Editorial

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'Implicit' and 'Explicit' do not exist as a pedagogic binary where one exists to the exclusion of the other. Nor do Implicit and Explicit exist as a cline where more of the one necessarily means less of the other. If I know this, why do I seem to keep landing up on the more explicit side? Calling for more explicit and visible forms of curriculum design and pedagogic process ensures that learners and teachers are clear about what they have to do, especially in South Africa, where most of our learners are struggling with basic foundations, not specialised heights. Making explicit what needs to be learnt, how it should be learnt, and what and how it should be assessed is a key 'improver' because it improves efficiency, cuts down on wasted time and poor sequences, enables clarity of sight and straightforwardness of movement. The problem with the above is that it sounds like a traditional 'back to basics' call and raises the hackles of all the discovery oriented, facilitative, progressive educators out there who have a moral mission to care for children, nurture children, make sure they explore, create, innovate and grow. Very quickly, there are suddenly two groups shouting at each other over a boundary wall built up with the wasted minds and bodies of our learners, both blaming the rising body count on each other as the wall grows higher and higher.

I felt this tendency rise up in me with some of the papers in this edition and would like to analyse why it happened and what to do about it. My strongest reaction came with what is happening in Namibian education. Although the Namibian education system partly inherited the same Apartheid curse, its post independence trajectory has increasingly taken a different path to South Africa. Namibia has a far smaller system, with around 600 thousand learners and 1500 schools. South Africa has around twelve and a half million learners in close to 50 thousand schools. Post independence Namibian educational reform was strongly influenced by the Swedish International Development Agency and a radical exile philosophy of critical and transformative learner centred pedagogy that emphasised integration of knowledge and reflective practice. Partly because Namibian education is so small, the influence of this 'radical' Swedish pedagogic philosophy has been pervasive. There has been no influential critique of this critical social constructivist position, whereas in South Africa, based on powerful critiques by academics such as Joe Muller,

Jonathan Jansen and Linda Chisholm, there has been an increasing shift towards a plainly defined, content-based curriculum, with explicit sequences and basic assessment tasks that test for clearly defined content. Nyambe and Wilmot show, very clearly, that teacher education in a specific Namibian college suffers from a 'forked tongue' syndrome, where teacher educators espouse a learner centred, constructivist pedagogy but actually teach in a traditional, teacher centred way that is antithetical to the radical pedagogy. It's important for us to understand this dynamic and Nyambe and Wilmot tell the story well, but what rises up in me is puzzlement around why there is no critique of this critical social constructivist transformative learner centred pedagogy in Namibia. For Nyambe and Wilmot the issue is around failure of implementation and the need to change broader structural arrangements so as to improve the possibility of a more genuine form of learner centred pedagogy, both in the colleges and in schools. What is not even on the horizon is the question of whether critical social constructivist learner centred pedagogy is the problem in Namibia, not the cure. Maybe it's the attempt to take something that occasionally works in richly equipped and staffed schools of the freezing north and apply it to the poorly equipped and staffed schools of the hot south that is the problem. And so I find myself on one side of the wall, ranting.

I stayed there when thinking about Petro du Preez, Shan Simmonds and Cornelia Roux's interesting meditation on how to improve the way we teach and learn human rights education. Education cannot just be about knowledge and specialisation of consciousness. We are in a hard fought for democratic country balanced on a knife-edge that needs deep entrenchment of civic, moral and ethical standards. Human rights education is a response to this need, and the paper provides a nuanced discussion of how to take the project forward. Their research on teacher and learner understandings of human rights education revealed a combination of superficial practices that treated human rights education as something to be learnt at a specific time in specific subjects (like life orientation) along with confusion around how to negotiate differences of opinion when these arose. One teacher paradoxically noted that 'maintaining a culture of human rights means to agree to disagree – but in silence'. Some learners tended to show an individualist orientation to human rights ('I have the right to swim because it is fun'). I can imagine Petro, Shan and Cornelia sifting through the data in some despair, as teacher after teacher showed lack of insight and learner after learner revealed the consequences of this lack. Their recommendations basically involve a full scale assault. Get human rights education into everything, do it explicitly and implicitly,

covertly and overtly. How? Firstly shift away from an epistemologically oriented teacher praxis where the issue is specialising consciousness towards an ethics of care position where feeling and affection towards others drives us. Secondly, allow for intuitive dialogue about complex, shambolic moral issues where hands get dirty, emotions get challenged, and horizons get shifted within an ethical community that holds it together in a loving way. Thirdly, push for teachers to become extended professionals who take ownership of their own development and emancipate themselves as well as their learners. How could I be on one side of the wall against such a well meaning, cogently put, and passionately argued for set of proposals?
It started with one of the teachers comments:

> Economic and Managerial Sciences was a very abstract learning area for learners . . . adding 'funny' strategies such as dialogue and contents such as human rights might just confuse learners more. (T: comment 3)

The summary comment on this is

> Comment three is an example of a teacher's attempts to justify her failure to infuse human rights in the curriculum and teaching-learning practices in a balanced manner.

Maybe, maybe not. It could be a professional teacher defending her (his and her) subject discipline and intuitively recognising what much research points towards – a focus on the subject as subject without distractions, add ons, extra themes, embellishments, warm up activities, asides, etc. tends to improve performance in the subject. Nothing spectacular or counter intuitive here in terms of breakthrough research – centering on the subject improves performance in the subject. But is this not fiddling whilst South Africa burns? Surely what is needed is a stronger emphasis on human rights to avoid all the current abuse going on? It depends on what foundation human rights are built up from, and this takes us back to Durkheim's distinction between mechanical or organic forms of solidarity, where either solidarity is built up on the principle of everyone being the same and doing the same; or everyone differentiating themselves based on specialisation of function. The beauty of organic solidarity is that it is in the differentiation of function that solidarity comes. You rely on others to do what they have specialised in whilst they rely on you to do what you have specialised in. Do unto others as you wish they would do to you. At the heart of organic solidarity lies specialisation, and this is the import of what the teacher above is pushing for. The consequence of this position is not necessarily a failure of human rights, but a strengthening of the base on which human rights can flourish. This is not to deny the need

for schools to be places where human rights are embedded and flourish in the warp and weft of school life; it is to dispute that teachers who fight for the purity of their subjects are somehow failing human rights education when, at a deeper level, they could be laying the foundation for its organic flourishing. Again I find myself on one side of the wall, this time arguing for a clear maintenance of subject boundaries against the attempt to infuse them with other themes and issues like human rights education. The word 'infuse' sounds more like 'contaminate' to me.

I don't want to be on one side of a wall arguing with my colleagues, I want to be in a place where we understand the generating principles of education that produce both traditional and progressive types of education, where the very idea that there are two types of education antithetical to each other is seen to be but a surface drama of much deeper rules at play, where instead of throwing foam at each other we ride the wave. The lead article of this edition, Fataar and Du Plooy's *Spatialised assemblages and suppressions* gets under the surface through a fine-grained reading of how children negotiate the lived domains of home, environmental location and school. As the lives of four children unfold in the paper, we find each of them assembling specific learning positions based on subjective engagements with their lived reality. It's a tale of how each of these children work with what they have and come to be particular kinds of learners based on the affordances of their environments. In the second half of the paper we read about how the school these children go to suppresses their rich learning dispositions. "The dynamics of the school reworked the children's positioning in such a way that they assumed one-dimensional learning subjectivities emptied of productive and enriching possibilities." This is due, in part, to the tough context of the school and its teachers, where social pathologies result in teachers being distracted from the pedagogic tasks and taking on "one dimensional professional personas" to cope. The school struggles to keep basic functions going. Generative and creative pedagogic strategies are absent with chalk and talk to the textbook ruling the day. The four distinctly individual children find themselves in a school environment that struggles to differentiate, that cannot work with heterogeneity, and forces a homogenous and crude pedagogy on them. The last third of the paper tracks how the four children negotiate this suppressive set of classroom practices with different results. Each uses their own set of resources and networks within the homogenous pedagogic environment and this results in different trajectories. Sadly, the trajectories do not result in positive learning paths for most of them.

It's a tough paper to muse over, but in comparison to much of the research pouring out on the dysfunctional nature of most of our schools, it gives some hope. It might be that the teacher suppresses the individual learning dispositions of her students, but at least she (she/he) is teaching lessons on time and on task. It's a glass half full or half empty syndrome. Fataar and Du Plooy use the possibility of a more complex and differentiated pedagogy to show how empty a simple and basic pedagogy is, but the simple pedagogy does manage to half fill the glass. A school caught between complete dysfunctionality and full scale functionality is an interesting creature, both for what it does and does not do and what it can and cannot do. The term 'suppression' catches the tension. As a negative descriptor it is all about crushing, cracking down, and squashing; and this is the major sense suppression holds in the paper. But in psychology, suppression can refer to the conscious exclusion of unacceptable thoughts or desires, the educational variant of which is sublimation, where lower and more unacceptable energies are transformed into higher activities. As Nietzsche pointedly asks us is in *Human all to human* – what would we do if we found that the most magnificent results were attained with the basest and most despised ingredients? Reading Fataar and Du Plooy's paper with both senses of 'suppression' in mind helps us see the school as half full and half empty at the same time.

Intellectualisation is one form of sublimation, and we find an excellent account of parts of this process in Pholoho Morojele's paper *Childhood memories that matter.* Morojele tracks how his own experiences of growing up in Lesotho as a boy heir impacted on his doctoral research on gender in rural Lesotho schools. Pholoho grew up believing his purpose in life was to protect his sisters and family from the consequences of patriarchy. And on one level, this was exactly why Pholoho was conceived. The cattle of his father would have been inherited by other Morojele families had he not been born. Patriarchical rules of Basotho culture would have taken the cattle away from daughters as they have no rights of inheritance. Pholoho being born saved his sisters from increased poverty and dependence, hence his name meaning salvation. He exists as a result of patriarchy but, in being born, saved his elder sisters from poverty.

> The equation of simultaneously becoming a benefactor of patriarchy and a protector of my sisters and family against the ills of patriarchy brought so much pressure and darkness to my life. Yet this sense of insecurity brought about an enormous sense of liberation – a commitment to undertake a study of gender equality, which aimed to contribute knowledge on how to address gender inequality in rural Lesotho schools.

We need more accounts of the undercurrents driving us to do the research we do. How many of us show neurotic, psychotic, borderline and/or hysteric(al) traits. We act out, disassociate, regress, deny, project, and compartmentalize, and that's just to get one article into JoE, never mind what happens if the paper is rejected.

We have to be careful where this takes us however. And here I am not just thinking how everyone's research and specialisation interests takes on a suspicious hue – 'so why exactly did you choose to specialise in gynaecology?' or 'so why do pharmaceutical drugs interest you so much?' or 'so tell me what the real reasons are behind your research question?' We also have to be careful of what this does for the objectivity of knowledge claims. Pholoho's self analysis results in a sense that he has a richer and more dynamic understanding of what drives him and his research area, but it does not improve the validity of his research, or subvert it for that matter. This depends on research protocols. We have double blind experiments that eliminate bias both in the participants and the researchers. We also have psycho-analytic techniques that track the unconscious with specialised tools and open it out to tracking. As Freud said 'Where id was there ego shall be', or to rephrase it in terms of the theme running through this editorial 'Where the implicit was, there the explicit shall be'. The explicit was not always there, somehow hiding behind the implicit, it needs to take its place, supplant it. The point is not that research is a personalised and value laden process, its how we deal with it. Knowledge production has complex human relationships and drives embedded within it – we can start off with this point, we do not have to end with it. The social constructivist and post modern project could do with some self analysis that pushes for *making it explicit*, to use the title of one of the two key recent works of analytical philosophy.[1] For Robert Brandom, formal logic is not implicitly standing behind our ordinary ways of thinking and acting, waiting to be uncovered. Formal logic is not some hidden ground from which everything springs. Rather it is a way of developing a logical self consciousness about meaning, of making explicit implications that push outwards from our normal reasoning. Don't look for a hidden foundation of formal logic inside the implicit, rather work from this implicit ground as it is and make it explicit. This is how I (psycho) analytically read Pholoho's paper – where social constructivism was, there objective inferences shall be.

This positive gloss on making the implicit 'explicit' faded a little as I read Nampota and Preece's dissection of how four African universities work with 'community service'. Sadly, but not unexpectedly, community commitments

are made explicit in university strategic plans and mission statements but are then left hanging sweetly on the page, untroubled by practice. I suspect there is a direct inverse relation between how glossy the university brochure on community service is and how much money and time is spent on actual community interventions. Being explicit is certainly not a cure all, and it can hide all sorts of pathologies, one of which is hollowness. Nampota and Preece provide four policy recommendations to prevent this from happening: community service must have a tangible organizational presence in the university structure; incentive and assessment procedures should encourage lecturer and student participation; needs analyses of the relevant stakeholders in the community should be done; and multidisciplinary and cross community networks should be encouraged to enable worthwhile responses to a complex problem space. It is so easy for universities to assume a big brother role when intervening in a community, especially when the community is poor, and not see that the intervention is insulting, out of touch, self serving, and condescending.

It's easier to make perceptible and measurable factors explicit, but this should not stop us tackling the project of bringing more subtle forces to light. If absolute poverty is defined as earning under a dollar a day, then poverty can be quantified and used as an indicator, but this ignores how poor people perceive poverty. These more implicit factors need to be brought out into the light. Dieltiens and Meny-Gilbert provide an illustration of how to do this in their paper discussing how poor communities experience poverty. The key insight is that, with school drop out rates, subjective experiences of inequality are as important as the absolute poverty a family is in. If you are all poor together, there are ways of coping at school; but if you are even poorer than your poor neighbour, there is cause for anger, jealousy, embarrassment and social exclusion. At school level the subjective experience of poverty in contexts of inequality increases the risk of poor learners dropping out of school. As one girl (Thembelihle) put it:

> . . .like when you are in a big family and the mother can't give everyone the attention they need. She only concentrates on the youngest ones and forgets about you, and if you ask her for something regarding your school she won't give it to you. . .When you get to school you see that other children have everything and you are the only one who does not have a thing so you end up dropping out of school because you feel like you are the odd one out. Then your mother starts calling you names because you dropped out (Social Surveys, 2007).

The final paper of this edition explores middle class parents' expectances of teachers to provide their children with the best education possible. Minaar and

Heystek explore the implicit and explicit factors shaping parental expectations and show that this involves far more than being in class, on time and on task. It involves teachers ensuring that their children will be successful, both in school, after school, and beyond school, resulting in an intensification of teacher workloads. It's not far off, I imagine, before teachers or the education department are sued for future damages based on present actions. Getting hold of some of my past teachers and charging them for my parlous current lack of income is an exquisite idea, if only they earned enough to be able to pay for it, and if only I could get hold of their past selves, not their current ones.

Standing back from the papers there is something troubling about the way I have structured the implicit/explicit relationship as an attempt to work with the principle 'where the implicit was, there the explicit shall be'. Much good teaching works the other way round – from the explicit to the implicit. Recent developments and research in Instructional Design have shown that one of the best ways to structure a learning program is to start with an explicit and simple version of the whole task and then increasingly make more and more of the activities both less explicit and more complex (Van Merrienboer and Kirschener, 2007). This avoids two pedagogic pathologies: starting off a new learning process in an implicit mode where the learner flounders and drowns because she does not know what to do; and information overload where too much explicit information is given and results in cognitive saturation. An explicit and simple whole task shifting to implicit and complex developments results in increased attention, grappling with issues, improved memory, more automated responses, and final mastery. We know that novices work better and learn more effectively with an explicit task, but we also know that experts prefer an implicit problem that is hard to see through (Van Merrienboer and Kirschener, 2007). So it is by making things explicit that the implicit grows as an expanding circle beyond it. As I stated at the beginning of the editorial, the implicit/explicit distinction does not exist as a binary. Making things explicit works outwards from an implicit base, and the process of making explicit ensures that *implications* spill out from it in abandon, forever beyond its laborious reach. Seeing the implicit/explicit as an intertwined process like this helps us avoid five pathologies: exclusionary binary, oversimplified cline, superficial hollowness, explicit saturation and drowning in implicitness. I hope it also makes clear that it is not from one side of the boundary that I rant, but from a desire for us to work with the processes of the implicit/explicit in its fullness.

References

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[1]   The other is Derek Parfit's *Reasons and persons* (1984). Parfit would point out to Morojele and Fataar/Duplooy that the personal identities of children are completely different to who they will be as adults; that time changes them from one person to another. If we take seriously that one person should not harm another, then we should also take seriously that the actions of an earlier self identity should not be allowed to harm its later self. This has interesting implications for both papers, and as we will see later in the editorial, for Minaar and Heystek. My rating of *Making it explicit* and *Reasons and persons* at the top of the 'recent analytical philosophy hit list' is idiosyncratic, but there is a strange pleasure in making these kinds of lists, especially for the analytics, who take themselves so seriously, but land up in the weirdest of places. Parfit, by the way, has just brought out his second book – the magnum opus, *On what matters* (2011) – twenty seven years after *Reasons and persons.* Imagine what his yearly performance management review must have looked like in between.

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