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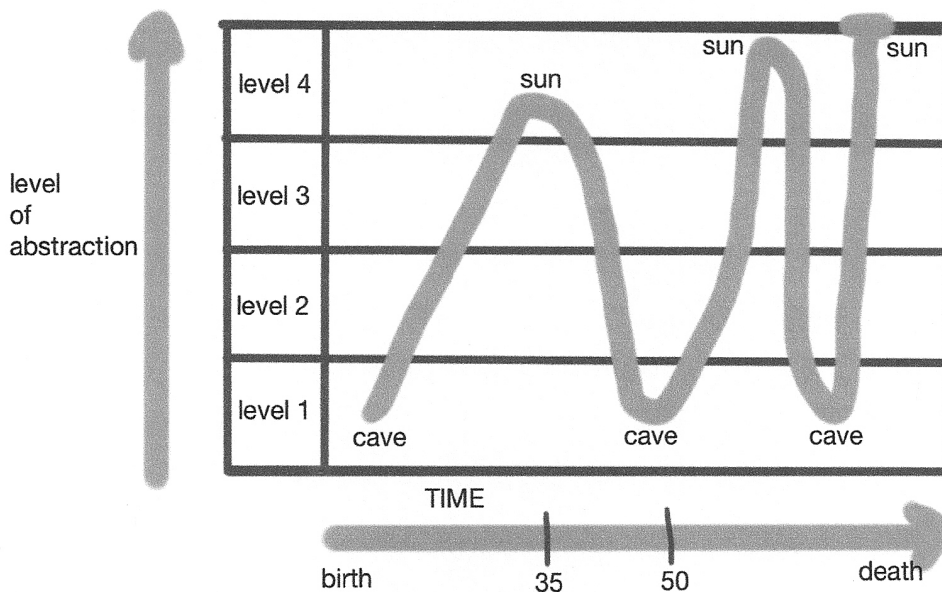
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Editorial

Semantic density and semantic gravity

Wayne Hugo

As education academics we are partly in the business of abstraction, but if Socrates had to pin you down in a corridor and interrogate your understanding and practices of ‘abstraction’, how would you fare? What is abstraction, how does it work, how does it operate in knowledge structures and pedagogy? The best student of Socrates wrote the founding text on how abstraction works in education and captured its essence in the Cave Metaphor. A student, forced to look at only shadows on a cave wall, is released and makes a journey upwards and away from everyday localised experiences into the light of pure abstraction, before descending again into the cave to work towards the release of others. Periods of working in the darkness of the cave must alternate with continual journeys back up into the light to recharge abstract insight and also to push towards the highest levels of pure abstraction found in the form of the Good.



Using the above diagram we can see that Plato was clear on a number of issues. There are four levels of abstraction on the Y axis, and the time period on the X axis is the lifetime of a philosopher king, who only reaches the heights of abstraction at around the age of 35 before descending back into the cave to practice as a politician (35–50), and then ascending up and down more frequently as he develops more experience dealing with the intricate combination of localised experience and abstract principle.

It is the task of each generation of educational thinkers to rearticulate and critique this founding vision, and amongst our current generation, Karl Maton is giving it a good go. In this edition of the *Journal of Education* there is one article that uses his Legitimation Code Theory to analyse Marketing in Higher Education, as well as a book review that critically explores Maton's book '*Knowledge and Knowers*'. Key to the latest developments in LCT are Semantic Waves, and we can use Plato's Cave Metaphor as a backdrop to understand Semantic Waves.

Firstly note the difference between the cave of everyday, located, spontaneous concepts and the light of pure abstraction and principles. Maton uses the term 'Semantic Gravity' to catch how, within the cave, meanings are embedded in their context and are heavy with particularity and detail. With a shift into the light of the sun, meanings become decontextualised and are able to rise above specific, located senses. Meanings become more general and abstract, getting to the essence of the concept beyond its concrete flavours and instantiations. It is almost as if, in rising towards the sun, all that is extraneous to the pure form is burnt away, leaving only the essence to rise, like the spirit away from the body. The task of an education system and the society it exists within is to ensure movement from everyday meanings to abstract and general concepts and then back again. Both the movement upwards and downwards are difficult paths to negotiate. Plato symbolises this by how the pilgrim, when struggling upwards, is blinded by the light of the sun when emerging from the cave; and how, when descending downwards back into the cave, is again blinded by the darkness. It is hard to work from the concrete and local towards the abstract and general; but it is also hard to work from abstract principle to a located case study or instantiation. An educational cycle has to do both – it has to rise upwards to abstraction and then descend to located instance.

The time it takes to move through a single cycle gives us an educational semantic ‘period’. How many cycles are completed in a given time period gives us the ‘frequency’. Where we enter (level 1, 2, 3, 4) gives us our entry point, where we end gives us our exit point. How high (and low) we can go gives us our range, and the individual patterns chased through this plane give us distinct profiles – a wave metaphor rises above us as a way of tracking and analysing the processes of curriculum and pedagogy.

In his empirical research with the LCT community of practice Maton found that two key processes of how abstraction works in curriculum and pedagogy needed clarification – Semantic Gravity and Semantic Density. Both are simple to grasp – Semantic Gravity refers to how embedded in context meaning is. The more meaning relies on its local reference for meaning, the heavier it is; the more decontextualised and universal the meaning, the lighter it is. Take this editorial, for example. At its most general it is an editorial, like many other editorials written in journals across the world. At its most particular and concrete, it is this editorial written for this journal.

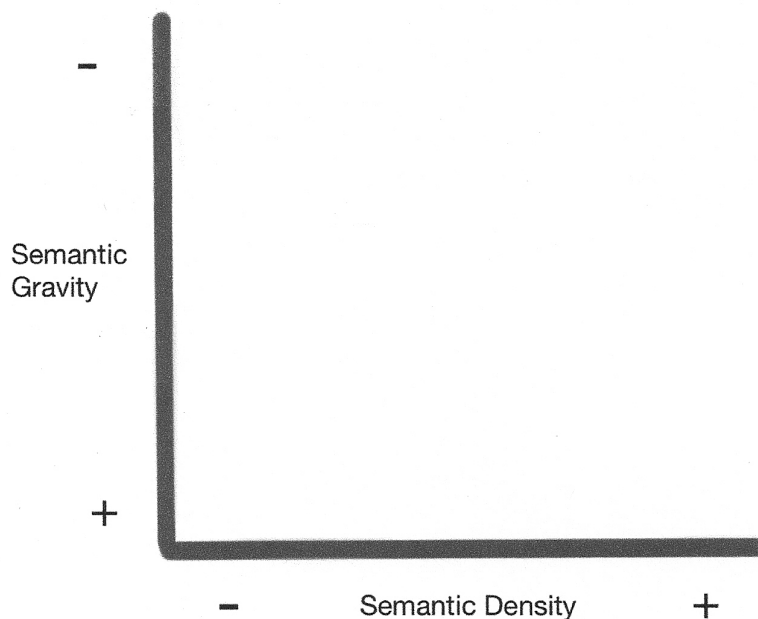
1. Editorial
2. Editorial for *Journal of Education*
3. Editorial for this issue of the *Journal of Education*

In general, the meaning of ‘editorial’ rises above particular instances and located meanings to describe how editorials work in general; in particular, the meaning of ‘editorial’ is heavily tied to the current articulation of the page you are reading. Teachers work with the processes named by Semantic Gravity all the time. Every time a general concept is illuminated by a specific case; every time a local instance is generalised into a universal rule, we have Semantic Gravity at work.

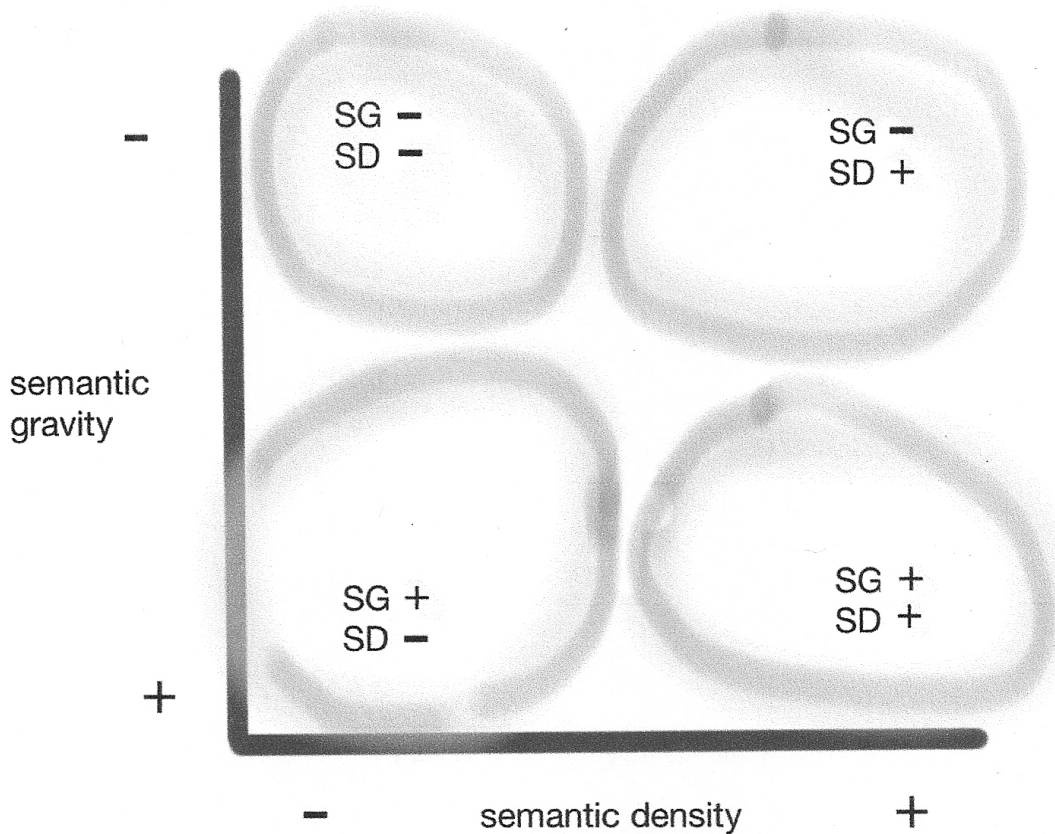
But something very strange happens with abstraction losing particularity as it rises to generality – its formalisation allows for new relations to build that are not based on located concreteness but on logical connection and specific features. This allows for a very different type of connection that is not based on located meaning in context, but of formal distinctions and specifications. There are major differences in the complexity and depth of different networks. Some networks are denser than others, some concepts contain more distinctions and relations within themselves than others – some concepts condense more within themselves than others. Maton calls this variation in condensation Semantic Density. Again, this process is ubiquitous in

pedagogy. Teachers are continuously building up Semantic Density when working conceptually with their students. Complex concepts need to be unpacked into their specific elements and relations and once the concept has been properly understood, it needs to be used with other concepts to grasp a larger or higher process. When a teacher ‘unpacks’ a concept then there is a lessening of Semantic Density; when she ‘packs’ the concept up and uses it as a whole to understand even more complex or broader issues, then there is a strengthening of Semantic Density.

Maton then combines Semantic Gravity and Semantic Density together and explores how they play with each other. Often these two processes work together. When a teacher unpacks a concept into its specific components (SD-), she often also gives a concrete or local example (SG+). But these two processes independently vary. It is quite possible for a teacher to unpack the concept into its specific elements (SD-) and not give concrete examples, just as it is possible for a teacher to give a located example to illustrate a general concept (SG +) without unpacking the specifics of the concept. I make sense of how these two processes work with each other by simply placing each process on a separate axis. An increase in abstraction results in a lowering of SG, descending to more concrete and located examples results in an increase in SG.



Four basic zones are generated with infinite grading between them:



Such a representation allows you to track how the pedagogic process plays out in terms of Semantic Gravity and Semantic Density over time. It also forces you to think about the two processes separately and together at the same time. This is important in terms of knowledge cumulation, because simple abstraction strips away particulars as it moves towards the general – it becomes lighter and lighter – and that is not what counts, because knowledge becomes more dense and complex as it grows. You have to catch a process that becomes more ‘intricate’ as it becomes more abstract. That is why the combination of Semantic Gravity and Semantic Density work so well together.

You can intuitively try it out. Here is a grade four Natural Science textbook working with ‘Energy’. See if you can track the line through six sentences:

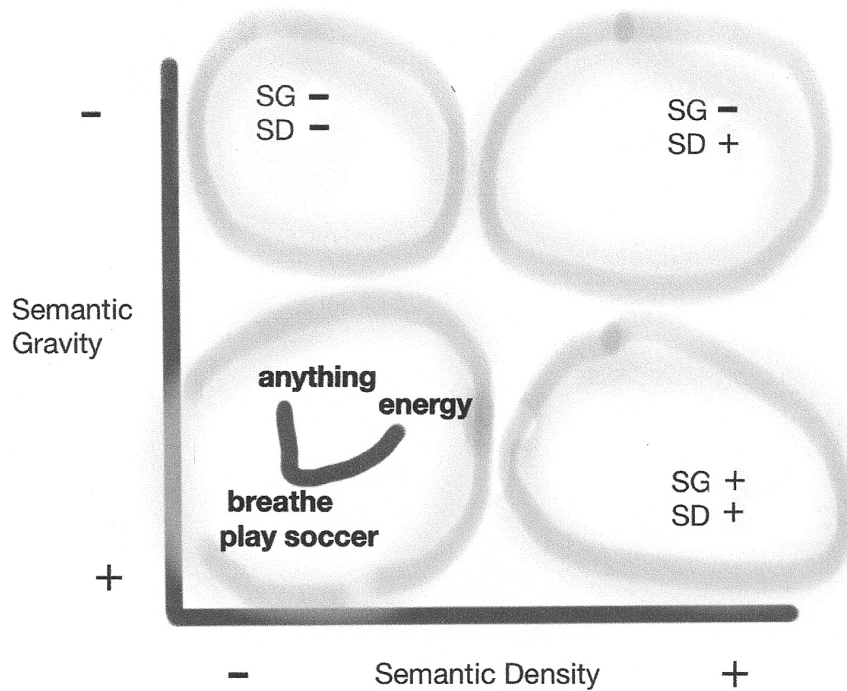
1. In order to do anything – breathe, get out of bed, do your homework or play soccer – you need energy.
2. All machines that help us, such as taxis, televisions, the stove and light bulbs need energy in order to work.
3. In science we say that energy is needed to do work.
4. Work is a word used in Science to describe effort or energy used.
5. For example, if you push a box along a table, you are doing work.
6. The box is also doing work.

What jumps out for me, before I show my line, is that the extract works with everyday and specialised senses of energy and work.

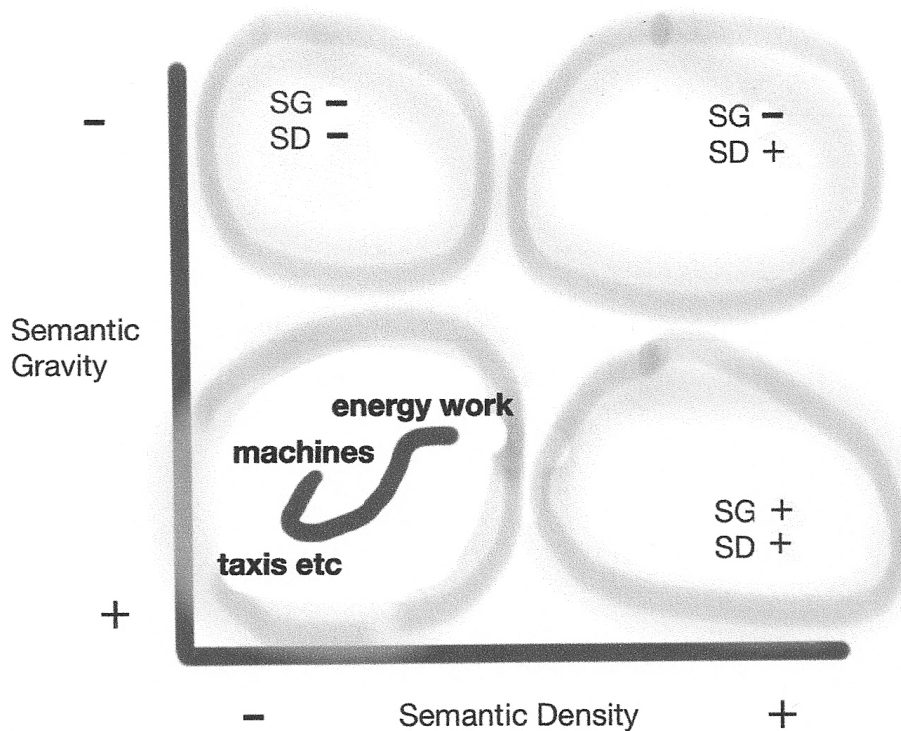
- An everyday sense of energy is the stuff we need to do things (sentence 1).
- An everyday sense of work is that machines need energy (like electricity or petrol) to function (sentence 2). If something is working, then it is doing its job.
- A specialised sense of energy is that what is needed to do work (sentence 3).
- A specialised sense of work is energy used (sentence 4).

The two concepts of energy and work are defined in terms of each other, not localised examples. Local examples are stripped away in sentences 3 and 4. Then we get a new example of work in sentence 5 that combines energy and work inside of ‘work’. Finally, the coup de grace, with sentence 6, an example that surprised and subverts everyday understanding – when you push a box along a table, the box is ‘working’, not just you. Can we track this on the matrix above?

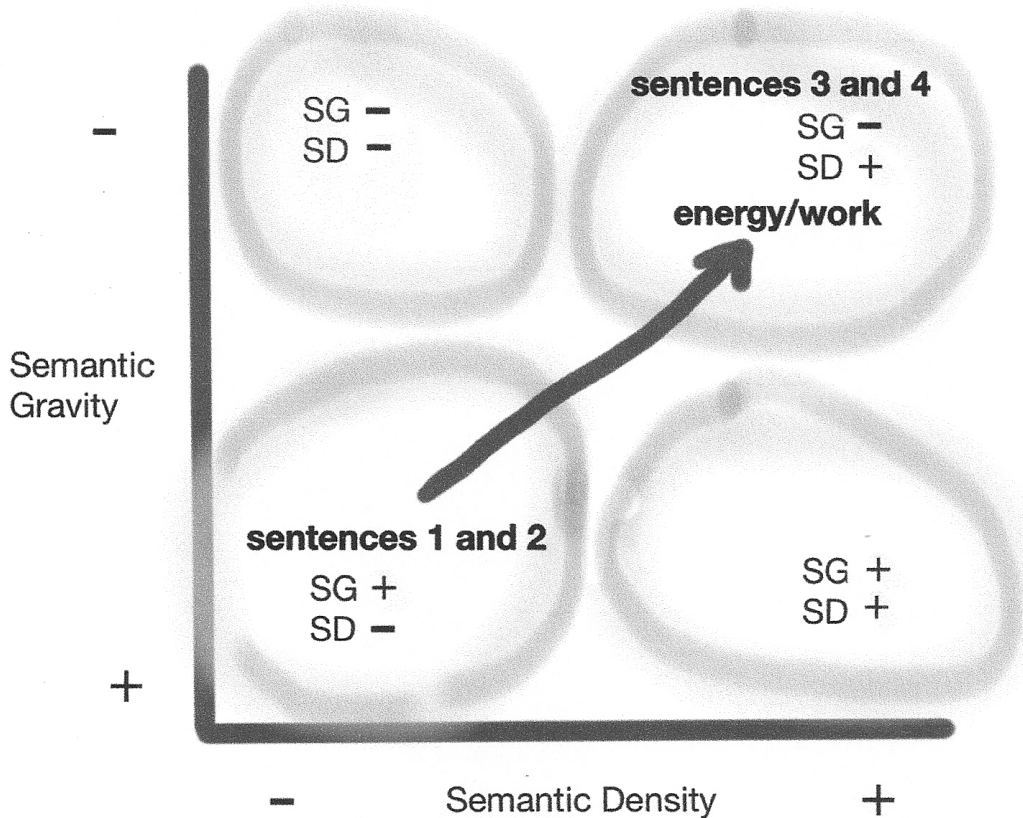
An immediate issue is what level of focus are we working with – inside the sentence or between sentences? The first sentence has a low level concept ‘anything’ that is unpacked with examples (breathe, get out of bed, do your homework or play soccer) and then tied together again with a more specific concept ‘energy’ that is related to what you need in order to do anything.



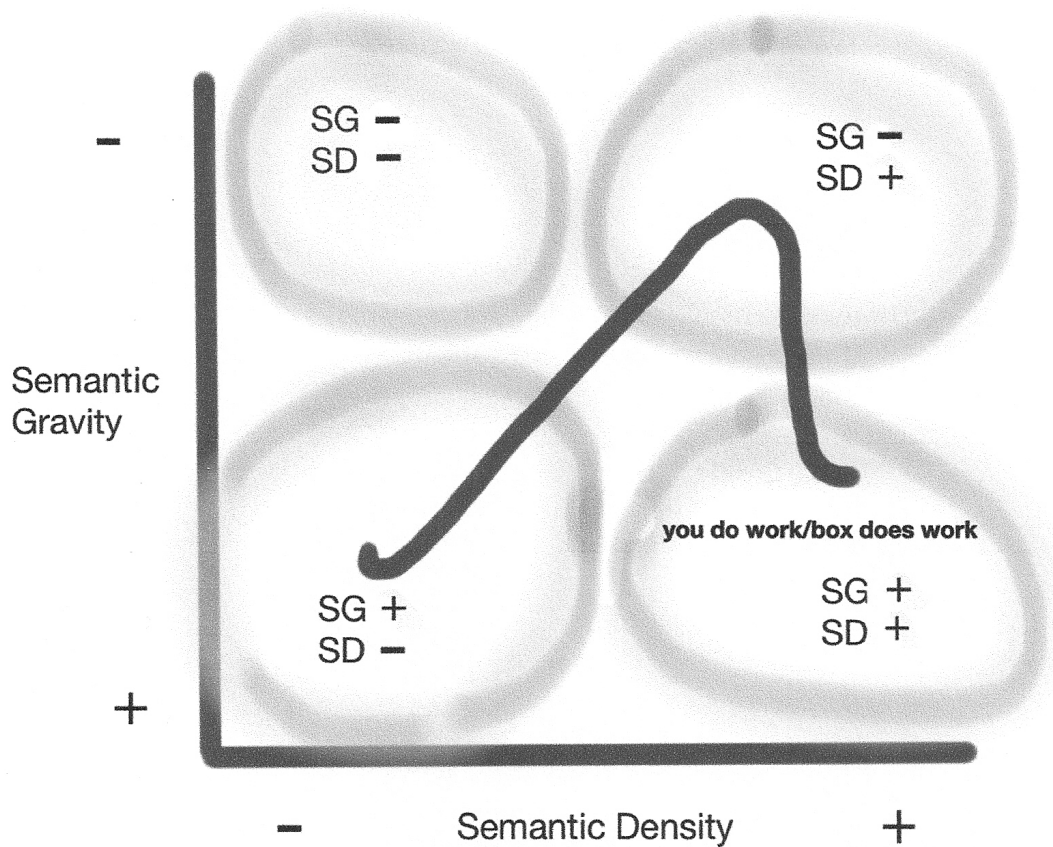
The second sentence performs a similar movement from low level concept (machines) to specific examples (taxi... light bulbs) to energy again, only it adds an everyday understanding of 'work'. I think, at this point, that 'work is slightly more semantically dense than energy, because it wraps up inside of itself energy and machines. 'Machines' is also more concrete than 'anything', hence slight ly high SG.



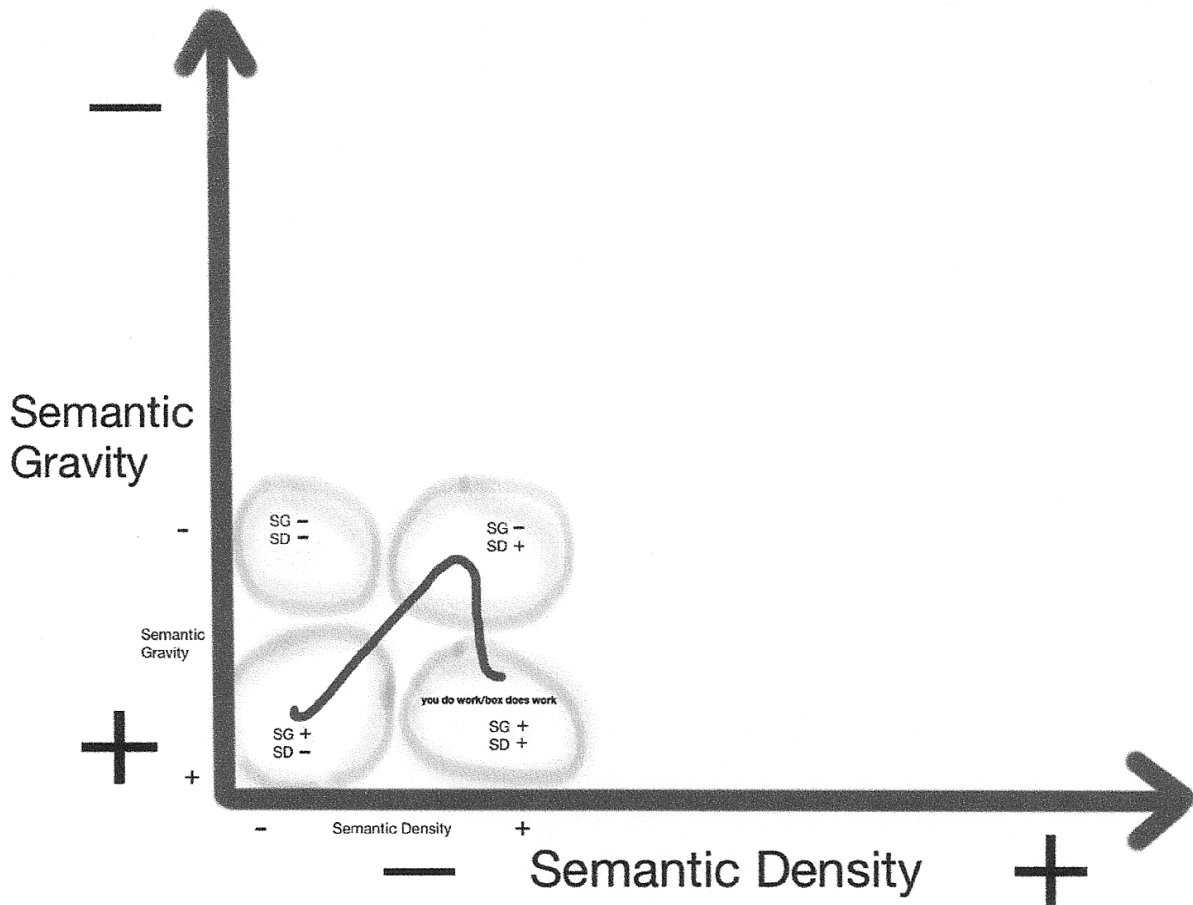
But notice that both sentences are really operating in the SG +/SD- region. With sentence three and four there is a shift into increased abstraction (SG-) and tighter definition (SD+). The terms energy and work are defined in terms of each other at an abstract level that increases the SD of both through each other.



Sentences 5 and 6 then give an example of how these more specialised concepts of energy and work combine that refuses to go back to everyday understandings, *but does still concretise*. So what happens here is that Semantic Density remains strong (maybe even increases), but Semantic Gravity becomes stronger with the concrete example.



What we have, is a semantic wave that combines both SG and SD continuously together. Note that this is a grade 4 textbook discussion of energy that is working at the very beginnings of scientific understanding. As we move through the years, both abstraction and density will increase dramatically as higher and higher levels are reached with more and more meaning compacted within the terms. The size and systematicity of the network will grow.



We have the beginnings of a way to symbolically track cumulative learning. You might disagree with how I analysed the textbook – maybe ‘anything’ is lower in SG and lower in SD than I indicated; maybe you doing work pushing a box has the same SD as the box doing work – but these intricate decisions make a community of practice flourish as it deals with actual engaged analysis that gives and demands reasons.

There is much more than Semantic Waves to LCT, as you will find in two of the articles in this edition of JoE. Arbee, Hugo, and Thomson show how LCT works as an analytical tool in Higher Education through a case study of Marketing at UKZN. Fiona Jackson provides an extended essay review of Maton’s book, *Knowledge and Knowers*, that substantively engages with the structure and issues of the book. *Knowledge and Knowers* is an impressive book. It provides a synthesis of much of Maton’s recent work as well as demonstrating how LCT is continuously on the move, engaging with developments and problematics, both theoretical and empirical, in a

constructive and synthetic way. LCT is growing in strength in South Africa, with established communities of practice at UCT and Rhodes, and we need to engage substantively with what it offers.

If Fiona Jackson provides a detailed review of *Knowledge and Knowers*, then Paula Ensor does a similar job on Stephanie Allais' fascinating book – *Selling out Education: National Qualifications Frameworks and the Neglect of Knowledge* (2014). If Maton provides us with a way to grasp the micro fibres of cumulative learning, then Allais shows the macro forces ranged against cumulative learning across the world and particularly in South Africa. The logic of the market and the belief that education can solve all the problems of the world pins education between two unenviable forces – one strips the substantive content of education down to marketable elements; the other fattens education up as the great provider. Education is not the great saviour of our modern world; it is not the salve to all that is wrong. Education can do good, but it is an imperfect force with limited means operating in a restricted environment. Allais uses her detailed research on the South African National Qualifications framework to illustrate how market forces and hyped expectations inflicted educational damage, not only in South Africa, but across the world. Ensor finds Allais' account insightful, but engages in a respectful critique of Allais' critique, pointing to areas where Allais needed to clarify her focus, where she overstepped bounds, misidentified forces, and where more work is needed. It is the kind of serious review a book of this calibre deserves.

Ensor ends with a call to focus in on the distinctive dynamics of vocational education, crucial as it is to the functioning of modern societies. It's not only vocational education that needs a distinctive focus, it's all the different types of knowledge structures and practices. We have not yet developed a taxonomy of knowledges that has the same detail as Linnaeus provided for plants, but at least it is on our horizon. Hirst came close with his *Forms of Knowledge* (see *Knowledge and the Curriculum* (1974)), but his idealist project lost traction, although it is now being picked up by the social realists who work a lineage from Durkheim, through Bernstein to Young, Moore, Muller, and Maton. This project has become increasingly sophisticated, especially with the realisation that Cassirer provided us with a more precise and generative classification of knowledge than Durkheim or Bernstein (see Young and Muller's much underrated *Truth and Truthfulness in the Sociology of Educational Knowledge*, 2007). Cassirer was the genuine article, a philosopher who took the project of understanding all current forms of knowledge of his generation and age seriously, even if that meant dealing with Einstein's relativity and Darwin's evolution in relation to Kant's metaphysics. I cannot name an equivalent

modern philosopher who has attempted the same project with the same rigour and eye for historical detail – Latour and Zizek pale in comparison, Foucault's *Order of Things* hardly bears mention – so the use of Cassirer to understand specific knowledge forms is to be welcomed, and Alka Sehgal-Cuthbert provides us with just such a piece in her analysis of Art Education.

In 2009 we published Bolton's research on Art Education that pushed for a distinctive understanding of the processes and dynamics of evaluating Art at school level. We finally have a companion piece in Cuthbert's sustained meditation on the distinctiveness of Art Education.

If we can summarise all that has gone before under a general theme of access to powerful knowledge structures, then this falls under an even wider theme, which is access to education in general. There are many luminaries in this field, but for me it is the work of Keith Lewin that I turn mostly to for insight. He has set up The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) that focuses on the reasons why children fail to access and complete basic education. Key to this endeavour is 'an expanded vision of access that includes meaningful learning, sustained access and access provided equitably'. (<http://www.create-rpc.org>). It is a key intervention in the most massive of all struggles – meaningfully educating the poor children of our world. Jean Baxen, Yvonne Nsubuga, Lori Diane Hill, and Anne Craig provide us with an account of CREATE's meaningful access framework, how it can be applied to conditions in the Eastern Cape, and what additional dimensions can be added to gain a more insightful account of meaningful access.

With such an intense set of papers, it is fitting to have one paper that deals with the role humour plays in education. Mary Chabeli, Jackie Malesela, and Monica Rasepae spent some time with learner nurses exploring what experiences of humour they had in nursing education. Humour plays a key role in pedagogy but can be abused – either by being offensive or by being aggressive and denigrating. The teacher is in a position of power and can tease without being teased back, ridicule and mock without being mocked back. That said, there are all sorts of humour that have positive effects. Banas, Dunbar, Rodriguez and Liu (2011) have provided us with an excellent general review of humour in education, and much of what they say is pointed to in the experiences of learner nurses. You will not however, find a joke in Chabeli *et al*'s paper, which is a little sad, given that even Kant and Freud told jokes when analysing humour, so perhaps it is fitting to end off with a joke about us as academics (forgive the masculine):

Upon waking, a woman said to her academic husband, “I just dreamt that you and me were playing with a string of pearls on our bed. What do you think it means?”

The academic smiled and kissed his wife. “You'll know tonight,” he softly whispered.

That evening, he came home with a small package. She jumped up, embraced him, took him to the bedroom, settled on the bed, and delicately unwrapped the package.

It contained Freud's *'The Interpretation of Dreams'*.

I might add, it's a darn good book.

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Art education: a case of mistaken identity?

Alka Sehgal-Cuthbert

Abstract

This paper begins by identifying two fundamental problems in contemporary British and American secondary art curriculum: epistemological confusion and the absence of any aesthetic component. This paper proposes a reformulation of art as an aesthetic cultural accomplishment drawing on Kant's theory of the aesthetic and symbolic representation as discussed by Cassirer and Langer. This is followed by a comparative epistemological analysis of art with Social Realist models of scientific knowledge. A case is made for art as a unique form of knowledge, possessing both a subjective aesthetic basis and an objective basis in its expressive form. The final section of this paper discusses the implications of the proposed conceptualisation of art for the art curriculum, and proposes a model for art education in schools that has the potential to solve the problems identified at the beginning.

Description of current confusion

In his analysis of the 2004 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Art syllabus, Cunliffe finds several examples in the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and supporting documentation, where pupils are required to show evidence of contextual understanding in their artwork. Cunliffe rightly argues that this requirement confuses practical or procedural knowledge with

declarative or propositional knowledge.¹ Both cannot be assessed according to the same criteria in a single work (Cunliffe, 2005b). The assessment criteria in the syllabus and supporting documentation, such as teachers' guidance notes lack the consistent linguistic clarity and logical coherence appropriate to their status as official statements of curricular aims and evaluative criteria.

The AOs from AQA's 2004 specifications for the GCSE Art syllabus are present in current specifications of the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) and other British exam boards including the older Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) 2012. Thus the AOs analysed in this paper can be taken as general, rather than atypical, features of British examinations in art for pupils at the end of secondary schooling. The AQA's introduction to the Assessment Objectives states that evidence for their attainment should be either demonstrable or measurable, which implies that there should be a close correspondence between course content, evaluative criteria and form of assessment. Such correspondence is not evident in the AOs in pages 1–4 of the *Teachers' Resource Bank, Interpreting Assessment Objectives*:

AO1 Develop their ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding.

AO2 Refine their ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes.

¹ Cunliffe's use of these terms derive from Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (1949) which proposes a concept of knowledge whereby its different forms arise from the different rules required in their manifestation. This means that the main distinction between practical and intellectual knowledge does not lie in their different sources (i.e. the empirical world and the inner world of reasoning) as suggested in traditional epistemology, which Ryle criticises for its dualism. In *Curriculum Design and Epistemic Ascent in Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 47(1), (2013), Winch makes a helpful distinction between propositional knowledge, skills, techniques and inferential capability. In a practical subject such as art, skill is developed through a combination of techniques, propositional knowledge (both teachable) and experience of practice (not teachable). The first two are governed by different rules and criteria which mean that understanding of, for example, the social context of American abstract art, requires expression in linguistic form and its concomitant rules and procedures. This understanding, which is by definition conceptual, cannot be expressed through the rules and procedures required by the craft of painting where imagination and intuitive feeling play a larger role: these can be made manifest more clearly in artistic rather than linguistic forms (this is discussed more fully in the third section of this paper, Art and Knowledge).

AO3 Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions in visual and/or other forms.

AO4 Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding, realising intentions and where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements.²

Whilst AO3 is reasonably clear, other significant confusions support Cunliffe's central criticism that the GCSE art syllabus and exam contains a fundamental confusion between different forms of knowledge. For example, AO1 implies a considerable study of art history alongside experience of looking at, and studying, a purposive selection of paintings. The term 'investigations' is left unspecified; it *could* refer to verbal or written commentary or essay; the logically appropriate forms of assessing such knowledge and understanding. But it is equally possible for 'investigations' to be understood as visual, in which case it is not clear how analytical and cultural understanding could be explicitly demonstrated or measured. This latter interpretation is made explicit on page 4 where teachers are advised that

Candidates' critical understanding could be embedded in the progress of their work as it develops. It might be evidenced visually in the relationship between preparatory studies and resolved outcomes. It could be evident in a completed piece of work.

The vague wording of AO1 risks encouraging the erroneous idea that producing pastiches of particular styles of art is the same as developing cultural understanding; and often this is done at the expense of pupils developing more autographic works based on a thorough grounding in appropriate skills (Cunliffe, 2005a, 2005b). AO1 and AO4 suggest that the examination and course content supports a predominantly socio-cultural approach to art but without requiring "assessment evidence that would logically flow from the socio-cultural emphasis". (Cunliffe, 2005a, p.201).

AO2's claim that ideas can be refined through experimental practice and selection of materials conflates mental process of thought with its physical manifestation; this misses the intellectual character of refining ideas. Thinking and doing need to be distinguished theoretically if each is to retain its specific characteristics, even if they are almost inseparable in practice. Artistic *articulation, or expression*, of ideas may be refined through the practical process of making art (Hickman and Kiss, 2013; Reid, [1929]), but ideas *per se* can only be refined by the activity of purposeful thinking in some form of

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<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/subjects/AQA-4200-W-TRB-IAO.PDF>

internal or external dialogue based on concepts, reasoning, evaluation and judgement. The content of artistic practice is not explicated; the only further guidance is, “consideration might be given to the formal elements of art, craft and design such as line, shape, tone, texture, colour and form and how these might be most effectively used and explored”. The words “*consideration might be given*” (my emphasis) indicate that these essential components of art practice are understood as more or less optional extras.

AO4 requires analytical and critical understanding, which would be assessable in the form of either a written or verbal account based upon a combination of art appreciation, and the sociology and history of art. But AO4 only stipulates “a personal, informed and meaningful response”, which could apply to most assessment pieces and is thereby unhelpful guidance for assessors. In short, neither the conceptual nor the practical aspects of art are clearly understood or explained in these AOs.

Similar confusion exists in other places of AQA’s Art and Design documentation. For example, the section outlining course content of the AQA 2014 specification, states that pupils’ portfolio could include:

Critical and contextual work that could include visual and annotated journals, reviews, reflections and evaluations, documentation of a visit to a museum/gallery or experience of working with an artist in residence or in other work-related contexts.³

This suggests that an account of a gallery visit constitutes critical and contextual understanding. Whilst such work could provide contextual information relating to pupils’ artistic influences, it is hard to see how such documentation could be considered ‘critical’. Furthermore, educationally, this is a highly contestable idea as it assumes that deeper levels of knowledge and understanding will spontaneously emerge from everyday, experiential based knowledge. Significantly missing from the GCSE examination and syllabus is “The development of critical discrimination and aesthetic judgment-making, especially the capacity to locate these in their social, artistic and cultural contexts” (Harland quoted in Cunliffe, 2006, p.67).

³ <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/subjects/AQA-4200-W-SP-14.PDF>, p.8

Such problems in the British secondary level art curriculum are similar to those in the corresponding American art curriculum (Barkan, 1962). The absence of aesthetics in the sociology of art is discussed by De la Fuente (2007), and in contemporary culture it is noted by the artist Grayson Perry who cites Marcel Duchamp's warning, "Aesthetic delectation is the danger to be avoided." Ruefully he remarks that making an aesthetic judgment today is often regarded as "buying into something politically incorrect, into sexism, into racism, colonialism, class privilege. It almost feels it's loaded, because where does our idea of beauty come from?"⁴ The next section discusses this question in reference to Kant's *Critique of Judgement* ([1790]).

The intrinsic worth of art and Kant's aesthetics

In *Critique of Judgement*, Kant ([1790]) insists that aesthetic feeling is utterly disinterested; that is to say that the feeling of delight is prompted by the apprehension of beauty alone. There is no invocation of morality, reason or sensual pleasure; in this way the beautiful is different to both the agreeable (that provides sensory gratification) and the good (which has an objective worth set upon it). Aesthetic feeling may invoke thoughts as well as feelings, but there is no causal chain of reasoning required. Aesthetic feeling is characterised by a lack of conceptual thinking because concepts are necessarily 'interested'; that is to say that they are the link between external aspects of phenomena and the internal experience of it (Kant, [1790]). Aesthetic feeling or the apprehension of beauty arises from the free play of all our cognitive faculties 'at rest'. Our intellectual reasoning, our emotional feelings and moral sentiments are not being consciously directed towards some external empirical or logical object or purpose. Rather than the outcome of using a process of logic or reasoning where mental faculties are focused or directed towards a particular purpose, object or wider goal, our recognition of beauty prompts imagination; and releasing perceptual and mental faculties from everyday focuses and contingencies (Cassirer, [1944] Eiser, 2002; Tallis, 2012).

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Grayson Perry's Reith Lectures: Who Decided What Makes Art Good? In <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/c37b1b6a-3017-11e3-9eec-00144feab7de.html#axzz2hhTN3Alz>

Applied to art, Kant's explication of the aesthetic does not mean there is no place for conceptual thinking. It is, for example, required in recognising the representational content of paintings, e.g. landscapes, a female figure, fruit in a bowl and so on. And to a greater or lesser degree, conceptual knowledge is required in recognising the genre of the work, its chronological and evaluative place in art history or where it stands in relation to an artist's development. But in experiencing an object as beautiful, it is the imagination rather than logical or propositional thought that is appealed to in order "to refer the presentation to the subject and his feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (Kant, 1790, §1 p.44). The imagination is free to spontaneously suggest undeveloped material (intuitions, feelings, moods), which is discarded by reason's use of concepts. Such material, when encountered imaginatively cannot add to scientific knowledge or knowledge in the humanities. But the aesthetic response in both the creation and appreciation of art can become the basis of a deeper recognition or understanding of subjectivity as the site of all experience and cognition (Cassirer, [1944]; Eisner, 2002).

The epistemological ambiguity of Kant's idea of the aesthetic has left it open to criticism. Its autonomy or disinterestedness is mistaken for a rejection of human characteristics; and its subjective basis mistakenly understood as synonymous with being unreal and therefore amounting to little more than "an expression of the common subjectivist-metaphysical assumption" that separates the arts from "the whole complexity of life" (Best, 1992, p.34). It is true that Kant's account of the aesthetic is based upon individual subjectivity; as is his account of morality in *Critique of Practical Reason* ([1788]); but both arise from his attempt to uphold a sphere of autonomy to subjectivity rather than uphold a subjectivist-metaphysical assumption *per se* (Michaelson, 1990). His theory of aesthetics (and morality) could be described as teleological in that an a priori faculty to recognise beauty is implied; but this is located within human powers rather than those of religion or nature. The profound humanism in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is evident in his following summary of the aesthetic:

Only by what man does heedless of enjoyment, in complete freedom, and independently of what he can passively procure from the hand of nature, does he give to his existence, as the real existence of a person, an absolute worth. Happiness, with all its plethora of pleasure, is far from being an unconditioned good (Kant, 1790, §4, p.5).

It is a clear affirmation of the intrinsic worth of being human resting in our ability to do things 'in complete freedom', irrespective of whatever external

goods may be achieved. In insisting on the disinterestedness of aesthetic feeling, and in debarring it from knowledge, it could be argued his aim was not to reduce the complexity of the human mind to reason alone but to argue for the capacity for aesthetic feeling as an intrinsic, human faculty.

Kant conceded that the autonomy of aesthetic feeling is reduced at the moment of judgement. An aesthetic judgment implies a demand for the assent of others, irrespective of whether a specific judgement achieves a complete consensus. The idea of judgement in aesthetics is regulative rather than stipulative, and involves practical acts of judgement making that in turn, require propositional knowledge, and hence places necessary limitations on the autonomy of aesthetic feeling.

Another criticism implied in Best's interpretation of Kant's aesthetic disinterestedness is that it is too focused on the isolated individual; as if there was no social context. However, it is precisely the 'disinterestedness' of aesthetic feeling – its independence of any individual's particular interest – that renders it imputable to everyone and thus it acquires subjective universality.⁵ Unlike objective universality in science, art's subjective universality is not generalisable: it does not require a single judgement to be held by everyone, but presupposes common assent to the existence of a standard of beauty. Kant's idea of aesthetic judgement rests upon an implied community of judging persons whose acts uphold a common standard; rather than isolated individuals whose judgements have no purchase beyond their immediate circle. His relocation of the source of validation of art to human faculties instead of religious or cultural institutions introduced a new freedom for artists as well as a new element of uncertainty. Questions of artistic truth, how to achieve it in art and who was to legitimise its worth, had to be asked anew, and in this way Kant's *Critique of Judgment* influenced subsequent artistic endeavour (Doorly, 2013).

Kant's work was directed more towards developing his philosophy of mind rather than of art or education *per se* but his theory of the aesthetic has been influential on later philosophers, including Cassirer and Langer, who are discussed later. The next section considers art's place in the curriculum.

⁵ Kant's use of the term 'interest' is different to current meaning. He uses it to refer to the way a determinate concept connects external phenomena and inner will, direction of thought.

Art's place in the curriculum

Since the 19th century school knowledge has been primarily, although not exclusively, selected on the basis of its capacity to foster intellectual development. The intrinsic worth of a liberal subject based education has coexisted with other extrinsic values. For example, the application of scientific knowledge increases human control over the natural world, the humanities contribute to more accurate and nuanced understanding of societies in different places and times, and the arts contribute to a richer, more complex culture. The extrinsic values of education, have until recently, been understood as arising *indirectly*, through its primary roles of intellectual development and introduction to a public culture (Arendt, [1954]; Hirst, 1965; Oakeshott, 1971; Peters, 1965). Due largely to its powers of generalisation and application, scientific knowledge in Britain and America during late 19th century/early 20th century, became the most valued form of public knowledge. In this process the arts have been marginalised in education not least because they lack the epistemological characteristics that make science, and to a lesser extent, the humanities, more *immediately* useful and valuable (Cassirer, [1929]; Eisner, 2002.).⁶

There is an older philosophically distinction, going back to Plato ([420BC]), between knowledge and imagination. Where knowledge derived from reason has been closely associated with striving for truth, imagination's expressive power to evoke images and feeling immediately has aroused suspicion because of its potential to distract from, or corrupt, reason's search for truth. Consequently the visual arts in particular have lacked the status of other subjects (Nauta, 2004). However, some philosophers have questioned this understanding and lowly status of the imagination. Vico, for example, regarded science as less certain knowledge than the humanities because the basis of science is the natural world, which Vico wanted to uphold as God given and therefore essentially unknowable to man. His phrase 'verum factum' expressed the idea that knowledge in history and mathematics could be more reliable or truthful as they are based on human societies and institutions, or logical rules; they are derived from human and not God's design and therefore more knowable (Iheoma, 1993; Pompa, 1982). More

⁶ Although Polanyi claims the triumph of science due primarily to its role in industrialisation has also resulted in its instrumental valuation and one-sided development as it has become increasingly divorced from a broader humanistic endeavour (Polanyi, [1958]).

recent anthropological philosophy and sociology has argued that visual imagery of primitive societies had an important mythic function in creating meaning and order; functions which later were adopted by language, without which scientific knowledge could not have developed (Durkheim, [1915]; Cassirer, 1929): and in these accounts imagination is not so much defeated by reason as marginalised. However it remains important as a complement to the abstraction of scientific thought and in modern societies it has its fullest expression in the arts (Cassirer, 1929).

The application of scientific criteria and models within education has been criticised for undermining a humanistic conception of education where all forms of knowledge are valued for their intrinsic worth as well as their indirect contribution to the wider common good as discussed at the beginning of this section (Davis, 1999, 2013; Doddington and Hilton, 2007; Eisner, 2002; Scheffler, 1965; Standish, 2011). This is often attributed to Enlightenment rationality, but Kant clearly states the need for limits, “We do not enlarge but disfigure the sciences when we lose sight of their respective limits” (1787, p.11). Extrapolated to education, his caveat suggests two things: that epistemological boundaries are respected, and that the intrinsic character and worth of different forms of knowledge are respected. The earlier discussion of problems in the British and American art curriculum suggests that this is not the case.

Without a robust, and widely accepted, model of art education, which does justice to art’s intrinsic character and worth, attempts to promote art and in the curriculum have to find external, often instrumental, justifications. Recent examples of powers imputed to art education are: improving mental health, self-confidence and life-skills (Roeger and Kim, 2013); or providing “students with the freedoms, abilities and agency to choose lives they have reason to value after graduation” (Maguire, Donovan, Mishook, De Gaillande and Garcia, 2012, p.369). These arguments are often used in relation to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in America and Britain. They are also used in contexts of countries where education systems are being developed to incorporate new economic and/or political imperatives. In South Africa and India, for example, a Romantic, Dewey inspired idea of art as individual expression, but located within a capabilities approach is being promoted. This is presented as oppositional to both explicit economic instrumentalism, and an unbridled individualism (CABE Report, 2005; Maguire *et al.*, 2012). Art’s main role in this conceptualisation is the promotion of personality attributes considered valuable for establishing a

sense of collective responsibility and social unity. Consequently such arguments could be understood as being socially, rather than economically, instrumental. As previously noted, it is possible for intrinsic and extrinsic values to coexist, but a necessary prerequisite is a prior existence of a clear appreciation, and strong affirmation, of art's intrinsic character and worth. If this were the case today, art's intrinsic aesthetic character would not be a source of embarrassment or regarded as something to be disavowed, as noted by Grayson Perry (see p.3).

Art as a form of knowledge

The Social Realist account of knowledge is premised on Durkheim's, and Bernstein's fundamental classification of profane/everyday and sacred/academic knowledge (Durkheim, [1915]; Bernstein, 1975, 2000). The main distinction between the two forms of knowledge lies in the greater formal and conceptual abstraction of the latter. Concepts arising from everyday experience are 'worked upon' by scholars; they are shaped into a condensed language, and classified according to their inter relatedness; and thus form distinct areas of study or subjects. Such knowledge is derived from experience in the first instance (Oakeshott, [1933] 1966; Tallis, 1989), but through collective endeavour over time, and public scrutiny, it acquires a greater degree of precision, semantic stability and logical coherence than the more contingent, context based knowledge used in everyday life (Moore, 2000, 2009; Moore and Young, 2001; Muller, 2000, 2012; Muller and Young, 2007; Rata, 2012; Wheelahan, 2010; Young, 2008). School subjects derived from such knowledge becomes the basis from which teachers can help pupils think "beyond the present and particular" (Bailey, 2009).

In the Social Realist account, objectivity of knowledge arises from the sociality of its production in academic communities and wider public scrutiny.⁷ Procedural objectivity creates knowledge characterised by the following:

7

See Gail Edwards, Standpoint theory, realism and the search for objectivity in the sociology of education in *The British Journal of Sociology of Education*, (2019), for a critical appraisal of Social Realism's account of procedural objectivity, which she claims ignores the requirement for diversity in process of reasoning to attain objective knowledge. This criticism is based upon an idea of knowledge as the property and product of isolated individuals, which is the opposite of a Social Realist conception of knowledge.

- (a) Abstract form comprising of codified language
- (b) Conceptual complexity
- (c) Powers of generalisation
- (d) Progression
- (e) Criteria for evaluation

If art is to be considered a valid form of knowledge, it should have analogous characteristics. By drawing on theories of symbolic representation and aesthetic form, as explicated by Cassirer ([1929], [1944]) and Langer (1957) it is possible to construct such an account without reducing art's subjective and objective bases.

Abstract form and language in art

Symbolic artistic forms arise in the artist's ability to create relations of opposing abstract nouns: light/dark; heavy/weightless; opacity/transparency or symmetry/asymmetry (Gombrich, 1984; Langer, 1957). In his discussion of problems of representation, Cassirer explains that although in reality the expressive and logical factors of signification are inseparable, their functions remain distinct and the one cannot be the causal source of the other (Cassirer, 1929). The almost inexhaustible range of possible responses evoked in the relationship between ostensive content and its expressive or aesthetic form mirrors our experience of our internal life. The fluctuating and ephemeral character of the structure of our subjectivity is given objective expression through art's aesthetic form (Cassirer, ([1929], [1944]); Langer, 1957), which comprises of:

a composition of tensions and resolutions, balance and unbalance, a precarious yet continuous unity. Life is a natural process of such tensions, balances, rhythms; it is these that we feel in quietness or emotion. As the pulse of our own living (Langer, 1957, p.8).

These expressive effects have often been imputed to the psychological states of either the artist or the beholder, which misses the vital mediation of artistic form embodied in the work itself. It is this mediation that allows the individual's feelings and epiphanies to be apprehended within a universal perspective whereby there is recognition of a world of feeling that we experience as intensely private, but which all are able to experience. The relational character of aesthetic form in a work of art creates a complexity that makes a single, simplistic response difficult. Instead there is the possibility for

reinterpretation, and the simultaneous presentation of contradictions that defy everyday reality or logical thought. Caravaggio's *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (1608), for example, evokes both horror and intimacy through obscuring a dramatic event in masses of dark space and shadow; the strength of the executioner is balanced by the vulnerable body of St. John; and both figures form a unity in their positioning even though logically, executioner and prisoner stand as opposites. The painting's composition evokes stillness but this is offset by a visual rhythm created by the figures in the foreground. It is the *formal* qualities of a work's visual 'grammar' that simultaneously evokes contradictory feelings of lived experience whilst inviting deeper and continued contemplation and interpretation. Great art, by virtue of its aesthetic form denies an overwhelmingly emotive reaction; this distinguishes Caravaggio's masterpiece from lesser works of the same biblical event. Instead of catharsis we are invited to 'feel at a distance' (Cassirer, 1944).

Aesthetic form, then, is not wholly a fixed, rule-determinable phenomenon. It arises in the relation between representational content and the extent to which the composition achieves a formal unity. In both its creation and appreciation aesthetic form *cannot be apprehended independently of the representational content* (which includes the content of abstract paintings), but in neither moment is it reducible to representational significance. Perhaps in relation to art, Kant's (1790) use of 'beauty' is best understood as an expression of the truth, or reality, of our subjectivity as opposed to truth and objectivity of the external world.

Complexity and generalisation

The existence of aesthetic forms "presupposes an autonomous activity, carried out over time, which consists in the building up, in the modifying, in the decomposing, of things which we may think of as unities or structures" (Wollheim, 1968, p.140). In a similar vein, Cunliffe (2013), following Steiner (2001) describes the process of accretion as a combination of the artist's procedural and propositional knowledge from which an artist can develop organisational depth in creating art. This allows an artist to know what to do in the midst of creating and by implication to be open to possibilities suggested in the manipulation of materials. The term 'materials' in this context is not only the physical substratum of paint and canvas. It includes

aesthetic forms and grammar comprising of mass and volumes, shapes, colour and tones. Accretion also includes a supporting armature, which includes:

cultural paradigms, moral purpose, types of practices, duration and methods of training, the breadth and depth of the creative repertoire, the materials and methods available and used, and the preparation, revision, experimentation that shape the final product (Cunliffe in Addison and Burgess, 2012, p.180).

The starting point for this iterative process of artistic creation is the artist's initial aesthetic response to something seen, heard, touched, remembered or felt. Without such a generative catalyst the artist may achieve a high level of technical proficiency in his/her work, but it is likely to lack expressive power (Reid, [1928]).

The objective basis of art qua art is in the unique instantiation of artistic form created by the artist. This uniqueness limits art's powers of generalisation compared to science. The variable, secondary qualities of physical phenomena and the beliefs, values and feelings of scientists are reduced in scientific methods but play a necessary role in art (Cassirer, [1944]: Gombrich, 1984).⁸ But this does not mean there is no capacity to generalise at all. The difference is that science is concerned with generalisation in the external world, and art in the internal world. For example, the complex and contradictory emotions evoked by Goya's painting of *The Third of May 1808* (1814) include terror, cruelty, pity, awe, and fascinated curiosity. These are feelings most of us will have experienced at some point as unique individuals in unique situations and relationships whether the terror of a child or morbid fascination of a bystander looking on upon a tragedy. Goya's painting, because of its expressive form, can draw the beholder's consciousness out from inner feelings – his/her *particular* emotional state – and into a wider world of universal emotions; here we can subject our aspects of our inner life to thought if we wish; and can gain a certain degree of 'mastery' over our interior world. So art can generalise but in a necessarily less stable and certain manner to other subjects. The extent to which this capability of art is made manifest in a particular work is one criterion by which we judge its quality and worth.

8

In *The Method of the Social Sciences* (1903-1917) Weber stresses that the fact-value distinction in social sciences does not mean that beliefs and values are non-existent. He explains that they operate at the initial stages of selecting, and defining the nature of, the initial problem to be investigated. Subsequent work is then more fully subject to processes and rules which limit these subjective elements. Polanyi's account in *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post Critical Philosophy* (1973) suggests a similar distinction exists in the natural sciences.

Progression

Knowledge in science increases breadth and depth of understanding of natural phenomena as developed through time. Simultaneously theoretical underpinnings of knowledge in science, and to a lesser extent the humanities, also develop through the subsumation of particular phenomena to general rules. For example, early astrology comprised of ordered symbolic systems involving codified beliefs and mathematical calculations yet it remained more akin to a systematised mythology in its personification of planets with powers to influence human life. As it developed theoretically, astrology became astronomy, and lost its mythical aspects. (Cassirer, 1956; Krois, 2009).

Development in art follows the principle of extension rather than subsumation. For example, Manet's artistic innovation was not only in extending the range of material suitable for artistic representation, but also in breaking *some* parts of established conventional artistic schema. Through this he managed to create fresh aesthetic forms that perfectly express his unique sensibility towards greater individual freedom offered by modern French society at that time (Nochlin, 1971). Such developments occur at particular historical moments when various social and cultural influences coalesce; and particular artists, through accretion, have been able to cultivate and create an artistic response to something new in society.

Criteria for evaluation

In addition to judging the complexity of aesthetic form in art, as discussed in the previous section, socio-aesthetic knowledge is also helpful in making judgements of new artistic developments. For example, the preoccupation in 20th century avant-garde painting with depicting flat spaces has been both valued as expressing artistic liberation (Greenberg, 1961) and criticised for abandoning representation, historically an important function of art as part of broader humanistic culture (Steinberg 1953). Witkin (2009) argues that the concern with flat space in painting since the mid 20th century expresses new aspects of social formation whereby the individual is denuded of subjective depth by an increasingly bureaucratic culture. The ensuing existential alienation is given powerful aesthetic expression in Rothko's colour field paintings for example.

However it could be argued that subsequent trends in art show an increasing concern either with technical innovation, or in extending range of representation alone. In this search for continual radically new expression in art, the artist, cut adrift from all artistic tradition becomes preoccupied with trying to be innovative for its own sake (Bell, 1972). The aesthetic component of art is forgotten and becomes an easy target for politically motivated criticism. The ensuing disregard for aesthetics form involves a loss of interpretative potential. (Steinberg, 1953). This is problematic because interpretation has an important role in making artistic meanings manifest and in judging. The widest possible range of public interpretation and judgement is required to ascertain the intrinsic worth of any artistic breakthrough precisely because it has the largest subjective based component of all the disciplines.⁹ Interpretation in art is the main means of ascertaining its intrinsic worth and status – it is analogous to processes of verification in science and without it the intrinsic worth of art becomes less discernible. Arguably this describes the contemporary cultural landscape.

It has been argued that art complements scientific abstraction through its emphasis on that which is particular and unique through the creation of artistic forms, which have expressive potency. In this way art achieves a formal rather than procedural objectivity (Cassirer, [1944]); and in place of procedures of verification, art requires interpretation and judgement from the public, and artistic accretion from artists. Art's development occurs with shifts in understanding, extending the range of representation, interpretation and artistic symbolic language. In this respect art is an example a subject with a horizontal knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000). The final section discusses the implications of this model of art for the curriculum.

Implications for the curriculum

This paper began by highlighting epistemic problems within the secondary art curriculum in Britain, and by locating these challenges within a wider cultural

⁹ In Hierarchical Knowledge Structure and the Canon: a Preference for Judgements, in F. Christie and J. Martin (Eds), *Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy, Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives* (2007), Moore makes a helpful distinction between private opinion, which is more contingent on the individual's preference, mood alone, and judgement which may have the same starting point, but is then subject to reasoning using public forms of knowledge, and stakes a public claim.

and historical context. I argue that these problems require a revisiting of first principles of art to establish its intrinsic worth; and a consideration of art as a form of knowledge, and that it is complementary to science and humanities in education. Art as symbolic representation, created through artistic accretion is distinguishable from a prevalent understanding of art (and by implication art education) as the direct, unmediated expression on the artist's inner psychological state alone capable of being directly understood by individuals with the appropriate sensibility. This concept of art affords little objectivity for art and reduces subjectivity to direct interpersonal relationships.

A model of art as an aesthetic object with subjective *and* objective basis is proposed which is capable of being introduced to pupils in a systematic and logically coherent way. The overall educational aim of art in schools is not to create future artists directly, but to encourage a culture where art is understood as having intrinsic worth. Its contribution to knowledge is that it can provide the basis for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of subjectivity, and strengthen faculties for imagination and interpretation.

It is from such a model of art that a more coherent art curriculum could be derived. It would comprise of three main elements: explicit introduction to procedures, techniques of drawing, painting and sculpture; art history; and an introduction to contemplating, and articulating verbal and written responses to, a wide range of works of art.

The introduction to techniques and materials of art practice would require explicit practical instruction, propositional knowledge relating to the physical properties of materials and how they act in combination, and plenty of time for practice is required if pupils are to have an meaningful experience of the craft component of artistic accretion. The component of art history contributes to widening and deepening pupils' knowledge of art as a valued cultural form; and also introduces the idea of culture as a public phenomena, susceptible to change and development. In conjunction with the third component, purposive contemplation of exemplary works of art, it can help pupils make synoptic comparisons and articulate critical aesthetic judgments. As discussed in the first section, this is something lacking in most British and American art education.

The selection, sequencing and pacing of the third component could, I think, allow for a high level of individual teacher choice, as long as the selection included examples from established artistic canon as well as more recent examples where judgment may be less settled. Cunliffe's work suggests it is

quite possible to do this even at primary school level by drawing upon what he terms ‘semantic differentials’ to guide pupils attention, and develop percipience, when looking at art (Cunliffe, 1999). For this to be introduced meaningfully requires teachers whose own familiarity and knowledge of art is developed enough to be able to re-contextualise what they know at a level appropriate for their pupils. By using a carefully devised set of questions that elicit guided and graduated responses rather than directly asking pupils what they think about a work, it is possible to encourage them to use their inferential abilities through which all knowledge and experience is cognised internally (Winch, 2013). Questions could be constructed that require pupils to award a numerical grade on a scale (e.g. is this painting very realistic – 9, or not realistic at all – 0) in order to direct discussion and implicitly introduce appropriate vocabulary for discussing art. Specialised vocabulary could be more explicitly rehearsed through commentary/essay type work where pupils practice articulating their responses in verbal or written language.

There are implications for assessment criteria in this model of art education. Current GCSE criteria stress personal development. It has been argued that children, and teenagers, are capable of having a personal response to art, and it is important they have the opportunity to do so. But a personal response or development in art will be very difficult to ascertain, especially in younger pupils, because their ability to externalise responses artistically is likely to be limited by their level of technical mastery, their necessarily limited experience of life, linguistic ability as well as having limited exposure to opportunities for discussion in these areas. It is more important to ensure pupils are being systematically introduced to examples of great art, and its language and grammar in order to externalise their responses as fully as possible.¹⁰ Whilst individual personal response, which arises from the subjective basis of art, cannot be directly taught, the criteria, vocabulary and procedures for *judging* art belong to art’s objective basis, and therefore these *can* be taught.¹¹ The task of the teacher is to introduce pupils to works of sufficient objective, formal depth and complexity that even if pupils have negative, or very weak, personal responses, there is enough interpretative scope in the work to justify its study to make informed, discriminating judgements and to give reasons for their responses *in reference to the work itself*. By refocusing on the objective

¹⁰ See previous section for discussion of language and grammar in art.

¹¹ This arises from the distinction between aesthetic feeling and judgement discussed in the second section.

and aesthetic forms of art, the pre-existing cultural capital of pupils has less influence on pupils' ability to progress in art at school, as implied in Bolton's empirical study (Bolton, 2009).

Conclusion

Contemporary cultural trends, which strive for perpetual radical innovation and dismantling of classificatory boundaries between art and everyday life, are highly problematic for art.¹² Social realist critiques of knowledge in the curriculum identify a similar trend: an inability or unwillingness to recognise and affirm classificatory distinctions between academic and everyday knowledge. Wider effects can be seen in the increasing esoteric nature of contemporary art, the elision of art and entertainment, and in an increasing gulf between contemporary art and the public.

A mutually fruitful relationship between art and the public requires public *aesthetic* judgement by critics, art lovers, art educators and students of art, artists and curators rather than the more privatised agreements between cliques of the cultural elites that seems to determine what constitutes good art today; and who often sneer when the public fails to rally round their calls to 'defend the arts'.¹³ Without a defence of art's intrinsic characteristics arguments for its inclusion in the curriculum can only be extrinsic (discussed in section 3) which in turn can only mean its instrumentalisation with the possible loss of the real value of art.

¹²

Two recent examples that exemplify this trend are: the introduction of a joint Fine Art and History of Art Degree at the prestigious Goldsmith's Art College, where the 'history' begins at 1945; and the recent UK initiative Art Everywhere, which received support from the Art Fund to put up over 15,000 billboards with enlarged copies of artworks for two weeks.

¹³

See Alka Sehgal Cuthbert, *In Defence of the Public's Judgement* at <http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/13722#.UmvhciSezfY>

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Epistemological access in Marketing - a demonstration of the use of Legitimation Code Theory in Higher Education

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Abstract

Having epistemological access to an academic discipline means that one is able to participate effectively in its 'Discourse'. However, understanding what such participation entails and putting this into practice is complicated as much about it is tacit and contested. This article argues that a more explicit understanding of what legitimate participation in a disciplinary Discourse involves is facilitated by using an analytical toolkit provided by Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to bring to the surface the discipline's underlying principles and 'rules of the game'. To support this argument and demonstrate the efficacy of this toolkit, the article foregrounds one discipline (Marketing) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Using the LCT analytical tools to explore the 'languages of legitimation' in interview data, documents and the discipline's scholarly literature, insight is gained into what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement in Marketing.

Introduction

Epistemological access may be described as the ability to 'own' both the knowledge and the characteristic ways of knowing, and ways of being associated with particular academic disciplines (Morrow, 2003; Gee, 2005). Having full epistemological access means, therefore, that students are able to 'pull off' the appropriate disciplinary identity and participate effectively in the discipline's 'Discourse', that is the "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting and interacting, in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network)" (Gee, 2005, p.26). Gee (2005) draws a distinction between "discourse" and "Discourse". By "discourse" (with a lower case 'd'), Gee refers to "language-in-use" (2005, p.7) or "stretches of language" (2005, p.26). When this language-in-use is integrated with "non-language stuff" (Gee, 2005, p.7) in enacting particular activities and identities, the term

“Discourse” (with an uppercase ‘D’) is used to signal these “ways of being in the world” (Gee, 2005, p.7).

The ability of lecturers to afford students complete access to the knowledge and ways of knowing and being in a discipline, means that lecturers themselves should enjoy an in-depth understanding of how best to do this. However, acquiring this understanding and putting it into practice is not always easy as much about it is tacit (Jacobs, 2007) and contested; unsurprisingly, therefore, such issues are under-researched in South Africa (Boughey, 2005). This article argues that the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2005a, 2005b, 2010, 2011, 2013) as an analytical ‘toolkit’, is a very effective point of departure for acquiring this understanding. Drawing on a doctoral study, which had the discipline of Marketing as its central concern (Arbee, 2012), the article shows how the use of LCT facilitates a level of understanding and insight into this discipline that made many of the complexities surrounding the teaching and learning of it in higher education institutions accessible.

The article proceeds by providing a brief background to the academic discipline of Marketing, highlighting the need for exploring epistemological access in this discipline as well as the challenges inherent in undertaking such exploration. Thereafter, the relevance of LCT for addressing such challenges and enabling insight into epistemological access in Marketing, by making explicit the discipline’s underlying structuring principles and rules, is outlined. Drawing on an empirical study of Marketing involving students and lecturers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the contribution that LCT is able to make in this regard is illustrated. The article concludes by considering the implications of the findings for Marketing pedagogy and assessing the value of LCT in facilitating understandings of epistemological access. The article tries to cover all the major dimensions of LCT in a clear and simple manner, necessarily resulting in the findings and implications being brief and illustrative, but we hope readers will get an overall scan of what LCT can do.

Marketing

The academic discipline of Marketing is just over a century old and in this time, it has gained immense popularity as an area of study at universities

across the world. Yet, issues relating to epistemological access in Marketing and other business and management disciplines are under-researched (Pearse and Amos, 2000). It is said that Marketing is “reflexively impoverished in terms of disciplinary self-understanding” (Ferguson, 2008, p.10) and that attention should be given to exploring the practices that bind those in Marketing together as a discipline (Brownlie, 2007).

However, in addition to the often tacit nature of such practices as referred to earlier, there is much about Marketing itself that makes such understanding difficult to acquire. Marketing amalgamates concepts, theories and methods from various other disciplines such as Economics, Anthropology and Psychology (Rust, 2006), each of which may have quite different ideas about what legitimate participation and achievement entails. In addition, the relationship between the academic discipline of Marketing and its associated field of practice further complicates understanding of what constitutes legitimacy in the discipline. Indeed, the debate as to whether Marketing should be an academic or vocational degree (in other words, whether it should be ‘about’ or ‘for’ business) continues in the discipline (Tregear, Dobson, Brennan and Kuznesof, 2010). Taken together, all of this points to contesting viewpoints on what the legitimate ways of knowing and being in Marketing are and lends credence to the assertion that “‘discipline’ brings with it tricky questions about access and boundaries. . . about who can be said [to be] practicing the discipline” (Parker, 2002, p.374). As noted earlier, the view adopted in this article is that LCT has much to offer in attempting to address such questions.

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)

Karl Maton’s LCT is a social realist approach (Maton, 2010) to the study of knowledge and education that provides a framework for conceptualising the underlying principles or ‘rules of the game’ that structure particular fields. In relation to the focus of this article, these principles and rules give insight into what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement in Marketing and therefore what students need to aim to achieve in order to gain epistemological access.

Fields

LCT is a field approach (after Bourdieu, 1985, 1994). For Bourdieu (1985), society is a field containing a number of other overlapping and dynamic fields and sub-fields. These constitute “relatively autonomous worlds” (Bourdieu, 1994, p.73), each operating according to its own logic. Accordingly, each field has its own orthodoxy or doxa, its own legitimate ways of doing things, which denotes what is acceptable and valued in the field and which therefore has structuring effects on the dispositions, beliefs and practices of its members (Maton, 2005a). This orthodoxy or legitimacy is largely tacit, with “many of the rules and principles of the game [going] on in a way that is not consciously held in the heads of those playing it” (Grenfell and James, 1998, p.21). Also adding complexity to understanding legitimacy in any field is that members of the field try to maximise their position in the field hierarchy by engaging in contestation over the definition and ownership of types of capital that confer status and authority, thereby impacting on what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement. Included among the wide range of things that may be studied as fields are academic disciplines, which may be understood as ‘social fields of practice comprising both relatively formal structures of knowledge and practices, and actors who share interests and norms (whether explicit or tacit) of knowledge production and communication’ (Freebody, Maton and Martin, 2008, p.191).

Tools

Maton (2005a) asserts that the viewpoints and practices of participants within a field constitute ‘languages of legitimation’, which embody messages as to what should be considered legitimate in that field. Analysing languages of legitimation thus enables insight into the legitimate bases for success, status and achievement in a field, thereby providing its underlying structuring principles and ‘rules of the game’. Accordingly, LCT is of relevance to a study of what constitutes epistemological access – that is, what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement – in the discipline of Marketing.

Maton (2013, p.11) describes LCT as “a multi-dimensional conceptual toolkit; each dimension offers concepts for analysing a particular set of organising principles (or legitimation codes) underlying practice”. The dimensions referred to are Autonomy, Density, Specialisation, Temporality

and Semantics. These dimensions allow for exploration of how fields are differentiated from one another – and this differentiation is what sets a field apart from other fields and contributes to particular understandings of what legitimacy in that field entails. As all five dimensions will be drawn on in the analysis of data, each dimension is explained below.

Autonomy

A basic aspect on which fields vary is their degree of separation or insulation from other fields, which mediates the extent to which external forces impact on legitimacy in the field. Disciplines with relatively weak external boundaries are susceptible to outside influence and control, and can be said to have less academic freedom and independence to set their own agendas and ways of working than disciplines with relatively strong external boundaries. For example, Accounting curricula in South Africa must meet the criteria laid down by the field's professional practice body in order to gain accreditation. This close relationship with the domain of practice has implications for value systems and performance criteria, and therefore for understandings of legitimacy, in the academic discipline of Accounting.

The dimension of Autonomy addresses a field's external relations and specifically its capacity for self-rule, with regard to who runs the field (positional autonomy, PA) and how the field is run (relational autonomy, RA). With regard to positional autonomy, an academic discipline may be run primarily by those within the discipline (university academics) or by those external to the discipline (such as the state, business or professional practice bodies). Similarly, relational autonomy considers whether the discipline's 'ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement' (Maton, 2005a, p.87) are derived from within or outside the field. The codes for Autonomy are reflected in Figure 1 (adopted from Maton, 2005a)

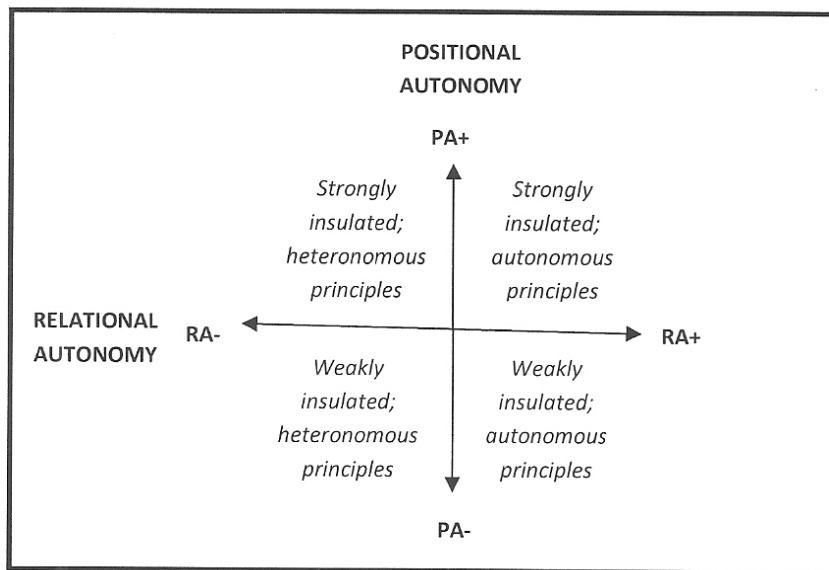


Figure 1: Autonomy codes

Source: Maton (2005b, 698)

For both of these aspects, stronger autonomy (PA+ and RA+) indicates stronger external boundaries and therefore greater control from within the field; weaker autonomy (PA- and RA-) indicates weaker external boundaries and greater control from outside the field.

Specialisation

Fields differ in terms of what they consider to be the legitimate bases for membership, authority, achievement and status. In many academic disciplines, such as those of the natural sciences, legitimacy relates to proficiency in the discipline's specialist knowledge and techniques (that is, one must be well versed in the distinctive knowledge base of the discipline and its accepted procedures for generating and working with knowledge in order to be considered a legitimate participant in the discipline). Personal attributes are not considered important, as long as one is proficient in the discipline's knowledge and ways of knowing. In other disciplines, however, legitimacy is based quite strongly on the personal attributes and disposition of its members. Some social science disciplines consider the possession of a particular perspective or standpoint, from which phenomena of interest to the researcher can be viewed, as giving legitimacy. For example, in Cultural Studies, 'the emphasis is on "giving voice to" the primary experience of specific knowers' (Maton, 2010, 44) and legitimacy is accordingly restricted to the specific

‘voice’ which is said to have ‘unique and privileged insight by virtue of who the speaker is’ (Maton, 2010, 44).

Maton (2005a) posits that intellectual fields can be specialised in terms of both knowledge and knowers. The dimension of Specialisation relates to the bases for differentiating a field from other fields in terms of *what* one may legitimately pursue knowledge of and *how* this may be done (its epistemic relations, ER), as well as *who* may be considered to be a legitimate knower (its social relations, SR). Specialisation can therefore be said to describe the legitimate ways of knowing and being that characterise a field, and is accordingly of great relevance to the question of what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing. Each of these two types of relations may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (-), giving rise to four possible Specialisation codes (see Figure 2): a *knowledge code* (ER+, SR-), which emphasises the possession of specialist knowledge and techniques over knower dispositions; a *knower code* (ER-, SR+), which emphasises knower dispositions and attitudes over specialist knowledge and skills; an *elite code* (ER+, SR+), which places equal emphasis on both aspects; and a *relativist code* (ER-, SR-), where legitimacy is based on neither aspect (adapted from Maton 2005a).

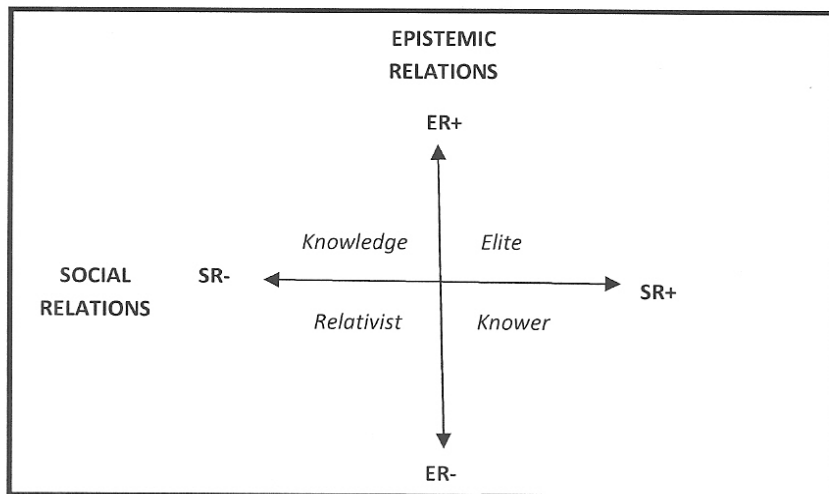


Figure 2: Specialisation codes
 Source: Maton (2010,45)

These settings (+/-) represent *relative* strength (stronger/weaker) of each aspect along a continuum, rather than fixed binary positions (strong/weak). This applies to all five dimensions. With regard to Specialisation, this means that while “there are always both knowledges and knowers” (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009, p.488), LCT considers which of these aspects is emphasised in knowledge claims and practices and is therefore dominant.

Semantics

Fields also differ in terms of how they advance knowledge. Some disciplines progress vertically by integrating and building on existing knowledge to arrive at increasingly general theory, with greater explanatory power, while others advance laterally by adding new segments of knowledge alongside existing ones, with each segment representing a different perspective (Bernstein, 1999). As an example of vertical progression, physicists are working towards “the ultimate law that explains the universe” (Bertram, 2008, p.52). Lateral progression is evident in Sociology, where new theories and perspectives about phenomena are added alongside existing ones. Additionally, disciplines differ in terms of the extent to which their concepts and theories can be empirically operationalised, tested and corroborated (Bernstein, 1999), indicating whether they tend to be applied (for example, Engineering) or theoretical (for example, Philosophy) in nature. The above has repercussions in terms of the types of knowledge and knowledge-building that are valued and considered legitimate in particular disciplines.

The dimension of Semantics allows for more fine-grained exploration of knowledge and meaning in fields, and specifically the capacity of fields to build cumulative knowledge, through two concepts, namely semantic gravity and semantic density. Semantic gravity (SG) relates to the degree to which meaning is bound to context, where stronger semantic gravity (SG+) signifies greater context-dependence and weaker semantic gravity (SG-) signifies less context-dependence (that is, greater abstraction). Where meaning is strongly tied to context, segmented knowledge-building results; cumulative knowledge-building depends on weaker semantic gravity (Maton, 2014). Semantic density (SD) relates to the degree to which meaning is condensed within socio-cultural practices (such as symbols, concepts, terms, phrases, expressions, clothing and gestures), with stronger semantic density (SD+) signifying greater condensation of meanings within practices and weaker semantic density (SD-) signifying that practices condense less meaning

(Maton, 2014). Figure 3, adapted from Maton (2005a) shows the possible Semantic codes.

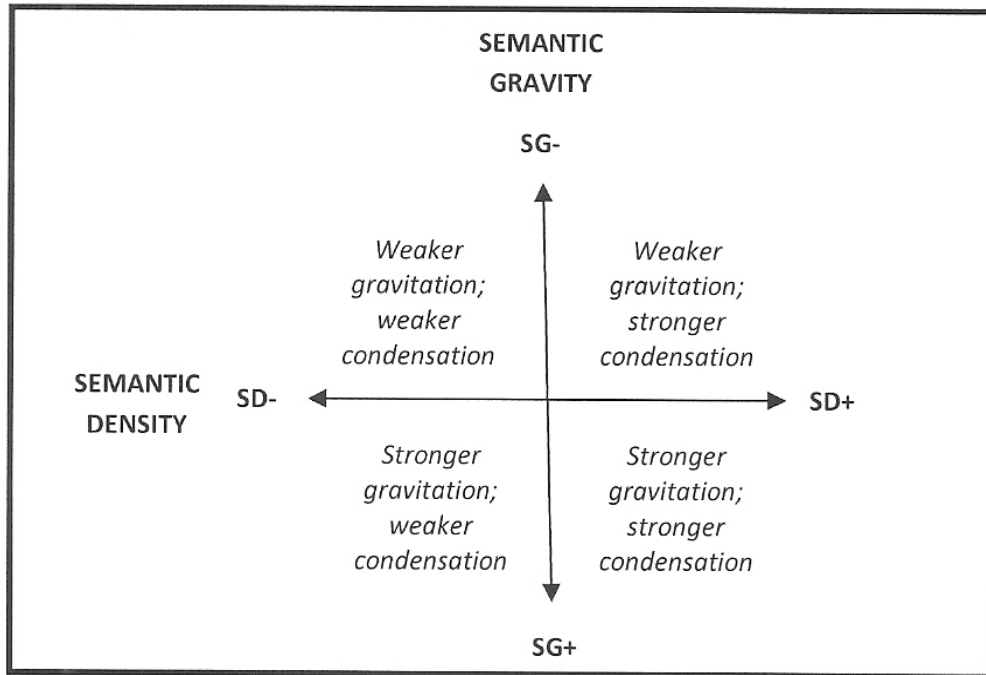


Figure 3: Semantic codes
 Source: based on Maton (2011, 66)

Maton (2011, p.66) states that “SG- is heuristically positioned at the top of the compass (where a ‘+’ sign might be expected) to reflect the tendency to picture such notions as ‘abstract’ or ‘decontextualised’ as higher than ‘concrete’ or ‘contextualised’. Positioning here is not a statement of value”.

Density

Fields also vary in terms of how differentiated they are internally. Where there is internal consensus and coherence as to what constitutes the disciplinary knowledge domain, focus and methods, and a common culture, there is likely to be agreement on what constitute the discipline’s legitimate ‘rules of the game’, thus facilitating epistemological access. The opposite is likely to be true of a fragmented discipline, in which there is contestation about what constitutes legitimacy. As noted earlier, Marketing draws on a variety of other disciplines. This is likely to lead to contested understandings of legitimacy in

Marketing. Describing another such discipline, Nursing, McNamara (2010, p.255) notes:

promiscuous use of theories and methodologies from diverse disciplines . . . results in unrelated, small-scale and short-term research activity engaged in by relatively few academics. This contributes little to the infrastructure necessary to support and sustain a cohesive community of arguers, enquirers, and critics who share a common language, values, norms, thought systems, and knowledge structures.

The dimension of Density addresses a field's internal relations and has to do with the degree of diversity within a field, with regard to its contents (material density, MaD) and beliefs (moral density, MoD). These concepts can be thought of as the number of units and the number of structuring principles respectively within a context (Maton, 2005a). In an academic discipline, material density could refer to the size of the disciplinary community and the breadth of its knowledge base while moral density could refer to the number of belief systems or 'schools of thought' in the discipline. Figure 4 (adopted from Maton, 2005a) shows the Density codes.

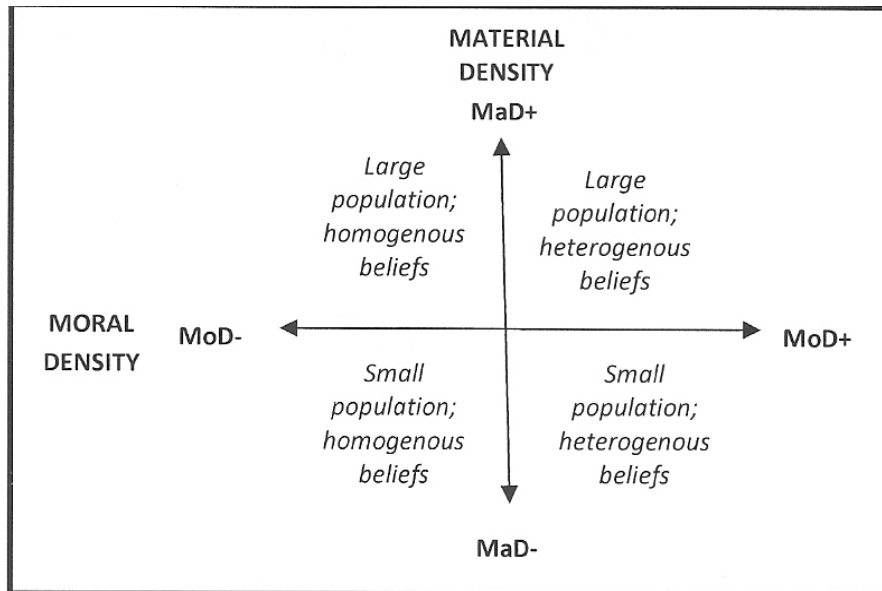


Figure 4: Density codes
Source: based on Maton (2005a, 90)

In each case, higher density (MaD+ and MoD+) signifies relatively high diversity while lower density (MaD- and MoD-) signifies relatively low diversity. Material and moral density in combination impact on differentiation (the relation between the units in a field).

Temporality

A further point of differentiation between disciplines relates to their temporal profiles. Some well-established disciplines are strongly influenced by long-standing disciplinary traditions, the upholding of which is likely to feature strongly in understandings of what constitutes legitimacy in such disciplines. Other disciplines, by contrast, place emphasis on ‘keeping up with the times’ and adapting in line with contemporary developments. Again, there are implications here for how legitimacy is understood in such disciplines.

In the dimension of Temporality, the last of Maton’s legitimation ‘tools’, a field is considered in terms of whether it is long-established or recently formed (its age or temporal positioning, TP) and whether it is backward-looking or forward-looking (its temporal orientation, TO). There are four possible temporal codes (see Figure 5): *archeo-retrospective* (old and backward-looking; TP+, TO+), *archeo-prospective* (old and forward-looking; TP+, TO-), *neo-retrospective* (young and backward-looking; TP-, TO+) and *neo-prospective* (young and forward-looking; TP-, TO-). Together, temporal positioning and orientation give the rate of change in the field (adapted from Maton, 2005a).

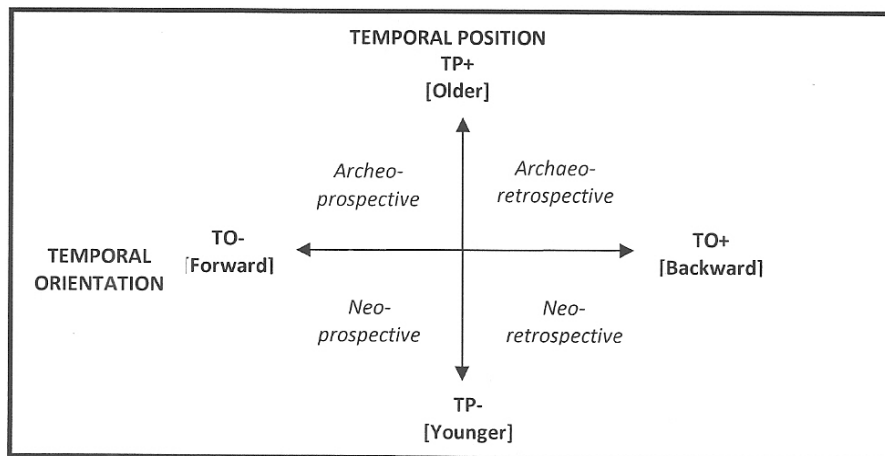


Figure 5: Temporality codes

Source: based on Maton (2005a, 94; www.legitimationcodetheory.com)

From the above, it should be becoming clearer now how, in providing a framework that can be used to analyse how knowledge and practices are structured in academic disciplines, LCT enables conceptualisation of the ‘rules of the game’ of particular disciplines by “making explicit what is already known, at least implicitly, by members of the field” (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009, p.501). This is crucial because, as previously stated, it is often the tacit nature of disciplinary practices, norms, values and knowledge that makes it difficult for lecturers to facilitate students’ participation in the disciplinary Discourse, thereby impacting on students’ ability to gain epistemological access. The next section shows how the LCT framework was operationalised in an empirical study in order to reveal the ‘rules of the game’ of the Marketing discipline.

The research

The research upon which this article is based was located in the discipline of Marketing on the Westville and Howard College campuses of UKZN and aimed to address the question of what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing.

Methodology

To gain insight into the legitimate ways of knowing and being in Marketing, an LCT analysis of the languages of legitimation of those in the discipline was undertaken. Although a field in itself, Marketing at UKZN is also a sub-field of the wider discipline of Marketing. With regard to the discipline in general, the discipline’s scholarly literature was viewed as embodying languages of legitimation. These were analysed using the analytical tools of LCT outlined in the previous section. In the specific context of UKZN, viewpoints arising during semi-structured interviews with three Marketing lecturers and nine Marketing students in their final year of undergraduate studies, as well viewpoints and practices embodied in course documents and assessment tasks were similarly conceptualised and analysed as languages of legitimation. In effect, both a top down analytical framework using existing LCT concepts and a bottom up approach using grounded theory were employed together to develop a flexible framework that both had structuring concepts as a guide and an openness to emergent issues.

Findings

For each of the five dimensions of the LCT framework, findings are presented, firstly for the discipline in general and then for Marketing at UKZN.

Autonomy

Positional and relational autonomy are relatively high (PA+, RA+) for Marketing, indicating a relatively high degree of insulation from outside control in terms of who runs the discipline and how it is run.

Marketing graduates do not require certification by a professional body, giving academics complete control over curricula. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a recurring theme in Marketing education literature is the need for academics to address the gap between Marketing education and practice (see, for example, Wellman, 2010a). For Marketing lecturers, however, achievement and status in the discipline are linked to academic indicators such as research output and teaching evaluations, contributing to the “inward-looking mind-set” of academic Marketing (Reibstein, Day and Wind, 2009, p.2).

At UKZN too, Marketing academics have full control over the discipline. Practitioners from the business world had no input as curriculum advisors or guest lecturers. Academic principles and practices also drove the ways of working in the discipline. For example, academic genre types (such as essays) were more prevalent and more heavily weighted in assessment tasks compared to business genre types (such as reports and plans). Recruitment criteria for academics emphasise teaching experience and research output. Only one of the three lecturer participants had any industry experience. Many students indicated that the way things happened in the discipline was disconnected from ‘the outside world’, pointing to the insularity of the discipline’s practices. Nothando, for example, felt that *It all has to do with theory. It’s just everything theory, theory. And then I just wonder, if in the outside world, will they be asking us about the theory?* Sihle agreed that *we do 100% theory. . .there’s no practical. So if you get there [the workplace], they’re not going to ask you ‘Discuss for us marketing mix and all those things’ . . .but you’ll have to put that into practice.*

The relatively high autonomy of the discipline may make it difficult to achieve some of the aspects linked to legitimate participation and achievement outlined earlier. Sihle and Nothando's comments above indicate a perceived lack of application in their Marketing courses, even though the findings presented under Semantics make a claim for the discipline as being application-based. Insulation from the business world (represented by a lack of practitioner involvement in the design and offering of courses) is likely to impact on the extent to which students gain familiarity not only with the contexts in which they are expected to be able to apply Marketing knowledge (as highlighted under Semantics), but also with the knower attributes and dispositions considered important for legitimate participation and success in the discipline, as embodied in such practitioners (and outlined under Specialisation).

Specialisation

Analysis reveals that a knower code (ER-, SR+) underpins the discipline of Marketing, indicating that personal attributes and dispositions are relatively important to legitimate participation and achievement while the possession of specialist knowledge and skills is downplayed.

Literature points to the "vital role played by personal traits and attitudes" (Wellman, 2010a, p.125), as well as the "personal attributes" and "dispositions" (Ng, 2006) of students in contributing to their competence and success in Marketing. Specialist knowledge, by comparison, is downplayed. For example, a Marketing qualification is widely considered not to be a prerequisite for employment or success in the field of practice (Wellman, 2010b; Glenn, 2011).

Similarly, at UKZN, the importance of Marketing students' personal attitudes and dispositions was stressed by all participants. Many students indicated that they had chosen to major in Marketing because of the perceived fit with their personalities. By contrast, only two students mentioned that having a good knowledge of Marketing concepts was important. According to Nothando, what was more important in Marketing was *the creativity, coming up with concepts, making like a brand. . . you make the brand alive*. It was clear that personal dispositions were considered more important than specialist knowledge, with Kamini (a lecturer) also asserting that employers *don't look for that technical stuff; they look for people that are different*. (Indeed,

literature – for example, Melaia, Abratt and Bick (2008) – seems to support this assertion). Elaborating on the nature of this difference, Kamini noted that: *The successful Marketing students, I've normally found . . . they have a . . . well, from the ones I've dealt with – a lot of them have a, er . . . they have some endearing quality about them, they. . . they have something, um, which is not the same as the standard person. Um, like one guy I know, he's, um, he's a bit, you know, he dresses a bit . . . funky and he's got a . . . he wears funky hats and things like that. But he's the kind of people that you . . . the kind of person that you . . . you will get attracted to because you wanna listen to what he says. Because as much as he looks funky and whatever, he's got a certain style about him and the way he speaks . . . so when he speaks about marketing, or something about marketing, it's believable, so . . . he's engaging.*

Among the many attributes that participants considered important for success in Marketing were creativity, resourcefulness, 'street smarts' (Kamini, lecturer), extroversion, open-mindedness, as well as the abilities to communicate confidently, think logically and intuitively, and quickly identify opportunities and capitalise on them.

The implication of a knower code in Marketing is that educational practices in the discipline should give greater attention to specialising students' Marketing identities in ways that are appropriate to the disciplinary Discourse, rather than to transmitting Marketing knowledge. Yet traditional pedagogy in Marketing is transmission-based (Baron and Harris, 2006; Glenn, 2011).

Semantics

Marketing is characterised by stronger semantic gravity (SG+) and weaker semantic density (SD-), a combination that indicates a lack of capacity to build cumulative knowledge because there is greater focus on context-bound meanings rather than on context-independent meanings and also not a great degree of condensation of meaning in concepts.

What one finds in the Marketing literature is a picture of a context-driven discipline, embodied in a call for "the whole marketing academic community to work on relevant business problems" (Reibstein, Day and Wind, 2009, p.3). The relative lack of attention given to the development of theory is evident in the description of Marketing as the "least-theorised" business discipline (Burton, 2005, p.16). Marketing pedagogy draws heavily on case studies and

examples, emphasising the application of knowledge in ‘context-relevant’ ways (Walker, Tsarenko, Wagstaff, Powel, Steel and Brace-Govan, 2009). The lack of condensation of meaning in Marketing concepts is reflected in Brown’s (1997) description of the academic content of business disciplines as ‘superficial’ and Hunt’s (2002) reference to the ‘dumbing down’ of contemporary Marketing textbooks. Marketing also has an explicit and unambiguous rhetorical style (Crosling, 2005).

At UKZN, participants made frequent reference to the importance of application, practicality and the usefulness of Marketing knowledge in relation to specific settings. Kiara (a student) felt that success as a Marketing student comes from *being well rounded in what’s going on in the real world . . . as well as knowing theory, er, and knowing how to apply the theory. It’s not just reading to get through the reading; it’s reading to understand, reading to apply and look at it in context of, you know, what’s going on – and that’s what makes you successful*. Course documents, prescribed textbooks, pedagogic practices (such as a reliance on the use of examples and case studies) and assessment practices (such as the setting of application-based assignments and the expectation that students provide ‘practical examples’ and ‘real-life applications’ in tests and exams) further highlighted this focus. There was also an indication from participants that the degree of condensation of meaning in Marketing concepts is not high as this comment from Michael (a lecturer) indicates: *I don’t think Marketing is . . . conceptually challenging, really*. Similarly, Ben (a student) felt that Marketing was *not that intense in terms of, er, demanding . . . your thinking*.

The Semantics code for Marketing (SG+, SD-) signifies that applied, rather than theoretical, knowledge is valued in the discipline. Emphasis is placed on generating useful knowledge that practically addresses business problems in specific contexts, rather than on building a body of abstract theoretical knowledge. This implies that students need to gain familiarity with the business contexts that serve as the site of application so as to be able to apply Marketing knowledge to such contexts.

Density

The Marketing discipline in general reflects a Density code of (MaD+, MoD+), signifying relatively high material and moral density. High student to staff ratios (Glenn, 2011) and the breadth of the traditional ‘overloaded’ syllabus (Wellman, 2010a) are both indicators of higher material density.

Relatively high moral density is apparent in references to “a number of debates and contentions” (Ferguson, 2008, p.21) and a “plethora of competing academic theories” (Wellman, 2010a, p.121), indicating a divergent disciplinary community. Methodologically, the discipline is divided into ‘camps’ (Bolton, 2005), which “often view one another as irrelevant or even adversarial” (MacInnis, 2005, p.15).

According to Kiara (a student), *now you notice everyone’s doing Marketing*. The UKZN data contained several other references to large class sizes and the large volume of content in the curriculum (both indicative of higher material density). The picture was mixed with regard to moral density. While in practice a managerial perspective and a positivist approach dominated what was taught, the lecturers often expressed quite different ideas about what the curriculum should encompass, as well as what their roles as lecturers should entail. For example, while Michael thought that the curriculum *needs to be pulled together* and condensed, Kamini felt that *it is a bit sad that . . . our focus is only on, um, quantitative research. So we lack fundamentally in the whole spectrum of what is research methodology*. And while Michael saw Marketing lecturers as subject content experts, and not as ‘educationists’, and thus as having no role to play in helping students to acquire the academic literacies important to participation in the disciplinary Discourse (such as writing skills), Kamini felt that it was important for those within the discipline to take on this role.

Relatively high material density (MaD+), represented by large classes and a tightly packed syllabus, may contribute to pedagogic practices not best suited to facilitating student participation in the disciplinary Discourse. For example, in an effort to manage high student numbers easily, Marketing pedagogy typically takes the form of traditional large-group textbook-based lectures in which “students are generally passive recipients of lecture/tutorial materials” (Baron and Harris, 2006, p.294), whereas quite different pedagogic approaches are likely to be better suited to helping students practice and take on the disciplinary Discourse. Relatively high moral density (MoD+), which indicates a possible lack of consensus over what should be taught in the discipline (and how), also has implications here as there may be lack of agreement among lecturers as to what constitutes the disciplinary Discourse, how this Discourse is best taken on and who should be responsible for facilitating students’ taking on of the Discourse of Marketing. Indeed, in Marketing there is a lack of consensus as to what students should learn and how they should learn it (Glenn, 2011). Clearly, such lack of consensus has

repercussions for students' chances of gaining epistemological access to the discipline of Marketing.

Temporality

Marketing reflects a neo-prospective code (TP-, TO-), denoting a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline.

Marketing as an academic discipline only emerged in the early twentieth century, and has had a forward-looking orientation since its earliest days (Witkowski, 2010). This may be because marketers operate in a fast-changing environment, thus requiring a "visionary strategic thinking orientation" (Melaia, Abratt and Bick, 2008, p.243). Accordingly, Marketing students need to be able to "critically analyse the position of a firm and envision where *future value* can be created for customers" (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003, p.46; emphasis in original). Marketing is "particularly prone to transitory knowledge" (Macfarlane, 1997, p.52) and may be the business discipline "most influenced by changing fads and fashions" (Zinkhan and Hirschheim, 1992, p.83).

At UKZN, a neo-prospective code was evident in the way that participants spoke about the discipline. In terms of temporal positioning, Marketing was seen to be a young discipline. Nisha (a lecturer in her early thirties) related how, when she was a student at one of the universities that had merged to form UKZN, Marketing was not offered as a major in its own right but only as a small sub-section of a Business Management course. In terms of temporal orientation, a forward-looking orientation was represented in assessment tasks and the way participants spoke about the discipline. For example, Nothando (a student) stated, *you need to do a whole lot of reading, 'cos you need to be up to date with everything that's happening. Like trends and stuff.* When discussing an assessment task with students, Michael said he *wanted three things covered in their [assignments] . . . and the third thing is the recommendations going forward – and that's what I really looked at the most.* This, he felt, was appropriate because, in Marketing, *you've got to change things; things have to be different.* Evidence of the rapid change that characterises Marketing was apparent in the offering of modules such as Special Topics in Marketing, designed to allow for the quick inclusion of contemporary issues and developments in the curriculum.

A neo-prospective Temporality code means that Marketing is a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline. Accordingly, it is important for students to be able to keep up to date with current issues and developments in the discipline, and to be able to have an appreciation of the significance of these for future marketing practice.

Discussion and conclusion

To understand what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing, it is necessary to explore the knowledge and ways of knowing, as well as the ways of being, that are valued in the discipline but that often remain tacit.

LCT enables tacit knowledge within fields (such as academic disciplines) to be unlocked (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009), making explicit their bases for legitimate participation, success and achievement. An LCT analysis of Marketing reveals its ‘rules of the game’ and gives insight into what students (and lecturers) need to aim to achieve and ‘own’ in order to be considered legitimate participants in the disciplinary Discourse – thereby addressing, as noted earlier, an under-researched area in Marketing (Brownlie, 2007). LCT does this by providing a framework that can be used to analyse viewpoints and practices in a field along five dimensions, which provide the organising principles that underlie practices and their contexts. This allows for a more guided entry into empirical data and for a process of analysis that is less ‘messy’ than more grounded approaches. This is not to say that LCT itself has not emerged from messy and grounded processes that seriously engage with data, only that the systematic analytical tools that have emerged from the engagement between theory and data become useful. The ‘toolkit’ and language that LCT provides for analysing phenomena, also facilitates comparisons across phenomena and contexts. Thus, what LCT allows, within its predetermined parameters, is a high-level, internal focus on the educational logics that structure Marketing as a discipline, revealing how the discipline works, what it values and what it does not, and the possibilities and constraints associated with it.

To summarise, the LCT analysis of Marketing at UKZN revealed that legitimate participation and achievement in the discipline is based on the possession of appropriate personal attributes and dispositions rather than on the possession of specialist disciplinary knowledge and skills. Accordingly,

Marketing pedagogy should give greater attention to specialising students' identities in appropriate ways instead of focusing on the transmission of knowledge. This raises the question of exactly how this can be achieved, especially in a discipline where traditional pedagogy is transmission-based (Baron and Harris, 2006) – a possible avenue for future research. The emphasis placed on applied rather than theoretical knowledge in the discipline implies that students need to gain familiarity with the contexts that serve as the sites of application so as to facilitate the application of Marketing knowledge to such contexts. Because Marketing is a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline, it is also important for students to be able to keep up to date with contemporary developments in the discipline and in the marketplace, and to be able to have an appreciation of the significance of such developments for future marketing practice. However, the relatively high autonomy of the discipline, in terms of its insulation from the business world, is unlikely to facilitate students' becoming familiar with either the business contexts in which they are expected to be able to apply Marketing knowledge or the knower attributes and dispositions (as embodied in marketing practitioners) that are considered important for legitimate participation and success in the discipline. The lack of consensus among lecturers over what should be taught in the discipline and how this should be done also has implications for students' ability to gain epistemological access to the discipline of Marketing.

The LCT analysis therefore gives insight into what is considered legitimate in Marketing, and also begins to address the question of why what is espoused in languages of legitimation is not always actualised in practice

Note

1. A capital letter is used when referring to the academic discipline of Marketing; lower case is used when referring to the practice of marketing.
2. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants. All quotes from data are presented verbatim and unedited.

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Analysis and monitoring of equitable access and full participation in education in South Africa: the challenge of data quality

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Abstract

Indicators to measure educational access serve the useful purpose of facilitating the evaluation and analysis of progress made towards achieving stated educational access objectives. In South Africa, data from the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) are commonly used to report on progress made towards universal educational access. The critique in the use of these data is threefold; first, that they are computed from inaccurate school data and second, that their conceptual basis stems from a structural approach to educational access that gives primacy to the onset or final phases of the schooling process (primary or secondary) rather than also to what not only happens during school but also in classrooms. Subsumed and arising from the first two, the third critique relates to the nature of indicators used to measure educational access. Put differently, conceptualisations premised on a structural approach have not only had consequences for the source of data and indicators used to measure educational access but also for its analysis and interpretation. Established therefore, is that conceptions of educational access not only influence the choice of indicators that are regarded to be effective and suitable to describe educational access (Fataar, 1997; Lewin, 2007; Hill, Baxen, Craig and Namakula, 2012) but they also impact the nature of data generated for this purpose.

Through a review of conceptualisations of educational access and through the use of data drawn from a study of two Eastern Cape secondary schools, this paper argues that a shift in discourses on education access is necessary for this country to fully understand and respond to the discontinuities that persist to characterise the education system. It calls for a shift from a structural discourse to one that intersects equity and full participation concerns. The paper highlights how such a shift in conceptualisation not only has implications for the nature of data gathered but importantly for indicators produced and applied to describe and measure educational access.

Data for monitoring educational access in South Africa

Prior to 1994, the nine racially desegregated education departments that existed in South Africa at that time each had their own ways of collecting information on education provision and delivery (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2007). The National Education Policy Information Act of 2004 established a unified Education Management Information system (EMIS) intended to oversee the collection, storage, processing, analysis and dissemination of information as a strategy towards encouraging evidence-based decision-making in the education sector. Serious doubts have been expressed over the reliability and validity of EMIS data (Van Wyk, 2006; The Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention, 2007). Limited information on education access in South Africa can also be gleaned from the analysis of census and general household survey data. Apart from these two databases and what can be gleaned from the Grade 12 national examination results, South Africa has no other major sources of data to monitor and evaluate educational access. As we show in the section that follows, these data are underpinned by a notion of access that emphasises a structural and systemic analysis using quantitative measures as the primary source. Initial use of such an approach was important, and indeed crucial, given the inequitable education system inherited by the democratic government of 1994. But as conceptualisations of access to education evolve to become more complex, so should data sources and indicators. Yet the link between the two has received little attention in research. Equally, little to no attention is paid to the type of indicators arising from various conceptualisations; concerns at the heart of this paper.

Conceptualisations of educational access and indicators to measure educational access objectives

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has made a concerted effort towards not only improving structural or physical access to education but also to quality education for all her citizens, especially previously disadvantaged population groups. The country's new Constitution (RSA, 1996a) guarantees all children the right to basic education (Grade 1 to 9), and further stipulates that "[E]veryone has the right to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (RSA, 1996a, p.1257). The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) makes it

mandatory for all children to attend school until the end of Grade 9 or age 15. One of the essential elements in determining whether South Africa has achieved its goals of access to education for all is the development of good indicators and the collection of high quality data that includes both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Results with respect to structural access have been impressive with enrolment in school in South Africa widely acknowledged as being among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), middle income countries. For example, the 2010 MDG report concluded that South Africa has accomplished the goal of universal primary education before the targeted date of 2015. The 2010 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for ordinary secondary education in South Africa stood at 86%, up from 81% in 2002, while the sector's Gender Parity Index (GPI) estimate of 1.07 (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2012, p.6) indicates that South Africa's female learners have a slight edge over their male counterparts in participating in secondary education.

The above notwithstanding and while structural access to school is guaranteed for all children, the mainly quantitative indicators, easily translatable into percentages as in above, mask the inequities attendant in a schooling system beleaguered with low completion rates, slow progression through the system, high dropout rates especially after Grade 10 and poor performance in the key subjects of Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounts (DBE, 2010b; 2011a). Put differently, and to make a broader point, the quantitative measures drawn from the use of particular indicators, premised on structural conceptions of educational access, foreground what occurs at the onset or end of schooling (primary or secondary) and thus do not also account for what happens during the process of schooling.

Despite various initiatives introduced by the post-apartheid government that include improved school infrastructure and management, professional development of teachers, the introduction of no-fee schools, a school feeding scheme, and the revision of curriculum frameworks aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning (Motala, Dieltiens, Carrim, Kgobe, Moyo and Rembe, 2007; DBE, 2010a) to enhance access to education at all levels of the education system, equitable access and full participation remain a challenge. Indeed, even though government action indicates a shift toward a more complex conceptualisation of access to education that reflects a combination of structural, social and economic factors, the dominance of a structural approach persists in reporting gains made in access to education. Over-

reliance on quantitative indicators, therefore, does not reflect the discontinuities inherent in the process of education in a country where high numbers of children who enter the system do not complete.

Recent conceptualisations of access to education focus on the intersections of a complex array of issues that mediate and militate against learners' participation in the schooling experience (Motala *et al.*, 2007; Hill, Baxen, Craig and Namakula, 2012) and thus already encapsulate forms of access that move beyond a structural notion of the term. For example, Sayed's (2002) analysis of access to education stems from an inclusion and exclusion perspective. He acknowledges that despite having physical access to schools, there are factors both inside and outside school that contribute to the educational exclusion of learners. He identifies four features that need to be considered in measuring access to education beyond the physical. These include points of access (e.g. access policies and geographical location of schools); institutional setting and ethos (e.g. school culture and practices); curriculum (e.g. content and world views); and the interplay of multiple forms of injustice (Sayed, 2002, p.29). Instructive in such a conceptualisation is attention paid to structural forces that press upon schools in ways that negatively impact experiences of equitable access to education. Such a discourse though under plays factors outside school as well as what happens in classrooms that precludes full participation in school. Sayed (2002) also stops short in operationalising the concept by not specifying indicators to measure the four points of access. He is also silent on the nature, form and analysis of data. The implication is that while there is a notable conceptual shift, the practice of data generation, analysis and interpretation remains unchanged, in part, due to the structural roots inherent in such a discourse.

The Consortium for Research on Educational Access Transitions and Equity (CREATE), through a conceptualisation of meaningful access, extends Sayed's (2002) framework by identifying five key dimensions not already taken into account. These include high and regular school attendance rates among learners, little or no grade repetition, and learners' ages that are appropriate for their grades, achievement of expected learning outcomes including learners' mastery of basic knowledge, skills and competences as stipulated by curriculum requirements, high transition rates to higher grades or phases by the majority of learners and the provision of equitable learning opportunities to all learners including those from marginalised population

groups (Lewin, 2007, p.21). The CREATE framework represents an advance in conceptualisation of the term in that it not only focuses on the physical and structural mechanisms, but also on participation in the process of schooling. It considers the current and historical instances of marginalisation that may impact individual students' ability to meaningfully access educational opportunities. Participation in this instance thus includes structural as well as processual aspects of schooling and is accounted for in three ways. The first coincides with physical access and is subsumed in Sayed's (2002) concept of inclusion and the identification of mechanisms that militate against children entering the education system. The second, partially captured by rates of retention and completion, describes the state of staying in school. The third incorporates aspects of classroom life that allow students to become successful constructors of their own knowledge (Lewin, 2011). This notwithstanding and like Sayed (2002), the CREATE framework does not make explicit the implication such a framework has for the nature of data and the kind of indicators governments, policy makers, and researchers require to measure the attainment of education access.

We propose a conceptualisation of educational access as full participation. While taking account of and subsuming structural and processual elements that Sayed (2002) and Lewin (2011) propose, full participation shifts the gaze towards the classroom and on learners. The basic premise is that factors impacting learners' access to education as well as those shaping teaching and learning are integral to any conceptualisation of educational access. Learning is understood to be situated and produced and reproduced within broader social and historical practices, which come together in complex ways to produce what is valued in the field (Bourdieu, 1990) or community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Fully participation not only requires time for immersion in the practice but importantly, also access to the rules attendant with the practice. Learner positionality and legitimacy as contributors to the learning process are fundamental to such a conception. Initially, learners might be marginal to the learning process, but with time, experience and the attendant social, material and cultural resources made available, should come to not only embody the values of the practice but also embody concomitant social and individual identities (O'Donnell and Tobbell, 2007). Central to such a conceptualisation is the need to take account of the reciprocal and semiotic relationship between actors, context, and process of interaction and as such acknowledgment of the intersection between structural, processual, cultural, and agential (Archer, 2007) factors in producing educational access

and outcomes. Full participation, therefore, necessitates simultaneously paying attention to structural, cultural and agential elements because it is their intersectionality that produces particular forms of educational access and success. A conception of educational access premised on full participation, therefore, would require data resulting from indicators that focus on structural, processual, and agential elements at the level of the school *and* classroom.

We use data derived from two secondary schools in the Eastern Cape to highlight limitations in current discourses and in so doing, propose the type of data and indicators that would arise from conceptualisations of full participation.

Research context

The paper draws on a study that focused on two secondary schools and that took place in the Grahamstown Education District of Makana in the Eastern Cape.¹ On average, secondary schools serving predominantly black learners in this education district perform better in the National School Certificate (NSC) examinations (administered at the end of Grade 12) than the provincial average. However, given that the pass rate in Eastern Cape in general is extremely low, there is great concern over the low numbers participating in the examination in the first instance and poor quality of these passes (*Grocott's Mail*, January 6, 2012). Lack of NCS success at the level that allows access to tertiary education opportunities is a major obstacle to achieving admission to Grahamstown's prestigious Rhodes University and other higher education institutions in the country. It also flies in the face of post-apartheid government efforts to address the social injustices of the past through improvement in education, skills and income levels among the country's previously disadvantaged population groups.

The two schools in the study were relatively representative of peri-urban secondary schools. With respect to matric pass rates, they are neither the best nor the worst in the area. They are relatively well-resourced with poverty index ratings of 4 and 5 respectively, indicating that, based on Provincial Department of Education calculations; they are in the top 40% of schools

¹ There are nine provinces in South Africa, each sub-divided into local municipalities.

economically. An initial inspection of their EMIS data revealed high enrolment rates, especially in the lower Grades of 8 and 9. The higher Grades of 10 to 12 showed a worrying trend that raised questions about learner throughput, repetition, and retention rates in school.

Methodology

Our approach to examining the data requirements for effective analysis and monitoring of full participation comprised three stages. First, and to frame the data requirement analysis, we used the five key dimensions of the meaningful access CREATE framework as the basis to analyze data from the two participating schools, which included mark schedules,² snap survey forms, and school annual survey forms. For purposes of this analysis though, two of the CREATE framework dimensions, ('little or no grade repetition' and 'high transition rates to higher grades or phases by the majority of learners') were collapsed into 'grade progression'. The aim of this component of the analysis was to highlight the gaps that exist between the kind of learner data that is currently collected in South Africa to monitor educational access and the kind that is required to assess meaningful access to education.

The next step was to (a) generate a list of indicators deemed important to monitor meaningful access, given that the framework provided a conceptual tool and categories of analysis but not specific indicators, and (b) highlight the gap in data sources. This, with the view to highlighting the gaps that exist in the type of data and indicators in the use of meaningful access and to make the argument that conceptions of full participation have potential to generate data and indicators that better reflect school *and* classroom factors that militate against educational outcomes and success beyond merely a structural analysis.

Results

Using the dimensions employed in the CREATE's meaningful access framework, Table 1 below shows the results of the analysis of the available

² Documents used by all public schools in Eastern Cape to capture summaries of learner profiles and academic performance at the end of each school semester.

data in the two schools. The data required to effectively analyse and monitor progress in educational access attainment in each of the four aspects about learners are outlined in Column 2 of the table. The table also displays the available data on learners regarding educational access that were collected in the schools' mark schedules, and snap and annual surveys.

Table 1: A comparison between the data on learners that are required to effectively monitor meaningful access to education, and the actual data that are collected by the two secondary schools

Dimension	Required data on learners	Mark schedule data	Snap survey data	Annual survey data
School attendance	Identity of all learners in each grade	Names and identity number of learners in each grade	No data	No data
	Learner enrollment figures	Number of learners in each grade by gender and population group	Number of learners in each grade by gender	Number of classes per grade
				Number learners in each grade by population group & gender
	Number of days each learner in each grade was present/absent from school in a particular school year.	No data	No data	No data
	Average number of days in a particular school year learners in each grade were present/absent from school by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	No data
	Main reasons for learner absenteeism in each grade by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	No data
	Identity of learners in each grade who left the school in a particular year	Names, identity numbers, gender, population group and home language of learners who did not write the end of semester examination	No data	No data
	Number and % of learners in each grade who left the school during a particular year by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	Number of deceased learners in each grade by gender and cause of death
				Number of learner pregnancies in each grade
Number of learner transfers to and from the school in each grade by gender				

Grade progression	Number and % of over-age and under-age learners in each grade by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	Number of learners in each grade by date of birth
	Number and % of repeaters in each grade in a particular school year by gender, population group and home language	Number of years each learner has spent in the grade in a particular school year	No data	Number of repeaters in each grade, gender and population group
Learning achievement	Identity of learners who passed/failed their grade in a particular school year	Names and identity numbers of learners who passed/failed their grade at the end of each school semester	No data	No data
	Number and % of learners who passed/failed their grade in a particular school year by gender, population group and home language	Number of learners who passed/failed their grade at the end of each school semester by gender	No data	Number of failures in each grade by gender and population group
	Individual learners' end-of-year marks in Maths, English, Accounts and Physical Sciences for each grade	Individual learners' end of semester marks in all subjects for each grade	No data	No data
	Average marks for each grade for Maths, English, home-language, Accounts and Physical Science	No data	No data	No data
	Individual learner's participation and achievement in non-academic school activities	No data	No data	No data
Access to learning opportunities	Individual profiles of learners in each grade including their physical, mental, health, nutrition status, and home background	Gender of learners in each grade	No data	No data

Access to learning opportunities (continued)	Number and % of learners in each grade by type of disability	No data	No data	Number of disabled learners in each grade by gender, population group and disability type
	Number and % of learners in each grade by gender, population group and home language	No data	Number of learners in each grade by gender	Number learners in each grade by gender and population group
				Number of learners in each grade by preferred language of instruction and gender
				Number of learners in each grade by content subject, gender and population group
				Number of learners from outside the Eastern Cape by province or country
	Number and % of orphaned learners in each grade by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	Number and type of orphaned learners in each grade by gender
	Number of learners in each grade who are on social grants by gender, population group and home language	No data	No data	Number of learners in each grade registered but not receiving/ social grants
				Number of learners in each grade receiving/ social grants
Number and % of learners in each grade taking Maths, Accounting, Physical Sciences by gender, population group, home language and disability	Individual learner's performance in all subjects for each grade	No data	Number of learners in each grade by content subject, gender and population group.	
			Number of learners taking subjects outside the NCS in each grade	

Comparisons across the columns in Table 1 indicate that none of the three school data sets that were examined during the study contained the full complement of data on learners that are at a minimum, required for more effective monitoring of meaningful access to education. Of the three school data sets that were examined, the annual school survey forms provided the most comprehensive data on learners regarding educational access, while the snap survey forms provided the least data. Even if the data on learners from all three sources were combined, there were still gaps in the information on learners that would be required to effectively monitor meaningful access to education. It should be noted that, given the lack of a uniform learner identification system, combining data from different sources is neither straightforward nor feasible on a large scale.

School attendance

None of the three school data sets that were examined contained detailed data on learners' school attendance levels. Of the three forms, the annual school survey provided the most data on learners' school attendance, although this was mainly by way of numbers of learners in each grade who, for example, were deceased or transferred from/to the school. Although, all three forms provided data on learner enrolment figures, they all lacked data on individual learners' school attendance. None of the forms asked for data on reasons for learners' absenteeism, although the annual survey form collected data in each grade on learner deaths and their causes by gender.

Grade progression

Information on learners' progression was inadequate in all the three data sets. The mark schedules only provided the number of years a particular student had spent in current grade. The annual survey form requested information on numbers of learners repeating the grade by gender, and was not specific to individual learners. The snap survey form collected no information on learners' progression.

Learning achievement

Of the three forms, only mark schedules provided data on learners' level of educational achievement. This included the overall academic performance of each learner, and individual scores in each subject examination, by grade. None of the three forms supplied data on learners' non-academic performance. No data was available regarding students' transition rates to higher grades or phases of education.

Access to learning opportunities

Mark schedules provided the most in-depth personal data on learners, which in addition to their population group and gender, also included their names and identity numbers. However, data on learners' backgrounds in the annual survey covered a wider scope and included for example learners' home language, preferred language of teaching and learning, pregnancy levels, and home province/country. Only the annual survey form provided data on learners' social circumstances. However, this information was not linked to individual learners, and was limited to number and type of orphans in each grade by gender, learners who are receiving/not receiving social grants and causes of learner mortality.

Results from the first stage above showed the limitations in the available data, when dimensions of meaningful access were applied to monitor meaningful access to education. To advance full participation as a conceptualisation of education access, Table 2 below elaborates on the type of data as well as proposed indicators for its operationalisation. We draw attention to differences in indicators and data necessary to assess education access objectives in each case.

Table 2: Indicators and data to measure full participation

Dimension	Full Participation	Meaningful Participation
Learner profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners' name, gender, identity number, population group, home language and grade Number and % of special needs learners in each grade and nature of disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners' name, gender, identity number, population group/home language and grade Number and % of marginalised learners in each grade
Learner background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptions of individual learner's life history, health, nutritional status, learning needs, distance travelled to school, means of transport to school etc. Number and % of learners receiving social grants by grade, gender and population group Number of learners living in child-headed households by grade, gender and population group Descriptions of individual learners' home circumstances including cultural back-ground, socioeconomic status, parents' educational levels, etc. 	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p>
School profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (rural/urban), quintile distance from nearest town, etc School accessibility by phone and road 	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p>
School enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of learners in each grade by gender, population group and disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of learners in each grade by gender, and marginalised group
Schooling costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and % of learners receiving school uniform aid 	x
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and % of learners unable to pay school levies, contributions, etc. 	x
School attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of days each learner attended/was absent from school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of days a particular learner is present/absent from school by grade, gender, age and marginalised group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of learners per reason for absenteeism 	x
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of regular late comers in each grade by gender and reason for late coming 	x

Teaching and learning resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner: essential school textbook ratio in each classroom • Learner: computers ratio • Learner: chair/desk ratio in each classroom • Condition of school furniture, blackboard, etc. in each class • Correct workbooks, textbooks, etc delivered on time • Types of facilities in the classroom for special needs learners • Types of additional educational resources available in each classroom 	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p>
School's language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of learners in each grade whose home language is the LoLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home languages of learners
School's curriculum policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects offered by the school • Number and % of learners enrolled in key subjects in each grade by gender and population group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects offered by the school • Number and % of learners enrolled in key subjects in each grade by gender and population group
Teachers' practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' coverage of prescribed curriculum requirements in each grade 	x
Learners' progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of under-aged / over-aged learners in each grade by gender and population group • Number and % of repeaters in the grade by gender and population group • Number of learners who left school in each grade by gender, population group and reason for leaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of under-aged/ over-aged learners in each grade by population group • Number and % of repeaters in the grade by population group • Number of learners who left school in each grade by population group and reason for leaving
Learners' transition rates to higher phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of learners who passed each phase by gender and population group • Number and % of matrics from the school who joined HEIs by gender and population group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of learners who passed each phase by population group • Number and % of matrics from the school who joined HEIs by population group

<p>Learner performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of learners who passed /failed the grade in the previous year by gender and population group • Performance of individual learners in the year- end, mid-year and other standardised test marks • Number and % of learners who passed /failed the NSC and ANAs by gender, population group and quality of pass • Number and % of learners who passed / failed key subjects in each grade by gender and population group each semester • Pass rate and average marks in key subjects in the ANAs and the NSC by gender and population group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of learners who passed/failed the grade in the previous year by population group • Performance of individual learners in the year- end, mid-year and other standardised test marks • Number and % of learners who passed/failed the NSC and ANAs by population group and quality of pass • Number and % of learners who passed / failed key subjects in each grade by population group each semester • Pass rate and average marks in key subjects in the ANAs and the NSC by gender and population group
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Discussion

Two challenges to effective monitoring of access to secondary education in South Africa are the inadequate availability of indicators of educational access (mainly due to incomplete conceptualisation of educational access), and inaccurate and incomplete data on educational access that are generated by schools. While, with the introduction of electronic tools, the Department of Education is to be commended for taking steps to improve the quality of data on educational access, for the majority of under-resourced schools in the country, mark schedules, snap surveys and annual schools surveys remain the main means by which data on educational access are generated.

The CREATE framework of meaningful access to education was a useful starting point in that it provided an analytical tool to guide the identification of indicators and some data types for a more effective analysis and monitoring of educational access. By demonstrating the disparity that exists between the data on learners that are generated by these three data forms and the data that should be in place for effective reporting on meaningful educational access to secondary education in South Africa, the study highlighted the need for broader conceptualisations of educational access and that of more research into indicators of educational access that best capture the secondary education

experience of the majority of South African learners. The paper proposed a conceptualisation of full participation, which, we put forward as having promise for contextualised and nuanced descriptions of education access. Such an orientation shifts the gaze towards the classroom and onto learners; necessitating data with indicators that focus on learners and teaching and learning which have not been taken account of in the five CREATE dimensions.

The range of data on learners that are needed to effectively report on progress towards meeting educational access objectives require frameworks that draw on large data sources, usually quantitative in nature, some data are necessary to understand the conditions of learners and teaching and learning not always captured quantitatively. Put differently, although most of the required data are quantitative, for example number of learners in each grade, number of days an individual learner is absent, and number of repeaters in the grade, some are qualitative, for example learners' physical condition, socio-economic status and performance in non-academic school activities. The need for data on educational access to be disaggregated stands out in our study, not only to grade, gender and population group (for example, learners in a grade, repeaters in a particular year), but also to individual learners (for example, learner absenteeism and learning achievement). Analysis of the required data on learners and teaching and learning strengthens the argument for profiling and identification of all learners in the secondary school system as an initial step towards effective monitoring of their access to education. A step which has been planned for and approved by the Department of Education (LURTIS), but whose implementation has been stalled for various reasons.

As Table 1 showed, none of the three data sets currently used to gather school data contained the full complement of minimum data on learners that are needed for effective analysis and monitoring of meaningful access to education. Nor did the three data sets, taken together, provide all the data needed. All three forms that were examined during the study mainly focused on the collection of quantitative data on learners, reflecting a structural approach to educational access. While numbers (for example of learners by grade and of orphans by gender) and percentages (for example of repeaters and over-age repeaters in the grade) were commonly recorded, qualitative data on learners were rare. Examples of such data include reasons for learners dropping out of school, and descriptions of learners' social circumstances.

The latter data are especially important as it has been shown in numerous studies that learners' socio-economic circumstances are a key determinant of learner achievement in South Africa (van der Berg, 2007; Howie, 2003).

The data on learners' grade progression was another example of the incompleteness in data sources. In the annual survey form, this was expressed as the 'number of repeaters by grade and gender,' and in the mark schedules as 'number of years spent in grade.' Age distribution of learners by grade, gender, population group and social circumstances would give a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of learners' progression. Lastly, the data from the three forms were mostly disaggregated to grade, gender and population group. Only mark schedules disaggregated data on individual learners, and this was limited to learners' academic performance. Disaggregation of key data on educational access to minority groups and individual learners is especially important in identifying and addressing their specific educational access needs.

Table 2 showed that a conception of full participation provides an extension in data source and indicators to measure educational access outcomes in ways not possible when 'meaningful access' (Lewin, 2011) is applied. Additional data sources were necessary to not only understand learners and aspects of their lives that impact their experience of access, but also factors in the classroom that mediate their learning experience. While some of the measures to access experience are quantifiable, as was the argument earlier on, some would require data only obtainable through qualitative forms of data generation.

Conclusions and recommendations

Full participation as a conceptualisation of access not only provides the impetus to focus on the actions and interactions of learners at the classroom level but also on elements impacting teaching and learning. Laying this framework of participation against previous conceptualisations of access gives a useful tool for thinking about what it means to fully participate in education. The most basic aspects of access, structural access also form the most basic form of participation but that is not the whole story. It offers a way of generating data and indicators that extend the current development of Lewin's (2011) 'meaningful access'. It requires a deeper examination of the schooling context and the actual experiences of learners in the classroom and in so doing

might enable education decision makers to ask questions about why in the face of meeting the structural access imperatives, many children still stop short of completing school. The recent initiatives such as South African School Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) and the National Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) would go a long way toward making high quality, usable data on learner progression and achievement available were it to also consider conceptions of full participation as a conceptual framework to monitor educational access outcomes.

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Humour to facilitate meaningful learning in nursing education as experienced by learner nurses

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences of learner nurses regarding the use of humour in facilitating learning in order to formulate guidelines to facilitate the integration of humour in nursing education. A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed. A non probability sampling method was used to select 70 participants in three Higher Education Institutions. Six focus group interviews were conducted. The qualitative method of data analysis was used. Trustworthiness was ensured and ethical standards were observed.

Three main themes emerged: positive effects, negative effects and the absence of humour. The sub-themes of positive effects of humour indicated a psycho-physiological effect, social effect and cognitive effect. The sub-themes of the negative effect of humour indicated that inappropriate humour distracts learners from learning, and racist jokes result in a loss of interest in learning while the absence of humour creates a tense learning environment. Recommendations are given.

Introduction

Humour, as defined by Billings and Halstead (2009), is the ability to perceive, enjoy, or express what is comical or funny; the quality of being laughable or comical; funniness. Humour can be expressed in various ways. It can be anything that amuses or creates a positive feeling. A person expresses humour with the intention that it will be appreciated by the receiver. However, the receiver's perception of humour may not accord with that of the person expressing the humour or vice versa (Quinn and Hughes, 2013).

Background to the need for humour as an educational strategy to promote learning

From the inception of formal nursing education during the Florence Nightingale period (1861 to 1914), the nature of nursing education is reputed to have been purely religious (Attewell, 1999). Training at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St Thomas hospital was subject to strict discipline. Character training and moral standards were emphasised, and nursing students lived in nurses' homes under strict supervision. This serious approach to learning terrified learner nurses and made them scared to practice the skills that needed to be mastered, thus negatively affecting their learning (Mellish, Brink and Paton, 1998). Taking into consideration the historically stringent background of nursing education and the seriousness of nursing as a profession, facilitation of teaching and learning need to be revisited in order to make learning enjoyable.

Humour can be used to provide welcome relief in a tense class. Humour can also be used to emphasise and clarify important points, thus increasing understanding and retention (Billings and Halstead, 2009). A humorous stimulus is perceived or recognised differently by people and not all learner nurses are therefore able to recognise a humorous stimulus as presented by the nurse educator. Learners may get distracted or offended by the use of humour owing to their understanding of the language (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi, 2011). On the other hand, nurse educators should use humour effectively in facilitating learning so as to develop the learners' sense of humour, which is also expected in clinical practice, where a climate of acceptance, support, trust and freedom of expression should be created (Quinn and Hughes, 2013). Humour will be effective only if learner nurses, as the people at whom the humour is directed, can recognise it as a facilitative instructional approach. However, its didactic validity to promote learning needs continued exploration, and guidelines need to be laid down for the teacher who has to utilise the method (Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy 1993).

The aim of the study

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of learner nurses regarding the effects of humour in facilitating learning in three higher education institutions in Gauteng.

Research design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used (Burns and Grove, 2009). This approach enabled the researcher to explore and describe the meaning of the experiences of learner nurses regarding the effects of humour in facilitating learning at a nursing education institution in Gauteng.

Methodology

Study population and sampling

The population consisted of 638 final-year learner nurses registered for a Diploma in Nursing during 2011 in all three nursing education institutions (NEIs) in Gauteng. A non probability purposive sampling method (Burns and Grove, 2009) was used. Of these learners 232 were from NEI (A), where 26 learners volunteered to participate. NEI (B) had 205 learner nurses and 20 of them volunteered to participate, while NEI (C) had 201 learners, 24 of whom volunteered to participate in the study, leading to a total of 70 learners taking part. Ethical considerations were observed using the ethical standards of the Democratic Nurses Organization of South Africa's (DENOSA, 2005).

Ethical Procedure

Informed consent was obtained from all participants for data collection and for the use of a tape recorder after an explanation of the purpose and method of the study (DENOSA, 2005). Participants used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Confidentiality was ensured through the safe-keeping of audio-taped interviews and transcriptions. Participation was voluntary, and ethical clearance was granted by the University of Johannesburg's Higher Degrees and Ethics Committee. Permission was also granted by the management of the participating nursing colleges before the commencement of the data collection.

Data collection

Six phenomenological focus group interviews were conducted Krueger and Casey (2009) in the three NEIs from a total sample of 70 final-year learner nurses on theory block within three days. Two focus group interviews consisting of 10 and 16 participants were conducted in NEI (A), while two focus group interviews of 10 participants in each group were conducted in NEI (B). The last two focus group interviews consisting of 14 and 10 participants were conducted in NEI (C). The interviews were conducted in English which is understood by both the interviewer and interviewees. The researcher asked open-ended research questions Burns and Grove (2009) to direct the study, namely, “How did you experience the use of humour as a method to facilitate learning”. Facilitative interview skills were used to elicit in-depth information about the experiences of learner nurses regarding the use of humour to facilitate learning. Responses were tape-recorded to ensure that the data-collection and data-transcription processes were accurate (Plano, Clark and Creswell, 2010). Field notes were taken during the interviews to enrich the data collected. The researcher continued questioning until data saturation was reached (Brink, 2001).

Data analysis

Data was analysed using Tesch’s qualitative open-coding method of data analysis (in Creswell, 2012). Open-coding refers to the labelling of words and phrases found in the transcripts or text (Creswell, 2012). It is about using the data to generate conceptual labels and categories for use in theory building (Punch, 2009). The researcher engaged a co-coder to analyse data independently in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Field notes were taken into consideration during data analysis. A list of emerging themes and sub-themes were then developed. Significant statements were extracted and categorised into thematic clusters to be used as citations in the description of findings. Findings were integrated into a thick, exhaustive description to cover all possibilities of the experiences. A consensus discussion meeting was held between the researcher and the co-coder to reach an agreement on the independently identified categories. Follow-up individual interviews with five purposely selected participants in the three NEIs were conducted to verify the accuracy of the identified categories in order to ensure trustworthiness through member checking.

Trustworthiness

Rigor was attained by attending to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In order to ensure the credibility and confirmability of the study the strategies applied were prolonged engagement, triangulation and member-checking. To augment the study's transferability, that is, the degree to which the results of the study can be generalised to settings other than the ones studied (Brink, 2001), the researcher incorporated a comprehensive description of vivid quotes into the study's findings. The study's dependability was enhanced by thorough description of the methodology used by the researcher in the study.

Findings and discussion

The findings revealed positive effects, negative effects, effects of absence of humour. Sub-themes of positive effect of humour indicated: a psycho-physiological effect, social effect and cognitive effect. Sub-themes of negative effects of humour indicated that inappropriate use of humour hinders learning. Too much humour distracts learning, and racist jokes result in a loss of interest in learning. The absence of humour, on the other hand, creates a tense learning environment resulting in decreased learner participation (table 1).

Table 1: Experiences of learner nurses with regard to the effect of humour in facilitating learning

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES	RELATED CATEGORIES
Positive effects of humour		
Psych-physiological effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help cope with stress, tension and anxiety • Stimulates the release of endorphins • Alleviates depression and enhances the well-being of learners 	
Social effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish professional relationships • As an ice breaker • Create a relaxed non-threatening learning environment 	
Cognitive effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates comprehension • Assist in problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate processing of new information • Simplify difficult concepts • Make meaningful association • Promote creative and divergent thinking • Promote theory and practice integration
Negative effects of humour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much humour distracts learners from learning • Racist jokes result in a loss of interest in learning 	
Effects of an absence of humour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a tense learning environment resulting in decreased learner participation 	

Positive effects

Psycho-physiological effects

Participants identified the following benefits of humour in facilitating learning: humour helps people to cope with stress, tension and anxiety, stimulate the release of endorphins; alleviates depression and enhances the well-being of learners.

Humour helps cope with stress, tension and anxiety

Irrespective of the cause of stress, tension and anxiety, learning becomes inhibited. Participants indicated that, when used appropriately, humour assists learners to cope with problems as evidenced by the citation. One participant remarked: “*We come to class with huge family or personal problems, but the use of humour enables us to cope despite all these (hmm and nodding – others agree)*”. According to the participants, a break in the form of humour provides an opportunity to relax and take in new information. Participants acknowledged that the nursing curriculum is very packed and that could contribute to the anxiety they are experiencing, as they fear failure. A participant highlighted: “*It is easier to study or learn more if you are happy than when you are sad and stressed. . . and when happy you enjoy what you are doing hence you do not feel the workload*”. Humour is a major psychological tool (Check, 1997) that helps students cope with stress. It enhances their sense of well-being, and boosts their self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence, as well as alleviating anxiety and depression. Check (1997) states that sometimes laughter is the best medicine.

Humour stimulates the release of endorphins

Research in humour physiology has been conducted and reveals that when positive emotions are elicited through humour, the sympathetic nervous system is stimulated, resulting in increased heartbeat and deep respiration, allowing for strong blood flow to the brain. As one’s brain receives more oxygenated blood, an increased sense of arousal and alertness occurs (Tortora and Derrickson, 2010). It is this pleasant emotional response evoked by the perception of humour that leads to an increased positive effect (Martin, 2007).

Pleasure causes the release of endorphins which influence feelings and thinking, creating a state of alertness and increased memory (Fry, 2002). Endorphins are a group of substances in the nervous system that forms part of a larger group of morphine-like compounds called opioids. Opioids help relieve pain and stress, thus promoting a feeling of well-being (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1995, Volume 6).

The release of dopamine within the limbic system of the brain explains the pleasure felt when a learner gets a joke. Research studies on the benefits of laughter show that humour enhances students' health by alleviating pain and psychological discomfort (Check, 1997). Laughter stimulates the cerebral cortex of the brain that improves mental and physical health. Laughing causes the diaphragm to massage the right side of the heart, which releases endorphins, a natural painkiller (Check, 1997). In support of this view, Garner (2006) believes that, physiologically, humour and laughter can aid learning through improved respiration, lower pulse rate and blood pressure, exercise of the chest muscle, greater oxygenation of blood and the release of endorphins into the blood stream. The implication is that it is imperative that learners find meaning in the humour which makes them laugh so that their mental alertness is kept high. This enables them to connect the humour to their existing conception for meaningful learning to take place.

Humour alleviates depression and enhances the well-being of learners

The nurse educator is responsible for creating a physical and psychological learning environment that is stimulating and enjoyable. Learners are sensitive to embarrassing and depressive situations, especially when these situations are carried out in front of other learners in class as indicated by the following remark by a participant: *“Lecturer X likes making racist jokes which are directed at certain racial groups. I don't get the humour in the joke, it depresses and demotivates me, I check the timetable and if I realise that it is that particular lecturer's period, I feel like not going to class at all”*. Stress and anxiety interfere with the ability to learn, but depression is a state of feeling sad, a serious medical condition in which a person experiences a feeling of despondency, dejection, and desolation. A person feels hopeless and unimportant and is unable to live in a normal way (Online Merriam Webster Dictionary). The implication of reaching a state of depression is that the learner may be demotivated to the point of terminating the programme or losing interest and becoming an at-risk learner. The worst scenario is when

the learner moves from mild to severe depression that warrants hospitalisation. Penson, Partridge, Rudd, Seiden, Nelson, Chabner and Lynch (2005) are of the opinion that laughter is the best medicine in stressful situations. Humour should never be used in a way that belittles a learner or creates negativity to the class atmosphere. This confirms the value of building humour capacity in nursing learners to use in their practice so as to improve the psychological well-being of patients.

Social effect of humour

The following social aspects of humour emerged from participants: (a) humour establishes professional relationships, (b) humour as an ice breaker and lastly (c) humour creates a relaxed non-threatening learning environment.

Humour establishes professional relationships

Socialisation is a fundamental didactic principle to promote learning (Fraser, Loubster and van Rooyen, 1993). Socialisation is defined as the individual's adaptation to his physical, psychological and social environment through interaction with other people. One participant stated: "*Humour builds a joyous relationship between the lecturer and the learner. A lecturer who uses humour is respected, whereas those who do not, are feared. When you think of an authoritarian teacher, you end up not wanting to attend or to consult, but when you think of a teacher who will make teaching fun, you anticipate attending the lecture*". Scanlan and Chernomas (1997) contend that lecturers cannot engage in a reflective humorous relationship with learners unless they give up their positions as authoritative knowers. The authors suggest that the lecturer work together with learners to uncover each other's tacit meanings of the experiences. In this relationship, learners and teachers interact to discover the meaning of learning situations together. This paradigm shift of teachers giving up control in the relationship with learners should be modelled so that learners can model the same relationship with peers and beyond the classroom environment to the clinical settings (Scanlan and Chernomas, 1997).

The affective-social climate pertains to, among other things, how the educator and the learners relate to and interact with each other. This climate is further explained as a climate in which learners experience safety, trust, acceptance,

respect, support, connectedness and satisfaction (Gravett, 2005). A safe humorous environment allows learners to air their views without any constraints or feeling threatened. Sharing humour and laughter is indicative of togetherness and creates a positive emotional social atmosphere conducive to the feeling of safety. Several studies support the findings that humour improves the relationship between learners and their teacher (Ulloth, 2003) and (Aylor and Opplinger, 2003). According to Chauvet and Hofmeyer (2007), a professional relationship between the teacher and the learners is characterised by being safe, open, relaxed, humorous, flexible, exciting, informal, professional and respectful. This implies that the lecturer and learners should uphold these values in order to facilitate and make learning enjoyable rather than the lecturer being feared and unapproachable.

Humour is an ice breaker

Humour has a positive effect on learning, as it draws the learners' attention and makes them want to listen. Participants stated: *"If I have to listen to a lecturer talking endlessly without breaking the ice, I get bored and fall asleep when the lecturer just give a bunch of facts in a monotonous voice, but when jokes are integrated I want to listen more"*. Participants indicated that ice breakers enable them to relate content to what they already know. They agree that ice breaking strategies are funny and can be utilised to facilitate understanding. The following was stated: *"When you start your lecture, do not start with what you are going to teach, start with whatever is happening in the community or in the news that is interesting"*. Others reiterated: *"Ice breaking humour must be done at the beginning of the lesson and in-between especially during double periods where we get tired"*.

According to Restiano (2011) and Bowman (2009), the attention span of adult learners ranges between eight to ten minutes after which the brain begins to lose focus. This is reiterated by Reardon (in Gravett 2005), who remarks that learning is enhanced when one interrupts it for two to five minutes in order to process information. Learners mentioned strategies such as ice breakers, cartoons and verbal jokes as strategies which give them a break from all the work. This implies that the brain needs time to process the information and therefore making a verbal joke may provide such time.

Humour creates a relaxed non-threatening learning environment

The lecturer is responsible for creating an enabling learning environment that embraces democratic values such as freedom to express one's feelings and thoughts (Birbeck and Andre, 2009). Humour sets the tone for a more relaxed atmosphere which in turn creates a positive climate conducive to learning (Pollak and Freda, 1997). The environment should make the learners want to learn and the use of humour is perceived as a psychological tool that can help learners cope with stress and anxiety (Check, 1997).

Participants acknowledged the fact that the nursing curriculum is packed and difficult to understand due to the difficult medical jargon used, and this creates a lot of anxiety and uncertainty as to whether they will successfully learn the content therefore explanation of difficult concepts in the form of humour provides an opportunity to relax and understand the difficult content. Ulloth (2002) contends that some nursing subjects are difficult and threatening to the learners sometimes, and if teachers present the content in a rigid manner with a serious disposition, learners become intimidated. The solution to this problem is to integrate humour when teaching to lower stress levels of learners and hopefully make the learning content less threatening, more palatable and more memorable. A participant highlighted: *“It is easier to study or learn more if you are happy than when sad. . . and when you are happy you enjoy what you are doing hence you do not feel the workload”*.

Where there is anxiety, the brain does not accept information (Check, 1997). This perspective is supported by Story and Butts (2010), and Jensen (2008), who argue that humour reduces learning anxiety and learners learn more when not feeling threatened. A positive non-threatening environment has a positive influence on learners' emotions, which in turn impacts positively on the cognitive stimulation. This means that learners feel free to deliberately engage each other and seek clarity where necessary (Birbeck and Andre, 2009). Such engagement is facilitated by a non-threatening environment as mentioned by Gravett (2005, p.44): *“A non-threatening learning climate is consequently crucial in promoting meaningful learning”*. Cognisance must be taken that it is not only the use of humour that can create a conducive learning environment, many factors and approaches such as cooperative and reflective learning can produce such an environment (Carver, 2013).

Cognitive effects

The development of the learner's intellectual ability entails not only his ability to memorise information and to recall it again at a later stage, but also to capture the learner's attention and to execute a variety of complicated cognitive tasks such as understanding, reasoning, processing of new information, simplifying difficult concepts, integrating theory and practice, making correct association, using divergent thinking and creativity. The following cognitive effects of humour were identified by participants: (a) humour facilitates comprehension, (b) and humour assists in problem-solving situations.

Humour facilitates comprehension

Comprehension is a cognitive activity whereby the learner is not only able to recall but is able to grasp the meaning of information or situations. The use of humour in facilitating learning helps the learner better understand the content as it becomes simpler for them. The related sub-themes that emerged included: humour facilitates the processing of new information, simplifying difficult concepts, and making meaningful associations.

Processing of new information

Learners' receptivity to information alone does not necessarily demonstrate understanding. It merely demonstrates an acceptance of and preference for learning as part of the learner's value system. As learning becomes part of the learner's value system, the learner wants not only to be in a fun class, but also to be able to successfully process the content. Participants remarked: "*Humour gives us a chance to digest what had just been taught and we laugh and it is easier for us to remember or formulate new information*". This is because learning does not refer to receiving and recording pre-packaged information and storing it for later retrieval; it is an active process through which one constructs meaning and transforms understandings (Gravett, 2005). Meaning-making is a process in which one actively constructs one's own knowledge using a pre-existing cognitive structure as a frame of reference.

This means that one has to actively process the information to allow meaningful learning to occur. According to Chabeli (2008) and Carver (2013), when an educator tells a joke related to the content, learners must first recognise and interpret the joke being told by using their own pre-existing

conception of the world as a frame. Once this incongruity is resolved, construction of new meaning and own understanding results. Understanding is one of the processes involved in effective and meaningful learning. This process transforms, either by enriching or revising one's conceptions (Gravett, 2005). According to Dormann and Biddle (2006), humour helps learners construct their own understanding.

Simplifying difficult concepts

Difficult concepts become meaningless to the learner, thus making it even more difficult to master complicated or secondary concepts. Participants indicated: *"Nursing uses difficult words, but if the tutor explain or act them out in the form of a joke, it makes sense and we then understand"*. They further acknowledged that through comic role play, learner participation is enhanced: *"Encourage learners to humorously play the role of how substances such as histamine interact with receptors to produce an allergic response in the body. The learners must continue to demonstrate how a histamine antagonist reverses the effects of histamine"*. In order for the learning content to be meaningful, not only is the use of humour of the essence (Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin, 2010) but meaningful organisation of the content to be role played becomes necessary (Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy, 1993; Carl, 2002). The educator must incorporate humorous activities when an understanding of difficult concepts is needed, for example, allowing learners to role-play the mechanism of action or the side effects of drugs in a funny way. However, the educator must ensure that all medical terms and their translations and transcriptions are well understood beforehand. Once all role players have learnt their roles, they could be asked to creatively decide on how to act their roles. Animated, humorous role-playing by the learners themselves will enable them to construct their own understanding, which may make it possible for them to simplify difficult concepts.

Making meaningful associations

The ability to form correct associations leads to learning. One participant recalled: *"A lecturer who used a funny puppet film to demonstrate the effect of obesity on the functioning of the heart made the content easier by this meaningful association."* The participant further stated that *"Even though we laughed loudly; we could make meaningful association of the effect of obesity on the heart"*. According to the theory of association (Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy 1993), meaningful association can be achieved by selecting the humorous stimuli most suited to the content and conveyed to the learners in the form of films or cartoon pictures. Information-processing theory,

postulates that, both visual (funny picture) and auditory (scenario) stimuli are coded by sensory register as images and sound patterns respectively (Woolfolk, 2010). Once the information is coded in the sensory register, the brain forms perceptions in which the information is categorised and regrouped through pattern discrimination using existing knowledge as a frame of reference. The ability to retrieve prior learning or experiences when feeling positive is higher than when not, because strategies that trigger positive emotions in learners allow the brain to tag the learning experience as important and thus it is able to make connections and better perceptual maps for better understanding (Jensen, 2008).

Humour assists in problem-solving situations

Problem solving can be defined as any situation in which some information is known and other information is needed. It can engage learners in seeking knowledge, processing information, and applying ideas to real world situations, and it has the potential to motivate learners and show them practical reasons for learning. The lecturer can use humourous teaching strategies in order to develop the learners thinking and reasoning skills that is: their ability to analyse situations, to apply their existing knowledge to new situations, to recognise the difference between facts and opinions, and to make objective judgments (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997). According to the participants problem-solving requires; divergent and creative thinking, and promote theory and practice integration.

Promote creative and divergent thinking

Creativity is a fundamental ingredient in finding alternatives by problem-solving and generates originality. Typical characteristics of creativity are: fluency of ideas, elaboration on ideas by going beyond the obvious and including new dimensions (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997). One participant suggested, “*Humour help us to generate ideas and be creative and imaginative.*”

Divergent thinking is an important element in creativity which involves scientific discovery and artistic creation as its defining characteristics (Koestler, in Martin, 2007). These terms are seen as a switch in perspective, or a new way of looking at things which enhances problem solving of a situation (Martin, 2007). It is the positive emotions stimulated by one’s funny personal experience recounted in the form of a story that facilitates the

generation of new information by transforming external information to fit what one already knows (Fiedler, 2001). Funny stories help the learner to move beyond the classroom and look at the problem in a broader perspective. This means that humour in this instance makes the learners reconstruct their own understanding of a funny story being told by someone else. These are believable stories that make learners conscious of the reality of what to expect in the clinical setting. Learners develop divergent thinking because humour goes beyond the obvious to seek new ways of looking at things (De Bono, 1973). When learners are able to resolve the incongruity of humourous stimuli, it indicates flexibility in thinking, thus enabling them to relate to and integrate divergent learning material or course content (Isen, Daubman and Nowicki, in Martin 2007). It is important to integrate positive emotions, as they foster a learner's ability to think creatively and derive personal meaning (Prigge, 2002).

Promote theory and practice integration

The primary purpose of facilitation of teaching and learning in nursing education is to enable learners to apply what they have learnt in clinical situations. When in the clinical area, learners are afforded the opportunity to transfer knowledge to practical situations that they encounter. The purpose of educational programmes is to produce a learner with applied competence. Within the South African National Qualification Framework model, applied competence refers to the learner's ability to integrate concepts, ideas and actions in an authentic real-life context. Applied competence constitutes practical, foundational and reflexive competencies.

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA Act no 58 of 1995) foundational competence refers to the learner's ability to demonstrate the knowledge and thinking that underpin the action taken. This implies that the facilitation of learning using strategies such as acting out in a humourous way as described above can assist the learner to acquire foundational competence which forms the basis for practical competence. If learners know what they are doing and why they are doing it, they are more likely to acquire the ability to perform certain tasks or actions in real-life situations. The educator's role in this instance is to assess the learner's performance and give feedback to enable integration of performance with understanding, thus serving as a connection between the cognitive and psycho-motor domains in order to adapt to a situation at any point in time, referred to as reflexive competence. This integration can be facilitated by use of humour as noted by one participant: "*The process of third stage of labour is quite complicated but*

when we were taught how to help the woman in labour to ease pain, the lecturer did the rocking from side to side, singing funny rhymes, . . . it was quite fun. Now we remember what to do when a woman is in labour."

According to De Young (2009), meaningful transfer of learning is therefore not complete without the ability to use knowledge. New knowledge should bring about change in behaviour that makes the difference in the patient's condition. Barnett and Ceci (in De Young 2009), are of the opinion that successful transfer depends on, among other things, the way in which the material was taught and learned. One participant stated: "*I recall how participating in a humorous role play in which I acted the role of a democratic sister, with my peers acting out other leadership styles, enabled me to demonstrate what I had learnt into practice regarding types of leadership in real life situations*". Humorous play-acting of leadership styles by learners should be made as close to reality as possible. When learners are able to see the similarity between what they are learning in class and what they practically do in a clinical setting, learning becomes possible, thus reducing the gap between theory and practice (Barnett and Ceci, in De Young, 2009). Educators must therefore think deeply about humorous approaches that best address learners' learning concerns.

Negative effects of humour

It was found that learners experienced not only the positive effects of humour, but its negative effects as well. The negative effect mentioned by participants was that humour used inappropriately hinders learning. Two sub-themes emerged concerning negative effects, namely: too much humour detracts learners from learning, and racist jokes result in a loss of interest in learning.

Too much humour distracts learners from learning

The use of too much unrelated humour detracts learners from learning in particular for achievement-orientated learners who concentrate on what counts and avoids acts that waste time (Quinn and Hughes, 2013). Participants referred to the fact that when humour is used inappropriately, for example using too much humour as in engaging in a relentless string of jokes not related to the content, learning is negatively affected. In other words,

learners lose focus on the course objectives because, the teacher concentrates more on the jokes. Participants indicated: *“Incompetent lecturers like to buy time by using a series of jokes until the period ends. Such lecturers cannot be taken seriously. This is attributed to the fact that the lecturer tends to talk about humorous things rather than concentrating on teaching the content”*. Participants went on to say that humour is a good thing: *“Unless the lecturer is hiding incompetency, however when a test is to be set, the same lecturer asks complicated questions which were not taught. Lecturers should not replace the content with a series of jokes and hide behind jokes”*. The implication is that learners may see class attendance as a waste of time (Lei, Cohen and Russler, 2010). This means that the use of too much humour affects the educator’s credibility and may lead to a lack of trust.

Learners’ perception of an educator as incompetent destroys the trust and respect, which in turn negatively impacts on the affective social climate necessary for educator credibility. Due to lack of respect for an educator, there may be increased noise levels in the class, which gets out of control, wasting time that could have been used effectively. This atmosphere hinders learning and is destructive as the humour is not fulfilling its intended purpose (Carver, 2013). Appropriate moderate humour is recommended, as too much diminishes its effect (Story and Butts, 2010).

Racist jokes result in a loss of interest in learning

Racism is a form of prejudice. Educators who use racist jokes create distrust in learners. When differences are obvious, distrust becomes greater (The World Book Encyclopedia International, 1995, Vol. 16, p.52). Participants remarked: *“Lecturer X likes making racist jokes which are directed at certain racial groups and therefore creates lots of mistrust in the learning environment*. Another stated: *“If you keep getting those nasty comments especially made in a language not understood by all learners, we feel very disrespected and demotivated with a very low self-esteem”*. The results showed that participants experienced racist jokes that were directed at certain racial groups. These jokes made learners lose interest in the subject and in learning. Learners then distance themselves from learning activities. Humour that is targeted at individuals or groups is said to be disparaging, for example, targeting a particular racist or ethnic group. This type of humour is classified as inappropriate, as it offends others (Wanzer, Wojtaszczyk and Smith, 2006)

A racist joke that is offensive and threatening to the learner's core sense of identity results in anger and social distancing (Refaie, 2011). This finding is supported by Englert (2010) who argues that if the humour is not suitable or offends learners' racial standing, the result may be social distancing and isolation from their counterparts. If humour is used inappropriately, it can cause divisiveness (Hall 2001, in Wagner and Urios-Aparisi, 2011). These learners feel side-lined, and therefore develop decreased motivation to process course content. According to Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin, (2010), the negative effect generated by inappropriate humour, creates a negative emotion which in turn hinders learning.

The negative emotion that learners claim to experience when racist jokes or belittling remarks are passed includes feeling bad and, offended and having low self-esteem. Any humorous attempt that leaves one feeling belittled does not conform to the expected classroom norms and standards, especially if stated by an authoritative figure like an educator (Wanzer, Wojtaszczyk and Smith, 2006). The results of this study indicated that learners experienced an attack on their personal worth and self-esteem when the educator jokingly uttered nasty remarks and comments under the false pretence of being funny.

It is recommended that educators should conform to the accepted classroom norms and to role-model the type of communication required of the learners. Educators must re-examine their own communication skills and reflect on their own teaching by ensuring a periodic feedback from learners about their inclusion of humour in the classroom. They must revisit the purpose of using humour as an educational strategy and refrain from using humour that targets learners.

The use of humour must facilitate the connection between the educator and the learner and not divide them (Chiasson, in Mantooth, 2010). This can only be achieved if the humour is used appropriately with no belittling remarks and racist jokes targeting other learners. Appropriate humour builds sound relationships between the lecturer and learner, and can be used as an educational vehicle to identify where support is needed. The ideal way would be to integrate humour that fosters a sense of openness and respect between learners and the educator (Shibinski and Martin, 2010).

The effects of absence of humour

This study focuses on the experiences of learner nurses on the effects of humour in facilitating learning, but the absence of humour also emerged as having an influence on learning. An absence of humour creates a tense learning environment, resulting in decreased learner participation.

Absence of humour creates a tense learning environment

Educators who are known by learners to be humourless, serious and rigid, create uncertainty and confusion when they attempt to use humour to draw the learners' attention. One participant remarked: "*Learners do not know whether to laugh or not and even get scared to do so because the educator has never joked with them before. One may not know the motive of sudden use of humour*". Kelly (2005) indicated that some educators consider their jobs too serious. Integrating humour into their teaching would appear inappropriate or unprofessional, and they therefore resort to not using humour in their teaching. Participants remarked: "*We get bored in a classroom without humour and end up sleeping due to boredom as the mind begin to wander. In other words, one's attention is directed at something else*". According to Bowman (2009), when one listens to uninteresting information, the brain starts to create its own internal world, due to lack of stimulation. Absence of stimulation refers to lack of emotional involvement: for example, listening to the same monotonous voice with no element of surprise or interest. As Wolfe (in Bowman, 2009, p.30) puts it, "the brain normally becomes so accustomed to the stimulus that it ignores it". This means that the attention is no longer focused on learning, but is elsewhere, which is not conducive to learning. According to participants, a lesson without humour is not only boring but the atmosphere becomes tense and does not automatically permit learners to ask questions. The fear arises from not knowing how the lecturer will react due to his or her serious nature and disposition.

Participants verbalised: "*Those who are so serious and do not incorporate humour in teaching demonstrates their authoritative position*". Story and Butts (2010) noted that this type of educational experience is oppressive and places students in spectator roles instead of them becoming inspired by an interactive process of co-learning. Seemingly, in this instance, learners are not inspired. The approach that focuses on rigid presentation of the subject within

an allocated time is a teacher-centred traditional approach to teaching and learning and contributes to learner passiveness. Once the purpose of incorporating humour to content has been identified, one does not have to try too hard to make the content interesting, since one can use the kind of humour that suits one's personality (Narula, Chaudhary, Agarwal and Narula, 2011; Shibinski and Martin, 2010).

Recommendations

The following recommendations were adapted from Wanzer, Wojtaszczyk and Smith (2006): an educator who is not comfortable with being a source of humour will benefit from using other types of humorous content, e.g. cartoons, animations and funny videos. Those who are not comfortable with any type of humour should consider using verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviours such as smiling, laughing, vocal variety and amusing gestures. Educators that are novices in using humour must observe those who actively use humour to share in best practices. It is advisable to have a collection of humorous jokes from the internet or any other source. Staff development departments must include regular development sessions to train educators on using electronic media to find and extract humour-related material. It is therefore recommended that educators be introduced to the benefits of the use of humour in the class, and the effects of its absence. This instruction must include the consequences of the use of inappropriate humour. It is also recommended that research-based guidelines for the integration of humour to facilitate learning be developed.

Implications

The realisation that the facilitation of learning through humour is another fun way to educate, is not to be misused, as time lost cannot be regained. Too much humour wastes time and distracts learners from focusing on course objectives. Using humour does not mean that an educator lacks discipline and cannot exercise proper classroom management or control. The responsibility and power to ensure class control and discipline is vested in the educator irrespective of the teaching approach used. Therefore, nurse educators need to be made aware of the negative effects as well as the effect of the absence of humour. It is necessary to adhere to a time schedule when incorporating

humorous strategies, in order to ensure effective time management. This can be done by planning the use of humour in advance, during the preparation of a lesson, so as to effectively incorporate it into the content.

Conclusion

Educators who fear using humour in their teaching might not be aware of the benefits of humour to learning and thus deny learners and themselves an opportunity of creating an enjoyable learning environment that facilitates understanding and retention through humour. There is a need for such educators to emulate those that are humour-oriented, and to get the feel of the use of humour. This will help them realise that their job does not have to be too serious and that they too can use humour and still be appropriate and professional. It is understood that not all educators are humour-oriented and that it is not only through humour that a conducive learning environment can be created. Educators who are not humour-oriented must first be made aware of the benefits of humour to learning. Secondly, they must be assisted in determining the purpose for the use of humour, and how humour can be integrated into the content to enhance understanding. Research-based guidelines could be of assistance in this regard (Garner, 2006).

It is also recommended that a similar study be replicated to validate the findings in other nursing education contexts. This will enhance the transferability of the findings to other educational institutions.

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Neoliberalism, education and ‘the neglect of knowledge’

A review essay of *Selling out Education: National Qualifications Frameworks and the neglect of knowledge* - Stephanie Allais. Rotterdam: Sense 2014

Paula Ensor

Any opportunity for us to examine an issue of global educational significance through the lens of South African experience is one to be celebrated. Allais’ book is an excellent and timely example of this as she grapples with an issue of South African complexity and offers lessons to educationalists tackling similar issues here and in other parts of the world. She has written a stimulating, insightful and provocative book, part scholarly monograph, part polemic, which will be of interest to educationalists across the spectrum of educational studies, both inside and outside of South Africa.

In her introduction Allais indicates that her primary aim in writing the book “is to convince educationalists about the value of organized bodies of knowledge, and that a primary role of education is assisting learners to acquire this knowledge; consequently, bodies of knowledge should be the starting point of curriculum design” (Allais, 2014, p.xv). She advances this position against those who privilege the ‘everyday’ within the curriculum, or competence and skills, or who in other ways promote instrumentalism or ‘relevance’ in educational offerings. In doing so, she draws on a substantial amount of work that has, in one way or another, addressed this issue (see for example contributions by Muller, Taylor, Moore, Young and Young and Muller in the bibliography of this book).

Allais sets out the three main arguments that span the book as follows: firstly, that the economy (by which she means neoclassical frameworks) has subjected education to the logic of the market and profoundly shaped the ways in which education is now understood and delivered; secondly, that education is presented as the solution to major social and economic problems which it is unable to address; and thirdly, that it is necessary to explain the “curious agreement” that has emerged between those on the “left” who have

promoted education reform, and those on the “right” who have advanced educational policies “that derive from neoliberalism” (p.xxii).

At the heart of the book lies the South African National Qualifications Framework, the local and international context within which it has emerged, its social logic, and its failure to deliver on any of the major promises made by its advocates at its inception. The SANQF rests on two central planks – learning outcomes and learner centredness – which together shape the way in which curricula are constructed. Both regard knowledge as ‘flat’, segmental and arbitrary. Allais returns at various points in the book to the issue of learning outcomes, the impact they have on curriculum design, and the importance of constructing curricula that take knowledge, the “heritage of humanity” (p.215), as a starting point.

Allais understands the NQF as an outcome of neoliberal insistence on the market, which has permeated state policy and reshaped the function of the state from provider of services to regulator of service providers. Market thinking in her view has also penetrated significant sections of the academy. She argues that educational policy internationally is shifting increasingly towards the rhetoric of ‘relevance’ and the making of curricula that are germane to work and everyday life, thereby purportedly addressing many of the social problems that emerge as a result of the rolling back of the welfare state and the introduction of new forms of regulation. Education is regarded as the solution to these deep-seated problems, and thereby set up as a scapegoat in that it cannot deliver on what is unreasonably expected of it.

The emergence of neoliberalism and the development of national qualifications frameworks in Scotland, UK, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa has resulted in the ‘export’ of qualifications frameworks to other parts of the world, especially poor and middle income countries, and Allais provides a graphic account of pitiful and expensive failure. Allais explores the relationships between qualifications frameworks, educational provision and labour markets, suggesting that the emergence of such frameworks is symptomatic of the weakness of such relationships rather than a mechanism to strengthen them.

A critique of neoliberalism courses through the book, and drawing on the work of Fine and Milonakis (p.175), Allais argues that “neoclassical economics imperialism” has penetrated educational policy, research and practice as well as the social sciences more broadly. This penetration has not,

in her terms, found adequate opposition, and this she attributes largely to the influence of postmodernism. The discussion of neoclassical economics imperialism and postmodernism is set up to provide a context for Allais to advance an explanation for why the 'left-wing' have either actively supported qualifications frameworks, or failed to adequately critique them. Postmodernist and constructionist approaches (which she regards as "epistemologically weak") (p.200) have either overlapped in their support of neoliberal educational policies, or failed to provide adequate opposition to them.

This very compressed summary of the book provides a glimpse of Allais' breadth of interest. The strength of the book lies in this wide scope, and the ways in which it uses the experience of the South African Qualifications Framework to engage with educational issues across a broad spectrum, to illustrate how educational policy is shaped by economic and social pressures, and to problematise the relationship between education and labour markets. One does not have to agree with the moves she makes, or the positions she adopts, to recognise the importance of the book in painting this broad canvas. I expect that it will serve as grist for discussions in education for some time to come. While I am critical of aspects of the book, which I discuss further below, I regard it as a significant and refreshing contribution to the field. Refreshing particularly because of its polemical aspects, by which means Allais pins her colours to the mast and sets out her own educational commitments regarding the NQF and education more generally.

Adopting a polemical style, as Allais does in parts of the book, has recognisable strengths in that it shaves off ambiguity and targets issues directly by setting them up in particularly sharp relief. In a field such as education where the stakes are high, and the intellectual and material resources for dealing with them are not always as robust as they should be, establishing clarity about the issues and naming those agents who promote and hinder change is understandable. The downside is that at times the polarities are perhaps too sharply drawn, too little evidence is provided to make the case, and the claims made are too sweeping. For example, many sociologists will be surprised at the following suggestion made in the book:

Referring to any kind of resource as capital cedes conceptual ground to neoclassical economics, and digs us deeper and deeper into a conceptual morass (Allais, 2014, p.184) [. . .] including Bourdieu's more nuanced notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973, 1984). By using the term to refer to social resources, trust, knowledge, networks, or any of the other

aspects of society which have been labelled as a kind of ‘capital’, we are accepting an economic re-writing of society as a whole (Allais, 2014, p.185).

The trenchant critique made by Allais of postmodernism and its political cul-de-sac is apt but ignores the contribution of scholarship (which she might describe as ‘postmodernist’) to our understanding of the workings of power and inequality, consumerism and the commodification of culture, and of identity formation.

Notwithstanding this and other criticisms I have about lack of precision in some of the arguments, the book is a welcome contribution to educational debate in South Africa and one that all students of education should be encouraged to read. Allais has made a sharp critique of the potential effects of neoliberalism on education which is timely and important, especially given the proliferation of qualifications frameworks internationally. In raising my concerns I do not wish to diminish the contribution of her work but to contribute to meaningful discussion of the issues she raises.

My first concern relates to what Allais means by a ‘national qualifications framework’. As she concedes, there are many frameworks in existence globally, which are built according to different logics and which consequently have different effects. While she makes the concession that there is variability in type, she does not always make clear what form of framework draws her ire. It seems to me that there are at least three fundamental dimensions of variation in relation to national qualifications frameworks: firstly, whether they are based on whole qualifications or unit standards; secondly, whether they are compulsory or voluntary; and thirdly, whether they are intended to span all educational sectors, or only vocational education. I felt that the book needed to clarify this variation explicitly from the outset. It makes a fundamental difference whether an NQF is based on unit standards or on whole qualifications. The Scottish QF and the Australian QF, for example, appear to have started life as mechanisms for positioning whole qualifications comparatively, and were not intended to span formal education and training. The New Zealand QF was born as a unit-standards based framework, but was not compulsory, and higher education for example withdrew very early on.

What distinguishes the South African experiment is that it was compulsory, based on unit standards, and was intended to embrace all facets of education and training. At its heart lay the logic of credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), which Allais does not refer to in these terms. In its original conception,

CAT framed the logic of the SANQF, and was intended to penetrate the school system to include the FET level as well. The difference between an NQF built on unit standards and one built on whole qualifications is crucial, and the impact (and potential damage to the system) of each follows on from this. Whole qualifications frameworks are not necessarily framed by outcomes, as Allais concedes. They are able to generate outcomes on the basis of existing qualifications and arrange these in some kind of hierarchy in order to make judgements about commonality and difference.

A units-standards based qualification framework based on credit accumulation and transfer is a different kettle of fish altogether, and it is this type that draws the heat of Allais' rejection of NQFs in general. Such an NQF rests on a fundamental assumption: that knowledge can be broken up into what Allais describes as 'bits', and that different 'bits', generated within different contexts, can be rendered equivalent. The NQF assumes that there is an invariant quality to all forms of knowledge that allows the 'different bits' to be compared on a common framework. Level descriptors provide the rungs upon which unit standards are to be arranged. As Allais shows in her critique, this framework has failed, either to achieve equivalence, or to improve qualifications, or to promote recognition of prior learning, or to strengthen vocational training, and has failed at huge cost.

Because the different kinds of possible NQFs are not consistently and visibly demarcated in the book it is not always clear which forms have been exported. Chapters 4 and 8 describe a large number of countries, particularly poor and middle-income countries, which have been persuaded to implement NQFs. However it is not always apparent whether the frameworks have been implemented at all, and where they have been, whether they are based on whole qualifications or unit standards, or whether they are voluntary or compulsory. It seems that the export process has entailed for the most part the take up of qualifications frameworks for vocational training only. It would have been helpful to summarise this crucially important research in, for example, tabular form so as to gain a clearer picture of which frameworks are being implemented, and how.

A further concern is the way in which Allais takes up the notion of 'learner centredness' and curriculum construction. The CAT approach to building a NQF is used by Allais to launch a criticism of 'learner centredness' in general, which she takes to mean the design of curricula based on the needs and interests of learners rather than on organised bodies of knowledge. While

I am sympathetic to Allais' general point about the problematic notion of 'relevance' and to her criticism of the fragmentation entailed by the unit standards approach, the use of 'learner centredness' to describe the pathology she wishes to identify is perhaps unhelpful. Its reach is too broad, the polarities too stark, and it risks targeting also those who might share her concerns. As Allais concedes, 'learner centredness' can apply to curricula (shaping the way these are structured) and to pedagogy (taking the needs, interests and experience of learners as a starting point in teaching from these 'bodies of knowledge'). She is in favour of the latter, but not the former. But I would argue that 'learner centredness' enters into curriculum construction as part of the mechanism whereby knowledge becomes curriculum.

Bernstein (1990) makes the point that the physics (or mathematics, or history) that learners encounter in school is not the same as that encountered by university students, or by mathematics or physics researchers. School physics is formed by drawing selectively from physics as an academic discipline. "The rules of relation, selection, sequencing, and pacing [. . .] cannot themselves be derived from some logic internal to physics nor from the practices of those who produce physics. *The rules of the production of physics are social, not logical, facts.*" (Bernstein 1990, p.185 my emphasis). Putting this differently, it is the moral order of society and of education which shapes what knowledge is selected, how it is distributed and how it is configured. The 'bodies of knowledge' of physics and other disciplines are recontextualised to form the curriculum of schools, universities and colleges, on the basis of what are determined to be the purposes of education and the needs, capacities and interests of learners at any point in time. Number theory is a highly complex domain of mathematical enquiry, but it is not taught in the foundation phase. Rather, children learn to count and to calculate using their fingers or other tokens, and then progressively learn to abstract from this concrete apparatus to manipulate numbers as concepts. Number theory cannot guide teachers and curriculum planners on how to construct a curriculum but offers an important resource for this to happen. The hierarchy at play in the Foundation Phase is not the hierarchy of mathematics, but a constructed cognitive hierarchy of learning that has come to be accepted as a natural trajectory for all children.

Throughout the book Allais returns many times to the importance of internally organised bodies of knowledge that need to be acquired, and cites mathematics as a particular example of a subject exhibiting a "clear hierarchical structure" (Allais, 2014, p.158). But it is arguable whether a

single unique hierarchy organises mathematical knowledge, either within the discipline or within formal education. The Bourbakists attempted from the 1930s to develop such a disciplinary hierarchy on a set-theoretic basis, and efforts were made to replicate this in schools as 'new maths' in the 1960s. This was a failure on two counts. Set theory failed to provide the axiomatic foundations for the organisation of mathematics, and teaching set theory to school learners did not significantly advance their mathematical thinking. Similarly it is questionable whether unique hierarchies organise history, literature, biology, geography et cetera. The challenge for teachers and curriculum planners is to construct vertically robust and coherent pathways from disciplinary knowledge in order to induct students into conceptual understanding. This understanding is configured differently at different levels of the education system, and the age of learners, for example, is an important consideration in developing curricula that offer worthwhile and powerful forms of knowledge in a coherent way. It is hard to see how any curriculum can be constructed without considering the needs, capabilities and interests of learners, so in this sense every worthwhile curriculum is 'learner-centred'. Allais concedes that consideration of learners' needs is an important dimension in curriculum construction, but the concession is at times obscured by the valid criticism of a version of 'learner-centredness' which promotes the experience of the child rather than the acquisition of knowledge (a position which, parenthetically, I do not consider Dewey to be guilty of). Perhaps the difficulty is in part because of the use of the terminology, and using 'progressivism' rather than 'learner centredness' to target very specific forms of curriculum construction may have served the argument better.

My third concern relates to Allais' use of the term 'education'. It is not always clear what stands at the forefront of her attention when she discusses the needs of education, and especially the need to concentrate efforts on the acquisition of powerful forms of knowledge. At times it becomes clear that she is discussing the education system as a whole, at other times she is in fact discussing vocational education, and at other times she is discussing a specific variant of qualifications framework. This becomes problematic when the CAT-type qualifications frameworks that she uses to exemplify neoliberal education, with their emphasis on outcomes, on market relevance, on knowledge as "little bits of information" (p.172), are made to stand for the education system as a whole.

Ambiguity about what constitutes 'education' also seems to imply that all domains of education are of a piece, with the same interests and requirements,

and subject to the same threats. One of the difficulties of a national qualifications framework of the South African type as originally conceived is that it rests upon sectors that are different in their symbolic structures and modes of social organisation. If Allais is making the claim that the needs and requirements of education and training are the same, then we need to understand the commonality of their social base. The SANQF sought to integrate education and training without considering the specificity of each. Formal education institutions (universities, colleges and schools) for the most part negotiate discursively elaborated knowledge in specialised sites set aside exclusively for learning. The institutional boundary between formal education, work and everyday life is usually a strong one. Vocational education entails discursively elaborated as well as tacit knowledge, and requires direct teaching as well as modelling in the site of practice. Allais cites Gamble in relation to vocational education as follows: “evaluative criteria reside not only with the master, they reside in the master as the carrier of the collective knowledge tradition” (Gamble, cited in Allais, p.161). This is not the case with formal education, where the ‘collective knowledge tradition’ stands independently of those who transmit and evaluate it.

The idea that students in vocational education should have access to powerful forms of knowledge is a compelling one, but we need to go further to spell out what the specificities of vocational education are, and how the links between vocational education and occupations might be meaningfully made. Unless we outline the specificities of vocational education and schooling we end up with yet another proposal to integrate education and training, this time on the terms of formal education rather than of training.

This difficulty is particularly starkly framed in the last chapter of the book where Allais’ attention is focussed almost entirely on schooling. Given the challenges she points to throughout the book that face vocational education in so many parts of the world I hoped to find more discussion of how we might move forward to improve matters in this area. I accept that there is no ‘magic bullet’ to resolve the many challenges relating to education and the labour market, and strongly endorse her call to build strong institutions to provide high quality education. But given our experience in vocational education since 1994 it would have been useful to find at least a review of the main lines of debate to date, and the policy implications of these. A more pressing challenge facing schooling at the present time is not the framing of curricula in terms of unit standards, but the very strong emphasis placed on assessment targets and testing which is a fragmenting strategy of another kind. The threat of

competence-based approaches and the fragmentation associated with them is named as a threat to vocational and adult education, but these are not discussed in much detail at all. At many points in the book Allais advances the argument that we must prioritise knowledge in the making of curriculum but there is little detail of how this should be achieved in relation to vocational or adult education, except to argue strongly for the need to promote verticality and coherence in vocational education.

My fourth concern with the book is the attempt to explain how the 'left' (which incidentally is never defined in the book) have come to support NQFs and other educational policies emerging from the neoliberal right. She suggests there are three possible reasons for this: that the 'left' believes these qualifications frameworks are "potentially liberatory" in spite of the risk of co-option by the right-wing (p.189); that the "centre left has conceded so much conceptual ground to the right that there are few fundamental differences between them" (p.189) or thirdly, "that the epistemological ideas traditionally favoured by many left-wing educationalists in fact weakens education, by leaving it with no intrinsic criteria or sense of specificity, which has opened it up to being redescribed in economic language" (p.189)

The discussion on these three points is extended, and at the risk of oversimplification in reducing this to a nutshell, it appears that Allais, drawing on the work of Fine and Milonakis, is suggesting that weak epistemology in the social sciences, attributed largely to the influence of postmodernism, has enabled neoclassical economics to colonise the social sciences and reduce scholarly enquiry to the categories and imperatives of the market. This has eroded the capacity of the social sciences in general, and education in particular, to mount an effective critique of neoliberal policies in education.

At a rhetorical level the arguments are thought provoking and interesting and it would be productive to explore how far they work empirically, both in form and extent. It is not explained why neoclassical economics (which has been around for over a century) has now come to decisively frame the social sciences (and education) globally, nor are we given illustrations of how this colonisation has worked itself out methodologically and theoretically across the social sciences and education, and in policy and practice. The focus here is almost entirely at the level of contesting ideas, rather than on social groups,

their material interests and how these play out in the field of education and elsewhere.

The surfacing of group interests (and not simply the complex contestation of ideas, and who is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’) would assist in explaining why elements of the ‘left’ in South Africa supported the NQF, and why so many employers and workers have now lost faith in it. The proposal promised the improvement of educational standards and a massive expansion of access to education. It promised accreditation of workers on the shop floor who had for decades performed jobs for which job reservation had denied them certification. It promised to adults who had been forced through poverty to leave formal schooling at an early age the opportunity to learn again, become qualified, and alter their conditions of life. The SANQF was supported by many of those who had committed themselves to the struggle against apartheid because it was believed to advance the conditions of poor people. Neoliberalism and postmodernism had little traction in the minds of those who took seriously the promise of a better life for all. If the epistemological resources for critique have been so badly compromised, how do we explain that formal education freed itself so early on from the CAT logic, and that the NQF has shrunk to a shadow of its former self?

Bodies of knowledge, our ‘human heritage’ as Allais puts it so well, stand as a powerful resource for the constructing of curricula, but I question whether they are able to form the ‘starting point’. Bodies of knowledge have no agency. As Bernstein (2000) points out, political interests (via the pedagogic device) contest the rules for the selection and distribution of knowledge in the making of curricula in any historical conjuncture. It is not simply neoliberalism as an ideology that configures our moral order today, but globalisation, a radical form of social restructuring that enables global capital to transform production, capital flows, trade, labour markets and the nation state internationally, concentrating massive wealth in the hands of the few and creating unemployment and poverty for the multitude. How do we envision a new moral order which redeems all sectors of education from the threats which Allais so sharply identifies, and which at the same time acknowledges our position in a globalised world? Access to powerful bodies of knowledge and strong educational institutions to offer them is necessary but not sufficient. A new social and moral order is required to establish new grounds for making curricula. There is a substantial body of literature which spells out the implications of what Bernstein (2001) calls the “totally pedagogised society” (p.365); the eroding of solidarity and commitment, the hollowing out

of identity and the installation of what Stephen Ball refers to as a form of “economic Darwinism”: “adapt, evolve or become irrelevant” (Ball 2009, p.203). The challenge is to develop a vision for education that takes us beyond this, a vision which can provide a ‘starting point’ for making powerful curricula in our time.

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Knowledge and knowers by Karl Maton

A review essay

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Fiona Jackson

Abstract

This article outlines selected aspects of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), as presented in Maton's book *Knowledge and Knowers: Towards a realist sociology of education* (2014), and considers their usefulness to the field of education research, in particular, for language education. An introduction to key LCT concepts is provided highlighting their analytic power for the investigation of the varying forms of educational knowledge structures, knower roles and what forms of pedagogic practices promote or inhibit cumulative learning. The notion of 'context', in relation to LCT's concept of semantic gravity and decontextualised knowledge forms, is considered alongside Cummins' notions of contextualised and decontextualised language. The importance of further research into what is meant by 'context' in relation to pinpointing the nature of contextualised and decontextualised knowledge, and the nature of forms of cumulative learning is raised.

Knowledge and Knowers: Towards a realist sociology of education (2014) distils the evolution of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), while emphasising issues of knowers and their practices. The sweep of the book is large, complex and theoretically dense, addressing more issues than can be usefully considered in a single article. Areas such as Maton's discussion of LCT's foundation in Bourdieu's field theory and Bernstein's code theory, while important to engage within order to understand fully the theoretical lineage of LCT, will not be discussed in detail here. I focus on those aspects that seem most immediately provocative and generative for research into pedagogical practice (using issues in relation to language education as exemplars) – the dimensions of Specialisation and Semantics. However, I begin with brief contextualisation of these dimensions within LCT as a whole, sketching its roots in the thinking of Bourdieu and Bernstein.

LCT locates itself within a social realist paradigm, drawing particularly upon the sociological theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, while pursuing the goal of building a sociology of knowledge that addresses the gap of 'knowledge blindness' (Maton, 2014) in educational research. This gap,

Maton argues, is the result of prior intensive research foci on *relations to* knowledge, for example, as in relations of social power to knowledge. Consequently, knowledge itself is under-researched and constructing a sociology of knowledge requires working with an understanding of knowledge as something *real*, with different types of knowledge varying in structure, properties and effects. However Maton also argues that taking knowledge seriously is no license to valorise it at the expense of forms of knowing rooted in knower practices, hence the focus of the book on knowers as well as knowledge.

Legitimation Code Theory¹ addresses issues of social practice, aiming to identify and articulate the underlying organisational principles of social fields. It sees people as agents operating, both collaboratively and competitively, in fairly independent, yet interlinked social arenas. Drawing on Bourdieu, it argues the goal of much social practice is to achieve maximum relational gain, in terms of social control, position and prestige. Each field works uniquely, with distinctive types of prestige and sets of resources. Yet beneath the particularities lie similar generative principles which LCT works to excavate and understand. Currently LCT has identified dimensions of Autonomy, Density, Temporality, Specialisation and Semantics. *Knowledge and Knowers* focuses on the educational field, setting out how the dimensions of Specialisation and Semantics contribute to the building of a sociology of knowledge and knowers. Maton argues that knowledge in itself is under-researched, but cautions that taking it seriously is not to valorise it at the expense of forms of knowing rooted in knower practices.

Located within a social realist paradigm, LCT understands knowledge as neither purely cognitive nor social. Maton argues against construing knowing only as inner mental processes, or on focusing attention solely on knowledge as social power. Intensive scrutiny of relations *to* knowledge in educational research has led to the serious gap of 'knowledge blindness' (Maton, 2014). LCT assumes we build knowledge collectively as well as individually, socially as well as cognitively. New knowledge arises out of extant knowledge that has been crafted and evaluated by socially contingent actors engaged in relationally strategic manoeuvres within particular fields. Bernstein's code theory is harnessed to sharpen the analytic focus provided by Bourdieu's field theory. Code theory helps unravel how knowledge structures

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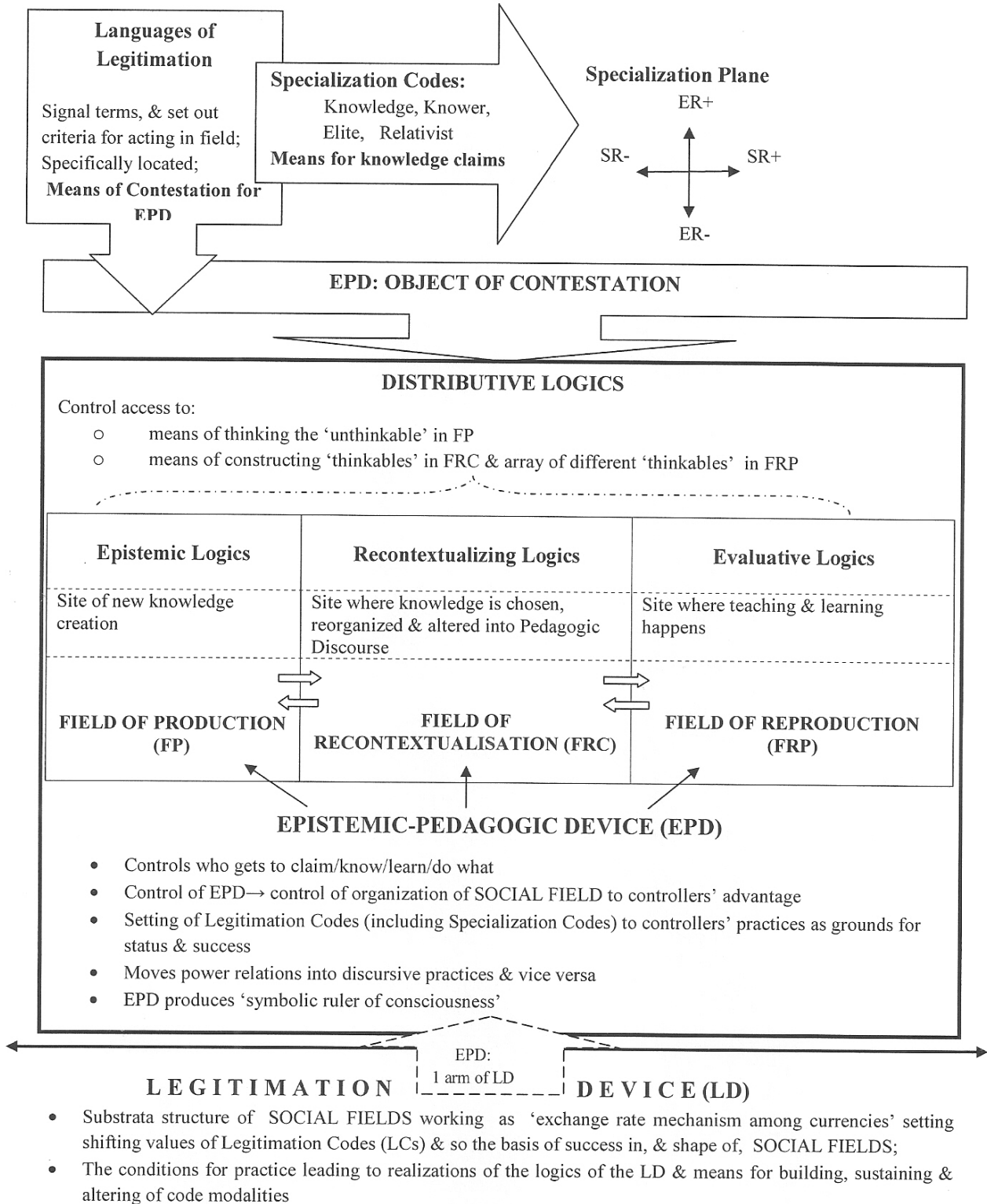
For more information on Legitimation Code Theory see the LCT website: www.legitimationcodetheory.com

impact upon fields, focusing attention on knowledge as the medium of the educational message; on how knowledge practices themselves are structured. By extending Bernstein's 'pedagogic device' into the 'epistemic-pedagogic device' Maton provides the means to analyse knowledge and knower practices across intellectual, curricular and pedagogic fields. LCT thereby extends, enlarges and synthesises selected concepts from both field and code theory, developing rather than displacing them; establishing an explanatory framework for the cumulative theorisation of the underlying organisational principles of knowledge and knowing.

While Maton's exposition of LCT, via its prior chronological development, illustrated with numerous examples from substantive empirical studies, is a strength I hankered for a clear synoptic overview of the inter-relationship of the components of LCT. Figure 1, on page 3, shows my initial 'mapping' of just one set of legitimation codes – those from the Specialisation dimension. The diagram reads most logically from the bottom up.

Maton posits the Legitimation Device (LD) as the deep, generative level of organisational principles regulating all social fields, the agents operating within them, and their practices. He uses the metaphor of a currency exchange for its actions, revealing partial roots in Bourdieu's notion of 'capital'. Thus actors enter and operate in social fields with varying forms and quantities of social currency, or 'value'. The Legitimation Device controls how people interact and exchange their social currencies. Those with maximum power over the Legitimation Device regulate which Legitimation Codes have most power, and thus what counts as legitimate within the fields. The operations of the Legitimation Device thus form social fields as active 'fields of possibilities' (2014) in perpetual flux. Actors within these fields work both together and against each other in order to leverage the largest gains in attaining the most prestigious relational positions, and in controlling what counts as prestige. The practices of actors, which can be both explicit and tacit, comprise languages of legitimation that count as competing claims for legitimation.

Figure 1: Interrelations of Legitimation Device and Epistemic-Pedagogic Device and Specialisation Codes (Jackson’s ‘Mapping’)



The ‘epistemic-pedagogic device’, one arm of the LD, pertains to issues of knowledge and education. Its revision and extension of Bernstein’s ‘pedagogic device’ provides a way of understanding arenas of social struggle across three fields of practice: the fields of production, recontextualisation and reproduction. The field of production is the site of the genesis of new knowledge, of the ‘unthinkable’ – what people such as scientists, academics, poets, artists and inventors generate. The field of recontextualisation is the site for the selection from the knowledge of the field of production, its rearrangement and transformation into forms for pedagogic communication. The field of reproduction is the site where the teaching and learning of recontextualised knowledge happens. Each field operates according to its own specific logics, meaning it is problematic to conflate the forms of operation of fields as identical. However, individuals such as university academics may operate across all three fields. For example, an applied linguistics lecturer may conduct original research on how language is deployed differently in corporate meetings and written documents arising from such meetings. This may contribute to the development of theories of corporate communication and the relations between spoken and written discourses (field of production). The lecturer may write a textbook on corporate communication for undergraduate university students (field of recontextualisation), and then may teach in an undergraduate course on corporate communication (field of reproduction), focusing on strategies for effective communication in meetings and written documents. A lecturer setting out to theorise their practices in each field, would need to work with a conscious understanding that each field operates according to its own logics.

The shift from Bernstein’s conception of field ‘rules’ to Maton’s of field ‘logics’ seeks to prevent false claims that they propose practices as deterministically rule governed. The mapping of the EPD also highlights that knowledge moves in many paths, with the bi-directional arrows showing recontextualisation happening between fields. The right-to-left arrows indicate that artifacts from recontextualisation fields can be intellectualised or absorbed into production fields as a part of ‘prior’ knowledge that acts as ‘raw material’ for the genesis of fresh knowledge. For example, student essays produced within a corporate communication course may be the subject of research into knowledge building and/or communication processes within the field of communication education. Insights from such research may contribute to the building of communication and genre theory. In addition, educational knowledge (from the reproduction field) can be re-curricularised (extracted from, re-directed, moved to) as curricular product of recontextualisation

fields. For example, following analysis essays by corporate communication students may be transformed with theorised annotations and wrap around text relating salient aspects of genre theory to the essays, and included in a book on academic writing for communication students.

Maton's other key revision of Bernstein's model is to argue that distributive rules do not control the practices of the field of production. While Bernstein's model asserts that every field has its own distinct practices, the unique practices of the field of production remain unspecified. Maton further argues that the rules controlling the field of production are not mainly distributive, but that distributive logics relate to all fields of the EPD, reaching across the activities of the whole arena. Distributive logics illuminate that "a precondition for playing the game is entering the arena" (2014, p.51). This implies that the EPD regulates not only who has access to 'thinking the unthinkable' (means to control, as well as generate, the genesis of new knowledge) via participation in production fields, but also who has access to the means of constructing 'thinkables' in recontextualisation fields and to an array of different 'thinkables' in reproduction fields. Thus, if epistemic, recontextualising and evaluative logics regulate the various 'whats', then distributive logics regulate "who enjoys access to which 'whats'" (2014, p.51). Therefore the EPD sets out the key components and deep principles underlying people's contestations to control which criteria of achievement prevail and the 'conversion rates' among them. Consequently, the people who control the EPD control the 'ruler of legitimacy' in key social arenas and secure the greatest reach and impact for their own location in status hierarchies.

The idea of 'languages of legitimation' illuminates both the sociological nature of knowledge practices and the epistemological nature of potentially legitimate knowledge claims. Languages of legitimation underpin the practices of actors and simultaneously count as claims for the legitimacy of their actions, or, "for the organising principles embodied by their actions" (2014, p.24). They constitute the grounds for contesting claims to scarce supplies of prestige and material goods. Thereby they are positions strategically adopted with the purpose of maximising the advantage of the locations of agents inside a "relationally structured field" (2014, p.24). They signal the terms and criteria for acting in a field and are specifically located within particular versions moulded by the actors' positions and perspectives. So languages of legitimation constitute organising principles that have consequences. Firstly their innate compositions are neither uniform nor

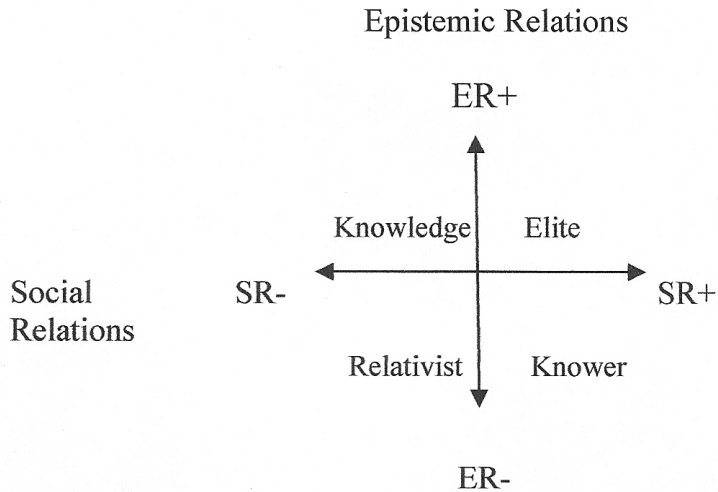
impartial. Secondly, the structure of a language moulds the potential of what can be communicated. This conception of languages of legitimation facilitates a focus both on analyses of ‘relations to’ knowledge practices and analyses of ‘relations within’ knowledge practices.

In relation to knowledge practices languages of legitimation are realised (in one dimension) as epistemic relations and social relations that constitute specialisation codes. Specialisation refers to the reality that all human practices and beliefs are both:

- (a) about, or positioned towards something, thus involving relations to objects of focus, and
- (b) by someone, thereby concerned with relations to subjects.

In highlighting the co-existence of these elements within all human activity, Maton facilitates a conceptually whole focus, signalling the salience of attending both to issues of knowledge in itself, and identity and social formation. Maton analytically differentiates between ‘epistemic relations’ (referring to relations between practices and their objects) and ‘social relations’ (referring to relations between practices and their subjects or originators). Epistemic relations illuminate issues of what can legitimately be named as knowledge, while social relations focus on who can assert themselves as legitimate knowers. These concepts are deployed using Bernstein’s notions of classification and framing. Classification refers to the strength of boundary maintenance between situations. Framing refers to the location of control inside contexts. Stronger framing points to greater control from above. Therefore, stronger epistemic relations refer to practices which place firm boundaries and control around what can legitimately constitute objects of study and what procedures may be used. Stronger social relations refer to the placement of strong boundaries and control around who may be recognised as legitimate knowers.

Maton argues against dichotomising typologies in educational research, and so visualises epistemic relations and social relations as intersecting continua that generate a Cartesian plane which produces a topological space comprising four specialisation codes – knowledge, elite, knower, relativist as set out in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Cartesian Plane – Specialisation Codes

This topological space provides possibilities for separate variations in the strength of epistemic relations and social relations. The mapping of infinite numbers of positions along continua of relative strengths is thus possible, along with the tracing of shifts of position within quadrants.

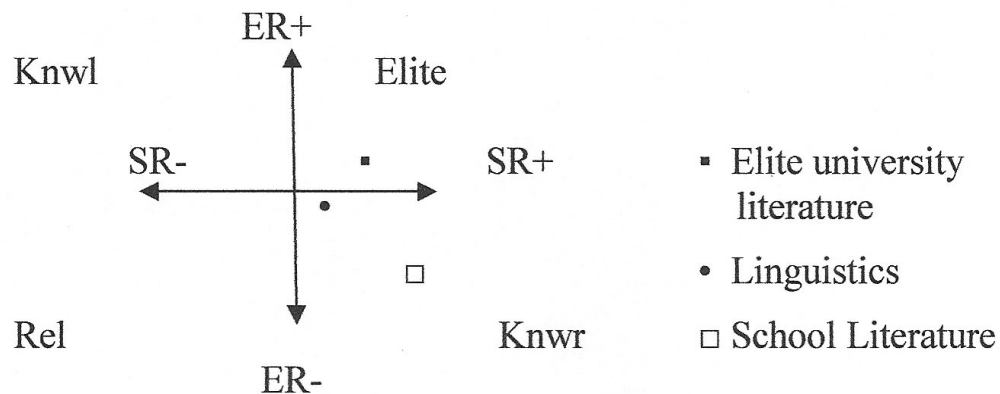
Knowledge codes are those which strongly mark off what counts as legitimate objects and/or methods of study, while backgrounding the salience of personal attributes of those who do the studying. This is schematised as ER+ SR-. Physics is typically an example of such a code, where specialised knowledge of particular objects of study using strongly controlled procedures is stressed. In principle, there is no social restriction on who may claim legitimate physics knowledge, as long as they master the accepted procedures for knowledge building in physics.

In contrast, knower codes (SR+ ER-) ground assertions of legitimacy in particular kinds of knowers. There is stronger classification and framing of social relations – *who* makes claims is the most important factor in terms of ideal knower traits. Differences between knowers are thus stressed. Wide ranging knowledge assertions, methods and procedures are largely a matter of individual choice. Social knower codes aim to speak the experiences of knowers with truth being established via the ‘voice’.

In the field of reproduction this points to the possibilities of nuanced plotting of variable positions. For example, in relation to English Studies, the study of literature in schools can usually be placed as a knower code, where social

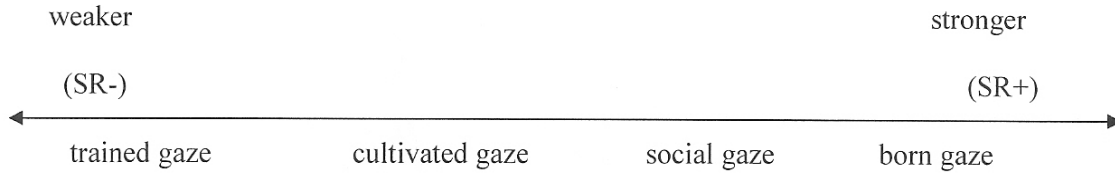
relations predominate in relation to the importance of knowers' responses to literature (usually through cultivation, developing the dispositions of knowers into a range of possible literary gazes). However, where the focus of study is linguistic, while the placement is still likely to be within the knower code quadrant, it will be much closer to the knowledge quadrant, since the focus will be far more on the knowledge, understanding and analysis of linguistic structures in a highly systematised way and far less on the traits of the knowers. There may well be other possible placements, such as of the study of literature at an elite university. In such circumstances, what you know about English literature may be as important as who you are as a knower – for example, if to count as a legitimate knower you must arrive with extensive reading of classical as well as English literature as foundational knowledge to the further growth of your already cultivated literary disposition. Such an approach would likely be placed within an elite code.

Figure 3: Specialisation Codes – Placement of Literature and Linguistics



Additionally within the field of reproduction, the specialisation plane offers an analytic framework for the nuanced investigation of teaching and learning practices. It allows for tracking of subtle shifts in emphasis of specialisation codes across different aspects of the pedagogic process. It can also facilitate exploration of issues such as the dispositions and practices of teachers and learners, and degrees of code match and code clash between them (see Chen, 2010 for an example from professional education).

Maton further elaborates upon specialisation codes in terms of types of gazes, identifying a continuum from weaker social relations to stronger social relations:

Figure 4: Continuum of Gazes

Trained gazes are those with weaker social relations (SR-) and stronger epistemic relations (ER+) while born gazes are those with much stronger social relations (SR+) and weaker epistemic relations (ER-). Cultivated gazes are those with a somewhat weaker social relations acquired by long immersion that cultivates the legitimate dispositions of the knower. Social gazes are acquired by virtue of one's location in society, such as from one's class position, or one's social category, such as being black or female. Hierarchical growth of knowers can occur through cultivated gazes. That is, an increasing range of knowers can, in principle, be admitted at the base of the hierarchy and can then be socialised into the legitimate cultivated gaze. These ideas therefore potentially provide a shared language through which to explore ongoing contestations surrounding pedagogic issues. For example, suggestive research areas regarding school-based learning of home and additional languages include:

- What is the legitimate gaze of cultivation in particular contexts?
- What are the languages of legitimation for our different home languages as school subjects? How do these compare with each other, and what are the implications of any differences?
- What are the implications of aiming to expand the base of knowers in language education?
- Who are the guardians of the gaze? What is the nature of their legitimation codes?
- Which criteria and pedagogic processes are deployed in the processes of cultivation of legitimate gazes?
- What code clashes are evident in the field (e.g. between policy-makers, curriculum designers, textbook writers, teachers and learners? What are the implications of these clashes?

LCT specialisation codes can be further analysed into 'insights' and 'lenses', offering increasingly delicate discriminations within, as well as between

codes. Space constraints, however, do not permit elaboration of these here – Chapter 9 explicates these distinctions.

A further key concern for Maton is the question of what constitutes, and promotes, cumulative theorising and learning, as opposed to segmented thinking. This is deeply linked to Bernstein's suggestive model of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' discourses (2000). Horizontal discourses are those of everyday, informal knowledge. Vertical discourses are those of specialised, systematic, formalised knowledge. Within vertical discourses, Bernstein then identified two types of knowledge structures. Hierarchical knowledge structures comprise hierarchically organised knowledge systems with clearly principled knowledge, coherently structured and systematically integrated. Horizontal knowledge structures consist of numerous specialised languages, each with specific criteria for specialised modes of analysis. These operate from different assumptions and are segmented from each other. Maton focuses here on developing Bernstein's model to be useful in the field of reproduction. He asks how educational knowledge can facilitate cumulative learning (that is, greater conceptual hierarchisation) as opposed to segmented learning. He argues that segmentalism

[comprising] 'a series of discrete ideas or skills rather than cumulatively building on previously encountered knowledge'. . . 'can constrain students' capacities to extend and integrate their past experiences and apply their understandings to new contexts, such as later studies, everyday lives or future work' (2014, p.107).

Cumulative learning enables transfer of knowledge between contexts and through time, while segmented learning often restricts transfer, leaving learners with knowledge locked within the 'semantic gravity well' of particular contexts. Maton proposes the notions of cumulative learning, semantic gravity and semantic density as key tools to articulate the underlying organising principles enabling understanding of what makes discourses horizontal or vertical, or a knowledge structure horizontal or hierarchical.

Semantic gravity refers to the degree to which the meaning of practices relates to their contexts. Maton elaborates:

This semantic gravity may be relatively stronger or weaker along a continuum. When semantic gravity is stronger, meaning is more closely related to its social or symbolic context of acquisition or use; when it is weaker, meaning is less dependent on its context. One can also describe processes of *strengthening* semantic gravity, such as moving from abstract or generalized ideas towards concrete and delimited cases, and *weakening* semantic gravity; such as moving from the concrete particulars of a specific case towards

generalizations and abstractions whose meanings are less dependent on that context (2014, p.110).

Broadly, then, semantic gravity involves degrees of abstraction and concretisation. A key issue is determining exactly what is meant by ‘context’ in order to establish degrees of dependence/independence of context. Maton does not directly tease out this issue, but elaborates via two case studies. The first investigated a Masters level task where instructional designers of learning resources had to analyse case studies of actual projects, drawing connections to literature in the field and their own design experiences along with identifying ‘major project management issues’ in instructional design. A *study specific* external language of description of varying levels of abstraction in student responses was developed for the analysis. So, here, contextual independence refers to students detaching themselves from the particulars of their own professional experience, and the specificities of provided case studies. That is they were expected to distance themselves from specific social contexts of experience. Greater abstraction from context was also linked with students’ capacity to draw out generalised insights about, and principles for, instructional design. The study showed how few students were able to do this, and posits the absence of scaffolded models of the required weakened semantic gravity to guide students as one reason for the paucity of decontextualisation in student responses to the task.

The second case study looks at a thematic unit of study in school English, for the New South Wales Higher School Certificate. Students had to study a variety of texts under the theme *The Journey*, and write an integrative answer exploring how much studying the “concept of imaginative journeys expanded your understanding of yourself, of individuals and of the world” (2014, p.117). Maton characterises this task as aiming to weaken semantic gravity by pointing students to engagement with broader literary principles applicable to multiple texts. Analysis of a high and low achieving essay revealed very different profiles. The high essay moved from relatively weak semantic gravity (generalising with a literary gaze) down to particularities of individual texts, then upwards again to more abstract concepts. This builds a semantic gravity wave through the essay, propelled by a cultivated knower code (2014, p.119). The student presents her insights filtered and altered through a literary gaze. By contrast the low essay shows a ‘flat’ profile of much stronger semantic gravity and narrower range. The essay is segmentally structured with strongly bounded discussion of each text. Stronger semantic gravity is expressed through localised discussion of each text along with a personalised

gaze where the writer directly links her subjective experiences to discrete items in the texts. ‘Context’ here is thus construed both as the life and personal experience of the writer and the particulars of individual written texts encountered. Meaning independent of context is implied to be that which is applicable both to those ‘originating’ contexts, and other linked, but putative contexts; thus generalised meaning projected into an idealised literary domain. This involves linguistic realisations of such abstractions in a depersonalised written register. The nature of the links between forms of detachment from social and symbolic contexts, and forms of linguistic realisation of these, remains a key area to be researched. Fruitful ongoing collaboration between Systemic Functional Linguistic scholars and LCT scholars are opening up this area productively (see, for example Maton & Doran, forthcoming; Maton, Martin and Matruglio, in press, 2014; Martin, 2011, Martin, 2014).

The concept of semantic gravity invites consideration against Cummins’ earlier concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS) (1991), and his later extension of these into his matrix with two intersecting continua – the first being Contextually Embedded/Decontextualised Language, and the second being Cognitively Demanding/Cognitively Undemanding Tasks (2009, 2013). These were developed for the specific purpose of understanding the situation and educational needs of immigrant children having to learn through the medium of a new language while developing bilingual proficiency. Cummins proposed that such learners mastered everyday language (BICS) up to three years sooner than they mastered CALPS in their new language. In LCT terms BICS could be related to knower structures, while CALPS could be linked to knowledge structures. However, they are not knower/knowledge discourses in themselves, but communicative resources deployed to effect communication within knower and knowledge structures. Cummins’ matrix enables finer, non-dichotomised distinctions than possible just with the BICS/CALPS division. For example, two teenagers conversing casually via smses are engaged in relatively context-reduced (in terms of the channel of communication), but probably cognitively undemanding communication. Two academics fiercely debating the merits of code theory versus field theory over a beer in a pub are engaging in relatively communicatively context embedded, but cognitively demanding communication. ‘Context’ here comprises mostly the extra-linguistic dimensions of communication. So context-embedded language is that where meaning is carried para- and non-linguistically, as well as linguistically, and interlocutors have recourse to immediate negotiation and

re-negotiation of the meanings being constructed. Context-reduced language is that where the language itself carries most of the communicative meaning, so requiring high levels of linguistic explicitness. ‘Cognitive demand’, for Cummins, refers to the extent to which the linguistic tools required for a task have been deeply internalised and automatised. Cummins is thus not explicitly teasing out variations of conceptual abstraction and demand. However, working with such an understanding of a ‘cognitive demand’ continuum could provide a helpful matrix for educators and materials designers.

Cummins’ model was strongly critiqued, amongst other reasons, for its inadequate linguistic conceptualisation of CALPS. In responding to the criticisms, he cited the work of Biber (1986), and Gibbons and Lascar (1998) as providing sound linguistic evidence for the existence of academic registers involving varieties of ‘distanced’ language. Gibbons and Lascar, drawing upon SFLs Mode parameter, concluded: “Register is a product of the relationship between the linguistic systems and the contexts of their use.” (1998, p.41). This debate points back to the long vexed question of how to understand the inter-relationship between conceptual structures, cognitive processes, their realisations within linguistic structures, and their relationships to situational and social factors.

While there is overlap between the concepts of semantic gravity and CALPS they cannot be conflated, in part because they exist to do different things. Semantic gravity, as part of LCT, sets out to theorise social practices of people, beyond the needs of bilingual learners and education, and, in principle, beyond education itself. It focuses upon conceptual decontextualisation, that is, processes of knowledge abstraction. Cummins focuses primarily upon issues of communicative contextualisation/decontextualisation. However, consideration of the prior debates around the intricacies of unravelling the linguistic/cognitive/pedagogic interface of register variation illuminates the work still to be done in establishing the precise nature of semantic gravity continua in diverse educational fields and processes of knowledge building, and their linguistic realisations. As part of an ongoing dialogue between LCT and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) scholars, Martin and Matruglio (2013) are re-exploring the SFL concept of Mode in the light of Maton’s proposals regarding semantic gravity and highlighting the linguistic complexity that must be recognised and worked with. What LCT’s semantic plane offers educational researchers is an analytical toolkit providing a pedagogically focussed way into the intricacies

of educational practices. The resultant insights may then highlight linguistic aspects of these situations that need additional close research attention, enabling strategic, targeted application of the most salient aspects of dense linguistic theory for pedagogically focused problems.

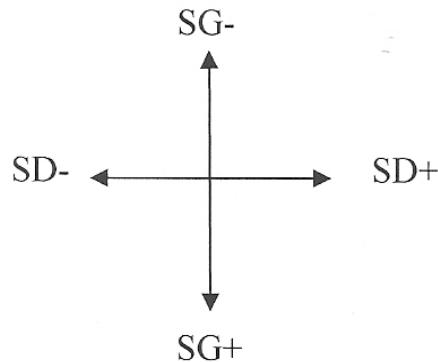
In close juxtaposition with semantic gravity, Maton proposes the notion of semantic density which

refers to the degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices (symbols, terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, actions, clothing, etc.). . . The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meanings are condensed within practices; the weaker the semantic density (SD-) the less meanings are condensed. The strength of semantic density of a practice or symbol relates to the *semantic structure* in which it is located' (p.129).

For example, the word 'world' can be more or less semantically dense depending on its semantic location. It is relatively less semantically dense in the question 'Where in the world is Waldo?' in the *Where's Waldo?* children's books where the reader has to hunt for Waldo in complex, crammed double-page pictures. It is relatively more semantically dense in the opening line of Wordsworth's sonnet *The World Is Too Much With Us*: "The world is too much with us; late and soon. . . ." While the former instance indexes geographical (and pictorial location), the latter invokes an associative network of worldliness, materialism and consumerism as societal burdens. 'World' in geography could condense many more meanings, and invoke a complex network of conceptual relations, including the whole earth and its:

- peoples,
- surface features (geomorphology) – mountains, ravines, oceans, lakes, volcanoes, caves; (ecosystems) – savannah, alpine, riverine, tropical;
- atmospheric features – gases.

Again, LCT focuses on possibilities of nuanced tracking of shifts in semantic gravity and semantic density, through pedagogic processes and artifacts, as well as in intellectual theories. Each principle is presented as a continuum, which, when juxtaposed in intersection with each other, generates a semantic plane, enabling a basis for both 'typologising practices' and 'topologically exploring differences *within* types and dynamic processes of strengthening and weakening (SG $\uparrow\downarrow$, SD $\uparrow\downarrow$) as presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Semantic Plane

Combining semantic density and semantic gravity as analytic tools permits the tracking of shifts in the nature and coherence of pedagogic discourse over time, using notions of semantic waves, and degrees of semantic flow (Matruglio, Maton and Martin, 2013).

Key issues for ongoing research include establishing to what extent, and in what ways, semantic waves promote cumulative learning in different disciplines. Building cumulative knowledge of where, and what forms of, semantic waving are highly valued across, and within, disciplines is important. Establishing profiles of teachers/learners in terms of semantic waving and how these relate to learner achievements could also be productive. However, these developments are just alluded to within this book. Maton points to LCT being deployed in praxis (Martin and Maton, 2013) and, he says, this is “stimulating new ways of realising LCT through what can be termed *external languages of enactment*”(2014, p.209) such as a project in secondary schools explicating the notion and pedagogic salience of semantic waves to teachers. Clarence recently investigated the presence, absence and nature of semantic waving and its role in cumulative learning in humanities tertiary education (2014).

Numerous other aspects of the book, merit close attention, most notably Maton’s exposition of cosmologies, that is “how belief systems... underlie the ways actors select and arrange *clusters* and *constellations* of stances that, in turn, shape what is viewed as possible and legitimate within a field” (2014, p.149), along with his concepts of axiological and epistemological condensation. Another key area is his refinement of the ideas of epistemic relations and social relations to account for ‘minor differences’ within each category that he argues have ‘major effects’ (2014). These are well worth engaging with and offer fertile insights and tools that could be productively

deployed to explore issues, such as shifts within specific disciplines and how certain concepts, theories and pedagogical approaches gain ascendancy and others do not.

Knowledge and Knowers is lucid, generous and written with elegance and conviction. While LCT focuses broadly on social practices, and on the nature and effects of knowledge in particular, the dominant focus of *Knowledge and Knowers* is on knower structures. Maton deftly fuses insights from Bourdieu and Bernstein in setting out a cogent theory of knowledge and knowers. A key contribution is the richness and flexibility of the toolset, with demonstrated analytic power in researching educational practices across an array of levels and contexts. While Maton's contribution is substantial and insightful in his capacity to draw together salient aspects of diverse theoretical traditions, and to tilt at the windmills of inadequate educational research, he is also quick to acknowledge and point to the collective contributions of many other scholars to the growth of LCT. *Knowledge and Knowers* is provocative, thought-inducing and generative; offering a powerful, multi-faceted array of analytical tools to the project of cumulative knowledge building in the field of educational research.

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Notes for Contributors

Journal of Education will appear at least twice per year.

Submissions

Unsolicited papers are welcome for consideration and should be addressed to the Editor of the *Journal of Education*. Submitting authors should note that a per page fee of R100 will be levied on published submissions. Institutional Research Offices of higher education institutions usually pay this type of fee. Authors whose affiliated organisation may not have instituted this practice are asked to contact the Editor, as the levy is a means of sustaining the journal, and is not intended as a deterrent to aspiring authors!

Articles and review essays are reviewed by anonymous external referees. Appropriate papers will be refereed for significance and soundness. Papers are accepted on the understanding that they have not been published or accepted for publication elsewhere.

Articles and essay reviews (maximum 6 000 words); debate, discussion and research notes (2 500 words); book reviews (2 000 words); and book notes (200 words) will be considered.

Contributors should submit an electronic version of the article by e-mail to the Editor at JoE@ukzn.ac.za. This should not be formatted, and preferably not use a variety of fonts and font sizes or use paragraph styles. Where necessary, however, authors may wish to indicate levels of subheadings (i.e. first level, second level). Each paper should be accompanied by a 100–150 word abstract. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum, and authors are asked to keep tables and diagrams to the most feasible level of size and simplicity. Tables and diagrams should also be sent in separate files. The name(s) and full address(es) of the author/s should appear on a separate sheet.

Each author will receive a copy of the journal in which the paper appears.

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Referencing style

Journal of Education style of referencing is a requirement. References in the text should appear as follows:

No country in the world can afford the schooling its people want (Reimer, 1971) and it has been argued that “of all ‘false utilities’, school is the most insidious” (Illich, 1971, p.60).

The references should be listed in full at the end of the paper in an acceptable standard format, preferably the following:

Books

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. *Title: additional title information*. Edition (if other than the first). Place of publication: Publisher.

Chapters in edited or compiled books

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. Title of chapter or article. In Surname(s), Initial(s) of editor(s) or compiler(s). (Eds). or (Comps). *Title of book*. Edition (if other than first). Place of publication: Publisher. Inclusive page numbers of the chapter.

Journal articles

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. Title of article. *Name of journal* volume number (part number (if there is not continuous pagination)): inclusive page numbers.

Articles and reports in magazines and newspapers

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. Title of article. *Name of magazine or newspaper* day and month: inclusive (and additional) page numbers.

Book reviews

Surname of reviewer, Initial(s). Year of publication. Title of review (if there is one). [Review of] *Title of book reviewed* by Name of author in its most familiar form. *Name of periodical* volume number (part number) or date (if applicable): inclusive page numbers.

Theses and dissertations

Surname, Initial(s). Year. Title: additional title information. Description of work. Location of university: name of university.

Seminar papers

Surname, Initial(s). Year. Title: additional title information. Unpublished seminar paper. Location of university: name of university, name of department, programme or unit.

Conference papers (unpublished)

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year. Title: additional title information. Description of occasion (including the nature and subject of the conference or meeting, name of the society or group, the place at which it was held and the date(s) on which it was held).

Duplicated materials

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year. Title: additional title information. Description of material. Location of issuing body: name of issuing body.

Interviews

Surname of person interviewed, Initial(s). Year. Interviewed by initial(s) and surname of interviewer. Place where interview occurred, further details of date (day and month). Details of location of transcript, if available.

Personal communications

Surname of person with whom communicated, Initial(s). Year. Description of communication, further details of date (day, month).

Microforms, audio-visual material, CD-ROMs etc.

As for works above but with the addition of the format in square brackets at the end of the reference, e.g. [Microfilm] or [Videotape] or [CD-ROM], etc.

Online sources of information (published or unpublished)

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. *Title*. Version (if any). Place of publication: Publisher.

<Address of web page between> Day, month (and year if different to publication year) of visit to site.

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Frequently asked questions

Is the Journal of Education SAPSE accredited?

Yes

How many issues per year?

In terms of a recent policy decision, we aim to produce at least two ‘normal’ editions of the journal each year in addition to at least two special issues (one of which will be the Kenton Special Edition).

Most journals now have a per page fee which contributors are required to meet should their articles be accepted. Does the Journal of Education levy such charges?

Yes. This step was necessary to cover the costs of the increased number of issues each year. A levy of R100 per page will be applied to successful articles submitted to our office. The central research offices in most institutions of higher education routinely arrange for such payments to be made. We encourage individual authors who do not have such cover to contact us.

Are articles peer reviewed?

Yes. Our goal is for articles to be refereed by three experts in the field.

What is the waiting period after submission?

Referees provide their crucially important service for no reward, and are sometimes unable to oblige on time but we endeavour to respond within three months.

Can I send my submission by e-mail?

Yes. The electronic version of the article should be sent as an email attachment.

To what extent should an article being submitted be presented in ‘the style’ of the journal?

Citation and referencing should be in the style of the journal (see the previous section ‘Notes for Contributors’). Authors are not expected to reproduce the particular fonts and font sizes used in the journal, but the levels of headings and subheadings should be clear. With regard to the electronic version of the article, we prefer as little formatting as possible.

Does the journal have a policy to encourage and support budding novice researchers?

Unfortunately not – this is simply beyond our capacity. While we welcome extended comment that referees may be able to offer, we cannot impose on their good services beyond the expectation of an overall judgement on the article, together with brief justification of that judgement.

What is the rate of acceptance/ rejection?

The following statistics for 2008 and 2009 provide an indication of the pattern of acceptance/ non acceptance:

Year	Accepted with no or minor revisions	Accepted after revisions	Not accepted
2012	1	11	30
2013	0	8	34

Even an increase in the number of issues each year will not keep pace with the ever-increasing number of submissions. We can do little to mitigate the competition engendered by state funding policy and the kinds of incentive schemes that have become a feature of the higher education landscape.

Is there an appeal mechanism should my article not be accepted?

Beyond summarizing reasons for rejection – where applicable – we regret that we are unable to enter into detailed discussion on decisions reached by the Editorial Committee on the basis of referee reports.

The journal describes itself as providing “a forum for scholarly understanding of the field of education”. What does this really mean?

We understand this as implying that articles should represent a rigorous enquiry (conducted through argumentation or empirically) into the understanding of educational issues. Such inquiry originates in a problem rather than a solution, and it is rare for such enquiry to have no reference to, or engagement with, a broader literature and theory. Advocacy in the form of prescriptions or ‘how to do it’ recipe knowledge for practitioners seldom finds favour with referees. The question of audience is key. The assumed audience is the collective body of researchers rather than those more narrowly concerned with the effective implementation of specific policies.

Recent non-acceptances include a high proportion of undeveloped research reports, summaries of dissertations, and even sound but small-scale case studies that are purely context specific and unconnected with broader issues, literature or theory. Similarly, even a successful conference paper is usually in need of further development before it merits publication.