emblem for national identity”. Trichopoulou (2018: 65) supports this view, explaining that “traditional foods are an expression of culture, history and lifestyle”.

3.3 *The Medicinal Value Attached to Indigenous Foods*

Food that has been identified as traditional in Africa has been found to have a variety of health benefits, such as reducing the chances of developing chronic degenerative diseases (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2015). The core concepts of healthy eating are not foreign to African farmers, cooks, and eaters and yet, if not all, of the existing diet books include no African recipes. This omission leaves people with the sense that such food has no role in a weight loss or health gain strategy (Tshukudu & Trapido, 2016: 12). In a study by Lambden, Raceveur and Kuhnlein (2007) on traditional food attributes, respondents linked indigenous and traditional foods to health.

The following statements from respondents support the relationship between indigenous foods and health:

- Many indigenous foods [sic] are healthy and not eaten mostly by youth of today and most of the youth are not even aware of them examples of indigenous food are African eggplant.
- In most cases, indigenous food [sic] are recommended as ‘food for a healthy diet’ because of the natural units it contains.
- Many indigenous food [sic] are healthy.
- They are considered to be nutritionally nourishing as they contain a wide variety of nutrition and vitamins which can ultimately contribute to one’s well-being and they provide diet diversity.

There is a general perception that indigenous cuisine is healthier than the foods we are currently eating, which are genetically modified. Less processed foods contain a higher nutritional value and indigenous foods are eaten in

their most natural state to preserve all their nutrients. The respondents noted that minimal processing was a characteristic of indigenous food. They stated:

- Indigenous could be defined as the originality or natural aspects of a specific topic or object.
- Indigenous crops are a testament to how a community may be nourished and sustained by locally sourced foods without the help (or hurt) of processed products.

Therefore, it can be argued that community perceptions are that the more unprocessed the product is, the healthier it is. Such a view has seemingly gained popularity within current societal beliefs, especially among student populations and can be used to ground decolonial perspectives on the curriculum.

3.4 *The Symbolism Attached to Traditional Foods-Heritage Status, Special Occasions and Habit*

As Kwik (2008) interpreted, the preparation of traditional food is necessarily a process that does not change. Therefore, wisdom is carried from generation to generation. People have learned how to produce food and prepare it the same way as earlier generations to preserve the tradition of their culture. How food preparation occurs makes it easily identifiable as coming from a particular group of people. Therefore, keeping information on how food is prepared is crucial, as noted Moyo, Ngulube and Kazembe (2016).

How people learn to prepare food in the home is what they remember and what becomes what is traditional and authentic for the individual. When speaking of heritage, one needs to look at the sustainability of the food based on the constant transfer from one generation to another, resulting in continuity of the food item and cooking methods. The study respondents had an understanding that indigenous food knowledge is transferred from the past to the present. Their responses were the following:

- The foods are usually passed down from generation to generation.
- The foods usually define a certain culture, country or region.
- Indigenous food is food that is [sic]cook by a group of people with the same culture or believes the food recipes of that food has been pass on from generation to generation.

Food and cooking methods are generational. The cultural background is a crucial part of food choice and habit because people build emotional connections with their food and decide what they believe is appropriate to eat. Habits and special occasions are very closely linked, on the basis that what

is generally eaten daily becomes a way of life. Celebrations also have habits attached to them. When one is taught to prepare particular food in a specific way, it becomes a way of life, and some particular processes and methods need to be considered.

In defining indigenous foods, eight of the respondents spoke about how the product is made, but special occasions and habit were not mentioned. However, the students noted the following in terms of indigenous food:

- During this time, food was prepared in bulks and stored in area where it can later on be consumed.
- Most of these food is not recorded due to a lack of materials that were not available during that time, but elderly people in different communities have an idea of what was prepared back then.

Because the transmission of indigenous culinary knowledge is mainly oral (Sharif, Zahari, Nor & Mohammed, 2013), a great deal of information has been lost over the years, resulting in the youth of today lacking sufficient knowledge of indigenous foods. Presenza and Chiappa (2013) conclude that this loss of knowledge between the generations is due to Mcdonaldisation, Westernisation, urbanisation, globalisation and acculturation. However, the main issue is preserving indigenous culinary knowledge, as the number of people who currently possess this knowledge is dwindling. According to Moyo, Ngulube and Kazembe (2016: 144), not enough is being done to ensure that indigenous knowledge is kept in institutions such as archives and libraries. This muted approach comes even though such institutions can document information on indigenous cuisines, and therefore, they should adopt strategies for ensuring the preservation of the knowledge and cuisines.

4 Conclusion

One can conclude that just as highlighted by Van Wyk and Higgs (2011), students can be viewed as consumers of their education, and courses are designed to offer the kind of skills and knowledge that attract students who anticipate having to compete for the labour market. Understanding how students define indigenous knowledge can be used to decide what content to put into the culinary curriculum, based on what the students expect. The importance of student engagement can further be highlighted, noting that if students are interested and find value in what they are learning, they will be active participants. However, if they do not, it will be avoided as it becomes irrelevant and boring. Using students' experiential knowledge of indigenous culinary knowledge may assist not only in attracting students to study Food and Beverage

Operations or Hospitality Management and enable them to relate better with the curriculum equally. Such an approach can also enhance student's academic performance and skills acquisition in general.

The involvement of students in the processes related to a decolonised curriculum is therefore essential. In addition, the importance of student-centred teaching and learning needs to be promoted. Students have theories that they can relate to or can associate with their own cultures whilst others do not have that privilege. Students have a strong interest in understanding processes and structures, and should they not feel included and involved in their learning, they will detach. The chapter has further highlighted negative influences related to the state of education systems that do not have a clear reflection of indigenisation in the formal curriculum in post-colonial Africa. Lack of the formal curriculum is reflected in institutions lacking textbooks, syllabi, policy documents. In addition, teachers' resource materials tend to experience compromised performance, which negatively influences their goal for sustainable social and economic development.

In terms of limitations and recommendations, the following issues need to be explored. First, this study was based only on students' perceptions from one university. Perceptions of students from other higher education institutions were missing, which could potentially influence the data. Second, the sample consisted of 31 Food and Beverage Operations and Hospitality Management second-year students. It is recommended that a larger sample size inclusive of first- and third-year students be used to ensure the collection of various opinions.

Concerning recommending further research, especially in light of the limitations mentioned earlier, it follows that provision of various products, influenced by marketing and sensory properties envisaged in the Guerrero et al. framework. Above all, no responses from participants were received concerning marketing, providing various products, and sensory properties in the current study. Although these were factors that Guerrero et al. (2012) found to contribute to the definition of traditional food, students in the South African context did not mention these factors. Therefore, this may provide a platform for future studies with a broader scope from various institutions, both public and private, to establish the symbolism of such factors.

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Eloquence in African and Inherited French Teaching Traditions

Convergence and the Need for Transformative Pedagogy Inadvertent

N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba

Abstract

One of the detrimental colonial legacies that have been reproduced in the contemporary educational systems in Africa, especially in higher education institutions, is the conspicuous absence of student-centered pedagogy that prevails in African universities. While this phenomenon is widespread in Africa, it is even more glaring in the countries whose education systems were inherited from the French. Indeed, in the French academic tradition eloquence in delivering a well-prepared course is highly prized and considered an indicator of the mastery of the subject matter and an intrinsic attribute of excellence in teaching. They refer to *cours magistral* and, furthermore, name highest levels of academic ranks “*Professeur de Rang Magistral*” or “*Maître de Conférences*”. In the African culture too, masterly eloquence is an admirable attainment. In this chapter, I argue that institutions of higher learning of African countries that inherited a French academic tradition endure the negative impact of the convergence of two mutually reinforcing traditions of teacher-centred pedagogy. The chapter will be a historical and conceptual essay that will critically examine the history of the external pedagogical factor that is inadvertently reinforced by the African pedagogy and cultural value. The current period requires a transformation towards a student-centred pedagogy fostering critical thinking.

Keywords

colonial legacy – African culture – French academic tradition – academic student-centred pedagogy – teacher-centred pedagogy – critical thinking

1 Introduction

Indigenous African education systems have historically been characterised by the high value placed on teachers who are recognised for their eloquence and

clarity using an oral pedagogy. This aspect of African systems has prevailed, particularly in countries under the French system of assimilation, despite the yoke of colonialism. This chapter is a reflective essay on the paradoxical and inadvertent convergence of aspects of Africa's educational tradition and French cultural practices and legacy, particularly concerning the notion of eloquence in teaching. I argue that institutions of higher learning in African countries that inherited a French academic tradition endure the negative impact of the convergence of two mutually reinforcing traditions of teacher-centred pedagogy. The chapter critically examines the historical undertone of a French pedagogy with an imprint of past colonial policies and practices that inadvertently supported an African pedagogy and cultural values. In the current context of promoting democratic values, there is an urgent need for transformation towards a student-centred pedagogy that fosters critical thinking from both the teacher and student-centric viewpoint.

Colonial legacies have been detrimental to Africa and have had a lasting impact (Kane, 2012). One of the areas in which this is evident is higher education, with the conspicuous absence of student-centred pedagogy and the deliberate failure to develop independent and critical thinking that prevails in African universities. While the aforementioned detrimental legacies are widespread in Africa, it is particularly glaring in those countries whose contemporary education systems were inherited from the French in the context of colonisation, with its systematic policy of suppressing agency among the colonised. In the French academic tradition, eloquence in delivering a course is highly valued. Eloquence thus means that mastery of the subject matter must be reflected in an eloquent delivery – in other words, an intrinsic attribute of excellence in teaching is the oral performance of the teacher. The French refer to *cours magistral* (lecture) and, furthermore, name the highest levels of academic ranks as *Professeur de Rang Magistral* (Professor of magisterial rank) or *Maître de Conférences* (lecturer) – all connected to the idea and practice of considering oral competence as being desirable and worthy of the highest level of recognition. Similarly, in the African culture, masterly eloquence is an admirable attainment and attribute although this does not in any way exclude agency which enables the learner an opportunity to participate and exhibit their knowledge and skills. In essence, the learning gets to be holistic as opposed to being teacher centred. An inherently 'teacher eloquence' centred approach improperly and unfairly alienates the student in the learning equation.

This chapter's approach is historical, articulating the continuity of the two educational traditions with an enduring and negative fusion. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first presents African indigenous education

and some of its key features, including a focus on the predominance of orality and its implications for the education process, teaching and learning. The second section deals with the roots and traditions of French education and the manifestations of eloquence in education delivery, while the third section examines the inadvertent convergence of two systems which were initially opposed. The conclusion is a reflection on parallel and converging systems that emerged inadvertently from the colonial experience and its legacy.

It is also important to emphasise that the thrust of this paper is not simply to argue that oral expression with eloquence has limited value or is *dépassé*. Rather, the main argument is that while orality has fulfilled some specific purposes in different historical and cultural contexts, contemporary education demands a critical examination of its limitations in making the necessary adaptations for a purposefully transformational and liberatory pedagogy for empowered citizens and social progress in Africa.

2 Indigenous African Education and the Centrality of Orature

Historical facts have been authoritatively established about the range, variety, and complexity of African writing systems (Emeagwali, 2006, 2016; Bekerie, 1997; Kreamer & Adams, 2007; Jeppie & Diagne, 2008; Kane, 2012). According to authors such as Basil Davidson (1984), the earliest evidence of writing systems in the world was found in Africa, although for some hitherto unknown reason it did not firm up and evolve in a linear manner. Among the vast repertoire of writing systems, some better-known examples are Geez (Ethiopia), Meroitic (Nubia), Hieroglyphics (Egypt), Vai (Liberia), Nsibidi (Nigeria and Cameroon), Bamum (Cameroon), Ajami (Mali, Nigeria and Niger) and the Adinkra pictographic and gold weight ideograms among the Akan (Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire).

However, it is also a fact that the predominance of orality in African culture, education, teaching, learning and the production of knowledge, has led to the establishment of what has been termed 'orature'. The written and oral features of African culture and education are not mutually exclusive, nor are they unique to Africa. Education in the history of the world has always had informal, non-formal and formal components. Education systems often include a blend of the three. This chapter articulates aspects of African education, emphasising orality and its receptivity to an aspect of the French education tradition in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. Although orality is the focus of this chapter, some more general aspects of African indigenous education are discussed first.

In spite of many attempts to correct misapprehensions about education in Africa, there still remains the colossal task of transforming current education systems and aligning them with education systems in the rest of the world. Unfortunately, much of Africa still lives in the shadow of colonial ideologies that replaced African ideologies that were deemed backward and in need of transformation. For the most part, colonialism subverted African traditions and education systems. Africans were declared as having been 'ameliorated' when they became quasi-European. However, a plethora of literature shows that Africans were not 'uneducated', and that their education was in line with the societal expectations of each individual community (Rodney, 1972: 122).

Precolonial and non-Europeanised Africa had its own education systems which were designed to train individuals for specific roles in their communities. Though most of the teaching happened in informal settings, some occurred in formal secluded settings such as initiation ceremonies (Rodney, 1972: 122). In such instances, there was separation according to gender, and sometimes age group. This type of education and training was not readily recognised as education by the colonial systems and administrators (Iwuji, 1990: 53). However, African cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs among other social systems were passed from generation to generation (Wallbank, 1935: 231; Okafor, 2004: 416) in an effective manner. This constituted a system that worked. Therefore, the colonial administration was eager to disrupt the education that gave Africans their self-awareness, values, and the impetus to fight against colonisation. The African training generally did not have a method to test whether individuals understood the substance and practical aspects of their education, except by playing effective roles in advancing their communities (Greenfield, 1972: 170). The absence of a method to test whether individuals understood the substance and practical aspects of their education was one glaring difference between African education and Western education – Africans had the use of oral tradition at their disposal (Okafor, 2004: 416). This was not a formal type of education as was later imposed during colonial rule (Bolt & Bezemer, 2009; Frankema, 2012: 336). It should also be noted that before colonisation in some Islamic parts of Africa, a new Afro-Arabic tradition with writing systems was already in place (Jeppie & Diagne, 2008; Kane, 2012). More generally rooted was the tradition whereby older members of communities, ethnic groups or clans were considered to be the custodians of knowledge.

Some factual aspects of the rigorous and continual training that African children and adolescents experienced need to be critically examined. Children and adolescents were merely recipients of information passed down from one generation to the next (Brock-Utne, 1996). While they acquired other skills, it was in their best interests to remember every aspect of their training, to be able

to replicate the information eloquently and effectively when they came of age to pass it on to younger generations. In essence, there was a certain degree of compliant absorption of information, with little originality on the part of the learners (Wallbank, 1935: 231), and limited provision for individualised critical intervention. Older members of society who were in charge of training were the ultimate authority, who delivered masterfully according to the prevailing rules and methods acceptable to the community. Education in precolonial/non-Europeanised Africa was not education for education's sake, so much as familiarisation with societal needs and wants, for societal preservation. This ranged from knowing the flora and fauna to understanding any given community's ecology, history, and values. It was education generated by Africans for Africans and was especially relevant to communities' needs and particular settings (Brock-Utne, 1996; Rodney, 1972: 122). Simply put, indigenous (precolonial) education in Africa was designed to ensure that Africans understood their environments, their traditions, and cultures (Wallbank, 1935: 231).

It ought to be emphasised that the indigenous forms of training were structured with the older members of society as the repositories of information, and younger members as the recipients to carry forward the training throughout the generations (Okafor, 2004: 410). In that regard, children had many instructors at their disposal in their communities. Teaching went beyond familial boundaries; extended families and whole communities were involved (White, 1996: 10). Again, all that was required of the children was commitment to memory of all the material handed down to them verbally by society elders of the specific community. This way, they would grow with an in-built understanding of the fabric of their societies.

The greater part of precolonial Africa relied on orality to pass important information from one generation to the next. As noted, the older members of society were revered as the custodians of history, culture, tradition, and other essential aspects of community life, including knowledge of food and the environment. Society clung to the words of their elders to carry them forward for generations to come (Irwin, 2014: 3, Finnegan, 2007: 3). Given the lack of formal education, bringing with it the ability to read and write, Africa depended on the oratory of wise, elderly members of society to educate and inform future generations (Okafor, 2004: 412). Because oratory was the primary available tool for conveying the history and ideologies of a community (Cohen, 1989: 9), the custodians needed exceptional memory and the ability to command an audience (Finnegan, 2017: 5; Vansina, 1972: 1; Furniss & Gunner 1995: 4; Okafor, 2004: 410). Thus, the African education system is characterised by eloquence, and deference to both gerontocracy and competence.

The role of orator was significant, not only in that it gave an individual the responsibility of informing future generations about their past and their culture, but also that it recognised the individual as an educator, and an important figure in the community (Okafor, 2004: 410). Further, for issues beyond the training of young Africans in the roles and responsibilities of society, the orator needed to be wise and witty, with a good recollection of events, to be able to teach the identity of a people. The emphasis of the oral tradition was on the ability of the orator to master the language and use it accurately to captivate listeners and learners. The role and responsibility of the learner was to absorb and retain the knowledge imparted by the elders to pass it on to future generations.

Because of the colonial history of the African continent, many forms of education and training were introduced by colonial administrators as well as by missionaries. The Portuguese, the French, the Americans, and the British all left an indelible mark on African education systems. The introduction of new forms of education changed the picture and purpose of educating African children (White, 1996: 10). By overlooking and disregarding existing forms of training, colonial administrators and missionaries sought to fill an educational void that was thought to exist. This led to “the decimation or near-complete killing and replacement of endogenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 1). Although Western education systems were established in the colonies, there was no provision for African institutions to develop or innovate in order to answer the day-to-day needs of Africa and African development. Today, existing institutions are simulations of fully functioning Western institutions, while the opposite is true for former colonies (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 1).

3 The Roots and Traditions of French Education Delivery

It may appear unnecessary or even irrelevant to refer back to medieval times when discussing contemporary education issues in the 21st century. However, there has been relative continuity in the key dimensions of French education that made its way to Africa in the context of colonisation and blended with indigenous systems. Indeed, such a historical perspective is necessary in order to explain aspects of the present educational systems in former French colonies, taking into account failed or non-implementable assimilation policies. A better understanding of the process of social formation and development of the educational system in Africa requires an analysis of the educational

system in France and the social structure that fostered that system of education, which was later transplanted into Africa its contradictions.

French education is deeply rooted in Christian and Greco-Roman civilisations. In the absence of a structured society during medieval times, there was no group to organise formal education to serve the various interests of ongoing social formations. The first group to organise the embryonic system of education was a religious group, which made Christianity the transmitter of ancient civilisation (Miles, 1953: 4). The influence of the Church, and of religious methodology on the content of formal education, grew in the following centuries. However, in the 11th and 12th centuries, the goal of education became less unidimensional and the Church was no longer the sole social system which controlled education. At that time, there was a certain 'urban renaissance' with a 'small local bourgeoisie' who understood the relationship between education and the economic system that they were controlling. In adapting the education model to their economic needs, that small bourgeoisie contributed to creating schools to acquire knowledge in domains that were not totally controlled by the Church, such as trade, administration, and the legal system (Chevalier et al., 1968: 15). More and more schools were created, many under the initiative of kings, princes, and other authorities in the growing urban areas. For those who attended schools, the new opportunities offered by the socio-economic structure of the time constituted the main incentive.

The basic curriculum in those schools consisted of the "seven liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric, and logic, which composed the trivium; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, which constituted the quadrivium), while education of theology, law and medicine represent[ed] a kind of higher education" (Chevalier et al., 1968: 15). During the 13th century, the educational system of future France was set up according to its almost final foundations. As Chevalier et al. (1968: 15–16) state:

Professors and students obtained autonomy regarding the state, and partially from the Church and constituted in bodies which took the name of universities provided with certain privileges and a certain independence. Those universities provided themselves a four-faculties internal organisation: faculty of arts distributing a kind of secondary education oriented around the study of liberal arts, which after seven years of studies, led to the final diploma, which from the 14th century, took the name of baccalauréat; the baccalauréat holders were allowed to enter one of the three other faculties (theology, decree or law, medicine) which, at the level of higher education, delivered the license and doctorate and opened access to teaching and occupation in law, administration, and medicine.

In the beginning, some students were provided with boarding facilities. Gradually, boarding facilities developed into distinct bodies and autonomous teaching institutions within universities, and these became secondary schools. In certain areas without universities, some secondary schools were created by the official authorities, or under the initiative of certain groups of the population demanding education. These 'colleges' were independent of the universities.

Of primary importance in this chapter is the fact that the Church had a complete monopoly of the universities. Final examinations were organised and diplomas granted only via the Church. While the Church could not prevent the opening of many independent secondary schools, it refused to let students from independent schools take the examinations. Those students were denied the opportunity to obtain diplomas, regardless of what they had learned in school. As a result, they were not 'officially' qualified to pursue their studies beyond secondary level or take on jobs reserved mainly for diploma holders.

Only a few elementary schools (*petites écoles*-small schools) existed, totally separate from the secondary school-university duo. There was also a lack of technical schools, as technical education was still provided either in the family or in neighbourhood workshops. In the 15th century the state grew stronger, and in a quest to share the authority of the Church over schools, successive heads of state started requesting that schools be secularised. By the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the struggle among other social institutions for control over schools intensified.

In this context of power struggle, the Church succeeded in securing almost entire control over secondary school-university institutions. This power of the Church was affirmed through new religious congregations, especially those of the Jesuits and Oratorians. Educational and social goals, the curriculum, and evaluation and selection criteria were all aspects of education set up by the Jesuits. The Jesuits' influence on these defining areas can still be found in academic secondary schools in France today. This is especially the case in the *lycée*, although this institution was legally created in 1802 by Napoleon.

The complete monopoly of Church over education meant the prevalence of a selective and elitist system. Over the years, the bourgeoisie had been strengthening its economic power, while the Church and the aristocracy were controlling other sectors of society, with diminishing economic means. With the 18th century revolution that united all anti-aristocratic and anti-religious forces, the principle of equality for all citizens was openly expressed. However, after so much had been said and written on the issue of equality in the domain of education as for the entire socio-economic structure, equality was still far from being achieved.

After obtaining the baccalauréat, secondary school students were admitted to the universities. Aside from ephemeral changes that took place after the revolution, neither the curriculum, bases for selection and evaluation, nor the method of teaching changed significantly from those instituted by the Jesuits and Oratorians. Over the centuries, those who attended secondary school (later the *lycée*) were mainly children of the dominant social class. Education in the *lycée*, following the tradition of secondary education since the beginning, was not conceived of as terminating at any particular grade. From the lower to the upper grades, the curriculum was designed to be gradual and complementary. As Isambert-Jamati (1970: 46–47) explains:

Secondary education is conceived to last for many years, and each element of learning is in the curriculum of a given grade only because a specific curriculum has preceded it and another curriculum will follow it. Therefore, there is a unity of this level of education which has a value in itself, by failing to go through all the grades of the *lycée*, one loses an invaluable advantage of the curriculum conceived in its interdependence.

This gradual and interdependent conception of the curriculum in secondary school included university, which constituted an upper level of the same system. In academic terms, the immediate purpose of the *lycée* was to enable students to acquire a strong *culture générale* (general culture), an intellectual training. Over the years, in terms of the curriculum and the method of teaching, the *lycée* – and by extension the university – retained the humanist and scholastic influences of the Jesuits. Students' passivity, together with the capacity to memorise eloquently delivered lectures, constituted highly prized values in the *lycée*. Like a priest or monk of the Middle Ages delivering a sermon, the teacher was viewed and treated as the sole repository and transmitter of knowledge.

The physical structure of the classroom consisted of a platform for the teacher, with students placed in a lower position. This classroom structure symbolised the hierarchical relation between the teacher (representing power, authority, and knowledge) and the weak, obedient, ignorant, and empty vessel ready to be filled with knowledge, which the student represented. Most often, the teacher lectured from a platform, and the students were required to learn to reproduce exactly, without asking questions or advancing different perspectives on the topic they were being taught. Miles (1953: 9) notes that the formalism of teaching in a *lycée* and higher education could be traced back to:

Erasmus who introduced them (written composition, exercise in style, *explication de textes*) as a means of acquiring a polished style in Latin.

The literary formalism of Erasmus is especially significant because it addressed, as were all the educational ideas of the Renaissance, to a definite social class to which it was admirably adapted. It was essentially aristocratic in nature, interpreting the needs, tastes and desires of a privileged social class and preparing its recipients to assure a role in that society.

A ‘well-educated man’ (*honnête homme* – ‘honest man’), was considered to be the product of this humanist conception of education. Many authors such as Rabelais and Montaigne in their time criticised this encyclopaedic conception of education, considering that “il vaut mieux une tête bien faite qu’une tête bien pleine” (it is better to have a well-made head than a full head). The universalistic conception of the role of the ruling class made it necessary to design a curriculum which enabled future leaders to communicate, not only with old civilisations through the ancient texts and scriptures, but also with other contemporary societies, specifically with the ruling class of those societies.

4 The Inadvertent Convergence of Two Seemingly Incongruent Learning Systems

Aspects of the aforementioned African traditions and the French pedagogical legacy were rooted in an alien culture and in colonial policies of domination. In contemporary societies that value democratic practices, these aspects call for change. The forced shift from indigenous, traditional forms of training African children to the new Western forms created an upset in the order and ideologies of communities. Specific markers characterised French colonial education: French was the language of instruction; there was limited enrolment, and it created an elite class of Africans (White, 1996: 12; Clignet & Foster, 1964: 191). This deviated from the way things were done before the onset of colonial administration. Previously, learners were taught their own languages. The family and community taught everyone, and there was no distinction drawn between the taught and the untaught, which meant that class differences were not created. However, African students produced by the French colonial education system were intended to fill low-level vacancies in colonial administrations, thus being educated to create a labour force (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 7; Frankema, 2012: 338; Rodney, 1972: 122).

The main aims of colonial education were to achieve “basic literacy, numeracy, vocational training and domestic science” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 7). African countries under French colonial rule were drawn into the use of the French

language for various reasons. The assimilation mission was meant to bring many African elites into the French fabric. Accordingly, [t]he use of African languages in education and administration was actively discouraged by the French colonial administration, because African languages were viewed as an obstacle to the objectives of cultural assimilation in French (Bokamba, 1991: 182).

In many former colonies in Africa, French and English have remained as the languages of instruction and correspondence (Lee & Schultz, 2011: 3). In the French context, this was particularly advantageous in that the more proficient one became the better one's chances for employment and social status (Bokamba, 1991: 187). To ensure the promulgation of the French assimilationist system, colonial administrators designed 'centralised' education and administrative policies for their colonies (Bolt & Bezemer 2009; Grier, 1991: 318–319; Lee & Schultz, 2011: 11), a deviation from the British establishments in their African colonies.

Contrary to the aims of many African states striving to provide education for many of their people, French colonial education was restrictive. It was not a commodity available to all and sundry (Frankema, 2012: 335). Rodney (1974: 123) notes that:

Africans were educated inside colonial schools to become junior clerks and messengers. Too much learning would have been both superfluous and dangerous for clerks and messengers. Therefore, secondary education was rare and other forms of higher education were virtually non-existent throughout most of the colonial epoch.

Bokamba (1991: 190) observes that “only a small percentage of the eligible population was selected for admission into the available elementary and secondary schools”, thus making education an exclusive enterprise. Those few individuals chosen for post-secondary studies moved to France for further studies (Bokamba, 1991: 190). This was also true for British Africa, where university education could only be accessed in Europe. For this reason, French colonial education has been dubbed 'elitist' as it excludes a vast number of people. This is aptly described by Rodney (1974: 124) thus:

perhaps the most important principle of colonial education was that of capitalist individualism. Bokamba (1991: 192) identifies four different ways in which language in Francophone Africa has impeded the education system. These are: (1) admission and promotion criteria, (2) learning strategies, (3) extension or application of knowledge, and (4) academic

performance (Bokamba, 1991: 192). A thinning process was applied in the already exclusive system, meaning that more and more learners were dropped or left out at every level.

In the African universities where I was trained, scientific teaching was quite valid in the subject matters I had to learn, but it taught rather dependence than real science. I mean that, for three years, I was told how biology had developed through works implying the use of facilities, which did not exist on the spot. ... all I could ever do at the University of Dakar was to repeat European works (Hountondji, 1987: 382).

Citing Jacques de Certaines (1978), Hountondji (1987) summarises the reality of African university education inherited from colonial education systems in Africa; the African scientist, and by extension, the African scholar in any other field, is not privy to the up-to-date research and technology, hence the need to go and experience it abroad. For those African scholars who succeed in studying abroad, their areas of study and specialisation may not be relevant to the African context that they return to (Adriansen, Mbow, & Mehmood-Ul-Hassan, 2015: 137). There is a limit to what African university education can offer its learners, and this precludes innovation.

The term 'inadvertent convergence' in the title of this chapter needs further clarity in this chapter. Indeed, following the 1884/1885 Berlin Conference and first attempts by the Europeans to de facto colonise the continent, Africans mounted formidable resistance to colonial rule. After they were defeated by the more powerful, destructive means that the Europeans had in this existential anticolonial battle, they retreated into passive resistance by boycotting the 'social surgery' that European colonial powers had envisaged in the transformation of African social institutions, among which education was central. Indeed, African education across the continent had provided the values and skills that led them to fight for their freedom and defend their land. Thus, it was of critical importance for the European colonial powers to disrupt African education and replace it with their own, in order to produce 'perfect' colonised people who would not only stop fighting colonial rule and policies but would, in fact, assist in the process of entrenching colonial domination. The idea of having the African youth schooled and mis-educated in colonially designed schools was soundly rejected by African families and other decision-makers, with a clear understanding of what was at stake for the future.

It was critical for the colonial powers to carefully design the colonised education to produce a brainwashed and docile colonised subject. They proclaimed a policy of assimilation – the meaning of which some analysts consider has been inadequately understood. Clignet and Foster (1966: 8–9) state that:

'the assimilationist attitudes of some French policy makers [were seen] as mere reflection[s] of their ethnocentrism'. Indeed, it was the most progressive officials who advocated the creation of metropolitan forms of education in Africa, with the expectation that the barriers between African and European would thus be eradicated. Their fundamentally liberal orientation is too often forgotten. Their aim was that both groups enjoy parity of opportunity and that merit, not cultural or racial origin, should be the primary determinant of social and economic status within the French community.

Given the colonial imperatives and such a progressive goal of assimilation, extending the same educational opportunities quickly proved unsuitable in the colonial context (Assié-Lumumba, 1984). Thus, instead of applying a policy that would give the same educational opportunities to colonised Africans as those existing in metropolitan France, the French colonial administration realised that colonial domination and control of the colonised would not be compatible with equality of educational opportunity for the Africans and the French. In the class-based patriarchal systems that existed in France as in other European powers at the time, French policies led to the creation of two types of schools for colonised boys – both at the lower level of the system:

1. schools for chiefs' sons targeted as future local leaders who would not lead resistance movements, but would instead support colonial rule, and
2. schools for a small number of boys from the masses, trained to acquire technical and vocational skills for low-ranking, administrative clerical and technical positions.
3. Very few schools were available for a small number of girls, who were mainly trained as future wives.

On the whole, there were only elementary and 'higher primary schools' (all below secondary school level) for Africans. Also, given the resistance against the colonial establishment, the African youth who attended these colonial schools were forced to participate. However, as colonial rule was established and irreversible Europeanisation underway, the African attitude towards European education changed considerably. The skills taught, including the capacity to speak European languages, were proving to be assets, especially after WWII when decolonisation movements intensified and those with European formal education (no matter how basic) were using it effectively. In fact, the African demand for European education, including university education, was becoming relentless. However, up until just a few years before the process of independence of the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were still no higher education institutions in the French colonies.

Among many temporary solutions that were undertaken to ease the pressure of demand was the organisation of 'summer' courses in 1946 for male students from *écoles normales* (normal schools) in the colonies – such as *Ecole Normale de Dabou* in Côte d'Ivoire that was created in 1936 – to prepare these students to enter the second cycle of the *Lycée Van Vollenhoven* in Dakar (Sénégal). At the end of the cycle, they could qualify to take the *baccalauréat* examination to open the door to university education, primarily in France since there were no higher education facilities in the colonies. Additionally, by a decree of 20 March 1947, the *écoles primaires supérieures* (higher primary schools) that was specifically designed for the colonised, became *collèges modernes* (modern colleges) thus acquiring a status similar to academic secondary schools in France. In the same vein, by a decree on 12 November 1947, colonial vocational schools were transformed into *collèges techniques* (technical colleges) like those in France. In 1947, *collèges classiques* (classical colleges) were also created in Africa.

The curriculum in new schools on African soil was the same as in France. To fully implement the new equal opportunity policy, building more schools in the colonies became necessary. Despite all these policies, there were not enough schools in Africa to accommodate all the youth ready to enrol at various levels. Thus, while opening new schools and changing the statuses of existing schools, sending African students to France became a popular policy, especially in the absence of higher education institutions in the colonies. However, despite the highly regarded possibility of studying in France, even this option proved to be inadequate to meet a high and constantly increasing demand. Ironically, at this juncture, the assimilation policy that was enunciated but not applied and the attitude of Africans who rejected any type of French colonial education, finally met, with the indiscriminate application of French education in its colonies. This convergence was the beginning of a vicious cycle of multi-faceted, post-colonial dependency as described by Ajayi et al. (1996: 39):

[F]or the Africans, the French policy aimed to leave the mass uneducated, and to groom a select few as *évolués* (sophisticated), co-opted as loyal upholders of French culture and colonial rule, encouraged to complete their education in France and to feel more at home in Paris than in Africa.

In Africa, the oldest among the contemporary institutions that were upgraded to the status of universities were actually set up in response to the demand of the Africans themselves at a time when independence was inevitable. Thus, *instituts des hautes études* (institutes of higher studies) were set up in Dakar, Tananarive, and Abidjan shortly before the end of the *en masse* (in mass) independence of French colonies in 1960. All the African universities in

former French colonies were created after independence. However, in a neo-colonial nexus, there were all modelled after French university traditions with regard to the curriculum, the teaching and learning policies and practices, and the language of instruction. Accordingly, the whole package of French educational traditions was transferred to African countries.

On one front, an African tradition found itself very compatible with the French: that of the eloquence in education delivery. In a tribute to a former professor, I wrote:

Masterly eloquence is highly valued in African culture. For me, this African cultural heritage was further reinforced by the French educational tradition, which also considers eloquence in delivering a well-prepared course, *cours magistral* (lecture), as an indicator of the mastery of the subject matter and an intrinsic attribute of excellence in teaching. (Assié-Lumumba, 2008: 574)

Modelled after the medieval monk and even the contemporary priest who eloquently delivers sermons that ought not to be discussed, the teacher at any educational system with this tradition may not readily offer the students the space to develop critical thinking capacity. There must be a methodology in African orature and the educational process of telling stories instead of telling the stories randomly. Rhetoric with the abundant use of appropriate proverbs is critical in the African oral civilisation. The quality and the number of stories are also important. The more a person masters history and many other specialised fields, the more this person became an authority and learned figure widely revered. Thus, with the cumulative process of acquiring knowledge, older people, in general, become a source of reference and are considered wise men and women. For the African child, it is fascinating to listen to an older person talking about various fields: history, religion, philosophy, geography, and various aspects of scientific knowledge related to specific areas such as agricultural production and nature. Storytellers use common or allegoric forms, direct stories or those with humans or animals as characters. It is no different from listening to an older person reading books on these subjects to the child. The only difference is that in the African context, the child is expected to learn and memorise the stories, while in the context of formal written education, the child may read the same and other books when learning how to read. It has been said that in Africa, “an old person who dies is equivalent to a library that burns down”, except that in the case of the library, many documents may exist somewhere else in the same form.

The background mentioned above is essential for advancing an argument that African patterns of social relations contributed to reinforcing teachers' power and authority in the French educational context. As indicated earlier, in general, younger people must display an attitude of respect when an older person is talking to them. In such a context, the respect accorded to the older person is fundamental. The respect given to an older person is explained in part by the old person's age, but above all by their knowledge. In the African context, knowledge is power. Thus, the relations between young and old are essentially relations between 'the weak and the powerful. The point here is that African patterns of relations and the value of knowledge and age provide further legitimacy to the teacher's own assumption of being the sole repository of knowledge and authority in the classroom.

In addition, this knowledge in the colonial context corresponds with the structured values attached to French/external/exotic knowledge and African/indigenous/familiar knowledge. In particular, pupils defer to the teacher as an older person, often in the category of the father (most often) and also the mother (since African women entered the teaching profession during the post-colonial period). There are various layers of power and authority claimed and granted to the teacher; one comes from outside, imposed and contested from within, even in the form of passive resistance (e.g. refusal to enrol children, deliberate enrolment of children with the wrong social origins). The other is indigenous, declared, and assumed to have become marginal, yet it is the daily and most prevalent reference for the majority. Both layers meet in the social space of the classroom to make the African teacher the Master; just as – and in some cases even more so – than the colonial masters, many African teachers have abused their new form of authority.

Thus, the French system of social and educational relations, relations in the colonial situation, and African patterns of relations all contributed to establishing an atmosphere of fear and terror in classrooms. Although such relations may have remained in many schools for a long time,¹ they have now changed.

5 Conclusion

Colonial education systems designed curricula that were devoid of African input and were also devoid of African relevance. Education had no bearing on African realities, but instead was intended to fulfil the interests of colonial administrations (Adriansen et al., 2015: 128). Research methods and standards used in African universities are produced and passed down from Western

countries. There is a sense of 'playing catch-up' by African institutions, an undertaking that is both unbecoming and unattainable. Adriansen et al. (2015: 134) put it thus:

All too often, localised methods and theories from the Global North are portrayed as universal methods and theories, resulting in transference of other contexts without recognising their particularity.

Post-colonial governments have made efforts to improve various elements of the education sector, including increased funding and curriculum reforms. Despite these changes, there remains a dependence on ideas and innovations from Western countries for new materials and technologies. Thus, in some respects, past experiences of colonial power in Africa continue to prevail. Ironically, where African culture has managed to create a fusion with European systems in the pedagogical realm, the two perspectives and their interface present a challenge to a contemporary, desirable method of teaching. Indeed, a convergence of negative elements in the inherited French legacy and the African tradition has constituted an enduring hindrance to full development of education in these societies.

It is a final irony that although French traditions have been reformed (or evolved) to meet contemporary realities and demands. The French traditions have persisted in Africa and have perpetuated the interface of two traditions. However, given the imperatives of developing critical thinking capacities for democratic societies, these convergent and reinforced practices of education delivery require reform toward transformative and learner-centred pedagogy for the education of new citizens.

Note

- 1 It is challenging to find a precise date when such practices ceased, but even ten years ago, some teachers still beat their pupils.

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Rwanda's Language-in-Education Policy Shift from French-Dominant to English-Only Medium

2009–2017 Prospects and Implementation Success in Higher Education

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Abstract

This chapter falls under the subtheme of “In-context pedagogy for university students”. It is viewed from the lens of language as a pedagogical tool through which teaching and learning is mediated. The issue of modifying existing language policies is debated among scholars worldwide. In the Rwandan context the medium of instruction – for over a century – was in French. The medium of instruction then shifted to English as the sole medium of instruction from 8th October 2008. This shift in the medium of instruction from French to English aroused both appreciation and concerns. This chapter explores university lecturers and students’ perceptions on the prospects and challenges in the implementation of the new policy between 2009 and 2017. It builds on the views that were expressed immediately after the announcement of the policy shift in 2009, to compare with their perceived level of implementation success in 2017, after nine years of implementation. Two universities located in Kigali City were selected, then survey questionnaires, individual interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students were conducted in both 2009 and 2017. The key finding in the 2009 interviews was that lecturers and students appreciated the policy shift. They believed that opportunities offered by English internationally, regionally and locally tended to surpass French. Rwanda’s adherence to the Common Wealth and the East African Community required proficiency in English as well. The key challenge pivoted among lecturers who had experience and training in French and were concerned that they would lack the skills to transitioning to teaching in English. The 2017 findings revealed high level of language policy implementation success and lecturers’ increased proficiency in teaching through English. The chapter argues that lecturers’ self-determination, motivation and teaching by practicing with students, accelerated their English language mastery. The chapter recommends comparative studies among countries that implemented language policy shifts.

Keywords

language-in-education policy shift – language pedagogy – language policy implementation success – English medium of instruction – Rwanda’s quadrilingual policy – language preference model

1 Introduction and Background to Rwanda’s Language Policy Shift

This chapter investigates the implementation success of the Rwanda’s language policy shift between January 2009 and December 2017, as perceived by lecturers and students selected from the University of Rwanda – College of Education and the University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies. The chapter is a contribution to the field of language-in-education policy and its implications to language pedagogy. It focuses on the selected Rwandan university lecturers’ and students’ perceptions on the level of implementation success, prospects and challenges encountered during the implementation of the modified language policy, between 2009 and 2017. The issue of language policy and language planning is debated among scholars worldwide (Bamgbose, 1999; Alexander, 2004; Canagarajah, 2005). The African context and the Rwandan language policy, where French has been the medium of instruction for a century, prior to the shift to English as a sole medium of instruction on 8th October 2008 aroused both appreciations and concerns. The chapter is viewed from the lenses of language policy as a pedagogical tool through which teaching and learning are mediated, with two languages at play, namely English and French in the Rwandan higher education.

Regarding the Rwanda’s linguistic landscape, it is a multilingual country, with four official languages, namely Kinyarwanda, English, French and Kishwahili (Republic of Rwanda, 2003; MINICAAF, 2017). However, Rwanda is also among the countries which have one common language and one common culture, within one nation. It is virtually unique among the surrounding countries in having a single local language (i.e. Kinyarwanda) which is the national language, considered as a mother tongue for all Rwandan people. This language is spoken and understood by all Rwandan citizens, including children, adults, literate and illiterate people, and it is used across the whole country. Rwanda is therefore categorised among the endoglossic countries. These are countries where the single dominant language is spoken by the overwhelming majority of the population. In Africa, endoglossic countries include Rwanda with Kinyarwanda, Burundi with Kirundi, Swaziland with siSwati, Somalia with Somali, Botswana with Setswana, and Lesotho with Sesotho (Abdulaziz, 1993;

UNESCO, 1996). Hence, Kinyarwanda is the mother tongue for the majority of the Rwandan population as it is spoken by 99.4% (MINECOFIN, 2014). Its predominant use has crossed the Rwandan borders and the language is used in some parts of the neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania.

A cursory socio-linguistic survey of Kigali City, the capital of Rwanda, or in other parts of the country, indicates that several languages such as Kinyarwanda, French, English, Swahili, Luganda, Lingala among other languages are used. All these languages are likely to be used differently by different categories of people. Among all these languages, the Rwandan Constitution officially recognises four languages. Article 5 of the New Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, which was adopted on 4th June 2003 stipulated that: "The national language is Kinyarwanda; the official languages are Kinyarwanda, French and English" (Republic of Rwanda, 2003). Kiswahili was recently adopted as an official language (MINICAAF, 2017).

Regarding the Rwandan language-in-education policy, French-dominant language policy has characterised Rwandan education for almost a century, particularly between 1900 and 1994 (MINEDUC, 1995). Before 1994, Kinyarwanda, English, French and Kiswahili had different social statuses in Rwanda, and only French and Kinyarwanda were used as media of instruction (MoI) in schools (MINEDUC, 2004; Kayisire, 2004). After 1994, Kinyarwanda, French and English gained equal status as official languages. Then the 1996 constitution legalised English as a medium of instruction (MoI) and all the three languages were used as MoI and taught as school subjects at different levels of education (MINEDUC, 2002). The equal status among the three languages continued until October 8th, 2008, when French was dropped as a medium of instruction at all levels of education and replaced by English, but continued to be taught as a subject. It is to be noted that between 1994 and 2008, the language policies implemented in Rwandan schools stipulated that Kinyarwanda be used as a language of instruction from primary grade 1 up to primary grade 3, with French and English taught as subjects; then, from primary grade 4 up to university level, English and French were used as media of instruction, with the continuation of Kinyarwanda as a subject up to the end of secondary school (MINEDUC, 2008, 2009).

On 8th October 2008, the Rwandan Government modified the then trilingual policy (Kinyarwanda, English and French as media of instruction) which was in effect in all Rwandan schools and replaced it with English as the sole MoI for all subjects at all levels of education, from nursery schools up to university level (MINICAAF, 2008). The implementation of the new policy commenced at the start of the 2009 academic year. English became the sole medium for teaching other subjects, from kindergarten up to university level, while all other

languages were taught as subjects (MINEDUC, 2009). The main motive behind the language policy shifts can be attributed to the fact that Rwanda had joined the East African Community (EAC) on the 1st of July 2007. The EAC comprised mostly English-speaking countries, namely, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (MINICAAF, 2008). Hence, as MINICAAF (2008) indicates and as Niyibizi (2010: 2) argues “the economic factor stimulated by regional socio-political integration has motivated the Rwandan Government to modify the previous trilingual policy”. Rwanda was also preparing to join the Commonwealth, which it joined in November 2009. The Commonwealth comprises countries which were mainly colonised by the United Kingdom, which is predominantly English speaking. Additionally, as MINEDUC (2009) and Niyibizi (2010) reported, it was financially expensive for the country to run trilingual parallel programs, i.e. some schools teaching in French, others in English, and yet others in Kinyarwanda, especially in nursery and lower primary schools. At university level, it also doubled the costs, because two languages, namely French and English, were being used as parallel media of instruction in higher education (MINICAAF, 2008; MINEDUC, 2009; Niyibizi, 2010). Hence, as Niyibizi (2014) and Sibomana (2015) argue, the adoption of English as a sole medium of instruction from grade one on 8th October 2008, and the dropping of French as a medium of instruction have modified the status of French and Kinyarwanda, even if these two languages were still taught as subjects and used in various areas, including mass media. It is against this background that this study investigated the level of success in the implementation of English-only medium policy, between 2009–2017, as perceived by lecturers and students from the two selected Rwandan universities.

2 Contextual and Methodological Underpinnings

The overall aim of the study is to explore the university lecturers’ and students’ perceptions on the prospects, challenges and implementation success of the English language policy, between 2009 and 2017, in Rwandan higher education. The study analyses the prospects at the beginning of the policy implementation in 2009 and compares them with their perceived level of implementation success in 2017, nine years into the policy implementation. Hence, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. How did Rwandan university lecturers and students at the selected universities perceive the shift from French-dominant to English as a sole medium of instruction in higher education, in 2009?
- ii. What opportunities and challenges did university lecturers and students anticipate in the implementation of the new language policy at university level?

- iii. What are their perceptions about the implementation success of the language policy at the end of 2017, nine years into its implementation?

2.1 *Methods and Analytical Framework*

This study has been conducted in two phases. The first phase was conducted in January 2009, at the beginning of the implementation of the policy under investigation; while the second phase was conducted in December 2017, nine years of the implementation of the policy. It adopted a mixed methods approach, where quantitative and qualitative methods were employed (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007), with two separate but complementary phases. Hence, the mixed methods adopted the strategy of “Consecutive Embedded Strategy”, which is characterised by data collection phases, during which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed consecutively (Creswell, 2009: 210).

As the shift from French to English MoI started with 2009 academic year, the data collection methods used during the 2009 phase were survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students, which informed about their perceptions on the policy change. For the 2017 phase, survey questionnaire with lecturers was the main method of data collection, and it enabled the lecturers to rate their perceptions on the level of implementation success, their improved proficiency, the challenges encountered and the strategies adopted to mitigate those challenges. All the participants were university lecturers and university students who were selected from two universities. These are the University of Rwanda – College of Education, a public university with campuses located in Kigali City and Eastern Province respectively, and the University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies, on its campus located in Kigali City. The two universities were selected through systematic sampling, which is also a non-random sampling technique (Mackey & Gass, 2005), where the list of all public and private institutions of higher learning were randomly made by the research, then every fourth institution on the list was selected in each category. Participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This translated to selecting lecturers and students whose linguistic background was dominantly French, and who were present on campus during data collection. Lecturers and students with English backgrounds were not selected because they were considered to be proficient in English.

It is to be noted that the 2009 phase of the study focused on the prospects of the new policy and the anticipated challenges for lecturers and students who had been trained in French previously, while the 2017 phase targeted lecturers with French background, who had experienced the nine years implementation of the policy, using English as a MoI. This phase explored their perceived level of implementation success, experienced challenges and strategies adopted to

cope with the English-only medium policy demands. The sample size in the 2009 phase of the study comprised 50 lecturers, including 30 from the University of Rwanda – College of Education and 20 from the University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies. They completed the survey questionnaire; and then 10 lecturers were selected for individual interviews, five from each of the two selected universities.

For students, ten focus group discussions were conducted in the two universities, in total, with five focus groups from each university. Each focus group included 6 students, amounting to 60 students in total. In the 2017 phase, 112 survey questionnaires were emailed to lecturers, with 62 lecturers from one of the two universities responding. The private university did not participate as most of the lecturers who participated in 2009 phase were no longer at the university and such a situation affected the results of this study, especially on the conclusions from the 2017 phase results.

The analysis for qualitative data followed thematic content analysis (Creswell, 2009) where themes and categories were produced from data; while the quantitative data were analysed through simple descriptive statistics, mainly univariate analysis, which described and summarised data on a single characteristic or a single dependent variable, showing frequency distribution in terms of percentages (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Based on the methodology used in this study, the threats to validity could be linked with what Sapsford and Jupp (2006) described as population validity and validity of measurement because this study cannot claim that all views from higher institutions of learning were identified. However, the triangulation of methods served to minimise these threats to validity. Ethical issues were adhered to by confidentiality, neutrality, consent with participants and voluntary participation.

Insights for theoretical framework and analysis are derived from Spolsky's (1989) language preference model. Spolsky (1989) developed this theory based on his observations on the "complexity of the circumstances under which second languages are learned, or failed to be learned" (Spolsky, 1989: 2). The component of his theory which was applied to this study is the innovative mathematic formula, which is applied to second language learning, to determine conditions for success or failure in learning the second language. The formula is $K_f = K_p + A + M + O$. As Spolsky (1989) describes this formula, K stands for the knowledge and skills in the second language of the learner, f stands for future time and K_f stands for the learner's second language knowledge and skills at some future time. K_p stands for the learner's current knowledge and skills, including his/her knowledge of first language, third language and any other languages. A stands for components of learner's ability including psychological, biological,

intellectual and cognitive skills. M stands for learner's affective factors such as personality, attitudes, motivation, and anxiety while O stands for opportunity for learning the language, including the time for learning, formal or informal situations where the learner is exposed to the language. The additive symbol in Spolsky's formula indicates the interaction and contribution of all factors in facilitating the learning. This study applied these factors to weigh the level of policy implementation success between 2009 and 2017. In this regard, Kp represented lecturers' proficiency in English just after language policy shift in 2009; Kf represented their proficiency in 2017, after 9 years of implementation; M represented their motivation in improving their proficiency and O represented opportunities and challenges encountered over this nine-year period. This framework served as both the analytical and theoretical toolkit.

Survey questionnaire responses, individual interviews with lectures and focus group discussions with students provided information on prospects, opportunities and anticipated challenges in the implementation of the English-only medium policy. The data analysis process was governed by the method of concept mapping (Sapsford, 2006) which consists of analysing the questionnaires or interviews by dividing them into categories, sometimes with supporting examples of quotations from the interview or the participants' written answers. They are like components of thematic content analysis (Creswell, 2009), but based on what Sapsford (2006) described as accumulation, which consists of looking for patterns in interviews or questionnaires as a whole or summarising interviews on cards and then using quotations from the text as illustrations of typical or illustrative examples. Hence, the following themes emerged as findings:

3 History on the Rwandan Language-in-Education Policy Shifts between 1900 and 2017

In Rwanda, Kinyarwanda is the dominant language. It is used in all aspects of life in the whole territory by the entire population. In fact, from the founding of Rwanda up to the arrival of foreign colonisers in 1898, Kinyarwanda was said to be the only language used for communication among Rwandans (Kabanza, 2003; Kayisire, 2004; Niyibizi, 2010), and Rwanda was linguistically homogeneous (Mutwarasibo, 2003; Niyomugabo, 2008). The linguistic situation between 1900 and 1994 was characterised by a number of language policy shifts.

The first shift was observed in 1916, when the Belgium colonial masters replaced the German colonisers in the Rwandan colony and replace Kiswahili in primary schools with French (Shyirambere, 1978, cited in Kabanza, 2003).

Thus, French became the official language of government, law, civil service, army, education and international relations (Mutwarasibo, 2003).

The second shift was observed in 1948, when interracial schools – based on the European model – were established in Rwanda. In these schools, French was prominent, and Rwandan students who were enrolled at these schools were prohibited from using Kinyarwanda. Rather, Dutch was introduced as a subject starting from primary grade 4 (Shyirambere, 1978, in Kabanza 2003: 3; Grosjean, 1982, in Niyomugabo, 2008). The third shift was observed in 1963, just after the 1962 independence, when English was introduced in secondary school, but it was taught only as a subject; it was given a lower status and was not taught at the primary school level (MINEDUC, 1996). The fourth shift was made during the 1978 education reform, which was nicknamed ‘Kinyarwandisation of primary school’, because Kinyarwanda was extended to be used as a MoI of some courses up to grade 8 (MINEDUC, 2004). The fifth shift was observed after 1994, when the trilingual policy (Kinyarwanda-English-French) was adopted and the three languages were used in schools as subjects and as media of instruction from nursery school up to university level (MINEDUC, 1995). The sixth shift was made on 8th October 2008, when the Rwandan Government modified the then trilingual policy (Kinyarwanda, English and French as media of instruction) which was in effect in all Rwandan schools since 1994 and replaced it with English as the sole MoI for all subjects at all levels of education, i.e. from kindergarten up to university level (MINICAAF, 2008). The implementation of this shift is investigated in this paper. The seventh and current language-in-education policy shift was made on the 11th of February 2011 when Kinyarwanda was adopted again as the medium of instruction for all subjects from nursery school up to primary grade 3, with change-over to English MoI from grade 4 onwards (MINICAAF, 2011). Kiswahili was also recognised as the fourth official language in 2017 (MINICAAF, 2017).

From the language policy shifts described above, it is evident that Kinyarwanda, French and English were declared official languages in 1994, after the repatriation of Rwandans who were living in exile. Before 1994, Rwanda was classified as a Francophone country and only French and Kinyarwanda were used as languages of instruction from nursery school up to university, in all schools throughout the country (MINEDUC, 2003).

4 Implementation of the 2009 Language Policy Shift, from French-Dominant to English-Only MoI

On 8th October 2008, the Rwandan Government modified the existing trilingual policy in Rwandan schools; English became the sole MoI for all subjects

at all levels of education, while Kinyarwanda and French were to be taught as subjects, but at different stages of education (MINICAAF, 2008). The implementation of this new language policy had to commence with the 2009 academic year (MINEDUC, 2008). On 9th January 2009, the change-over to English medium of instruction started in schools, from nursery school up to university. Even though the programme was to shift progressively up to 2011 when all subjects were to be taught in English, all schools embarked on English MoI immediately (MINEDUC, 2008, 2009).

Within the context of equipping teachers with skills in English to enable them to implement the new policy, it was explained that all teachers of primary, secondary schools and universities were to undergo intensive training in English during the holidays and would continue to be trained. The teachers training schedule published by MINEDUC (2009) indicate that all teachers ought to have reached the required proficiency in English by 2011.

In universities and institutions of higher learning, English and French had been used as MoI in parallel because English-French bilingualism was promoted between 1994 and 2008, with dual-medium language of instruction policy (Mutwarasibo, 2003; Niyomugabo, 2008). Hence, tertiary education was characterised by the exclusive use of both English and French between 1994 and 2008 and the language policy described in MINEDUC (2002, 14) stipulates that French and English will be used as media for teaching other subjects from primary grade 4 up to university level. The Rwandan use of both English and French facilitates direct communication with neighbouring countries and further afield. For example, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi predominantly use French, while Uganda and Tanzania predominantly use English. Therefore, Rwanda has advantages in using both French and English. However, since 2009, English became the sole MoI in higher education and French was dropped down as a MoI.

5 English Preference and Its Dominant Role Worldwide

A dominant language like English is believed to be a preferred tool of communication in different corners of the world. In this regard, Kelechukwu (2007: 2) argues that language plays a central role in any institution because it is an essential tool in the institution, execution and sustenance of human communicative interaction. Therefore, the significance of language choice and preference emanates from the fact that it affects not only those who are directly involved in the everyday practice of making choices or those who must face it in their professions (e.g. teachers, journalists, etc.) but also those in government whose language policy decisions affect people's lives in significant ways (Perumal, 2015).

A significant body of studies show that English is one of the most used languages worldwide. The findings from a number of studies that investigated people's attitudes and preference between international/foreign/additional languages including English and local languages or mother tongues report English as the most preferred international language. This preference for English is found not only in countries and areas where English is predominant, but also in areas where it is not. A few illustrative examples of English preference are to be found in South Africa (Perumal, 2007; Mutasa, 1999; Braam, Broeder, Extra, Mati, Pludemann & Wababa, 2000; De Klerk, 2002; Matee, 2003; Alexander, 2004; Hornberger & Vaish, 2008); in Australia (Oliver & Purdie, 1998); in Turkey (Karahan, 2007); in Botswana (Arthur, 1997); in Swaziland (Mordaunt, 1991); and in Rwanda (Niyibizi, 2010; Maniraho, 2013; Habyarimana, 2014; Niyibizi, 2015). However, some studies revealed that English is not preferred over local and indigenous languages. For example, Bokhorst-Heng and Caleon's (2009) study in Singapore showed that attitudes towards English were not highly positive among Chinese, Indian and Malay children who were in grade 5, rather they preferred their local languages.

The dominant role of English language, its preference and its spread in different corners of the world are observed, and that is why it is described as the passport to the good life, to status, to wealth (Pattanayak, 1993) and as a vehicle of globalisation (Nikolov & Djigunovic, 2006). Such preference of English might have motivated the Rwandan Government to legislate the use of this dominant language as a sole medium of instruction in its educational system. Hence, the motivation and rationale for this study is to explore the selected lecturers' and students' perceptions on the implementation success of the language policy changes between 2009 and 2017.

6 Prospects and Opportunities Offered by the 2009 Language Policy Shift

University lecturers and students who participated in the study revealed the key prospects and opportunities that were offered by shifting from French-dominant to English as a sole MoI up to higher education. The first opportunity was to enable Rwandans to integrate into the English-speaking world, with economic, social and political benefits associated with it. Most of the participants perceived English medium instruction to be the passport to joining regional and international organisations, like the East African Communities, Commonwealth and others. The illustrative examples are the following extracts from interviews and group discussions:

The first prospect is a political one: Rwanda has joined the East African community, and most of the community members use English, that is why I appreciate it; it is even spoken by many people in the world, including powerful countries like USA, UK, emerging Asian countries and we need to communicate with them. (Lecturer 7)

We have heard that Rwanda intends to join the Common Wealth where English is predominantly used. Though we predominantly use French, we are taught that English is a global and international language, predominantly used worldwide. (Student, focus group 4)

Not only most of the neighbouring countries use English but also countries which help Rwanda use English. We have observed that most of Non-Governmental Organisations operating in Rwanda come from English speaking countries and predominantly use English. Those who master English have more opportunities than French speakers. (Lecturer 2)

It was noticed that we have been losing in terms of development by not knowing English. In Africa for example, most of French-speaking countries are still lagging behind while Anglophone country are far advanced in terms of development. (Student, focus group 7)

The second prospect identified by participants is the academic gain from English medium as compared to French medium. Extracts below shed more light on this:

Rwanda used to teach in French and Kinyarwanda in schools, with English as subject, but English was not mastered because it was only taught as a subject, while French and Kinyarwanda were mastered to higher extent; and now that English is going to be taught as a MOI, we believe that it will be mastered. (Student, focus group 9)

I believe that students are going to know English because learning a language without using it as a medium for learning is not really advantageous. Students and even lecturers will master the language by learning it and by using it to learn or to teach other subjects. (Lecturer 10)

Additionally, participants compared English and French, especially the ease in learning and using these two languages, as stated in the following extract:

... from primary school up to university, students who evolved in English-speaking schools are very fluent in English and can express their opinions easily when compared to their French counterparts; and English grammar is simple when compared to French grammar ... our Anglophone classmates have been complaining that French is more complicated than English, for both students and teachers. (Student, focus group 10)

In the same vein, a criticism about the French-dominant medium policy was raised as follows:

... we are at university now, but when you talk to some people who learnt in French in Rwanda, you sometimes wonder if they are speaking French or another language, you feel like they are speaking a mixture of languages; and it is rare to find a primary school leaver who studied in the old system who can really speak French fluently; but you will find that pupils studying in lower primary in the English medium system are able to express themselves in English. (Student, focus group 2)

The third prospect which was emphasised by participants is the predominance of research materials and documentation written in English, when compared to those in French. The following example reveals it:

Another prospect for using English medium is that research is going to be expanded and improved as people will be able to read sources from different languages. When we see available materials and resources in terms of new technology, travelling and tourism industry, books and research conducted widely, English materials are more in number than French. Lecturers and students are going to benefit from this. (Lecturer 1)

These few examples which were selected from many more confirm that university lecturers and students perceived several prospects and opportunities by the shift from French-dominant to English-only medium policy since 2009. Hence, these excerpts tend to confirm that *O* (opportunities) described in the theoretical played an important role in justifying and motivating the lecturers and students towards the move to English-only medium. Such opportunities are likely to contribute in motivating them to uplift their *Kp* (knowledge or English proficiency that they had in 2009) to *Kf* (knowledge or English proficiency that they are expected to have by the end of 2017), as described in the theoretical framework. The next theme explores their anticipated challenges.

7 Perceived Challenges at the Onset of the 2009 Language Policy Implementation

The participants confirmed that the newly adopted language policy was promising and wonderful; but they raised some concerns and anticipated some challenges:

The first anticipated challenge was about the fate of other languages, which risked to be neglected at the expense of English preference. Extracts below express such a concern:

The English policy is wonderful, but it should take into consideration other language policies, specifically the multilingualism or policy of using several languages, bilingual and trilingual policy which would be beneficial not only for Rwanda but also for the region, because every foreign language is an asset ..., it will also be difficult for students to learn all the subjects in English while they were used to being taught in French predominantly, and sometimes in Kinyarwanda. (Student, focus group 5)

This new policy seems to put less emphasis on French and the next generation risks not knowing French while the current generation was lucky to be bilingual, to know both French and English though the levels were different. We know that two languages are better than one. (Lecturer 8)

The second concern was about the job security for French speaking teachers and their ability to adapt to English medium, as expressed in the following extracts:

People who exclusively speak French were not taken into consideration, for example, some teachers of French will be jobless. We know that some teachers are very fluent in French and can only impart knowledge in French; it will be a problem for them to teach in English. (Student, focus group 1)

... almost all the teachers were used to teaching in French for all the subjects, and the government wants to start the implementation of the new policy immediately since 2009; it will therefore be difficult and tiresome for teachers to learn English, especially at the beginning, and they may waste time if the change-over is not prepared well. (Lecturer 9)

The third challenge which was anticipated by participants was about high costs in the implementation of the policy, as the extracts below attest to:

The implementation of this new policy might be costly and may require time, many new teaching materials and many new teachers, in case the existing teachers may be unable to teach in English, especially in primary and high schools. (Student, focus group 3)

8 Perceived Ease or Difficulty in the Implementation of the English-Only Medium Policy

Participants had different perceptions about the smooth or challenging implementation of the new language policy of using English medium. Out of 50 lecturers who completed the survey questionnaire in 2009, 33 (66%) anticipated that the implementation would be easy; 15 (30%) indicated that it would be difficult; while 2 (4%) anticipated that it would be impossible or unachievable. Those who perceived that the implementation would be easy contended:

From 1994, both Anglophone schools have been teaching through English; Francophone schools have been teaching in French but also learning English as a subject. I don't think they will encounter any serious problem in this regard. (Lecturer 27)

At university level, bilingual practices have been promoted enough. Our students navigate easily through French and English; they are supposed to cope with English medium with more ease. (Lecturer 43)

In my point of view, it would not be very difficult for French speakers to adapt to English medium because the two languages have several similarities, several French words resemble English words, they only differ at pronunciation level. (Lecturer 19)

Participants who anticipated that it would be difficult were mainly criticising the immediate and abrupt switch from French to English medium. For instance, they indicated that:

... it will not be easy for teachers to immediately switch from French medium and start teaching in English, they can learn the language but it will be difficult to teach other subjects in that language, immediately. (Lecturer 14)

Teaching materials written in English are not sufficient and the translation of the existing teaching aids into English will be difficult for teachers whose background is purely French. (Lecturer 21)

I might say that French-speaking people seem to be pushed into English, and some seem to be resistant not physically but psychologically, which will make the implementation difficult. (Lecturer 16)

The main argument of those who anticipated that the implementation is likely to be impossible summarised it in the following responses:

Considering the language history in our country where about 90% of teachers were trained in French while English is used by few people, the implementation of this new policy is likely to be very difficult. (Lecturer 37)

The big issue is for old teachers; it will be complicated for them to learn a new language, especially those who were trained in the 1970s and 1980s. There are even some of them who will not pick any single word of English due to their age. But the young ones who practiced English as a subject in school will encounter less challenges. (Lecturer 31)

The preceding quotes constitute some of the perceptions that participants had on the eve of the implementation of the English-only medium policy in 2009. The suggested strategies for coping with all the identified challenges, were mainly to provide sufficient training in English for in-service teachers, to look for highly qualified trainers of English, to motivate French-speaking teachers to invest in learning English while teaching through it, and to provide enough teaching materials, textbooks and teaching resources written in English. The next section reports on the perceptions of university lecturers, in 2017, after nine years of the policy implementation.

9 University Lecturers' Perceptions on Level of Policy Implementation Success

Lecturers' indicated their perceptions about the level of success in the implementation of English-only medium policy, between 2009 and 2017. Figure 4.1 summarises their perceptions on level of English MoI policy implementation success between January 2009 and December 2017, which they rated on a four-item Likert scale: very successful, successful, poor and very poor.

It can be observed from Figure 4.1 that the majority of the participating lecturers perceived the implementation of the policy to be successful by the end of 2017. In this regard, 44 out of 62 lecturers who completed the online survey questionnaires (70.97%) rated that it has been successful. Only 18 lecturers (29.03%) rated the implementation as poor; none of them rated it as very poor

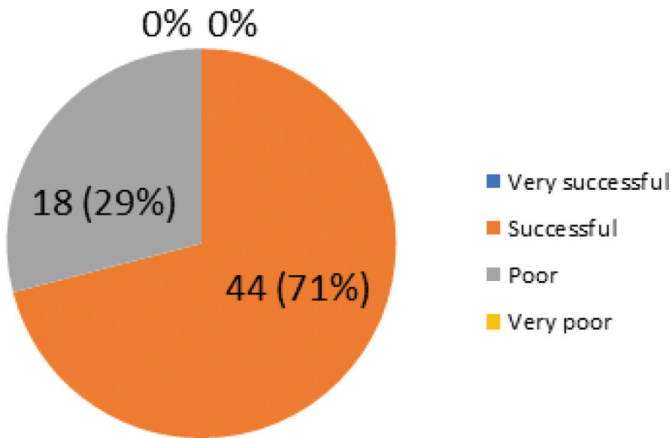


FIGURE 4.1 Lecturers' perceptions on level of English MoI policy implementation success between January 2009 and December 2017

or very successful. The justifications which they wrote on the questionnaire include the quotes such as “Many Francophone lecturers made impressive efforts to teach and assess in English” (Lecturer 58); “The lecturers and students have been trained and became increasingly confident and proficient in English” (Lecturer 46).

However, some lecturers have opposing views, like: “The learners graduating from high school and universities are not yet any better than those who did not use English as a MOI” (Lecturer 61); “Students’ writing in English is still bad, it is not easy to mark their work written in English” (Lecturer 30). From these few quotations, lecturers still have varied views about the level of policy implementation success, but it is evident that personal efforts, self-learning and teaching by practicing made this language policy successful.

To confirm their perceptions on level of implementation success, lecturers were asked to rate their level of confidence in teaching through English by the end of 2017. Diagram 2 summarises their perceptions on a four-item Likert scale: very confident, confident, not confident and not confident at all.

Figure 4.2 shows that by the end of 2017, the university lecturers who participated in the study are very confident (30 out of 62, making 48.4%) and confident (32 out of 62, that is 51.6%). None of them felt non-confident in teaching through English.

They also had to compare their perceived level of proficiency in English at the eve of policy change in 2009 and in 2017, after nine years of implementation. Their comparison was based on four language skills, namely speaking, writing, reading and listening in English. Again, they rated their proficiency in English on a four-item Likert scale: very good, good, poor and very poor. Table 4.1 summarises their perceptions on English proficiency.

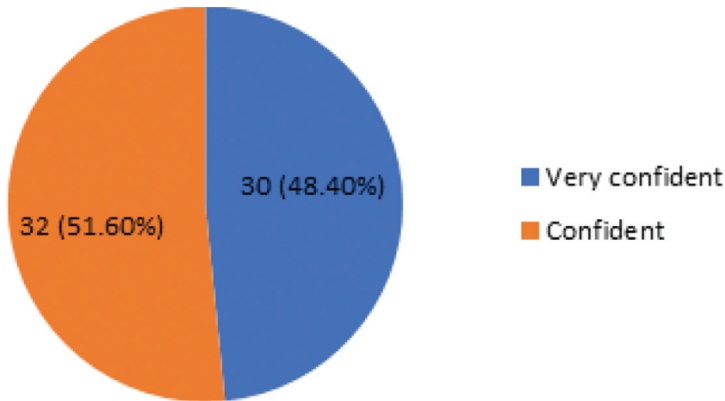


FIGURE 4.2 Lecturers' perceived level of confidence in using/teaching through English by end 2017

Observation from Table 4.1 reveals a clear improvement in English proficiency, among the 62 lecturers who filled in the survey questionnaire in the 2017 phase. A clear evidence is that lecturers who had poor proficiency in English in 2009 (30.6% in speaking; 9.7% in writing; 11.3% in reading and 38.7% in listening) had improved their proficiency in 2017 as they all rated themselves as good and very good. None of them rated him/her as very poor.

10 Lecturers' Strategies for Successful Implementation of the Policy

Lecturers indicated the strategies they applied to cope with the demands of the English-only medium policy. The following quotations from the questionnaires sythetise their efforts: "I relied on practice; I made effort of using English only during my actual teaching and I kept interacting with my Anglophone colleagues" (Lecturer 44); "my own effort helped me to become a regular English user, but it built on the training in English that the University organized for francophone lecturers after the policy change" (Lecturer 17); "As I was purely a French-speaker, I embarked on self-study and self-training by using English programs on computer and cellphone. For example I followed online English lessons with Molly Stones, Lucy, Emma, Jennifer, Adam ... and others; I read various English books, made summaries, and listened to various recordings to improve on my pronunciation" (Lecturer 26). These illustrative quotations show how lecturers' high level of motivation and self-determination made the English language policy implementation successful at university level. This can be linked with high level of *M* (Motivation) described in the theoretical framework, which uplifted their *Kf*, that is the knowledge or proficiency in English that they had by the end of 2017. In the above extracts, the lecturers' voice is

TABLE 4.1 Comparison between lecturers' perceived level of proficiency in English in 2009 and in 2017

	Lecturers' perceived level of proficiency in English on eve of policy shift in 2009				Lecturers' perceived level of proficiency in English by end of 2017			
	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
Very good (76–100%)	7 11.3%	18 29.0%	30 48.4%	19 30.6%	30 48.4%	43 69.4%	49 79.0%	18 29.0%
Good (50–75%)	36 58.1%	38 61.3%	25 40.3%	19 30.6%	32 51.6%	19 30.6%	13 21.0%	44 71.0
Poor (26–49%)	19 30.6%	6 9.7%	7 11.3%	24 38.7%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Very poor (1–24%)	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

dominant because they are the ones who experienced the seven years of policy implementation. The students' voice was silent in 2017 phase because those who participated in 2009 phase were no longer at university and the researchers could not manage to track them in their working places.

11 Empirically Derived Reflections on Language Policy Shifts

The findings from this study extend the debate about the language policy shifts, their implementation and their effects on education. The shift to English medium was adopted in Rwandan education, but language policy shifts were experienced in other parts of Africa and the world, such as Morocco (Marley, 2004), in Hong Kong (Poon, 2004), in Philippines (Gonzalez, 1998), Malaysia (Ozog, 1993; Azmi, 2013), in Indonesia (Paauw, 2009) and in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2005), to mention just some. For the Rwandan language policy shift which was adopted by the Government on 8th October 2008 and started to be implemented from January 2009, the majority of the participants appreciated the move, though it seemed to follow a top-down process. Such a top-down move tends not to be in total congruence with Makoni (1993), Meyer (1995), Spolsky (2004), Shohamy (2006) and others who argue that the new policy formulation and implementation is more effective when both the top-down and the bottom-up processes are adopted.

The big challenge on the eve of the policy shift was the limited English proficiency among francophone lecturers and limited resources. Initial training was organised for teachers and lecturers, which indicates that the Rwandan Ministry of Education aligned with Cohen's (1998: 103) advice that teachers need to be trained first and foremost in language teaching; and Singleton's (1989: 244) warning that the quality of the experience of learning a second language in the initial stages must be positive, otherwise it is likely to result in antipathy towards the language, or in demotivation towards the subsequent second language learning experience. That is why university lecturers and students were satisfied, enjoyed and appreciated the 2008 shift, though there were and there are still challenges. The preference for English might have been motivated by the fact that English is "the world's lingua franca in commerce, academia and technology" (Shohamy, 2006: 81) and "a global language" (Baker, 2006: 86; Perumal, 2007).

The level of English proficiency between 2009 and 2017 improved greatly among lecturers. This challenges the old belief that old teachers and adults in general cannot easily learn and master a foreign language. Rather, the findings in this study support Marinova-Todd, Marshall and Snow's (2000: 28) argument that age does not influence language learning and that there is no critical period that limits the possibility of language learning by adults as some

linguists tend to believe. In this regard, the Rwandan experience confirms linguists' views (see McLaughlin, 1985; Collier, 1989; Marinova-Todd et al., 2000), that adults and older learners are generally faster and more efficient in the initial stages of the second language learning.

From the findings, and in line with the theoretical framework $Kf = Kp + A + M + O$, we can confirm that *M* (Motivation) and *O* (opportunities) played a tremendous role in uplifting the lecturers *Kp* (knowledge or language proficiency that they had in 2009) to *Kf* (knowledge or language proficiency that was projected by the end of 2017). The findings have revealed that lecturers were highly motivated to embrace the English medium policy, they made an effort to master English, including self-teaching and teaching by practicing; the Government also provided opportunities, training, conducive environment for teachers to increase their English proficiency. That is why their *Kf*, which is reflected by their level of confidence in teaching through English and their level of proficiency by the end of 2017, was revealed to be high, as the findings have indicated.

All these efforts have led to the successful implementation of the policy between 2009 and 2017, because the finding has revealed that 70.97% of the participating lecturers rated the policy implementation as successful. While Ager (2001: 5) argues that a language-in-education policy can be successful or fail to achieve its aims due to a number of factors, the Rwandan case shows success to some extent. It reflects optimism, and not the dominance of pessimists who tend to believe that there are striking failures in almost all language policy implementation (Spolsky, 2004: 223). In its implementation, the Government of Rwanda might have taken into consideration any evidence from other studies in Rwanda, in Africa and abroad to implement the policy successfully. Such evidence includes advice from scholars on factors that make a language-in-education policy successful and effective, like involving stakeholders at grassroots level (Bamgbose, 1999), encouraging the participation of the whole population (Alexander, 1992), focusing on teacher training, resources and teaching practices (Barkhuizen & Gough, 1996) and involving all educational stakeholders (Makoni, 1993; Meyer, 1995; Niyibizi, 2014; Niyibizi, Makalela & Mwepu, 2015). But again, as one participant commented 'every language is an asset'. This means that the adoption of English medium should not impede the mastery of other languages, like French, Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda.

12 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

In conclusion, this chapter has brought new insights in the debate about language-in-education policy implementation, and its uniqueness is about

university lecturers and students' perceptions and experiences after language policy shifts. While the Rwandan language-in-education policy shifts were described as "a prototypical case where sudden and consecutive language-in-education policy shifts were experienced" (Niyibizi, Makalela & Mwepu, 2015: 98), the implementation of one of these shifts is perceived to have been successful after nine years of implementation. Even though some challenges persist, it can be observed that the Rwandan Government decision to adopt English as a sole medium of instruction was a visionary initiative. In this study, we are cognizant that the small sample used and the absence of students' voice in 2017 phase cannot allow the findings to be generalised to the situation in the Rwandan education, but the chapter has given a glimpse into the successful implementation after language policy shifts. We recommend a more extensive study with a representative sample size, at different levels of education, for a more robust picture of language policy implementation in the Rwandan context. A comparative study is also recommended among the countries that have experienced language policy shifts recently, be it within the African context or worldwide.

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Collaborative Learning among Diverse Online Students at an Open Distance Learning Institution in South Africa

Pedagogical Considerations for Online Learning Development

Anneke Venter

Abstract

Collaborative online learning has the potential to provide a social space for students to build a learning community where they can develop trust, share resources and learn together, even when they are from different locations and backgrounds. The efficacy of online learning lies in accommodating diverse online students by providing opportunities for productive engagements. However, incongruity in access to technological resources means that students do not experience the same degree of convenience and closeness in their online exchanges. This chapter is a product of a qualitative study which explored how online students respond to the demands of online learning. A case study was used to gather in-depth information from focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews conducted with online students at the University of South Africa (Unisa). In this way information was gathered about the subjective experiences and perceptions of a diverse group of online students. The research highlights that students respond differently to the demands of online learning and develop personal learning environments. Social capital theory is used to explain how social ties contribute to the facilitation of online. The findings indicate negative effects to collaboration in online learning. The chapter explores how theoretical insights on the positive and negative conditions and effects of social capital in online learning can be employed to develop and support meaningful and sustainable interactions between diverse online students.

Keywords

online learning – collaborative learning – personal learning environments – social capital – learning development

1 Introduction

This chapter reports on a study which was conceptualised as an attempt to gain an understanding of the nature of student collaborations in online learning and the potential benefits of such collaborations. A social capital framework was used to investigate whether student collaborations in online learning create opportunities for social capital development in the service of the learning project. The aim of the exploration was to understand the conditions and positive effects of social capital, particularly in relation to questions of if and how it facilitates learning among diverse students in an online environment. The intention is to use these insights to offer guidelines on designing collaborative online learning experiences that will improve the facilitation of learning.

The growing use of online learning in open distance learning (ODL) to address the issue of transactional distance between distance education students and their peers raises questions of whether collaborations do, in fact, take place in online learning and if so, what the learning outcomes of those exchanges are. The availability of learning opportunities in online learning is particularly relevant for the introduction of online learning at the University of South Africa (Unisa), a large ODL institution in South Africa whose students come from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, with disparate levels of access to technological resources and skills.

Collaborative online learning has the potential to provide a social space for diverse students to develop social capital by participating in establishing a learning community where they can develop trust, share resources, and learn together, even when they are from different locations and backgrounds (Oztok, Zingaro, Makos, Brett & Hewitt, 2015). A larger online network implies more collaborative opportunities and greater learning prospects (Casquero, Ovelar, Romo, Benito & Alberdi, 2016). The efficacy of online learning lies in providing opportunities for productive learning-related engagements to diverse online students (Osborn & Theodore, 2005). However, disparities in students' access to technological resources and skills may imply that they do not all experience the same degree of convenience and closeness in their online exchanges (LaPointe & Reisetter, 2008).

This study does not provide a comprehensive view of the overall architecture of all possible social networks used in online learning, and it was not directed at establishing causal links between student collaborations and academic performance. Neither does it address the potential adverse effects of online collaborations. The purpose of the study was to explore whether it is possible for diverse students to develop social capital with learning benefits in an online learning environment.

2 Diversity and Online Learning at Unisa

The social mandate of Unisa as an ODL institution responds to relevant higher education policies with a strong social justice component (Baijnath, 2014). Owing to the nature of ODL and Unisa's accommodating admissions policy, the institution admits large numbers of diverse students, offering them the flexibility to study at their own pace and in their own place. Students turn to Unisa during different phases of their lives, according to the affordances of their educational needs, life roles, and economic positions.

Unfortunately, increased access to higher education does not guarantee higher graduation rates. It is common to see low graduation rates in distance education, compared to full-time, residential education institutions (Inkelaar & Simpson, 2015). The majority of distance education students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not succeed in completing their studies. The throughput at Unisa is low, even when compared with other ODL institutions (Lephalala & Makoe, 2012). Unisa students arrive at the virtual doorstep of the university with different levels of academic preparedness and needs and expectations. Although some of them are underprepared for higher learning (Subotzky & Prinsloo, 2011), or for the unique demands of studying at a distance (Aluko & Hendrikz, 2012), others are equipped for tertiary distance education and have suitable access to educational resources. It is clear that the university enrolls a diverse student body with different cultural backgrounds, levels of academic readiness, and access and exposure to modern technology (Mbatha, 2014).

Since the 1990s, Unisa has invested in technological initiatives and the development of student support structures as part of a new institutional strategy and learning model (Queiros, De Villiers, Van Zyl, Conradie & Van Zyl, 2015). The model introduced new modes of delivery and student support, as well as a shift in core pedagogies to take advantage of the potential of online teaching and learning (Baijnath, 2014). Online learning can be used to bridge what is known as 'transactional distance' in a distance education context (Meyer, 2010). There is a growing recognition at Unisa of the need to unlock the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) to connect students with each other and enable collaborative and engaged learning experiences. An electronic learning management system (LMS) called 'myUnisa' was developed to facilitate student interactions with their peers, learning materials, and lecturers and tutors (Abdullah, 2015).

This study of the online learning model at Unisa explores the landscape of social capital in online learning by examining the ways in which diverse students interact and participate in the online learning environment. The aim

was to determine if the online learning environment may facilitate the development of social capital in support of students' learning endeavours.

3 A Social Capital Perspective on Online Learning

The theory of social capital is concerned with the resources embedded in networked relationships, provided that there is "mutual acquaintance and recognition" between the relationship partners (Bourdieu, 1986: 249). Social capital can also be defined as the attributes of a group or network, where the attributes refer to the qualities that are inherent in and between social groups (Coleman, 1988). Social capital is about the benefits that an individual derives from being a member of a group or network, as well as the benefits for the group or network by virtue of the interaction between its members. The theory of social capital is appropriate for studying the connections and relationships that develop between people in social networks in an online learning environment.

It follows that individuals with a large and diverse network of connections have more social capital than those with small, less distributed networks (Valenzuela et al., 2009). In other words, students in large and diverse networks have more opportunities to interact with a broad spectrum of people and will be exposed to different viewpoints (Casquero et al., 2016). Collaborative learning in networks holds a distribution advantage which means that it provides opportunities to overcome the performance limits of an individual.

The mere existence of connections between students does not guarantee the development of social capital, as these social ties come into fruition only when information flows and when trust, norms and sanctions around reciprocity and the well-being of the groups develop. In an online learning context, this means that students have to be able to connect, exchange information and build trust with peers in an environment where shared norms and values govern participation rates and the content of their interactions. The social ties vary in terms of purpose, strength and/or value (Oztok et al., 2015). Students develop close ties with bonding social capital in long term and tightly knit groups and weak ties with bridging social capital in sporadic and extended groups and/or networks.

3.1 *Bonding Social Capital in Online Learning*

Online students are not only looking for information per se; they are hoping to find affiliation by connecting to supportive groups (Dabbagh, 2007: 220). Students with similar interests have the potential to develop high levels of

bonding. Close ties can develop between people who share ‘similar’ characteristics, such as having the same background, being from the same race or culture, or sharing the same goals, for example, working hard at their studies. The concept of ‘bonding’ social capital is used to describe the establishment of intimate and long-term connections with people who become friends and share emotional intensity. These bonds reinforce social cohesion, which facilitates substantive social and emotional support. Bonding social capital enables supportive relationships through which information can be exchanged. Learning is thus fostered through existing contacts (Oztok et al., 2015).

3.2 *Bridging Social Capital in Online Learning*

Contact and interaction with other students in a learning network may lead to widespread or loose ties between diverse students who belong to a variety of groups and/or learning networks. Loose ties have the potential to bridge the gap between students previously unacquainted with one another and to provide access to new information and possibly alternative viewpoints. The concept of ‘bridging’ social capital refers to bridges developing between diverse people, resulting in wide and shallow ties between people from different life situations (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2009). These ties or bridges are described as ‘weak’ or ‘shallow’ since they are formed quickly and may be sporadic or once-off. The strength of such ties is not based on any embedded intensity or intimacy, but lies rather in providing a path between previously unconnected points (Granovetter, 1973). Hence, weak ties may be described as bridging social capital (Steinfeld, Ellison & Lampe, 2008; Oztok et al., 2015).

Bridging social capital can be indispensable for communication about learning because it provides pathways to people with whom a student would otherwise not have had the opportunity to connect (Granovetter, 1973). Such bridges between strangers make it possible to obtain new information and provide exposure to diverse viewpoints. Forming weak ties is essential for bringing diverse online students together. Students come together in online groups not because they know each other or share similar interests, but because they are enrolled for the same course (Oztok, 2012).

3.3 *Social Presence and Social Capital in Online Learning*

Picciano (2002) points out that interaction between students in itself does not guarantee that a meaningful exchange will take place. While face-to-face interactions take place in the immediate presence of others, online interactions need to be mediated. Online students need to perceive themselves and others as ‘real’ and noticeable in order for meaningful online interaction to take place. In other words, the online setting requires a social space in which students

are aware of and feel in touch with themselves and others (Kreijns, Van Acker, Vermeulen & Van Buuren, 2014; Oztok et al., 2015). Without this type of social presence, online students do not feel comfortable and will struggle to connect with others (Akcaoglu & Lee, 2016).

Online students create an online self and a social presence by 'typing themselves into existence'. This requires a combination of "one's sense of self and one's perspectives of others" (Oztok et al., 2015: 20). 'Impression management' in online learning relates to how students present themselves as good students and desirable partners for interaction (Kehrwald & Oztok, 2016). Social presence therefore facilitates interactive learning activities and the development of social capital in an online learning community (Oztok, 2013; Kehrwald & Oztok, 2016). Social capital can increase the commitment that online students feel towards their community. This sense of commitment makes them more likely to contribute time and knowledge to the community voluntarily. Generalised bonds of reciprocity and trust are common within such communities (Lu, Yang & Yu, 2013).

4 A Qualitative Study of Student Collaborations in Online Learning

This study explored the question of whether learning networks are formed in the online learning environment at Unisa and if so, what the nature of social capital in online learning is in this context. A qualitative research methodology was preferred because the research question required complex answers to exploratory questions about the collaborations between diverse online participants. The qualitative approach enabled a subjective perspective of how students respond and adjust to the demands of online learning. In particular, the study sought to determine if and how they developed online networks in pursuit of their learning project. Online learning at Unisa was selected as a case to explore how diverse students interact and participate in an online learning environment. A particular fully online module offered by the university was selected because it requires students to participate and collaborate in online discussion forums as part of the formal assessment plan.

The study comprehensively explored the process of developing social capital in online learning and its effects on online learning. A combination of four focus groups and 12 telephonic interviews with a number of purposefully selected students was used. The sample was drawn from students who lived in the Gauteng province for two main reasons: more than half (54%) of the students registered for the course reside in Gauteng and the main university campus is situated in Gauteng. Procedural care, including pseudonyms,

TABLE 5.1 Some characteristics of student participants

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Race
Koki	Female	Black
Benita	Female	White
Petra	Female	Black
Stian	Male	White
Pieter	Male	White
Thomas	Male	Black
Leana	Female	White
Connor	Male	Black
Mandla	Male	Black
Vuyo	Male	Black
Poppy	Female	Black
Mua	Female	Black
Jasmine	Female	Black
Bina	Female	Black
Mattheu	Male	Black
Nelson	Male	Black
Ahil	Male	Indian
Moipone	Female	Black
Roxy	Female	White
Suhi	Female	Indian
Omi	Female	Indian
Zanele	Female	Black

password protected files and protected storing of confidential data, was taken to safeguard the anonymity and interests of participants.

The table below include demographics related to gender and race to depict an overall picture of the students in the sample. The students are not listed in any particular order.

Theoretically informed discussion outlines were developed to guide the focus group discussions and telephonic interviews to elicit first-hand information about the full spectrum of experiences and perceptions of interactions and collaborations, clarifying the process of social capital development in online learning and the accompanying potential benefits and hindrances.

The data obtained from the focus group discussions and individual interviews was transcribed, coded, processed and analysed using qualitative data

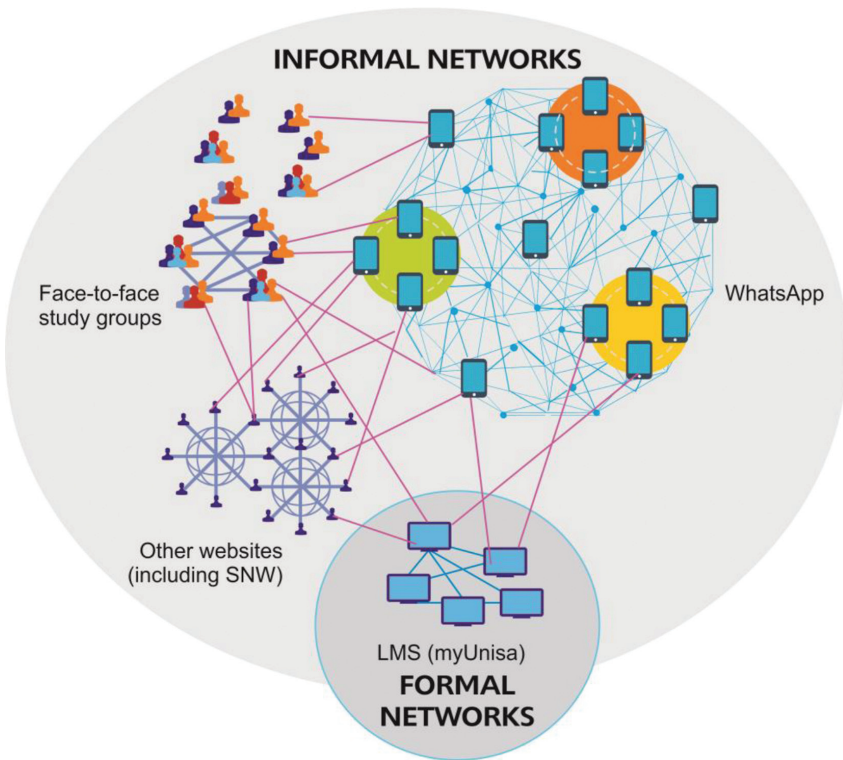


FIGURE 5.1 Illustration of different interaction modes on formal and informal learning platforms

analysis software. The findings were interpreted by means of thematic data analysis. Insights into the data developed from several rounds of robust data analysis over time, which allowed a strong narrative to emerge.

5 Formal and Informal Learning Networks among Diverse Students

Feedback from the student participants in this study reveals that they use a variety of methods, platforms, and technologies in support of their learning project, including formal and informal learning networks. Formal learning networks are built on a structured, pre-designed learning platform in educational settings; the chief goal is to obtain a degree or certification (Czerkawski, 2016). In this case study, the formal learning environment is provided by the official LMS, 'myUnisa'. Informal learning networks provide an alternative, unstructured and independent social space which students manage themselves (Czerkawski, 2016). Such informal learning networks extend beyond

the official learning grid to include interactions with self-recruited contacts on external social networks. Various configurations of participation in formal and informal learning networks came to light in this study, as presented in the following sub-sections.

5.1 *Integration of Formal and Informal Learning Networks*

The study demonstrates that student activities are not limited to formal learning environments. Informal learning interactions include offline activities, such as face-to-face study groups and visiting the physical campus of an external service provider called Critical Law Studies (CLS). Informal online learning activities include social media tools such as WhatsApp, and other websites, including a site on which an independent social network was run by and for Unisa students called StudyNotesWiki (SNW).

A certain level of interaction with fellow students in online groups on myUnisa is required in partial fulfilment of the module. The students are expected to participate in online groups to solve problems without the assistance or conspicuous presence of the lecturer. The group had to solve a problem on their own and post the answer on the Discussion tool of myUnisa. The feedback indicates that some students were not sure of what was expected of them. Poppy related how she would sit and stare at her computer, not knowing what to do. The collaborative learning assignment on myUnisa did not generate highly interactive, dense or long-term communication patterns. This is illustrated by the comments made by Omi, who complained that her group was not cooperative at all. She added that the few who did in fact participate could not come “to a solid conclusion”. She felt frustrated that they “couldn’t respond properly”. This was corroborated by Collen, who explained that “some don’t even answer your questions. You question their work, but they don’t come back”.

Although students were hesitant to participate, some of them reported the benefits of collaborating with peers on myUnisa. For example, Nelson, was of the opinion that collaboration with peers helped to identify gaps in his knowledge and aided self-assessment. He explained the advantage of working with peers in the following way:

Helps a lot, it brings attention to certain things which you might not be aware of in your interaction with other students, you are able to learn. It did help. Most definitely. And you are able to gauge yourself, to see how much you know of the work, not necessarily that other students know enough, but it gives you a sort of feel of how far you are with your study materials.

The benefits attributed to myUnisa collaborations include – to a lesser extent – some socio-affective benefits, such as developing confidence as a student, decreased feelings of isolation, and a boost in morale. For instance, Omi commented:

And then somehow when you meet them (online) you feel more confident about yourself and what you are learning. In that sense, you are not isolated with your own books but there is interaction. It can make you a better learner, more confident and get other ideas and prepare you.

The findings demonstrate that working with peers on myUnisa includes some cognitive and social-affective benefits. However, they also reveal that myUnisa does not provide for all the students' needs and that, as a result, the informal networks are very active. These consist of voluntary, self-initiated contacts, comprising a variety of face-to-face (offline) and online exchanges. The informal collaborations reveal a different side to, and a more comprehensive view of collaborative learning than what was evident on myUnisa.

It is significant that some online students conducted face-to-face (offline) interactions with peers in informal study groups. The majority of these groups existed prior to the online module and continued after completion of the module. Petra shared the fact that she was a member of a long-standing study group that had existed before she enrolled for the online learning module. She explained that the study group met on Saturdays to discuss study-related issues and to collaborate on completing tasks. Several other black participants indicated that they were members of face-to-face study groups. Bina felt that her study group with black peers provided everything she needed. She noted: "I had my own people that I studied with so I didn't need a bigger group". The sense of obligation towards offline group members relates to a sense of belonging, which Petra ascribes to the fact that her study group had become like a family. However, similar face-to-face study groups were not evident among any of the other race groups.

The findings demonstrate widespread use of informal (online) social media networks such as WhatsApp. Vuyo explained that more students have access to WhatsApp than to personal computers and laptops. WhatsApp exchanges include one-on-one or group-based interactions. Students use WhatsApp to get 'just-in-time' information or knowledge to close gaps in their existing knowledge. Hence, the frequency of exchanges increases just before deadlines for assignments or examination dates. Jasmine described her experience of how students would help one another on WhatsApp just before due dates for assignments. She reported: "... it was like, especially on a Monday or a Tuesday when the assignments were due then the messages would fly around all day".

The benefits attributed to collaborating with peers on WhatsApp are mainly socio-affective in nature, although they also include a cognitive element. Zanele explained how her WhatsApp group helped her:

Yes, because sometimes you're in doubt and you doubt if you have the right answer or if you are at the right place and then the other people [on WhatsApp] will like go no, this is how we did it and then you'll know, OK, I am on the right track.

The findings indicate that students also 'met' and started interacting with strangers on SNW, a student-driven social media platform. SNW users typically register as members and then start searching for peers doing the same module. While some exchanges are short-lived, others develop into reciprocal relations. Some SNW users developed close ties with notions of obligation and a sense of community. For example, Benita referred to SNW as "the community" to which she belonged. Mattheu described the sense of community between SNW members as "a groupie feeling".

Exchange partners were selected on the basis of the quality of their contributions to the discussion on the SNW site. Benita explained that reciprocity developed between active and loyal members, who would go the extra mile for one another. The reciprocity did not extend to non-contributing members (so-called 'free riders'). According to Benita, it was easy to determine if a person was an active member or whether they were just "fishing"; one would simply look at the frequency and content of the other one's postings on the site to determine whether such a person deserved an answer. In her words, those who were "fishing" would not get any reply and would "get kicked out", figuratively speaking. The participants reported that some of them use (and pay for) additional tutorial services provided by CLS, a company offering tutorial services for Unisa Law students. The services are expensive in the sense that it costs more to receive additional tutorial support at CLS than to register for a whole module at Unisa. However, the CLS patrons had high regard for the services provided. Consider, for example, the compliment offered by Roxy, who said:

Yes, yes, so that is the great thing [about CLS] is that they offer classes part time, so over the weekend I have classes. The classes are absolutely brilliant and a huge help. It is quite expensive but it is worth every cent.

Although the CLS services are offered offline, its patrons shared several positive comments on how CLS supported their online studies, on both academic and socio-psychological levels. The academic benefits include receiving

step-by-step guidance on the learning materials plus accompanying notes, and assistance with assignment preparation, while the socio-affective benefits include sharing a sense of community with peers, developing trust and reciprocity, and benefiting from the help of others.

The findings reveal that due to certain socio-economic realities, there is an unequal distribution of resources among Unisa students, such as unequal access to materials and tutorial support, technologies, technological skills, and learning networks. Evidence of low levels of participation on myUnisa seems to support the notion that a large group of Unisa students do not have the necessary ICT background, hardware, or skills. The widespread use of more affordable options such as offline study groups and WhatsApp communications suggests that students try to find alternatives within budget constraints. On the other hand, some students can pay for additional private offline tutorial services. These findings support the notion that there is reason for concern about parity in achieving collaborative learning benefits amongst Unisa students (Lephalala & Makoe, 2012).

5.2 *A Personal Learning Environment of Student Collaborations*

The above discussion shows that mandatory interactions on a formal learning network are augmented by voluntary, self-initiated interactions in an informal network that includes both offline and online platforms. An important aspect of understanding student online collaboration is to recognise the integration of formal and informal learning networks for establishing personal learning environments (PLEs). A PLE is a space where students move within and across the different learning platforms (Dawson, 2010), interacting and collaborating with peers in pursuit of their own learning and the development of collective knowledge (Attwell, 2007).

The integration of offline and online tools or platforms in forming PLEs is confirmed by Van Harmelen (2006). PLEs are described as a “mash-up” of distributed services which provides a single window from which students can track their own activities and those of other people, to source, edit and share content, and collaborate with peers (Chen, Choi & Yu, 2012). Thus, PLEs are encapsulated in the familiar maxim: “It’s not what you know that counts, but who you know”.

A PLE has the potential to facilitate the nurturing of social presence in online learning and establishing bonds and bridges both between and across student groups and/or networks, all of which support cognitive and socio-affective forms of learning in online environments. Integrating formal and informal learning networks in PLEs has the potential for creating a supportive learning environment for diverse students with different needs and aspirations.

PLES provide students with opportunities to take control of and personalise their learning environments. This is becoming increasingly important to students who feel that a formal LMS lacks the ability to allow them the freedom to present and manage themselves according to their own needs (Dabbagh & Fake, 2017).

Self-directedness requires students to, A PLE is not an open space where indiscriminate or random interactions occur. Instead, it is a space where intentional interactions take place between people who share a common denominator such as an interest or goal, or membership of a group or network. The study suggests that there is a space for forming informal social ties to supplement learning in the formal space.

It is evident that students reflect constantly on the tools and resources that help them to learn best and accordingly develop customised PLES. This demonstrates the role of student agency in online learning. The study confirms that self-regulated learning is a key factor in managing online learning as the responsibility rests on students to manage their own learning (Educause, 2009). This finding is supported by previous research, which concludes that students make a plan to overcome structural constraints (Czerniewicz, Williams & Brown, 2009). It is clear that it takes effort and initiative to capitalise on the potential for meaningful collaborations. Self-regulation plays a critical role in coordinating the options available to online students.

6 Pedagogical Considerations for Designing Collaborative Learning Experiences

The insights gained into the social capital effects of collaborative online learning call for an exploration of how best to design learning opportunities for meaningful interactions and encouraging mutually beneficial collaborative efforts between online students (Mays, 2016). The study shows that various forms and modes of collaboration between online students is feasible and practical in PLES (Attwell, 2007). This section explores ways in which online learning can be designed to encourage collaborative learning and foster the development of social capital.

6.1 *The Application of a Heutagogical Framework in the Design of the Learning Environment*

A heutagogical approach to learning design is appropriate for students in the 21st century, as they are increasingly self-directing their own learning environments. Students exercise increased learner autonomy by choosing relevant

content, appropriate times, places, media, networks and activities for learning (Dabbagh & Fake, 2017). The various different tools and networks include user accounts, social media, blogs and wikis, personal websites, hard-drive or cloud storage, and social bookmarking or other licensed services (Haworth, 2016). A heutagogical approach acknowledges that learning also takes place outside the formal learning environment and that a self-directed student moves freely in and between formal and informal learning networks and have a range of social ties with social capital benefits in a customised personal learning space (namely a PLE) (Blaschke, 2019). A heutagogical approach allow for the creation of opportunities for diverse students to connect, share resources and learn together. In this way heutagogy facilitates shared and mutually beneficial learning experiences and social capital development between students in the applicable networks in a PLE.

A fitting learning design therefore need to utilise the affordances of a PLES to serve as an interface between formal and informal learning environments. In this way lecturers may use PLES to prepare external sources to share with students, to provide scaffolding and a space for students to build individual and group portfolios and to serve as a springboard to obtain additional help, as needed (Haworth, 2016).

The use of PLES highlights the need to make learning opportunities available for mobile applications which support all aspects of an effective PLE, namely self-direction, collaboration with peers, tracking, organising, and reflecting on the learning process. The present study shows that WhatsApp is an affordable and user-friendly mobile technology that enables immediate, just-in-time contact between students. Other mobile applications can be considered, for instance, an app to run discussion forums. This would enable students to interact with peers in a discussion forum on their smartphones, without having to sign in on myUnisa. A PLE provides for the integration of mutually beneficial interactions with existing student friends who provide support and new contacts in the broader network who affords exposure to non-redundant and alternative viewpoints. This facilitates the establishment of both bonding and bridging social capital in a PLE.

6.2 *The Integration of Student Support and Learning Design*

The study illustrated that online students require more cognitive and emotional support than is currently offered by Unisa. Additional support can be provided by scaffolding learning material to address challenges incurred by isolation and a lack of self-directed learning skills (Ludwig-Hartman & Dunlap, 2003). This study has pertinently indicated the need for a proactive, mandatory, online learning orientation programme to direct and support students who are

new to online learning. It is suggested that students start by completing a self-assessment of their online skills gained through prior work, in order to determine their level of online learning competence. Feedback on their baseline skill levels would then assist students to identify short- and long-term goals, and help to steer them towards appropriate training interventions (Ludwig-Hartman & Dunlap, 2003).

A next step would be to structure the first few weeks of the course in such a way that students are given some practice and become progressively familiar with the online environment. Thereafter, they can be encouraged to start leading discussions and providing peer feedback. Once students are acclimatised and have some experience in applying self-directed learning skills, they should become more confident and active in the online environment (Ludwig-Hartman & Dunlap, 2003).

Scaffolding can be supplemented by the use of online mentors or e-tutors who build a personal relationship with each student in their group. The e-tutors provide individualised guidance, which can taper off as the student develops higher levels of self-directedness. The e-tutors also serve as a link to the broader community by introducing individual students to relevant resources and/or learning networks. This might motivate hesitant students to become engaged in a PLE, or enrich existing PLEs of all students. Participation in a PLE enables students to move from the periphery of the community or network to the centre. Greater participation and involvement foster engagement with the culture of the network, which help students to gain experience and the skills needed to assume the role of an expert or 'old-timer'. This is an important step in the development of the learning community and social capital, because expert students can then assist new students as they become acquainted with the community (Ludwig-Hartman & Dunlap, 2003). This facilitates a process in which students make contact with people they were previously unacquainted with and provides for bridging social capital development.

6.3 *The Facilitation of a Process of Socialisation into Online Learning*

Absorption into online learning does not automatically follow signing up for an online module or course. Instead, academic socialisation into online learning is an implicit and explicit process by which students acquire and internalise the knowledge and skills necessary for becoming full members of the online learning community. The academic socialisation entails a process of disengagement from the old system and getting into a new rhythm before students can assume a new identity as online students. The end result of socialisation is for the online role to be internalised and for students to identify themselves as members of the online learning community (Brett, Lee & Oztok, 2016).

The socialisation process can be fostered by hosting regular events for appropriate interaction between students and lecturers, characterised by clear instructions, modelling, and reinforcing the desired behaviour, as well as communicating positive expectations. Synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums, wikis, and blogs can be used to facilitate dialogue or collaborative experiences (Watson & Gemin, 2008).

Participation in other informal social networks may also serve a socialisation purpose, as these offer opportunities for students to actualise their interests, become socially aware, and take ownership of their online activities. The most important point of socialisation is that it should be at the level at which the students connect with each other (Watson & Gemin, 2008) and develop shared norms and requisite levels of reciprocity for social capital development.

6.4 *The Design of Challenging Collaborative Learning Activities*

Collaborative learning provides an opportunity for an individual to overcome their own limitations. It offers a distribution advantage because relevant tasks can be divided across a larger reservoir of cognitive capacity. However, to obtain the collaborative advantage, students need to invest additional cognitive, psychological and social efforts to communicate required information and coordinate their interactions with others. Students will be willing to incur these additional transaction costs only if the task is too complex for an individual to carry out on their own. In other words, a student will only invest the necessary effort if learning with others will expand their limited processing capacity (Kirschner, 2009). Tasks aimed at stimulating collaborative learning should carry a high cognitive load to motivate students to engage with others in order to increase mutual cognitive capacity and share the load. The tasks should be complex and challenging but accompanied by explicit assessment criteria (Roberts & McInnerney, 2007). They should call for a positive interdependence, where the contribution of each member is indispensable. This supports social capital development in and for the group.

Students may have had negative experiences with online group work in the past, perhaps having to carry a heavy load if some group members did not contribute equally. The study proposes that the assessment of group work should include both the product and the process of group work. The group can be asked to develop graphs to demonstrate levels of member participation throughout the process. Group members can also be asked to reflect and provide feedback on the performance of the group according to a set of criteria. The emphasis is therefore not on the final product only, but on developing skills to participate fully in the group process. It should be possible for group members with high as well as low participation to reflect on and articulate

their learning experiences (Brindley, Walti & Blaschke, 2009). Such challenging tasks provide an opportunity for students to discover the hidden social capital in their online collaborations.

6.5 *The Allowance for Sufficient Time to Foster Trust and Social Capital in Relationships*

It takes time for students in the online environment to develop the requisite collaborative learning skills and confidence (Brindley et al., 2009). The amount of time that students spend online relates to their level of participation in online learning activities and satisfaction in terms of their learning experience (Cho & Shen, 2013). However, the limited time available during an online module may impede the development of a sense of community and reciprocity (social capital). This can be countered by using more collaborative learning tools that run alongside the formal offering of the module, such as informal interaction opportunities on social media such WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter. Students can also be encouraged to use wikis or blogs to extend their repertoire and enhance their social presence. Student postings about their learning can then be made available during and after the module has been completed, thus providing an avenue for connecting with peers on a long-term basis. This enables the development of a mix-up of close social ties with bonding social capital potential and weak, distributed social ties with prospective bridging social capital.

Online students need to have a belief in the reputation of the institution, and the design quality of the module needs to be stable. Online students also need to feel secure when revealing information about themselves. They should be able to negotiate social relationships in online learning in a way with which they are comfortable (Wang, 2014). Heterogeneous online groups provide opportunities for students to reshape their thinking more deeply, by being exposed to alternative viewpoints and getting feedback on their own positions. This requires trust in others, as trust will help participants to be open about their own beliefs and develop healthy reciprocal relationships with others in the group. Trust plays a critical role in collaborative processes in online groups. However, the development of trust is challenging owing to the lack of physical cues, the heterogeneity of online groups, the relatively short time available for interactions, and the unconscious nature of trust development (Smith, 2008). Online groups may exhibit a 'honeymoon period', during which "swift trust" develops between members (Swan, 2004: 2). However, the initial trust may soon wane, because it is difficult to trust strangers.

The development of enduring trust requires time and energy. Online students need to work hard in sustained deliberation processes to consider and

coordinate different points of view. Group members need to commit themselves to the group. However, some may be reluctant to do so, and withdraw in order to avoid such commitments. Evading behaviour includes finding a scapegoat for failing to have a meaningful conversation (such as blaming the computer), or hiding behind other defensive behaviours. The paradox of trust is that the ability to trust others relies on the perception that trust already exists in the group. The puzzle is a result of a 'push and pull' struggle between individual members and the group as a whole. The group expects the members to take the risk and become engaged in open discussions, but an individual may be reluctant to do so until they feel the group is safe (Smith, 2008). This represents a dynamic interdependence between the self and others, involving group process issues.

6.6 *The Cultivation of Social Presence in the Online Learning Environment*

The study confirms previous research that shows that online students need to feel 'real' and experience others as real and important in the online learning environment (Oztok et al., 2015: 20). One strategy for cultivating social presence is to require students to keep a journal with reflections on their learning process. This provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate a personal side to their knowledge contributions.

Very often, students in the online environment need to make sense of the context of their peers, especially if they come from different walks of life and have no shared history. Thus another way of facilitating the development of social presence is to encourage participants to create their own introductory profiles containing information about their interests and background. Students may be encouraged to add a photograph or an image to provide social cues as to what is important to them. Personal profiles provide an opportunity for online participants to learn something about each other, to feel in touch, and become connected with one another (Kear, Chetwynd & Jefferis, 2014). Students may feel a more personal connection with online peers if they are able to view their personal profiles (Oztok, 2012). Socio-cultural awareness will help to facilitate the establishment of relations in which trust can develop. Writing a personal narrative may also help to establish and present the self as 'real' in the online community. This form of 'impression management' refers to the way online students intentionally construct presentations of the self; such presentations may facilitate the establishment of ties with others and the development of a social learning network. Impression management in an online learning environment is strongly related to students' motivations, which in turn, may affect the nature of the social ties they establish (Kehrwald & Oztok, 2016).

Group size is another key consideration is facilitating social presence in an online setting. While large online groups may generate a lot of discussion, a large number of posts does not guarantee the establishment of social ties with social capital potential for meaningful discussions. Smaller online groups may, in fact, encourage better social presence by allowing members to form more personal impressions of others, grow sociability in the group, and work together to accumulate social capital (Akcaoglu & Lee, 2016). Learning designers need to be conscious of the effects and dynamics of small groups, in order to set up small groups that can generate a form of shared history so that trust with social capital benefits can develop, which in turn facilitates deep discussion.

When attempting to design an effective collaborative online learning experience, the designer needs to attend to the dynamics of group processes in order to allow developmental opportunities for the group to work on their trust and other issues around feelings of obligation and reciprocity. It may be helpful to provide clear guidelines on what groups are expected to do and how individuals should conduct themselves within the groups. The lecturer should embody trust by being consistent and creating an environment where students feel free, are allowed to explore, and even to make mistakes. The lecturer should not interfere, but rather allow time for members of the group as a whole to manage their fears and attend to their own group processes. It may be challenging for lecturers to relinquish control, but it is crucial to provide the space for online students to take ownership of their groups.

Online educators need to develop particular skills through a process of continuous professional development to manage and ensure the effectiveness of collaborative learning practice. They need to be willing to provide a space for independent student interactions and acknowledge student contributions, even if they feel uncomfortable with a changing student role and the extent of student autonomy. The design and development of online learning may challenge the status quo and be labour-intensive (Kebritchi, Lipschuetz & Santiago, 2017).

7 Conclusion

The chapter contributes to an understanding of the importance of a comprehensive view of collaborative learning for social capital development in online learning, particularly among students who come from diverse backgrounds and engage in a wide range of formal and informal learning networks. Much can be learnt from informal student participation in PLEs that can be used to improve the design and facilitation of online learning. The findings of the study

highlight the important role of social presence, self-regulation, and informal social learning networks such as PLES, to enhance the process of social capital development and the facilitation of online learning. The chapter contributes to an understanding of how theoretical insights can be employed for designing and developing collaborative online learning experiences that support social capital development in pursuit of learning.

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Exploring Culturally Responsive Teaching amongst Pre-Service Teachers

Boitumelo Khunou

Abstract

According to Lemmer and Meier (2011), the desegregation of South African schools post 1994, has presented teachers with new challenges, necessitating the inclusion of multicultural education in Initial Teacher Education. This is set to equip teachers with pedagogical strategies that are contextually relevant and address diversity, issues of reconciliation as well as social cohesion (Sayed, 2016). The ability of the teacher to adopt such strategies in the classroom in order to accommodate learners of diverse backgrounds and cultures is termed Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000). This chapter discusses Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and its potential to respond to the diversity challenges faced by teachers in South African Classrooms. The main research question is, “how has the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program prepared them for Culturally Responsive Teaching in South African high schools?” qualitative data was collected from pre-service final year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. This data was collected through written questionnaires and a focus group discussion, and analyzed thematically. Results showed that these pre-service teachers lacked a CRT knowledge base that was necessary in order to adopt Culturally Responsive Teaching practices. In addition to this, they had little knowledge of practical ways in which they can implement Culturally Responsive Teaching at classroom level.

Keywords

initial teacher education – culturally responsive teaching – pre-service teachers

1 Introduction

The end of the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1994 challenged the newly elected democratic government to create a more socially responsive education

system that would afford all South African learners access to quality, equitable and democratic educational opportunities (Mncube & Harber, 2010). Pedagogy is at the heart of quality education. Diversity is inextricably linked to the provision of quality education in South Africa's unique context (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Given the diversity of learners in South African schools, it is critically important to adequately prepare teachers for teaching diverse groups of learners. It is imperative that initial teacher education (ITE) programmes should equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to successfully contribute to the academic achievements of learners who exhibit various forms of diversity.

Diversity issues constantly challenge educators within curricula, schools and schooling contexts. Most educators lack the knowledge to turn those challenges into enriching, inclusive learning experiences for learners (Spradlin & Parsons, 2008). In this chapter, I argue that in order for teachers to successfully teach in South Africa's diverse context, ITE programmes must emphasise diversity and prepare pre-service teachers to apply culturally responsive teaching (CRT) to respond to the needs of learners.

This research used a qualitative methodology which included 23 pre-service teachers in their final year of a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (majoring in Economics) at a South African university. The data collection methods included written questionnaires completed by the pre-service teachers and a focus group discussion with 10 of them who stated their willingness to participate in a focus group discussion. The questions sought to uncover the participants' understanding of CRT and its importance in the classroom in the subject they taught, namely Economics. Participants were also asked to suggest ways in which CRT could be practically implemented in a lesson plan. Lastly, they were asked to comment on the degree to which they felt their pre-service teacher training had prepared them for CRT in the context of South African classrooms. The responses to the written questionnaires were used as a pre-task to inform the focus group discussion. The pre-task gave the participants a better understanding of the discussion areas for the focus group. Colucci (2007) validates the usefulness of a pre-task prior to conducting a focus group discussion.

2 Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Much has been written about CRT in various subject areas and contexts. It is defined as the use of the prior experiences, frames of reference and cultural knowledge of learners to make learning encounters more relevant (Gay, 2010,

2015). A growing body of literature supports CRT as an effective way to teach learners from diverse cultures and different racial and linguistic backgrounds (Gay, 2002; Ortiz, 2012). The term “culturally responsive” is used by Ladson-Billings (1995) to describe the dynamic relationship that is created between the home culture and the school culture, where pedagogic bridges are built between what learners know and believe and the new ideas that they encounter in the school environment (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The cognitive development of learners takes place within the multiplicity of cultures (Sosibo, 2013) that they bring to the classroom context. In addition, teachers and schools themselves display cultures that may differ significantly from those that learners bring with them from home (Sosibo, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This divergence may cause a disconnect that makes learners with significant cultural, racial and linguistic differences more prone to dropping out, under-achieving, or being disproportionately represented in special education programmes (Gay, 2002; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Such learners are denied an equal opportunity to learn and succeed in school (Gay, 2002; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007).

The literature suggests that CRT is a way to bridge this disconnect. CRT focuses on teaching within cultural diversity, helping learners to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the lives, cultures, experiences and contributions of different cultural, racial and linguistic groups. This approach is often not recognised in traditional schooling arenas (Gay, 2013). CRT requires that teachers be sensitive to their learners’ backgrounds and not separate their teaching practices from the cultural aspect of the learners’ identities (Saint-Hilaire, 2014). The education of culturally, racially and linguistically diverse learners needs to empower them and increase their agency (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995) by connecting in-school and out-of-school experiences to aid their learning. Using cultural filters as a base for teaching makes learning encounters more relevant for diverse learners.

Many attempts have been made to ensure that diversity is seen as an important part of education. However, these attempts do not always constructively transform the achievement of diverse learners, because they are often motivated by a negative and deficit view of cultural, racial and linguistic differences (Gay, 2013). Examples include superficial initiatives in schools, such as days for cultural celebrations and an increased focus on learning about cultures as an end in itself. Instead, teachers should learn to teach academic knowledge through the cultural filters of learners (Sleeter, 2011; Reygan, Walton & Osman, 2018). CRT is more about learning about different cultures and then applying particular practices in teaching learners from such cultures (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Vavrus, 2008; Sleeter, 2010). Educators need to examine

their own expectations for diverse learners and “challenge the commonly held view that these learners are underprivileged, powerless and disadvantaged” (Gay, 2013: 54). Any teacher with a genuine commitment to creating equitable learning experiences and opportunities for their learners will use the cultural capital of diverse learners in their educational reform efforts (Gay, 2013; Sleeter, 2010).

3 Initial Teacher Education in South Africa

ITE remains a key focus area in South African educational policies, particularly where the desegregation of schools post-1994 presented the challenge of including multi-cultural education in pre-service teacher training (Lemmer & Meier, 2011). Teachers need to be equipped with pedagogical strategies that are contextually relevant and address diversity and issues of reconciliation and social cohesion (Sayed, Badroodien, Salmon & McDonald, 2016). However, diversity in ITE is still primarily an elective subject or a topic in a particular course (Lemmer & Meier, 2011). Although policies and legislation in South Africa make provision for recognising diversity in schools, there are still significant disparities between policy and practice, with implementation being a severe challenge (Lemmer & Meier, 2011). Sayed et al. (2016) note that there are critical disconnects between ITE and pre-service teachers’ social and personal realities when they enter classrooms. Hence, pre-service teachers are often unable to commit to the strategies and pedagogic approaches they learn in their teacher training. In a study conducted by Sayed et al. (2016), pre-service teachers reported that ITE did not provide them with the pedagogic strategies to deal with the realities they faced in South African classrooms. They were uncertain about how to teach diversity, as well as how to teach particularly sensitive and difficult topics. Lemmer and Meier (2011) state that it is imperative that ITE programmes should address issues of diversity across the ITE curriculum.

4 A Culturally Responsive Teaching Framework

To lay the groundwork for a CRT framework in ITE, this chapter draws on the work of Gay (2002), who described five essential elements of CRT:

1. developing a cultural diversity knowledge base;
2. designing culturally relevant curricula;
3. demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community;

4. promoting cross-cultural communication; and
5. ensuring cultural congruity in classroom instruction.

These principles provide a way in which to recognise desirable CRT practices. The principles are used in this study to unpack pre-service teachers' understanding of CRT. In addition the principles describe the challenges pre-service teachers face in teaching to diversity in multi-cultural classrooms. Above all, the challenges and opportunities for pre-service teacher programmes to better equip pre-service teachers for CRT. I draw on these core principles to effectively describe pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse learners.

4.1 *Developing a Cultural Diversity Knowledge Base*

Teachers need a sound knowledge of their learners and their knowledge of the subject content (Gay, 2002). Participants identified knowledge as an essential aspect of competence in CRT. In this study, I drew on the work of Gay (2002), who describes five elements that are essential for CRT.

One of the critical aspects raised by participants is the need for an educator to know their learners as an essential foundation of any responsive teaching; a participant thus argued: "... you have to know your learners well in order to be responsive to their needs". In essence, participants revealed that many learners come from different backgrounds and cultures, making it crucial to have sensitive culturally responsive teaching in the classroom that acknowledges and recognises every learner and their differences.

Other participants also revealed that the importance of a teacher knowing the context of the learner or their background enhances their capacity to accommodate and respond to diverse learners' cultural and academic needs. It creates an accessible learning environment where learners can express themselves without feeling left out.

Learners grow up in different cultures, which they bring to the classroom context, and their development occurs within the multiplicity of these cultures (Sosibo, 2013). Teachers who are aware of such differences can be responsive to culturally, racially and linguistically diverse learners.

4.2 *Designing Culturally Relevant Curricula*

Teachers need to know how to convert their cultural diversity knowledge base into instructional strategies and designs. In the study, content was highlighted as one of the themes in the implementation of CRT in the classroom. Participants felt strongly that selecting culturally relevant content that learners could relate to was a key strategy. Participants regarded it as important to learn how to develop practical culturally responsive lessons, with one stating:

I would have to include of the purpose of the lesson or topic and whether it would be beneficial for the diverse students. I have to include misconceptions that they might have because as they come from different homes and backgrounds, their understanding of a topic will be different and I have to address them in a way that is sensitive to what they already know.

One of the ways of being sensitive to what learners already know is to value their prior knowledge and experiences, as pointed out by a respondent:

The curriculum must be inclusive and take cognizance of the diversity and existence of minorities and their contribution ... opening up and allowing differences in cultures to contribute and coexist with mainstream teaching. You must also respect and use examples that do not offend anyone.

4.3 *Demonstrating Cultural Caring and Building a Learning Community*

CRT entails creating a classroom culture that is conducive to learning for diverse learners. Participants felt the need to create an inclusive classroom environment where all learners have the opportunity to participate, feel valued and thrive. By acknowledging differences, the teacher demonstrates an element of cultural caring and is able to create a learning community that celebrates differences. According to one participant:

The teacher must know the learners in order to create a learner-centred environment in the classroom. The teacher needs to find a way. You need to know your learners, their social backgrounds, kinds of homes that they come from just by asking questions in class. It doesn't have to be direct questions but as you teach in class you kind of get a sense of who your learners are. That helps the teacher find strategies that they can use in teaching to accommodate all learners.

Another participant observed:

You must cater to the differences you come across while teaching and be reasonably understanding when teaching learners with diversity. You [must] see their differences and not discriminate against any of them. You are aware that we are living in a diverse society and trying to accommodate all the learners you teach.

These reflections reveal the importance of acknowledging differences in helping the teacher to demonstrate cultural caring and be more explicit in their choices in building a supportive learning community.

4.4 *Promoting Cross-Cultural Communication*

Teachers' ability to communicate across cultures is of key importance, as it helps them to better understand their learners. Code-switching was reported by participants as a way of communicating across cultures in the classroom. They also took the culture of the subject itself into account as one teacher explained: "As teachers and students interact in Economics class, there is a certain culture being inculcated". Another participant observed:

Code-switching is a useful way to engage with diverse students. While the data in general did not reveal an in-depth discussion on cross-cultural communication, the responses suggest that teachers should not only foster communication across cultures, but also familiarise learners the culture embedded in the subject being taught.

4.5 *Ensuring Cultural Congruity in Classroom Instruction*

Teachers have to match instructional techniques and strategies with learners' diverse learning styles (Gay, 2002) in order to build cultural congruity in classroom instruction. A participant thus reflected:

You have to know your audience, understand different teaching and learning styles and include modes of learning that can be understood by most learners. Lessons should be fun and teachers should use different methods to teach to diversity. They must be conscious of how they teach.

Teachers thus highlighted the need for a teacher to take cognisance of diverse and rapidly changing cultures that learners live through and experience. Equally, the need for appropriate and relevant subject content was found to be an essential part of culturally responsive teaching. In addition, teaching strategies or methodologies that are up to date combined with context specific and relevant assessment strategies were found key across the diverse teacher participants.

The quote as was commonly found across the participants, also describes the intentionality of CRT and the choices teachers have to make in the classroom. A number of themes from the data set further reflect the importance of cultural congruity in classroom instruction. Differences must be acknowledged in the classroom and teachers have to explicitly accommodate culturally, racially and linguistically diverse learners by bringing these cultural backgrounds and experiences to the classroom and using them as a springboard for teaching various concepts.

5 Pre-Service Teacher Experiential Knowledge with Culturally Responsive Teaching

This study sought to explore CRT and the extent to which pre-service teachers in their final year of study feel prepared to teach in the context of South Africa's diverse schools. While most participants in the study admitted that initially they were not specifically aware of CRT, they could associate it with acknowledging differences in the cultural backgrounds of learners in the classroom. The importance of CRT within the context of their teaching subject, Economics, was recognised. Economics is seen as a lived subject that requires the teacher to be able to relate the content to the everyday experiences of learners.

The participants' definitions of CRT corresponded with those found in the literature, namely teaching learners through their own cultural filters (Gay, 2013), and integrating cultural content for the purpose of enhancing the achievement of learners in the classroom. To ensure that teaching is more culturally responsive, teachers need to be conscious of their classroom decisions and their teaching strategy, and take account of different learning styles in their teaching. Mindfulness of content is also crucial, as is welcoming and engaging with different views. This also encourages learners to take ownership of their learning experience. The four-year Bachelor of Education degree has made efforts to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching to diversity in its Methodology courses. However, the participants in this study who were enrolled for the degree agreed that they required additional support. One participant felt strongly about this:

We do not get enough time to get used to the culture of the school. I feel we are not getting the practical aspect of it. They teach us about how to prepare a lesson but we haven't actually gotten to see how we handle a class with diverse learners. The teaching is one way. I can't actually put my finger on how you accommodate diversity in the classroom. You don't see that element. You just take the textbook and teach what's in it. Those who follow, follow. Those who don't are left behind. I haven't seen it practically happening so I don't think we are prepared.

Support could take the form of increasing pre-service teachers' CRT knowledge base (i.e. educating them on CRT, its core principles and associated practices), as well as providing them with more hands-on support during their teaching experience. While teacher preparation programmes do provide pre-service teachers with insights into teaching practices, pre-service teachers

tend to lose what they have learnt in their initial teacher preparation when it is absorbed by the realities of South African schools and their more traditional and conventional school cultures (Sayed et al., 2016).

6 Conclusion

The growing importance of CRT in South Africa's diverse schooling context should not be understated. Pre-service teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and skills to teach to diversity in the classroom. Resources must be provided to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in multi-cultural classrooms during the practical teaching component of their course, particularly those in under-resourced schools. The results of this study indicate that providing enough time is crucial for the implementation of CRT. Pre-service teachers require sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the culture of the school and the learners where they undertake their teaching practice. This study sought to explore the extent to which pre-service teachers are prepared for teaching in South African classrooms and has revealed that challenges remain in teaching to diversity effectively. This presents an opportunity for redesigning ITE programmes that explicitly teach diversity and encourage CRT as a way for teachers to provide equitable learning experiences to learners with diverse cultures.

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Coursework Assignments

Higher Expectations for Deeper Engagement

Caroline Long and Gift Cheva

Abstract

In our postgraduate teacher education courses, we aspire to engage students in authentic intellectual work. It is during this engagement that the design and production of assignments, and the student work emanating from engagement with these assignments, become essential components of instructional quality. In this study we ask, “What is the relationship between the intellectual demand of a given assignment and the student work given in response?” We work with the hypothesis that the quality of intellectual demand in the assignment determines to a large extent the quality of the work produced. We adopt, and adapt, a protocol based on a framework of authentic intellectual work, as a lens with which to assess the quality of our assignments, and also adapt the complementary protocol to assess the student work. The teacher assignment protocol comprises three dimensions, disciplined enquiry, knowledge construction, and real world engagement. The associated protocol for the assessment of student work is similarly constituted. The purpose of these protocols is to assess teacher designed assignments from an honours course titled Assessment and Evaluation, and the resulting student work. While the quality of teacher assignments affects student intellectual work, we posit that the classroom environment can either enable or constrain agency, a critical factor in intellectual work. The third protocol, labelled professional agency, is included to indicate the psychosocial context in which authentic intellectual work is prioritised. The focus of this chapter is the design of protocols that align with our course goals and are theoretically informed, and therefore provide a lens for evaluating both teacher assignments and student work, and in addition monitor the psychosocial context. In order to check the validity of the protocols we analyse three assignment questions and analyse two sets of responses from a moderately proficient and a competent student. We also reflect on the extent to which the classroom environment enables or constrains agency from the perspective of one lecturer and two students.

Keywords

authentic intellectual work – assignment protocol – teaching quality – disciplined enquiry – knowledge construction – real-world work

1 Introduction

In the postgraduate education courses for teachers offered at our institution, we seek to engage students in authentic intellectual work. As practising teachers, the students bring their prior classroom experiences to the discussion space, where they compare, align and contrast these experiences with the assigned literature, and then express their ideas both verbally and in writing. Their written responses are evaluated by a more experienced educator, namely the lecturer. The design and production of assignments, and the work that students do when they complete these assignments, become essential components of instructional quality.

We, two lecturer-researchers, undertook a study to examine the relationship between the intellectual demand of a given assignment and the quality of the student work submitted in response. Our hypothesis was that the quality of the intellectual demand of an assignment determines, to a large extent, the quality of the work produced. To test this hypothesis, we used an action research approach, in which we worked with the definitions of *teacher quality* as indicated in the design of assignments, and *teaching quality*, which is evident in instructional design, and the interaction between lecturer and student responses (Joyce, Gitomer & Iaconangelo, 2018) (see the following section). In addition to ourselves the lecturers and action researchers, the participants in the study were postgraduate students on the ‘Assessment and Evaluation’ module in the BEd Honours programme. All the students have had some teaching experience and some of them are currently teachers in local schools. We use the terms ‘lecturer’ and ‘teacher’ interchangeably when referring to ourselves.

The first phase of the study was to evaluate the assignment questions according to a framework that made explicit the relationships between teaching, as envisaged in the delivery of this module and as implicit in the design of the assignments and student work. The framework, closely aligned with our approach to teaching was that of ‘authentic intellectual work’ (Newmann; Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001). This framework was used as a lens with which to evaluate the quality of the assignments we designed, and to assess the quality of student work. The protocol, theoretically aligned with ‘authentic intellectual work’, is the Intellectual Demand Assignment Protocol (IDAP) (Wenzel, Nagaoka, Morris, Billings & Fendt, 2002, cited in Joyce et al., 2018). The term protocol

denotes a defining document that consists of a number of dimensions, each of which has a clear description in the form of a rubric for each scale point on the dimension. The use of protocols for both the grading of teachers and for providing feedback in professional development programmes has been extensively used in improving teaching quality studies (Wood, 2007; Bell, Gitomer, McCaffrey, Hamre, Pianta, & Qi, 2012; Joyce, Gitomer, & Iaconangel, 2018). In this study the IDAP protocol, adapted for our context, is used to evaluate our own work, specifically the design of assignments.

The teacher assignment protocol comprises three dimensions, *disciplined enquiry*, *knowledge construction*, and *real-world connection*. The associated protocol for the assessment of student work is similarly constituted. The purpose of these protocols is to evaluate teacher-designed assignments in an honours module, *Assessment and Evaluation*, and to assess the student responses, and through this process improve the quality of the assignments.

The focus of this chapter is firstly describe the course goals through the lens of 'authentic intellectual work', and present the adapted IDAP protocol, which then provides a tool for evaluating teacher assignments and student work. In order to check the validity of the protocols, we analysed three assignment questions and two sets of responses from two students, judged to be at the higher end of the proficiency scale for this cohort of students. As part of our ongoing study we ask: "What is the relationship between the intellectual demand of a given assignment and the student work submitted in response?" We work with the hypothesis that the quality of intellectual demand in the assignment determines to a large extent the quality of the work produced.

However, the key factors is improving teaching whether at the tertiary level, or school level, relies on a clearly defined theoretical framework, protocols based on the framework, and then application of the protocols to assignments in the interest of professional development on the part of lecturers, and improved learning on the part of students. In this small scale study the design of the assignments was refined in line with our findings, having evaluated both the assignments and the student responses.

Methodologically the research used an action research approach, identifying a focus area in the researchers' own practice which was perceived to have a potential to improve, thus offering students a better educational experience. In essence, the quality of the lecturer-designed assignment, and the subsequent student work offered in response to the assignment was explored.

The set of protocols in the study includes a protocol for the evaluation of a lecturer-designed assignment, and a protocol for the assessment of student work. The assignment examined in the study consists of eight subsections, with each subsection consisting of a question or questions designed to test understanding of a key construct in that particular section.

2 Framing Learning Processes within the Classroom Environment

Assignments, whether completed in class or outside of class time, have been identified as important components of instructional quality and therefore as indicators of the overarching concept, teaching quality (Joyce et al., 2018). The importance attributed to the assignments is especially pertinent in tertiary education, where a substantial amount of learning occurs outside the lecture room. In postgraduate honours courses, the proportion of time spent in lectures in comparison to the time devoted to additional reading and assignments is probably in the ratio of one to ten. In this course of 30 credits, there are an estimated 300 notional hours (Department of Education, 2007), of which there are 24 hours of formal contact time, and some consultation time, with the remainder independent study.

In the tertiary environment, it is therefore critical for assignments to be designed with characteristics that engage the student in intellectual work and promote optimal learning. In accordance with Bell et al. (2012: 63–64) and Joyce et al. (2018: 48), we define teacher quality as “the quality of those aspects of interactions that can be attributed to the teacher” while teaching quality refers to “the quality of interactions between students and teachers”. Effectively constructed assignments are a critical component in evaluating both teacher quality, and teaching quality when grading and giving feedback on student responses. With this definition instructional quality, and assignments, may be described as a component of teaching quality.

The study is nested within a framework of ‘authentic intellectual work’ that is enabled by an authentic pedagogy. Newmann et al. (1996) have shown that authentic pedagogy is strongly associated with authentic academic performance, that authentic pedagogy can be equitably distributed among students of diverse social backgrounds, and that its achievement effects are reasonably equitable for students across different social backgrounds.

The study presented in this chapter informs our own teaching at postgraduate level, and with some adaptation could be of benefit to the teaching of other postgraduate courses, as well as undergraduate courses.

This chapter therefore draws from a comprehensive study into measures of teacher quality (Joyce et al., 2018), however focusing primarily on the evaluation of assignment quality. Following Joyce et al. (2018), we adopted (and adapted) the framework of ‘authentic intellectual work’ originally designed by Newmann et al., (2001). ‘Authentic intellectual work’ is described as “relatively complex and socially and personally meaningful” (Joyce et al., 2018: 53). It focuses on *disciplined enquiry*, which entails the use of prior knowledge in the field, in-depth understanding of the topic, and texts, at hand, and elaborated communication, in both verbal and written form. It further foregrounds the *construction*

of knowledge, which goes beyond the routine use of information and skills previously learned. In authentic intellectual work, students are required to construct knowledge by “organizing, interpreting, evaluating, or synthesizing prior knowledge to solve new problems” (Newmann et al., 2001: 14). This knowledge must have *value* that takes students beyond the current educational experience. To connect with real-world problems that have legitimacy within their own experiences, students need to structure and restructure knowledge, rather than simply reiterating information which they have reviewed.

In our courses, we apply the theory of authentic intellectual work, and view it as comprising three phases adapted from Newmann et al. (2001), plus a fourth phase (derived from our own research). In the *first phase*, the students bring their existing knowledge and experiences into the discussion space, based on their individual experience and work, and engage with their peers, in language that is meaningful to them. In the process they compare, align and contrast these experiences with the debates and literature encountered in the educational environment, generally provided by the lecturer. This phase aligns with the process of *disciplined enquiry*, which requires the reflection on prior knowledge, engagement with new knowledge in the form of a text, or lecture notes, and reorganisation of knowledge.

In the *second phase*, this new knowledge is presented in the class environment; students are *constructing knowledge* through organising, interpreting and synthesising their existing knowledge in response to a new context, and new problem. After preliminary exploration and engagement, the students have to articulate their knowledge in an assignment. In this phase, the quality of the assignment or lecture-based task may either lead the student to deeper engagement with the particular topic, or invite only minimal engagement.

Taking students beyond their current educational experience, and making connections with the real world should be embedded in lecture-room work and assignments. This objective is aligned with Newmann et al.’s (2001) requirement that tasks should have value *beyond the classroom experience*. The focus on the real work is therefore seen as the *third phase*.

There is also a *fourth phase*, namely the evaluation of students’ written offerings, only briefly referred to in this chapter, however critical to this learning cycle. A more experienced educator evaluates their assignments and can induct them into academic writing as a genre. Apart from its technical components, academic writing is essentially the articulate expression of personally meaningful ideas in a virtual conversation with the literature, both past and current. The quality of this interaction between lecturer and student is determined by the design of the assignment as well as the authentic engagement of the student.

In our adapted framework, students reflect on their own experience in the academic context, applying disciplined enquiry that extends beyond anecdotal

reporting of personal opinion. Reflection entails identifying themes from personal experience and weaving them into the content of the academic texts. In the process, students develop knowledge that is grounded in experience and builds on literature in the discipline. Moreover, it enables them to engage with the academic community and develop skills that they can apply in the educational environment.

3 The Question of Mathematics and English in Diverse Contexts

Our research was inspired by a comprehensive study that examined the quality of school mathematics and English language arts (ELA) classrooms as part of a larger study of the measures of teaching quality (Joyce et al., 2018). Those authors used Newmann et al.'s (2001) 'authentic intellectual work' as a framework for their research and measured the quality of assignments and student responses using the Intellectual Demand Assignment Protocol (IDAP) (Wenzel et al., 2002, cited in Joyce et al., 2018). Joyce et al. (2018: 49) drew on prior work that investigated how students respond to intellectual demands. They found that tasks that are "challenging, constructive and relevant" elicit a significant response from students and that demanding high-level intellectual engagement in the classroom is "connected to student outcomes". Joyce et al. (2018) further investigated the validity of measures of teaching quality, building on the work of Messick (1989), who conceptualised validity as an all-encompassing construct. They investigated "evidence of the extent to which scores from an artefact protocol support the inferences about teaching" in both ELA and mathematics classrooms (Joyce et al., 2018: 55).

Koh and Luke (2009) carried out a similar study in Singapore schools, which involved an empirical examination of the quality of teacher assignments and student work. Their theoretical framework was also based on the principles of authentic assessment and intellectual quality. The study collected a random stratified sample of assignments and student work from both elementary and high schools, in five subject areas. The differences across grade level and subject area were of some educational consequence, revealing a large variation of quality in students' work. The correlations between the quality of the assignment tasks set and student work were strong and significant, at both elementary and high school levels. A major finding of that study is that where teachers set more intellectually demanding tasks, students were more likely to generate higher quality work.

Both the major studies, Joyce et al. (2018) and Koh and Luke (2009) referred to above, point to the importance of extending research on authentic intellectual work to other contexts. In our study, we have extended it to tertiary

education, more specifically into education theory and teacher training, rather than having a subject-specific focus, as was the case in previous studies.

4 Assumptions Underlying the Framework and Associated Protocols

The framework guiding this study and the design of the protocols (see Appendices A and B) for the evaluation of assignments and assessment of student work follow the tradition of Dewey (1970), Freire (1972), Whitehead (1929), and others. We have modelled our study on the work of Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996), borrowing and developing their concept of authentic intellectual work, and on the proposition of Joyce et al. (2018) that the assessment of teacher assignments and the corresponding student work provides valid indicators of both teacher and teaching quality.

Within this framework, the protocols provide the conceptual lens through which to evaluate both assignments and student work. However, the protocols are not meant to “privilege teacher practices” (Joyce et al., 2018: 59) in the sense of advocating one educational philosophy or teaching style over another. Instead, we support the view of Newmann, King and Carmichael (2007: 15) that “no single [teaching] practice or set of practices has been shown to be *most* effective for varied intellectual outcomes for *most* students across several grade levels and subjects” (our emphasis). Hence, we have focused on the products of the lecturer and the written student responses, rather than on observed practice. In this way we propose that professional development focus on teaching quality, as manifest in artefacts such as assignments, which may obviate the difficulties caused by observer bias, which is inevitable in classroom observation studies.

In the study by Joyce et al. (2018), the origin of the assignments was not of consequence; they could have been designed by a publisher or educational authority. *In our study, we examined the design of the assignments we set for the Assessment and Evaluation module* (Long & Cheva, 2017/2018). The study by Joyce et al. (2018) includes both typical and challenging assignments. We acknowledge that much of teaching is routine, and that routine procedural work is often not only required, but also valued; such consistency may create an environment in which students feel comfortable and confident. In our study, however, we focused specifically on assignments that require authentic intellectual work.

5 The Context

In the BEd Honours programme, administered over two years, three modules are offered in the first year. One of these is the ‘Assessment and Evaluation’ module.

The module covers broad areas such as defining good education, engaging with foundational aspects of assessment (purposes, what to test, how to test, teacher roles, effects on learners, validity and reliability), large-scale assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the theory of formative assessment, and the construction of high-quality tests. The textbook *Testing: Friend or foe* (Black, 1998), considered a seminal work, is one of the core prescribed readings, supplemented by more recent publications.

The supporting pedagogy for the course involved designing educational experiences for lecture time, setting prescribed readings, organising student presentations and class discussions, designing assignments and subsequently the production of student work, in the form of assignments which were then graded for a mark which would determine the final outcome of the student on this module.

The preliminary work required making explicit in this module the dimensions of the framework for 'authentic intellectual work', namely *disciplined enquiry*, the *construction of knowledge*, and *real-world connections* (Newmann et al., 2001). Both the protocol for the evaluation of the assignment and the protocol for the assessment of student work consisted of these three dimensions (see appendices A and B). In our study, the purpose of using these protocols was to evaluate teacher-designed assignments for this module, and the resulting student work, as measures of teaching quality. The research question guiding the ongoing study is: "What is the relationship between the intellectual demand of a given assignment and the student work produced in response to the assignment?"

This first part of the study is essentially about aligning the protocols for evaluating the assignments in postgraduate courses. We used one of the assignments in this module to verify the use of the protocols, and the alignment of the theoretical framework of authentic education with the course content and themes in our study. The outcome was an improved set of questions (see Section 6) on that specific component of the assignment, and a set of principles (see Section 6) for constructing and designing assignments in future.

5.1 *Course Assessment and Evaluation' Routines*

In the course 'Assessment and Evaluation', there are some routine assignments which require recall; however generally assignments involve students engaging with the textbook and other readings, through drawing on their own experience, linking new knowledge with prior knowledge, and then conducting some further research. The purpose of this particular assignment was to allow students to engage in depth with a particular textbook and make connections with their experience. The extended assignment comprised eight sections,

TABLE 7.1 Supporting pedagogy for the assessment and evaluation module

Assessment and evaluation module	
Domain description	Theory and practical implications of assessment, formative assessment, high-quality summative tests and large-scale assessment.
Pedagogic interaction	Reflection on own experiences, discussions, readings, group presentations and individual written articulation of relevant ideas and concepts.
Assignment	Initial critical engagement with theoretical and practical questions drawing from the prescribed textbook (Black, 1998). Later inclusion of other seminal work. (See Long & Cheva, 2017/2018.)
Student artefacts	Responses to critical questions in written assignments.

each of which covered a chapter in the textbook. From the course assignments, one assignment was selected, and then three sections from this assignment were selected.

The students were prepared in the following way. Each of the eight chapters from the Black (1998) textbook was assigned to a pair of students who worked together to answer questions designed to focus their reading. They then presented the major ideas from their allocated chapter to the class, where there was discussion about the chapter and its relevance to their educational context. The students were then given the assignments, the set questions for each of the chapters which they completed individually and in written form. This assignment constituted a major assignment for the first semester.

For the purposes of initial validation of the protocols for the evaluation of assignments, we selected three chapters (see Appendices C1, C2, C3), from eight possible chapters, namely:

- History (high-stakes assessment) (Chapter 2)
- Reliability and validity (Chapter 4)
- Pupils and assessment (self-assessment) (Chapter 8)

The protocol for the teacher assignment (Appendix A) was used to evaluate the design of the questions on these three chapters (within the larger assignment of eight chapters). The complementary protocol for student work (Appendix B) was used to assess the written work submitted individually by the two selected students. From the cohort of students in this module, we

chose two students of moderate to high proficiency, Thabo and Khanyi (the names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the students). By applying the student work (sw) protocol to relatively good work, we could gauge its usefulness, and also investigate the relationship of the assignment to student work, uncluttered by a possible lack of student engagement with the task.

5.2 *Instruments (Teacher Assignment and Student Work Protocols)*

The IDAP (Wenzel et al., 2002, cited in Joyce et al., 2018) instrument comprises two distinct protocols – one for mathematics, and one for ELA. The ELA protocol best approximated the needs of tertiary-level honours courses, as required in this study. We adapted this protocol to accommodate the aims of the ‘Assessment and Evaluation’ module, which broadly defined are: ‘to equip the education professional with knowledge and skills in the area of educational assessment’.

As with the Joyce et al. (2018) study, the instrument for this study has two related forms – one from the perspective of evaluating the design of the teacher assignments, and the second designed to analyse student work. There are three parallel dimensions, which take the form of scales, for each of the two protocols and an additional fourth dimension for evaluating student work. Each scale has three or four scale points which have a rubric which constitutes a description of the scale point.

The two protocols were evaluated separately, with one lecturer-researcher responsible for evaluating the teacher assignment protocol, and the second lecturer-researcher focusing on the student work protocol. We then conducted a joint review which established a measure of consensus and enabled further reflection. Together we refined the protocols by interactively considering the goals of our course, defining ‘authentic intellectual work’ in our context, and reflecting on the student offerings.

6 Protocol Evaluation Results

6.1 *Evaluation of the Teacher Assignment Questions (Assignment Question 1, Assignment Question 2, Assignment Question 3), and Assessment of Student Work (Student 1, Student 2)*

Three assignment questions focused on the three chapters, History (A₁), Reliability and validity (A₂), and Pupils and assessment (A₃) – were selected for the study. The process required three steps: firstly the teacher assessment protocol (Appendix A) was applied, thereby checking to see the alignment of the protocol to the course and to the assessment. The second step was to check the

TABLE 7.2 Instrument comprising two protocols

Assignment protocol	Student work protocol
Scale 1 – Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in depth study, elaborated communication)	Scale 1 – Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in depth study, elaborated communication)
Scale 2 – Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)	Scale 2 – Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)
Scale 3 – Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)	Scale 3 – Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)
	Scale 4 – Writing style and language conventions

student work protocol (Appendix B), based on the work of two students – of moderate to high proficiency at the time of writing, to ascertain whether the protocol functioned as expected. In addition to establishing the validity of the two protocols, the third step was to revise the assignment questions, building on the two earlier steps, in the interest of offering improved assignments in subsequent years.

6.1.1 Assignment Question 1: History

Chapter 2 in Black (1998) provides an overview of the history of assessment and discusses issues relating to large-scale and high-stakes assessment. The following excerpt was deemed pertinent, and we hoped that it would provide the students with the opportunity to engage with critical issues around the topic. Appendix C1 presents the evaluation of this assignment question and a revised version thereof.

Assignment 1: History

“Testing and assessment interact with learning; the interaction can be a forward one, in the composition of testing regimes to reflect and support learning aims, or a backward one [affected] by the influence of high stakes tests on goals and methods of work of both teachers and students” (Black, 1998: 22).

Rewrite the above statement in your own words, giving examples of the “forward” and “backward” interaction from your own school or teaching experience.

This assignment question was categorised as requiring moderate intellectual demand in terms of *disciplined enquiry*. Students were required to unpack the statement by going back to the full text in order to *construct their own meaning*. There was some connection with the *real world* in that students had to search for examples from their own experience that illustrate the ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ reference.

6.1.2 Student Work

In this assignment question, the students were asked to explain the relationship between high-stakes testing (backward effect) and formative type assessment (forward effect), in their own words. They were also expected to explain terms that appear to be everyday words – ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ – in relation to high stakes testing and formative classroom-based assessment. They needed to illustrate this difference by drawing on examples from their own school experience. Using the Student Work protocol, the student responses were judged in terms of the same three dimensions: *disciplined enquiry*, *construction of knowledge*, and *making real-world connections*.

Khanyi’s response to Assignment Question 1

There are two types of testing and assessment which Black (1998) refers to, the first one being forward assessment. A teacher reflects and supports the learning aims with the learners (Black, 1998: 22). An example of this would be own teaching and assessment set by teachers and learners. In my own schooling experience, this would be testing to see what is known by the learners which is a form of formative assessment.

The second type is backward assessment. It is the influence of goals and methods of teachers and learners (Black, 1998: 22). This leads to the effects of testing on learning.

In my own experience, this would be summative assessment. A common way to identify an example would be the Annual National Assessments (ANAS). These results are recorded to see and better the level of learning and understanding of learners.

With regard to the first dimension used to evaluate this piece of student work (*disciplined enquiry*), Khanyi has not engaged with the topic in any depth, but rather takes phrases from the textbook, and weaves them into her answer. To some extent, she has constructed knowledge in that she has applied the concept of a “forward interaction” to formative type assessment, but has not succeeded with the “backward interaction”. She has provided an example from

her real-world experience, but not successfully as she does not fully understand the influence of high stakes testing on the teacher and the classroom.

Thabo's response to Assignment Question 1

Learning interacts with testing and assessment in a forward manner when the purpose of a collection of tests is to reflect and support the learning aims. The interaction of learning with testing and assessment becomes a backward one when the testing regime is for the purpose of making important decision about learners, teachers or districts (Black, 1998). In the foundation phase classroom, I have viewed a forward interaction when the teacher assesses learners' content knowledge as stated in the Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) document. When a teacher conducts a formative assessment based on the work covered in one unit, and another for test of the next three units, this assessment can be said to be a testing regime to reflect and support the learning aims (Black, 1998).

An example of a backward interaction could be a baseline test that is used to make an important decision about what teacher and learning practices should be employed to achieve good results in a particular subject. In a grade three class the teacher could use a test that asks learners to write 5 examples (words) of each part of speech, so as to ascertain which parts of speak learners struggle with and adjust the teaching of these.

While Thabo clearly understands what Black (1998) means by a forward interaction, he has not completely grasped the concept of a backward interaction. In terms of *disciplined enquiry*, one can only assume that he exhibits a surface reading of the text. Likewise, in terms of the *construction of knowledge*, there is little analysis and synthesis. Regarding *real-world engagement*, Thabo refers to standard curriculum documents and provides examples from his classroom experience.

The students were expected to push the boundaries of the concepts 'testing' and 'assessment' by applying them beyond the lecture room. Khanyi's response mentions the ANAS, a large-scale national assessment, and makes the connection. However, there is little evidence in either Khanyi's or Thabo's responses that show their own interpretation or synthesis of the concepts, although we do not know whether they were capable of doing so at that point in time. It could certainly be the case that the design of the assignment question did not demand analysis and synthesis.

On further reflection, the analysis of this assignment question points back to the teaching of this course. In order to build the expected connections between testing and classroom practice, explicit teaching and conscious engagement with the debate would be required.

6.1.3 Revised Assignment Question 1

After our reflection, we decided to revise this assignment question to make explicit the intellectual demand in terms of *disciplined enquiry* (Dimension 1), *constructing own knowledge* (Dimension 2) and *real-world connections* (Dimension 3).

Assignment Question 1 – Revised

“Testing and assessment interact with learning; the interaction can be a forward one, in the composition of testing regimes to reflect and support learning aims, or a backward one [affected] by the influence of high stakes tests on goals and methods of work of both teachers and students” (Black, 1998: 22).

1. Rewrite the above statement in your own words, giving examples of the “forward” and “backward” interaction. Explain the possible effect on classroom teaching of a “forward” interaction. Reflect on a “backward” interaction in terms of the impact of high-stakes assessment. Provide examples from your own school or teaching experience.
2. What support could be provided to assist teachers with navigating a path which takes into account both types of interactions?
3. Write a letter to the local education department, describing the two processes, discussing the possible effect on teaching and learning, and then offer a contribution to policy formulation.

6.1.4 Assignment Question 2: Reliability and validity

Chapter 4 in Black (1998) covers many features of reliability and validity and provides standard definitions of these constructs. However he also raises some critical questions on the topic. One such critical question was identified for this assignment question. Appendix C2 presents the evaluation of this assignment question and a revised version thereof.

Assignment Question 2: Reliability and validity

“The relative importance of reliability and validity depends on the purpose of an assessment, they can be in competition in that one can often be enhanced only at the expense of the other” (Black, 1998: 54).

Give a brief definition of reliability and validity. Why are these two terms usually linked together?

What are the distinct differences? Give an example which illustrates the statement above.

This assignment question was gauged to have moderate intellectual demand, in terms of *disciplined enquiry*, although the statement “explain why the two terms are linked” adds to the demand. Here one might say there is the opportunity to construct knowledge, however there is no explicit requirement for the answer to include a real-world connection.

6.1.5 Student Work

The topics reliability and validity are complex to measurement theorists; it is therefore not surprising that the students find this topic and the associated question difficult.

Khanyi's response to Assignment Question 2

Validity a tool for measuring what the test is supposed to measure, [and may be divided] into many types such as content validity and construct validity (Black, 1998: 42–43). Reliability is when a learner takes a task or question, which is marked by an examiner for a term mark or grade (Black, 1998).

These two terms are linked together because testing is dependent on both validity and reliability. A test should be reliable in terms of reproducible scores of a wide variety of conditions, and valid to measure the learning explored and not narrowed down (Black, 1998: 48).

There are distinct differences in these two terms. Reliability is easy to check, and is rarely available due to reproducible marks in a different environment. However, validity is difficult to check but is neglected due to the test results being justified on inferences and actions. ...

An example to illustrate the statement made by Black (1998) would be: Narrowing the range of test aims enhances reliability at the expense of validity, but broadening the range could cause a reverse effect (Black, 1998: 49).

While Khanyi provides definitions of validity and reliability, her explanations are not comprehensive; instead they are taken from Black's work, without thorough engagement. She writes, “Validity is a tool for measuring what the test is supposed to measure” (Black, 1998: 42–43). This definition of validity is commonly used, however, the complexity of validity, as elaborated by Messick (1989) is lost. The statement “Reliability is when a learner takes a task or question, which is marked by an examiner for a term mark or grade” (Black, 1998) is not meaningful, and was probably paraphrased from the text, without thorough understanding.

The task which required Khanyi to link the concepts, and further to explain the distinct differences between them, again shows that she does not fully

understand these concepts. And again, when asked to rewrite the statement in her own words, she appears to be lost. She again quotes from the book, without demonstrating thorough understanding.

In terms of *disciplined enquiry*, Khanyi does not seem to understand what it means to engage with the text; thus without this understanding, she is unable to construct her own knowledge, or connect the concepts to the real world.

Thabo's response to Assignment Question 2

Reliability is defined as the extent to which an experiment, test or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials (Black, 2009). Whether a test is administered in the afternoon or in the morning, this should not have an effect on the reliability of the assessment instrument. According to Black (2009), validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the assessor is attempting to measure, whether or not it measures what it is supposed to measure. When a test is valid, it is almost always reliable, this is because it accurately measures the intended concept. However, reliability is different from validity in that even if a test is reliable, it may not provide a valid measure.

The reason these terms are usually linked together is because assessments and their results depend on both reliability and validity.

These two elements are not completely independent because a test which lacks any one of the two will subsequently result in unfair assessment. For instance, if reliability of a test is enhanced and learners pass tests because the questions are relatively less challenging, the validity of their results may be compromised at the expense of reliability and consistency of the results.

In contrast to Khanyi's response, Thabo demonstrates a good understanding of these two concepts. When asked to link the two concepts, and note the differences, his answers are coherent with the initial definitions he has provided. He provides a good example, which illustrates the statement in the question.

6.1.6 Revised Assignment Question 2

The assignment (see below) was revised by making the explicit demand to link the two concepts, as would be required in *disciplined enquiry* (Dimension 1). The *construction of knowledge* comes from the requirement to provide an example (Dimension 2). The *connection to the real world* is introduced in the requirement to describe a particular situation where validity would take precedence over reliability (Dimension 3).

Assignment Question 2: Reliability and validity – *Revised*

“The relative importance of reliability and validity depends on the purpose of an assessment, they can be in competition in that one can often be enhanced only at the expense of the other” (Black, 1998: 54).

1. Give a brief definition of both reliability and validity. Explain how the two concepts work in conjunction with one another, and then explain the somewhat reciprocal relationship between reliability and validity.
2. Support your explanation with an example.
3. Describe a situation where validity might take precedence over reliability.

6.1.7 Assignment Question 3: Self-Assessment

The statement below, selected from chapter 8 in Black (1998) (‘Pupils and Assessment’), provides a positive view on self-assessment. We thought that this view should be further interrogated by the students, by looking back at the evidence presented by Black in this chapter. Appendix C3 presents the evaluation of this assignment question and a revised version thereof.

Assignment Question 3: Self-assessment

“Pupil self-assessment has a consequence that they are more motivated and conscious in relation to their work. They are more responsible and their efforts are more long-term and goal centred” (Black & Atkin, 1996: 110, cited in Black, 1998: 135).

The above statement is affirmative about the role of self-assessment. From the discussion in this chapter, what evidence does Black give that could support this statement?

What is your view? Do you agree, or disagree? Give reasons.

While this question was the strongest of the three in terms of intellectual demand, in that the students were required to “find the evidence”, there is no explicit requirement to construct knowledge, nor is there a connection to the real world.

6.1.8 Student Work

The students were required to provide evidence from the chapter to support the assertion made by Black (1998).

Khanyi's response to Assignment Question 3

Black (1998) suggests that all learners have fundamental and practical reasons to play a role in their self-assessment. These are that learners are fundamentally responsible for their own learning, and practically it involves learners working by themselves (Black, 1998: 127). Mastery type of children have the desire to want to learn, and believe in improving their own intelligences (Sylva, 1994, cited in Black, 1998: 133). Learners' desires are based on the interest of their work, and will continue if they are successful in it. "There is evidence that pupils can assess themselves if they can see the learning aims clearly and if assessment feedback provides clear information about the gap between their work and achievement of these aims" (Black, 1998: 136).

Yes, I agree with Black (1998) that learners' self-assessment makes them more responsible and goal-centred towards their own work. However, Sylva (1994) suggests another type of child called the Helpless type. They have low self-esteem because they believe they are not clever enough, tend to avoid challenges and have no belief in improving their intelligences (Black, 1998: 134). This could be because learners perceive themselves based on feedback, and if the feedback is negative the learners believe they will not succeed. Therefore, not all learners are the same. Some learners need motivation and positive feedback to attempt self-assessment in a positive manner.

Khanyi's response starts by discussing several beneficial features associated with self-assessment. She identifies discussing the marking criteria, marking their own work, engagement in the formulation of test papers, selection of the test questions, and marking the test. Each of these issues provides a point about the type of self-assessment, but does not explain the relation of the type of self-assessment to the student. Instead, her response tends to provide discrete ideas as claims. Clearly, there is more description than analysis in Khanyi's response. The marker concluded with the following comment: "Yes, but try to present an argument".

Khanyi extends her response by drawing from other sources: "Mastery types of children have the desire to want to learn, and believe in improving their own intelligences (Sylva, 1994, cited in Black, 1998: 136). In terms of knowledge construction, Khanyi explores the effect on learners of negative feedback: "This could be because learners perceive themselves based on feedback, and if the feedback is negative the learners' believe they will succeed. Therefore, not all

learners are the same. Some learners need motivation and positive feedback to attempt self-assessment in a positive manner". Khanyi does draw on her experience to extend her answer to a real-world experience. This part of her answer points to authentic engagement with the task.

Thabo's response to Assignment Question 3

To support his view, Paul Black cites that self-assessment at the point of learning is a crucial component for developing complex understandings through reflective habits of mind (Zessoules & Gardner, 1991). These habits support his notion that this type of assessment is long-term and goal centred.

I feel that if self-assessment is a good tool to use in informal formative assessments. If it is used to generate marks for reports in the term, learners can lose the aim of self-assessment which is for personal improvement. They will be tempted to be more lenient and less critical and reflective of their work as the aim would merely be to get high marks.

I agree with the author because if a learner can see their own short comings it will be easy for them to focus on improving that element of their knowledge. To substantiate this view, Paul black states that "if effective learning requires that pupils become increasingly involved in taking responsibility for their own learning, then they must also be involved in their own assessment (Black, 1998: 132). As such, the learners' ability to critique and evaluate their own work is an added benefit to effective learning and formative assessment.

Thabo does engage with the question. In terms of *disciplined enquiry*, he shows some understanding in that he has selected from the text a sentence that supports the given assertion by Black (1998), but he has not gone back to the chapter to elicit the evidence that was used to support this statement. He constructs his response in a way that shows good reasoning skills. His final statement is well constructed and points to a real-world context.

6.1.9 Revised Assignment Question 3

In our revised assignment we attempted to make the intellectual demand more explicit (Dimension 1). The requirement to provide a counter argument provides the opportunity for the students' construction of their own knowledge (Dimension 2), and the requirement to communicate the information (Dimension 3) provides the real-world connection.

Assignment question 3: Self-assessment – *Revised*

“Pupil self-assessment has a consequence that they are more motivated and conscious in relation to their work. They are more responsible and their efforts are more long-term and goal centred” (Black & Atkin, 1996: 110, cited by Black, 1998: 135).

Black and Atkin (1996) make strong claims for the importance of self-assessment.

1. Provide three examples of evidence provided by Black (1998) to support the statement above.
2. Provide a counter argument for the use of self-assessment.
3. Write a short exposition (1/2 page) on the role of self-assessment that can be shared at a meeting of teachers.

6.1.10 Student Work: The Fourth Dimension

With regard to all three of the assignment questions we do acknowledge, however, that the course did not focus explicitly on the genre of academic writing. There was no explicit requirement that students adhere to the technical requirements for academic writing. In both cases, Thabo and Khanyi, there is a need for attention to these technical requirements. This dimension has an overarching function which requires specific attention, perhaps from a writing centre though also in the lecture time.

6.1.11 Summary

In summary, the three assignment questions were initially categorised as having *moderate* intellectual demand. After revision they remain in that category; however, in the light of the revisions and more explicit requirements, we anticipate that the students will be able to improve their responses.

We note that the way in which the assignments were structured (around chapters in the prescribed textbook) may have impacted on the student responses in that there was not the specific requirement for higher order thinking and reasoning. Had the assignments been more explicit about the requirements according to the three dimensions, such as in the revised versions where students were asked to delve deeper into the text or to compare two constructs, the students would not have had to infer what was required.

6.2 *Teaching Quality, Assignment Quality and Submitted Student Work*

Teacher quality in this study is regarded as those attributes that are individual, whereas teaching quality refers to the incidents of teacher student interaction.

The design of the assignment, may be assigned to teaching quality. Certainly the grading, or marking, and the feedback to students, along with instructional design falls into the category of teaching quality. In this section, we focus on the relationship between the intellectual demand of the assignment, and the quality of the student responses. We reflected on the two instruments we used – the protocol to evaluate the assignment questions and the protocol to assess the student work. In this way, we were able to refine the assignment questions through engaging with the design of our own assignments and the corresponding student responses.

On reflection, we propose that in general, the design of an assignment – in terms of intellectual demand and explicit expectation of what is required in terms of student responses – determines the ceiling that a student can reach. Good students may infer what is required and have gleaned insights into good writing, however struggling students may be disadvantaged by lack of explicit direction. As shown in Figure 7.1, the arrows move in a direct line from high demand to a good response, or diagonally from high demand to a moderately good response, or from high demand to a limited response. Similarly, an assignment with moderate intellectual demand elicits a moderate or poor response, while if the assignment requires little intellectual engagement, there is little opportunity for the student to excel. Of course there is the exception for the student who has already mastered the academic skills required.

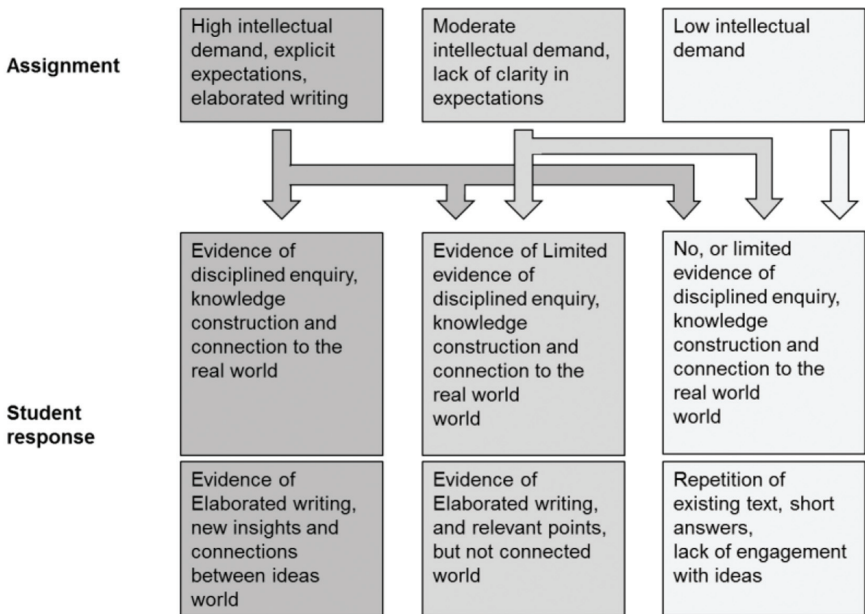


FIGURE 7.1 Relationship of assignment quality to student work

6.3 *Reflections on the Principles of Action Research*

This study achieved a few purposes. It enabled us as course lecturers to engage critically with the design of our own assignments, and with the student responses, thus demonstrating the principles of action research. Through this interaction we were also able to engage with the protocols we had adapted, and thus gauge their intrinsic usefulness, and therefore validate their use for this Assessment and Evaluation module, but also perhaps for other honours courses, and perhaps even for undergraduate courses.

This research has resulted in the production of functioning protocols for the evaluation of assignments and complementary protocols for assessing student work. The evaluation of the three assignment questions resulted in improved versions of the questions and hence improved teaching quality. The application of the student work protocol to the students' offerings enabled us as lecturers to reflect on both student work our own teaching quality.

6.4 *Limitations of the Study*

Schoenfeld (2013) points out the complexities of constructing a protocol as an analysis scheme for empirical use. He describes the many challenges one faces when trying to design a manageable protocol and the many revisions it undergoes before a final product is created. He highlights the contentions between use of the protocol in theory as well as in practice. The purpose of this small scale study was to adapt and design a protocol that served as a lens to interrogate the quality of assignments and student responses, in terms of dimensions on a continuum from high intellectual demand to mere repetition of text or ideas in the prescribed textbook.

The sample, both in terms of the number of assignments, and the number of students on which this study is based is small, the reason being the lecturer-researchers were researching their own practice. The assignment questions were self-selected, for the purpose of validating the protocols, rather than to evaluate the quality of the assignments on the course as a whole. Future research with these refined protocols could assess a range of assignments that are used to assess the students.

In spite of the limitations of this study, the results point to the potential of using such protocols to evaluate and reflect on the quality of assignments in terms of the theoretical aims in a course of study.

7 Summary and Inferences

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between higher quality assignments (in terms of intellectual demand) and the quality of

student work, in a postgraduate honours course (Assessment and Evaluation). In particular, the aim was to study the role of written assignment questions in supporting high authentic intellectual engagement.

The process of engaging with existing protocols developed by Joyce et al. (2018), and adapting them to suit the aims of our course, enabled us – the lecturer-researchers – to sharpen our thinking about the aims of the course as a whole, the quality of the assignments, and the quality of student responses. We aligned our assignment questions with the theory underpinning authentic intellectual work, through the lens of the adapted Intellectual Demand Assignment Protocol (IDAP) for assessing teacher assignments, which comprises *disciplined enquiry*, *construction of knowledge* and *real-world connections*. This meant that we could revise the assignment questions to clearly delineate and formulate aspects of the assignment to cover these dimensions, in order to improve the assignment questions for future student cohorts.

The protocol for assessing student responses enabled us to reflect on the work that students were able to produce in response to the assignment questions, and thereafter on the quality of the assignment. We acknowledge that there are other factors that impact on the ability of students to engage in authentic intellectual work, such as understanding the academic genre, in particular the process of academic writing.

Newmann et al. (2007: 15) make the bold statement that “no single practice or set of practices have been shown to be most effective for varied intellectual outcomes for most students across several grade levels and subjects”. In this regard, we believe focus on teaching quality rather than teacher quality, focuses attention from the task at hand, which is to provide an environment for students to engage in intellectual work.

With the expansion of this study, across entire departments, it would be possible to conduct more rigorous analysis of the assignments in use, and which may enable further validity checks and point to any empirical inconsistencies in the respective protocols, dimensions and the scale points to identify levels of a particular dimension. A suggested recommendation is that teacher professional development should focus on authentic pedagogy, and in particular, authentic intellectual assessment design, in order to contribute to the improvement of student learning and performance. We argue that this will be a key prerequisite of educational systems that are seeking to expand pedagogy and student outcomes beyond a focus on factual and rote knowledge, and enable equitable distribution across diverse social backgrounds.

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Appendix A: Protocol for Evaluation of Assignment

Grading	High authentic intellectual demand (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual demand (2)	Low authentic intellectual demand (1)
<p>Scale 1 – Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in-depth study, elaborated communication)</p>	<p>This task requires drawing on prior knowledge, engagement with text, and extended writing. Students are asked to either make an assertion, state a claim OR draw a conclusion OR suggest a generalisation, OR to support a given assertion with evidence offered by examples, details, illustrations, or facts, and/or reasons.</p>	<p>Students are asked to engage with the text, and answer targeted questions which elicit understanding. The answers are sufficient to complete the task; the task requires raising several points. The task does not require the various points to be related or integrated into an argument, or coherent description.</p>	<p>Single sentences are required or to fill in the blank, or complete the sentence, or a one word answer. Complete a table, or match definitions to descriptions.</p>
<p>Scale 2 – Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)</p>	<p>The dominant expectation of the task is that students construct knowledge and/or an idea. They are required to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information.</p>	<p>The expectation is that students make sense of the existing text, and show understanding, through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information.</p>	<p>There is little or no expectation for students to construct knowledge or an idea. Students can satisfy all of the task requirements by reproducing information they have read, heard, or viewed.</p>
<p>Scale 3 – Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)</p>	<p>The task requires students to take on a real world role. It calls for a product that achieves a purpose beyond simple demonstration of academic competence. In addition the task requires that work be submitted to an audience beyond lecturers, students and graders.</p>	<p>The primary purpose is to demonstrate academic competence. The task requires that students take on a role that they could realistically assume now or in the future.</p>	<p>The task does not specify a role for the student. The primary purpose of the task is to demonstrate academic competence.</p>

Appendix B: Protocol for Assessing Student Work

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response (1)
Scale 1 – Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in-depth study, elaborated communication)	The work includes extended writing that makes an assertion and supports with evidence offered by examples, details, illustrations, or facts, and/or reasons. The work also is sufficiently developed, internally coherent, and effectively organised. The work includes extended writing and detail.	The work includes extended writing, and supports with relevant evidence, but lacks internal coherence and effective organisation.	The writing is a series of isolated sentences or short answers that do not support a central idea.
Scale 2 – Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)	The dominant part of the work constructs knowledge or an idea – the work generates and explores ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information, through the use of academic writing and techniques.	The work demonstrates moderate construction of knowledge or an idea – a portion of the work generates and explores ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information, but not dominant part of the work.	There is little or no construction of knowledge or an idea. All or almost all of the work can be generated by reproducing information they have read, heard, or viewed. Little or no evidence of the use of strategies and techniques.
Scale 3 – Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)	The student takes on a real world role and demonstrates in the product recognition of a purpose beyond simple demonstration of academic competence.	The work stands in isolation of real world engagement but demonstrates academic competence in the connection of ideas.	The student does not demonstrate academic competence.
Scale 4 – Academic writing and referencing skills	The work demonstrates competent command of spelling, grammar and punctuation and effective use of language resources.	Some errors that make it difficult to understand.	Isolated sentences that do not support a central idea.

Appendix C1: Evaluation of Assignment Question 1: Black (1989) Chapter 2

Q1. “Testing and assessment interact with learning; the interaction can be a forward one, in the composition of testing regimes to reflect and support learning aims, or a backward one [affected] by the influence of high stakes tests on goals and methods of work of both teachers and students” (Black, 1998: 22). Rewrite the above statement in your own words, giving examples of the “forward” and “backward” interaction, from your own school experience.
Ch. 2: History

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response(1)
S1. Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in-depth study, elaborated communication)	This task requires drawing on prior knowledge, engagement with text, and extended writing. Students are asked to either make an assertion, state a claim OR draw a conclusion OR suggest a generalisation, OR to support a given assertion with evidence offered by examples, details, illustrations, or facts, and/or reasons.	Students are asked to engage with the text, and answer targeted questions which elicit understanding. The answers are sufficient to complete the task; the task requires raising several points. The task does not require the various points to be related or integrated into an argument, or coherent description.	Single sentences are required or to fill in the blank, or complete the sentence, or a one word answer. Complete a table, or match definitions to descriptions.

Evidence and rationale

Students are required to engage with the text, understand, and rewrite the statement. The second part requires illustrations that confirm understanding.

(cont.)

Appendix C1: Evaluation of Assignment Question 1: Black (1989) Chapter 2 (cont.)

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response(1)
<p>S2. Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating synthesising)</p>	<p>The dominant expectation of the task is that students construct knowledge and/or an idea. They are required to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information.</p>	<p>The expectation is that students make sense of the existing text, and show understanding through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information.</p>	<p>There is little or no expectation for students to construct knowledge or an idea. Students can satisfy all of the task requirements by reproducing information they have read, heard, or viewed.</p>
<p><i>Evidence and rationale</i></p>	<p>Students are required to rewrite, then apply this knowledge to the analysis and synthesis of own experience.</p>		
<p>S3. Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)</p>	<p>The task requires students to take on a real world role. It calls for a product that achieves a purpose beyond simple demonstration of academic competence. In addition the task requires that work be submitted to an audience beyond lecturers, students and graders.</p>	<p>The primary purpose is to demonstrate academic competence. The task requires that students take on a role but one that students could not realistically assume now or in the future.</p>	<p>The task does not specify a role for the student. The primary purpose of the task is to demonstrate academic competence.</p>
<p><i>Evidence and rationale</i></p>	<p>Students primarily required to demonstrate academic competence. This new competence may equip students for school or local leadership.</p>		

Appendix C2: Evaluation of Assignment Question 2: Black (1989) Chapter 4 – Reliability and Validity

Q2. “The relative importance of reliability and validity depends on the purpose of an assessment, they can be in competition in that one can often be enhanced only at the expense of the other” (Black, 1998: 54). Give a brief definition of reliability and validity. Why are these two terms usually linked together? What are the distinct differences? Give an example which illustrates the statement above.

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response (1)
S1. Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in-depth study, elaborated communication)	This task requires drawing on prior knowledge, engagement with text, and extended writing. Students are asked to either make an assertion, state a claim OR draw a conclusion OR suggest a generalisation, OR to support a given assertion with evidence offered by examples, details, illustrations, or facts, and/or reasons.	Students are asked to engage with the text, and answer targeted questions which elicit understanding. The answers are sufficient to complete the task; the task requires raising several points. The task does not require the various points to be related or integrated into an argument, or coherent description.	Single sentences are required or to fill in the blank, or complete the sentence, or a one word answer. Complete a table, or match definitions to descriptions.
<i>Evidence and rationale</i>	Define two related concepts. Draw a conclusion, and illustrate through examples.		
S2. Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)	The dominant expectation is that students construct knowledge and/or an idea – to generate and explore ideas <i>through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or</i> evaluation of information, through the use of academic writing and techniques	There is some expectation that students construct knowledge or an idea – to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information, though writing skills are not expected.	There is little or no expectation for students to construct knowledge or an idea. Students can satisfy all of the task requirements by reproducing information they have read, heard, or viewed.

(cont.)

Appendix C2: Evaluation of Assignment Question 2: Black (1989) Chapter 4 – Reliability and Validity (cont.)

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response (1)
<i>Evidence and rationale</i>		Construct knowledge through analysis, synthesis of concepts, and illustration through an example.	
S3. Real-world connection (impact or influence on others)	The task requires students to take on a real world role. The task also calls for a product that achieves a purpose beyond simple demonstration of academic competence. In addition the task requires that work be submitted to an audience beyond lecturers, students and graders.	The task requires that students take on a role but one that students could not realistically assume now or in the future. The primary purpose is to demonstrate academic competence.	The task does not specify a role for the student. The primary purpose of the task is to demonstrate academic competence.
<i>Evidence and rationale</i>	Primary purpose is to demonstrate academic competence. Student may perform real-world role, though in a limited local context.		

Appendix C3: Evaluation of Assignment Question 3: Black (1989) Chapter 8 – Self-Assessment

Q3. “Pupil self-assessment has a consequence that they are more motivated and conscious in relation to their work. They are more responsible and their efforts are more long-term and goal centred” (Black & Atkin, 1996: 110, cited in Black, 1998: 135).

The above statement is affirmative about the role of self-assessment. From the discussion in this chapter, what evidence does Black give that could support this statement? What is your view? Do you agree, or disagree? Give reasons.

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response (1)
S1. Disciplined enquiry (prior knowledge, in-depth study, elaborated communication)	This task requires drawing on prior knowledge, engagement with text, and extended writing. Students are asked to either make an assertion, state a claim OR draw a conclusion OR suggest a generalisation, OR to support a given assertion with evidence offered by examples, details, illustrations, or facts, and/or reasons.	Students are asked to engage with the text, and answer targeted questions which elicit understanding. The answers are sufficient to complete the task; the task requires raising several points. The task does not require the various points to be related or integrated into an argument, or coherent description.	Single sentences are required or to fill in the blank, or complete the sentence, or a one word answer. Complete a table, or match definitions to descriptions.
Evidence and rationale	Support or refute a given assertion, giving reasons from both the text and from own experience.		
S2. Construction of knowledge (organising, interpreting, evaluating and synthesising)	The dominant expectation is that students construct knowledge and/or an idea – to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information, through the use of academic writing and techniques.	There is some expectation that students construct knowledge or an idea – to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of information, though some writing skills are expected.	There is little or no expectation for students to construct knowledge or an idea. Students can satisfy all of the task requirements by reproducing information they have read, heard, or viewed. Little or no direction given in the use of strategies and techniques.

(cont.)

Appendix C3: Evaluation of Assignment Question 3: Black (1989) Chapter 8 – Self-Assessment (cont.)

Grading	High authentic intellectual response (3)	Moderate authentic intellectual response (2)	Low authentic intellectual response (1)
<i>Evidence and rationale</i>		Students required to engage with the arguments for self-assessment given in the text, construct a case for or against the stated assertion.	
S3- Real-world connection (influence or impact on others)	The task requires students to take on a real world role. The task also calls for a product that achieves a purpose beyond simple demonstration of academic competence. In addition the task requires that work be submitted to an audience beyond lecturers, students and graders.	The task requires that students take on a role but one that students could not realistically assume now or in the future. The primary purpose is to demonstrate academic competence	The task does not specify a role for the student. The primary purpose of the task is to demonstrate academic competence.
<i>Evidence and rationale</i>		Demonstrate academic competence. A local role within the school community regarding change in classroom practice.	

Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instruction

What Lessons for Economics Lecturers in South Africa?

Loïse Jeannin and Emmanuel Ojo

Abstract

In this chapter, we argue that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) have not received enough attention despite their potential to improve economics teaching in South Africa. There is an ongoing debate about the Africanisation of knowledge in South African universities, and CRT and DI can help economics lecturers draw on the diversity of their students while increasing the relevance of economics teaching. Analysing how the pedagogical principles of CRT and DI can be unpacked in the South African context, we point out that CRT and DI can enable lecturers to better engage learners in their classes by providing context-relevant content, authentic learning activities and fair assessments. Economics lecturers can draw on students' intrinsic motivation by offering a menu of learning activities to help students connect their learning with their socioeconomic backgrounds and the realities of their life in South Africa. The chapter argues that despite the learning opportunities related to transnational academic staff being underrated, mobility within the Southern African region is expected to benefit researchers, university lecturers, and their institutions. Further, transnational mobility can facilitate research and teaching collaboration and capacity development.

Keywords

culturally responsive teaching – differentiated instruction – teaching in higher education – economics education – South African university

Africans in particular do not come to university to escape or erase their Africanness, but to confirm and articulate their roots.

MALEGAPURU W. MAKGOBA (1997: 77)



1 Introduction

South Africa is a culturally rich, diverse country with 11 official languages and a history marked by the scars of an apartheid regime. Partly as a challenge to the past and its residue in the present, the #FeesMustFall movement which started in 2015 has evolved into a decolonisation debate. This debate about rethinking how university curriculums are taught, has continued within South African universities since then. There has been a strong call for Africanisation of knowledge, and various authors believe that this offers an opportunity to regenerate the content and the pedagogical approaches used in higher education (Maringe & Ojo, 2017; Steyn & Reygan, 2017). This chapter aligns with the decolonisation debate and aims to contribute to the regeneration and critical rebalancing of higher education teaching (Pitsoe & Dichaba, 2014; Ramoupi, 2011). Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and differentiated instruction (DI) applied to the teaching of economics in South African universities are examined in this chapter. While CRT aims to accommodate diverse learners in a class, drawing on their cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity (Gay, 2002, 2010), DI enables students' access to different contents, learning activities, or assessments in the classroom (Heacox, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014). The chapter conceptually investigates how these two pedagogical approaches can be relevant for teaching economics and how they could contribute to making tertiary education more connected to the realities of life in South Africa.

Drawing on insights from relevant literature, the core question this chapter explores is: *How can CRT and DI be used to teach economics in a context-relevant manner in the South African higher education environment?* The question draws on the current debates concerning the Africanisation of what is taught at universities (Le Grange, 2016) and the reform of economics teaching (Peterson & McGoldrick, 2009). We voluntarily adopt a practical stance in addressing this question to meet economics lecturers' needs.

1.1 *Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) and Differentiated Instruction (DI)*

This section presents theoretical and conceptual insights from the literature focusing on the value of CRT and DI in the current South African context, especially in economics classes. Focusing on a South African online university, Pitsoe and Dichaba (2014) advocate for the use of CRT to accommodate three generations of students (baby boomers, X- and Y-generations). Acknowledging the digital revolution, these authors recommended CRT as relevant in meeting the learning needs of diverse students across generational and cultural divides. CRT is presented as an emancipatory and transformative pedagogy to

the extent that students' values and cultures are not only praised, but also used to teach students effectively (Bamber, Lewin & White, 2018; Pitsoe & Dichaba, 2014; Rector-Aranda, 2018).

2 Pedagogical Responsive Learning

Pitsoe and Dichaba (2014: 1358) argue for “a pedagogy responsive to the learning, emotional and social needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students with and without disabilities”. The authors encouraged lecturers to embrace students' diversity in co-constructing knowledge by applying CRT principles and drawing on the funds of knowledge as described by Moll et al. (1992). Culturally sensitive teachers are expected to embrace students' different perspectives and connect them with a wide spectrum of philosophies, theories, and methodologies used across different cultures (Pitsoe & Dichaba, 2014). Doing this, according to the authors, enables students to feel proud of their cultural heritage and value their own perspectives while developing their critical thinking skills, which are deemed crucial in economics classes. Invariably, the argument for CRT aims at cultural inclusion and academic excellence. This approach has been advocated in mathematics teaching and other disciplines (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Williams, Edwards, Kuhel & Lim, 2016) and we extend these recommendations to economics teaching in South Africa.

The way university economics has been taught, using a mainstream orthodox paradigm, has been strongly criticised – especially following the 2008 financial and economic crisis leading to changes in the economics curriculum (Abito et al., 2011; Shiller, 2010). In a qualitative study of university economics lecturers in large undergraduate classes in South Africa, Ojo (2016) reports that the majority lecturers wished to make their teaching more relevant to the socio-economic realities of students. Ojo (2016) recommends scaffolding students' learning by using real-life examples and textbooks that feature South African examples. In the same vein, Ojo and Jeannin (2016) argue for a revision of the economics curriculum to include a broader perspective of socio-economic relationships and to depart from the dominant use of mathematical models and neoclassical dogma.

As the socio-economic, environmental, and political contexts are entwined, Peterson and McGoldrick (2009) support the adoption of pluralism in teaching economics. By using multiple paradigms, lecturers can help students extract and critically analyse the complexity of socio-economic relationships and construct relevant meanings within the economic context of South Africa.

3 Relevance of CRT and DI in the South African Context

CRT can be useful to economics teaching in South Africa as it draws on students' prior knowledge and initial understanding and experience of economic relationships. This is demonstrated in empirical South African research by Ojo (2016). The pedagogical approach encourages lecturers to use examples and case studies anchored in an African context or featuring African companies, as recommended by researchers in other parts of the world (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Pimpa, 2009). CRT proposes that learning must be connected to students' socio-economic realities and business experiences, without totally dismissing Western or Anglo-Saxon world views. CRT rebalances the curriculum content to provide learning experiences and activities that develop students' skill sets and autonomy, while respecting and even nurturing their diverse perspectives and skills. For example, the experiences of university undergraduate economics students can be broadened by site visits to companies and by discussions with guest speakers from diverse socio-economic communities and backgrounds.

CRT encourages lecturers to be open to students' diverse ways of knowing and learning, and to consider their diversity of age, gender, experiences, and socio-economic as well as cultural backgrounds. It reflects the arguments of other scholars for respecting different epistemologies and learning preferences (see Crose, 2011; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007; Merriam et al., 2007; Ntseane, 2011). As such, DI can be beneficial as it offers students learning opportunities through a menu of activities, contents, and assessments. Economics lecturers can, for instance, allow students to choose between participating in a problem-solving group (with a final oral presentation) or writing an individual essay. In this case, students must know in advance that both activities will be fairly assessed on the basis of equivalent grading rubrics. Lecturers can present this menu of activities as an opportunity for students to develop their strengths, or alternatively, to start building new skills. As observed by Ojo (2016), lecturers pursue different objectives when teaching economics, and these objectives can be met through differentiated exercises.

By recognising everyone's connectedness as well as offering care and respect to individuals in the class environment, CRT abides by the South African principles of *ubuntu* (Waghid & Shanyanana, 2016). It encourages students and lecturers to learn from each other, value the richness of their diverse perspectives, and contribute to students' holistic development of the mind, the spirit, and the body (Merriam & Kim, 2011). When teachers make the classroom inclusive by inviting community members and diverse ethnic experiences, they contribute to positive social change and support authentic learning beyond fears, stereotypes, and misunderstandings.

4 CRT and DI For Tertiary Economics Education: The Theoretical Nexus

CRT is a pedagogical approach that aims to truly accommodate students' diversity of learning needs and perspectives by welcoming different conceptions and ways of learning in the shared space of the classroom. The main contributors to the development of CRT are Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay, whose theories are reviewed below. CRT draws on a constructivist philosophical background in which knowledge is negotiated and grounded in people's history and experiences. The discipline of economics, as it is currently taught in higher education (in South Africa and beyond), remains theoretically driven (Ojo, Booth & Woollacott, 2018). CRT is suitable for studying economic relationships in that they cannot be separated from the wider scope of human and social behaviours in culturally shared contexts (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007).

In the 1990s, drawing on Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Ladson-Billings began to conceptualise a culturally relevant pedagogy while working with African American communities. She states:

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1995: 160)

Ladson-Billings (1995) contends that all students should be able to achieve academically, while developing their cultural competence and their critical thinking skills with regard to society and culture. She shows that good teachers are all passionate about their roles and about giving back to society (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In addition to expecting high achievement from all learners, these teachers enjoy helping students to scaffold their learning from their personal base of knowledge and experiences. This invariably helps learners to engage in collaborative learning. Learners consider themselves part of the community and approach knowledge as constructed. Hence, Ladson-Billings (1995) encourages teachers to provide authentic learning activities while they remain open to students' learning interests and needs.

DI has been conceptualised and developed by various scholars (such as Heacox, 2012; Santamaría, 2009; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2009; Tomlinson, 2014). It draws on the differentiation of content (degrees of knowledge complexity), process (different learning activities), and product (varying assessed outcomes) within a specific learning environment, to enable students to engage in

meaningful learning activities. DI considers the diversity of learners' abilities, rhythms, readiness to learn, learning preferences, and interests (Borja, Soto & Sanchez, 2015). In their study of 25 graduate students, Santangelo and Tomlinson (2009: 318) explain that:

Students strongly endorsed class-based activities and course assignments that allowed them to select topics and tasks that were at an appropriate level of complexity and that were personally relevant. These options increased motivation to put forth effort, enhanced understanding and internalisation of the concepts, and created a desire to pursue additional, independent learning.

4.1 *Enhancing Economics Teaching in South African Universities*

There is a dearth of literature concerning South African tertiary economics education. However, the few authors who have contributed to the debate agree that traditional approaches through 'chalk and talk' have dominated the economics classroom (Marire, 2018; Ojo, 2016; Ojo et al., 2018; Ojo & Jeannin, 2016; Schroenn Goebel, 2017). This traditional pedagogical approach and its theory-driven content with numerous mathematical models foreground the need to examine the value of CRT and DI to regenerate the South African way of teaching economics.

Within this context, and considering the diversity of the undergraduate student population in South Africa, what lessons can be drawn from the pedagogical practice of CRT and DI? To address this question, we offer a series of sub-questions to help economics lecturers think differently about their teaching, with reference to the wide literature on CRT and DI (see Gay, 2010; Pitsoe & Dichaba, 2014; Richards et al., 2007; The Education Alliance, 2006; Tomlinson, 2014). These questions aim to help lecturers to reflect on their teaching practices and consider the actions necessary to increase their classes' potential for inclusiveness and differentiation.

- *Are students affecting the content taught in economics classes and the assessment modalities?*

It is crucial to encourage students to co-construct economic knowledge that makes sense for them from an historical and socio-economic perspective (Gay, 2010). Lecturers can experiment with the negotiated syllabus (Harris, 2010) and encourage students to suggest topics of interest. As inspired by Santamaría (2009), instructors can also allow students to choose among different learning tasks, enabling them to develop different competencies, such as presentation or written skills.

- *Are students able to work on projects that are directly related to their lives or community?*

It is important to reconcile learning with students' real-life contexts in a given socio-economic context (Aceves & Orosco, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In addition to acknowledging the students' own fund of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), lecturers may use problem-solving teaching by asking students to identify a community/company issue, collect data (interviews and documents), and write a brief report that could contribute to economic and social change (Bridges & Hallinger, 1996).

- *Is collaboration encouraged, especially between culturally diverse students?*

Collaboration plays an important and integral role in knowledge creation and production, including that which occurs in the classroom. Collaboration offers the space for using academic activities as an opportunity for cross-fertilisation of ideas in a diverse, multicultural and multilingual South African classroom. Lecturers need to explain the importance of developing one's own intercultural sensitivity before suggesting that students work in assigned groups (embracing cultural, gender, and age diversity). In such an assignment, it is necessary to support students throughout the team project by emphasising the importance of constant communication to build trust and confidence, and to minimise misinterpretations. As proposed in Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory, students will learn more effectively from their knowledgeable peers if meaningful sharing is encouraged (Borja et al., 2015). In addition, instructors may ask students to write a brief report about their learning experiences. This raises self-awareness about their beliefs and reflects on their intercultural and collaborative experiences, as illustrated by Erez et al. (2013) in the online environment, and by Elliott and Reynolds (2014) in a face-to-face context.

- *Can students use a language other than English to collaborate?*

A socially just effort is required to acknowledge linguistic diversity within the classroom, enabling students to feel welcome in the academic sphere. Lecturers may enable students to use the languages they wish during group activities to facilitate peer work and support. By accommodating different languages in the classroom, instructors encourage students to embed their learning in their own language and knowledge base.

5 Conclusion

We have extended the discussion in Chapter 6 of this book by suggesting ways in which CRT and DI can improve economics teaching in South African

universities. Specific examples are by offering a menu of learning activities, accommodating students' diverse perspectives, and using content that is relevant to the South African context. On this basis, we argue that these pedagogical methodologies make teaching more relevant for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Using CRT and DI, economics lecturers who are culturally sensitive and inclusive are given the opportunity to transform their pedagogy by enabling students engage in authentic and meaningful learning activities. In addition, this presents a space for lecturers to critically analyse their socio-economic environment, aligning their inclusivity with student's diversity. To avoid creating a gap between students' identity development and their academic success, the use of CRT and DI in the economics classroom is strengthened when teachers "consciously make connections to students' cultures, languages, and everyday experiences in order for students to experience academic achievement while preserving their cultural and linguistic identities" (Aceves & Orosco, 2014: 22).

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Corporeity in PhD Thesis Writing

Rituals and ‘Writing Gestures’

Elsa Chachkine and Anne Jorro

Abstract

In this chapter, we explore the role played by the body in thesis writing for professionals involved in doctoral studies at the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (Cnam). Our hypothesis is that writing a PhD thesis is not just an intellectual engagement, but also an emotional as well as a bodily engagement. Thus, in this research we refer to the “writing gesture” when undertaking the writing of a PhD thesis. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are Mauss’s ethnographic works (Mauss, 1950, 1947), for whom the body is “man’s first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means”. It is also rooted in anthropological studies around “the rites of passage” (Van Genep, 1987), re-explored for the writing activity of adult learners by Delamotte et al. (2000). The first section of our research tries to understand the role played by the body at the various stages of writing the PhD thesis. The second section identifies five “writing gestures” that PhD supervisors and PhD candidates should be aware of.

Keywords

bodily engagement – PhD thesis – research posture – liminality – corporeity – gesture

1 Introduction

For professionals who are writing a PhD thesis, the development of specific PhD writing skills presents a significant challenge. In this piece of adult learning research, we explore the intellectual, emotional and bodily engagement of adults who are studying for a PhD and writing their thesis. Our hypothesis is that writing a PhD thesis is not purely an intellectual engagement, but also an emotional as well as a bodily one. The student’s emotions and bodily

actions help to address the challenge. Thus, in this research we refer to the idea of ‘writing gestures’ in PhD thesis writing, leaning on Mauss’s ethnographic works (Mauss, 1950, 1947), in which the body is described as “man’s first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means”. This research is also rooted in anthropological studies around “the rites of passage” (Van Genep, 1987) that were re-explored by Delamotte, Gippet, Jorro and Penloup (2000) in terms of the writing activity of adult learners.

Ten professionals engaging in PhD research took part in the present qualitative research. They answered a written questionnaire and participated in comprehensive semi-controlled interviews (Kaufmann, 2001). Our participants, working in the fields of education, social work, health and information sciences, engaged in doctoral research for different personal and professional purposes such as supporting promotion of their professional profile. The first section of this study seeks to understand the role played by the body’s activity during the various stages of writing the PhD thesis. The second section describes five ‘writing gestures’. These gestures are shaped by each writer’s personal biography, or they could be influenced by their subject and by materials mobilised for their PhD study.

2 The Writing Process for Adult Learners

Academic writing can present specific challenges for adult learners. These include not only physical engagement in the writing process, but also tension, feelings of insecurity and coping with the various steps which can be thought of as ‘rituals’. It therefore follows that the role of language in adult education has been highlighted for different written tasks, such as an internship report (Dejemeppe & Dezutter, 2001; Jorro, 2014), reflective learning journals (Bucheton & Chabane, 1999; Deleted for anonymity, 2002), or portfolios (Merhan, 2014). In all such writing, the author needs to reflect on his or her actions and experiences, and this can be a real challenge for adult learners who are used to producing short pieces of professional writing. In particular, it poses an internal struggle for the professional, as a certain objective distance must be maintained from the research participants when writing a PhD thesis (Pollet, 2001).

A PhD thesis is a long, structured piece of written work that must comply with certain norms. At stake is certification of the researcher as having succeeded in their doctoral endeavour (Reuter, 1998). The other vital aim of a doctoral study is the production of scientific knowledge in the form of a contribution to their field of study. This means that the PhD candidate writes not

only for his or her supervisor, but must also keep in mind the future jury members who will certify (or not) the study, thus issuing judgement on whether the candidate merits entry into the postdoctoral research community. He or she also writes the thesis for the benefit of other researchers, experts and practitioners in the explored field.

The PhD candidate needs to adopt a research posture (or standpoint), while at the same time conducting the task of writing up the research study. This dual posture (of trying to be a researcher and writing up the thesis) is often described as generating tensions. Indeed, doctoral students are at the intersection of two different socio-cultural spheres, that is, at the point where training and research intersect (Reuter, 2004; Delcambre, 2009; Rinck, 2011). On the one hand, the PhD candidate has to demonstrate that he or she has developed the requisite knowledge and skills to be admitted by the community, in accordance with its own norms. On the other hand, he or she doesn't control it, and this can result in major tension.

Research conducted by Delamotte et al. (2000) – rooted in anthropological studies around *The Rites of Passage* (Van Genep, 1987) – considers the concept of “passage to and by the writing” (Delamotte et al., 2000). This study presents three different functions of ‘passage’, namely ‘separation’, ‘liminality’ and ‘incorporation’. These correspond to three stages in writing a PhD thesis, which are discussed in turn below.

During the first stage, the writer is in an uncomfortable situation. Rather than beginning to write immediately, he or she circles around the actual act, and can feel utterly befuddled in front of the blank page. He or she might seek self-reassurance by organising the physical work space, then leave, only to return a few minutes later, and then leave again. This hither-and-thither behaviour reflects the internal struggle faced by the writer as he or she attempts to begin the writing process. In the same vein, Dabène (1987: 57) refers to “writing insecurity”. This means that the writer experiences much anxiety related to the internal contradiction between negative poles (for example, the judgment of others) and positive poles (such as things that are under their control), which may consume part of their energy as they seek to express their ideas.

The liminal stage is reached when the writer becomes immersed in their writing – when words start to flow; they add and delete, in trying to find the exact word or expression, and they reorder and rewrite text in more appropriate ways to express what they want to say. At this stage, the writer is fully mobilised – biographically, socially, cognitively and linguistically (Delamotte et al., 2000). At the liminal stage, the writer is going through an interpretative process, confronting ideas that emerge from their own history, and their manner of expression bears traces of their own emotional connotations.

The third phase (incorporation or re-aggregation) marks the end of the writing process. A piece of writing has been produced which is the tangible proof of having come to the end of this rite of passage. The writing now reflects the essence of the whole person. This passage through the writing process is symbolically intense: if it develops its own order, then the writer is able to transform feelings of pressure and insecurity in order to create a piece of writing that is fundamentally their own. The experience demonstrates the dual process of reflection and creation. We now present more details of what the doctoral student candidate experiences during the different writing stages.

3 Corporeity in Writing

Many pieces of research have investigated writing processes (Dabène, 1987; Reuter, 1998; Delamotte et al., 2000; Reuter, 2004; Delcambre, 2009), the development of specific discourses, and the position of the writer, but nothing appears to have been written about the notion of ‘corporeity’ in writing except in relation to the process of physical writing and its gestures. In fact, in this field, research has highlighted the process of drawing letters and symbols being closely linked with the meaning of the resulting words. Within this framework, the background is cultural, and aesthetic – nay, even philosophical (Guérin, 2011).

The fact remains that writing is not only a cognitive process; however, in Western cultures, the body has become invisible in writing practices (Joas, 1999). In these contexts, all the autobiographical dimensions relating to the act of writing are ignored, in spite of the fact that these dimensions could be the foundations of good writing practices. Flusser (1999) presents an anthropological view of a person’s daily gestures, and links thought and gestures in analysing the writing process: “Thinking before articulation is only a virtuality, which is to say, nothing. It is realised through the gesture. Strictly speaking, there is no thinking before making a gesture. [...] To have unwritten ideas really means to have nothing” (Flusser, 1999: 24). Hence in the framework of this research, we investigate the writing practice of doctoral candidates in trying to understand the place of the body during the particular process of writing a PhD thesis.

The physical place where the body is located is embedded in various rituals, as described in the work of van Genep (1987), and reutilised in the work of Delamotte et al. (2000). In this view, the writing work space forms a space for the writer will begin the activity of writing. Browsing or walking around a room, or even changing the place where one sits to write, reflect physical engagement in the writing process. Even such small gestures as getting up and

sitting down again demonstrate the writer's engagement with the physical space. Van Genep's work is complemented by a second theoretical underpinning in the form of Mauss's ethnographic works (Mauss, 1950, 1947). For him, the body is "man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means" (1950: 372).

4 Exploring the Research and Methodological Context

4.1 *Research Questions*

In this research study, we sought to answer three main questions:

- What is the writer's engagement with the physical space in the process of writing a PhD thesis?
- What are the rituals in the writing practice? Are rituals associated with a particular type of writing practice?

Considering the fact that writing a PhD thesis is not only an intellectual engagement, but also an emotional as well as a bodily one, in this research we refer to 'writing gestures' displayed by adult learners when undertaking the writing of a PhD thesis. Our third research question is:

- What specific gestures are exhibited by PhD students during the writing process?

We sought to answer this question in order to understand the various writing steps they go through, with particular focus on the importance of the personal engagement in the physical space

4.2 *The Research and Methodological Context*

Ten participants volunteered from among professionals enrolled in a PhD programme in the Abbé Grégoire doctoral school at the Cnam. The Cnam is a French institution dedicated to life-long higher education. The Cnam intends to fulfil the educational needs of adults at any stage of their career, in the economic, technical and social field. The doctoral school is made up of research units in the field of human sciences (Management Sciences, Workplace Sociology, Education Sciences, Architecture, etc.). For the most part, the participants were members of the *Centre de Recherche sur la Formation (CRF)*, which is an Education Sciences research unit. The other two participants are doctoral students in information science and economics. There were eight women and two men, ranging in age from 28 to 66 years, with an average age of 50.

TABLE 9.1 Information about the participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Profession	PhD completion time	PhD defended	Discipline
FB	41	F	Social educator	3 years	2016	Education Sciences
LPQ	54	M	Hospital executive	5 years	2015	Education Sciences
FPM	55	F	Education advisor	5 years	2015	Education Sciences
P	64	M	Retired engineer	5 years	2015	Education Sciences
LL	47	F	Educator and manager in the health field	–	In progress: 4th year	Education Sciences
PR	58	F	Educator	8 years	2015	Education Sciences
LP	54	F	Educator	5 years	2016	Education Sciences
MG	66	F	Retired social work educator	9 years	2014	Education Sciences
LC	32	F	Teacher in information science	–	In progress: 5th year	Information Science
RA	28	F	Journalist and feminist blogger	3 years	2016	Economics

Most participants began their doctoral studies after having gained significant professional experience in the workplace. However, this long period of professional experience does not necessarily mean that they are acquainted with writing or have the ability to produce scientific writing. The decision to choose candidates from the CRF was based on the fact that they had attended a doctoral workshop which had raised their awareness of the importance and process of scientific writing. Consequently, they could acknowledge the difficulties involved in scientific writing, and learned how to express and discuss their rituals when they start writing, which personal strategies they use to begin the writing process, and their writing engagement. From our point of view, their oral evidence constitutes a substantial and valuable corpus. Since this study was conducted, eight of the participants have already been awarded their doctorate and the other two have almost completed writing up their theses.

4.3 *Data Collection*

Two data collection tools were used in conducting this qualitative study of writing engagement among PhD students and to understand the place of the body in this process. Firstly, the participants completed an online questionnaire with open-ended questions, in order to collect information about their environment (habits, representation – or conception – of the writing process, etc.). Secondly, a comprehensive semi-controlled interview (Kaufmann, 2001) was conducted with each participant in order to gain more profound insights into their particular writing activities. A rich bank of data was collected, as a result of the positive two-way interaction between the participants and the researchers (the authors of this chapter). The comprehensive semi-controlled interview protocol evolved between the beginning of the interview process (May, 2017) and the last interview (June 2017), in order to integrate our insights into the advancing research process. As the interviews progressed, the place of the body in the writing activity was more explicitly broached, so that the participants might verbalise things which might previously have been sub-conscious.

Interviews lasted from 35 to 70 minutes, and were recorded and transcribed in a trustworthy manner: {.} indicates a one second pause, {...} a two seconds pause, capital letters indicate a speaker emphasis, / and \ indicate a rising and a falling intonation and {laugh} indicates a non-verbal activity. Interviews were conducted in French and quotations from the responses have been translated into English for this publication. Content analysis was conducted in order to identify and gather information about relevant themes. The data was summarised using the following coding frames:

1. **The materiality of writing (laptop, notebook, pencils, board, etc.).**

Writer	Writing rituals	Corporeity in writing activity	Analysis
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S₁

S₂

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2. Issues about self-knowledge, writing, reading and writing gestures: the activity of the writer displays multiple gestures, which accompany the writing process from the beginning, and may continue throughout the writing activity. Some activities help and some amplify the writing, and our role was to identify and analyse these gestures:

3.

Writer	Specific knowledge about writing and reading; Personal knowledge	Writing gestures	Analysis
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S₁

S₂

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5 The Question of the Body at Work

The first analysis seeks to find the place of the body during in the writing activity. The collected data contains many references to the materiality of writing (computer, pencils, notebook, board, etc.). Although this subject has been explored in other studies (Delamotte et al., 2000), our findings presented here focus on corporeity in writing processes.

5.1 *Writing Anywhere and at Any Time*

The data shows that many places are used during the writing process: places connected to sleep (bed, night table), meals (dining room, kitchen, table, cafeteria at work), transport (train, tube/underground, walking between work and home) or washing (shower):

PM: But I have written sitting on the bed/ because I suddenly remember something or because I have just 30 minutes to rewrite something; uh:

on a uh rough draft/ or I might write in the kitchen and that's because I don't want to lose my train of thought at that moment. (interview)

LPQ: ... that time I was in the cafeteria of the hospital/ it was really noisy/ it was complicated because it was a paediatric hospital so parents were in the cafeteria/ close family members/ siblings/ I could hear very difficult conversations/ uh about ill children/ it was difficult/ I really experienced difficulties but I didn't put my pen down ... this was the first step when I collected materials and theoretical elements. (interview)

LP: When I didn't have enough time to dive into the writing, I wrote summaries, I wrote in books or on my articles (I could see the development of my ideas and insights, as each was dated). It might take place in a library or at home, in a hotel room, or on the train. Indeed, I made the most of such moments when I could be interrupted at any time without it creating too many problems. (questionnaire)

The range of places mentioned is linked to the breaks that may occur naturally around a full-time job and family life. These breaks are seized upon by students, because they allow for the liberation of thought and the construction of the PhD research:

LPQ: Afterwards, there was the theoretical investigation and research issue phase/ and that/ that was an extraordinary experience because brainwaves happened everywhere/ when walking/ in the underground/ when taking a shower uh/ and at that moment you must write quickly because it quickly slips away/ {...} then I started the first data analysis/ and then ideas could come up anywhere {.} at work/ in my office/ I am doing something completely different/ I answer a phone call/ I look at my screen/ I answer at the same time to what's-his-name/ I prepare my presentation for the afternoon/ that's my working routine/ and suddenly/ the revelation {laugh} I fall to my knees/ inside, I can feel myself fall to my knees/ it is the revelation/ and then I write. (interview)

In this way, places and moments which occur in the students' tight schedules contribute to the writing process: this finding is common for all the PhD candidates in this study. This reflects the deep engagement of the PhD candidates in writing up their research studies. Such small breaks are not only used in a practical way, but they are linked to special spaces that contribute to the construction of research activities – they are the place and the moment when brainwaves became tangible on sheets of paper, on post-it notes and in notebooks. These breaks or spaces are facilitated by physical features – the objects

around the student – as well as by mental, sensory and motivational aspects which allow the student to take advantage of their affordances.

5.2 *Construction of a Favourable Environment for PhD Writing*

Even if novice researchers seem to know how to take advantage of some affordances in terms of time and space, they are also preoccupied with building a favourable place in which to write the PhD thesis. The choice of a specific environment is linked to a particular writing activity (e.g. transcribing oral data, reading and writing notes, or writing parts of the thesis). Some writing activities are more ritualised than others, and express the different stages in the aforementioned ‘passage’ through the writing process: separation (uncomfortable situations, writing insecurity), liminality (verbal flow) and incorporation (writing now incorporates a process of reflection by the writer). These rituals must be understood as specific behaviours with specific rules, usually characterised by a cycle of repetition, and they point to values which involve the use of the body.

5.3 *The Search for Well-Being*

To get into the act of writing, all participants stated that they sought or needed to “feel good” (PP, interview). For example, they expressed the need for a comfortable chair, light or silence:

- FB: My armchair means a lot to me! [...] if it was a chair/ {.} it would be difficult/ it is not ultra-comfortable/ one of the armrests is broken/ you see/ it is not the best/ I'm not sure the other armrest will last until the end. (interview)
- FPM: in other words to start writing/ that's it – things must be in order/ let's say/ it's always on a table/ I only work on a laptop/ [...] in a place where I feel good/ basically it's always in my kitchen or the veranda it's never in my office {small laugh}/ I only worked once in the office to do the transcript/ because I had oral interview data/ I really needed silence/ (interview)
- LPQ: In concrete terms/ when it falls silent/ well, I sit down in front of my computer/ I sit myself down in a comfortable armchair with cushions/ a suitable lamp and then either I read/ or I write/ so uh/ and there are moments when I have to lie down/ on the sofa which is empty at night. (interview)

This search for well-being is often accompanied by hot drinks (coffee or tea) which boost self-confidence and strongly increase sensations. These drinks help to set off and start writing, as well as to accompany ongoing writing:

PP: I lock myself in my bedroom [.] uh and I take a cup of tea [...] for me that's how I start writing/ the physical conditions which I place around me/ [...] AH my cup of tea/ in fact it comforts me/ it comforts me and I have the feeling/ that uh above all it comforts me and it's like having some company/ then it's hot so I absorb something hot/ uh/ and uh in fact it accompanies me whilst I write my few sentences. (interview)

5.4 *The Search for Isolation*

All participants in this study stated that a vital condition for progressing through the writing passage is isolation – the need to create a bubble, and find quiet. This assists their passage towards the ‘expression’ and the gesture of recovery-reformulation described later). The participants have a predilection for writing later on in the evening, when children are in bed (LL interview), or during the night “when it falls silent” (LPQ, interview):

LL: uh I told myself I finish my PhD [...] in my bedroom where I have silence and then in the library where all the books are which I frequently use/ well/ in the end they ended up in my bedroom {laugh} I feel good in this set-up/ since a couple of MONTHS/ and as I told you there's also the data which I've collected and organised/ and suits me/ so I think that this stage is the end of the writing/ when I was in my first office I couldn't look to the future/ I really have an environment which I have built as I have gone along/ and now it is just right for me. (interview)

While note taking, data collection, and the transcription of momentary ideas can happen anywhere and in any circumstances, the final writing activity takes place in isolation, and its own rhythm is sought, separate from work, the family, and the list of daily activities:

LP: For the writing, I wanted, nay even needed to be alone, to find myself, in my temporality, my imaginary world, not to have to account to others for what I was doing and where ... For example, if I woke up during the night, I could work if I wanted, I could go to bed late, I could eat at odd hours, be in communion with myself, talk loudly with myself or my subjects, or with my authors, to make them talk, and finally be immersed in my notes, my notebooks, my data, my memories of all the sensations I had during the interviews. (questionnaire)

5.5 *Body at Rest – Body in Motion*

With the aim to find its own temporality and to resonate with oneself, some participants need to sit down, “the body is sat down”, “the members [of the

body] are in harmony with the brain to start writing more easily" (PP), and ensure that the body is calm:

LP: the writing itself is on the computer/ but for example C. lent me her country house/ which is wonderful/ I understood that there was one bodily sense which had been a bit dormant – that is, the ability to listen/ because in her house no noise can be heard/ so uh I had all my time/ I listened to my own breathing and my voice because I speak [when I write]. (interview)

On the contrary, the writing process can be constrictive and painful, even if the result provides satisfaction:

LC: last February/ I literally KILLED myself working but that's the last article I wrote for my PhD / I mean before finishing it/ and I really had good reviews/ I don't regret it/ but in concrete terms I didn't do any exercise from December to March/ in February it was horrible/ I didn't go out at all/ because I absolutely had to finish/ [...] anyway I was FORCED to finish this article and then I had to go out but it was bad for my health/ I went to the doctor because I had problems with my legs/ with my circulation/ I urgently had to do sport again because I really didn't feel well. (interview)

LP: During the final stage of writing up/ naturally my body began to ask me for more attention/ to be more aware of it/ It no longer sufficed to feed it properly/ to clean it/ and to find the chance to relax during the day. (interview)

During the final stage of writing up the thesis, all the participants faced the constraint of remaining in a sitting position for hours "without eating sweets" (LC, interview). Some of them spoke about the "domestication of one's body" (LP), allowing oneself to move and listening to one's body:

LP: I need to have different spaces and that's why I like being alone/ ideally big enough to have the possibility to go from one room to another uh/ [...] yes, there you can go in every direction/ you sit down/ in the staircase/ {,} you change the place where you write because you are going to give birth to something/ now your brain is doing its job. (interview)

The need to go from one room to another suggests that the writer is trying to find himself or perhaps that he tests himself to break through his own limits.

Sometimes, the body in motion is integrated in the process of reflection and within the writing process. It makes possible “a new perspective”, “a break for a reflection”, and “to digest somehow” (FPM, interview):

FPM: At times I get up especially and [...] I walk or I am stuck to the kitchen stove and I spend a lot of time/ I don't know/ I take a little distance from this writing lying on the table [...] I get up and I have a break/ if I can say that like this and then I come back to it/ I do that because I need to think and it takes time/ all this WORK/ I had a great deal of breaks because I needed all these chances to reflect. (interview)

The variety of places and snatched breaks, the organisation of their own space and writing time, bodily limitations and demands, as well as the different strategies mobilised to control these factors – all these elements demonstrate how young researchers apply themselves to the work and manage the constraints. They aim to go beyond their limits and master the tension and difficulties that are a fundamental part of the writing process, without straining themselves. They make rules for themselves, attempt to change themselves, to modify their essential self, and to make a work of art out of their lives (Foucault, 2001). This existential transformation is all-encompassing for each individual.

6 Writing Gestures

The second part of the analysis focuses on the writing gestures employed by the writers. These gestures were explained by our participants, often in terms of strategies and activities. They described their specific acts, intentionally oriented and directed at the self. The writing gestures observed during writing workshops and discussed by Jorro (2016) are not only corroborated by this research, but are also more accurately characterised. We also outline a new gesture, the gesture of ‘diversion from the act of writing’. All these writing gestures reflect the students’ investment in their activities.

6.1 *The Collector's Gesture*

By reflecting on their writing experience, students identified phases in their writing activity. They described actions similar to those of a collector, for example, they collected written records or video recordings, constituted resources, and established lists (Goody, 1979). These actions belong to the first phase of writing that makes it possible to establish a referential and semantic base, and

an inventory of citations, which will then be used for more linear writing. Collector gestures symbolise a rite of entry into the writing activity.

FB: Oh my god/ there's always a notebook in my bag/ So, it was always like that long before the thesis but as my thesis progressed/ I needed a notebook on my nightstand/ I did need IT/ I used a great number of incredible post-it notes that I always put in the same drawer in the kitchen/ In fact/ in the strategic rooms in which I have ideas/ I write everything that comes into my head\ {.} Sometimes, it's a complementary idea/ Sometimes/ I think I have a lot of paintings in my thesis/ I think that a word is misused/ {.} so I go through that. (interview)

6.2 *The Expressive Gesture*

The expressive gesture is used in the second phase. At this point, the doctoral student enters into a longer writing. They have to verbalise and express an idea that they are trying to formulate, and then they come back to it later. One doctoral student (FB) stated: "I would say that I need to write at the same time as I think about it" (interview).

FPM: Then there was a later time when I knew what I meant/ I worked on some notes on all this/ from this first draft/ I had something that was a bit more organised/ so here was the first phase of general organisation/ then there was a finer phase where I was really writing/ part by part, etc./ and when I had a whole part, I went to the computer and I wrote a clean version. (interview)

The expressive gesture consists of an oral or written externalisation of one's thought. Verbalisation and reformulation, note taking and rewriting are implemented by the author. This is the case of LPQ, which seeks in a favorable environment to deepen an idea.

6.3 *The Gesture of Recovery-Reformulation*

This gesture is fundamental to the writing activity. Feeding back into the text is driven by the idea that improvements are always possible. It is important for the writer to improve the wording, to modify a part of the text, or to return to an unclear explanation. The use of the computer predisposes writers to such a process of reformulation. The students emphasised the importance of this gesture, which promotes a coherent relationship with what they are trying to say, what they have not yet managed to write, and consequently what such modifications are trying to bring about.

LPQ: it's the same/ most often computer for writing/ and after there are all the readjustments/ there I hadn't noted the reference/ there/ it is necessary to get back to the books/ the last minute adjustments {incomprehensible} then it was the same/ 15 pages on it/ I did not take it/ it's not work anymore actually/ {.} What happened/ is most often on the computer at home/ most of it/ most of it was at night while sleeping and then/ during the week that I devoted/ the whole week/ almost day and night/ and in two days/ annexes/ presentation of annexes. (interview)

6.4 *The Gesture of Restructuring the Thesis*

Writing a thesis should be considered not only in the organisation of the different parts, but also in its entirety. PhD students expressed how they constructed their writing and their need to review the arrangements within each part and between the parts. Sometimes, it became necessary to delete a significant part of the text. The symbolic cost of such an action is important – sometimes it implies giving up a development which took time and which later proves to be irrelevant or inappropriate.

6.5 *The Gesture of Diversion from the Act of Writing*

The act of diversion can be described as branching off from the initial activity of writing in order to initiate another activity that suspends the tension being experienced by the writer. The underlying purpose of the diversion gesture can be thought of as being somewhere between procrastination and allowing space for the maturation of time and thoughts. At first sight, if the diversion activity is, for example, searching the web for peripheral information, or even a completely different task from writing, the gesture seems to establish a 'change of channel'. However, one may also consider this diversion gesture as a necessary parenthesis, since the writer is still fully engaged mentally, and the 'click' moment mentioned by students is not far away. In other words, leaving their writing with the full intention of going back to the text later seems to be the rationale for such a gesture.

RA: I know that if I want to write I have to spend all my day on it/ so this is a day where I will not take a look at my emails/ I will not answer the phone/ where I really will not be bothered I do not know if I have problems of inattention BUT it's quite hard enough to describe/ and especially to write this thesis and if I have a moment of inattention I know that I stop/ and I go on social networks/ I always lose twenty-five minutes doing this type of thing. (interview)

7 **Experiential Reflections on the Role of the Body in PhD Writing**

The present research study highlights the fact that writing for research purposes is highly challenging. A PhD study, and in particular writing up the thesis, is a reflection of a student's desire to commit themselves to conducting research and recording their findings. It is an exacting task, especially when daily life for adult learners is packed with professional and family commitments. Students who are engaged in professional activities in their workplaces often need to deal with tight schedules before being able to focus on their writing. Research studies in the field of academic writing (Bucheton & Chabanne, 2002; Reuter, 1998, 2004) commonly describe cognitive or even epistemological impediments involved. This study highlights practical obstacles and difficulties that have to do with daily life and learning how to make arrangements to ensure for oneself a suitable and productive writing environment.

We found that the question of writing to be used does not seem to be the most pressing issue for a PhD student who incessantly needs to organise the place or space in which they can carry out the task of writing their thesis. When the question of scholarly writing was mentioned in our interviews, it was viewed by the participants as an exacting task. However, we also found that when doctoral students experience difficulty in writing, they do not explicitly mention the need to gain writing or discursive competences. The most surprising finding was to discover how the authoring function is often overshadowed by physical preoccupations (i.e. the rituals needed to get into the writing process). This demonstrates the need of some students to set up a 'place for themselves' so as to alleviate "writing insecurity" (Dabène, 1987: 57).

An interesting finding of this study is that the student's writing engagement is dependent on physical relationship with the writing task. The role of the body is revealed by the attempts made to find an environment to stimulate the writing activity. The conditions of the selected environment facilitate the efforts required for writing the thesis. These conditions, which are essentially related to personal circumstances, influence the student's progress in writing the thesis. Being at one with oneself and organising one's work environment reflect the importance of the 'concern for self' within the objective of self-development that is generated by the act of writing. An autobiographical dimension imbues thesis writing. The writer seems to target the establishment of the right relationship with himself or herself, in other words, to experience the self-governance described by Foucault (2008) in an attempt to achieve self-consistency; in this context, such attempts occur in the writing circumstances of the student.

Writing engagement is infused with precise actions that signal a departure from the unsystematic activities movements that regularly mark the doctoral student's daily life. Writing gestures emerge as work on the thesis progresses. The preparation stage in starting the writing process involves 'collector' gestures, the writing amplification stage appears with the 'expressive' gesture, and the process culminates with the gesture of 'recovery-reformulation'. PhD students clearly described the gestures of a 'collector' in setting up their working environment. This 'expressive' gesture is deliberate, and clearly differs from an initial writing gesture that lacks depth and ideas. Writing emerges as the performance of an act – a concrete act that requires specific actions or movements directed to oneself personally; actions that convey a purpose and reflect the author's experiential knowledge.

A particularly noteworthy finding is the gesture of 'diversion from the act of writing' – a gesture that sets the writing activity aside. This can be interpreted in one of two ways: either as an act of truancy, or as an act of detachment of the writer from their piece of writing. This gesture of diversion is underpinned by the need to stay more or less in control, since the student must soon get back to the piece of writing and resume the writing activity. Should this not be the case, the diversion gesture could result in the writing activity being suspended.

Identifying these writing gestures does not lead to establishing a particular scale. The gestures have their significance.

Learning how to write a thesis requires the development of self-knowledge in an environment set up by the writer. The findings of this study show how important the materiality of writing is; this involves the layout of a working space with stacks of books carefully arranged, the selection of pencils and pens, the use of post-it notes, and a suitable place assigned to the computer. The layout can also include other dimensions, for example, when the writer reconfigures a familiar space – such as a staircase, a corridor, a bedroom – to make it a place favourable for reflection and articulating his or her thoughts. These spaces become 'counter-spaces' or 'utopias' that stimulate the subject's imagination and generation of ideas. Foucault (2009) uses the term 'heterotopia' to refer to the influence of the personal space set up by the writer and into which they project themselves, that is, a space to which they are committed.

8 Conclusion

Taking corporeity into account in thesis writing is a way of humanising the act of writing, and adding a sense of 'concreteness' to the writing activity. The variety of writing gestures presented in this chapter reflects the meandering

paths taken by doctoral students, with each of them entering and conducting the writing process in their own way. Our findings show that it is important to extend the field of vision to be able to understand what entering the writing process implies: writing does not solely impact the PhD student as an individual, but also his or her personal and professional environment.

The particular gestures which were identified during the second stage of this research study include elements related to the paths taken by the writers during their rites of passage. Without being a clinical study on conceptual gestures or formal instructions (Streeck, 2009), the gestures we have identified provide information for future doctoral students and directors of research who support and advise them on the thesis writing process. Awareness of these gestures makes it possible to clarify objectives, establish reference points, and relieve fears and anxieties often mentioned by young researchers in their thesis journals (Gérard, 2014).

Whilst preserving an anthropological perspective, avenues for further research include investigation of the acquisition of language competences and, more broadly, the assimilation of writing knowledge at stake, not only in our own institution but more widely for PhD students in writing their theses.

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Supervising Doctoral Students in South African Higher Education

Pedagogy, Context and Agency

Michael Cross

Abstract

This chapter explores the constitution of doctoral supervisors and the ways they adopt to themselves in their discharge of supervisory duties. The chapter uses diverse contexts to understand duties in diverse and complex contexts such as South Africa. The strategies and actions invoked by supervisors to ensure their success in their supervisory endeavours are explored. One of the key arguments of the chapter is that under the current environment, doctoral supervisors in South Africa are marred by a complex, fluid and fast-transforming environment. Such an environment requires strategies and practices that transcend conservative approaches of doctoral supervision that are usually associated with mainstream scholarship. This chapter presents two major themes. First, the problem facing current supervision practice relates to its failure to account for South African diversity and contextual complexity. In particular, the circumstances of the students and the environment in which doctoral education takes place becomes a central issue. Apartheid produced a complex higher education environment that calls for a more context-sensitive pedagogy of doctoral supervision. Second, following consideration of the profiles of current doctoral candidates, exclusive reliance on conventional modes of supervision without embracing broader strategies such as extra coaching, mentoring, pastoral care and other forms of guidance and support is problematic.

Keywords

doctoral supervision – contextual complexity – content knowledge – supervisor development programmes – models of doctoral supervision – pedagogy – agency

1 Introduction

This chapter explores how doctoral supervisors are constituted and equip themselves to discharge their supervision duties in diverse and complex contexts such as South Africa. Of importance to our analysis are the strategies and actions that supervisors invoke to enable them to take students through the doctoral process successfully. The chapter argues that, under existing circumstances, doctoral supervisors in South Africa operate in a complex, fluid and fast-transforming environment that calls for strategies and practices beyond the scope of conventional modes of doctoral supervision proclaimed in mainstream scholarship. For example, the lack of guidelines and specific requirements for supervisors brings into play the ‘do it as was done’ syndrome, in which the supervisor is guided by how he or she was supervised. This chapter posits two main claims. First, the problem facing current supervision practice is that it fails to account for South African diversity and contextual complexity, in particular the circumstances of the students and the environment in which doctoral education takes place. Apartheid generated a complex higher education environment that calls for a more context-sensitive pedagogy of doctoral supervision. A major problem in this regard remains the lack of, or poor re-contextualisation of the supervision models in use. Second, taking into consideration the profiles of current doctoral candidates, it becomes difficult to rely solely on conventional modes of supervision without resorting to strategies such as extra coaching, mentoring, pastoral care and other forms of guidance and support. In pursuing these arguments, we map out and revisit prevalent supervision practices that dominate doctoral education in South African universities, and explore ways in which supervision can be improved.

As a result of the apartheid legacy, many students still enter doctoral education with considerable knowledge gaps and distortions at epistemological, theoretical and methodological levels. These gaps are accentuated along racial and gender divides. The under-preparedness of supervisors – particularly a lack of understanding of the contextual complexity, resources and potential of their students – adds to the under-preparedness of students. Thus, this chapter suggests that for doctoral supervisors, disciplinary or content knowledge, as well as knowledge of doctoral supervision (pedagogical and contextual knowledge) warrant re-visiting. The chapter proposes an alternative framework for supervisor development programmes. It places this framework within an alternative epistemology that acknowledges the importance of historical and contextual realities in pedagogical practice, and characterises doctoral supervisors, taking cognisance of the interface between biography, experience and supervision pedagogy. Biography reflects how supervisors are constituted by their own lived realities, knowledge acquired in their past academic experience,

meaning generated from it, and opportunities this experience creates for learning, advising and problem-solving in the same or different paradigms. We suggest the need for greater vigilance against the universal generalisation of supervision strategies, and a greater sense of ethical and moral responsibility.

2 Understanding Pedagogy, Context and Agency in Doctoral Supervision: A Conceptual Framework

Doctoral supervision remains a type of pedagogical engagement that is not well understood (Grant, 2003). While conventional rules on doctoral supervision are widely known, the scholarship of doctoral supervision in South Africa has not paid sufficient attention to pedagogical practices as influenced by the local context. Very often doctoral supervision has been treated as a ‘rule-following’ process in which students are made aware of, and expected to comply with the ‘guiding signs’ and ‘warning signs’ embedded in institutionally-approved codes of rules and procedures (Lee, 2010; Grant, 2010). Such a perspective ignores the unpredictable dynamics determined by contextual complexity. It is worth noting that even with the emphasis on rules and procedures, supervisors tend to operate autonomously under the auspices of academic freedom.

The concept of supervision itself remains globally highly contested, with analysts placing emphasis on different strands: (i) an organised procedure between students and supervisors intended to enable students to attain their academic, occupational and personal goals (Ender, Winston & Miller, 1984); (ii) a process of fostering and facilitating learning, research and communication at the highest level (Laske & Zuber-Skerrit, 1996); (iii) a pathway linked to the training and production of “high quality researchers who are able to bring innovative changes to their workplaces, be they in business, government, academe or non-profit sectors” (Nerad, 2012: 59); (iv) preparation for the labour market or industry (Harman, 2008); and (v) socialisation into an academic community of practice – a space through which Ph.D. students constitute, negotiate and share beliefs, ideas, problems, dilemmas and ways of understanding or explaining the world (Hadjielia-Drotarova, 2011; Nerad 2012).

Generally, as Backhouse (2011: 32) describes it, doctoral supervision “assumes different meanings depending on the various discourses that underpin doctoral studies (e.g. scholarly discourse – socialisation into the world of knowledge production, and a community of practice; labour-market discourse – production of transferrable skills for the labour market; and on-going personal development discourse – development of critical intellectuals)”. However, the overwhelming problems confronted by doctoral students – particularly those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds – necessitate a wider conception

of supervision that embraces mentoring and counselling strategies. We thus “conceptualise supervision as formal and informal guidance, exposure, and support – social, emotional and intellectual – leading candidates towards the completion of a Ph.D. according to the requirements of both the university, the discipline, and all those who are positioned to utilise the knowledge and services of doctoral graduates” (Backhouse, Ungadi & Cross, 2015: 18).

Analytically, this chapter uses the concept of *pedagogy of doctoral supervision* to refer to the processes – theoretical and practical, intellectual and material – as well as the creative methods that supervisors invoke to facilitate doctoral learning. This concept concerns the instruments (policies, code of rules and procedures) and complex processes (the practice of supervision) that are used to socialise students into a community of practice in the various spheres of academic and social life. Not only the pedagogy of doctoral supervision, but also individual pre-dispositions determine whether students find it easy or difficult to adjust their *habitus* to the academic environment. The term ‘pedagogy’ is thus used in its broader sense, not simply as a descriptor of the core practices within the supervision domain, but “as an indicator of how those practices connect in mode and style to the wider university processes, social structures, cultural shifts and intellectual conditions” (Cross, 2018: 76).

The pedagogy of doctoral supervision and related mediation strategies are influenced by the *context* of doctoral supervision, which is well captured in Backhouse’s (2009) notion of ‘intersecting contexts’ – the disciplinary, academic, departmental, supervisor, family/community and workplace influences (both positive and negative) that affect the mediation strategies adopted by supervisors. *Context* here is about what shapes both the supervisor and doctoral candidates who are located and operate within a particular academic setting; it relates to the global, national and institutional influences which impact on supervision practice as well as institutional histories, legacies and cultures. Backhouse (2009: 5) argues that “PhD students ... sit at the intersection of many contexts including the department and institution in which they study, the discipline in which their research is located, the place where they work (often a university department), and their family and friends or other groups to which they are affiliated”. The prominence and relevance of each context depends on the social and academic circumstances of the Ph.D. candidate. Some may be enabling while other contexts may conflict with candidates’ needs and identities, and as such require careful negotiation (Backhouse, 2009: 7).

In order to embrace an effective supervision pedagogy, supervisors need to master *content knowledge* which comprises disciplinary knowledge and knowledge of academic practice in its key dimensions – research, teaching and learning – as well as an understanding of the principles and values and *modus operandi* that characterises such practice. They also require *knowledge*

for supervision, which encompasses the strategies, skills and resources to enable students to socialise into a given community of academic practice. In this chapter we highlight the dialectic of student *agency* and doctoral supervision according to these processes.

The chapter considers also the concept of ‘compensatory capital’ discussed later in the chapter, which may account for how students position themselves positively under the condition of marginalisation. In contrast to Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of social capital, compensatory capital refers to positive and enabling personal characteristics associated with patterns of behaviour under a situation of marginalisation. An important theoretical assumption in the use of this concept is that deprivation or marginalisation does not imply incapacity.

3 Modes of Inquiry, Data and Evidence

The bulk of information presented in this chapter was gathered through document analysis and literature reviews (individual writings, biographies, articles, etc.). Besides documentary analysis, data was also obtained through interviews with selected scholars. The study involved nine lecturers and six doctoral students from the faculties/schools of education at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg. The selected lecturers had supervised in the doctoral programme for more than ten years. The small sample was to enable an in-depth exploration and thick description of participants’ experiences in doctoral supervision (Martens, 2010; Munhall, 2007). Three key framing factors in student supervision are biography, context and experience. To integrate these dimensions, the study embraced the tradition of narrative inquiry, which in the view of Goodson and Sikes (2001), signifies ‘learning from lives’ (see also Altenbaugh, 1992). Narratives of lived experiences offered opportunities for interpreting the relations between past, present and projected developments in the lives of supervisors – in particular, how their perspectives on doctoral supervision have been shaped and reshaped under unpredictable and changing circumstances. In this regard, unstructured interviews with open-ended questions enabled intensive face-to-face conversations with the interviewees who recalled their experiences as students under supervision, described their appropriation of new concepts, theories and ways of thinking about student supervision, and explained how they generate their own perspectives (if any) and interpretations of the supervision context and its impact of their practices.

In analysing the data gathered from the various sources, attention was given to critical issues such as: (i) insights into the South African postgraduate environment; (ii) accounts of doctoral supervision experiences; (iii) supervision pedagogy and mediation strategies – the epistemologies, theories, methods

and concepts underpinning them, and any other relevant influences in shaping particular supervision strategies and practices; (iv) supervision challenges confronted, as well as strategies used to address them; (v) how academics perceive themselves as supervisors and what motivates them; and (vi) how they perceive their students and their interface with them. Particular attention was paid to different ‘codes’ (including epistemological constructs) used in day-to-day communication, the language of expression (theories, concepts and specialised terminology) in the narratives of their supervision experiences, and their perceptions and understanding of these experiences.

4 Doctoral Supervision in South Africa: Contextual Complexities

Apartheid established a highly segregated higher education system which has left a racialised and gender skewed legacy – this hierarchy of knowledge privileges white males in the production and control of knowledge, and places blacks at the bottom of the structure. The distortions from this legacy are felt at three important levels: (i) the knowledge hierarchy amongst university staff; (ii) unsatisfactory access and success rates; and (iii) an inadequate post-graduate environment. Table 10.1 shows that a highly racialised knowledge hierarchy still dominates the qualifications of academic staff in South African universities.

Table 10.1 indicates that white academics hold the highest percentage of postgraduate qualifications: total of 12,483 (48.54%), in particular Masters: 5,110 (42.12%), and Doctoral: 7,373 (54.28%) qualifications. Table 10.2 presents an analysis of the distribution of academic positions (ranks) by race.

TABLE 10.1 Academic staff qualifications by race in South African universities in 2017

Race	Masters		PhD		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
African	4,990	41.13	3,997	29.42	8,987	34.95
Coloured	790	6.51	669	4.92	1,459	5.70
Indian	1,035	8.53	1,051	7.74	2,086	8.11
White	5,110	42.12	7,373	54.28	12,483	48.54
Other	207	1.71	494	3.63	701	2.70
Total	12,132	100.00	13,584	100.00	25,716	100.00

SOURCE: HEADCOUNT OF ACADEMIC STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (DHET, 2017)

TABLE 10.2 Ranks of academics by race in South African universities in 2017

Rank	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Other		Total
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Professor	512	17.72	116	4.01	176	6.09	2,001	69.26	84	2.91	2,889
Associate Professor	594	24.36	124	5.08	199	8.16	1,440	59.06	81	3.32	2,438
Senior Lecturer	1,782	32.87	278	5.12	440	8.11	2,800	51.65	121	2.23	5,421
Total	2,888	74.95	518	14.21	815	22.36	6,241	179.97	286	8.46	10,748

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM DHET (2017)

The data shows that higher education institutions in South Africa continue to face serious shortages of suitably qualified supervisors. By 2009 only 16% of academic staff in universities held doctoral degrees (Backhouse, 2009), which points to a desperate shortage of qualified staff to supervise doctoral students. The data for 2016 also shows that of the 55,053 academic staff in South African universities, only 13,055 had doctoral qualifications, and of the 21,510 students enrolled in doctoral studies only 2,797 graduated (CHE, 2016). This pattern is well illustrated by Table 10.2 which indicates that whites held the majority of the most senior positions in universities in 2017: 2,001 (69.26%) professors; 1,440 (59.06%) associate professors; and 2,800 (51.65%) senior lecturers were white.

Second, compared to other developing countries such as Brazil, Singapore, Botswana and Namibia South Africa, registers a ridiculously small number of much-needed graduates for socio-economic development. This shortage is aggravated by considerable race and gender gaps in both access to doctoral education and the number of successful PhD graduates. The Council on Higher Education indicates that out of 22,572 doctoral students only 3,057 completed their studies in 2017, which means that over R1.3 billion in government subsidies is spent each year on doctoral students who do not complete their studies (CHE, 2017).

Third, the postgraduate environment remains inadequate with institutions blaming government for insufficient funding, supervisors pointing to student under-preparedness as the main problem, and students pointing to academic staff unwillingness or under-preparedness in addressing their needs (Gardner, 2009). The same can be said in relation to academic enrichment activities (e.g. doctoral seminars, research and writing workshops and scholarship

development initiatives) and institutional logistics including the workspace supporting doctoral students.

Under such circumstances, higher education institutions in South Africa face considerable challenges. There is a need to steer innovative pedagogical practices in doctoral supervision in a fast-changing social, economic and political context. Furthermore, the quality of doctoral graduates requires attention (Mutula, 2009: 7). For instance, ASSAf (2010) reports that doctoral graduates have inadequate skills and knowledge in terms of teaching, writing and presentation skills, as well as quantitative and statistical skills. Similarly, the National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2012) questions the limited production of knowledge that translates into innovation in social and economic development. Efforts to improve doctoral supervision are confounded by increased postgraduate student enrolments, without a proportionate increase in the number of supervisors and lecturers (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2008). As a result, the numbers of students requiring supervision overwhelm the available supervisors. This happens at a time when supervisors have to contend with the diversity of doctoral students and preparing them for multiple careers, which clearly has an impact on the pedagogy and effectiveness of doctoral supervision. Besides, most supervisors are overwhelmed by administrative tasks within the institutions they serve (ASSAf, 2010).

5 Approaches and Models of Doctoral Supervision

Approaches that supervisors adopt to supervise their PhD students are commonly referred to as *models of supervision*, which essentially represent “conceptual approaches to teaching and learning” at doctoral level (Lee, 2010). These models can be classified as *one-on-one*, *cohort*, *committee* (or *panel*) and *co-supervision*, each of which is discussed below. Generally, the proliferation of these models rests on the assumption that in a pluralistic society, doctoral supervision requires collective efforts as a pathway to success. Some universities have introduced supervisor training programmes to assist supervisors in addressing their limitations in the practice of supervision and to enable them to catch up with contemporary trends. Unfortunately, “internal training and seminars on postgraduate supervision” tend to be poorly attended (De Lange, Pillay & Chikoko, 2011: 2).

5.1 *One-on-One Supervision*

Also known as the apprenticeship model – in which a single student is assigned a single supervisor – the *one-on-one* model is the earliest and most widespread

model of supervision globally (Dietz, Jansen & Wadee, 2006; ASSAf, 2010). It was introduced by the Humboldt University in Germany in the nineteenth century and entails an apprenticeship, coaching relationship between the supervisor and the student. The student learns the necessary skills and competencies from the supervisor (Jameson & Naidoo, 2007). In theory, this model offers PhD students an opportunity to be supervised and mentored by a highly qualified, experienced person, who in most cases provides the student with some form of financial sponsorship (Halse & Bansel, 2012). This enhances the production of highly specialised graduates who conform to the expectations of belonging to a community of practice (Lee, 2010).

Critics argue that supervisors' feelings, views, preferences, prejudices and perceptions can have a negative impact on the scope, methodology and direction of the entire research project (Leder 1995; Dietz et al., 2006; Petre & Rugg, 2010; Backhouse et al., 2015). Further criticisms of this model include the following: it fails to accommodate knowledge or perspectives from other fields (Johnston, 1999); it offers limited possibilities for innovative supervision strategies (Halse & Bansel, 2012); it risks the reproduction of outdated knowledge and practices ingrained in the supervisor's work and experience (Enders, 2005); and it may contribute to late completion and increased dropout rates (Lewis, Nyalashe, Hartley & Naicker, 2008; Kehm (2010) points out that students under this type of supervision may not complete, or take a long time to complete their studies, they may lack knowledge of the market and available career opportunities, and may be limited in terms of professional, managerial and organisational skills. In South Africa, this model has also been criticised for "serving a small number of PhD students and therefore working against the government policy of increasing the number of PhD graduates" (ASSAf, 2010: 16). Nonetheless, it continues to be the most popular approach in South African universities.

5.2 *The Cohort Model*

The *cohort* model is an outcome of recent international supervisory innovation that aims to address the shortcomings of the one-on-one model of supervision (ASSAf, 2010); it is defined as "a PhD year-group of self-minded doctoral candidates who study together in workshops, progress through to doctoral studies together, are identified by others as a group and identify themselves as a group" ASSAf (2010: 66). In South Africa, the cohort model of supervision has been in use since the 1990s as a strategy for enhancing the learning experience and improving student throughput (Samuel & Vithal, 2011; De Lange et al., 2011). It was adopted by the South African Doctoral Consortium (also known as the Spencer Programme), which conducted a PhD programme in educational policy studies in partnership with Stanford University for 15 years.

The cohort model is characterised by seminar sessions which include support from novice and experienced supervisors, and fellow PhD students (Govender & Dhunpath, 2010). It enables the development of a community of scholars, instead of over-dependence on the supervisor; and it reduces the isolation and solitude usually associated with doctoral studies (De Lange et al., 2011). It promotes immense solidarity and dependability within the cohort, ensuring not only support from supervisors and academic staff, but also from peers, as well as a monitoring structure and clear achievement of targets (ASSAF, 2010). Furthermore, it is regarded as highly efficient in terms of time and resource management, and can thus increase completion rates (Burnett, 1999).

Samuel and Vithal (2011: 1) argue that the cohort model can significantly increase the quality and quantity of PhDs produced annually. It allows for the development of scholarship and the implementation of reflective practices, as well as pedagogical practices such as democratic teaching/learning participation (Samuel & Vithal, 2011: 1; Govender & Dhunpath 2011; Lange, Pillay & Chikoko, 2011). As a supervision model, and being grounded in learner centred philosophy, the cohort model embraces the assumption that “knowledge is a product of social processes and not solely an individual construction” (William, 1999: 205). On the downside, there have been claims about difficulties in securing participation of staff in core activities of the cohort model sessions (De Lange et al., 2011), and a lack of commitment from students and supervisors has been mentioned (ASSAF, 2010). Currently, the approach is not as popular as the one-on-one model (Backhouse, 2009); yet globally, it is acclaimed as the best alternative to the one-on-one model (Burnett, 1999).

5.3 *Committee Supervision*

In the *committee supervision* model, the principal supervisor is assisted by a committee or panel of experienced supervisors (Petre & Rugg, 2010). The individual supervisor oversees the progress of the student on a regular basis, while major decisions affecting the student’s progress are “ratified in the formal meetings with the committee” (Petre & Rugg, 2011: 27). The effectiveness of this model depends largely on the power play within the committee, where any slight power disequilibrium can be detrimental to the student (Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000). Its success depends entirely on how group members deal with challenges posed by their epistemological, theoretical and methodological differences, in front of their students. The model is credited with bringing many experts on board, reducing pressure on individual supervisors, exposing students to distilled discussion among supervisors, and providing students with a channel to resolve any conflicts (Petre & Rugg, 2011). The weakness of

this model lies in the fact that if it is not well managed, the various competing opinions that arise may confuse students.

5.4 *Co-Supervision*

The shortcomings of the one-on-one and cohort models, knowledge discipline challenges and the shortage of experienced supervisors have led to experimentation with *co-supervision*, in which two or more supervisors are charged with the responsibility of supervising a graduate student (Burgess, Pole & Hockey, 1994 cited by Spooner-Lane, Henderson, Price & Hill, 2007). In the co-supervision model, students benefit from the different perspectives and expertise of both supervisors (Nightingale, 2005). It appears to be more suitable in the context of interdisciplinary research topics, and as a mechanism of support for novice supervisors (Phillips & Pugh, 1987). However, as in the committee system, supervisors may differ in their supervision approaches and modes of interaction with students, with possible negative impacts on their students. Differences in individual skills, knowledge and experience may result in conflicting feedback. Personal attributes such as age, gender and ethnicity may also complicate relations between supervisors, and between supervisors and their students (Nightingale, 2005; Phillip & Pugh, 1987). Also in some universities, faculty policies hardly recognise or reward supervisors who venture into co-supervising students from other departments, faculties or institutions (Vanstone, Hibbert, Kinsella, McKenzie, Pitman & Lorelei, 2013).

Overall, one could argue that the cohort model, committees and co-supervision have the effect of enriching the PhD student experience by maximising peer and academic support. They open doors to critical scholarship by liberating students from the domestication parameters of the one-on-one model, exposing them to a variety of perspectives. Their generative effects in strengthening creativity potential in students cannot be underestimated. They are also critical in mediating tension and contestation (thus minimising the potential of conflict) through the involvement of staff and student peers, and by making student work and development more transparent. However, the choice of a particular supervision model remains a contextual issue that should take into account the profile of students, the supervision environment, and the availability of resources – both human and material.

6 **Becoming a Supervisor: Accumulated Experience or Training?**

In many parts of the world, it is generally agreed that doctoral supervisors should be holders of a PhD in their areas of specialisation (ASSAf, 2010; Dietz et al.,

2006; Backhouse, 2009). This implies that they are endowed with the necessary skills and knowledge to supervise PhDs students. For many years, supervisors in South Africa have accepted and treated their supervision practice behind a shroud of privacy (Park, 2006; Grant, 2008; Manathunga, 2005). The view that “supervision has been learned first and foremost by trial and error, in the manner of a craft” has been accepted as almost an unproblematic, institutional fact (Grant, 2008: 12). Two main categories of thought have emerged on this matter. There is the argument that foregrounds learning through experience, i.e. accepting that supervisors are not formally trained but acquire the prerequisite skills necessary for supervision through personal experience (Grossman, 2016). A contrasting argument is that the current crisis in graduate education requires that academic staff should be subject to formal training on teaching and supervision issues through staff development programmes (Halse, 2011; Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2008). Each of these viewpoints is discussed in turn below.

6.1 *Learning through Experience: The Practice of Knowledge vis-à-vis the Knowledge of Practice*

Most doctoral supervisors learn supervision skills through experience on the job – that is, learning by doing (Halse, 2011; Backhouse, 2009; Dietz et al., 2006). Thus, in their supervision practice, they draw on social and cultural capital accumulated from their past academic experiences, and practices by their former supervisors during their own time as PhD students. Cultural capital refers to non-material resources, goods such as educational credentials, types of knowledge and expertise, verbal skills and preferences that can be converted into an investment, offering returns in terms of student supervision (Appelrouth & Edles, 2012: 656). Skills and knowledge deployed to socialise and train PhD students in all the disciplines are at the heart of cultural capital, which in turn informs supervisors’ approaches, mediation strategies, and relationships with their students, as well as their disciplinary knowledge and how they utilise environmental resources.

Learning to supervise from experience may be ‘good’ but it has shortcomings. The level of privacy it entails is more likely to curtail creativity and much-needed critical scholarship for today’s world (Kamler & Thompson, 2006). Doctoral experience may inculcate knowledge and skills within a particular field of specialisation (including research design and methodology), but it does very little in providing a pedagogical basis on how these skills can best be inculcated in students. The same is true in terms of developing change attitudes, dispositions and practices that promote critical scholarship and play a crucial role in establishing positive relationships and augmenting a student’s confidence in supervisory encounters.

6.2 *Supervisor Development Programmes: Current Experiences*

Supervisor development programmes represent a new phenomenon in South African higher education and several institutions have now developed training programmes for supervisors (Backhouse, 2009). These are generally limited to workshops in which supervisors exchange ideas, are updated on trends in doctoral supervision, and receive handbooks to guide them in the process of supervision. Unfortunately, these programmes have come under fire for falling short of supervisors' expectations. A criticism is that such programmes assume that "there are deficits in supervisors' expertise and that these can be remedied through formal, structured, cognitive transmission of knowledge from instructor to the learner" (Halse, 2011: 3). The same author found that the programmes tend to focus on instrumental, administrative aspects of the doctorate, which emphasise the rules, policies and regulations of supervision as required by universities; and they fail to acknowledge the knowledge proficiency gained from practical experience by supervisors and the contexts in which supervisors operate. An important consideration is the fact that supervision in South Africa has generally remained a domain of practice, and in scholarship terms, *a domain of practice of knowledge* (that is, the application of predominantly experiential knowledge to postgraduate supervision), with very little *knowledge of practice* (that is, the generation of theory through research or reflective practice). Guidelines, procedures and checklists (with limited theorisation of the supervision experience) dominate the literature on doctoral supervision. This explains to some extent the prevalence of negative attitudes towards some supervisor development programmes.

In the following section, we discuss an alternative framework for supervisor development programmes. We place this framework within an alternative epistemology that acknowledges the importance of historical and contextual realities in pedagogical practice, and takes cognisance of the interface between biography, experience and supervision pedagogy in doctoral supervision. We suggest the need for greater vigilance against universal generalisation of supervision strategies, and a greater sense of ethical and moral responsibility. In line with our general argument, a prerequisite for context-sensitive approaches to doctoral learning is the notion of *situated learning*, borrowed from Lave and Wenger (1991) and translated here as 'learning in context'. For learning in this sense to be effective, students must be part of, or operate as participants in well-functioning communities of practice articulated to the process of supervision: suitable activities would include supervisor-led research projects; reading groups on theory or methods; academic enrichment or working groups on writing for publication; work-in-progress workshops; and online (virtual) communities of practice.

7 Negotiating Shared Spaces and Shared Meaning

In our context, the concept of *shared spaces* refers to communities (social spaces) that offer opportunities for doctoral learning. *Shared meaning* implies the common perceptions, awareness and understanding that both supervisors and students bestow on the value of interactions within these communities – whether educational artefacts, activities or ideas – even in the face of differences of opinion. The role of supervisors is informed by an understanding of how students respond to supervisors' efforts to alter the institutional environment in order to accommodate an increasingly diverse student population and build a cohesive and interconnected community – and how those efforts affect the experiences of their students. Very often, contestation over policy or course issues can be reduced essentially to contestation over meaning. This is illustrated by a study on significant doctoral student conversations in a network of friends about their perceptions of their supervisors. In their analysis, Backhouse et al. (2015: 15) provide the following account:

Different academic discourses warrant different supervision practices. [...] Depending on the discourses underpinning a particular doctoral programme, supervisors give different and sometimes conflicting significance to these contexts, and operate with them differently, hence the competing perspectives on doctoral supervision, eloquently expressed by one student as 'they can't even agree ...'. Doctoral students spend a large amount of their time and energy discussing the different views that supervisors have of the doctorate (PhD). They tell stories of supervisors in the same discipline and the same department who have widely differing opinions of what PhD students must do; how they must do it; and what the supervisor's role is in the process.

The same authors contend that "if students' conversations are stimulated as critical spaces for engagement, where shared meaning about supervision experiences is discussed, they can promote effective student/supervisor interaction and enhance learning" (Backhouse et al., 2015: 15). Such critical spaces serve as a mechanism for meaning construction and feedback to supervisors. Supervisors can bring these meaning-construction initiatives into more formal instructional shared spaces, where negotiations of shared meaning can be steered and monitored. Key areas of engagement could be: (i) student experiences of institutional efforts to promote a healthy and dynamic institutional environment, culture and ethos to turn an increasingly diverse student body into a socially cohesive and interconnected community; (ii) student perceptions, awareness,

and understandings (or knowledge) of campus social interaction and institutional practices insofar as these affect their social and academic experiences; and (iii) student agency or positionality in these processes (Cross, 2018: 180). By strengthening student agency in these spaces, an environment can be created that is conducive to social, intellectual and academic enrichment, a dynamic doctoral learning experience, and improved student satisfaction. In turn, these experiences can contribute to building a climate that is conducive to shared meaning, by supporting students' openness to being challenged, encouraging them to have enough self-confidence to challenge or defend their views, and enabling them to exert their imagination and creativity.

8 Revisiting the Approach to Academic and Normative Induction

A key to socialisation into an academic community is the approach of principles, values, norms, rules and regulations that govern a particular institution, department or programme, and their *modus operandi*. We refer to these as 'constitutive rules'. There are also other more cultural norms embedded in established institutional and departmental practices (e.g. forms of behaviour in the library or postgraduate hub, dress style, songs and other practices during graduation ceremonies and other rituals). We refer to these as 'institutional facts' as they tend to be approached in somewhat different ways. With the decolonisation movement, both constitutive rules and institutional facts have turned into a domain of fierce contestation and confrontation. Once again, to avoid major disruptions, academic and normative induction practices are being renegotiated.

In this context, supervisors are being called upon to facilitate student insertion into, and engagement with the institutional normative world in a more dynamic manner – not just through an ambiguous communication of the code – rules and procedures governing student supervision, but through engagement with it. In terms of induction practices, this requires shifting the emphasis from the beginning of the year 'briefing days' to constant and sustained engagement with students. Specifically, at the micro level for doctoral students, critical questions to discuss may include, for example, the following:

- a. The **WHY** question: creating a vision of the destination point, the finished product and career implications;
- b. The **WHAT** question: knowing what is entailed in the doctoral process (e.g. reviewing the literature, drafting the research proposal, complying with ethics requirements, choosing fieldwork strategies, developing

- research instruments, collecting and analysing data, drafting the thesis, submission procedures, learning contracts, etc.);
- c. The WHO question: clarifying student profiles, that is, their current identities and future or imagined identities, including what they need to become in order to complete their studies successfully;
 - d. The WHERE question: understanding the intersecting spaces and contexts that may enable or constrain student efforts;
 - e. The WHEN question: specifying the timeframes and deadlines necessary to undertake expected tasks – this depends not only on the requirements, but also on one’s vision for the future;
 - f. The HOW question: evaluating one’s compendium of strategies that have been successful in similar projects, such as individual ‘chamber secrets’ or toolboxes.

Some of these aspects are spelt out in the code of rules and procedures, or explained by supervisors in induction discussions.

At the institutional level, two important considerations are worth highlighting. First, the challenge in dealing with scars of disadvantage is to enable students to engage in academic practice within established constitutive rules and values of a dynamic, academic environment. This environment is not fixed, but needs to emerge by establishing a space of dialogue and possibilities that stimulates student regeneration, innovation and enrichment. This would certainly open up a shared space, facilitating the mediation of student experience and meaning construction, resulting in shared meaning about the student experience. Second, like other human beings, students are not simply ‘rule-followers’ or ‘norm-obeyers’, particularly when the current ‘decolonisation fever’ requires healing. They are “strategic improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations created by the institution, with their active participation” (Schwartz, 1997, cited in Cross, 2018: 75). As such, the dialectic expectations/experiences (that is, whether they experience what they hear) vis-à-vis awareness or understanding of these aspects (that is, whether they appropriate and internalise them) deserve recognition. In other words, it is not only the rules, norms and values enshrined in the university code *per se*, or what supervisors say, which determine student positive social action – it is primarily the reciprocal relations through which students and supervisors negotiate and construct a moving social reality between ‘being’ in a doctoral programme and ‘becoming’ a doctoral student with a strong academic identity. While the internalisation of the social system of norms is important, supervisors need to be able to mediate tensions, contestation and potential conflict that might emanate from the process.

9 Strengthening the Congruence between Social or Academic Contexts and Doctoral Learning

As already alluded to, Backhouse (2009) maps out the relevant intersecting contexts that shape doctoral learning experience, distinguishing *inter alia* the institution, department, discipline and disciplinary networks, workplace, family and friends. The culture of the department or the unit where the doctoral programme is being offered may be constraining or enabling. Similarly, how students develop the practices of inquiry and citizenship depends on how these practices are engaged in by the department. Academic disciplines have different rules of engagement with knowledge and disciplinary practice. The vision, policy, strategy and type of institution (e.g. traditional, comprehensive or university of technology – in the South African typology) may influence student experience at the programme level, or in terms of pedagogical practice and academic enrichment. The same can be said about the family environment and networks of friends or peers – these may also enable or constrain learning, or enhance learning opportunities. Facilitating awareness and optimal use of learning opportunities across these contexts is certainly an important dimension of supervision.

How these contexts influence or shape doctoral learning experience depends on their degree of alignment with the doctoral programme. Depending on the degree of alignment, the data in this study points to the following scenarios: (i) students are actively engaged with the discipline, are members of relevant professional bodies, are present in major relevant conferences, and publish in discipline-specific journals; and (ii) students act to change and improve the learning environment, or even the configuration of learning contexts. Thus, although strengthening the alignment between academic contexts and the doctoral education process is a domain that requires considerable individual and collective agency from students, it is also an area where supervisors should play an important role. Supervisors need to be instrumental in creating dynamic places and spaces where mediation strategies for effective doctoral learning can be maximised.

Mediation strategies refer to the forms of intervention that supervisors may invoke to enhance doctoral learning across the intersecting contexts. These can take the form of individualised mediation strategies, which are highly unstructured, closed and constrained by privacy: what transpires therein remains between the supervisor and a student. More significant interventions include collective or group mediation strategies, and technology-mediated strategies – these seek to blend the transmission of a research culture into socialisation strategies by having students participate in recommended lectures, workshops, seminar presentations or team teaching organised by the supervisor. It should

be noted that group mediation strategies do not exclude individual consultation with supervisors; but they can offer better mentoring opportunities, stimulate critical scholarship, and lead to minimum time completion rates, more grounded learning and greater integration into academic practice (Backhouse, 2009: 8; Harris, 2006). Both types of strategies can contribute immensely to the doctoral education process by supporting and sustaining student engagement.

In our context, 'culture' refers to "the sum of activities – symbolic or instrumental – that exist in an organisation and create shared meaning" (Tierney, 1997: 3). The same author describes 'socialisation' as the "process through which the individuals acquire and incorporate these activities" (1997: 3). For instance, when a supervisor organises a writing retreat, they create an environment that helps to teach the craft of scholarly writing. Attendance at workshops and conferences introduces students to established researchers who can provide specialised advice in various areas of theory, methods and literature. Generally, these strategies involve various academics and experts, nurture collaboration among students, and integrate students into the supervisor's wider network of research, while also enhancing socialisation into communities of practice – as discussed in the following section.

9.1 *Building Communities of Practice*

Doctoral education is not only about introducing the student to the craft of production of knowledge, but it also involves socialisation into specific communities of practice. A community of practice refers to "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002: 4). It is this sense of common purpose, interdependence and mutual benefit that binds together a community of practice. For students to gain 'epistemological access' to a relevant community of practice, a mutual partnership between the supervisor and student may be required to enhance collaboration and willingness to learn (Vilkinas, 2002). 'Epistemological access', a term coined by Morrow (2009: 78), refers to the process of "learning how to become a successful participant in the academic practice" of a particular academic community. It requires an understanding by students of how the community operates or 'thinks'. It thus requires them to use their own initiative and take individual responsibility to enable them to gain entry into the 'rules of the trade' of academic practice – that is, the practice of searching for and working with knowledge, and becoming a knowledge practitioner.

Thus, doctoral education can be interpreted as a process of socialisation of students in gaining membership as practitioners of knowledge in specific communities of practice, be they academic or business-related. Through the process of doctoral supervision, students gradually assume suitable identities defined

by these communities, as well as the mechanisms for participating and gaining membership or affiliation therein. This involves according to Wenger (1988), interacting and doing things together, learning from and acting “as resources to each other, exchanging information, making sense of situations and negotiating new meanings, sharing new tricks and new ideas” (47) as well as “keeping each other company and spicing up each other’s working days” (100–102).

10 Accounting for the Contextual Complexity of Marginalisation

Supervision and socialisation processes in contexts of extreme marginalisation along race and gender lines represent a major challenge for both supervisors and students, given the difficulties of arriving at shared meaning about what is expected of them. For example, the common mismatch between supervisors’ and students’ expectations created by pedagogical distance quite often takes a political or cultural dimension among black students and can be interpreted as a manifestation of racism. In such contexts, PhD students are immersed in a world of ambiguity, full of “feelings of uncertainty, a lack of clarity, and overall ambiguity with what they [are] doing, where they [are] going ... what ... await[s] them”, as well as career trajectories given the uncertainties of the labour market (Gardner, 2007: 721).

The necessity of taking the conditions of marginalisation seriously in our conceptualisation of the needs and challenges confronted by historically disadvantaged doctoral students, and the implications for supervision practice, cannot be underestimated. Two competing responses have emerged in this regard. The first rests on the ‘deficit model’ interpretation of student under-preparedness and proposes strategies aimed at compensating for the knowledge and learning gaps in students. This approach formed the basis of the main academic support strategies that were implemented in the 1980s and 1990s (bridging courses, targeted advice, etc.). The second perspective tackles student disadvantage with reference to Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of ‘social capital’, which privileges the intellectual and material resources students acquire from the family, social and economic networks they are able to access. This makes historically disadvantaged students potential casualties and condemned to failure, given their limited access to powerful networks in society. Our argument is that this theory can lead to a misinterpretation of the resources that such students possess.

Cross and Atinde (2015) coin the concept of ‘compensatory capital’ and argue that under certain circumstances, a disadvantaged socio-economic and historical background provides a generative environment for developing alternative cognitive and intellectual resources that may enable students from these backgrounds to respond positively and productively to key challenges

in their academic journeys. Under certain circumstances, experiences under marginalisation allow students to develop alternative forms of capital – intellectual, cognitive, attitudinal and material resources – that enable them to adjust and cope with new challenges (Cross & Atinde, 2015). Such resources include dispositions and pre-dispositions to transform their habitus, which provides them with greater adaptability. Thus the cognitive dimensions emanating from such experiences could be regarded as enablers rather than disablers, allowing students to navigate successfully in the university environment.

Compensatory capital refers to the assets and learning resources developed under the experience of marginalisation (Cross & Carpentier, 2009), including attributes such as the following: (i) *autonomous functioning* leading to positive decisions; (ii) *self-realisation* through goal-setting around becoming agents of social change with an altruistic or market-oriented purpose; (iii) *self-regulation* (as individuals or groups); (iv) *dispositions and pre-dispositions* for hard work that enable students to disrupt and adjust their *habitus*; and (v) *self-determination*. These appear to be key internal factors that enable these students to negotiate their success by adopting a never give up attitude. Thus compensatory capital (not acknowledged in Bourdieu's (1986), concept of social capital) refers to positive and enabling personal characteristics that reflect the patterns of behaviour and the outcome of cognitive processes acquired from day-to-day life in poor communities. In these communities lies the ability to set goals, choose and decide where and when to seek help, who to turn to in case of need, how to manage scarce resources efficiently, how to draw on team work when necessary, amongst others.

On a university campus, these attributes can be translated into skills and attitudes such as coping mechanisms, self-reliance, perseverance, adaptability, flexibility in making choices, financial literacy, and the ability to consult or seek advice from older or more experienced peers, etc. These attributes are a reflection of daily life in the village, and compensate for the negative effects of marginalisation. However, tapping into these alternative resources requires knowledge of context and student backgrounds. This is a domain that begs the attention of doctoral supervisors in order to address the needs of students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds effectively.

10.1 *Beyond Conventional Boundaries: Mentoring and Pastoral Role*

Given the knowledge and cultural gaps entrenched by racist, sexist and isolationist apartheid policies, systematic institutional and supervisor mediation is needed, while acknowledging that the 'self' (the individual student) remains the main agent for the acquisition of epistemological access. Our major contention here revolves around the need to stretch the boundaries of conventional doctoral supervision to include other forms of guidance, exposure, learning

and support – intellectual, social, emotional, financial and material – geared at producing well-grounded practitioners of knowledge who can navigate successfully locally and globally in a rapidly changing world. This guidance may take the form of providing academic support, resources and facilities, and most importantly, individual guidance, counselling and advice. We refer to the role played by the supervisor in this process as providing ‘pastoral care’. In this context, narrowing down the social and pedagogic distance between supervisors and their students constantly stimulates individual student responsibility.

Pastoral care allows a dynamic interplay between student responsibility (which requires active engagement in time and effort), the quality of institutional mediation in student learning, the teaching and learning context, and the way in which an institution organises learning opportunities and services. When supervisors are positioned as pastoral care givers dealing with vulnerable individuals, they require not only knowledge of managing and addressing individual social and learning problems, available resources and the mechanisms to access them, but also knowledge and skills in the domain of human care, including psychological and social interaction. A key implication of our contention is that, when dealing with students with vulnerabilities due to marginalisation, socialisation strategies should not be restricted to the formal “processes through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialised knowledge and skills” (Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2003: iii). A more holistic and reconstructive approach is needed.

11 Conclusion

Doctoral supervision takes place in universities which, in South Africa – given their colonial and apartheid legacies – are inherently highly decontextualised places of learning, drawing on decontextualised supervision strategies. Under such circumstances, supervisors tend to operate out-of-context (without considering the supervision environment and its complexities), and out-of-history (without acknowledging how history has shaped individual student experiences, including their cognitive and intellectual resources, in a peculiar way). Students enter doctoral education with considerable knowledge gaps and distortions at epistemological, theoretical and methodological levels. Supervisors usually embrace supervision responsibilities without adequate understanding of the nature and complexity of these gaps and distortions, as well as with apparent misrecognition of the resources and potential that their students may or may not possess. In this regard, the under-preparedness of supervisors compounds the under-preparedness of students.

This chapter brings to the fore the realisation that current doctoral education challenges in South African higher education cannot be effectively addressed in the supervision domain with reference only to the current structure of knowledges for supervision; these knowledges include *embodied knowledge* inculcated or learned through experience under supervision during their own postgraduate studies; *knowledge embedded* in the official codes of requirements, rules and procedures; *disciplinary knowledge* acquired in their fields of specialisation, largely removed from local context; and current *inter-disciplinary knowledge* steered by globalisation pressures. Against this background, both knowledge *of* doctoral supervision (understandings of doctoral supervision) and knowledge *for* doctoral supervision (contextual, disciplinary, pedagogical and pastoral knowledge on the basis of which we frame our recommended supervision strategies) warrant re-visiting. Indeed, a fundamental deconstruction and re-contextualisation is required in terms of supervisors' epistemological foundations, approach, content and forms of delivery in the supervision process. This has serious implications for prevailing conceptions of knowledge of supervision, knowledge for supervision, pedagogy and social interaction, both in terms of the necessary epistemological breaks with the past and the types of moral, ethical and methodological vigilance required.

Overall, the challenge entails strengthening the alignment between social and academic contexts of doctoral supervision on the one hand, and on the other hand, doctoral learning itself. The goal is to maximise supervision mediation strategies through building communities of practice, thus contextualising the pedagogy of doctoral supervision. Bringing context to the pedagogy of doctoral supervision is not just a pedagogical matter, but also an essential epistemic and cognitive justice imperative. To emphasise this point, out-of-context supervision can be used to subtly discriminate between people, foster certain firms of knowledge, and block the advancement of groups of people – an aspect particularly significant in South Africa in resisting the legacy of racism and gender discrimination. Although PhD graduates are being exposed to conventional modes of inquiry, reasoning and expression, very little effort is dedicated to exploring alternative, context-sensitive supervision strategies that take epistemic and cognitive justice into consideration. Such a project would certainly require widening the scope of conventional modes of supervision to embrace mentoring, pastoral support, guidance and counselling.

Editors' Note

This chapter is posthumously published following Professor Michael Cross' untimely passing on 6 June 2021. At the time of his passing, the book was at an

advanced stage of production after he diligently led the editorial processes as senior editor for the book whilst also doubling as series editor.

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‘Assessment for Learning’ over ‘Assessment of Learning’

A Quest for Mastery Rather Than Performance Orientation in Postgraduate Research Degrees

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Abstract

At higher education, students are terminally assessed through a research output that demonstrates their originality, creativity, innovativeness, and contribution to knowledge and problem solving in society. However, the research assessment process, unlike the traditional pencil-and-paper and other performance assessments which are thoroughly proctored by the examiner, is one that is loosely structured. Depending on whether the student engrosses in undertaking research as an assessment by mastery orientation or performance orientation or both will determine whether the research process serves as an assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning. In this chapter it is argued using a critical review of literature that postgraduate students who use mastery orientation in carrying out their research will pursue a deep learning of both the theoretical and practical demands of the research process, in which case what is learned is enduring. Hence research as a terminal assessment will serve as an assessment for learning. On the other hand, students engaged in research through performance orientation are likely to engage in surface learning; taking ethical shortcuts in the pursuit and just wanting the work done, presented, and passed. In this case, what is learned from the research process is not enduring, and hence the process serves as assessment of learning for a short while. It is recommended among others that institutional policies and faculty practices regarding research conduct should engender deep learning through mastery orientation as opposed to surface learning through performance orientation so as to foster research as an assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning.

Keywords

assessment of learning – assessment for learning – deep learning – surface learning – mastery orientation – performance orientation

1 Introduction

The term 'research' carries varied meanings. It is broadly defined as a creative, systematic or scientific investigation of phenomena to advance all forms of knowledge, and use the new knowledge generated for other new applications (Frascati Manual, 2015). In the words of Stokking, van der Schaaf, Jaspers, and Erkens (2004: 94), "The meaning of the term 'research' ... is broader and is to be equated with what is denoted ... as 'investigation': research in which the approach and results are not obvious". As noted by Geuna and Martin (2003: 3), "Universities have been expected to become more efficient in their use of public resources and more accountable (Massy, 1996). These pressures have made research evaluation a central issue".

Research is therefore one of the core disciplines that define a university as a higher education institution. A research output is a requirement for scholars in most, if not all, higher education institutions, usually as a terminal assessment during postgraduate studentship. Postgraduate students are expected to exit the institution with a high level of proficiency in research skills. This calls on the lecturers and students to respectively teach and learn research methodology using the best interactive, constructivist strategies so as to attain maximum retention and application of the knowledge gained (Richardson, 2003). The students are expected to demonstrate this proficiency in the conduct of their own research for the award of their degree, in the work place, and in society at large where applicable.

Drawing on the theoretical learning models of Hodges (1990) and Kolb (2014), the best way to learn from the research process is to allow students to engage actively and collaboratively while conducting research. The student should start at a basic level, with foundation learning involving concrete experiences, then move through intermediate learning stages involving reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation, and ultimately to capstone learning when they are proficient enough to conduct a research study on their own. The role of the lecturers involved in this process is construed as one of formative intervention by 'meddling' constructively in the activities and strategies through which the student learns to do research systematically from scratch. In such a growth scenario, research serves as *assessment for learning* (Atibuni & Olema, 2018).

On the other hand, the final output – report, proposal, dissertation, thesis, article, or publication – is scored to give a measure of the extent of competence that the candidate has gained in conducting research. This requirement imparts a critical demand on the student to obtain the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to undertake research. In this case, the process and product of research as a discipline is one of the key summative assessments

that need to be produced by the postgraduate scholar, and research serves as *assessment of learning*.

The focus of this chapter is on the need to foster the undertaking of research among postgraduate students as assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning. By emphasising the adoption and promotion of mastery orientation rather than performance orientation (described in detail in later sections) in the process of acquiring research skills, the chapter provides formidable answers to the challenge of undertaking research as an assessment of learning. It then offers reasons why research should be undertaken with a focus on assessment for learning instead. The key argument of the chapter is in line with Sadler's (1998) proposition that there is a need to shift from evaluating research outputs using assessment of learning (which is commonly referred to as *summative assessment* of learning outcomes at one point in time, usually at the end of a period of instruction) to assessment for learning (which refers to *formative assessment* conducted as part of a strategy to inform and guide the learner to progress in a desired direction). In order to enhance understanding of ideas as they flow in the paper, the following section provides the definitions of the key terms used in the write-up.

2 Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are used in this chapter and are defined here in order to clarify meaning and avoid confusion.

1. *Assessment*: The process of collecting evidence and making judgments about learners' achievements or non-achievements in order to arrive at decisions about progression in their studies.
2. *Summative assessment/Assessment of learning*: Assessment of learning outcomes that takes place at one point in time, usually at the end of a period of instruction.
3. *Formative assessment/Assessment for learning*: Assessment is viewed as a strategy to inform and guide the learner to progress in a desired direction.
4. *Deep learning*: The process and outcome of learning in which the student uses active and collaborative strategies to acquire and retain knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are enduring.
5. *Surface learning*: The process and outcome of learning in which the student takes shortcuts rather than delving deep in the pursuit of knowledge, aiming to simply get the work done.
6. *Mastery goal orientation*: An adaptive orientation in which a learner focuses on learning as much as possible, overcoming challenges, increas-

ing their level of competence; it is characterised by a hardy response to failure and persistence in overcoming difficulties.

7. *Performance goal orientation*: A maladaptive orientation in which a learner aims at outdoing his colleagues in the same pursuit; it is characterised by giving up or cheating in the face of setbacks, failure or negative feedback.
8. *Performance-approach orientation*: Defines success in relation to others from a normative competitive viewpoint, while aiming for favourable judgments of self from others.
9. *Performance-avoidance orientation*: Defines success in relation to others from a normative competitive viewpoint, while avoiding unfavourable judgments of self from others.

3 Assessing Postgraduate Research in Higher Education

The South African Qualifications Authority ([SAQA]; Atibuni & Olema, 2018: 32) defines 'assessment' as "the process of collecting evidence and making judgments about learners' achievements or non-achievements in order to arrive at decisions about them". The term *assessment* is sometimes interchanged synonymously with the term *evaluation*. Evaluation is regarded as part of assessment, and refers to the making of a value judgment about the learner's competence against the assessment criteria (Scriven, 1991). Atibuni and Olema (2018) delineate different types of assessment including diagnostic, summative, formative, continuous, continual, integrated, authentic, quantitative, qualitative, and extended assessments. Norm- and criterion-referenced assessments can be added to this list.

Drawing from Atibuni and Olema's (2018) propositions, postgraduate research should be construed as a process by which students actively construct their own knowledge and skills through the research process, rather than being recipients of research outputs produced by someone else. This requires active engagement with the research process, in which the student needs to interact with subject content, supervisors, other lecturers, fellow students, institutional and other environmental resources and personnel, and spend time in personal reflection. Therefore, a one-time assessment of research outcomes grossly undermines the efficacy of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that are seasonally prevalent in the learner, for instance, in the course of cooperating with a data analysis expert. Moreover, learning how to conduct research is not an end in itself; it is incremental; it is the acquisition of a certain piece of knowledge, particular skills, values, or attitude stages that will equip the student for ascent on the higher rungs of the research engagement ladder.

4 Postgraduate Research Process

The term ‘research’ is ubiquitous; it can mean different things to different people, depending on their subject of specialisation. At postgraduate level, the term is often used to imply three main things (OECD/CERI, 2008): First, it refers to the course units – such as general research methods, quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, and mixed research methods – that involve the teaching and learning of the methodology of scientific investigation. Second, research implies gathering necessary information through reviewing appropriate literature from the library and other sources in order to complete an assignment, test, project, group work, or examination. Third, research can refer to the final rigorous investigation in a postgraduate degree, involving a stepwise ascent starting with identifying a topic or problem area, writing a proposal to detail how the investigation will be conducted, collecting data, analysing the data, and reporting the findings in a research report, dissertation or thesis. Sometimes an oral presentation is required, as well as further dissemination of the findings. The focus of this chapter is on the third meaning.

Stokking et al. (2004: 99) outline 10 consecutive steps required in carrying out postgraduate research as follows:

1. identifying and formulating a problem using subject-specific concepts;
2. formulating the research question(s), hypotheses and expectations (if any);
3. making and monitoring the research plan including the research design and time schedule;
4. gathering and selecting information/data;
5. assessing the value and utility of the data;
6. analysing the data;
7. drawing conclusions;
8. evaluating the research;
9. developing and substantiating a personal point of view; and
10. reporting (describing) and presenting (communicating) the research.

By pursuing the above steps, the student gains holistic experience from designing and conducting research, learning throughout the process. Evaluating and assessing research according to the steps in this process serves as assessment for learning rather than mere assessment of learning. Scholars (e.g., Dweck, 2000) have variously suggested such a shift, since deep learning as opposed to surface learning (described to a greater depth later) is envisaged as the outcome of research as assessment for learning. Strategies for fostering

assessment for learning and associated deep learning are suggested in this chapter. Higher education institutions need to formulate deliberate institutional policy and practice frameworks for research supervisors to walk closely with, and monitor students throughout the research process. This chapter presents further arguments for the need for higher education institutions to structure mastery goal orientation strategies into the research agenda, so as to reduce the deleterious effects (Soltani, 2007) of performance goal orientation (especially performance-avoidance).

5 Precursor Theories of Performance and Mastery Goal Orientation

Goal orientation theory has long been used to describe, explain and predict motivation and achievement in younger learners at lower levels of education, and undergraduate students (Soltani, 2007). Comparatively, the amount of research on motivation and achievement among postgraduate students is minimal. This chapter avers that goal orientation theory should be investigated in the context of postgraduate students, particularly in the area of research engagement. This gap calls for a deliberate effort to initiate discourse on the goal orientation held by postgraduate students as they progress through their studies, and how this changes in the light of extrinsic factors such as the nature of the course, with specific reference to the research process.

Goal orientation theory was derived originally from the *social cognitive theory* proposed by Bandura (1978) and was developed by Dweck (1996, 2000) who combined aspects of *attribution theory* (Weiner, 1972) and *achievement goal theory* (Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot & Thrash, 2002). According to Dweck and Leggett (1988), goal orientation theory explains learners' cognitive, affective, and behavioural dispositions toward achievement related processes and outcomes, by describing and explaining the processes that govern how individuals select and pursue achievement goals, and the meanings they attach to these goals. Achievement goal theory considers how a person's goals can influence their beliefs and actions, subsequently affecting their achievement, relationships and self-concepts (Dweck & Molden, 2000). It links goals to belief systems, emphasising the importance of self-theories (also called 'implicit theories') in terms of motivation. Self-theories describe how individuals view their own personality characteristics and attributes. These theories may be domain specific and situation sensitive; they may also be influenced by the environment and the passage of time (Dweck, 1996, 2000; Heyman & Dweck, 1998; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991, cited in Soltani, 2007).

Implicit theories are thought to be developed early in life, before most children begin formal schooling (Soltani, 2007). According to Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin and Wan (1999: 588):

implicit theories and goals create a motivational framework that (a) guides the individual's strivings prior to an outcome and (b) creates a meaning system within which attributions occur.

This implies that by the time a person enrolls for postgraduate study, he or she already has deeply entrenched self-concepts. However, as noted above, these perceptions can be altered through the experience of extrinsic moderating factors.

Dweck and Leggett (1998) distinguish between two types of goal orientation within implicit theory, namely, *entity* (discussed further in the following section) and *incremental* orientation. Each type of orientation leads to a different set of beliefs, values, and resulting behaviours. Individuals who ascribe to *incremental theory* tend to focus on mastery goals. They emphasise effort over ability or skill, and try to seek feedback, mainly negative rather than positive, in order to invest more effort and so improve (Soltani, 2007). The individual, instead of engaging in negative competition with the peers, is more likely to seek support in order to gain more knowledge and skills from them. Such an individual will most likely exhibit deep learning characterised by metacognition. When faced with setbacks, the individual is more likely to adopt positive coping mechanisms, such as mobilising more effort for the task at hand, until they succeed. Hence incremental theorists are thought to display higher intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and mastery orientation than entity theorists.

Elliot and Dweck (2005) posit that self-theories determine if an individual is focused on competence validation (*performance* goals) or competence acquisition (*mastery* goals). These authors define 'competence' as "a condition or quality of effectiveness, ability, sufficiency, or success" (p. 5). This enables us to conceptualise achievement in terms of competence which is measurable in behavioural terms, in daily activities, and across an individual's lifespan. In the light of that work, Elliott and Harackiewicz (1996) postulated a revised achievement orientation theory in which performance goals are distinguished according to two categories: *performance-approach* and *performance-avoidance* goal orientations. An individual positioned in performance goal orientation is likely to define success in relation to others from a normative, competitive viewpoint. Performance-approach goals aim for favourable judgment of competence, while performance-avoidance goals are focused on avoiding unfavourable judgments of self (Dweck & Leggett, 1998).

Where a student is predisposed to performance-avoidance goal orientation, he or she may choose to withdraw from participating in learning activities, professional activities and research processes, and tend instead towards negative coping behaviours, particularly in the face of setbacks (Dweck, 1996, 2000). Students of this nature are said to be engaged in surface learning, characterised by taking shortcuts including some unethical ones such as employing someone else to do the research for them. Such cases are examples of research as assessment of learning, serving the student for only a short while.

6 Performance and Mastery Goal Orientation Pathways for Research in Higher Education

With regard to postgraduate research, it can be argued that students who follow an *entity* theory of intelligence and consequently have a performance-approach goal orientation, will demonstrate a *mastery orientation* pattern when the research process runs smoothly. However, when faced with challenges, they are likely to adopt a maladaptive performance-avoidance, helpless pattern. Their self-effort will slacken, their active and collaborative participation in research activities will be left wanting, their student-lecturer interaction will be characterised by grumbling and bickering, and they will tend to lodge complaints about the inadequacy of institutional support. Soltani (2007) posits that performance-approach goals are associated with improved grade point average and persistence with positive feedback, while performance-avoidance goals are associated with lack of persistence, low achievement, self-handicapping behaviours, and cheating. Studies by Harackiewicz et al. (2002) and Midgley, Kaplan and Middleton (2001) have demonstrated that a combination of mastery and performance-approach goals facilitates increased motivation and interest, as well as higher academic achievement.

On the contrary, postgraduate students who employ *mastery orientation*, facilitated by incremental implicit theory, will most likely invest energy in coping with the different challenges that inevitably arise in the research process. They strive to engage in active and collaborative undertaking of their research, be the engineers of healthy student-lecturer interaction through regular consultations with their research supervisors, and make maximum use of the available institutional resources in order to accomplish their research projects. In other words, mastery-oriented research students envisage success in relation to accomplishing their research tasks. Such students are more likely than their performance-oriented counterparts to reap positive benefits, including deep processing, deep learning, increased motivation and self-efficacy, and

persistence in the face of challenges they face (Soltani, 2007), with the aim of long-term achievement.

As argued by Weiner (2005), if a student attributes failure in research to an unstable factor such as effort, he or she will be more likely to believe in trying again and putting in more effort. If, however, failure is blamed on stable, unchangeable factors such as intelligence, then the student will most likely give up future efforts in conducting research since these would be unlikely to improve his or her performance. Given that an individual's goal orientation is not static but changes situationally, the way research is popularly construed in the university and by the individual student (as summative assessment – of learning; or as formative assessment – for learning) is likely to orient the student towards performance or mastery goal orientation respectively.

7 Dangers of Assessment of Learning for Postgraduate Research

In recent times, educationists have hailed assessment as a vital tool in the education process. Research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD/CERI, 2008: 2) indicates that the most visible assessments are summative:

[S]ummative assessments are used to measure what students have learnt at the end of a unit, to promote students, to ensure they have met required standards on the way to earning certification for school completion or to enter certain occupations, or as a method for selecting students for entry into further education. Ministries or departments of education may use summative assessments and evaluations as a way to hold publicly funded [institutions] accountable for providing quality education. Increasingly, international summative assessments ... have been important for comparing national education systems to developments in other countries.

At postgraduate level, most students are expected to carry out research for the purposes of a final summative assessment. Such research outputs carry the same high stakes as described by OECD/CERI. Previous research (e.g., Atibuni, Kibanja, Olema, Ssenyonga & Karl, 2017; Stokking et al., 2004) has shown that the majority of graduate students are older, working part- or full time, and juggling work, financial and family duties. Thus many of them exhibit a constrained work-life balance due to scarcity of time and financial support for research. The multiple stresses on these individuals can hinder successful

completion of graduate study and the related research component. Their academic goal orientation is often biased toward achieving the ultimate end – a degree – as quickly as possible (performance goal orientation), as opposed to concentrating on the academic journey to comprehend the content and processes (mastery goal orientation). As a result, these students most likely tend to view their research activities as assessment of learning rather than as assessment for learning.

In undertaking research for their final exit from higher education institutions, the postgraduate student is usually assigned a supervisor or a team of supervisors to advise and mentor him or her along the research journey. Many times, supervisors expect their students to follow steps in the research process in a chronological order with minimum, if any, deviation. Such a stepwise assessment of progress in research presents various challenges; first, the steps are not fully differentiated, and second, they are dependent on both the subject matter and the context in which the research is carried out. As argued by Hodson (1992), research as a science is a holistic pursuit and should be taught, learned and assessed as such.

Van Tilburg and Verloop (2000) argue that whereas research supervisors demand their students to follow Stokking et al.'s (2004) 10-step model (mentioned earlier), to conduct research, many supervisors themselves have little knowledge of research, little experience of conducting research themselves, and little experience in constructing and assessing research assignments for students. This is particularly true in low resource settings where a 'high-performing' postgraduate student (without experience in article writing and publishing) is recruited immediately after his or her graduation to teach and supervise postgraduate research students. Rather than emphasising steps that are not skills in the classic psychometric sense, it is better to emphasise a more holistic approach by integrating the theoretical learning of research methodology with the practical undertaking of research projects; unfortunately, novice and dogmatic supervisors seldom accede to this approach.

Stokking et al. (2004) further observe that supervisors vary greatly in the amount and type of assistance and feedback they provide to research students as a result of the summative assessment model of evaluating research. These variations may be expressed in terms of the weight attached to the different aspects of the research process, student-lecturer interaction, lecturer-lecturer interaction in case there is a co-supervisor, whether each student is supervised alone or in a group with other students, and involvement in sourcing internal and external examiners to grade the dissertation or thesis. It is not uncommon for a supervisor to demand that their students should tailor their research to suit the supervisor's own research interests, or to be in line with

how the examiners will score the work, thus diverting the students from pursuing their own passions. In other words, the supervisors exercise and maintain maximum control over the students' research activities. When students meet challenges in the process, their goal orientation is likely to shift from mastery to performance-avoidance orientation. In this way, the summative assessment model of research can limit creativity and innovation, and is often a precursor of unethical research conduct among students (Soltani, 2007).

Assessment of different students' research outputs cannot be done objectively, due to their different topics, methodologies and styles; thus a high degree of subjectivity often prevails in the process. Moreover, various examiners or assessors naturally attach varying degrees of importance to the different aspects and skills of research. Some examiners might score aspects highly which were not intended to be examined, for instance, the presentation of the document. Furthermore, the scoring criteria do not necessarily provide an opportunity for the student to decipher what needs to be done, or how to improve. For example, some examiners might simply place a question mark against a phrase or sentence, which does not indicate whether or not the candidate needs to change something. Thus the summative assessment of research is not objective and is sometimes unfair, often failing to provide the insight needed for the candidate to improve the work.

In setting standards for the assessment of research outputs, universities often fail to take into consideration the demands of the various disciplines. For instance, what would be considered as very necessary in the pure sciences – such as materials and methods – might not be necessary in the social sciences, humanities and languages. This implies that assessment of postgraduate research is not well streamlined and therefore does not have the required resources in terms of textbooks to facilitate its undertaking (Stokking et al., 2004). Sometimes, examiners are drawn from across disciplines due to a lack of personnel in the student's field of specialisation to examine the work. In such cases, the examiner may lay heavy emphasis on cross-disciplinary and cross-cutting issues, such as research questions and the corresponding conclusions, at the expense of developing the student's competence and research skills in their area of specialisation.

The costs of summative examination of postgraduate research theses and dissertations are sometimes so prohibitive that universities often hire only one examiner to handle the works of several students at once, in order to minimise costs. However, key criteria in evaluating a summative assessment include reliability, objectivity and equality, which can be fostered through using more than one assessor (Stokking et al., 2004). In addition, the work needs to be scored at every stage of the process such that the final score is an average of

the scores on a number of earlier steps, in a bid to promote fairness and generalisability of the scores over time; an aspect that eventually lacks given the summative assessment model employed. Often times the comments from examiners reflect areas that should have been improved when the candidate was still progressing actively – formatively – through the research project. If the candidate passes, the areas highlighted serve as possible areas that could have been improved; however it is then too late for them to add value to the outcome.

The lack of structure within the research examination framework sometimes results in a candidate being referred from the final examination to start the whole process from the beginning. This may arise if the candidate is not gifted in the art of oral presentation of the work before a panel of examiners, or sometimes the work is indeed poorly done as a result of poor guidance on the part of the supervisor. This challenge could have been addressed if a formative assessment model had been used to guide the research process. On the other hand, another candidate may produce a sub-standard research output, but because he or she is gifted in the art of oral presentation, will pass the examination. In cases where a candidate fails, a lot of time and resources would have been wasted, leading to frustration and anxiety among everyone concerned, including other students. Ultimately, the students begin to twist their goal orientation from mastery to performance-avoidance orientation, with the resultant negative coping strategies of unethical practices, such as soliciting the services of someone else to do the research for them. The imperative of grounding students in ethical research methodology and practice is thus lost.

With regard to research-based promotion of lecturers in most universities – where the number of candidates supervised and successfully completed as well as the number of publications are considered for promotion on the career ladder – some lecturers may begin to indulge in intrigue. Students are often segregated and labelled as low, moderate, or high ability. Some staff will decline to supervise students in the moderate and low categories, because those will stall their career progress if they fail to complete in time. Staff who take on such students may get saddled with a large number of similar students, whose fate then gets sealed: they may not complete their research projects satisfactorily, or in time. New students assigned to such supervisors may also relapse into a performance-avoidance orientation and get entangled in negative coping strategies.

In addition, the ranking of universities and provision of research funds to lecturers hinges very much on the number and quality of research outputs – grants won, publications, citation impact, and so on. As a result, some lecturers prefer to concentrate on their own research and building their own curriculum

vitae for more funding, rather than supervising students who will ‘waste’ their time that could otherwise be used profitably for writing grants and papers. This, in my opinion, is a serious danger of evaluating research using a summative assessment model, which undermines the research progress of postgraduate students. Generally, the grades assigned to staff as a measure of research productivity tend to introduce some negative competition that curtails the positive help that the students would receive, had a formative assessment model involving close supervision and timely feedback to the student been used during the research journey.

It must be acknowledged that supervisors also benefit from the formative feedback they provide to students. When providing feedback, the supervisor pays close attention to what students appear to understand well (or not), and so are better able to adjust their instructional strategies to encourage deep learning within the student. This implies conversely that staff who refuse to participate in formative research supervision process of postgraduate students will not understand student needs and so will continue to impart knowledge in ways that elicit surface learning among their students.

It can be concluded that summative assessment of research is inimical to research engagement among postgraduate students as it engenders performance-avoidance orientation and hence surface learning. It is advisable to adopt formative assessment of research (elaborated in the following section) so as to focus students on mastery orientation, with the hope of generating deep learning that entrenches them in high-level engagement with the research process.

8 Situating Assessment for Learning as Being Ideal for Postgraduate Research Engagement

Formative assessment (also known as *assessment for learning*) refers to assessment conducted as a strategy to inform and guide a learner to progress in a desired direction (Sadler, 1998). The concept of formative assessment was first introduced in 1971 by Bloom, Hastings and Maddaus (Murtagh, 2012). According to Murtagh (2012), assessment need not be used solely to make summative evaluations of student performance, but rather teachers should make assessment an integral part of their teaching, by providing students with prompt feedback and correction as a way to remediate student work. In this way, the teacher serves as a ‘formator’, forming and nurturing student growth by assessing them as the teaching-learning process continues.

In the context of postgraduate research engagement, formative assessment implies frequent, interactive assessments of a student’s research progress to identify concerns that need to be addressed. The ultimate aim of the formative

assessment of research is to guide the student toward developing his or her own skills to tackle the demands of their research work – skills such as learning to learn, and deep learning within their field of investigation – which is why it is referred to as 'assessment for learning'. A plethora of research (see OECD/CERI, 2008) has shown that formative assessment is one of the most effective interventions for promoting high-performance among students, chiefly because it focuses the student on mastery orientation rather than performance orientation. The following sub-sections present eight strategies advanced by OECD/CERI for formative assessment that elicit mastery orientation and hence deep learning, contextualised in terms of postgraduate research engagement with the aim of enhancing students' progress in research.

8.1 *Strategy 1: Establish a Culture of Interactive, Active and Collaborative Approaches to Research*

In a formative assessment framework, students are encouraged to work in groups and offer critique on each other's work. The outcome is a learning community where every individual feels responsible first of all for his or her own success, but also for the overall success of every other individual. Regular critiques obtained from peers in such a setting encourage the individual to strive for improvement while challenging them to make a contribution towards the success of the others. Any fear of, or aversion to feedback can be overcome in such a setting. Prompt feedback is provided within the group instead of students each waiting for feedback from one supervisor, which may not be forthcoming due to the supervisor's heavy workload. The role of the supervisor in this scenario is to help the students to believe in themselves and allow them to feel safe enough to take risks and make mistakes within the learning community. In this way, students feel safe in revealing what they may or may not understand, and hence they can be helped appropriately.

In such a group setting, the students' attention is focused on mastering their own tasks at hand, and developing emotional competencies, rather than on competing with peers. Emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-control, compassion, co-operation, flexibility, and the ability to make judgments on the value of information, serve the students well, not only on the research journey but indeed throughout their lives. Emotions also affect a student's self-esteem, motivation and ability to regulate his or her own learning.

8.2 *Strategy 2: Establish Learning Goals, and Track Individual Student Progress toward Those Goals*

In most cases, a postgraduate student proposes his or her own research topic for investigation; hence there will be a variety of research goals and objectives among students in the same cohort. Apart from the general, cross-cutting

methodological issues, every student will pursue their own goals and their progress can be tracked individually by the supervisor. This eliminates situations of comparison in which weaker students might absorb the idea that they lack ability, and thus lose motivation and confidence, possibly turning towards a performance-avoidance orientation. The supervisor's role is to demonstrate to the students that he or she believes in their effort, rather than in their ability. According to Ames (1992), such a belief from a supervisor plays an important role in the student's beliefs about himself or herself. Appropriate reference to an individual student's progress and opportunities to improve their work based on feedback can help to counter the negative impact of social comparisons.

8.3 *Strategy 3: Use Varied Instructional and Learning Strategies to Meet Diverse Student Needs*

According to Soltani (2007), formative assessment promotes professionalism among postgraduate students by providing differentiated learning approaches such as encouraging participation in research groups, presentations, conferences, and publishing, among others. Participation in committees, leadership activities, and various university groups are other formative research activities that provide an avenue through which students can build professionalism and progress towards their own research dreams. As noted by Weidman and Stein (2003), strategies taken by departments and lecturers to encourage student participation in professionalism building activities are critical for successful orientation into the culture of academia. Even part-time, non-traditional postgraduate students with multiple work-life demands may be able to benefit from at least one type of differentiated learning activity to improve their research progress, compared to a scenario that offers a single strategy (e.g. face-to-face supervision).

8.4 *Strategy 4: Offer Psycho-Social Support to Students*

Postgraduate students generally require more time and effort from lecturer and departments because of their uniqueness in being involved in multiple roles. Support systems from cohort and collaborative groups, lecturer, and peers are important to assist graduate students in evolving into professionals in their own specialty disciplines of specialty, and into professional researchers. In the wake of internationalisation and the 'massification' of higher education, there is increased diversity among students, as well as increased numbers of part-time students and distance learning programmes. Students often experience physical, proximal, professional and psychological alienation in their new settings. Effective research engagement would require that their psychosocial needs are taken care of by providing financial aid, flexible schedules and

personal encouragement, among other strategies. It is only possible to gauge a student's psycho-social needs when a formative as opposed to a summative research supervision model is employed.

8.5 *Strategy 5: Provide Effective Supervisor Feedback on Student Performance and Adapt Supervision to Meet Identified Needs*

Acton and McCreight (2014) posit that apart from students working collaboratively in small groups and offering each other feedback, supervisors and lecturer operating in a formative assessment framework generally give seminars to provide feedback to students so that they gain a deeper understanding of some of the practical and theoretical issues raised about their work. Such seminars provide an ideal opportunity for assessment for learning, as they offer the potential for collaborative group work where students can benefit from tutor and peer feedback.

Supervisors using a formative assessment model may need to take time off from their other duties in order to review students' work and provide them with one-to-one feedback. According to OECD/CERI (2008), feedback is vital to formative assessment, but not all feedback is effective. Feedback needs to be timely and specific, and include suggestions for improving future performance. Good feedback should tally with the outline of explicit assessment criteria for student performance. The supervision process should be more transparent, and be able to model learning to learn and deep learning skills for students. In this way, students are able to learn from the assessment process and have more chance of retaining what they have learnt.

8.6 *Strategy 6: Provide Richer Institutional Support and Encourage Active Engagement of Students in Building Critical Research Skills*

Formative assessment enables the identification of gaps in students' critical research skills. Lecturer can then organise workshops, seminars and training sessions to enrich students in terms of the necessary critical skills. In particular, non-traditional postgraduate students often exhibit gaps in areas such as numeracy and literacy, information and communication skills, data management and analysis skills, and time management skills (Atibuni et al., 2017). Hands-on and minds-on workshops on these areas provide students with the opportunity to gain practical experience and competence that transcends their student life into their work life. Research (e.g., see Steele & Aronson, 2005) has shown that the formative use of interventions can change a mind-set from an entity approach to a more incremental pattern, and thus successfully improve performance among exceptional students. Institutions need to provide opportunities for non-traditional postgraduate students who believe that they are

unable to perform computer tasks (for example) to decrease their anxiety levels and increase their sense of efficacy, along with displaying better skills.

8.7 *Strategy 7: Offer Apprenticeships through Research Assistant and Research Tutor Positions*

Previous research has shown that the environment influences goal orientation; in particular, a traditional, normative, competitive environment – such as one set by summative assessment – fosters performance goals with resulting negative behaviours (Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Midgley et al., 2001). To facilitate mastery goal orientation, postgraduate students could be offered employment opportunities and assistantships. Employment support and planned lecturer and cohort support could contribute to addressing any issues regarding their research progress and promote their success. A postgraduate student who has been exposed to a research assistantship will employ the same skills to progress in his or her own research work; and one who has taught other students will engage more effort to accomplish his or her own research activities. A formative assessment strategy demonstrates that the student is trusted and assessed as a potential future employee in a higher education institution. This approach positively addresses psychological as well as social dimensions.

8.8 *Strategy 8: Sequence the Research Process*

One of the principles of formative assessment is that the learning process should be structured sequentially – from foundational through intermediate to capstone learning (Hodges, 1990; Kolb, 2014). Students at the foundational level are encouraged to start the research process by first examining and linking research articles to see how different authors build and refine methods and knowledge. They may then advance to gain experience of the research process by conducting a pilot study to pre-test and improve on a research instrument at the intermediate level. At the capstone learning stage, the students participate in assessments that allow them to develop further and become aware of themselves as researchers.

9 Conclusion

From the foregoing conceptualisations and discussions, we conclude that formative assessment (or assessment for learning) is the most effective way to help promote research engagement among postgraduate students. Students who are guided in the research process by means of formative assessment strategies will adopt mastery as opposed to performance goal orientation. Mastery orientation focuses students on pursuing deep learning and learning

to learn, by enabling them to view research as a process rather than as a series of research products as an end in themselves. Therefore, postgraduate research students need to be inducted stepwise into the process of research using formative assessment strategies. This implies that the curriculum for postgraduate research should cater for student and supervisor support through provision of minimum resources including criteria, presentation fora, and materials for formative assessment of research. The dangers of summative assessment of research need to be averted through interactive approaches that elicit mastery orientation in the students.

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Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Patched onto the System to Access Professional Education

Sibonokuhle Ndlovu

Abstract

Since post-Apartheid in South Africa, there has been significant efforts to include persons who have been previously disadvantaged in teaching and learning in higher learning, and in professional employment. As it all starts from professionalisation, all diverse students including those with disabilities, are being afforded opportunity to access professional learning. However, from the decolonial perspective, the finding is that, while at surface value levels, there are opportunities for students with disabilities to access professional learning, the hidden structure of coloniality and its effects continue to influence their exclusion. Students with disabilities are only patched onto the system and not totally included, hence *those who cannot hold on fall away*. The chapter first presents affordances and opportunities provided to students with disabilities to access professional learning an institution of higher learning. Decolonial theory is used to analyse the specific opportunities afforded, to reveal why students with disabilities remain excluded despite the affordances. The chapter seeks to contribute to the broad issue of low throughput for formerly disadvantaged social groups in higher learning and the exclusion of persons with disabilities from professional employment. Universal Design in Learning is proposed as a way in which teaching and learning in higher learning could be organised so that all diverse students' learning needs are considered from the outset.

Keywords

students with disabilities – professional learning – higher learning – affordances – coloniality – hidden structure – inclusion – exclusion – diverse

1 Introduction

Since the demise of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, efforts have been made to include all persons who had previously been disadvantaged in education, higher education, professional development and employment. Considering that professionalisation of the individual is the starting point for all types of employment, there have also been significant efforts to include formerly disadvantaged students – including those with disabilities – in higher education, particularly by providing affordances and opportunities for access to professional learning pathways. However, the deep underlying invisible structure of coloniality which also presents obstacles, should not be glossed over because on the surface students with disabilities might seem to have greater affordances in accessing professional education, while they are only ‘patched’ onto the system.

Embracing diversity in education and employment is an issue of priority, both internationally and in South Africa. South Africa in particular, seeks to include historically disadvantaged social groups – such as women, blacks and people with disabilities – in the skilled workforce as it prepares to compete in the global market of the 21st century (Carrim & Wangenge-Ouma, 2012). This chapter focuses on affordances for students with disabilities in professional learning in a higher education institution. Decolonial theory in this context is therefore used to unveil how the effects of coloniality perpetuate their exclusion. The chapter thus seeks to contribute to the broad issue of low throughput of formerly disadvantaged social groups in higher learning, in particular the exclusion from professional employment of persons with disabilities. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is proposed as an approach that genuinely includes students with disabilities in professional scholarship. It is an approach, which considers the diverse learning needs of all students from the outset.

Although there is a broad base of intention to increase access to higher education by formerly disadvantaged social groups, in general, their participation levels and success rates are low (CHE, 2013); and graduation times are delayed for specific groups (Second National Higher Education Summit, 2015). Despite the affordances and opportunities provided for formerly disadvantaged students, including those with disabilities, they continue to be confronted by specific obstacles that limit their learning and opportunities for graduating into the professions (Ndlovu & Walton, 2016). This chapter, therefore, endeavours to illuminate the underlying, invisible causes of continued exclusion. The framework of decolonial theory was applied to reveal the hidden structure of colonialism and its ongoing effects on the formerly colonised.

The chapter commences by discussing how professional degrees differ from other academic programmes in higher education and training and what

professional scholarship generally involves. It goes on to argue that on the surface, there appear to be opportunities and affordances for specific social groups, such as accommodation, service provision and disability support; however, at a deeper level, it emerges that these students are only ‘patched’ onto the system. Because of the obstacles they are confronted with, those who cannot hold their own drop out. The chapter concludes that the adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) could provide opportunities and support to all types of diverse students, including those with disabilities, so that they are empowered to access professional learning in a way that enables them to succeed. UDL is an approach that considers the diverse learning needs of all students and caters for them from the outset. Rose and Meyer (2000) argue that its principles guide those who teach, consider from the start the individuals’ backgrounds, abilities, and disabilities, and then design a curriculum accessible to all methods, learning, and assessment. Eagleton (2008) views UDL as an approach that promotes flexible goals, methods, assessments and materials from the outset in order to minimise barriers that limit the learning of diverse students. Therefore, as claimed by the same author, it can be argued that UDL creates maximum flexibility from the start and capitalises on technology to meet the needs of all.

2 Professional Degrees in the Higher Education Sector

Professional degrees are specialised, highly esoteric and consist of abstract knowledge, which is applied differently in various fields of practice. They are characterised by the practical, hands-on acquisition of both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills. Examples of professional degrees include, among others, Medicine, Law, Architecture and Accountancy. Abbott (1988) describes the ‘professions’ in the same way. According to Friedson (2001), theoretical knowledge has its “foundation in abstract concepts and formal learning” (p. 35).

In contrast, specialised knowledge is the foundation from which the principles that inform practice are derived (Shay, 2013). Professional degrees thus require the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and skills and the development of the ability and expertise to apply these appropriately in the field of practice. ‘Professional learning’ is a term that will be consistently used throughout the chapter, to refer to learning of the specific professional degrees. Clarke and Winch (2004) argue that there is a need for knowledge about theories, alongside the ability to recognise the contexts in which they apply. Thus, professional degrees consist of professional knowledge, which Dickson (2007)

defines as the 'know-about' and 'know-how' of knowledge applied in practice. Dickson also refers to the specialised (theoretical) knowledge required in a specific profession and its practical application. Curricula for professional degrees should include theory and opportunities for practical application in settings that enable integrated learning (Ndlovu & Walton, 2016).

In professional programmes of study, learning occurs in two contexts: in the university and workplace settings. Expertise and professional judgement are required to apply professional knowledge appropriately, adapting it to suit individual situations within the context of practice. Shalem (2014) argues for the importance of exercising professional judgement within the field of professional practice. The highly scientific form of professional knowledge and its application is what distinguishes professional practice from any other practice. At the end of their professional studies, students should have acquired theoretical and practical knowledge and developed a professional identity and culture to access professions of their choice.

Professional degrees are also distinct from other academic programmes due to their connection with professional bodies (Harvey, Mason & Ward, 1995). For example, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) is the professional board for educators in South Africa. Health Professions Council (HPCSA) regulates the professionals in the health sector. These bodies accredit specific professional programmes of study, and the criteria for accreditation are based on the institution's suitability to offer a particular programme. When accreditation has been approved, representative stakeholders of the professional bodies become involved in designing the curricula (Jamal & Bowie, 1995) for the relevant professional degree programmes. The representative stakeholders of the professional bodies determine the entry requirements, the specific professional knowledge needed and examine the students for competence in theory and practice. Thus, professional bodies determine and monitor the internal and external quality of such programmes. They also specify ethical codes of conduct to ensure that all their members abide by established ethical principles. Professional bodies' involvement is important in maintaining moral and ethical professional practice and appropriate standards (Harvey et al., 1995). They work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, specifically in the higher education sector, to improve all aspects of professional degrees. Professional bodies can be viewed as gatekeepers of the professions because they are involved throughout the process from entry into the professional programmes of study to access the relevant profession. They ensure that it is those who have the right credentials in terms of qualifications, ethical behaviour and morals, who take up professional jobs after successful completion of their studies.

3 Contextualising Methodological Nuances

Data were collected from an institution of higher education, which was previously advantaged. The study reported in this chapter used a qualitative research design and collected data via one to one in-depth interviews with 12 students with disabilities and seven staff members from the Disability Unit. The selected design and data collection methods were the most appropriate. They allowed deeper interaction with individual participants (Creswell, 2003) and provided them with an opportunity to freely share their experiences, views, and opinions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Qualitative methods also allow for building a mutual researcher-participant relationship in which they can work together (Mertens, 2015). Tables 12.1 and 12.2 provide the demographic details of the student participants and the Disability Unit staff members.

TABLE 12.1 Demographic information of students with disabilities

Characteristics	Category	Number
Sex	Male	6
	Female	6
Race	Black	7
	White	5
Age	21–25	6
	26–30	4
	31–40	0
	41 and above	2
Schooling background	Special education	4
	Mainstream	8
Year of study	4th years	7
	6th years	1
	Post-graduate	4
Onset of disability	At birth	10
	Before entry into school	2
Programme	Law	4
	Medicine	2
	Education	6

TABLE 12.2 Demographic information of DU staff members

Characteristics	Category	Number
Sex	Male	4
	Female	5
Race	Black	6
	White	3
Position in the Disability Unit	Head of unit	1
	Adaptive technician	1
	Administrators	5
	Sign language Interpreter	1
	Learning disability coordinator	1
Work experience	0–5 years	3
	6–10 years	2
	11–20 years	3
	21–30 years	1

These three programmes of study were selected mainly because they are amongst those identified by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2011) as being scarce in terms of national skill levels. They were also selected for their different entry-level requirements. By virtue of having different points and subjects for entry requirements, it suggests they have varied demands, both at entry and in professional learning. Being different in terms of demand could yield varied affordances for students with disabilities. It will help not to homogenise and universalise the affordances for students with disabilities at the Institution to all the three professional degrees. Students with disabilities were identified by means of a snowball approach (De Vaus, 1986), in which one student referred the researcher to another, who in turn involved another student. Staff participants from the Disability Unit volunteered to take part in the study; some are living with disabilities and others are not. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the higher degrees committee. Ethical clearance was obtained from the same institution, in which both the researcher and the participants studied. Ethical procedures were followed throughout the study.

4 Affordances and Accommodations at the Institution

Conforming to the policy of non-discrimination, the institution is making a concerted effort to ensure that all types of learners have access to professional

learning, according to their diverse learning needs. Specific accommodations are offered to students with disabilities, such as assistive devices to enable access to learning and extra time in examinations to enable fair assessment. The institution provides support in the form of funding specifically for students with disabilities, and some members of academic staff make efforts to accommodate them during classroom teaching. There is bus transport specifically for these students and the built environment has been improved to enable them better access to learning venues, libraries and other places on campus. All these accommodations, service provisions and disability support collectively afford students with disabilities the opportunity to access professional learning, as is the case for all other students at the institution.

5 Affordances and Experiences in Classroom Teaching

The various affordances and accommodations for students with disabilities are reflected in the section that follows. They are presented as stated from students with disabilities experiences of classroom teaching and learning, access arrangements provided by the institution, fund support and from the Disability Unit, including provision of transport and improved built environment. That students with disabilities are still excluded has not been glossed over, thus experiences of exclusion, despite the affordances have been also noted and a presented, alongside the affordances.

All students with disabilities interviewed across the three programmes reported experiences in which a few willing lecturers make the effort to accommodate them in the classroom. In this regard, two participants described their experiences as follows:

A disabled student has other issues of access to overcome. When my lecturers have known that I cannot hear, they made sure I got all the important stuff for my learning. They gave me notes prior to the semester and they told me I had no choice but to gather myself and do my work. They do not give me special treatment but they assist me to access the medical information. (Response from a Medical student)

On the same vein another student had this to say:

I heard one lecturer mentioning people with sight issues when she was putting an overhead projector. She offered help and said such students should come to her office. It is when I realised that there is someone who understands us! (Response from a Law student)

In Education too, there is evidence that students with disabilities are afforded opportunities for professional learning. Three of the postgraduate students in Education, for example, had fulfilled the requirements of the programme theoretically and practically and graduated into the profession. The other three were in their fourth year of study. They had been learning at the institution and participating in field practice since their first year, both at special and mainstream schools, as part of their teaching experience. They had been able to complete required professional tasks, thus enabling them to move from one year to the next. It can be argued that the lecturers who accommodated their needs (as students proclaimed), contributed to affording them opportunities to access professional education and succeed in their studies.

However, students reported that the number of academic staff members who accommodate students with disabilities is few – many do not. ‘Few’ and ‘many’ could be critiqued for not quantifying the numbers precisely; however, these estimates are taken simply as stated by the participants, namely that those who are willing are fewer than those who are not. Students with disabilities reported experiences of not being accommodated by lecturers, more specifically in Law and Education. Three undergraduate students in their fourth year of study in Education explained that some lecturers do not send their learning materials for conversion in time. Conversion refers to the process of converting learning materials into an accessible format for students with visual impairments, such as Braille or large print. The students said that because of the slow process, they were given their assignment topics late, they then submitted them late, and received feedback late. In addition, when print materials were converted to Braille, there were distortions and omissions that made it difficult for them to read the documents. Lecturers also use overhead transparencies and Power point slides when teaching, which exclude students with total sight loss. Students with disabilities in Law reiterated the same experience of distorted conversions and the use of teaching materials and methods inaccessible to those with visual limitations. One of the students stated:

The lecturers forget us. They would say sorry I forgot to send your notes and all stuff. Even when they are teaching, they forget us, even in tests and in assignments. (Education Student Six)

Interestingly, when compared to Law and Education, Medical students reported different experiences about accommodations made by lecturers, namely a greater extent of willingness by lecturers. This suggests that accommodation of students with disabilities by willing lecturers varies from school to school, from one department to another or from one professional programme to another. We argue that students with disabilities have greater opportunities

for professional learning in Medicine where they appear to be better accommodated in teaching approaches.

Although students in the sample agreed that there are opportunities for professional education at the institution, those studying Law reported that they were confronted by teaching and learning obstacles, particularly in terms of the design of the content. Students said they were taught a lot of theoretical knowledge, but there were few opportunities for field practice. They perceived themselves as being inadequately prepared to apply legal principles appropriately, when they graduate. Though the verbatim below may apply to all students, including those without disabilities, experiences of dissatisfaction about the way they were being taught, are expressed. One student stated:

My professor, who is teaching me evidence [part of Law], it is like you are paid for your knowledge and not how you apply it. That is what they are teaching us, just concentrate on acquiring knowledge so that you are able to regurgitate it! (Law student Two)

Another student said:

Law for a student with a disability is not enticing here. There are many, many challenges that even a normal student faces and when it comes to you, it is 10 times even worse because not all these things that makes [sic] you different are not taken into account. (Law student One)

The accounts of the students in the sample show that on one hand, efforts are made in teaching to enable them to access professional education. On the other hand, they remain excluded in some ways, despite the affordances offered. The following words of a Law student show that those who cannot hold on tend to drop out:

It is extremely difficult for you to pass. It is exceptionally hard. You will have many courses left over again for the next year and then the next year and then the next year, so you end up being here for years and you drop out because struggling will discourage you. (Law student Three)

Thus, despite the affordances provided to students with disabilities in classroom teaching, they continue to confront obstacles that limit their access to professional learning. This has implications for graduating into the professions, and consequently it negatively affects entry into professional employment by persons with disabilities.

6 Affordance in Access Arrangements

This section discusses the affordances provided to students with disabilities at the institution, in the light of access arrangements. They are provided in terms of exam time, provision of assistive devices and funding for disability support, as well as having the best Disability Unit, to provide support to students with disabilities.

6.1 *Extra Time in Exams*

The institution offers students with disabilities extra time when writing examinations in order to ensure that they are assessed fairly. One student reported:

The department considers me in learning because I told them of my problem before the start of the block. In every examination, I write I have an extra time of thirty minutes, thirty minutes of every hour. They also print the exam on large print and give me my room to write from. This helps me a lot in terms of my eyesight. (Medical student One)

Giving students with disabilities or impairments extra time in examinations can be perceived as an affordance. It offers them the opportunity to be assessed on a level playing field alongside those without disabilities. However, not all students with disabilities utilise this provision for fair assessment. Some stated that the procedures they had to go through in order to be granted extra time were demotivating. A student lamented the need to see a number of professionals in order to be granted extra time:

They will tell you, if you want extra time, go and see an occupational therapist, optician and three [...] three different doctors! Someone is at the Education Campus, someone is at [...] you just get bored by the process. As for me, I went to register for extra time but I never got over the process because the whole thing just turns you off. Moreover, for albinism, eyesight is not something you can fake and say I cannot see clearly. 'I have never used extra time said one student'. (Law student Four)

This student is of the opinion that it should simply be understood that he has eyesight problems and thus be granted extra time, without him having to go through such processes. Thus, although there is the affordance of extra time for exams, some students with disabilities continue to be disadvantaged by the system, the institution and by virtue of being disadvantaged in themselves. In such cases, their chance of failing is exacerbated.

6.2 *Provision of Assistive Devices*

The institution provides relevant assistive devices for students with disabilities. The seven Disability Unit (DU) staff members who were interviewed stated that the Disabled Students Allowance fund (DSA) is adequate in providing assistive devices to students with disabilities. Ten of the 12 students in the sample confirmed that they have been provided with one device or another, to assist in their professional education. The devices include kindles, eye trackers, special magnifying glasses, hearing loops and motorised wheelchairs. A kindle is a small electronic device onto which e-books can be uploaded so that students with physical disabilities do not need to carry heavy books. Students with severe physical disabilities, who cannot use their limbs, can use the specific specialised eye tracker. The device enables them to control the computer mouse using eye movements. The DU members reported that the device sells for R65-000, which is approximately \$4 410-00 and the institution was the first in South Africa, to have it. DU staff members reported that students with disabilities are trained at the Disability Unit in using the specific devices. The institution also provides the software Jobs Access with Speech (JAWS) which is installed on the computers of students with visual impairments, to assist them with reading. The software enables a voice to read the written materials to these students. From the experiences of all students who participated, the provision of assistive devices, training and specialised software go a long way in optimising their access to professional learning.

6.3 *Provision of Funding for Disability Support*

Financial support is available for students with disabilities who choose to pursue professional learning at the institution. All seven DU staff members confirmed that they assist these students to access this funding, which is part of the National Student Fund Aid Scheme (NSFAS). However, this particular funding is a bursary specifically for students with disabilities. Most importantly, this fund includes the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), which covers the costs of assistive devices. The NSFAS bursary also covers the costs of transport, food, accommodation and tuition fees. Ten of the 12 students who participated in this study are beneficiaries of this type of funding.

The institution also provides other types of funding for which students with disabilities may apply. These sources include NSFAS for all disadvantaged students. These are students who are South African citizens, with a combined family gross income of to R350 000 per annum. This should be assessed and verified by NSFAS. There is also Fundza Lushaka for students in Education, the National Research Foundation (NRF), the Postgraduate Merit Award (PMA) scholarship, as well as external funding from private companies. A DU staff member stated:

Bring any kind of disability [...] I am waiting for that student who says funding is not enough to tell us exactly what he needs that he cannot get.

Morris (1989), concurring with Hurst (1993), argues that students with disabilities need more funding because they incur additional costs compared to other students. The above statement suggests that students with disabilities at this particular institution have additional affordances in the form of adequate funding to buy resource materials and all they might need for their professional learning. While this is the perception of the DU staff members, students themselves had a different view. Nine out of the 12 students who participated in this study stated that funding provided at the institution was not adequate for them. One of them said:

To say funding is adequate does not make sense because some students living with a disability have been excluded for financial reasons. (Response from a Law student)

Accounts of DU members and students with disabilities contradict each other in terms of adequacy of funding. Professional degrees, according to Le Grange (2014), are generally very expensive to study and this becomes more demanding for those with disabilities. At the particular institution, students with disabilities also confirmed that Education, Law and Medicine are expensive. She states that black people and those with disabilities, both from disadvantaged social backgrounds are excluded from studying the programme of Architecture because of expenses related to studying materials involved. The Disability Unit staff members could be overlooking the high cost of professional degrees in general when they say that funding is adequate to support students with disabilities in professional education. Thus, while affordances are made through the provision of funding, students with disabilities still confront obstacles that relate to funding. They stated that the inadequacy of funding negatively affects them and even when funding is provided, it takes a long time to materialise. They said that this situation negatively affected their learning, because they went without food and lacked money to buy the required materials for their professional learning.

6.4 *Disability Support Provided by the Disability Unit Structure at the Institution*

Students with disabilities have an opportunity to access professional education programmes through disability support provided by the institution. There is a Disability Unit which literature reveals to be the best in the whole country. The

specific literature is not cited as it has revealing information on the institution. The support structure has nine permanent staff members whose responsibilities include administering and providing support services to students with disabilities. For example, they offer technical support by training students with disabilities on how to use specific assistive devices. Students with disabilities approve of the services and support they receive from the Disability Unit. One student in the medical programme whose previous learning experience was at an institution in Cuba without a Disability Unit or other support structure, stated:

It is at this university that I have first talked about my disability and all my limitations. I have found the Disability Unit staff understanding and helpful. They advise me and its really helping my learning. (Response from a Medical student)

The student's statement shows that he feels the disability support he is afforded at the institution enables him in his professional learning. Thus, support provided to students with disabilities could be viewed as an enabler to accessing professional learning.

6.5 *Change of Attitudes towards Disability at the Institution*

Students with disabilities stated that the attitudes of stakeholders at the institution have changed for the better in terms of accepting and welcoming them. They stated that staff members in the Disability Unit and other students without disabilities manifest positive attitudes towards them. Across the three programmes included in this study, all the 12 students with disabilities acknowledged that attitudes at the institution are welcoming, and they feel included. Findings of positive attitudes could suggest that all diverse students are now being accepted and that the institution is embracing diversity. This reflects a shift to the better regarding views on disability – when students feel that they are welcome, there are greater chances of them becoming qualified in the professions because their self-esteem and confidence to learn, are boosted.

While the attitudes are positive at the institution of higher education, at workplace it is different. Some students with disabilities stated that in the workplace (for integrated learning), negative attitudes prevail. People still view them as incapable. One student said:

It goes back to people's mind-sets. They never think a disabled student is equally intelligent, is equally a hard worker. They expect that a disabled student always complain and would want sick leave. (Student of Education Three)

The student's statement above reflects that though there has been some change of attitudes at the institution, they still confronted negative attitudes at integrated settings of learning. Thus, there are both affordances and limitations relating to attitudes. This could limit professional learning as the two social contexts impact differently to students with disabilities. Although students with disabilities have the full support of the Disability Unit staff members at the institution, this is not extended to integrated learning in the workplace, such as practical learning in the field. Four of the seven Disability Unit members stated that it is not their responsibility, neither is it the responsibility of the university, to follow up and provide support to students with disabilities when they are doing field practice. One of them said:

I do not see it as part of Disability Unit. It is also not part of the university. We support them here but we cannot say we will do that until they get work! (Disability Unit member Two)

Three members expressed a different opinion, namely that it is their responsibility to offer continued support to students with disabilities when they are on field practice. However, they said that the institution does not have funds to allocate for such additional support. Students with disabilities stated that they confronted learning barriers in their practical learning when there was no further support by the responsible stakeholders from the institution. For example, they found that the assistive devices they used at the institution were different from those available in the work setting for integrated learning. Students with visual loss stated that they used JAWS at the institution but when they got to the field, they were expected to use Braille on paper, but no one had trained them on how to do so. Students with disabilities said that when they went for fieldwork, they were 'on their own'. Evidence of this may be seen in the following quotation from a participant:

At the end of the day, it is a hell of a lonely existence and that is proof of the pudding that society is not real [sic] inclusive. They talk; it is all-inclusive but look at the level of loneliness and isolation of people with disabilities. That tells you the truth. (Student of Education Five)

Preceding student responses reveal that students with disabilities are isolated and lonely, hence not included in their work places, which negatively affects their interaction with other professionals in the field, and consequently affect their practical and professional learning. Being on their own and feeling unsupported, again shows that they are only 'patched onto' the system and

remain excluded in several ways. Furthermore, the sudden change and withdrawal of support by the university exacerbates the situation and increases their chances of dropping out.

6.6 *Provision of Transport at the Institution*

Students with disabilities are provided with one accessible bus, which is specifically designed for them. The reason for providing one bus is to comply with being a 'reasonable accommodation', since students with disabilities are fewer than other students are. The accessible bus allows students with disabilities to access learning venues and in turn, professional learning opportunities. However, the bus is expensive for the institution to maintain and is limited in several ways. It has a crane, which means that it cannot take the strain of frequent round trips, and as a result, it has an inflexible time schedule of hour-long intervals. Students with disabilities reported that because of this limitation, they were always late for lectures. They also lived in constant fear that the bus might break down when they need to write exams.

6.7 *Improvement of the Built Environment*

The built environment has improved at the institution. Students with disabilities are afforded opportunities to access professional education programmes through an accessible built environment. For both the Disability Unit staff and students with disabilities, the built environment at the institution has been greatly improved. Old buildings have been renovated and facilities have been retrofitted. New physical structures are being built, taking principles of Universal Design into account from the outset, in order to include features necessary to support a diverse population. The improvement of the built environment suggests that a concerted effort is being made in terms of institutional transformation, to enable all students to access learning venues, particularly those with visual limitations and physical disabilities. The improvement of the built environment at the institution confirms what Fitchett (2015) states, namely that universities in South Africa have started to review their facilities to respond to the increasing number of students and staff with disabilities.

Despite improved accessibility of the built environment at the institution, students with physical disabilities stated that even though the new buildings are being built with diversity in mind, some of them are still inaccessible in several ways. They reported that they still could not comfortably access professional learning opportunities within those buildings. Students with a particular category of disability stated that the desks and chairs in the new buildings are in a tiered arrangement on stairs; thus those using wheelchairs have to try to position themselves comfortably in a few select areas and cannot choose

where they want to sit. They added that tables and chairs are connected, with big spaces between them. This limits students with physical disabilities in trying to sit comfortably and use the desks. The students also stated that the distances between the sitting area, the podiums and the whiteboards in the new venues are rather large. Those with partial sight cannot see what is written on the board and those with hearing limitations cannot hear what the lecturers are saying because they stand far off. They also state that the podiums are high above the heads of students using wheelchairs. One student stated:

The screen for knowledge is above, up there. Tell me, will you be able to keep looking up for the next one and half hours? (Student of Law three)

Another one stated:

For me access is not about entering a venue. Access means entering the room and be able to use it for learning. (Student of Education four)

Thus, professional learning for students with disabilities is negatively affected by inadequate seating options and large spaces between the lecturers' podiums and the students. Thus, the new built environment – said to be built with disability in mind – is still not fully accessible to such students. While on the surface level, the built environment seems to have been significantly improved to enable access to professional learning for students with disabilities, the physical structures tend to be only partially accessible and these particular students still confront some level of difficulties with access. It suggests that those with disabilities are not consulted prior to decision-making, in order to contribute their preferences as to how designs should include them.

7 Decoloniality, Technologies and the State of Support for Students with Disabilities

In this section, the decolonial theory is used to illuminate some of the obstacles that are still confronted by students with disabilities in professional learning at the institution. At the same time, affordances and accommodations are made to learn like all other students. The theory is used as torchlight because it broadly reveals the hidden structure of coloniality, which is the underlying cause of the surface obstacles for students with disabilities. Decolonial theory unveils the invisible structure of coloniality, which universalises all structures and practices, evidenced by the exclusive organisation of teaching and learning

practices. Diversity, multiplicity and pluralities of people were not considered from the outset, with the set-up favouring the dominant mainstream society (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). Furthermore, the categorisation of humankind by the dominant society rejects difference and uses ‘normalcy’ as the standard (Quijano, 2000). In particular, practices and structures in society and higher education are designed for ‘normal’ students. Hence, despite the willing academics making affordances for students with disabilities, most of them continue to be excluded since teaching practices do not cater for their learning needs from the outset.

The provision of assistive devices and extra time in examinations are affordances that enable professional learning, and are acknowledged. However, students with disabilities are still excluded, because their differences were overlooked from the outset. Access arrangements have been added onto the existing system rather than being incorporated into it; this merely ‘patches’ students with disabilities onto the system, without really including them. It should also be noted that assistive devices do not always enable access to professional learning. For example, a hearing aid provided to a medical student with hearing impairments, made noises and disturbed other students in lectures, so the student stopped using it. In addition, the JAWS software does not read mathematical symbols. While this might be a limitation for any other software, it negatively affects students with disabilities’ professional learning when their work is distorted. Thus, while the provision of assistive devices and software are acknowledged, as affordances to students with disabilities, that they will always afford learning, might not be totally guaranteed. Furthermore, it has been argued that when assistive devices are provided specifically to students with disabilities, and not for all other diverse students, they become a segregating and discriminating tool (Reich, Price, Rubin & Steiner, 2010). Thus, while access arrangements in general and assistive devices in particular are affordances to students with disabilities’ professional learning, there are those limitations, which cannot be glossed over.

Decolonial theory helps us to understand how the support provided to students with disabilities – in terms of funding and the presence of a DU – may be viewed in terms of ‘zoning’ (De Sousa Santos, 2007). In the days of colonialism, students with disabilities and the formerly advantaged institution itself belonged to two opposite zones: the zone of ‘being’ and the zone of ‘non-being’ (Grosfoguel, 2007, 2011). By virtue, such zones which the abyssal line (De Sousa Santos, 2007) divides. This is explained by Dastile and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) as an invisible, imagined line that is imagined which divides the world into two social realities, the Euro-America and Africa and non-Western countries, hence the two zones. Power is therefore distributed differentially, according to

which side of the line one falls on. During Apartheid, learners with disabilities were placed in special schools. This placement extended to higher education, when students with disabilities, who are at the same time disadvantaged, were not able to access advantaged higher education institutions. However, under policies of non-discrimination and policy shift towards inclusive education, students with disabilities now have access to the institution, just like other students. They are also provided with disability support so that they may access professional education opportunities in particular. The support in question is classed as 'individual accommodation' because it is not afforded to all diverse students, but takes the form of 'special' support provided specifically for students with disabilities. One needs to be careful to avoid any contesting terms that may carry notions of exclusivity. Walton and Lloyd (2011) argue that the term 'accommodation' carries the connotation that the particular students are not included but all the same have the right to be catered for. Thus, while accommodation in the context of the study is understood as an affordance for students with disabilities, some scholars could view it not as a good term.

While on one hand, the presence of a Disability Unit as a separate structure for supporting students with disabilities has been depicted as an affordance for students with disabilities, on the other it might be understood as a reflection that students with disabilities are not included, but are considered only as individuals being 'accommodated' at the institution. They are 'pasted onto' a system which was not originally designed for them. Had they been included from the start, there would be no need for any Disability Unit to specifically support students with disabilities, nor aspirations to be the best such unit. Students with disabilities would be supported in the same way that all other diverse students are supported. The presence of a separate Disability Unit could also unintentionally have negative psychological implications on students with disabilities. Thus, instead of being an opportunity and promoting access for students with disabilities to professional learning, the separate support could limit their success.

From the decolonial perspective, a contradiction in which the Disability Unity staff members and students with disabilities view funding as enough, and not enough respectively, points to a misunderstanding that results from hierarchically organised power in society at large and in the context of higher learning in particular (Grosfoguel, 2007). The hierarchisation of power implies that those in higher levels of the hierarchy might not understand the needs of those lower down due to differential access to privileges (Mertens, 2010). People without disabilities speak for those with disabilities because the former are higher in the hierarchy and the latter are lower. The DU staff members might also be speaking for students with disabilities in terms of adequacy of funding

because of issues of power dynamics. Titchkosky (2003) and Hosking (2008) argue that it is the voice of those with a lived experience of disability that should be listened to because they know their needs better than anyone else.

In light of the built environment and transport system that still exclude students with disabilities, decolonial theory again helps to illuminate the invisible structure of coloniality. Both the former and the latter were initially designed for 'normal' people. Using normalcy as a standard to categorise people, society at large and physical structures in specific social contexts, means that diverse people in their pluralities and differences are not accommodated (Quijano, 2000; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). The infrastructure at the institution was not originally designed for all types of diverse students. However, due to goals of inclusivity, transformation and policies of non-discrimination, the institution is making effort to be accessible to all diverse students, who qualify on academic grounds. Eligible students with disabilities now have access to the institution but the physical structures were designed for 'normal' students. For them to be 'accommodated' and to learn as other students do, special provisions have had to be made.

The decolonial theory further points to the categorisation of humanity (Quijano, 2000), resulting in hierarchies of 'inferior' and 'superior' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012); this, in turn, culminates in the oppression of one group by the other. Those without disabilities oppress those with disabilities and think that they can plan and design structures suitable for them without hearing their voices. Ultimately, students with disabilities continue to be excluded by the built environment created for them, because they were not consulted from the start. Since their professional learning is negatively affected in the process, it happens that some of them drop out.

Decolonial theory again points to negative attitudes against students with disabilities in the workplace, resulting from the hidden structure of coloniality, in which categories and hierarchies emerged through the categorisation process by the dominant society (Quijano, 2000). Persons without disabilities consider students with disabilities as an inferior category of people who cannot perform infield practice and those without disabilities. The evidence of potential oppression is in these words:

You have this fear when you go there. How are they going to treat me? Are the patients going to accept me? The university system is inclusive but when you go outside into hospitals, there is none of that sort! (Medical student one)

Thus, although there is a significant level of change in terms of attitudes at the institution, the negative attitudes experienced in the workplace limit access to

professional learning as an interactive process that takes place in both social contexts.

8 Affordances and Accommodations within a Conflicting Context

The institution is making every effort to afford students with disabilities opportunities for professional learning. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) argues that transformation efforts are evident in South Africa in line with the importation of democracy and human rights discourses from the West, which became popular in the 21st century. However, total inclusion of all has not yet been achieved. The affordances and opportunities that are provided to students tend to be piecemeal solutions to the greater problem of exclusion that confronts students with disabilities. In addition, hindrances that confront students with disabilities are considered only at face value, by the stakeholders in higher education, at national level and students with disabilities themselves, when they run far deeper, being influenced by the invisible structure of coloniality and its effects. It is the broad project of decolonisation of structures and practices in higher learning in general and at this institution in particular, that needs to be engaged to dismantle the underlying cause for exclusion. Without addressing the real cause of exclusion, affordances and opportunities are insufficient in providing access to professional learning for students with disabilities. Hence, we find that on the one hand, provisions are made available, yet on the other hand; students with disabilities continue to experience obstacles that hinder their learning.

A student with disabilities said:

When you interact with other disabled students, they will tell you it is never enough. Whatever the institution does is never enough for us; it can only meet us halfway. It is because of our individualistic needs, which are different and unique. What I may find enough, the next person with the same disability as mine might find it not enough. When I say, “this is quite fine for me”, the other person with the same disability will say “not for me”. Therefore, there is no best universal system that can apply to everybody who is disabled. It is not a one-size-fits-all kind of a thing. (Student of Education five)

The above statement confirms that despite all efforts of accommodation, provisions and disability support the institution is making to include students with disabilities, full inclusion in general – and in professional learning in particular – has not yet been achieved. Affordances and opportunities provided to students

with disabilities only 'paste' them onto the system, but do not include them in a fundamental way. Coloniality and its effects are matters too broad and challenging to be solved in simple ways – it remains an ongoing struggle. A solution recommended by this study to better equip students with disabilities for professional learning and ultimately professional careers, is adoption of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach (Centre for Universal Design, 1997, 2002).

9 Prospect of Way Forward in Universal Design for Learning

The Universal design for learning (UDL) already explained in the chapter above, could be an approach adopted to promote total inclusion of students with disabilities in professional learning in higher education. Adopting a UDL approach could thus save time spent on academic accommodations and adjustments, and could further increase access of students with disabilities to professional learning. UDL is thus viewed as a way to improve the professional learning of all diverse students including those with disabilities, because the learning needs of all students are considered and plans to cater for them are made even before they appear in the classroom. It means that no student is left out during the process of teaching and learning.

It has been noted that whilst the UDL approach enables access to the curriculum by all students, it does not always guarantee their learning (Boone & Higgins, 2007). Those authors suggest that teachers and other staff could mistake access to the curriculum for access to learning; however, these are simply not the same thing. Eagleton (2008) argues that universality for all might remain elusive, as some students might not fully utilise the design to enhance their learning, however thoughtfully it may have been implemented. While on the surface UDL could be seen as an approach inclusive to all, it needs careful attention in terms of catering for unique needs, to encourage all individual students to maximise their learning opportunities, in their own unique ways. Although the approach could improve professional learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities, the limitations that have been highlighted, should not be ignored. Rose and Meyer (2000) also emphasise that careful attention should be paid to the goals of learning experiences, and that such opportunities should be maximised for all students.

In the South African higher education context in particular, findings in the Fotim Project Report (2011) reveal that lecturing and learning currently pay very little attention to the principles of UDL. Earlier, Matshedisho (2007) observed that most academic staff are not interested in attending workshops on teaching students with different categories of disabilities. Vickerman and

Blundell (2010) argue that academic staff are central in enhancing opportunities for professionalisation, and when they are not interested in adopting inclusive teaching practices, it indicates a gap and deficiency in terms of teaching and learning for diverse students in general and those with disabilities in particular. Thus, in the higher education sector broadly, and in the particular institution in this study, the academic staff needs to be motivated to attend training sessions in order to utilise the UDL approach to include all diverse students, particularly in the teaching of professional disciplines.

10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed specific accommodations made by a particular higher education institution in South Africa, in terms of affordances and opportunities to enable students with disabilities to access professional learning. The accommodations include adaptations that some willing lecturers make to accommodate students with disabilities in classroom teaching and learning. Students with disabilities are provided with disability support and services through the Disability Unit, a structure in the institution intended to specifically support students with disabilities. The institution also provides access arrangements such as extra time in examinations to enable fair assessment. Students with disabilities are provided with assistive devices to help them overcome impairment-related disadvantages and thus have access to professional learning. The institution provides funding specifically for students with disabilities, which covers the costs of tuition, accommodation, assistive devices and food. Suitably adapted forms of transport are provided specifically for students with disabilities. The built environment, – which in the past offered limited access to students with physical and visual disabilities – has been greatly improved at this particular institution. All the accommodations, provisions and disability support provided by the institution combine to afford opportunities for students with disabilities to access professional learning and enable their entry into the professions.

However, despite the specific affordances and opportunities for professional learning that the institution provides, students continue to be excluded and are confronted by obstacles that limit their professional learning. Decolonial theory reveals that the underlying reason for their continued exclusion is the hidden structure of coloniality and its effects, which are not necessarily visible on the surface. Affordances and opportunities for professional learning at the institution only ‘paste’ students with disabilities onto the system, without including them in a fundamental way. As they continue to be confronted

by obstacles in their path to professional learning, those who cannot hold their own fail and drop out.

It is important that the hidden structure of coloniality and its effects be exposed to the responsible stakeholders and students with disabilities. This would contribute to decolonisation of the whole system of higher education, including the removal of oppressive structures and practices. Only then can students with disabilities be genuinely included to access professional learning in general and at this institution in particular. Dismantling coloniality and its effects on the oppressed is a perpetual struggle; hence, the decolonisation project takes time and is ongoing. This chapter proposes the engagement of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach, in which teaching and learning takes into consideration the learning needs of all diverse students from the outset. In this way, students with disabilities could be included from the start in order to access professional education and ultimately enter the professions.

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Myths Surrounding the Extended Curriculum in South Africa's Higher Education Sector

Phefumula Nyoni and Olaide Agbaje

Abstract

The chapter outlines the historical significance of Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs) and how historically disadvantaged universities have experienced the programme's implementation. This chapter explores the state of the transformative initiative by the Department of Education driven programmes with a particular focus on the features of ECPs. The chapter is based on experiences of the ECP in the context of formerly disadvantaged universities in South Africa. The chapter presents a different angle through reflections on some of the mythical features inherent in ECPs and how such myths and related institutional practices have a bearing on the transformative potential of ECPs. This angle also presents insights into missed opportunities resulting from the mythical assumptions regarding students' performance in the extended programmes. The chapter further highlights how some of the myths that have emerged, particularly around students in extended programmes, have become central in defining the perceptions around the performance of extended students. The myths have resulted in labels that have defined students' identities in the extended programmes and their performance. Still, the myths have produced practices that could jeopardise the programme's good intentions, threatening its success, particularly in historically disadvantaged institutions. The methodology used in this chapter involved ethnographic methods that included formal and informal conversations and observations of students in ECP programmes. The target groups were social science students in ECPs and other stakeholders in universities considered as formerly historically disadvantaged. The experiential interactions targeted humanities students in the ECPs and other actors dealing with that particular cohort of students. The chapter draws from the concept of agency to explore the transformative opportunities and challenges associated with the ECPs due to myths and related practices.

Keywords

Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs) – myths – formerly disadvantaged universities – transformation – extended students

1 Introduction

The transformation of higher education curricula in South Africa dates back to the pre-democracy period, with the reform agenda being accelerated during the post-apartheid era. Curriculum reform includes a focus on underprepared students in South African higher education institutions. This under-preparedness – especially among the majority black students – has been mainly blamed on the past and, in particular, on the consequences of the apartheid regime in South Africa, which are well documented in the literature (Ramrathan, 2016; Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido & Mkonto, 2017; Gray & Czerniewicz, 2018; Schmidt & Mestry, 2019; Dhunpath & Vithal, 2014; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014). In essence, the debates on under-preparedness are underpinned by the questions of access and success. Ramrathan (2016: 2) alludes to the root causes of the disjuncture between access and success among students entering universities in South Africa. Similarly, scholars have Soudien has (2010: 18) hinted at the crisis in the South African higher education sector, in terms of curricula, content, resources and teaching methodologies, in spite of notable improvements in certain areas (Ehren, Baxter & Paterson, 2018; Crouch & Hoadley, 2018; Gray & Czerniewicz, 2018; Schmidt & Mestry, 2019). The same author bemoans the innate quality inadequacies in the sector, especially regarding the majority of learners who come from underprepared backgrounds. Whilst this view remains essential not much has been reported about the contextual social fabric in the form of mythical practices by diverse actors involved in teaching and learning in higher education, especially concerning extended curriculum programmes (ECPS).

This chapter seeks to highlight some usually ignored mythical perceptions regarding ECPS. 'Mythical practices' can be described as stereotypical actions or attitudes that have come to be embraced as norms within day-to-day institutional activities. In reality, such actions or attitudes might be of human or institutional nature and may be based on practices or ideas that constitute distortions or are perhaps ill-conceived. These might go beyond policy dictates, yet if ignored, they might negatively affect student progression, with subsequent adverse consequences for the curriculum transformation agenda. Whilst in practice it might be challenging to identify mythical practices that could poison an institution, it is advisable to acknowledge those that may be detrimental to learning environments in general and programmes implemented to cater for underprepared students in particular.

In a related argument, the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2013: 54) has revealed the growth in the body of research on student retention. This is especially the case in local and international retention studies, where success

and failure have notably been linked to the interplay of complex factors in higher education. Some factors are inherently internal to the higher education system, whilst others are external in terms of social, cultural and material circumstances. Arendse (2015: 161) decries the historically unequal distribution of economic, social and cultural capital in the South African setting, which has created challenges in the way students access and engage with the university. Research into student access to higher education has often emphasised that access does not automatically translate into meaningful social and academic accomplishment. It is in this context that this chapter explores some practices associated with foundation programmes. This investigation is crucial since such initiatives are intended to improve academic access and success in their various forms.

A deficit of literature specifically focuses on how mythical practices and related perceptions influence practices within ECPS, particularly within historically disadvantaged universities. The underlying argument is that socially and economically disadvantaged individuals are less likely to gain access to and complete any form of higher education. Existing forms of support to such individuals cannot be successful if social conditions within the support package – such as those related to human agency – aren't taken seriously and dealt with. Within this context, we explore various practices associated with ECPS, one of the main curriculum intervention programmes in the South African higher education sector.

Kloot (2011) notes that during the pre-democratic era, foundation programmes were implemented in higher education institutions as an intervention to provide support to African students coming from so-called 'lower standard' schools in their debutant years at white, English-medium universities. These students were viewed as lacking the requisite academic potency to deal with obligations and expectations in standard study programmes within prescribed timeframes. It was felt at that time that offering them a bridging year was the best way to deal with their under-preparedness; however, bridging courses carried no credit, something that dampened their credibility and effectiveness. Kloot (2011) avers that, in contrast to the initial period (the 1980s to 1990s), later restructuring efforts improved bridging programmes mainly by ensuring that credits were offered towards earning a degree.

The performance of extended programmes is a crucial element to consider regarding ways to improve higher education outcomes. In the post-apartheid era (the mid-1990s to 2000s), the democratic government integrated foundation programmes into state education policy, particularly to redress past inequalities. With no limits imposed on intake numbers on extended programmes, historically advantaged institutions took advantage of the available funding

and used the opportunity to cushion their underprepared students. However, the uptake of ECPS in formerly disadvantaged institutions remained dwarfed. Following the government's increase in funding for ECPS in 2006, there has been a steady increase in institutional uptake (Kloot, 2011).

In the context of many attempts by South Africa's higher education authorities to deal with the persistent challenges of low throughput and high attrition rates at universities, Ramathan (2016) notes the important insights contained in the CHE report (2013), highlighting attempts to influence higher education curricula. An important realisation is that the costs associated with adding an extra year onto study programmes outstrip the costs of low throughput and high dropout rates associated with enrolling students from disadvantaged backgrounds into the mainstream programme by solely relying on their Matric performance. Further, due to the subjective nature of student performance and the limitations of standardised entry tests, some more capable students might find themselves on the extended programme. Such students might not require support and might even do better with an option to complete earlier; hence the commonly practised 'flexibility dimension' within the undergraduate curriculum, which allows a student to switch between mainstream and ECP depending on their performance. Such flexible grading, in essence, could allow those students who do not require support to be moved onto the mainstream programme and complete their programme within three years. The approach may further assist in addressing the challenge of mistakenly placing well-prepared students on the extended programme. Thus, it is crucial to utilise periodic assessments to assess if students should remain on the programme or be moved onto the mainstream programme.

This chapter presents reflections on various features of ECPS in the context of formerly underprivileged higher education institutions in South Africa. We follow a different angle from the usual focus on the historicity of ECPS, associated pedagogical and curriculum design processes and practices, or student experiences and perceptions. Instead, we present reflections on some of the mythical features associated with ECPS, which might inhibit their transformative potential – mainly if students are granted the space to use their agency effectively. The chapter further explores perceptions by higher education actors who use various standardised performance measurement rubrics to view students who qualify for ECPS as being underprepared and deserving special attention. Such an approach has wholly ignored the potentially rich knowledge that these students might have acquired from their backgrounds, which, in a way, could represent a form of agency that they may draw upon to deal with the obligations of conventional study programmes.

2 ECPs as Programmes for Redressing Inequalities of the Past

The notion of ‘transformation’ in the South African context has always been associated with redressing inequalities linked to the past. However, modern African institutions of higher learning exist as part of the globalised, westernised international order (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Zondi, 2016: 28). This view becomes crucial in trying to understand how well-meaning programmes (such as ECPs) have come to be tainted by mythical assumptions that may have resulted from a combination of policy limitations and misplaced human conceptions. Furthermore, some mythological beliefs may be associated with neo-liberal thinking, particularly concerning the practice of standardised assessment tests used to measure competency during the ECP admissions process.

Post-colonial education reform efforts in Africa in general and South Africa have undergone diverse phases of curriculum transformation. Although key reform targets have varied within the diversity of higher education institutions, the ultimate goal has been to attain transformation through dealing with the inequalities that are often blamed on past colonial circumstances. In a perspective that departs from blaming the past for higher education challenges and their negative impact on students from underprivileged backgrounds, Soudien (2010: 19) puts the blame for such challenges squarely upon universities themselves. He highlights three dimensions of the issue: the common inability of the system to engage with students right from their point of admission properly; the composition of both academic and administrative staff in the higher education sector; and the question of the curriculum, that is, what is taught. Soudien (2010) argues that combining these three issues represents the challenge of building a transformative climate for black students in the South African higher education system.

Further to Soudien’s view, the arguments presented in this chapter draw upon the opinions of Ramrathan (2016: 2), who indicates that education transformation in South Africa’s higher education sector suffers from a deficit of innovative methods in curriculum intellectualism. The crucial thrust of his argument is that curriculum reform is overly reliant on numerical trends in implementation, which tends to hinder transformation initiatives. This chapter reflects on practices in implementing ECPs in various South African higher education settings, which a combination of successes and failures has characterised. The myriad of myths surrounding ECPs has constrained higher education efforts aimed at assisting and supporting underprepared students. In some instances, the myths and related practices have been detrimental to the successful implementation of extended programmes and have even harmed students.

There are many beliefs and practices about teaching and learning that are held to be true without any validation, especially when it comes to extended programmes (Gray, and Czerniewicz, 2018; Dhunpath and Vithal (2014). This chapter seeks to explore such beliefs and practices regarding ECPS, including commonly-used labels such as ‘disadvantaged backgrounds’, students in ECPS as ‘special needs’ cases, Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement SATAPs as an end to student placements into the ECPS, ECPS compromise quality to accommodate underprepared students, and that students in ECPS lack self-confidence. Mythical assumptions such as these are what this chapter argues to be out of place and unhelpful. Some such myths have remained unchallenged until now; this chapter seeks to question them, with a view to debunking them. It is hoped that challenging these mythical assumptions will create an enabling space so that ECPS may achieve fruition in the form of a transformative edge. Furthermore, students who find themselves in extended programmes will be able to exercise their agency by making a valuable contribution to their own education.

3 Methodological Positioning of the Piece

The findings in this chapter are drawn from data collected within the social sciences setting of ECP practices, gathered mainly from my experience as a programme coordinator and facilitator in a South African university that commonly falls into the bracket of ‘historically disadvantaged institutions. The data is drawn mainly from experiential interactions with various ECP students and other actors involved in dealing with the cohort of students in the field of social sciences. The methodology used in this study draws further from several ethnographic methods, including formal and informal conversations with various stakeholders in this university. The observations were conducted during meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences involving higher education stakeholders, where ECPS featured in the discussions. In most of these engagements, I occupied the role of the ECP programme coordinator and facilitator, whilst in some instances, I was a detached observer. The experiential fieldwork took place between 2010 and 2015.

4 The Concept of an Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP)

‘Foundation’ provision is offered primarily to improve the academic performance of students who are at risk, owing to their disadvantaged educational

background that exposes their under-preparedness for university education. Such provision aims to afford these students the academic foundations necessary for succeeding in higher education (Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities, 2013: 310). South Africa's Department of Higher Education (DoE) has rolled out funding for foundation provision, as a way of recognising and promoting the critical role played by such programmes as part of the strategy for improving success and throughput, mostly among students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. ECPS consist of diverse ministerial approved models in which the foundation provision is handled differently as stipulated in each model. Foundation provision constitutes a part or whole course(s) component usually introduced for students in ECPS placed within an existing degree or diploma programme, commonly referred to as the 'mainstream' programme. The introduction of this augmenting component results in the programme being referred to as an 'extended curriculum programme' (ECP).

Arendse (2015: 25) explained that foundation programmes usually carry different meanings in different contexts and vary in terms of structure, depending on disciplines. Besides 'foundation', other concepts used to refer to such programmes are 'bridging' and 'augmenting'. The 'foundation' component usually consists of an element of a programme with a specific structure and content that carries similar credits to the mainstream programme. The 'bridging' component is characterised by offering augmenting courses or foundation programme whose scope is believed to be relevant in preparing students for the main programme of study. The 'augmenting' component involves some support mechanisms that are usually infused into the main programme, depending on the chosen model.

In essence, extended programmes are built from existing mainstream undergraduate programmes. The main differentiating factor in various ECPS is that of the particular mainstream programme that encompasses the foundation component. Thus, variance is expected between science, humanities, and business-oriented programmes. In terms of structure and focus, the foundation component of the ECP usually includes basic concepts, subject content, and learning approaches that cumulatively result in the acquisition of the much-needed competency. Those programmes that integrate substantial foundational provision – in addition to the coursework prescribed for the mainstream programme – usually result in a year being added to the initial programme's duration. Furthermore, although the content is the same as in the mainstream programme, it is presented in a repackaged way to enhance student understanding. The content of ECP is usually supported by additional courses that include life orientation, academic writing, and computer literacy that aim to

improve student skills to ensure that they will be adequately equipped to deal with the requirements and expectations of the mainstream course.

It is worth noting that the current definition of an ‘extended curriculum’ does not point to an extended first-year component, but rather to a complete degree or diploma that includes foundation courses (Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities, 2013: 310). It is important to note that its purposeful and structured nature formally defines a programme as a set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification (Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities, 2013: 310). It follows that an ECP thus refers to a degree or diploma that has gone through an augmentation in terms of academic concepts, components, courses or modules. This augmenting arrangement implies that possibly, foundational provision is not necessarily limited to the first year but could be built in at second- or even third-year levels (Kloot, 2011: 6). As cited by (Kloot, 2011: 7), in its continuous efforts towards curriculum reform, the DoE’s 2013 review, *Re-definition of Extended Curriculum Programmes*, underlines a pronounced shift for foundation programmes nationally. In essence, the government has ensured that foundation programmes are legitimised in higher education while being securely linked to mainstream programmes. It follows that whilst there could be several programmes in place across universities to improve access and success of students in their undergraduate studies, this chapter refers explicitly to ‘extended programmes’.

5 The Question of Under-Preparedness

The Council on Higher Education (2013: 57) defines under-preparedness for studies as difficulty with adjusting to the prescribed curriculum and an inability to study independently. Ehren, Baxter and Paterson (2018) add that under-preparedness includes an absence of intricate skills usually necessary to ensure success in a chosen educational field. Under-preparedness must not be taken to mean that the student is intellectually inept. However – as shown by a range of literature sources, student experiences, and the observation sessions conducted – certain myths exist, such as perceptions of some facilitators and students in mainstream programmes that ECPs are designed for the intellectually inept. The broader view reinforces such mythical perceptions that link under-preparedness with intellectual ineptitude – underprepared students are often viewed as incapable of handling the dictates of higher-order thinking processes associated with university education (Ehren, Baxter and Paterson 2018). In dealing with the challenge of under-preparedness, it, therefore,

follows that it becomes crucial not only to identify the myths associated with ECP implementation but to ensure that they are dispelled. This becomes an important intervention strategy for ensuring the success of the transformation project and ensuring the success of underprepared students in their tertiary education studies (CHE, 2013: 70).

6 Some Reflections on the Myths Surrounding ECPs

In understanding the genesis of curriculum interventions for underprepared learners within the South African context, it is crucial to start by acknowledging the commendable efforts by South African academic development practitioners over the past thirty years in attempting to address student under-preparedness. However, as Boughey (2010: 4) averred, early intervention strategies aimed at supporting underprepared students tended to locate the challenges of under-preparedness in students themselves. This location of challenges of under-preparedness in students and other myths are explored in this section.

6.1 *Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds Have a Deficient in Academic Skills*

This myth perpetuates the notion that black students are deficient in academic skills, specifically their command of concepts and language. This myth can be singled out as one of the most dangerous mythical perceptions that have hindered the transformative potential of ECPs.

The view that students can be categorised as underprepared simply for being black points to a form of unfair discrimination, which is exacerbated for those black students who possess good high school grades. This racially entrenched view is confirmed by Soudien (2010: 19), Gray and Czerniewicz (2018); Schmidt and Mestry (2019), who note that in some instances, placement in an ECP is based on the racially-based myth that black students would fail their first-year university studies, despite their matric scores. This myth further fails to embrace the knowledge that students from underprivileged backgrounds bring with them. They could translate the knowledge they enter university with into some form of agency one could draw from in dealing with some of the challenges they face within the university environment. In that context, various interventions came to be introduced in the form of additional classes and tutorials. These were perceived to make up for the deficiencies that students from disadvantaged backgrounds (mainly black) were thought to bring into the university environment.

6.2 *Standardised Assessment Tests Constitute the Best Tool for Student Placement into ECPS*

Following claims that some universities use arbitrary mechanisms in deciding whether students ought to join the mainstream programme or the ECP, Kilfoil (2015: 24) acknowledges the complexity in effectively predicting which students will succeed in their studies. Sibiya and Mahlanze (2018: 2) confirm the use of Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement (SATAPS) to assess entry-level applicants in selecting those that should be placed on ECPS. The same authors add that the focus of the tests is on the cognitive process and skills that underpin tasks rather than on discipline content. The SATAPS, which constitute primarily multiple-choice questions, aim to assess competencies in reading and writing modes only, something which does not give a chance of evaluating one's academic competency. According to the SATAPS results, entry-level applicants who obtain scores below 50% are placed in the corresponding ECP.

The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that, since all students have to meet the minimum entry requirements to university, they are then selected for entry into the programme after meeting the minimum university entry requirements based on their potential, measured through the SATAP rubric. Whilst SATAPS and other background data reflecting the socio-economic status of the student are used for placement purposes, it is crucial to note that they should not be viewed as an end in themselves. Institutional factors ought to be closely examined in order to ensure that an enabling environment is created to support all students in attaining the requisite pedagogical competencies. In this regard, it is equally important to ensure that the post-admission practices by facilitators and other actors involved in the implementation of ECPS promote the achievement of the expected results.

6.3 *ECP Students Are Considered as 'Special Needs' Cases*

This myth is based on the stigmatisation of ECPS and perpetuates the practise of attaching a 'special needs' label to ECP students. The existence of this myth can only be explained in the context of malicious, misinformed views. Just as Johnson (2017) argues, I observed many instances in which ECP students frequently compared themselves favourably with their mainstream counterparts; they praised and appreciated the support initiatives they had experienced in the programme. They highlighted that, far from the widely held misconception that the foundation programme is diluted in order to meet their unpreparedness, it had equipped them with requisite skills that augmented their competence in their studies. This experience was a form of agency that boosted their confidence to the extent that they began to assist mainstream students with some tasks.

While dispelling the myth that ECP students exhibit special needs, it is necessary to acknowledge that ECP facilitators need to possess the right agency to support students in foundation programmes. Students in the foundation programmes require assurance that their facilitators are willing to assist them with their learning requirements. The facilitators in this study displayed highly professional and sensitive attitudes in supporting their students, coupled with an understanding of how to work with them to nurture their full potential. Besides further improving the interactive space, these positive practices enriched the ground for pedagogical success.

6.4 *ECPS Are Characterised by Compromised Quality to Accommodate Underprepared Students*

Some misinformed individuals believe that ECPS are characterised by quality dilution to accommodate underprepared students. On the contrary, Kioko (2015: 23) reports intensive quality and depth in foundation modules. Based on the empirical evidence gathered during this study, there is often more intensive monitoring within ECPS than mainstream programmes. Both mainstream facilitators and external experts regularly evaluate all the modules. There is usually a strong collaboration between mainstream and extended curriculum programme designers – the difference between the programmes is mainly the restructuring of the subject matter, which is expanded and unpacked into multiple concepts, themes and sections, to align it with the extended contact time. Collaborative curriculum development usually enhances the sharing of good practices between the two programmes. Generally, the tests, assignments, examinations, and other assessment methods used to evaluate the students in the extended programme are subject to the university's typical quality requirements and regulations.

In demystifying the notion of compromised quality in ECPS, it is essential to explore their technical construction. Julius (2017: 5) points out that students in ECPS have their first year of university education spread over two years. This implies a curriculum extension since a semester's work in the mainstream curriculum is covered in six months, whereas the equivalent work is covered in the ECP over 12 months. This extension becomes a crucial form of opportunity that provides students with sufficient time to adjust between high school and tertiary education. The various skills that include life skills, writing skills, and academic competency skills acquired during the foundation phase help enhance the students' ability to embrace the appropriate learning ethos and habits to ensure successful articulation into the mainstream programme in subsequent levels of their academic progression. Therefore, it must be noted that this extension of the ECP in terms of duration is usually misconstrued as

a compromise of quality due to its assumed slow paced nature, which fails to recognise the content additions that get infused onto the ECP courses.

6.5 *ECP Students Lack Self-Motivation*

As a coordinator and facilitator, the interactions I had dispelled widespread claims of ECP students being lacking in self-will. The majority of the students that I encountered were full of enthusiasm and highly determined, to the extent that within the first three months of their studies, one could notice and admire the competency levels that they had already amassed from the foundation component. This contrasts with the findings from a recent study by Sibiyi and Mahlanze (2018: 4). ECP student respondents articulated that they were unhappy about being in the ECP, which reportedly affected them negatively from a psychological perspective. The same authors report further that ECP students have a negative attitude, which can hinder their academic progression. Such findings do not resonate with the context in which my experiential research took place.

Following the preceding arguments on mythical issues that have had influences on the implementation of ECPS, particularly in what are called HDUS in South Africa, it is essential to acknowledge that such practices are not only needing to be identified. In essence, they tend to have a bearing that goes beyond the success of the programme itself. If left unattended, the mythical issues are likely to compromise the broader transformation project. The mythical practices have therefore not received adequate attention as potential impediments to ECP implementation as focus and blame have been wrongly placed on policy and institutional issues and students themselves.

7 **The Transformative Potential of ECPs in Higher Education**

The growth in numbers of underprepared students entering higher education institutions in South Africa indicates a corresponding expanding need for foundation provision. The ill-preparedness of some students, which one can argue can best be dealt with by the ECPS, poses a threat to South Africa's transformational agenda. The transformational agenda could be threatened because students' competency shortcomings might lead either to premature dropout or, worse still, to the production of incompetent graduates who would struggle to deal with workplace and societal obligations. The notion of ill-preparedness should not be taken at face value since this could perpetuate myths surrounding foundation programmes. All students have the innate capability to perform well in their diversity, depending on the enabling agency prevailing

in their learning environment. As with preparedness, ill-preparedness is not given but relies on many factors in the student's secondary and tertiary learning environments, including the agency of the various actors involved.

The compulsion to assist underprepared students in triumphing over past inequalities brought upon them by a flawed schooling system is fundamental in pursuing transformational goals, not only for the benefit of students but also for society as a whole. Foundation programmes remain a crucial component of curriculum transformation in South Africa, particularly in enhancing the access and success of students from ill-equipped schools such as those in rural settings and townships. The growth of foundation provision, evidenced by widening access and improvement in graduation rates, points to the importance of foundation programmes (Arendse, 2015; Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido & Mkonto, 2017). They are central to the transformational agenda of promoting equity and efficiency in the higher education sector in South Africa.

The Report of the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities (2013: 317) notes that the foundation provision year becomes transformative in that it aims at formalising an extended curriculum to accommodate the large proportion of students who might otherwise fail to meet the demands of university learning and drop out of the system. A high dropout rate exposes the particular institution to income loss that it could have potentially obtained within the teaching grant received after a student has graduated.

Arendse (2015: 178) highlights the essential transformative edge implicit in how facilitators work with students and the kind of support and attitude they proffer in extended programmes. Enhanced facilitator-student engagement is a necessary form of agency that can improve academic accomplishment by students in the foundation phase of their extended programme. These students are often catapulted from an initial condition of being underprepared to one of exceptional competency (Arendse, 2015; Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido & Mkonto, 2017). Evidence suggests that the skills acquired at foundational levels – such as report writing and critical thinking – usually become a rich source of agency to propel these students forward, not only during the undergraduate phase of their academic careers but also during postgraduate phases and beyond.

8 Conclusion

The Department of Higher Education in South Africa has made funding available to establish and support foundation programmes for underprepared students in tertiary education. This funding plays a crucial role in the context of

recognising and promoting the role of ECPS in the government's strategy to improve success and throughput at the university level, particularly for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. Despite the challenges featured in the implementation of ECPS, the chapter has shown that it is possible to improve not only the access and success of the beneficiaries of the ECPS but also the quality of the eventual graduates.

This chapter has explored various mythical perceptions that are commonly found in many ECP contexts. Whilst such mythical practices and related perceptions might not receive strong attention; they can inhibit students' success in ECPS and the resulting credibility of ECPS. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and address these mythical perceptions and practices to optimise the performance of ECPS and the students enrolled in them. It is, therefore, crucial to embrace the need to move away from viewing ECP students as posing challenges and instead focus on identifying institutional and structural weaknesses that ought to be addressed to support students.

Therefore, it can be argued that there is an ongoing need for intensive empirical research and monitoring of foundation programmes to corroborate their effectiveness in improving success and throughput rates, particularly among students from underprivileged backgrounds. Such evidence is necessary for the sake of the institutions to which the students have been admitted and the broader success of the transformative agenda of higher education and society.

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In Retrospect

Context, Diversity and Human Agency Matter

Michael Cross and Sibonokuhle Ndlovu

1 Overview

This conclusion chapter seeks to capture and crystallise the core messages explicitly or implicitly articulated throughout the chapters in this volume. A common thread running through the various contributions is the pressing need to move beyond present curricular, epistemological and pedagogical practices in the higher education sector globally. Interesting and compelling insights have emerged on how innovative and responsive practices could be attained from South African, African, as well as global perspectives. In this regard, the book reiterates the important epistemological and methodological framework articulated by Cross and Ndofirepi (2017: 190), namely that:

... we look to the past for strength and inspiration, not solace and paralysis ...; we look inward, into the African context, for reflective critical introspection, we look outward to the global world to borrow where necessary and lend our imagination where possible ... and we look toward the future, and vow to make it different and better for our own sake and the sake of humanity in general.

Such a framework opens up space for an infusion of diverse experiences of curricular practice and relevant epistemologies and pedagogies drawn from local, regional and international contexts, particularly in the context of the revisited North-South dialogue. We are confronted today with what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) has described as a crisis of both epistemology and methodologies in our academic practices. Under such circumstances, higher education requires “... a critical review of the prevailing notions of epistemology, theory, research, knowledge, knowledge application, to establish a solid platform for meaningful change in our scholarship in our universities” (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2017: 189). The main thrust of this book lies in its attempt to unpack necessary social and epistemological conditions to enable meaningful scholarship and

curriculum practices in addressing the challenges posed by contextual and social diversity in our rapidly changing world.

2 Insights Emerging from This Book

The important insights that emerge from the thinking and writing of the contributors to this book are summarised in the following sections.

2.1 *Acknowledging the Centrality of Context and Contextual Complexity in Curriculum Discourse*

The book draws attention to the very notion of context and the centrality of understanding the contextual complexity in academic practice, i.e. historical, global, national, local and institutional influences which impact on academic practice at epistemological, knowledge and pedagogical levels. This means that beyond disciplinary and inter-/intra-disciplinary concerns, curriculum and pedagogical practice should take into consideration the diverse contexts in which they occur, the lecturers and their strategies, and the peculiarities of the students being taught, including the desired environments in which the future graduates may pursue their career choices. Teaching and learning in contexts of extreme marginalisation along race, ethnicity and gender lines represent a major challenge for both lecturers and students, given the difficulties in arriving at shared meaning about what is expected of them. This is the higher education milieu in Africa, and in South Africa in particular. In this respect, Sithole (2016: 120) draws attention to our conception of knowledge: “Which knowledge is at stake and whose purpose does it serve?”; and Santos (2010) argues for the consideration of plurality, heterogeneity, peripheries and margins – all these perspectives reiterate the centrality of context.

The book issues important warnings and guiding signs on the centrality of context – for example, there is a need to move beyond deficit model interpretations of student under-preparedness and instead rethink the concepts of educational disadvantage as being shaped by history, power and oppressive social relations. This rapidly changing and increasingly complex context warrants not just greater rigour in terms of knowledge selection and curriculum packaging, but also greater vigilance against universal or mechanistic generalisation strategies (assumed as being universal) – and thus a greater sense of ethical and moral responsibility in such pedagogical processes. Culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy should take into consideration the

locality of students in order to enable them to apply knowledge to their local contexts (Maringe, 2017). Even when teaching pure science and mathematics subjects that rely on abstract concepts, both the content and method of teaching should be applicable to, and consistent with village or township contexts (Metz, 2017).

2.2 *Embracing, Accommodating and Critically Engaging with Diversity in Curriculum Practice*

Not only in South Africa, but also elsewhere in the world, various forms of diversity – such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language and education – are increasingly becoming a major challenge as higher education institutions strive to become more inclusive and equitable. This theme recognises diversity and its implications for transformative epistemologies, curricula and pedagogy. Sithole (2016) argues that what needs to be advocated are the ecologies of knowledge, leading to a pluriversalised idea of the world. This is in agreement with what Mkandawire (2009) stated earlier, namely that, while many alternatives might have held the potential to yield better outcomes, instead they turned out to be disastrous. Therefore, Mkandawire (2009) proposed a ‘pluri-versal’ alternative into which all worlds would fit while maintaining their unique contexts.

As illustrated throughout this book, diversity, diversity issues and diversification, have become popular concepts in academic discourses, including teaching and learning strategies and practices. Cross (2004: 387–388) argues elsewhere that most institutions are attempting to respond to the challenge:

... within the context of a transformation process which impacts on every aspect of academic life from student access and support, outreach programmes, staff recruitment and retention, to academic programme development, research, scholarship and the social and learning environment on campus.

The first point to emphasise is the meanings of the concept of diversity itself, since it can mean different things to different people. For example, colonial and apartheid education practitioners emphasised cultural, linguistic, racial and social diversity as justification for their racially exclusionist policies. However, it is possible to re-conceptualise, work with and through the concepts of diversity and difference in order to pursue equity and social justice goals. In this way, new meanings can inform how higher education institutions reflect, accommodate and are responsive to social diversity and differences in terms of curriculum and pedagogical practice.

2.3 *Negotiating a New Moral and Cultural Ground*

We refer here to the ethical and moral ground that a transformative curriculum project requires from higher education institutions, particularly at the political juncture where they may appear to be under siege from neo-liberal market pressures – where the notion of the ‘public good’ is increasingly being diluted or side-lined under the logic of the markets. Under such circumstances, transformative curriculum efforts in higher education institutions are expected to undertake the onerous tasks of cultural regeneration, particularly against the legacies of colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa. Such regeneration entails reclaiming subjugated cultural certainties and searching for new ones by means of relevant research, and seeking curriculum and teaching and learning strategies underpinned by the values of equity, social justice, democracy and human rights. In the context of the African university, Wiredu (1992) sums it up with the maxim ‘African, know thyself’. This implies that the emphasis of epistemology, pedagogy and curriculum should be suitable for “producing students capable of generating home-grown solutions for African problems while also drawing from global human experiences” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016: 41).

2.4 *Enhancing the Role of Individual and Collective Agency in Teaching and Learning*

This insight speaks strongly to the notion of agency amongst both lecturers and students, as being central to academic practice within the context of transformative curriculum and pedagogy. Learning can only be meaningful and effective under the dialectic of student agency and appropriate lecturer pedagogy. In the same vein, pedagogy can only fully impact on student learning when pedagogical practice is stimulated by positive lecturer agency. When an innovative pedagogical strategy is met with strong student agency, an environment is created that is conducive to social, intellectual and academic enrichment, and improved student satisfaction – in other words, a climate conducive to dynamic learning experiences.

In terms of students’ success, enabling agency is central to ensuring their epistemological access or, in Morrow’s (2009: 78) words, the process of “learning how to become a successful participant in the academic practice”. It is necessary for students to understand how the institution operates or ‘thinks’ in context; and use their own initiative and individual responsibility to enable themselves to gain entry into the ‘rules of the trade’ of academic practice (Cross, 2018: 15). From the perspective of the lecturer, this approach requires the realisation that there is a dynamic interplay between student agency and responsibility – improving the quality of their pedagogy within a given teaching and learning context requires active engagement in time and effort on their part.

2.5 *Re-visiting and Re-articulating the Discursive Space of the South and the North*

This insight concerns the articulation between thinking and progressing locally and globally. We use terms such as ‘Western epistemic and theoretical hegemony’ and ‘Southern epistemicide’ (the negation of Southern modes of knowing and knowledges) as descriptors which reflect the position of Northern discourses and the consequences for academic practice in the South – referring more specifically to the unequal relations in the production and flows of knowledge.

This situation is complicated by the fact that globalisation has stretched and scrambled the geopolitical boundaries of the South to penetrate Western social and discursive spaces. Today, what were previously perceived as problems of the South (e.g. poverty, hunger, disease, crime, migration and violence) have also become problems in Europe and North America. New mass movements led by populist ideologies have emerged, posing fresh challenges to Western societies. Within the academic arena, these developments have triggered what could arguably be described as ‘a global knowledge crisis’, as acknowledged in current scientific debates. For example, the last two meetings of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) dedicated some of the main panel sessions to revisiting and assessing the adequacy of the theoretical legacy dominant in comparative education. The same can be said about debates in other social sciences and humanities fora.

Responses to the crisis have included fierce critique of Northern hegemony in higher education, the search for African epistemologies, and the development of so-called ‘epistemologies of the South’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; 2016). These developments propose systematic re-thinking of our curriculum and pedagogical discourses – a challenge which this book has modestly tried to address. However, beyond such theoretical insights, an important lesson that emerged from this book’s compilation process points to the value of openness in discursive engagement and the need to move beyond fixed ideas, theories and frameworks in the South–North dialogue.

2.6 *Reclaiming the African Discursive Space in the Global Context*

The chapters in this book demonstrate appreciation of the importance of borrowing from innovative global achievements that have worked in other contexts in the domain of curriculum and pedagogical transformation. There are numerous common spaces where we do not need to ‘reinvent the wheel’. However, we also draw attention to the obligations of the higher education sector in terms of responsibility and responsiveness to the diversity of societies and cultures in the world. An important warning sign here is the need for vigilance

against the adoption of decontextualised approaches to curriculum development and decontextualised pedagogies, unresponsive to local needs and challenges. In line with Mbembe (2012, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), this book highlights the value of carrying our own innovations to the global stage. The same author insists on close integration and fusion of African experiences and ideas into the global community, within a South–North scholarship. In his view, this is a cosmopolitan way of foregrounding what is best for the future of both local and global communities in a rapidly changing world.

2.7 *'Combing the Curriculum' and Uncovering Silences*

We borrow Cohen's (1994) notion of 'combing' to highlight how curriculum knowledge is produced and selected, and how silence and forgetting figure in the process. 'Combing' here refers to the careful scrutiny of current curricula and pedagogies to detect distortions and uncover possible silences embedded therein. Besides acknowledging the coloniality of current curricula, we point to the need to recognise silences surrounding subjugated forms of knowledge and their absence from the classroom. In this sense, decolonising higher education curricula requires embracing other forms of knowledge, including African indigenous knowledge, so that no epistemology is censored or rendered inferior. Pedagogically, this requires actively involving students in designing the curricula, appreciating the experiences of those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities. Decolonising the curriculum is thus another way through which an indigenous way of knowing can be revitalised (Ngugi, 1987, cited in Ntuli, 2002).

3 **Re-imagining Higher Education Curricula and Pedagogy: A Framework**

Overall, beyond the insights extracted from the debates presented in this book, thinking about transformative curricula, pedagogies and epistemologies remains a difficult puzzle to solve. While the insights discussed above provide a useful framework for interrogating current academic practices in the domain of teaching and learning, it remains a challenge to map out their articulations within the discursive transformation space. In attempting to address this puzzle, we recall the useful distinction made by Fraser (1997: 23) between what she refers to as *affirmative remedies* and *transformative remedies*. For her, affirmative remedies are aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying frameworks that generate them (Fraser, 1997: 23). As such, affirmative remedies represent surface reallocations

of respect to existing identities or existing groups, which do not go beyond tolerance, acceptance, patronising, benevolence, or compassion. This is not to downplay their value in the context of affirmation and inclusiveness; however, they are limited as strategies for promoting equity and social justice effectively, and if not carefully conceptualised, they run the risk of stigmatising those who suffer marginalisation and disadvantage.

In the South African context, *affirmative remedies* are currently associated with most initiatives recently introduced in universities. These include changing the visible expression of institutional cultural artefacts and practices to revalue unjustly devalued group identities and the group differences that underlie them. This includes changing the names of buildings perceived as being disrespectful, translating official documents into African languages, introducing African rituals into university ceremonies, and introducing course components on African history and culture “to acknowledge, validate, respect, and be sensitive to the diverse nature of human kind” (Goduka, 1996: 30). Further examples of this ‘add-on’ approach that is typical of affirmative remedies in South Africa are: (i) holiday celebrations with a new political and cultural flavour, special lectures on decolonisation themes (Africanised epistemology, knowledge, curriculum and pedagogy), cultural exhibitions, and cultural and awareness events; and (ii) adding new content (e.g. concepts, theories and themes) deemed relevant to the diverse cultural backgrounds of students to existing curricula.

However, the basic structure and canon underlying existing curricula are left intact. As Cross (2004: 405) expresses it:

It is a sort of ‘band-aids and aspirin’ without treating the underlying causes, which take care of acute aches and pains, and sometimes even appear to have healed them, while leaving the underlying chronic illness untouched to fester and resurface time and time again.

For Fraser (1997), *transformative remedies* are aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework, i.e. the processes that produced them. In the South African context, such remedies would certainly require dismantling and deconstructing the norm of old practices to transform Eurocentric and racist curricula to reflect the diverse nature of the academic staff and student population, and South African society at large. Against the legacy of apartheid, such remedies should do at least three things: (i) redress disrespect by transforming the underlying cultural-valuational structure that underpins curriculum content and delivery; (ii) destabilise apartheid group identifications and differentiation to raise the

self-esteem and human dignity of members of currently disrespected groups; and (iii) change everyone's sense of self to promote feelings of solidarity. In particular, transformative curriculum remedies require careful scrutiny of the socio-political basis that has historically contributed to the structure and content of current higher education curricula, the educational philosophies underlying their choice, and the pedagogical practices attached to them. This approach requires an understanding that this transformed curricula is to be delivered to particular groups of students, who arrive with different historical, social, cultural, religious, and class identities, different learning styles and dispositions, all of which necessitate a pedagogy that takes into account their individual profiles.

We do not pretend here to downplay the role of affirmative remedies (given their largely symbolic nature) in order to privilege transformative remedies. Any social transformation is made up of both symbolic and substantive actions. Symbolic actions have the role of mobilising and committing all stakeholders to transformation as they signal in practice that change is happening or about to happen; nevertheless, effective transformation occurs only through transformative remedies. What is needed in terms of affirmative remedies is to re-symbolise the changing social and curriculum order with reference to desired transformation goals. Thus, by flagging the idea of transformative remedies here, we are proposing a curriculum perspective that supersedes subject content and embraces the underlying principles or organising concepts that give structure to the subject; an understanding of how subject disciplines organise knowledge; and a pedagogy that takes into account how people think and learn in their own contexts.

More specifically, we envisage innovative pedagogies that are culturally inclusive across all disciplines and levels of education, pedagogies that consider the unique needs of all students in their diversity (including the disadvantaged and the disabled), and assessment practices that provide students with opportunities to engage creatively with knowledge. Bringing this perspective of both worlds to the higher education arena could contribute to expanding the knowledge economy in the 21st century. It will be worthwhile to undertake further research that is based on, and uses the themes from this book as a springboard – namely the topic of transformative curricula, pedagogies and epistemologies in diverse higher education contexts. Within the South African context, such a project will certainly require taking seriously the questions of equity and social justice. We envisage a teaching and learning environment in which there is pluriversality of ideas, diverse experiences, inclusive pedagogies, and an overarching pluriversality of epistemologies.

Globally, scholars have come to terms with the realisation that epistemology, pedagogy and curricula are in crisis and at a crossroad. The Euro-North imagination remains incapable of solving the problems that imperial and colonial processes created. In this respect, Chen (2010) calls for a dialectic interaction of both decolonisation and de-imperialisation, which would reconcile the North and the South, and assist them in moving forward together. As this book has demonstrated, it is high time to open up space for other epistemologies that consider global issues of social justice, equity and inclusivity. As we have already highlighted, it is important to forge what Grosfoguel (2012: 89) refers to as a “horizontal liberatory dialogue” – an alternative that considers the contexts of all traditions from one global perspective.

Editors' Note

This chapter is posthumously published following Professor Michael Cross' untimely passing on 6 June 2021. At the time of his passing, the book was at an advanced stage of production after he diligently led the editorial processes as senior editor for the book whilst also doubling as series editor.

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Index

- affordances 9, 74, 85, 158, 215, 216, 219, 220, 222, 223, 225, 227, 229–231, 233, 235
- African indigenous knowledge 13, 14, 259
- agency 1–3, 7–9, 29, 84, 98, 170, 172, 182, 184, 241, 242, 244, 247–251, 257
- assessment of learning 9, 194, 196, 198, 201–203
- collective agency 184, 257
- corporeity 149, 152, 156, 165
- course assessment and evaluation 113, 128
- critical thinking 1, 5, 6, 29, 42, 44, 140, 142, 251
- culturally relevant pedagogy 142
- culturally relevant teaching 139
- culturally responsive teaching 4, 7, 96, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 139
- curriculum reform 44, 240, 243, 246
- decolonisation 3, 4, 40, 139, 182, 183, 233, 236, 260, 262
- decolonised curriculum 17, 18, 23
- disability support 216, 220, 223–226, 231, 233, 235
- diversity 1, 2, 4, 6–8, 12, 20, 74, 97–104, 139–145, 169, 175, 208, 215, 226, 228, 230, 243, 250, 255, 256, 258, 261
- doctoral supervisors and supervision 168, 169, 178, 179, 187
- extended curriculum programmes 9, 240, 244–246, 249
- French teaching traditions 28
- inclusion 9, 14, 114, 140, 233, 234
- indigenous culinary knowledge 5, 11–13, 15, 19, 22
- language policy 47–51, 53–56, 59, 60, 62, 63, 65, 66
- liberatory pedagogy 30
- models of doctoral supervision 175
- moral ground 257
- mythical practices 240, 241, 250, 252
- open distance and online learning 72, 73
- orality 30, 32
- postgraduate research 197, 198, 201–204, 206, 207, 211
- protocols 7, 107, 108, 111–117, 126–128, 130, 131, 155
- rites of passage 150, 151, 166
- rituals 150, 152, 153, 155, 156, 158, 260
- shared meanings 181–183, 185, 186, 255
- social capital framework 6, 73–78, 88, 90
- socially responsive education system 6, 96
- the universal design for learning 234, 236
- transformative curriculum 257, 261
- transformative educational practices 1, 5
- transformative pedagogy 28, 139
- writing gestures 150, 153, 156, 161, 165