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Editorial

Wayne Hugo and Carol Bertram

The founding of the South African Education Research Association exemplifies the breaking away from false necessities. False necessity theory (Unger, 2004) rejects the notion that societies must be organised in a particular way and argues that structures can be dissolved and remade. The institutional order of South African education research organisations is not set in stone. It can change and will change, not because of some necessary logic of development but because individuals have the negative capability to imagine things differently, to revise and transcend their context, as well as the commitment to solidify the vision institutionally. This edition of the *Journal of Education* publishes research that was presented at the SAERA conference that took place in Durban in August 2014. It is the first time that JoE is publishing a Special Edition emanating from a SAERA conference, as it is now the official journal of SAERA. It was a milestone for the new organisation as the constitution for the new association was ratified, and the conference provided a great momentum to push the association forward. It was the second official conference hosted by SAERA, which was established at a launch conference at Bela Bela in the Limpopo Province at the end of January 2013. The theme of the 2014 conference was *Researching Education: Future directions*. There were 210 papers and panel sessions at the 2014 conference which either presented new empirical research or engaged with methodological and/or theoretical concerns.

A new tradition was established at the 2014 conference in the form of the Nelson Mandela Legacy lecture. This was delivered by Prof. Crain Soudien (University of Cape Town) who entitled his talk 'The provocation of Nelson Mandela' and asked the question 'How, to put it more starkly, does one make Mandela a catalyst for the surfacing of contradiction in one's and in our general thinking rather than the tranquilising balm for which he is used?' We have to hold to how Mandela challenged the false necessities of the past with a deep negative capability that could imagine a different world and practically pursue its institutionalisation. We have to do this again, now, in different circumstances and changing conditions, but with the same commitment to hard justice that innovates and resists within confining contexts.

Prof Michael Samuel from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was the chair of the Local Organising Committee. He set the scene for the three days of dialogue and engagement with his opening remarks, which are published in the last section of this volume. Prof. Shireen Motala's (University of Johannesburg) Presidential address, which was a review of the current state of Basic education regarding equity, access and quality, is also included here. The publication of the SAERA President's address at the annual conference will become a hallmark of the Special conference edition as it is important to capture and archive the development and growth of the association.

The six peer-reviewed articles that appear in this Special conference edition all engage in some way with the tensioned concepts of false necessity and negative capability mentioned in the introductory sections of this editorial. Roberto Unger has given the best modern formulation of these concepts, articulated in previous generations by Marx and Keats. In his magnum opus – *False Necessity – Anti-Necessitarian Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy* (2004) Unger defines negative capability as the “denial of whatever in our contexts delivers us over to a fixed scheme of division and hierarchy and to an enforced choice between routine and rebellion.” Negative capability breaks with false necessity and shows that the organisation of society can be remade. We have made the world we live in, and we can struggle to remake it. In the first two articles in this volume both Carrim and Postma engage with these issues of critical agency from a macro perspective. Carrim focuses on remaking society through social movements, while Postma argues that the individual subject must find freedom and control within the self to resist the long arm of neoliberalism.

Nazir Carrim reminds us that during apartheid, critical agency implied being critical of the ways in which schools reproduced, maintained and legitimised capitalism and racism, but that the meaning of the concept ‘critical agency’ has shifted in South Africa after 1994, partly because there is no obvious ‘enemy’. He argues that in the 1970s and 1980s, Marxism and critical theory connected critical thinking with critical agency in order to change the material relations and bases of capitalist orders. The social movements that were anti-apartheid education could be categorised as ‘critical struggles’ movements to use Touraine's terminology. In the post-apartheid situation it is evident that ‘positive struggles’ predominate, where the emphasis is on engaging with existing institutions, organisations and orders rather than being fundamentally opposed to them. Carrim's challenge is that as education researchers we need

to engage more robustly with what critical agency means for us now, where there is no clearly defined ‘enemy to destroy’.

Critical agency is also the subject of Dirk Postma’s article. He would argue that the enemy is clear, that it is neo-liberalism. He engages with the issue from a Foucauldian stance on neo-liberalism and argues that ‘A Foucauldian notion of critical agency provides a closer account of how subjectivity could be reclaimed through its resistance against and transcendence of the neoliberal order’. This article is a meditation on how neo-liberal governmentality creates subjugation, and that in order to challenge the reach of these processes, the individual subject has to appeal to a centre of control within him or herself. Thus, he argues that the subject in particular is the terrain where freedom could be practiced and control asserted.

If Carrim and Postma provide a macro focus on critical agency, then Jenni Case, Callie Grant and Ansurie Pillay provide a micro focus, reporting on data gathered through their own university teaching work.

For fifteen years, Jenni Case has focused her research on engineering teaching and learning. Here she reflects first on her own practice as an education researcher of a second year engineering course, and second, on her practice as a teacher of this same course some years later. Her purpose is to engage with the kind of knowledge that university teachers draw on to improve their practice and what knowledge outputs may be exemplified as SOTL (the scholarship of teaching and learning) as opposed to education research (and does it actually make a difference?) Indirectly she engages with what it means to be an education researcher and a university teacher who is interested in ‘doing social justice’ in the most micro circle of influence, the classroom, through supporting students’ enduring conceptual learning. The assumption is that what good university teachers do in their classroom in terms of teaching and assessment makes a difference to how students learn, and that the choices that a university teacher makes are more often informed to the contextual challenges of a particular situation, rather than generalised findings from SOTL.

Pillay’s study also focuses on the space of her own university classroom, which is where BEd students learn to teach English literature in schools. Her assumption is also that her choices as university teacher will make a difference to her students, both in the realm of their commitment to be ‘agents of change’ and in developing their own deep conceptual understanding of the subject

matter at hand (English literature). She describes a participatory action research project (PAR) where student teachers are framed as people who need to take agency to address social inequalities and to make a difference in their learners' lives. Her focus is on the methodology of PAR and how this enables student teachers to recognise their agency over 'who they are and how they teach'.

Callie Grant has been teaching and researching in the field of leadership and management for many years, with a particular focus on teacher leadership. In this article, she turns the focus to leadership clubs for learners in schools. The data were collected by teachers in South Africa and Namibia who are also BED Hons students enrolled for a service learning module. These teachers needed to initiate learners' leadership clubs in their schools, and as a starting point had to listen to the learners' voices as they articulated what issues mattered to them at school. The ultimate purpose was that learners would develop leadership skills by adopting a particular project goal for the year, but this phase is not reported in this article. The assumption is that learners' should take up agency in their own schools to address the matters that concern them most, a clear example of re-imagining the ways in which schools are organised, which mostly exclude learners' voices. However, there are cultural, structural and organisational barriers to learners becoming agents of change in their school that would need to be addressed.

The final article by Meyer and Abel engages with the key question of what teachers actually learn from professional development activities, using a hierarchy of outcomes to describe how these activities influence teachers' practice. In South Africa, we have an infuriating tendency to address shortfalls in teacher professional development with 'one-size-fits-all' workshops and short courses. No matter how much research comes out pointing to the need for sustained engagement through professional communities of practice and classroom mentoring and support, the quick and cheap fix is continuously reverted to, with the same result – the cheapest solution is not the most cost effective. Precious resources of time, goodwill and money are tossed down the drain, along with the reports that chronicle the wastage. If ever there was a competition for 'best' form of false necessity in education then workshops would be right up there. What other false necessities exist in education we leave for discussion at the 2015 SAERA conference in Bloemfontein at the end of October, where, in the words of Mao, we hope a thousand flowers bloom.

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Critical agency in the post-apartheid education system

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Abstract

This paper looks at critical agency in the South African education system. There has been a consistent linking of critical thinking with critical agency under apartheid, and that this was constructed by a 'critical struggle' (Touraine, 1985) against apartheid domination. However, this changed significantly in the post-apartheid moment, where compliance with the newly elected government is emphasised, and could be viewed in terms of 'positive struggles' (Touraine, 1986). These, however, limit critical agency in the post-apartheid formation. There is, nonetheless, evidence of critical agency being enacted in the post-apartheid education system. The importance of highlighting those forms of critical agency is crucial in order to enhance social justice in the post-apartheid educational system and society. This paper also links critical agency in the post-apartheid situation with the postcolonial and postmodern conditions because such conditions affect the possibilities of critical agency not only in South Africa but more generally.

Introduction

This paper focuses on critical agency in the South African educational system, and I do so from the lens of social movements. Part of the reason for the focus adopted here is the argument that for critical agency to be considered as such, it would need to lead to an alternative order, and not just be at the level of individual's oppositional actions, whether such actions are discursive or in social practices. Another reason for the focus on critical agency and social movements in this paper is because of what seems to be a decline in critical agency in the post-apartheid educational system. However, such a view presupposes several things: from relations between structures and agents; what constitutes alternatives in transformative terms; to individual and collective forms of action. In many ways as well, these presuppositions are being called to question because they point to shifts not only from apartheid to the post-apartheid formation but also to shifts from colonial to postcolonial situations (see Mbembe, 2001) and from modern to postmodern conditions (see Hall, 1992), locally and globally, and the kind of social actions they enable.

In the first section of this paper I engage with some of the issues related to critical thinking and critical agency by way of clarification mainly. Since the focus in this paper is more on looking at critical agency in the context of social movements, I am more concerned in this paper with looking at what types of critical agency in the South African education system results in what forms of social movement actions and how to make sense of these in theoretical terms. In order to do so I use Touraine's (1981 and 1985) characterisation of social movements and apply this to the South African educational context.

In the second part of this paper, I engage with some of approaches to understanding social movements and link these to the typology which Touraine provides. In this section, the increasing acknowledgement that social movements are more pluralised and dispersed currently seem to suggest that they are more characterised by 'positive struggles' in Touraine's terms. Such 'positive struggles' are also shown to be linked significantly to the material conditions of postmodernity. In this section of the paper I also discuss how such 'positive struggles' have manifested themselves in the post-apartheid situation.

In the third section of this paper I focus on Equal Education, a post-apartheid educational movement in order to demonstrate the complexities of critical agency and social movements in the post-apartheid situation.

In the last section of this paper, I focus on the implications for critical agency in the postmodern/postcolonial situation and show that 'front politics' and pluralised and dispersed forms of social actions, which may or may not converge into collective forms of actions, are more predominant currently. This requires a reorientation to understanding what may be regarded as collective forms of action. The implications this has for understanding current struggles in post-apartheid South Africa are also highlighted.

It is important to keep in mind that the focus in this paper is on critical agency in education in post-apartheid South Africa. Although, it is not possible to engage in such a discussion without also looking at social movements in post-apartheid South Africa more broadly, my focus in this paper is specifically on education. Thus, whilst I engage with some theories about social movements, and these cover various sectors of societies and in varying contexts, my concern in this paper is on the education sector specifically, and on critical agency in the post-apartheid educational system.

At the same time, it should also be noted that, in this paper I do not cover various movements in the post-apartheid educational system which may be construed as social movements as well, but focus instead on one educational social movement, Equal Education, as an illustrative example of the complexities of critical agency in the post-apartheid educational context.

At the outset it is also important for me to clarify that due to the limitations of space in this paper I am unable to enter into in-depth and detailed discussions about the various issues I raise in this paper. In this paper, I only use Touraine's characterisation of 'critical and positive struggles'. I do not provide a full account of Touraine's theory. I also look at some theories about social movements. I do so mainly in the context of Touraine's characterisation of 'critical and positive struggles' and in order to link Touraine with other social movement theories. I also do not cover all the issues that pertain to postmodernity, post-colonialism or the post-apartheid situation. As such, in this paper I open up the issues for further debate and discussion, and I suggest a possible terrain in which such a conversation may be taken further. The limitation of this paper and the brevity with which I deal with the issues I raise in this paper should be kept in mind.

Critical agency and critical thinking

The idea of critical agency in education came to the fore in stark terms with the advent of critical theory and its applications to education, which drew upon and critiqued early Marxism (see for example, Usher, 1996). The discourses of reproduction and resistance theories of schooling were noted for their contributions to raising awareness of the how schools are superstructurally manipulated to reproduce capitalist orders, and in the wake also significantly informed a critical view of schooling and schools (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986). From Bowles and Gintis' (1976) theory of the economic reproduction roles of schooling and its correspondence with the socialisation into hierarchies of capitalist relations; Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1976) account of the ways in which schools act as conservative forces and reproduce and privilege middle class cultural capital; to Gramsci's (see Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986) view of the political hegemonic role schools play in reproducing state hegemony as ideological apparatuses of state; reproduction theories of schooling point importantly to the need to be critical about what schooling does in capitalist society.

Critical agency in this view, then, implied being critical of the ways in which schools reproduce, maintain and legitimise capitalism (see Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986; and Dale, Esland and MacDonald, 1976) and taking action in order to work towards a more just social order. How this was possible began to be debated seriously given the overwhelming tendency towards structuralism in such reproduction theories which seem to have reduced any possibility for agency, critical or otherwise (see also Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986 in this regard).

It is in the debates with reproduction theories that resistance theories which foregrounded agency began to increase in significance. Willis' (1981) argument that all forms of reproduction, in themselves, entail agency was a crucial point in these debates. What Willis pointed out was that human beings – agents – in structures like schools are not just automatically reproduced into unequal capitalist orders, but through their own agency enable such reproduction to occur. Through his research with all boys' working class schools in England, Willis showed how through their own meaning making and choices the boys in such schools landed up being reproduced in working class jobs. Reproduction, then, could not be viewed as divorced from agency, and recognising how people as agents make meaning of the structures they inhabit, the ways in which they negotiate such meanings and the types of strategies they adopt to deal with such contexts were important to understand not only with regard to how schooling works, but also the dialectical relationship between structures and agency (see also Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986 in this regard).

It is also important to point out here that within critical theory and Marxism the importance of holding together the macro-sociological and micro-sociological dimensions of social lives, as well as structure and agency are central to the relational thinking that Marxism and critical theory employ. For Marxism and critical theory there is a dialectical inter-relationship between the macro-sociological and micro-sociological dimensions, and between structure and agency. The one is not without the other. They entail each other, influence each other and construct a dynamic between them that is dialectical (see Craib, 1984). The importance of this cannot be stressed sufficiently because it is the basis for the construction of the problematic of critical agency. Understanding how macro-sociological forces construct, enable and constrain agency and the ways in which agency at any level impacts on both the micro-sociological and macro-sociological dimensions of social life are crucial to understand.

The contours of these debates reverberated in South Africa. Kallaway's (1986) seminal work *Apartheid and Education* put forward a set of papers which applied both reproduction and resistance theories of schooling in order to analyse apartheid education. Christie and Collins (1986) article in this book applied reproduction theories in analysing Bantu Education, and convincingly showed how Bantu Education was integral to the reproduction of the apartheid order. Molteno's (1987) article applied resistance theories of schooling to show how Western Cape students exercised agency in their resistance to apartheid and apartheid education. As such, considerations of reproduction and resistance in education in South Africa, as well as entering into debates about the relations between structures and agency, were similar to education discourses elsewhere in the world.

Critical agency in the terms of critical theory and reproduction and resistance theories of schooling, then, means, firstly, being critical of the workings of capitalism, and as such requires critical thinking and critical awareness. Secondly, such critical thinking, it is implied, should also lead to critical agency against capitalism domination. The linking of critical thinking with critical agency against capitalism is a consequence of the Marxist maxim which states that it is not enough to merely interpret the world, but also to change it (see Mark and Engels, 1969). Influenced by Marxist analyses, critical theory and reproduction and resistance theories of schooling, thus, understood critical agency as changing capitalist orders. As such, such analyses highlighted the need for collective actions and not just individual actions since changing capitalist orders necessitate collective actions which go beyond individual actions.

In South African education, however, this was a bit more complicated because of the system of apartheid. Being critical of apartheid education meant being critical of both its capitalist and racist forms of domination. Thus, reproduction and resistance theory applications in South Africa indicated how apartheid education reproduced both capitalism and racism. In such applications apartheid was viewed as a system of racial capitalism, not just as a system of capitalism (see Kallaway, 1986). These applications to South African education were significant because they also opened up non-reductionist accounts of both capitalism more generally, and apartheid more specifically (see also Wolpe, 1988).

A caveat is in order here. Whilst Marxism and critical theory were significant in bringing attention to the importance of being critical of social orders and the

need to exercise collective actions to change such orders, it would be incorrect to suggest that being critical and the idea of critical thinking originated with Marxism and critical theory. Critical thinking was indeed present in Plato's account of Socrates' Dialogues in *The Republic* (Plato, 1920), early educationists such as Dewey (1910) also pointed to the importance of education developing critical thinking, and debates within positivism (see Hahn, Carnap and Neurath, 2001) and interpretivism (see Hospers, 1990), which predate critical theory, are also replete with rigorous theoretical argument and critical thinking. In South Africa, as the Kallaway (1986) seminal book poignantly also indicates, there were types of critical thinking and critical agency that existed in pre-apartheid, colonial times and under slavery.

What does, however, seem to be different with Marxism and critical theory is the linking of critical thinking with critical agency in order to change the material relations and bases of capitalist orders. It is, thus, not coincidental that Marxism and critical theory have been significant in informing social movements in the 20th century, from antiracism, feminism and working class struggles, throughout the world (see also Hall, 1992). However, it should be pointed out here that whilst Marxism and critical theory significantly influenced the development of such social movements, these social movements also differed significantly with Marxism and critical theory by pointing to other forms of domination and oppression – forms of domination and oppression that were not reducible to capitalism – and, thereby also had the effect of pluralising forms of critical agency and social movements (see also Hall 1992 in this regard).

My purpose in the above is to clarify some of the assumptions that are at work in accounts of social movements. It is not my intention to go into depth about the many debates and nuances about issues of structures and agency, individual and collection actions and critical thinking. As indicated my concern in this paper is more about looking at critical agency and social movements in the South African education system, and I want to use Touraine in this regard.

Touraine and social movements

I have chosen to use Touraine in this paper because Touraine's characterisation of social movement is helpful in capturing the shifts in apartheid and post-apartheid struggles, as I will show in this section of the paper. In addition, Touraine's account of social movements, whilst mentioned in other analyses of social movements in South Africa (see Ballard, Habib, Valodia and Zuern, 2013 for example, and which is referred to later in this section of the paper), has not been used sufficiently in the South African context. Carrim and Sayed (1992), however, have used Touraine in their analysis of social movements in the transition from apartheid to the post-apartheid situation and in an educational context, and I refer to the analysis they provided in this section of the paper as well.

The purpose of this section of the paper is more to clarify Touraine's account of 'critical' and 'positive struggles', and not so much to review the literature on social movements. I refer to the analyses provided by Ballard *et al.* (2013), Taylor (1997), Meer (2001) and Hart (2012) of social movements in the post-apartheid situation in order to locate Touraine's account of social movements within this body of theories. Ballard *et al.* (2013), Taylor (1997), Meer (2001) and Hart (2012), however, do not focus on education specifically in their analyses, and as is usually the case, their analyses deal with social movements in general and look at post-apartheid society as a whole.

Ballard *et al.* (2013) suggest that social movements may be viewed as follows:

Social movements are thus, in our view, politically and/or socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organizations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located. (Ballard et al, 2013, pg. 2)

Social movements, then, are collective forms of action, and not just individual actions, as I indicated at the beginning of this paper. In addition, as Ballard *et al.* indicate, these collective forms of actions are not any oppositional action but collective forms of actions that are directed. They are directed at 'changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system'. In the context of this paper, this also means that social movements' collective actions are instances of critical agency – they are directed at changing something – and, they entail critical thinking – being critical about the

conditions of one's life. It is also important to note that social movements are made up of 'multiple organisations and networks'. This is important to keep in mind because social movements bring together various and varying interests and different types of organisations and enable them to converge on a particular issue.

Ballard *et al.* (2013) also suggest that:

Investigations of social movements commonly build upon three central aspects relevant to our understanding of mobilization: the structure of opportunities and constraints within which movements may or may not develop, the networks, structures and other resources which actors employ to mobilize supporters. (Ballard *et al.*, 2013, pg.2)

Taylor (1997) pointed out that mobilisation theory may be viewed as falling into three categories. "These are the dissatisfaction/deprivation approach, the rational approach and the resource mobilisation approach" (Taylor, 1997, p.24). Taylor describes the dissatisfaction/deprivation approach as dealing with people's "experiences of frustration and anger to the relative deprivation brought about by their . . . conditions", the rational approach as one which deals with "people who are motivated to engage with citizen action out of individual self-interest and not psychological feelings of deprivation" and the resource mobilisation approach as based on the understanding "that since political dissatisfaction and social conflicts are inherent in every society, the establishment of movements centres on the creation of organisations to mobilise the potential for change" (Taylor, 1997, pp.2–3).

For Ballard *et al.* (2013), however, social movement theory which includes mobilisation theory may be seen as having three branches: the political opportunity branch, which looks at what kind of political situations construct what kind of protest actions. "The second branch of inquiry investigates how social movement organisations are formed, what local networks they build upon, what existing institutions they employ, and what access they have to political and material resources. This third area of social movement studies is based upon identity-oriented paradigms which stress the importance of social relationships for any understanding of movement activity; they therefore bring cultural frames including shared meanings, symbols and discourses into the analysis"(Ballard *et al.*, 2013, pp.2–4).

My purpose in the above discussion is to point out that there have been, and there are, different ways in which social movements have been conceptualised

and approaches to social movements have either attempted to combine elements of approaches or to work with such approaches in more a holistic way. Ballard *et al.* (2013) also suggest a more ‘dynamic approach’ to social movements which not only uses the insights of other approaches but goes beyond them in order to allow for a more fluid and ‘dynamic’ sense of social movements in the contexts of globalisation and the transnational character of contemporary social movements.

For me, one of the advantages of using Touraine’s characterisation of social movements is that it can be used irrespective of the approach to social movement one adopts. Touraine’s characterisation of ‘critical and positive struggles’ does not prevent any approach to social movements that one may want to adopt. In this regard Ballard *et al.* (2013), in relation to Touraine, also acknowledge:

Analysts of new social movements such as Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989) have underlined the importance of framing, by focusing on subjective elements such as identity, status and values. Melucci reminds us that the same experiences and behaviour can be viewed in different ways; meanings depend upon systems of reference. These shared meanings, defined as framing processes by Snow and others (Snow *et al.* 1986), are central to any understanding of social movement activity (Ballard *et al.* 2013, pg. 4).

As Ballard *et al.* indicate above, Touraine’s analysis of new social movements, which refers to contemporary forms of social movements, also focuses on ‘identity, status and values’. These, as will be seen below, are used in his characterisations of ‘critical and positive struggles’ and they are useful in viewing the differences in ‘critical and positive struggles’. They also help in understanding the shifts from apartheid and post-apartheid formations.

Touraine (1981, 1985) distinguishes between what he terms ‘critical’ and ‘positive struggles’ in order to capture the characteristics and developments of and within social movements. As indicated above these distinctions are used in this section of the paper to demonstrate the ways in which critical thinking and critical agency have shifted from the apartheid to the post-apartheid moments in South Africa. It is important, though, to first outline what Touraine means by ‘critical’ and ‘positive struggles’ before they are applied to the South African educational system.

Table 1: Touraine's characterisation of types and levels of struggles

	Types of Struggles	
	Positive	Critical
Levels of struggle		
Institutional	Influence	Access
Organisational	Status	Defense
Historicity	Alternative	Destroy

For Touraine (1981, 1985) and in relation to Table 1, 'critical struggles' are acts of defense against crisis, demands of access and attempts to destroy a "truly social domination" (Touraine, 1985, p.90). On the 'institutional' and 'organisational' levels in 'critical struggles' the focus is on getting access to institutions and to defend people rights to be in and to be treated equally within organisations. This is because in 'critical struggles' people are denied access and/or subject to misrecognition and domination within institutions and organisations. Due to these experiences of a 'truly social domination', such critical struggles aim to destroy the existing order of social domination in order to put into place another order, on the level of 'historicity'.

This form of a 'truly social domination', of which apartheid was one, provided the focus and framed 'critical struggles'. This is what characterised anti-colonial struggles and is not unique to anti-apartheid struggles. As Osaghae (1990) puts it:

The liberation of the state from colonial hegemony. This was generally true of various nationalist movements, but was truer in those colonies where the independence struggle was "revolutionary" and involved liberation wars (Osaghae, 1990, pg. 15; also cited in Taylor, 1997, pg. 23).

In these 'liberation wars' the aim was to destroy an existing order. There is a vast amount of literature available about the kinds and extent of struggles against apartheid, and there is no need to recount them here. Anti-apartheid struggles covered all sectors of apartheid society, and included an armed struggle which was founded by Nelson Mandela and for which he was imprisoned on Robben Island and the basis to outlaw the then African National Congress, and other political movements, such as the Pan-African Congress, and forced them into exile.

Looking at apartheid education, in particular, not only did South Africans (and indeed those in the anti-apartheid movement internationally as well) question apartheid education, and exercise critical thinking in relation to what it provided, they also clearly put forward an alternative of a non-racist, non-sexist and democratic educational system for all. This was the case since the beginning of apartheid education with the formation of ‘cultural clubs’ by the then African National Congress in the 1960s, through to the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and the launching of the People’s Education movement in the 1980s to the provision of policy alternatives by the National Education Policy Investigations (NEPI) which was a structure that was formed by the NECC. Various interests and differing political strands were able to converge in such ‘critical struggles’, and against a ‘common enemy’ – apartheid (education). It is in this vein that Carrim and Sayed (1992) have also argued that the anti-apartheid struggle, as well as resistances to apartheid education, were within this mold of ‘critical struggles’.

In providing such alternatives the anti-apartheid movement was able to demonstrate critical agency at the level of ‘historicity’ and thus provided significant critical agency that questioned the reproduction effects of apartheid education, the inherent inadequacies with the apartheid order and the inequities of the political economy of apartheid. Central in these developments were the influences of ‘reproduction’ and ‘resistance’ theories of schooling (cf. Nkomo, 1990 and Kallaway, 1986) which reinforced ideas about how schooling reproduces inequalities within capitalist societies, and the ways in which educational resistances are enacted.

However, due to the generating of alternatives, the anti-apartheid struggles did not ‘destroy’ the apartheid order and through the processes of negotiations, through which the post-apartheid dispensation was ushered in, such ‘alternatives’ were also compromised further and did not quite destroy an old order. This impacted on People’s Education and diluted its aims through processes of negotiation and compromise (see Levin, 1991 in this regard).

The politics of negotiations, and the fact that the post-apartheid dispensation is a result of such processes of negotiation, do not make it is easy to simply describe anti-apartheid struggles as clearly defined ‘critical struggles’. This is because in relation to the level of ‘historicity’ (see Table 1 above) critical struggles ‘destroy’ orders, they do not negotiate with it. The politics of

negotiations seem to be premised on ‘alternatives’ since it is ‘alternatives’ that one brings to the table, as it were, when one negotiates. Negotiations, then, and the politics thereof, are more within ‘positive’ and not ‘critical struggles’, at the level of ‘historicity’.

‘Positive struggles’ for Touraine (1981, 1985) and in relation to Table 1, are when people generally have access to social goods and institutions and where the social formation is not characterised by blatant forms of domination and oppression. ‘Positive struggles’, then occur mostly in democratic societies. However, struggles in these democratic societies are more about the extent people have ‘influence’ within ‘institutions’, the ‘status’ they occupy within ‘organisations’ and the degree to which they are able to enact ‘alternative’ ways of being and thinking. In ‘positive struggles’ then, position, positionality and impact matter most in order to construct alternative orders. Ballard (2005) usefully captures this shift to ‘positive struggles’ in the South African context in the following:

Whereas the need for adversarial struggle for state capture against the illegitimate apartheid state was clear, such unity of purpose does not emerge in the context of a democratically elected government. Today’s social movements are no longer affiliated to a political party working towards the capture of the state, as was the case prior to the democratic transition. Oppositional movements of the democratic era are more fragmented on what it is that they oppose and what their political project is. Opponents of the state have to overcome the familiarity that characterises the postcolonial situation (Ballard, 2005, pg. 1).

The postcolonial situation, to which Ballard refers, has been viewed by many as struggles around (re)defining ‘the nation’ – a nation borne out of anti-colonial struggles, and whose identity needs to be forged. As Osaghae (1990) also notes:

Since attaining independence, the liberation goal has been directed towards neo-colonialism ... the forging of national unity ... Overcoming under-development, especially in the economic sphere (Osaghae, 1990, pg. 15; also cited in Taylor, 1997, pg. 23).

In Gramsci’s terms such contestation around ‘forging national unity’ are ‘struggles of hegemony’, and are complex and dynamic. They involve various interests and various actors, operating on various levels and in several spaces. Touraine’s characterisation of ‘positive struggles’ is useful in this regard because it gives one a sense of where and how such struggles occur. ‘Positive struggles’ in these postcolonial, democratic societies are more about the extent people have ‘influence’ within ‘institutions’, the ‘status’ they occupy

within ‘organisations’ and the degree to which they are able to enact ‘alternative’ ways of being and thinking, as a new nation is constructed.

Using a Gramscian lens, Hart (2012) notes:

The hegemonic project of the ANC government hinges crucially on official articulations of nationalism and claims to moral authority through leadership of the liberation movement. Tapping into popular understandings of freedom, justice, and liberation from racial oppression and racialized dispossession, official articulations of nationalism bolster the ruling bloc’s hegemonic project in crucially important ways. At the same time these articulations are vulnerable to counterclaims of betrayal – and to the reclaiming of popular understandings of what is embodied in “the national question.” Escalating popular struggles over the material conditions of life and livelihood over the past decade are simultaneously struggles over the meanings of the nation and liberation – struggles that can and do move in different directions (Hart, 2013, pg 316).

Carrim and Sayed (1992) also suggest that the post-apartheid formation is more characterised by such ‘positive struggles’ since in the post-apartheid formation, which is a democratic dispensation, people are no longer denied access as was the case under apartheid. People can now contest the extent to which they exercise influence, the status that they have and the extent to which they can meaningfully construct alternative orders; all of which are constantly struggled over and contested by various people with varying interests.

Using the above as a lens with which to view the shifts in critical thinking and critical agency from apartheid to the post-apartheid situation it is evident that in positive struggles, which predominate in the post-apartheid situation, the emphasis is on engaging with existing institutions, organisations and orders rather than being fundamentally opposed to them. The emphasis, thus, on the level of ‘historicity’ is about enacting an ‘alternative’ and not to ‘destroy’ orders.

The question that arises from the above discussion is whether the type of critical agency that was demonstrated in the anti-apartheid struggles is possible within the post-apartheid situation. Put differently, and in Touraine’s terms, how does one exercise critical agency in ‘positive struggles’ as opposed to ‘critical struggles’? In order to explore possible answers to this question in the following I use the example of Equal Education, an organisation that emerged in the post-apartheid situation and which seems to manifest characteristics of both ‘critical’ and ‘positive struggles’.

Critical agency in post-apartheid South African Education

Equal Education (EE) describes itself as:

Equal Education is a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members working for quality and equality in South African education, through analysis and activism (<http://www.equaleducation.org.za/> accessed 23 July 2014 at 15H00).

EE has monitored the activities of the post-apartheid education ministry and has consistently pointed to the ongoing denial of education rights to many South African learners by the post-apartheid's government failure to ensure access to education among the poorest of the poor; the lack of basic facilities in schools located in mainly under-developed rural areas, lack of sanitation, electricity and other basic facilities in such schools; and, the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials in such schools. EE has grown in national stature and its constituency extends all provinces in South Africa. The current campaign of EE is related to ensuring that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa establishes and implements minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure. The norms and standards for school infrastructure was the focus of the conference held by EE in July 2014 in Johannesburg.

EE has petitioned government, made various submissions to the DBE, threatened legal action against the DBE, embarked on many protest marches in all provinces in the country and hosted several public meetings to highlight the plight of those schools who, even in the democratic South Africa, continue to suffer the indignities of lack of access to basic school facilities and thus are denied to fully realise their rights to basic education.

In the light of the above it is fair to state that EE meets the criteria of a social movement as outlined by Ballard *et al.* (2013) and which was cited earlier in this paper. EE is 'directed' and focuses on a 'single element' within the system. EE also is made up of various types of actors in different organisational structures across the country.

EE also carries with it a 'critical struggle' dimension in that it continues with the quest to ensure access to basic and quality education for all – this is continuous with the same demands that were made by the anti-apartheid movement, as discussed above. The focus on access is one of the central

demands in ‘critical struggles’ on ‘institutional’ and ‘organisational levels’. EE also ‘defends’ the right to educational access. In doing so, EE also highlights the fact that the new post-apartheid educational system is not working for all.

However, EE also manifests dimensions of ‘positive struggles’. In the July 2014 conference, the EE states:

The Norms & Standards for School Infrastructure require all provincial departments to submit implementation plans to the Minister of Basic Education by 29 November 2014. The Conference will discuss how, where possible, to support the provinces in the preparation and the implementation of those plans (EE Conference, Fixing our Schools 14-15 July, Conference Programme, pg. 9).

Later in the same conference programme EE states:

Much needs to be done by government, and with the support of civil society and other sectors a lot can be achieved. To monitor what is happening in all nine provinces, and to support implementation, is going to take a collective effort, and a shared strategy going forward is crucial to ensure that adequate school infrastructure becomes a reality for thousands of schools. This Norms and Standards Implementation Conference is geared towards those ends (EE Conference, Fixing our Schools 14-15 July, Conference Programme, pg. 9).

In relation to the above quotations three things become evident about EE: 1) it is located in civil society; 2) its concern is about helping government, the DBE in this instance, about doing things right and for all; and 3) it shifts to partnership with government, as opposed to being critical agents against government. EE, thus, enters into more ‘positive struggles’ types of action which aim at increasing their influence and status with and within government. This also renders its potential for generating alternative ways and modes of being minimal.

However, what more could EE be expected to do in the post-apartheid situation other than engage in ‘positive struggles’ that focus on the extent of their influence and status within government and within the educational post-apartheid system and community?

Ballard very poignantly points out:

Struggles in post-apartheid South Africa respond, in the first instance, to particular manifestations of exclusion, poverty and marginality. They are very often local and immediate; they are pragmatic and quite logical responses to everyday hardships. Activists

operate to achieve direct relief for marginalised groupings on particular issues. Such activists do not focus primarily on opposing the state's economic path, although they may do so by default, but rather on more specific struggles. This is not to say that they necessarily agree with the current national programme but rather that they choose to focus their attention on particular gains in relation to particular issues. In such situations, engagement with the state may indeed be on the cards. The country has, after all, installed a democratically elected government and given it an overwhelming mandate to pursue its programmes for overcoming the injustices of apartheid (Ballard, 2005, pg. 3).

This situation raises a few important questions about the extent to which even the actions of EE can be considered as critical agency. If actions taken do not project an alternative at the level of 'historicity' then neither in 'critical struggles' nor 'positive struggles' can they be considered to be actions of critical agency. Part of the issue here is that the post-apartheid government as opposed to the apartheid government is not a clearly defined 'enemy'.

It is precisely because of this that movements like the EE cannot easily project the post-apartheid government as an entity it simply cannot enter into partnership with. But, as should be clear from the discussion above, EE is at best in a critical partnership (a notion that began to be increasingly used since 1996 in South Africa) with government.

The lack of a clearly defined 'enemy', however, speaks to pluralisation of spaces and actions and actors in the postmodern situation, not only in South Africa but internationally as well. The complexity of postcolonial struggles also reverberates with the postmodern situation. It is to these dimensions and their impact on critical agency that I now turn attention.

Critical agency and the postmodern condition

The pluralisation of spaces, actors and actions possible in the postmodern condition is due to several levels of developments. Although it is not possible in this section of the paper to outline in detail the characteristics of this postmodern condition, briefly it may be seen in the following terms. The postmodern condition opens up spaces on the economic, political and socio-cultural levels.

In economic terms the ascendancy of the global economy, which is currently cast in neo-liberal terms, has impacted on the conditions of people work and is driven by the internet (cf. Castells, 2001). Politically, this has resulted in

supranational organisations and forms of democratic participation which have both increased the spaces for various interests and difference to rise. A 'politics of difference' and/or a 'politics of identity' has thus come to fore (see Melluci, 1989), with various assertions of identities organised in social movements ranging from various religious groups, feminist movements, sex/ual orientation focused movements, anti-privatisation groups, environmental groups and so on. If one needs to get a sense of plurality of movements, interests and actors there are in post-apartheid South Africa in relation to this, then the following should suffice:

The new generation of social movements appeared in earnest once the ANC's second term in office began. The Treatment Action Campaign (formed in 1998), Concerned Citizens Forum (1999), Anti-Eviction Campaign, Anti Privatisation Forum, Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (2000), the Landless Peoples Movement, Coalition of South Africans for the Basic Income Grant (2001) and the Education Rights Project (2002), have been amongst the more enduring and visible struggles to have reconstituted a vibrant oppositional civil society. Countless unnamed small scale and ephemeral struggles have also emerged across the country (Ballard, 2007, pg. 6).

In these political developments the types of oppositional actions that seem to predominate seem to be more in terms of alliances that are formed and which are enacted in terms of 'front' politics where people with various interests converge momentarily in a 'front' as a temporary 'alliance' which lasts only in relation to a particular issue that has been identified as in need of reactions and oppositions. Soon thereafter such alliances dissipate. Crucial to note in this is the transitory character of such collective forms of action (see also Melucci, 1985; and, Brandt, 1986).

On socio-cultural levels, ways of being and thinking are also being pluralised in terms of various and varying forms of identities and which also play themselves out in cyberspace. In this scenario, it becomes difficult to identify a clear 'enemy' and to mobilise collective forms of actions that would endure beyond a specific moment.

It is at this point, then, one is forced to rethink what in fact critical agency could mean within such a situation, of which the post-apartheid situation is a part.

I have argued in this paper that the beginning of critical agency is the development of critical thinking, but critical thinking on its own does not constitute critical agency. In the light of this, the post-apartheid education system needs to at least be viewed critically, and critical thinking about what

it does and does not do, in relation to what and in which terms will need to be enabled and encouraged. Without this any potential for critical agency will be difficult to put into place.

But this critical thinking needs to be more substantive than merely being critical about the extent to which government in fact realises its own policies in implementation. It will need to seriously interrogate which ways of being, whose forms of thinking and what types of actions and order it promotes. It cannot only be about the extent to which government implements its own policies.

The overwhelming tendency to enter into partnership with government, as is also the case with EE as discussed above, have led some to suggest that implicit in such partnerships with government is a de-mobilisation of civil society. Meer (2001) has, for example, argued that it is not only critical agency that is being undermined but the effects of current post-apartheid hegemonic processes is to appropriate civil society organisations and thereby de-mobilise civil society itself. Hart (2012) has also suggested that it may be useful to conceptualise these constraints on critical agency as akin to Gramsci's notion of 'passive revolution'.

This then leads to the points I raised and arguments I made in other sections of this paper. Critical agency in contexts where a clearly defined 'enemy' is not present, where a 'truly social domination' does not exist, can only mean what individuals can do in dispersed and pluralised spaces of their lives. Such forms of critical agency will include exercising critical thinking about the ideologies to which they are subjected, the ways in which they are positioned and the ways in which their ways of being are circumscribed and/or proscribed. These forms of critical agency at individual levels will be about contesting the hegemonic orders that influence their lives. Such critical agency could range from contesting the limits of structures; the ways in which such structures constitute and are constituted; the extent to which difference is acknowledged; the types of epistemic worldviews that are assumed; to modes of representation and modes of participation that are promoted.

However, it should be made clear that such individual forms of critical agency will not necessarily cohere into a collective social movement or a collective form of action. As I indicated above, the possibilities for such collective forms of actions will, in the postmodern condition, be in 'front politics' form and will be about people coming into an alliance around a particular issue for

a specific period of time. Thus, collective action possibilities would be transitory and issue based. In these forms of collective actions what should be noted is: 1) they are about a particular issue or event; 2) they are global alliances; 3) local and individual actions are rearticulated in terms of the issue being targeted and linked to the alliance; 4) the alliance disappears when the issue is over; and, 5) actors in each alliance may not necessarily be the same.

The implications of what has been discussed above is that critical agency in the current situation requires a critical understanding of one's own situation and an awareness of global connections. Critical agency also needs to focus on not only local but global socio-cultural and political economies. Thus, with the pluralisation of spaces in the postmodern and postcolonial conditions, possibilities for critical agency at individual and local levels increase, and at the same time it suggests that alternative struggles at the level of 'historicity' are more likely to be global in character. It should be kept in mind that the individual and local in relation to the global are not in bipolar opposition but need to be viewed as being dialectically inter-related. The global influences the local and vice versa.

In concluding this section of the paper, it is important for me to point out that what in fact constitutes 'alternatives' at the level of 'historicity' in Touraine's terms and the actual possibilities (and desirability) of 'destroying' existing orders may need to be revisited. Part of the difficulty with this is the absence of a clearly defined enemy, as I have argued. Another part of the complexity surrounding this is also that the level of 'historicity' implies a type of meta-narrative. Such meta-narratives are critiqued and/or denied in both postmodern theorising and conditions (see for example Hall, 1992; and Usher, 1996, in this regard). It is, thus, difficult to understand what the centrifugal force constructed through such meta-narratives and which allow struggles to cohere at the level of historicity could mean under such postcolonial and postmodern conditions. I have suggested above that one form this could take is in 'front politics' but these are transient. Further engagement with this will be necessary in order to get a better understanding of critical agency may mean in current times.

Finally, I also need to indicate that Touraine's typology of 'critical and positive struggles' which I have used in this article cannot be viewed as clearly separated from each other. I have shown that EE manifests both elements of 'critical and positive struggles'. Touraine's typology, thus, remains useful if viewed as over-lapping with each other, rather than being

distinct. This seems to be more the case in postcolonial contexts, where legacies of neo-colonialism to which Mbembe (2001) and Osaghae (1990) refer. In such postcolonial contexts, as in South Africa, where legacies of apartheid persist whilst constructing a post-apartheid order, 'critical and positive struggles' could, as I have shown with EE, operate simultaneously. In this regard, then, I think it will be necessary to realise that critical agency will be continuous with past forms of 'critical struggles'. Critical agency will be also different and discontinuous with 'critical struggles' as it is (re)defined and (re)articulated in complex contemporary pluralised societies. What critical agency could mean under such conditions, and in 'positive struggles', will also need further engagement.

Conclusion

The primary focus in the paper has been to look at what could be considered to be social movements using critical agency in a post-apartheid situation and the extent to which such social movements may be considered to be leading to alternative social orders. I have argued in this paper is that the post-apartheid situation seems to be more characterised by 'positive struggles' and issues of influence and positioning seem to predominate. Whilst such positive struggles reflect both critical thinking and critical agency they do not necessarily lead to alternatives at the level of 'historicity'. Looking at Equal Education (EE), I have shown that EE represents a type of social movement in the post-apartheid educational system that manifests both 'critical' and 'positive struggles', and as such demonstrates a critical agency at moments, but, at other moments, it also manifests tendencies to reinforce the construction of a dominant existing order in its partnerships with government. In this regard, I have argued that the limitations of what may possible to movements such as EE reverberate with the constraints of collective socio-political action in postmodern and postcolonial conditions. In relation to postmodernity and post-colonialism, I have been pointed out that collective actions tend to be more in the form of 'front politics' which utilise alliances among various people and groupings, with varying and multiple interests. Such alliances also tend to be transient and issue focused. In such a scenario, social movements against a 'truly social domination' seem to be less possible. I have also pointed out in this paper that what may be seen to constitute alternatives at the level of 'historicity' in such post-apartheid and postmodern conditions needs to be explored in further serious debate and discussion, since moving towards more just social orders,

locally and internationally, depend on such theories to inform future critical agency.

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Critical agency in education: a Foucauldian perspective

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The personal is political – Carol Hanisch, 1970

Abstract

While the neoliberal order is associated with the economy, government and globalisation, as a form of governmentality it effects a particular subjectivity. The subject is the terrain where the contest of control plays out. The subject is drawn into the seductive power of performativity which dictates its agency, desires and satisfactions and from which escape is difficult to imagine. Neoliberalism is particularly interested in an education which provides it with the much needed powers of production and consumption. This dependency of the neoliberal order on a particular kind of agential subjectivity is also its weakness because of the indeterminacy of the self. Within this openness of the human subject lies the possibility to be different and to escape any form of subjectification. Foucault's account of the critical agent portrays a form of difference that opposes and transcends neoliberal ordering. Foucault finds the principle of practices of freedom in the Greco-Roman ethics of the care for the self. It is an ethics where the subject gains control of itself through the ascetic and reflective attention in relation to available ethical codes and with the guidance of a 'master'. Such a strong sense of the self is the basis for personal and social transformation against neoliberal colonisation. The development of critical agency in education is subsequently investigated in the light of Foucault's notions of agency and freedom. The contest of the subject is of particular importance to education interested in the development of critical agency. The critical agent is not only one who could identify and analyse regimes of power, but also one who could imagine different modes of being, and who could practice freedom in the enactment of an alternative mode of being. The educational implications are explored in relation to the role of the teacher and pedagogical processes.

Introduction

Subjectivity is an important terrain of contest in the era of neoliberalism. While neoliberalism is largely used to describe the actions of governments and international corporations and processes of globalisation, it is dependent on particular kinds of individual subjectivities as both its products and its producers.

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by *liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms* and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (Harvey, 2005, p.2) – Italics: author

The neoliberal order colonises subjectivity and transforms it into the human resources it requires. In contrast to the experiences of alienation and oppression in the industrial era, neoliberal subjects participate fully and willingly and experience satisfaction, enjoyment and rewards. Neoliberalism presents itself as a total system that is not only inevitable but also beneficial to all. It claims to ensure the best of political, educational, social, medical and scientific advances, food security and sustainable development. Total subjection to this order is therefore not only for the individual good, but also for the social and environmental good.

Education is important for neoliberalism since it provides the human capital needed for business and industry, not only in the sense of skills, but also in terms of a particular kind of subject. Peters (2001) describes such an ‘enterprise education’ through which the self-monitoring ‘entrepreneurial self’ is developed. The individual has to take ‘responsibility’ for the self.

The curriculum must also be redesigned to reflect the new realities and the need for the highly skilled flexible worker who possesses requisite skills in management, information handling, communication, problem solving, and decision making. (Peters, 2001, p.66)

Although the concept of the ‘entrepreneurial self’ suggests a self that is in control of itself and actively pursuing its own goals, it remains subjugated to the neoliberal order which narrowly predefines identity, desires, choices, goals and satisfactions. Although the neoliberal market promises freedom on the basis of the multiplication of choices, the frameworks within which it operates is narrowly delimited.

While neoliberalism contains various rewards and satisfactions, it entails two kinds of deprivation: It shapes humans in the one-dimensional form of the *homo æconomicus*, and it marginalises and excludes the majority by depriving them from full participation in the world (Arendt, 1998) while extracting surplus value from them and from their living spaces. It is devastating to humans and to the environment.

The neoliberal subjectification is and should be resisted. Critical agency is the reclaiming of subjectivity. Critical agency is present in many forms and

locations of resistance (such as the Occupy-events or the Zapatistas) and in the literature of critique that draws on Marxist, Poststructuralism, Feminist, Anti-racist and Postcolonial perspectives. The limitation of acts of resistance is that they often remain within the logic and the problematic defined by the dominant order. The limitation of critique as literature is that it largely interprets and does not change the world (Marx and Engels, 1969). It is therefore important for critical agency to go beyond resistance and theorising in order to enact a different ordering. Although the nature and focus of the resistance cannot be prescribed the critical agent defines the deprivation and the appropriate form of resistance. A persistent question is consequently the nature of, and the resources available to, the agent who drives the critique and transformation. This (postmodern and poststructural) agent does not have recourse to an essential nature or to universal, transcendental or human-centered sources of critique and transformation. A conception of critical agency has therefore to be developed in the absence of universal or transcended values such as truth, rationality or the good.

This article explores perspectives that arise from a Foucauldian focus on critical agency. While Foucault is known for his investigations into forms of domination in prisons and mental institutions related to the power/knowledge nexus of the human sciences, the underlying interest in the possibilities of freedom which only appeared in his later works, have not received equal attention. We find in the later Foucault an engagement with neoliberalism and a notion of freedom that develops from within such a dominant order. It is also a kind of agency that could resist and go beyond the seductive power of the neoliberal culture of possessiveness and consumption. It provides an opportunity to investigate how critical agents could participate in the contest of subjectivity.

This article wants to contribute to Foucauldian studies in education and to critical education studies. Although a large body of research has been done in education on the basis of Foucault's ideas (such as Ball, 2013; Besley and Peters, 2007; Olssen, 1999; Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998; Walshaw, 2007) the notion of critical agency has not been well developed. This Foucauldian approach to critical education studies draws on a concern it has in common with Marxist approaches of Apple, McLaren and Giroux by appealing to Marx's (1998) view of critique not as a mental activity, but as historical material action. It will be argued that a Foucauldian notion of critical agency provides the basis for the transformation of the discursive and material conditions of freedom. This article investigates the implications of

Foucault's notion of critical agency for a kind of education that focuses on subjectivity that challenges and transform a dominant order.

Critical agency

A Foucauldian notion of critical agency provides a closer account of how subjectivity could be reclaimed through its resistance against and transcendence of the neoliberal order. The summary by Kelly (2013, p.244) of Foucault's conception of critical agency is used as a framework for this analysis that will be referred to throughout:

In general, this conception can be characterized as a subject's capacities (a) to render sensible and to critique the norms underlying any social, political, moral, aesthetic, or other practices or institutions that subjugate rather than liberate people; (b) to imagine, if not initiate, new norms that would transform the practices or institutions so they *desubjugate* and liberate people; and, recognizing that liberation carries its own forms of subjection, (c) to sustain this rendering, critiquing, and imagining as a permanent ethos. (Foucault, 1990d, pp.154,155; 2007, p.47)

This summary could be compared to that of Lemke (2002) for whom there are three aspects to critique: problematisation, voluntary insubordination and the audacity to expose oneself as a subject.

While (a) refers to Foucault's genealogical critique which identifies and analyses the conditions and discourses underlying forms of domination, (b) and (c) refer to a positive and constructive notion of critique. The insight into the contingency of forms of subjugation (a) contributes towards the possibility to imagine and initiate alternatives (b). But imagining and initiating do not ensure the durability of the liberation which entails a different mode of being as expressed in (c). The question that (c) wants to address is how to live after liberation, or how do we stay true to the 'event' (Badiou, 2005) of liberation? The continued existence of such a new mode of being is not dependent on a (communist) government, institutions, ethical codifications, or political parties, but on subjects that live an ethos.

It is this third aspect of critique that will be the focus of this essay. This aspect presents critique as a life-affirming practice, a way of living within, but also beyond forms of domination. It refers to an ethical kind of life that embodies critique. The positive nature of critique is expressed as follows:

I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them sometimes-all the better. All the better. Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I'd like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms. (Foucault, 1997c, p.323)

When I say "critical," I don't mean a demolition job, one of rejection or refusal, but a work of examination that consists of suspending as far as possible the system of values to which one refers when testing and assessing it. In other words: what am I doing at the moment I'm doing it? (Foucault, 1990b, p.107)

The object, rather, is to arm the subject with a truth it did not know, one that did not reside in it; what is wanted is to make this learned, memorised truth, progressively put into practice, a quasi subject that reigns supreme in us (Foucault, 1997b, p.102).

Such a positive approach to critique avoids a tendency (Leask, 2012) to separate Foucault's earlier work on subjectivity as subjugation from his later work on ethics, agency and freedom. It is, however, important to maintain the coherence in Foucault's project as expressed by him in a late interview (25 April 1984). Although Foucault shifted his focus in the later work, his central concern has always been the relation between "the subject, truth, and the constitution of experience" (Foucault, 1990a, p.48). According to Leask (2012, p.58) power is intensified in the later work of Foucault in such a way that it "came to infuse. . . the very subject that might previously have been taken to be a mere effect". Once the coherence in Foucault's work is maintained the relation between the positive notion of critique and forms of subjugation could be explored by asking how it is possible to live an ethos of freedom under the conditions of intensified subjugation? It is important to note that it is the same subjugated subject that engages in critique and develops agency. The basic point Foucault makes is that while the contest of subjectivity has become more intense in the neoliberal era the possibilities for critical agency multiply. The basis of the multiplication of possibilities is the 'care for the self'.

Holding the earlier and later work of Foucault together is also important in order to distinguish this kind of critical agent from the authentic humanistic or rational liberal subject: The Foucauldian subject is not autonomous and free from power relations. It is a non-substantive subject that does not have its own internal law (auto-nomos) by means of which authenticity could be achieved. It is always within and subjected to power relations.

In relation to the coherence of Foucault's work, the singling out of the third aspect of critique identified by Kelly does not in any way negate the first two since the three aspects of critique are dependent on each other. The first aspect relates to Foucault's analyses of regimes of truth in relation to mental institutions, prisons and later on, sexuality. Critique is here not the mere judgement that something is wrong in relation to a set of standards, but the making explicit of the underlying norms and mechanisms of truth.

But experience has taught me that the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than is abstract criticism.
(Foucault, 1990c, p.82)

The purpose of critique is not to unmask an ideological distortion, but to show how a particular regime of truth comes into being. Insight into the contingency of the verifying and justifying norms creates the space for the other two aspects of critique: imagining how things could be different (b) and living new forms of subjectivity as an ethos (c).

While Foucault has been accused of furthering the cause of neoliberalism (Zamora, 2014), the basic approach in this article is to follow scholars such as Dilts (2011) who points to his more fundamental form of critique that is often overlooked. Leask (2012) supports this by arguing that Foucault develops an 'immanent' form of critique. This means that critique and transformation do not appeal to universal values or theories, but develops through the subversion of the dominant order and the emergence of something new that is not a mere reaction.

Ethics of the self

Critical agency should not only be defined in terms of critique and resistance (first element defined by Kelly above), but also in relation to an ethos (third element) that appeals consistently to norms that are already present in culture. This ethos refers to an ethics defined by the *care for the self* which Foucault develops in volumes 2 and 3 of the *History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1986, 1990g). It shares with the 'ethics of care' (Nodding) the emphasis on a relational response to the particularity of the other, but differs in its primary focus on the (relational) self.

The central themes in the work of both the earlier and the later Foucault, subjectivity, truth experience and freedom should be drawn on to understand the ethics of the *care for the self*. He relates ethics and freedom as follows:

Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it informed by reflection. (Foucault, 1997a, p.284)

The first ‘freedom’ refers to the liberation from relations of domination such as slavery (which could be compared with negative freedom (Berlin, 1969)). Since a person can only live ethically (for Foucault) in conditions of self-mastery, this kind of freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. The second use of ‘freedom’ refers to an ongoing project through which a life is stylised by reflecting on the self (this could be compared with positive freedom (Taylor, 1979)). Freedom is exercised here as an ethical obligation towards the self. The ethics of the self is the continuing critique and transformation of the self and of external forms of subjugation. While freedom is the ontological condition for ethics, a positive notion of freedom is realised through an ethical life.

This ethics is primarily based on the Socratic dictum: “Take care of yourself . . . Make freedom your foundation, through the mastery of yourself” (Foucault, 1997a, p.301). Freedom is exercised through reflective and ethical self-mastery. Mastery of the self is not the same as the liberal notion of autonomy because the self is always in power relations (described by Foucault as governmentality). The self could also not invent the ethical norms of life by. The question Foucault asks is therefore how freedom could be practiced within and against the dominant neoliberal morality.

Foucault finds in Greco-Roman morality his inspiration for the formulation of an ethics of the self. This ethics is very different from the Christian denunciation and negation of the self, and obedience to an e(x)ternal law. The important difference between these two kinds of ethics is the relation of the individual to prevailing ethical codes. Whereas Christian morality requires subjugation and self-denial, the subject in the Greco-Roman ethics creates an own life which draws on, but is not determined by, the existing moral codes. Ethics is not about the obedience to a moral code through which the self is redeemed, it is rather a concern with the self in relation to the moral codes present in culture (Foucault, 1997a).

Foucault expresses this as follows:

Of course, there had also been certain norms of behavior that governed each individual's behavior. But the will to be a moral subject and the search for an ethics of existence were, in Antiquity, mainly an attempt to affirm one's liberty and to give to one's own life a certain form in which one could recognize oneself, be recognized by others, and which even posterity might take as an example. (Foucault, 1990a, p.49)

The moral codes are not something that must simply be followed, but are rather resources to draw on in the care for the self. Foucault draws on his investigation into sexuality to illustrate this (Foucault, 1990g). The Greco-Roman morality does not simply condemn sexual relations such as those outside the marriage and including slaves and young boys. These relations are harmful in so far as they represent the submission of the self to desires which took control of the self. Such relations are not wrong because they transgress a moral code, but because they damage the self. Ethics is not about the submission to any power or code besides the particular way the self has to care for itself. The only 'transgression' is the lack of care for the self.

The ethics of the self is, furthermore, an aesthetics of existence (Foucault, 1990a), a stylising of a particular kind of life. To illustrate the aesthetic of the work on the self, Foucault points to the artist:

This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting? (Foucault, 1990f, p.14)

It was a question of knowing how to govern one's own life in order to give it the most beautiful possible form (in the eyes of others, of oneself, and of the future generations for which one might serve as an example). That is what I tried to reconstitute: the formation and development of a practice of self whose aim was to constitute oneself as the worker of the beauty of one's own life. (Foucault, 1990e, p.259)

The crafting of such a life requires work on the self, disciplining of the self and self-exercise, a form of *ascesis*:

Care for the self is not simply an attitude, a form of living, but a practice, something for which time had to be set apart and which need to be attended to. It was seen as a 'duty and technique, a basic obligation and a set of carefully worked-out procedures. (Foucault, 1997b, p.95)

Ascetics is understood as an "exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1997a, p.282).

This ethical self is therefore not subjected to a dominating order, but it becomes a quasi-subject, a form of self-mastering. Foucault also describes this self-mastery as follows: it is to “take up residence in oneself”, a self-possession, a self-enjoyment, it is to surpass the self, and a mastery of appetites (Foucault, 1997a, p.285), an elaboration of self by self, a studious transformation, a slow arduous process of change, guided by a constant concern for truth (Foucault, 1990e).

Knowledge of and reflection on the self is an ethical search for the truth about the self. Truth should not be understood in a metaphysical or universalistic way as what corresponds with reality or what is the same for everyone. There is also no true or authentic self that has to be recovered. Truth is gained through reflection and self-knowledge in the mode of Greek dictum ‘know yourself’. This truth has a negative and a positive function. Negatively it denies and resists forms of subjugation, and positively it asserts a certain sense of the self. Negatively, this truth is different from the knowledge about the self which is produced through various kinds of governmentality within regimes or games of truth. It is a realisation of who one is not, a de-identification from what one is expected to be or coerced into being. It is at the root of the self’s resistance to forms of subjugation. This self is different from the entrepreneurial self enforced by the neoliberal order. Positively, truth about the self is approached through a reflection on the self in the light of ethical norms. It is the truth about the own intentions, motivations, satisfactions and desires. Freedom is the finding of and living in accordance with this enfolding truth. In line with Foucault’s conception of power/truth, this truth is also an effect of the power of the self over the self. Knowledge of and truth about the self are essential to the care of the self. This knowledge is not an attempt to find the ‘true self’, but rather a distinctive self that is not defined by dominant forms of subjectification.

This focus on the self is not a narcissistic withdrawal within a self isolated from its role within historical material practices. The care for the self could easily be confused with the neoliberal investment in the entrepreneurial self or with a ‘postmodern’ playfulness and continuous invention of the self. The crucial difference is that the care for the self entails a care for others. Within the Greco-Roman ethics the good ruler, husband, father, lover or slave owner is one that, first of all, takes care of himself without which one cannot be a good ruler or be ruled in the right way (Foucault, 1997a). The abuse or domination of others in any of these relations is an indication that the person does not take care of him/herself since s/he is not in control of his/her

passions and desires. Such lack of control is as disastrous to the self as it is to others. The care for others is therefore a constitutive element of the care for the self. The inclusion of others in the Greco-Roman *ascesis* is therefore in stark contrast with the Christian *ascesis* which entail a denouncement of the self, a withdrawal from the world and the prioritising of a vertical relationship with a deity.

The care for the self is also directly related to the transformation of the sociomaterial conditions of life. This ethics is directed against subjugated forms of governmentality embedded in social, economic and political relations. The care for the self forms the basis of the resistance against and transformation of the objective conditions of existence.

The care for the self constitutes the third element of the Foucauldian critical agency as defined by Kelly. The critical agent appears here as someone who practices his/her freedom from forms of subjugation on the basis of an ethos. The 'permanent ethos' points to a subject that continually detects and resists any form of subjugation however lucrative and 'satisfying' it might be. It is a subject set on a path of stylising him/herself in opposition to forms of subjugation within entrepreneurial governmentality. Freedom as 'agonism' refers to a continual combat, a permanent provocation (Foucault, 1982) related to the constant practice of the care for the self (Foucault, 1997b). Caring for the self takes place against the grain of neoliberal forms of subjugation. It is a continual vigilance in the face of the innovative ways in which the neoliberal ordering takes place.

While the ethics of the self draws on existing moral codes, it replaces the imposed morality of a dominant and dominating order as confirmed by Armstrong and Lemke:

Foucauldian autonomy, then, is not opposed to social regulation. Rather, it consists in the struggle to subvert the project of normalization by wresting the power of regulation from the ends of disciplinary control in order to deploy this power in the service of self-creation. (Armstrong, 2008, p.27)

The practices of freedom are forms of critique as an ethical activity. Thus, critical activity is understood as a way of self-formation - a self-formation that is neither an individual option nor a voluntaristic choice but operates in a specific normative horizon, thereby extending and transforming it. (Lemke, 2011, p.38)

Critical agency in education

Education plays a central role in the contest of the subject. The focus on the critical agent in education is an attempt to intervene in the contested area of colonised subjectivity in order to explore ways in which such agency could be developed. This section focuses on the cultivation of a certain kind of subjectivity as an essential element of critical agency.

Neoliberalism refers to a kind of social ordering that draws on and produces the will, desires and behaviour of individuals in a holistic way. These subjectivities are dominated in the sense that their destiny is predefined within a particular order. In order for critical education to respond to this, a different relation is needed between individual subjectivity and processes of social ordering. The difference lies in the demand to become a powerful subject that relates to, opposes and goes beyond dominating forms of ordering. The focus in this section is on the pedagogical processes that could contribute to the development of this powerful agency. It attempts to answer questions such as: How could a subject within relations of power become powerful in opposition to forms of domination?; How could education as a powerful process enable the empowerment and freedom of the subject?

Some of the processes of social ordering and the production of subjectivities through education are related to the role of teacher and the kind of knowledge. A Foucauldian approach to the individual and social ordering could be contrasted with that of other educational philosophies. Humanist and constructivist approaches tend to deny the normative role of the social order as represented by the power of the teacher and objective forms of knowledge. A Freirean approach of equal dialogue does not adequately allow for the powerful intervention of the teacher and for powerful forms of knowledge, either. Rational-liberal approaches over-emphasise the presence of a dominant order within which individuals are to be initiated. None of these approaches therefore succeed in maintaining a balance between individual freedom and the social order. They either leave the subject powerless within the limited framework of the self or powerless without a sense of self in a dominant order.

It may appear that a Foucauldian response does not suffice either because he combines a non-substantive self with the demand to oppose forms of subjugation and to practise freedom. It seems that the self is left without

resources, such as a true or rational self, in its resistance to domination. It has however been shown how critical agency is possible on the basis of Foucault's view of power, the self and freedom. It is shown that such a non-substantive agent can practise freedom by realising an own ethos. This section investigates how critical agency could be achieved in education by focusing on the role of the teacher and on aspects of pedagogical processes.

The aims of education

The non-substantive subject implies that the aims of education could not be specified in any substantial way in terms such as rationality or self-realisation. This also makes it harder to clearly define an oppositional self and to provide concrete content to freedom that would counter neoliberal forms of subjugation. In spite of this apparent weakness a Foucauldian approach to education insists on the development of a powerful self on the basis of an own ethos as a result of the continual work on the self. The powerful self has achieved self-mastery by defining an own morality on the basis of an interpretation and realisation of moral codes. This self is not swayed by fluctuating trends and representations demanded by the constant need for to reinvent the self. Critical agency should be developed in education by enabling children to practise their freedom by taking care of themselves (Peters, 2003).

The aim of education could be defined as the development of the self towards the "full and complete status of subject through the practice of the self" (Foucault, 2001, p.127). Although it is not expected that everyone would achieve this state of the self, it represents a fuller notion of being human. The "full and complete status of the subject" refers to a subject that has mastered him/her, know its desires, take care of the self, and live according to an ethos. The aims of education cannot be predefined in terms such as the 'critical thinker', or the 'life-long learner'. Such expectations, outcomes and standards cannot prescribe who the subject is to be. The fact that the outcomes or aims could not be clearly articulated does not leave the educational processes without direction and content. An indication of the kind of education that could develop the powerful self is discussed in relation to the role of the teacher and the pedagogical processes of teaching and learning.

Role of the teacher

A Foucauldian conception of the role of the teacher provides some insights into the dilemma of power and freedom in education as represented by the dichotomy between the authoritarian and the egalitarian educator. This conception allocates a much stronger role to the educator when compared to humanistic and Freirean approaches. The humanist and constructivist teacher plays mainly a supportive role to assist children in the realisation of the inner and authentic self and in the discovery and construction of knowledge. Knowledge is constructed on the basis of an own frame of reference that cannot be judged in relation to a superior form of knowledge. The Freirean teacher-student, who engages in equal dialogue, refrains from exercising authority and from transmitting knowledge. The rational-liberal teacher, on the other hand, knows what children should become by initiating them into (fairly fixed and established) forms of knowledge.

In contrast to these views the Foucauldian teacher plays a powerful, but non-dominating role. Although power is inherent to all human interactions and the tendency to dominate is constantly lurking, the Foucauldian teacher walks the tightrope between the exercise of power and the imposition of domination. While the exercise of power is always asymmetrical, it becomes domination when it claims to know who the child is or what s/he has to become. The teacher has to work with the tension between the demand for the child to define his/her own self, and the realisation that s/he cannot do this on his/her own.

While education is a life-long process through which the self works on itself, the 'other' plays an indispensable role according to Foucault. The subject cannot bring about its own transformation (Foucault, 2001). The individual needs a master in order to develop the fullness of the self. Foucault draws on Greco-Roman thinking to identify three aspects of 'mastership' (Foucault, 2001): Mastership through example, through competence and through Socratic problematisation. Since these three forms of mastership are not to be separated from each other, the relation between freedom and power should be investigated through the Socratic element within the other two forms. Foucault's emphasis on the essential role of the master points to the presence of (social) power within the heart of the educational process. It is important to investigate how this power functions in non-dominating ways since it strongly

influences the relation of the child to the social order and the possibility to develop powerful subjectivity.

As a model the teacher's form of subjectivity is an example of the kind of subject a child could become. The master as model could be the teacher in the classroom, heroes from history or 'prestigious souls' one encounters in literature and tradition. The model is a person that has developed a 'fullness of the self' by realising an own ethos and by practising freedom and an aesthetics of existence. The Socratic questioning implicit in the modelling is the question created within the mind of the child about the particular way his/her life could be stylised. The model is not to be copied but provides an example of how aesthetics of the self could be developed and how cultural codes could be interpreted as part of a personal ethos. While it demands of the child to stylise an own life, it leaves the question open of the way it is to be done.

The mastership through competence is the passing on of knowledge and skills. This implies that there is no restriction on the responsibility of the teacher to transmit to children the wealth of knowledge and the levels of available skills. It entails the acquisition of the central concepts and processes through which knowledge is generated and legitimised. Foucault therefore does not shy away from notions of transmission and methods of lecturing.

When this form of mastership is understood in relation to Socratic questioning, it entails a genealogical understanding of the contexts, processes and practices of power through which knowledge is generated and legitimised. While the acquisition of powerful knowledge is not in conflict with the understanding of its contingency, it should give occasion to the imagining of how knowledge could be different (see Kelly's point b). Essential for critical agency is the ability to understand various games and discourses of truth in order to be able to play the game differently (Foucault, 1997). An understanding of the role of the subject in the practices of knowledge production provides an alternative insight to the dominant emphasis on the consumption and the individualised possession of knowledge. In relation to the care for the self it creates a critical awareness of how the subject and the world are co-produced through knowledge practices.

The third element of mastership, Socratic mastership, takes place through dialogical questioning that works with the tension between ignorance and memory.

Pedagogy between ignorance and memory

The Socratic questioning of the third form of mastership is a pedagogy that mediates the tension between power and freedom. It works with the nonsubstantial self and the demand to develop powerful subjectivity. The emphasis on memory indicates that knowledge is not simply gained from external sources, but through the close attention to the self.

All the forms of mastership rest on the interplay and tension between knowledge and ignorance:

The problem of mastership is how to free the young man from his ignorance. He needs to be presented with examples that he can honor in his life. He needs to acquire the techniques, know-how, principles, and knowledge that will enable him to live properly. He needs to know—and this is what takes place in the case of Socratic mastership—the fact that he does not know and, at the same time, that he knows more than he thinks he does. (Foucault, 2001, p.128)

Children are not freed from ignorance by simply providing them with knowledge. The master cannot know what their ignorance is or what kind of knowledge would contribute towards their freedom. The freedom from ignorance has to employ the memory of the child:

. . .memory being precisely what enables one to pass from ignorance to non-ignorance. (Foucault, 2001, p.129)

Memory refers to the subject's own version of knowledge, an own interpretation of what is given, the own form of subjectivity, an own understanding of the self and the world which is not a copy of objective forms of knowledge. Memory is not simply a recall of what is memorised, but both a discovery and an expression of what you do not know you knew all along. It is not simply an expression of the true or authentic self since it requires the 'effective agency' of the master. Knowledge through memory is not the affirmation of whatever is produced by the child, but the outcome of a masterful process of questioning and prompting. It is not a process that closes the child in an inner self. Through a questioning of ignorance the child makes explicit what s/he already knew. Ignorance is therefore not the opposite of knowledge. The Socratic questioning does not aim to lead the child towards an objective form of knowledge, but to a knowledge that is already within the self. This does not mean that the individual already knew everything there is to know, but that an element of recognition is always present when something

new becomes part of memory. What is to be retrieved in memory would be unique to a particular subjectivity and is both a process of discovery and construction.

Socratic questioning is a powerful tool in the hands of the master, but it also curtails his/her power. The power of the master is limited by his/her own ignorance:

He is no longer the person who, knowing what the other does not know, passes it on to him. No more is he the person who, knowing that the other does not know, knows how to demonstrate to him that in reality he knows what he does not know. (Foucault, 2001, pp.129, 130)

While the master transmits knowledge and skills to the child, the questioning focuses on the particular way the child memorises it by relating it to what is already known and by bringing the own subjectivity into play. The master does not know the particular version of the subjectivity of the child, the particular interpretation and realisation of moral codes, or what the subject is to become and the particular way in which the subject would stylise its life. The educator knows that subjectivity has to develop and knows how it should be done, but is ignorant about the particular form the subjectivity could take. While the master remains ignorant s/he works creatively within the tension of ignorance and memory that is essential to the development of the self. The outcome of Socratic questioning cannot be predetermined because the knowledge retrieved through memory does not correspond with ideas that may pre-exist in the mind of the master, in culture or in metaphysics.

This conception of the teacher provides a way to overcome the dichotomy between the authoritarian and the egalitarian educator. The educator needs not deny his/her own competence and authority when knowledge and competence are 'imparted' to children, but has to remain ignorant of the way it is memorised. It also points to how subjectivity could be developed in education in to mediate individual freedom and social order.

Care of the self

Another example of the important role of the master is the way powerful subjectivity is developed through the care of the self. Foucault draws on Seneca's contrast between *stultitia* and *sapiens*. *Stultitia* is the state where the

care of the self is absent and manifests itself in the external determination of the self and the lack of an own will. It is state of a mind that is restless and cannot settle on anything and is not satisfied with anything:

. . .we can say that the *stultus* is first of all someone blown by the wind and open to the external world, that is to say someone who lets all the representations from the outside world into his mind.

[It is one who] cannot make the *discriminatio*, cannot separate the content of these representations from what we will call, if you like, the subjective elements, which are combined in him. (Foucault, 2001, p.131)

External determination takes place where there is no centre of the self and when one's life is constantly changed through external forces. It is brought about by an inability to discriminate between the different representations the self is confronted with. This discrimination is to be done on a sense of self developed through the care for the self.

Sapiens is when the will is changed in order to focus on the care for the self. The importance of the relation between the will and the self is expressed as follows:

The *stultus* is essentially someone who does not will, who does not will himself, who does not want the self, whose will is not directed towards the only object one can freely will, absolutely and always, which is oneself. (Foucault, 2001, p.133)

The individual cannot escape stultitia by him/herself because of the absence of the will to do so. The 'other' is necessary for the self to obtain sapientia which refers to self-possession and – control. The 'helping hand' of the other, represented by the figure of the philosopher in classical Greek thinking, focusses on the very mode of being of the child.

Conclusion

Critique and critical agency that focus on the analyses of and resistances to regimes of power are essential but limited because they do not necessarily escape from the frameworks they oppose. In order to challenge the reach of the processes of neoliberal ordering, critical agency has to find a kind of freedom that escapes subjugation. In order to counter subjugated forms of governmentality, it has to appeal to a centre of control within the subject

itself. Neoliberalism does not only have to be taken on at the global terrains of politics, the economy and the environment, but also on the terrain of the subject. The subject in particular is the terrain where freedom could be practiced and control asserted.

This attention to the subject is not a withdrawal from the economic, social, political and cultural domains of struggle and transformation. It is rather an attempt to focus in more detail on the agency of transformation. This agent is not a type (rational, autonomous, desiring, oppressed, member of a class or group) but a powerful subject who takes control of itself and who practices freedom in the pursuit of an ethical, meaningful and enjoyable life.

The care for the self is an ethical command which requires close attention to the way a style of life is crafted. This self is not autonomous, but always in relations of power. Control of the self is a power over the self that replaces the power of others such as a dominant order. This self is not subjugated to external orders, but draws on cultural values in the development of an own ethos. Since freedom is a practice of self-mastery it opposes external forms of governmentality on the basis of the care for the self. The care for the self entails the shaping of the own life in order to find and experience the own form of meaning and enjoyment.

The development and fostering of critical agency in education has therefore to focus on the ethical self through which a powerful form of own subjectivity could be developed. The care for the self provides the personal, moral and epistemic strength to challenge forms of domination and to practice the kind of freedom beyond domination. The care for the self is not an ascetic withdrawal, but the basis of personal and social transformation. It is a practice of freedom that creates a style of life that generates critique of the dominant order and that anticipates the life after liberation. While the critical agent will always struggle against dominating power, this article explores critique as a constructive, life affirming process which asserts itself within and against the powerful other.

A pedagogy that aims to develop a powerful subject has to find the right balance between the mediating role of the powerful (competent) teacher and the emerging independent subjectivity of the child. It focusses on the particular way the child takes care of him/herself with reference to what is of significance in culture. The role of the teacher is to ensure that the child does not get caught up in an isolated self or get lost within a dominating other.

These two dangers are uniquely combined in the neoliberal production of subjectivity. In order to contest this subjectivity, a strong sense of the self is needed who have developed the moral resources to craft an own form of life. It has been shown that the Foucauldian ‘master’ who provides powerful forms of knowledge and competence and who is limited by his/her ignorance of the mode of being of the subject is a necessary agent in the development of powerful subjectivity.

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Knowledge for teaching, knowledge about teaching: exploring the links between education research, scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) and scholarly teaching

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Abstract

The relationship between education research and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) is still debated, while a distinction has been made between scholarly teaching and SOTL. This study compares and contrasts two programmes of work that took place in a particular 2nd year engineering course, both led by the author. The first programme was an educational research project investigating student learning in the course. The second programme was a period of teaching, leading to some SOTL output. Analysis of the knowledge drawn on in teaching, confirms that good university teaching is not a direct application of research findings but rather draws on a broad and largely tacit practical base of knowledge. The article also offers a deliberation on whether it is productive to maintain the distinction between education research and SOTL.

Introduction

The idea of a ‘scholarship of teaching’ (later expanded to ‘scholarship of teaching and learning’, SOTL) arrived on the academic scene in the early 1990s with the publication of *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*, by Ernest Boyer (1990). Its arrival was timely. Boyer had been concerned that the increasing status accorded to research in the academy was at the expense of a focus on teaching, and this concern resonated with the growing academic (also termed education) development movement, which argued for the necessity of improved university teaching to deal with the needs of a massified and increasingly diverse student population (Clegg, 2009). The idea of SOTL grew quickly, within the US but also within other Anglophone contexts, spawned conferences and a journal, and has started to show influence in some university promotion policies (Chalmers, 2010; Vardi and Quin, 2010). In South Africa, the setting for the present study, there is substantial interest in SOTL given the current pressures to improve student

learning outcomes and a consequent focus on professional development for academics as teachers. However, it needs to be noted that from the outset, there has been a debate on what actually constitutes SOTL and this debate continues to the present. A recent contribution by Kreber concedes that SOTL is still a “contested concept” (2013, p.857). This article therefore starts with an overview of the conceptual work to date in this area.

Boyer had formulated ‘scholarship of teaching’ as one of the counterpoints he offered to the ‘scholarship of discovery’, his description of the traditional research valued in the university. In defining SOTL as one of the forms of scholarship (research), it might be assumed that SOTL is a subfield of educational research. On the other hand, Boyer’s actual (brief) description of the ‘scholarship of teaching’ suggests that by this term he had in mind a particular approach to teaching, a scholarly approach.

Acknowledging this potential conceptual confusion, in an influential article Hutchings and Shulman (1999) proposed that a distinction be made between ‘scholarship of teaching’ and ‘scholarly teaching’. To do this they start with a focus on ‘excellent teaching’, which they argue is the obligation of all academics – engaging students, and facilitating learning. ‘Scholarly teaching’ they define as a form of teaching which builds on excellent practice but goes beyond this to be informed by current literature, to collect evidence in the classroom, and, on the basis of this, to engage in high level reflection. ‘Scholarship of teaching’ has three additional characteristics in that it is “public (‘community property’), open to critique and evaluation, and in a form that others can build on” (p.13). It focuses inquiry on student learning.

Working with these clear distinctions, Richlin (2001) sees a progressive process which begins with scholarly teaching and all the reflective and deliberative processes which this entails, whereafter the potential exists for the teacher to take this further to develop SOTL:

The scholarship of teaching, in my view, builds on the end product of scholarly teaching. Having completed the process to the point of evaluating the results of the teaching intervention, the professor must decide whether or not to proceed with turning the findings into the scholarship of teaching. Clearly, this would depend on the significance of results. The professor may also consider, however, whether the extra effort to write up the material, subject it to another peer review, and disseminate the resulting manuscript would be worth the time required in terms of faculty rewards. (p.61)

SOTL, read in these terms, has a very close relationship to educational research more broadly, and some scholars have sought to clarify this relationship. Crucially, SOTL emerges from the (university) teaching context, and is usually conducted by the teacher. In this regard these debates could potentially be productively informed by the significant literature on practitioner research in the school teaching context (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009; Lunenberg, Ponte and Van de Ven, 2007). With regard to SOTL, established education researchers have sounded cautions around the possibility that university academics with no prior social science or humanities education can quickly move to producing knowledge in a new field (school teachers typically have had significant exposure to the disciplinary field of education), and concerns have been raised about the quality of some SOTL work that has thus far been presented at conferences (Brew, 2011; Elton, 2009). Prosser (2008, pp.2, 4) offers a fairly explicit position in this regard, stating that SOTL is “not research in the traditional sense” but rather “evidence based critical reflection on practice to improve practice”. Inasmuch as Prosser recognises the value of an ‘interplay’ between these two activities, he argues for maintaining a clear distinction between SOTL and education research.

Trigwell and Shale (2004, p.534), in considering such a conception of SOTL (as a form of practitioner research) and returning to Boyer’s original intentions to promote the status of teaching as an activity in the academy, are concerned that an enterprise that gets academics to focus on SOTL outputs, could be at the expense of an actual focus on (scholarly) teaching:

However, we have argued against a conception of scholarship of teaching that places too great an emphasis on the production of pedagogic knowledge. It potentially displaces teaching practice, and pedagogic resonance, from the apex of a conception of scholarship of teaching to its margins.

Thus they argue for a distinctive approach to SOTL, much along the lines of Prosser – one that does not conflate it with education research, but keeps it squarely focused on classroom concerns. They go on to write further:

We see teaching as a scholarly process aimed at making learning possible (Ramsden, 1992). It, therefore, follows that we see the scholarship of teaching as about making transparent, for public scrutiny, how learning has been made possible. (Trigwell and Shale, 2000, p.525)

In an attempt to contribute to this debate, the present article takes as a departure point the explicit distinction between scholarly teaching,

scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL), and education research outlined above. SOTL, although it has much in common with education research and could be considered by some as a sub-field of this domain, is defined by a form of enquiry that emerges from a particular teaching context, and is usually conducted by the teacher, who may or may not also be an established education researcher. In acknowledging the potential significance of these three distinct activities, this analysis will look to interrogate the forms of knowledge that they both draw on and produce.

The article presents a case study of a course in which I, at two different periods, adopted firstly the role of education researcher (working in conjunction with the course lecturer) and, approximately a decade later, took on the role of teacher in this same course. In the first engagement, as an education researcher (PhD student at that point), I had an explicit intention to produce education research on student learning. In the second engagement, as a university teacher, my focus was towards teaching and learning, and the focus of this study is on whether any aspects of scholarly teaching or SOTL could be identified in that work. This case study allows thus for an interesting comparison of education research, SOTL, and scholarly teaching, all conducted by the same person albeit at different points in time, in the same university course context.

Knowledge and teaching

To take this discussion further, it is important to consider the relationship between knowledge and professional work, with professional work in this instance referring to teaching. Here there is a growing literature mostly emanating from the school context, often with a departure point examining the formal pre-service education of teachers (Ball, 2000). Early work by Lee Shulman (1986, 1987) outlined a range of knowledge types that teachers need to be able to draw on in their practice. Clearly, at whatever level, teachers need knowledge of the subjects that they will teach. At a university level, this is often considered the only really important qualification for teaching, one's disciplinary knowledge. Shulman's key contribution was to note that for teaching one requires a reworking of disciplinary knowledge that transforms it into what he termed 'pedagogical content knowledge', an orientation which also includes knowledge around student learning in this disciplinary area.

For the purposes of this investigation, however, we are more concerned with what might be termed pedagogical knowledge, knowledge around teaching and learning. What knowledge do expert teachers draw on, in addition to their (pedagogical and disciplinary) content knowledge, when planning and when executing teaching? A central influence for conceptualising this kind of professional work has been that of Donald Schön, who highlights the centrality of reflective practice (Schön, 1983), seen also in a conceptualisation of scholarly teaching laid out by Brew (2010). In recent work on the sociology of professional knowledge, Young and Muller (2014) contend that although reflection is no doubt a key orientation in professional work itself, to focus entirely on this activity is to evade the significance of the knowledge bases that professionals recruit to their reflective practice. Thus, although much professional knowledge might be ‘tacit’, as recognised by Polanyi, it is nonetheless a knowledge base in its fundamental structuring and orientation to the world.

The SOTL literature does offer some recognition of the complexity of accounting for the knowledge that teachers draw on in teaching. Kreber (2013) refers to the Aristotelean typology of ‘intellectual virtues’ to signal the importance of phronesis (pragmatic and contextual judgement) rather than episteme (scientific knowledge) for SOTL. Here it is worth linking to Flyvbjerg’s (2001) contemporary conceptualisation of phronesis, in the context of a broader consideration of social science. Flyvbjerg argues that a phronetic social science is centred on the following three questions:

- Where are we going?
- Is this desirable?
- What should be done?

In summary then, however conceptualised, the literature is clear that teachers draw on a complex range of knowledges, both disciplinary and pedagogical, some tacit and some explicit, to inform their teaching decisions. We can now turn back to the SOTL literature. With the university as a site not only of knowledge acquisition/transmission but also of knowledge production, it is not surprising that the SOTL discussion is centred not only on the knowledge to be drawn on in teaching, but also on knowledge outputs from scholarly activity in the teaching arena (a key definition of SOTL as outlined above). The implicit assumption is that these knowledge outputs will be useful inputs

that others will draw on in informing their teaching; in fact the definition of scholarly teaching defined earlier gives prominence to the idea that the scholarly university teacher will inform themselves on ‘current literature’. There is also an emerging literature on the ‘research-teaching nexus’ that sees research and teaching as closely intertwined and mutually supportive activities – with an underlying joint concern for the process of learning, whether it be at the student or at the research community level (Bowden and Marton, 1998; Elton, 2001; Healey, 2000; Rowland, 1996). The present article seeks to interrogate these assumptions closely. It needs to be emphasised that drawing on knowledge to inform teaching, and producing knowledge in the context of teaching, are subtly different activities. What knowledge(s) do university lecturers draw on in their teaching? What is the relevance of SOTL or education research outputs in this regard? How is SOTL different to education research?

The research questions directing the present investigation can thus be formulated as follows:

1. Knowledge for teaching: What knowledge(s) do university teachers draw on and how might this relate to teaching that is defined as excellent or scholarly?
2. Knowledge about teaching: What knowledge outputs would constitute scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) and how might these differ to education research (or not)? To what extent can these be productively used to inform scholarly teaching?

The case study that informs this investigation focuses on a particular course and my involvement in the different roles of education researcher (termed Phase 1) and teacher (termed Phase 2).

The case study

This study is located in the context of a second year chemical engineering course at the University of Cape Town in which, at different periods, I was firstly an education researcher, and later the course convenor and lecturer. In 1996 I was appointed to an academic development post in the department with the explicit mandate to focus on improving student learning in the

programme. My attention fairly quickly gravitated towards this second year course which had a history of relatively high failure rates and was widely regarded as posing particular conceptual challenges to students. I proceeded to formulate my PhD work in the context of this course, which involved two years (1998–99) of extensive participant observation of class sessions, documentary analysis of student work, and interviews with students and the course lecturers (Case, 2001). Following completion of my PhD I began teaching in the first year of the programme as well as in another second year course and conducted a further piece of educational research with third year students. In 2009 I was given the opportunity to take over the convenership and lecturing in the very second year course in which I had focused my PhD attentions a decade before. For three years I convened and taught most of the course and thereafter moved into a more minor teaching role in the course. As of 2014 I have no involvement in that course and am teaching mainly in the first year of the programme.

These experiences provided a particular vantage point from which to explore the similarities and differences between conducting education research, performing (scholarly) teaching and engaging in the scholarship of this teaching. In this case study we have the same person as education researcher and teacher, at different points in time, but on essentially the same course (there were no curricular changes to this part of the programme over the period of investigation). It must be noted, however, that the passing of time meant that in many respects it was not ‘the same person’ doing academic work a year later, nor indeed exactly the same students or course context, given especially the dynamic context of post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the literature on SOTL tends to assume that the person conducting this work has a disciplinary research focus other than education. In this case, education research has been my main research focus, even though the somewhat unusual academic development post has meant that my teaching work has predominantly been in chemical engineering and thus I have some degree of subject specialisation also in that area.

Methodologically, there are always challenges in work that is essentially autoethnographic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). To build rigour into the process I analysed the documentary trail that I left from these two periods of work. For the education research and the SOTL this was relatively straightforward; to focus the analysis I selected one journal article from the PhD (Case and Gunstone, 2002) which I could compare to the journal article from the later SOTL work (Collier-Reed, Case, and Stott, 2013). For the

teaching work I used the trail of course documentation as well as some university and conference presentations relating to innovations in the course.

The analysis began with tracing an overview of these two periods of work in the different roles of education researcher and then teacher. The analysis proceeded to focus in on the knowledge used for teaching, comparing this with the knowledge outputs in the two phases of work.

Outlining the different roles and associated orientations

Phase 1: As education researcher on the course

The research project began from a conversation with the course lecturer, who was concerned about the quality of student learning in the course and felt that this was due to insufficient emphasis on the importance of conceptual understanding. She was keen to shift her teaching to increase this emphasis, and, with some input from me, she formulated the following innovations which she began to implement:

- Reduced and more focused content (the course content was reduced by 25%)
- More interactive teaching (she used various techniques to build student participation into the class)
- Reflective journal tasks (these required students to reflect on their learning and on their conceptual understanding)
- Conceptual assessment items (tests no longer just required calculations)
- One unlimited time test (students could take as long as they liked over one particular test)

I was interested to research how students responded to this new course context, specifically as to whether they shifted their study behaviours towards building the conceptual understanding that the lecturer prioritised. From the student learning literature in higher education I came across the notion of approach to learning, with its broad polarities of deep and surface approaches

representing whether conceptual understanding was prioritised by the student or not (Ramsden, 1992). From the science education literature, I found the idea of metacognitive development, which represented, I argued, the process of making a shift in approach to learning (Biggs, 1986). I thus formulated a research design working with a small purposively selected group of students to identify the approaches to learning prevalent in the course, and particularly to track any shifts in these approaches, and how these might relate to their perceptions of the course context.

Following a sustained period of interviews over a semester, coupled with an analysis of student work, both deep and surface approaches were identified in this group of eleven students, as well as a third approach, termed a 'procedural approach', where students focused on completing problems that had been assigned in the course as is typical in science or engineering courses. Exploring the ways in which students' perceptions of the evidently time-pressured course context might be related to their choice of approach, those taking a deep approach felt that they should invest time in building understanding in view of long-term benefits – they felt that taking time to understand ultimately saved time. Students using the procedural or surface approaches tended to avoid conceptual tasks as they felt these were too time-consuming and rather focused attention on meeting the deadlines for course submissions. The results that these students achieved in the course confirmed that the course did actually require students to grasp the conceptual foundations; only those students who ultimately used a deep approach to learning also passed the course. In conclusion, the results of this study were fairly damning for a course structure which retained significant time pressure but required students to change their approach towards a deep approach, if they were not already using it at the outset to the course.

Doing research I was concerned with what was happening in the course, but I channelled these concerns into a project which sought to establish new knowledge, not only for potential use in my context but also for a broader literature on approaches to learning. Inasmuch as it was distressing to interview a student who was failing on the course, as a researcher I was interested to find out what perceptions they held that were related to an approach to learning that was not associated with success on the course. Even though it was clear that students appreciated the opportunity to chat with someone, in the student interview situation I was not able to do much to modify their understanding or approach apart from engaging empathetically and, to some degree, prompting reflection.

Phase 2: As teacher on the course

In analysing the foci for my teaching over this period, I began by a comparison with the innovations that I had followed closely in this course during my earlier PhD study. Some of these had been dropped during the period when someone else was teaching the course, and I had reinstated the reduced and focused course content. I also reintroduced the journal tasks. I continued with a relatively interactive teaching style as I had seen exemplified by the course lecturer I had followed during my PhD. I kept the same assessment structure that had been in the course all along; significantly I did not change the time pressured assessment, as had been one of the implicit recommendations of my PhD.

From the document trail, two main innovations can be identified during my period of teaching on the course: designing an integrated project as part of the assessment, and introducing lecture recording (termed here 'lecturecasting', referred to in our journal article as 'podcasting'). These are now described and analysed in terms of the apparent motivations for these developments and the contexts in which they were implemented.

The integrated project followed a general move in engineering to introduce more project work which helps students see the significance of the theoretical material, and also to start to develop engineering skills (Grimson, 2002; Walkington, 2002). A key challenge that I was aware of, given my experience teaching in the first year of the programme, related to students' general struggles with doing work in groups, especially in the context of a culturally diverse class population, coming out of what is still a relatively segregated society with uneven school educational outcomes. To address this challenge, I designed a set of project tasks and arranged the course schedule such that all project work in groups actually took place in class. I made attendance of these sessions compulsory and I monitored and worked closely with groups as they grappled with the work, mediating in instances where groups were not interacting productively.

The lecturecasting was a response to a longstanding concern about students' ability to maximise their learning during lectures. With a large proportion of the class speaking English as a second language, I had been concerned about over reliance on fast verbal delivery and had developed a teaching approach involving extensive 'board work' (now on the tablet) to support this.

Lecturecasting allowed for a relatively simple recording of the board work with accompanying audio, using Camtasia® software. Students were able to download these recordings as mp4 files from the course website, and could listen to portions or entire lectures at their leisure.

I had a range of methods of obtaining feedback from students, ranging from immediate feedback during informal chats, through to anonymous ‘minute papers’ where on a weekly basis students gave general feedback on what they were struggling with, as well as the regular mid-semester and end of semester course evaluations (containing fairly standard closed and open-ended items, as well as customised items to gauge the impact of particular innovations).

With regard to the lecturecasting activity I had begun discussions with a colleague who was launching a similar innovation in another engineering course. We decided to construct a more formal enquiry in this context and to this end we recruited a postdoctoral research assistant to conduct focus groups in the class. In the context of the present article this is considered an exemplar of SOTL although at the time we would have most probably described it simply as ‘education research’, given that both of us had backgrounds in this research area.

Both innovations were well received as shown by detailed course evaluations. For the integrated project I was well aware of negative comments that would usually be made about random group allocation and was pleased to see these decline somewhat and being replaced by comments valuing the opportunity to work with others in class. The lecturecasts were used regularly by just over half the class, and in the focus groups these students expressed that this resource had significantly assisted them in grasping the material in the course.

On completion of my teaching work in this course my reflections in a talk given to university colleagues showed that I still felt challenged by how best to facilitate as many students as possible achieving the necessary engagement with the material – not only in class – but especially also out of class. I was pleased with the levels of engagement with the lecture that I had noted in observations and feedback, but I also noted that students only seemed to work out of class intensively in the few days before a class test. Following the previous lecturer in the course I had introduced a mini-test every second week, but these tests, counting for less marks in the overall assessment, did not seem to stimulate the required ongoing engagement in the course.

Students were juggling competing demands in multiple courses and my course only got a 'look-in' when a deadline was looming.

Analysis

Drawing from the detailed data summarised above, the analysis proceeded to respond to the two research questions framing the study. With regard to 'knowledge for teaching', the analysis focused primarily on Phase 2 when I took the role of teacher in the course, and sought to identify the knowledge that I drew on during this period, including the question of to what extent education research (including that which I had conducted in Phase 1) was drawn upon. The question of 'knowledge about teaching' compares the knowledge outputs from these two phases of work, specifically looking to characterise any differences between the education research outputs from Phase 1 and the more SOTL type outputs from Phase 2.

Knowledge for teaching

When I took over responsibility for teaching on the course, my central concern was to get students learning at a level that was required in the course. As can be seen above, all my actions were explicitly directed towards activities that I thought would 'work' and would make a difference. Many of my teaching decisions here were determined by the logistical constraints in a given course. For example, I had limited class slots and only a regular lecture theatre where I could run the group project, and so I selected groups of three, putting students together so that there was at least one laptop in each group, and arranged them in the lecture theatre so that with ease I could check attendance in each project session. All these decisions were informed by the 'art of the possible'. Lecture recording required me to purchase and develop some facility with the software but was relatively easy to implement, and so I couldn't see any reason not to do so. It did have one constraining influence on my teaching, which was that I had to keep relatively close to the laptop microphone and thus had to change my style for conducting interactive discussions in class.

Teaching was focused on getting learning to happen; I needed to be able to give evidence for my immediate community. Significantly, there was no simple and direct 'application' of research findings in teaching. The teaching

innovations identified here can certainly be seen to link to contemporary education literature which signals, for example, the value of ‘authentic enquiry’ (the project work), and the significance of using technology to enhance teaching (the lecturecasting). However, the actual *implementation* of these innovations was not driven by the research literature. The formulations and the execution appear guided by complex and certainly tacit knowledge derived from experience of teaching, and informed continually by evidence of student learning recruited from the context.

In this instance then of university teaching, it can be seen that while there is some evidence of innovations being informed by broad currents in the literature, it is more important to note how teaching decisions were largely driven by tacit, contextual knowledge, in a framework of reflective practice. In terms of the strict definitions given earlier then, it would be hard to term this ‘scholarly teaching’ and it would sit more easily in the category ‘excellent (or ‘good’) teaching’ given evidence of the success of these innovations within a broader framework of course delivery. I am making this judgement on the evidence that the research literature was not the major driver for the full range of teaching decisions and actions noted over this period.

Knowledge about teaching

This stage of the analysis aimed to compare the knowledge outputs from these two different periods of engagement with the course, first as an education researcher and then (defined here as) as a teacher engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. For the sake of the comparison this analysis looked closely at one journal output as representative of these two activities, an article from my PhD co-authored with my supervisor (Case and Gunstone, 2002) and an article on the inquiry into pod-casting co-authored with two colleagues (Collier-Reed, Case and Stott, 2013). For easy reference the abstracts of each article are reproduced here:

In this article it is argued that metacognitive development can be viewed as a shift in the approach to learning used by a student. This theoretical position is used to investigate the metacognitive development of a group of students on a course which was aiming to develop deep approaches and conceptual understanding. Considerable diversity was found in the approaches used by students, and also in the degrees to which those not initially using a conceptual (deep) approach were able to develop this approach. In those students initially using an algorithmic approach, one was able to make this transition fairly early on in the course, while others changed to different degrees at later stages. The students using

information-based approaches did not display any appreciable metacognitive development during this course. The study confirms that the promotion of metacognitive development (i.e. the use of deep approaches) is not easily achieved, and suggests certain aspects of the course environment that are either supportive of or detrimental to metacognitive development. (Case and Gunstone, 2002)

There is a growing literature on the educational benefits of using podcasting of lectures in higher education, but to date little research that interrogates closely its impact on student learning. The present study investigated how students used lecture podcasts produced in two engineering courses at a South African university. The findings confirm much of the growing consensus in the literature. Firstly, a majority of students in the courses elected to use the podcasts. Secondly, the study notes that lecture attendance, in contexts where lectures are seen as beneficial, is not adversely affected. Thirdly, few students use podcasts in the mobile mode but most rather use them as an additional resource in their private study spaces. There is intense use in the build up to tests and examinations, and there is a particular benefit for students who are not first language speakers of the medium of instruction. This study also points to the existence of both deep and surface approaches to engaging with podcasts, with substantial evidence of many students using podcasts as a means towards better understanding. (Collier-Reed, Case and Stott, 2013)

Both articles report on work which had as its origins some pedagogical innovation in the second year chemical engineering course at UCT, with the 2013 article also drawing in data from another course in the faculty. Both articles sought to explore students' perceptions of these innovations and worked with qualitative data collection methods, with the PhD representing a significantly more sustained process of data collection. Both conceptualised student learning in terms of approaches to learning, with the PhD linking this also to literature on metacognitive development.

At a deeper analysis these outputs do show some quite notable differences. The 2002 article located itself within a broader literature on students' approaches to learning and thus drove towards findings that were not so much about students' perceptions of an innovation, but which sought to say something potentially broader about student learning in higher education (this noted also in the choice of journal). This is evident even in the abstract to this article which departs from a general position on student learning and proceeds to deliver findings which are represented in fairly general terms. The lecture-casting article maintained a focus on the implementation of this technology in a course and confined its findings to that pedagogical issue, reporting ultimately to a more disciplinary focused journal audience, even though using in conclusion the language of approaches to learning.

Discussion and conclusion

In comparing the two phases of this study – the role of education researcher followed by the role of teacher – it can be seen quite clearly how these different roles played out. As a researcher I was focused on building new knowledge and concerned with having something to communicate to a wider research audience. As a teacher I was focused on getting learning to happen and most of my deliberations were focused towards this end. The SOTL-type inquiry into lecture-casting emerged from the teaching context and to some extent validated the impressions I had already formed while teaching. Significantly, there was no simple and direct ‘application’ of research findings in teaching. The teaching innovations identified here can certainly be seen to link to contemporary education literature which signals, for example, the value of ‘authentic enquiry’ (the project work), and the significance of using technology to enhance teaching (the lecturecasting). However, the actual implementation of these innovations was not driven by the research literature. The formulations and the execution appear guided by complex and certainly tacit knowledge derived from experience of teaching, and informed continually by evidence of student learning recruited from the context. In terms of the strict definitions offered earlier, we therefore cannot really term this ‘scholarly teaching’.

The analysis becomes even more vexing when we compare the knowledge outputs of work that was straightforwardly defined as education research (the PhD study) and that which for the purposes of this investigation could be considered scholarship of teaching and learning (the lecture-casting article). Both activities delivered journal outputs in the education literature; both conceptualised student learning similarly, and both drew off qualitative data of students perceptions of the course innovation. Subtle differences were evident in the intended audiences for these outputs, with the PhD study clearly aiming for a potentially more generalisable contribution to the student learning literature while the pod-casting study appears to speak more directly to a practitioner audience.

These differences aside though, we ultimately need to decide whether there is value in calling this latter work ‘scholarship of teaching and learning’ when it could also be described as ‘education research’. Adendorff (2011) points to this dilemma in reporting on the work of nine academics at a neighbouring South African university:

The interest of this study was in the experience of academics that use teaching and learning literature for reflection, dialogue and systematic inquiry into their own teaching practices. Although the respondents conceptualised their work as educational research rather than SoTL, the study was initially framed using the SoTL literature because this literature offered useful descriptions of the range of activities and difficulties associated with academics' efforts. (p.306)

In conclusion then this case study brings a useful light to bear on the debates around the meanings of SOTL that were outlined briefly in the opening of this article. If SOTL is to be a scholarship, in other words, a form of research, then it needs to be directed towards the objectives of research. This research can certainly be in the context of teaching and learning challenges, but it will be aiming towards knowledge production. This activity is simply not going to be able to deliver actual changes in the classroom. The activity that is centrally directed towards improving students' learning is good teaching, and even if informed by some of the literature (defined here as 'scholarly'), it will always have its focus on a particular set of challenges in a particular context, and the considerations at hand will go beyond this knowledge. Some of the considerations in the teaching challenges offered up by a particular context are going to require professional knowledge that will not necessarily be of interest to a broader scholarly community.

In summary therefore, this study raises questions about the notion of 'scholarly teaching' as defined in the literature. It has been shown how good university teaching draws on a range of knowledges, many tacit and contextual, and it has been suggested that formal research outputs might not play such a significant role in this regard. If our aim is to facilitate high quality student learning, there might be a significant danger in focusing too much on SOTL outputs at the expense of recognising the complex of deliberations involved in teaching.

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Using participatory research with student teachers in a South African English Education lecture-room: methodological implications

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Abstract

This article focusses on the methodological implications of using participatory action research (PAR) in an English Education lecture-room at a South African university. It argues that research with, by and for student teachers may engender their empowerment and transformation. Using a system of interventions with literary texts as catalysts, the student teachers worked towards becoming agents of change in their future classrooms. Over a two-year period, the student teachers and researcher worked collaboratively on the study that was framed by critical pedagogy. Information was collected using interviews, focus groups, student evaluations, drawings and written work and the data was analysed qualitatively. The study found that using PAR teaches student teachers important research skills that they may take into their classrooms. Further, the use of active dialogue and collaboration in a supportive environment facilitates PAR progressing successfully. Finally, critical reflexivity in PAR enables the process of change agency.

Introduction

This article focusses on the implications of using participatory action research (PAR) in an English Education lecture-room at a South African university. It argues that research with, by and for student teachers may engender their empowerment and transformation. Using a system of interventions with literary texts as catalysts, the student teachers worked towards becoming agents of change in their future classrooms. While the study generated many findings, this article focusses on answers to the following research question: What are the methodological implications of using PAR in a university lecture-room?

The study derives from two sources – the student teachers' anxieties about entering a seemingly dysfunctional educational system characterised by crisis

(Bloch, 2009) and my concern that student teachers are not taught how to become agents of change and make a difference to their learners' lives through literature or otherwise. While Priestly, Edwards, Priestley and Miller (2012) conceptualise 'agents of change' as being reflexive, creative and committed to pursuing and embracing possibilities for change even in the face of obstacles, it is my contention that student teachers need to be developed and empowered to confront the challenges of the many South African realities, including the freedoms and challenges of a relatively new democratic political dispensation. I also believe that student teachers need to be equipped to redress inequalities still carried over by South Africa's past configurations of repression. Further, they should be taught to teach to make a difference to their learners' lives.

I entered the research process with the contention that if student teachers are empowered with sound disciplinary knowledge, effective pedagogical tools and an understanding of how to bring about academic and social change, then they can make a difference to the lives of their learners, irrespective of context or resources. I also understood that for the study to enable empowerment and transformation, the student teachers had to have a vested interest in the study and had to be co-researchers with me in determining the course of the study. If they were not empowered with a transformation agenda, it was possible that they would not recognise the forces that shaped and still shape them, and thus would reproduce the existing system. The way teachers define their roles and functions determines what is done in their classrooms. Ultimately, if teachers do not recognise that they have the power to exercise agency over who they are, how they teach and what they hope to achieve, then the cycle of disempowerment and failure will continue and society will replicate itself.

To enable agency, this study focussed on the literature component of English Education where student teachers are taught different literary texts and pedagogical tools to teach texts. While content and pedagogy appear to be taught, student teachers are not taught how to make a difference to learners' lives through literature, or how to use literature or any other means to address issues that confront learners and their communities on a daily basis. Thus, the power of literature to both transform and empower is often ignored. In the study, six literary texts, chosen prior to my being appointed to the university, served as catalysts for change. They were two novels, *The Madonna of Excelsior* by Zakes Mda (2002) and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy (1997); two plays, *Sophiatown* by The Junction Avenue Theatre

Company (1988) and *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare (1623); and two films, *The Colour of Paradise* directed by Majid Majidi (1999) and *Much Ado about Nothing* directed by Kenneth Branagh (1993).

This article considers the methodological implications of using PAR to transform and empower student teachers to build their content knowledge and pedagogical skills and to develop agency. The article discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and provides an overview of the PAR process and how it was used in this study. The article then engages with the methodological implications of using PAR in the study.

The theoretical underpinning of the study

The study was underpinned by critical pedagogy which is founded on the possibility of transformation, and has a critical nature and liberating function. This theory posits that education should be understood in its socio-historical and political context, and should commit itself to transformation towards democracy, justice, equality, and freedom. It focusses on human agency and possibilities for change (Biesta and Tedder, 2007). Critical pedagogy draws on Dewey's assertion that education can function either to create passive, risk-free citizens or a citizenry informed by a concern for justice and equality (Giroux, 2009). Building on Dewey's ideas, Freire (1970) insisted that teachers and students should be agents actively engaged in the process of constructing meaning together. For Freire, critical pedagogy should be used to highlight issues of democratic participation, agency, and voice (Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2009), and, since this study was intrinsically concerned with democratic participation, agency, and voice, critical pedagogy was a clear choice with which to underpin the participatory action research.

A brief overview of the participatory action research process and how we engaged with it in the study

Participatory action research (PAR) emerged organically during the study, and, incidentally, was not named such until much later in the research process. For this study, student teachers and I used PAR, a form of action research, to enable social change. Our contention was that social change can begin with how teachers recognise and implement their roles and functions in the school

system. This means that teachers have a responsibility to help learners grow and develop both academically and socially, and to enable learners to challenge and confront the stereotypes and constraints that have shaped their lives. Teachers thus have to have agency, serve as agents of change and empower learners to assume agency as well.

In a PAR study, change is possible through theory and knowledge-creation which emerges from dialogue between the participants and the researcher (Flood, 1998). PAR “is a means of putting research capabilities in the hands of the . . . people so that they can transform their lives for themselves” (Park, 1993, p.1). It includes voices from groups not normally heard, credits community knowledge, modifies the role of the researcher to listener, works towards social justice, and necessitates recognising the power of and power relations between all participants. For this study, combining critical pedagogy with PAR was considered a sound decision in pursuing the aim of making research an agent of transformation (Swantz, 2008).

Hall (2005) suggests that the issue being studied in a PAR study should originate from the group. In this study, while the student teachers were not responsible for suggesting the idea for the research, they embraced wholeheartedly the idea of student teachers of literature becoming agents of change and recognised that it would be important for their future careers, professional identities and professionalism in their workplaces. They also recognised that the concepts of change and change agency were marginalised in their teacher education programme. In addition, they recognised their choices and responsibilities, and the power that they wielded in transforming themselves into agents of change. Thus, PAR was of immediate interest to them, as the outcomes of the research would affect them directly.

As is required of PAR, prior to the research process getting underway, the student teachers and I had to first reflect on and achieve a deep understanding of the historical, social, economic and political contexts from which the student teachers emerged, within which they study and the sociological realities of the schools where they will serve as teachers. Thereafter, we had to problematise the issue of how we could work together to use issues in the literary texts to serve as catalysts to enable them to become agents of change, and negotiate possible plans of action (Whitehead and McNiff, 2009). It was decided that with each text studied, various literary theories and pedagogical tools would be used and the concept ‘agent of change’ would be unpacked to move them closer to becoming agents of change. They would also consider

how the literary texts could serve as examples of how texts could help learners grow and develop. It was decided that we would use interactive, co-operative learning strategies to achieve our objectives.

The process was thus a collaborative one involving a spiral of cycles of research, experiential learning and action (Boog, 2003) and spanned just over two years, which included four weeks of teaching practice and a visit to a sample of teachers three months into their serving as fully-fledged teachers. Each cycle of the PAR, which typically comprised three weeks of lectures and tutorials, involved an intervention designed by the group to ascertain the extent to which the aims of the study were being addressed, and at each cycle, the intervention was implemented, observed, reflected on and theorised before further action.

Interventions in the PAR process used the literary text as a springboard to focus on literary theories, issues under scrutiny (social justice issues, in the main), innovative pedagogical tools, and unpacking of the concept 'agent of change'. For example, when working with *The Madonna of Excelsior*, the literary theories, practical criticism (text-centred criticism with a close reading and analysis), reader response (the reader as an active meaning-maker), marxist literary theory (the economic forces, social hierarchies, individual struggles and larger class interests) and feminist literary theory (gender relations and gender representations) were used. By using various literary theories, we engaged more fully with the text and could read it from various perspectives, while still following critical pedagogy principles.

Each lecture was placed within a flexible framework and began with either a question or problem posed to the student teachers. The answers helped to reveal what they were thinking and the lecture then explored and built on the answers that emerged from the discussion. Within the lecture, specific issues that emerged from the text such as race, class, gender, culture, power and identity, among others, were discussed as a class or in pairs, and answers, in writing or orally, were shared with the class. Throughout the lecture, the student teachers' views were explored and challenged, issues were open to debate, they were encouraged to interrupt the lecture and ask questions, and, I asked questions, both convergent and open-ended.

Various activities were used in the lectures including short writing tasks, role-plays, problem-solving activities, and reading aloud, and various resources were drawn on including music, digital versatile disks (DVDs), pictures, film

clips, newspaper articles, academic articles, interviews and critiques. At various times, language issues were pointed out incidentally with particular emphasis on the role of language as it constructed realities and social categories, and highlighted or suppressed agency, among other functions.

Another important aspect of the lectures was to unpack the concept 'agent of change' and determine how issues in the text could serve as catalysts for the student teachers to serve as agents of change. Initially, we unpacked the concept 'agent of change' and shared readings on the concept. Throughout the study, we attempted to understand a teacher's roles and functions in order to understand how to make a difference in the classroom and how to use issues in the text to enable learners' agency, participation, reflection and voice. Generally, the lecture format used various activities to address issues in the text, as pedagogical tools, and as ways to help them realise the aim of becoming agents of change.

After each PAR cycle, which included critical reflection of the cycle, qualitative data collection strategies (interviews, focus groups, student evaluations, drawings and written work) were used to evaluate the interventions and establish the extent to which the student teachers were moving towards becoming agents of change in their future classrooms. The data collected served to inform the next cycle and ultimately informed the conclusions drawn at the end of the study. A qualitative research approach provided opportunities for the student teachers to explore their experiences of the research process, and allowed for an in-depth understanding of findings. Thus, the flexible, fluid nature of qualitative research provided a perfect fit for PAR.

While the study worked with and collected some data from all student teachers in the English Education lecture-room, some data was collected from a purposeful sample. For example, the lecture-room observations, written work, drawings and student evaluations involved the sixty-six student teachers in the study. However, the focus groups, in cycles two and five, comprised eight student teachers, interviews were held with ten student teachers in cycles three and six, and teaching practice observations were carried out in seven classrooms after cycle five. In this study, a purposeful sample was chosen in terms of student teachers' race and gender because these two variables represented insights from various perspectives on the phenomena being investigated.

The student teachers served as co-analysers, monitors and verifiers of the research process, and the data collection process provided many opportunities to corroborate and verify findings. While PAR does not aim to be objective and impartial, it does aim for an authentic, credible, rigorous research process. In this study, the spirals of cycles and action-positioned nature of the research ensured that data collection and interpretation coincided, and subsequent spirals of cycles were informed by the assessment and interpretations of data from previous cycles. Using an iterative process, the group had to refer back to and reflect on data collected previously. I worked collaboratively with groups of student teachers in the data analysis (different groups for different sets of data), and the groups identified recurring themes and patterns that emerged from the data. Further, as qualitative analysts, the groups had to be reflective about their own voices and points of view.

To ensure the validity of PAR, the suggestions made by Moser (1975) cited in Morrow and Torres (1995) were followed in this study. Firstly, the PAR process, functions and aims had to be transparent to the group. Secondly, there needed to be compatibility between the aims and methods used to achieve aims. Finally, I needed to ensure that I had an in-depth understanding of the situation and truthfully revealed all aspects of the research, including limitations, of which I had become aware.

Because of the recurring action and reflection, PAR is often viewed as a work in progress with many unanswered queries and unsolved debates (Reason and Bradbury, 2006). Ultimately, PAR confronts conventional, established social science research by re-aligning research that goes beyond reflective data produced by external authorities appraising variables to active moment-by-moment theorising, data gathering, and investigations arising in the midst of an evolving, developing structure (Torbert, 2004).

Methodological implications of the study

While there were many implications of the study, this article considers the four main methodological implications of using participatory action research (PAR) in this study. The first methodological implication of using PAR was that the student teachers were equipped to implement a PAR process, despite not being formally taught how to conduct the research. They experienced most aspects of the research process and their involvement in the various

stages of the PAR cycles has enabled them to conduct research in their own classrooms. They co-designed the research plan that was required to identify problems, and collaboratively planned the interventions, implemented the actions, reflected on them and planned further. In their drawings, collected at the end of the study, they recognised the importance of ‘interactive’ and ‘collaborative’ research environments. They had a vested interest in the research process as they recognised that it responded to their needs and they demonstrated their willingness to be interviewed or to serve in the focus groups. I read this to imply a readiness to involve themselves in the research process that was designed to help them become agents of change. Further, despite data being anonymous and confidential, they were eager to reveal which responses from the data were theirs, even if the responses were unpopular ones and thus, were badly received by the others. I identified this finding as honesty on their part to reveal their current ways of thinking so that change may be implemented. When they understood that the study would be adapted in response to their direct needs, they accepted it as their own and ensured that their voices were heard. They embraced the control of the study, were empowered to shape its course, and recognised that issues of change have a strong chance of emerging through dialogue between the participants and the researcher (Flood, 1998). When interviewing four student teachers who had graduated and were working in their own classrooms, two of them referred to it as ‘our study’, indicating ownership of the process. A methodological implication of using PAR is that it put research capabilities in the hands of the student teachers so they could transform their lives for themselves (Park, 1993). This implication of using PAR was, for me, the most liberating aspect of the study as the student teachers’ participation, involvement and control in the different cycles of the study enabled some form of empowerment and transformation.

The second methodological implication involved the limitations of the PAR process itself. I, rather than the student teachers, collected data and chose samples for data collection, for purely logistical reasons. While the student teachers planned the PAR cycles, co-analysed data and determined interventions, they were not involved in every step of the research process. Instead, they were informed about the processes involved in data collection and sampling. In retrospect, their involvement in data collection and sampling might have had an important effect on the findings. In addition, the group was aware that PAR involved *ad hoc* planning, not necessarily the norm in research studies. PAR as a research design has also been criticised for lacking

specific methodological practices and a rigid framework (Waters-Adams, 2006; Van der Meulen, 2011), and the subjectivity of the group and the relationships that emanate from the various processes make PAR significantly different from traditional objective research. We thus had to make a concerted effort to work together as research partners, and responsibility for the research process was shared. We followed Moser's (1975) suggestions that the PAR process, functions and aims had to be transparent to the group and the aims and methods needed to be compatible (cited in Morrow and Torres, 1995). Throughout the study, we reflected upon the process as ethical issues emerged, negotiated, planned and implemented new cycles of research as carefully as possible, and theorised all findings to enable reliable access to practice.

The third methodological implication was the significance of using constant, active dialogue and engaged participation. The study was characterised by dialogue between the student teachers and me, and I tried to find non-threatening ways to ensure comfortable participation for the group. During a focus group discussion in cycle three, the student teachers indicated that they were very comfortable talking in the English Education lecture-room with one saying, 'This is the only class I talk in'. Another pointed out, 'In other lectures, you just try to answer and sometimes, if it's wrong, people find it funny'. The comments indicated that the student teachers experienced a sense of trust and respect among the group. The lecture-room was thus perceived to be a safe, respectful place for them to participate and share their views. Thus, a nurturing, supportive environment may serve to enable voice and democratic participation. Moreover, such an environment may engender agency and enable possibilities for change (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Giroux, 2009).

By the end of the study, drawings revealed that the student teachers believed that good teachers 'asked stimulating questions'; 'encouraged discussion'; set up 'debates to encourage higher order thinking'; and 'ensured that learners' views were respected'. In a final interview, a student teacher noted, that 'the questions, discussions and debates' were effective in 'making me understand things that you sometimes just accept'. The final reflection of the study indicated that the student teachers would 'remember to encourage talk and questions so learners learn how to examine issues' and 'remind learners that they have a voice and must use it. They must also respect other learners' thoughts', affirming the importance of creating space for learners' voices so that all learners are able to participate in an atmosphere of respect. Their

comments revealed their recognition that dialogue and conscientisation are effective in a study and a classroom with a transformation agenda (Darder *et al.*, 2009), and their views are supported by the findings of many researchers (Lowman, 1984; Golub, 1988; Bonwell and Eison, 1991).

A final and perhaps most important methodological implication involved the use of critical reflections at the end of each cycle to enable us to make informed decisions based on well-thought out ideas and help us move towards change agency. The critical reflections allowed for understandings and improvements of practices and ways of doing and being. A graduated student teacher interviewed after the study expressed her initial experiences of teaching as ‘overwhelming’, but she tried to ‘keep a perspective on things . . . reflect often . . . know why I’m doing this’, indicating her recognition of the benefits of critical reflection in her growth and development. It is hoped that the student teachers’ abilities to contemplate and deliberate on actions, experiences and ideas gleaned from the study have prepared them for similar reflections in their own classrooms.

Not only did the reflections facilitate deliberations on our practices, it allowed us to question our own long-held views and those of others. For example, while the student teachers could recognise issues of social justice in the literary texts and could explain how they would engage learners on those issues, they often contradicted themselves in their discussions. For example, they would denounce sexism but would accept male behaviour ‘because men behave that way’. Thus, while student teachers did not always agree with a literary character’s actions, they accepted and understood them because he was a man. We therefore recognised the inconsistencies in how we judged texts and what we said in our personal capacities, and we had to challenge ourselves to confront stereotypes and biases. We recognised that we needed to be reflexive by engaging in explicit, self-aware analyses of how we influenced the findings of the study (Aasgaard, Borg and Karlsson, 2012).

For me as the researcher, the PAR process entailed daily reflections alone to assess the progress of the study. While I was the facilitator and researcher in the PAR study, I was also the student teachers’ lecturer and assessor. While the roles of facilitator and researcher were shared with the student teachers, such that data analysis and verification, and critical reflection and planning for the next cycle were undertaken collaboratively, the roles of lecturer and assessor were not. I could therefore wield power within the research process and could arrive with biases related to the research process (Waters-Adams,

2006). I had, therefore, to mediate the research process very carefully, to enable all the roles to function successfully.

To ameliorate power imbalances, I attempted to empower myself with knowledge about PAR and to actively enable inclusion and active involvement of the student teachers in the data analysis and data verification. Further, I made a conscious effort to ensure that the researcher-participant relationship was a dialogical one where both the student teachers and I contributed to the research process, to the knowledge generated, and to the evaluation of the process. But, I realised I needed to continue developing my self-knowledge by critically reflecting on my core values, multiple identities, locations of power and privilege, and how these understandings influence interactions with others and with research practices. I understood that my work experiences and interactions moulded my identity, influenced my practices and shaped my values. While I recognised my core values as supportive of my actions, I realised that I had to re-examine my values constantly as I worked through the research process. Constant, honest and mindful reflection was therefore necessary to manage the research process. To achieve the transformation of student teachers in the study, I needed to re-assert my emancipatory intention and had to ensure that actions were in the best interests of the student teachers. To foreground the intention, ongoing action and reflection had to occur and extend beyond the PAR activity.

The critical reflections exposed a further methodological implication. We recognised that the research was a collective undertaking influenced by many forces within and beyond the academic institution. For example, there had to be an awareness that the student teachers and I work within our own institutional and community environments, which involve our own sets of values and structures of power. We therefore needed to examine power relationships in the research setting, including individual and institutional relationships. We recognised that we exist within wider social, political and economic structures that shape our experiences of race, gender, class, culture, sexual orientation and other aspects of identity.

We realised that the PAR study, in general, and critical reflections, in particular, had brought the group closer together and an ethos of trust, honesty and respect were evident. Since we worked as a collaborative group of investigators who were collectively responsible for the study, we had to establish a relationship that was based on open communication and commitment to bring about change. It is possible that the strategies used

during the study, such as sharing of stories and role-plays, had created a bond between us. In their written work, the student teachers noted that the PAR process had allowed them to ‘build relationships’ and ‘learn to respect each other’s views’, and I had to ensure that I respected them as active agents of change, mindful of the dynamics of relationships, including the issues of power and hierarchy playing out in the research situation (Johnson and Christensen, 2007).

In addition, the critical reflections enabled the group to be reflexive about their becoming teachers. In the focus group at the end of cycle two, two student teachers noted, ‘This study has made me think about whether I can make a difference to the kids at school’ and ‘How do I become a change agent? You ask us that and I have to think about it. I have to think about becoming something’. The two student teachers identified that they thought about becoming change agents, thus, the possibility for change was highlighted.

During cycle five, a student teacher observed that during Teaching Practice she ‘wanted to focus on the content and methods. But I couldn’t help saying, how do I make a difference to their lives’. In the final focus group, a student teacher noted that ‘the study makes me think . . . who am I as a teacher in South Africa? Can I create my own identity? Can I break the mould?’ Her comments reflected that she was thinking deeply about her role not just as teacher but as a teacher who wanted to make a difference. Her comments revealed that she was reflecting on her actions, experiences and thoughts, and was determined to forge her own identity. Another noted that, ‘there is always some way to make a difference. I feel guilty if I let it pass’ and yet another noted that she ‘didn’t want to dwell on change in learners’ lives but once you are aware, you can’t avoid it’. What the comments indicated is that they were becoming agents of change, whether they wanted it or not. They were aware that they could not avoid making a difference to their learners’ lives. Further, they were changing and making a difference to their own lives. Freire (2009) points out that while teachers need a firm command of their subject matter and a thorough understanding of the curriculum, they also need to serve as agents of change by setting up opportunities for learners to engage with the subject critically. Freire’s views are echoed by Fanon who points out that “what matters is not to know the world but to change it” (2008, p.13).

Finally, a student teacher pointed out that she would use issues that emerged from the literary texts to help learners develop academically and socially, but

noted that she would ‘use teaching moments from the texts, but I won’t preach. They must make decisions, think hard, and apply it to their own lives and contexts. It must be theirs’. She continued, ‘If I tell them . . . preach to them, I am, in a way, oppressing them’. While she knew that she was obliged to empower her learners and affirm their lives, she was equally aware that she had to reflect on her practices so that she did not impose her power and advantage on her learners. Overall, she recognised that her teaching of literature and the practices that she used had to be supported by well thought-out philosophical and ideological underpinnings if she was to make a difference to her learners.

By the end of the study, anonymous student evaluations revealed that all the student teachers aspired to be agents of change and had a clear understanding of themselves as agents of change who need to have a clear vision of their roles and functions, ethical and democratic principles, and a commitment to improving their own and their learners’ lives. They also understood the need for life-long learning and regular reflection on their professional identities. It is significant that one student teacher noted, in the anonymous evaluation, that s/he did not believe that s/he would become an agent of change, but still believed that teachers needed to be agents of change in their classrooms, signifying an aspiration to an ideal. All others believed they would serve as agents of change and in an interview, a student teacher noted that she had ‘a yardstick to use’ and wanted to be ‘a teacher who has some significance’. In their drawings, student teachers noted that an effective teacher ‘had a passion for making a difference in learners’ lives’; convinced learners ‘to think out of the box’; and ‘instigated change and influenced learners positively’. Responses signified that they were committed to bring about change and able to reflect on their thoughts and actions (Priestley *et al.*, 2012), were able to “live a critically conscious presence in the pedagogical process” (Freire 1970, p. 202), and could recognise their own agency and voice in the process of becoming agents of change in their classrooms so that learners became critical, active human beings (Giroux and McLaren, 1996).

Ultimately, critical reflection played a significant role in shaping who we became. While it is difficult to assess concepts of emancipation, agency, empowerment and democratic participation within the confines of the study, the student teachers did establish and understand, with clarity, what their goals, values, capacities, and functions are, and that represents an important starting point for them to take it further when in their own classrooms. I recognised growth and development in their ability to make choices, pose

questions and reflect on their actions and words. The impact of the study on the participating student teachers' could be seen in their use of participatory, transformative discourse. At the end of the study, they were able to use, with confidence, the important concepts of the study. In their final reflection, they considered the importance of taking cognisance of Lortie's (1975) 'apprenticeship of observation', Freire's (1970) concepts of 'banking' and 'libertarian' education and other concepts such as 'agency', 'voice', 'hegemony', 'critical literacy', 'conscientisation', 'collaborative strategies' and 'humanising pedagogy'. While such concepts, and others, were engaged with through each cycle, they could use them independently and with a clear understanding of how the concepts worked in authentic, practical situations. However, I understood that while they were conversant with discourse, it remained to be seen if the ideas were transferred to real situations.

At the end of the sixth and final cycle, the group stepped out of the research process. However, the process of the student teachers becoming agents of change is a long-term one in their school environments. Four months into their first year of teaching, at the end of the first school term and during their first school break, four novice teachers, who were part of the study, were interviewed to determine whether the principles and ideas of the study were being transferred to their classrooms. A purposeful sample of novice teachers was chosen based on the race and gender of the teachers and on the material resources at their schools. The classrooms of the four novice teachers revealed varying learner numbers, ranging from twenty-five learners in materially advantaged schools where resources and facilities were of a very high calibre, to sixty learners in materially disadvantaged schools where there was a dearth of resources and facilities.

In their classrooms, all the novice teachers used largely learner-centred lessons to engage their learners. Of significance were their reasons for choosing strategies. They noted that the home language of many of their learners was not English, and that they chose strategies that would encouraged their learners to speak, practice the language, and hear the language being spoken or read. They also indicated that they questioned and challenged learners' ideas, and related the issues in the texts to learners' lives. Thus, they were using issues in the texts to help their learners grow and develop academically and socially.

All the novice teachers were clear about what they wanted for their learners. The first novice teacher noted that she 'wanted to use the texts to expose

learners to different cultures and social classes and to show them that people have similar needs and wants, despite outward differences'; another wanted his learners 'to succeed' and he let them know that he 'cared about them'; a third tried to help her learners 'with their problems, academic and social' and realised that she needed 'physical, mental and emotional strength to be a teacher'; and the fourth 'tried to motivate and encourage' her learners, who mostly 'wanted to improve their lot', and she noted that she 'could not abandon her learners and needed interventions'. The four novice teachers, while teaching in varied contexts and being aware of many different challenges, were committed to and aware of 'making a difference to their learners'.

Of the study, all believed that the study had been useful to them, noting that it had been 'vital' to their training, taught them 'how to cope', 'transformed their thinking', showed them 'how to reflect', gave them 'confidence', and 'empowered' them 'to make a difference' in their schools. When speaking about the study, one teacher believed that 'it was the only relevant, significant part' of his university degree.

While the four novice teachers seemed to be implementing a transformation agenda in various forms, the choices made by the others are not known. They left the research process empowered with some of the skills and capacities to continue the transformation of themselves and their learners, and they understood that they needed to continue to interrogate any unanswered questions and reflect critically on their doubts and uncertainties. McLaren (2009) reminds us that empowerment equips participants with the skills and courage to implement changes where necessary.

Conclusion

By using participatory action research (PAR) in this study, it became clear that research outcomes, action outcomes and critical reflection may be used to understand, confront and improve systems and practices, and may work together to provide practical solutions to issues of concern.

Ultimately, the use of PAR in this study taught the student teachers important research skills, and they left the study fairly well equipped to implement a PAR process themselves, recognising both the strengths and limitations of the research process. Further, they recognised the impact of using active dialogue,

collaboration and participation in a nurturing, supportive environment to achieve aims. However, the most important implication of using PAR was that while they comprehended the strength of critical reflection to improve practices and understand the research process, they could discern the power of critical reflexivity to interrogate power imbalances and to shape their becoming agents of change in their classrooms. It became apparent that the use of PAR in a university lecture-room is not just feasible, its role as research of the students, by the students, for the students can prove very powerful in enabling empowerment and transformation.

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Invoking learner voice and developing leadership: what matters to learners?

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Abstract

Educational leadership and management (ELM) research overly focuses on adult leadership development at the expense of leadership of learners. Framed by the concept of *learner voice*, this article focuses on learner leadership and argues that learners should be treated as people whose ideas matter. It draws on a Bachelor of Education Honours (ELM) elective which required students (practicing teachers) to establish school leadership clubs and involve learners in a reform initiative in pursuit of leadership development. The longitudinal study which informed this article was designed as a multi-case study to explore learner voice and the development of leadership across 44 leadership clubs drawing on three data sources. The study found that while the phenomenon of learner leadership was not common across schools, leadership clubs offered a space for the development of learner voice. Learner voice was generated in relation to the school physical environment, English proficiency amongst learners, improved learner conduct, developments pertaining to the extra-mural curriculum, and leadership training initiatives. In addition, the clubs afforded learners the opportunity to initiate and lead a change project in their schools. However, the take-up of learner leadership as a whole school initiative was problematic in the majority of schools. The article concludes with some suggestions for a future research agenda emerging out of the first phase of the project.

Background and context

Schools are not working for the majority of our South African youth. We hear, all too often, of the academic crisis in schools; inequalities in educational provision, high failure rates, an increasing learner dropout rate, abysmal Mathematics results and levels of illiteracy pervading the system (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011; Christiansen, 2012; Rembe, 2012; Collins, 2015). In an attempt to redress the inequalities of apartheid, the South African education system has undergone wave after wave of curriculum redesign whilst, simultaneously, pursuing the global trend of standardisation, measurement and high stakes testing (Maistry, 2014). Surrounded by discourses of performativity and competition, schools are under enormous pressure to improve learner achievement which has narrowed the purpose of

schooling, not only in terms of pedagogy and content but also democratic participation (Mitra and Gross, 2009). Westheimer and Kahan (2003) describe how there has been a “shrinking of opportunities for students to have a democratic voice in the educational process” (in Mitra and Gross, 2009, p.525). Consequently, many youth, particularly those who feel their lives, beliefs and hopes are devalued and ‘othered’ by schooling and the curriculum, develop hostility to the institution of schooling (Mitra and Gross, 2009). As Jones (1996) so poignantly writes, many youth “have crawled beneath the blanket of despair and are suffocating from a lack of human connections” (in Smyth, 2006a, p.280).

Yet in the context of Australia, Smyth argues that the so-called dropout problem is mislabelled; for him student dropout is a result of “a lack of system and societal care, respect and indifference towards young people” (2006a, p.283). This too is the case in South Africa where the academic crisis in schools is a consequence of an uncaring and degenerating societal system. We are a society which has lost its moral compass (Ramphela, 2008) and the group most affected are the youth and particularly those marginalised through poverty, illiteracy, HIV and AIDS and lack of access to the most basic of human resources (Ramphela, 2008; Wood and Goba, 2011; Williams, 2012). It is these learners who most need to be supported and engaged in schooling who are now most likely to be “disillusioned, ignored and even denigrated by the schooling system” (Angus, 2006, p.370). However, it is precisely these marginalised learners who school leaders need to reach out to, engage with and learn to understand and accommodate in schools.

As early as 1982, the Canadian Fullan asked “what would happen if we treated the learner as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools” (in Osberg, Pope and Galloway, 2006, p.329). Building on this idea, Osberg *et al.* ask the thought-provoking question: “How can schools involve students in the introduction and implementation of school reform in ways that best serve them as learners and potential leaders?” (p.343). In direct response to these questions, I want to build a case for the development of authentic learner leadership as one possible way to turn schools around.

Leadership and learner voice

While leadership is a concept that is well-studied, research regarding adolescent leadership development is limited (Whitehead, 2009). This is particularly so in South Africa where learner leadership rarely features on the educational agenda and the voices of learners are, more often than not, ignored (Mabovula, 2009). In the context of this article, leadership is understood to be relational, a dialectical process which engages the human agency of all members of the organisation (Gunter, 2005; Angus, 2006). Based on dialogue and strong relationships, it is transformative and “can provide opportunities for all children to learn in school communities that are socially just and deeply democratic” (Shields, 2004, pp.109–110). Thus it is ethical in nature and its moral purpose is to promote the core values of social justice, democracy and equity in the social institutions of schools (Foster, 1986; Smyth, 2006b; Starratt, 2007). Framed in this manner, leadership cannot be reduced to managerial coercion but requires of one the courage to buck the rules, challenge the status quo and “worry more about engaging young people in schooling than managing their behaviour” (Angus, 2006, p.376).

Because of the dialogical nature of leadership, the voices of learners are integral to any discussion on learner leadership. The international literature refers to the voices of learners as ‘student voice’ and the concept is used to describe the range of ways in which learners can share in decision-making in schools – the kinds of decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers (Fielding, 2001; Mitra and Gross, 2009). However, because South Africa uses the term ‘learner’ to refer to school-going youth, I have chosen to use the concept of ‘learner voice’ rather than ‘student voice’ in the context of my work. Learner voice is about true democracy within institutions (Shuttle, 2007) and it is a potential catalyst for student agency. As Mitra and Gross (2009) contend, learner voice initiatives “can broaden the scope of who has a voice in schools and can even lead to student participation in developing school reform efforts” (p.538). However, they explain that schools tend to teach learners to be passive participants in a democracy rather than leaders. Teachers and parents generally speak too readily on behalf of learners and often misunderstand or disregard their perspectives (Fielding, 2001). And, as Mabovula (2009) claims, when learners are given a voice, it is often a mere ‘stamp of approval’ rather than a commitment to democratic participation.

The establishment of learner leadership clubs as a service learning initiative

While research has been growing on the topic of student voice in the international arena (Fielding, 2001; Flutter, 2006; Mitra, 2006; Whitehead, 2009; Mitra and Gross, 2009) it is limited in South Africa and other African countries (Mabovula, 2009; Uushona, 2013). Prompted by the need for research on learner voice and leadership development in South Africa and guided by the questions raised towards the end of the previous section, I redesigned the ELM Honours elective at Rhodes University with a learner leadership focus. The elective was designed as a service learning initiative, i.e. a teaching and learning strategy which linked the academic learning of the Honours students with a community service experience (Council on Higher Education, 2006; Hart, 2006). To clarify, these Honours students were experienced professionals, studying on a part-time basis while holding down full-time jobs in educational institutions such as schools. Thus the elective was designed as a credit-bearing educational experience which required the students to participate in an organised service activity in their institution and reflect on it in such a way as “to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996, p.222).

From the outset, the service activity set out expressly to treat learners as a serious constituent of the school community. Like Smyth (2006a), I was confronted with the question of how best to create the spaces within which forms of leadership could be exercised which incorporated the aspirations of learners. Learner leadership clubs offered such a space of leadership from which learners could ‘speak back’ concerning what they considered important about their learning. Thus these clubs were strategically positioned inside each of the schools of the Honours students and organised as an extra-curricular service learning activity for selected groups of learners. Mitra (2006) reminds us that the way one organises a learner voice group when attempting to make school reforms is critical to the outcome. A leadership club as a structure should not be confused with the legislated ‘Representative Council of Learners’ (RCL) which can now be found in the majority of the country’s secondary schools. In contrast to the RCL, participation in the after-school clubs was voluntary and membership differed from school to school. Furthermore, learner voice efforts through the mechanism of the clubs were

categorically different from the traditional school roles located within the RCL (Mitra and Gross, 2009).

The purpose of the clubs was that of leadership development which, as Whitehead explains, requires “a multifaceted approach, which includes techniques that range from formal academic processes to experiential development, or what is described as leadership development within the context of work” (2009, p.856). In the schooling context, the clubs provided learners with opportunities to develop their voice in a space in which they would ‘be heard’, develop their leadership and “learn how to become citizens prepared to actively engage in their communities and participate in democracy” (Mitra and Gross, 2009, p.522).

The design of the elective and the interventionist approach chosen was informed by the work of Mitra and Gross (2009) and their ‘pyramid of student voice’. Their pyramid is designed as a three level structure to illustrate youth opportunities possible as learner voice is increased in a school (Figure 1).

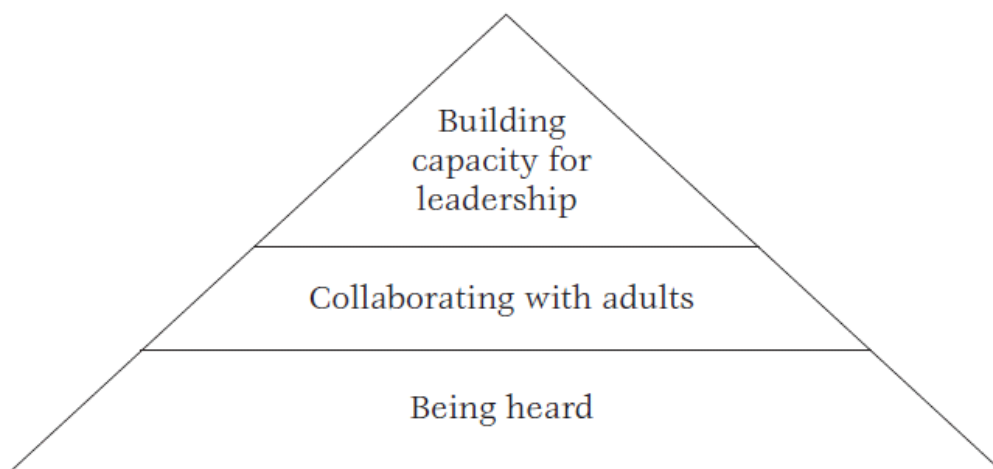


Figure 1: Pyramid of student voice (Mitra and Gross, 2009, p.523)

The pyramid begins at the bottom with the most basic (and most common) form of learner voice – ‘being heard’. In the context of the Honours elective, this meant that the Honours student, a teacher in the school, listened to learners through the mechanism of the learner leadership club to learn about their experiences at school and what mattered to them. This was achieved by getting the learners in the club involved as co-researchers in a simple learner survey. Club learners were first assisted by the Honours student to design a questionnaire in response to the following two research questions:

- (i) What knowledge, skills and attitudes do learners need in order to be able to lead authentically in educational institutions?
- (ii) What can be learnt from learners about what matters to them in their institutions?

Next, club members distributed the questionnaires to learners in their grade and were responsible for the collection of the completed questionnaires. The Honours student then assisted the members of the club to analyse the data in response to the research questions. Thereafter, the club members, with the help of the Honours student, determined the top five common 'areas that mattered to learners', in order of priority, in response to the second research question. From this list, the Honours student guided the learners in selecting the priority area which would become the focus of the club for the remainder of the year. Selection depended on the priority area being doable (in terms of time, resources and person power) and maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of the learners for an extended period of time (seven months).

The second level of the 'pyramid of student voice' involves the phase of '*collaborating with adults*' (Mitra and Gross, 2009, p.523). In the context of the Honours elective, this level involved the Honours students working with their club members to plan an intervention to address the focus area identified and implement the plan over the remainder of the year. Important to note is that the intervention was intended to be learner-driven rather than teacher-driven. Guided by Shuttle's (2007) typology of learner involvement in decision-making, rather than informing learners about or consulting them in order to support a decision, the intervention attempted to create an authentic and collaborative space in which decisions were shaped and owned by learners.

Smyth (2006a) has developed what he regards as the minimalist scaffolding necessary for the construction of spaces of leadership within which forms of leadership can be exercised. Three of his ideas were particularly pertinent in the development and exercise of leadership through the clubs in this study: firstly, there was a need to support the Honours students in their role as teachers in giving up some control and handing it over to learners; secondly, there was discussion about the importance of fostering an environment in which learners are treated with respect and trust rather than fear and threat of retribution; and finally, there was an emphasis on cultivating an atmosphere of care built around relationships (Smyth, 2006a, p.282).

The final (and smallest) level at the top of the pyramid, '*Building capacity for leadership*', includes an explicit focus on enabling youth to 'share in the leadership of the student voice initiative' (Mitra and Gross, 2009, p.524). This final level, Mitra and Gross (2009) argue, is the least common form of learner voice. At this level, learners can serve as a source of criticism and protest in schools by questioning issues such as cultural and structural injustices in the school. As will be seen from the ensuing discussion, the first phase of this project was designed with the purpose of exploring learner voice at the first two levels of the pyramid. The second phase of the project aims to take an in-depth look at these first two levels and then it will attempt an exploration of learner voice at this third level of the pyramid. With this in mind, I now move on to discuss the research project which underpins this article.

The research

The research which underpins this article is part of a larger research project exploring learner leadership in schools in South Africa and Namibia. The project was designed as a longitudinal study to track the Honours ELM elective at the university over a four year period (2013–2016). A qualitative, multi-case study approach was adopted in trying to answer the following research question: Do learner leadership clubs (as an extramural activity) contribute to the development of leadership in schools and, if so, how? As already mentioned, the first phase of the project was designed with the purpose of exploring learner voice at the first two levels of the pyramid. This first phase drew on two case studies; the first, a group of 12 learner leadership clubs drawn from the BEd Honours (ELM) elective offered in Grahamstown, South Africa in 2013 and the second a group of 32 learner leadership clubs drawn from the elective offered in Okahandja, Namibia in 2014. Participants in the first phase of the project included the two groups of Honours students, 44 participants in total. Data were generated from three different sources: first, the 44 academic journal articles which the students submitted as a major part of their assessment for the elective; second, the student self-reflective journals (the DP requirement for the elective) and third, two focus group interviews (FGI), one with a group of South African students and the other with a group of Namibian students. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data.

This first phase of the project offered a breadth of understanding on the topic at hand, an overview of what mattered to learners in schools. However, this

first phase relied on the voices of teachers to speak on behalf of the learners; it did not access learner voice directly. Thus, the second phase of the project, which is not yet completed, aims to select a sample of clubs from the first two case studies and do an in-depth analysis of learner voice and leadership development across all three levels of the student voice pyramid in a small number of schools. In this second phase, learners themselves will be a significant participant group.

The purpose of this article, however, is to share the learning from the first phase of the project, and particularly what was learnt from the exploration of learner voice at the first level of the pyramid, '*being heard*' (Mitra and Gross, 2009). I show, by means of two case studies (the South African and Namibian cases), what really mattered to learners and the ways in which learners shared in decision-making and participated in school change initiatives.

Discussion

What mattered to learners?

The South African case study

In the South African case study, 12 Honours students were involved in the design and implementation of learner leadership clubs as an extra-mural service learning activity in schools during the 2013 academic year. Of the schools involved, two were private city schools, one was a private rural school and rural public schools made up the balance. Regarding the constitution of the clubs, 11 clubs involved high school learners with only one club involving primary school learners. As discussed earlier, the focus area selected by each of the clubs denoted the priority area which 'mattered to learners' and which emerged during the survey done by learners during the initial stage of the initiative. These areas can be categorised in a number of different ways and so Table 1 is thus partial and represents but one way of organising them. Table 1 uses four categories and a number of sub-categories to group these focus areas.

Table 1: What mattered to South African learners?

Categories and sub-categories of learner leadership club foci

Category	Sub-Category	No. of students
Physical Environment (Total 6)	A cleaner environment, anti-littering and recycling Maintenance (repair and repaint) of hand tennis court Addressing water problems	4 1 1
Leadership Training (Total 4)	Peer mentoring/twinning Inviting learner voice Opening communication channels	2 1 1
Learner Conduct (Total 1)	Drug and substance abuse intervention programme	1
English Proficiency (Total 1)	Literacy intervention programme	1

In the context of the United Kingdom, Flutter's (2006) research has shown that, for her young learners, "the school environment emerged as one of the most important factors affecting the quality of students' learning in school" (p.184). In line with Flutter's research, the physical environment emerged as an important factor in the South African case study with half of the interventions (6 of a total of 12) focusing broadly, in some way or another, on this area. Four of these six clubs were interested in creating a cleaner school environment and they did this through campaigns to do with anti-littering and recycling. The fifth club aimed, through its intervention, to address the water problems facing the school while the focus of the sixth club was the repair and painting of the hand tennis court. This focus on the school environment is unsurprising given the poor condition of the majority of our South African school buildings. Like Flutter (2006), I contend that the general poor condition of many school buildings reveals the low status assigned to learners and symbolises a lack of commitment to their education, a message which is not lost on learners. It stands to reason then, that this would be an area which learners would like to change.

The next most common category consisted of four (of 12) focus areas, all of which had to do with leadership training of some form or another. These included two peer mentoring/twinning initiatives, an initiative aimed generally to invite learner voice and a final one which attempted to open communication channels between the learners and the management team. One leadership club in this case study focused on a drug and substance abuse intervention programme which I categorised as learner conduct whilst the final club focused on a literacy intervention programme which I placed in the category

of English proficiency.

The Namibian case study

In the Namibian case study, 32 Honours students were involved in the design and implementation of learner leadership clubs as an extra-mural service learning activity in schools during the 2014 academic year. While a couple of the Honours students taught in the local public schools in Windhoek, the majority taught in schools in small rural towns and deep rural villages in the lower socio-economic northern regions of Namibia. As with the South African case study, the majority of the Namibian clubs (29) were located in high schools with only three clubs in primary schools. This statistic across both case studies must give us pause for thought. What does this statistic suggest about the selection process used in our B Ed Honours qualification? Why are so few primary school teachers (both Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase) selected for the Honours programme? What does this mean for the development of teachers in these critical phases? Whilst these questions are beyond the scope of this article, they are crucial and further investigation thereof is essential.

With regard to the Namibian case study, Table 2 represents my categorisation of the 32 Namibian learner leadership clubs. Table 2 uses four categories and a number of sub-categories to group the 32 focus areas. Three of the four categories overlap with the categories in the South African case study.

Table 2: What mattered to Namibian learners?**Categories and sub-categories of learner leadership club foci**

Category	Sub-Category	No. of students
English Proficiency (Total 16)	Speaking, reading and writing English	8
	Library access and functionality	4
	Academic performance (including homework club, learning skills)	4
Learner Conduct (Total 10)	Drug and substance abuse intervention programme	2
	Bullying	2
	Late coming and absenteeism	2
	Ill-discipline	2
	Uniform	1
	Learner pregnancy	1
Physical Environment (Total 3)	Littering campaign	2
	Tree planting	1
Extra-curricular (Total 3)	Introducing an extra-mural sporting activity	2
	Improving the LRC election campaign	1

Unlike the South African case study, the Namibian case did not centre on the physical environment of the school as its main category. In fact, only three clubs had focus areas which fitted into this category (two which adopted, as their initiatives, littering campaigns and the third which attended to tree planting as the club project). Instead, the most common category (in the Namibian case study) was English proficiency with an overwhelming 16 of the 32 focus areas fitting into this category. Eight of these sixteen clubs were interested in the speaking, reading and writing of English. Interest in reading was also apparent in a further four clubs in this category; these clubs focused on ensuring that their previously dysfunctional school libraries were up and running, accessible to learners and staffed by themselves as learner leaders. Academic performance through developing homework clubs and improving learning skills was a central focus for the remaining four clubs in this category.

The next most common category consisted of ten (of 32) focus areas, all of which had to do with learner conduct in some form or another. This category was populated with intervention programmes which addressed drug and substance abuse, bullying, late coming and absenteeism, ill-discipline,

appropriate wearing of the school uniform and learner pregnancy. The final category involved extra-curricular initiatives (3 of 32) including the introduction of new sporting codes in the schools as well as a focus on improving the RCL election campaign at a particular school.

What was learnt from these two case studies?

From the first phase of the research project, I was able to identify five key areas of learning about learner voice and leadership in the context of our African case studies.

Firstly, the phenomenon of learner leadership was not common across the two case studies. One Honours student was of the view that “it’s an area that has been overlooked so obviously, in my experience at least, I haven’t seen a lot of it in many schools. . . so it won’t be easy to just enforce it; you have to make them accommodate it slowly” (FGI, 2013). The newness of the topic to another student was apparent in the following excerpt: “I enjoy this because it’s a brand new angle for me; I never had to learn about learner leadership. It’s always, as a teacher you must do this, but it’s never about the learner. So that was something new” (FGI, 2013). Yet another Honours student spoke of “bringing out the importance of the learner because we take things for granted, that we know what is good for the learners and, as a result, they resist” (FGI, 2013).

Secondly, learner leadership clubs as an extra-curricular activity in the case study schools offered a space for the development of learner voice and leadership. However, these clubs are but one example of a range of structures which can be introduced into schools with a minimum of disruption to draw on and develop leadership in learners. Through the mechanisms of clubs, the importance of healthy relationships amongst learners, and between learners and their facilitating teacher, surfaced. One Honours student explained that “what matters in schools are relationships, because if relationships are working, any programme that can come can be implemented successfully” (FGI, 2013). Another described how, “if learners are given a voice and if the relationship between the learners and teachers is good, there is a harmony in the school and all the beautiful programmes that we try to bring into the school can work out” (FGI, 2013). As a consequence of the club, yet another Honours student described how “now I am looking at my learners from another angle, that they have souls, they are human beings of which they have

potential. It's just that I have to discover who they are, so basically my growing, or my growth, will enable them to grow as well" (FGI, 2013).

Thus, as a consequence of the clubs, relations were acknowledged as central to the work of schools. Smyth (2006b), drawing on the work of Warren (2005), calls on schools to invest learners with 'relational power' which refers to "the building of trust within and across a range of groups in schools in ways that enable the development and pursuit of a common vision about how schools can work for all, including those most marginalised and excluded" (p.292). In this study, the introduction of learner leadership clubs in schools provided a mechanism through which teachers worked towards making their learners 'powerful people' (after Smyth, 2006b). The clubs provided the platform for authentic communication and debate amongst learners; they offered a generative and non-threatening space in which learners learnt to lead and they provided the catalyst for the emergence of learner-led school change initiatives.

Thirdly, learners have leadership potential. When given a generative and non-threatening space, learners were able to articulate what good leaders need to know and do and they were also able to list the values that good leaders aspire to. For example, the members of one of the clubs indicated that in order to execute leadership effectively, learners were required to be self-confident and have a high self-esteem. They also included in their deliberations the need to be caring, motivating, committed, accountable, respectful, flexible and honest. The attribute of being 'exemplary' topped their list as the most important leadership trait for learners (student academic journal article). When afforded the opportunity, learners were further able to communicate a vision and then work as a team to initiate a plan of action in response to that vision, with varying levels of autonomy and success.

Thus it would seem that the development of learner voice is the first step in the development of their leadership. However, Angus (2006) challenges us to do more than merely invite learner voice. He calls on school leaders and all teachers to invoke student voice, to "insist upon, enquire into, try to understand, interrogate, and generate student voice as best they can" (2013, p.378). This suggests that the development of leadership is a conscious and active process requiring modelling and teaching. One Honours student made the point that we cannot complain about the youth when we have forfeited our responsibility to teach them: "We are not involving them. They are not part of the decision-making. And we are not giving them a part to play. We are not

giving them the responsibility” (FGI, 2013). Another Honours student spoke of the different approaches she now adopted with her learners; an internal conversation she had with herself as a reminder to ‘do it differently’: “I’ve learnt a lot, how I interact, how (do) I invite them, how (do) I make them participatory, how (do) I make their voices heard” (FGI, 2013).

Whilst it was beyond the scope of the first phase of this research project to investigate the levels of success of the various learner leadership clubs, the second phase of the project is designed with this specific intention in mind. However, the findings of the first phase of the project suggest that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, learners constitute a latent source of leadership waiting to be tapped. The question that needs to be asked is: How best can we draw on the leadership of learners to assist us in the transformation of our schools?

Fourthly, and having listened to and ‘*heard*’ the learners through the mechanism of the leadership clubs, there are a number of issues which mattered to learners in the context of the case study schools. These can be organised broadly into the following categories: i) issues related to the physical environment of schools, ii) a focus on English proficiency amongst learners, iii) improved learner conduct, iv) developments pertaining to the extra-mural curriculum and v) leadership training initiatives. In and of themselves, these focus areas are both appropriate and doable. Furthermore, these ‘matters of concern’ to learners are not so different from what matters to good teachers. So the challenge for teachers is surely to learn to really *listen* to what learners have to say, *collaborate more* with them and create as many opportunities as possible for learners to speak about what truly matters to them. By so doing, teachers are more likely to be able to draw learners in as allies to the education enterprise and work alongside them as agents of change in the education process.

However, and making my fifth point, the take-up of leadership development of learners as a whole school initiative was problematic in the majority of the 44 schools. While permission was granted from the principals and parents for the clubs to operate in the schools (all issues related to access, permission and ethics was formally attended to at the beginning of the project), these clubs were often (mis)understood as the sole domain of the Honours students and viewed as a temporary structure in the school. As a consequence, the Honours students did not receive the full support of the staff and the take-up of learner voice and leadership as a whole school initiative failed. One Honours student described how the staff “distanced themselves from the whole process” (FGI,

2014). This was perhaps because “they don’t understand and they do not see the importance of it” (FGI, 2014). Another Honours student recounted how her principal did not like the idea of the intervention and warned her about it: “it must not disturb the programme of the school” (FGI, 2014). This same student also had little support from the teaching staff, perhaps for the following reason: “I think the way the principal introduced the whole intervention to the staff room also let them distance themselves from the whole process, and they thought it’s just this teacher’s thing that she wants for her BEd Honours, and that is her problem” (FGI, 2014).

In retrospect and in line with the view of Mitra (2006), as the coordinator of this learner leadership development initiative, I should have done more preparatory work to convince the schools of the importance of learner voice and leadership and garnered more support for the Honours students. Following Smyth’s (2006b) advice, the unit of change should have been the whole school rather than the individual teacher with his/her leadership club. In line with this thinking, Mitra convincingly argues that “before students are accepted as key players in school reform and decision-making, however, the concept of student voice must gain legitimacy amongst powerful stakeholders in the school” (2006, p.315). Drawing on the work of Chan (2000), Whitehead (2009) makes the very real point that leadership development programmes are often not well-integrated into the formal school curriculum.

Thus the challenge facing the university facilitators now during the second phase of the project is to explore ways to get the clubs more integrated into the schools in which the Honours students teach. Rather than it passing for a ‘tokenistic activity’ (Shuttle, 2007), the goal of the facilitating team is to get learner voice and leadership taken seriously in schools. This calls for increased mobilisation on our part through the sharing of documentation on learner voice and leadership with the teaching staff at the project schools and meeting with some of the school management teams to discuss the importance of our leadership development efforts within this project and beyond. In summary, and in the words of Shuttle, “learner voice should not act as an adjunct to an institution’s activities, but needs to be woven into all aspects of the institution, not hierarchically but as networks of engagement, thus paving the way towards a leadership model that is increasingly student-led” (2007, p.45).

Researching learner leadership: future directions

Publication opportunities emerging from Phase One

There are a number of publication opportunities emerging out of this first phase of the project. While all 44 Honours students involved in the 2013 and 2014 case studies submitted academic journal articles (a major component of their elective assessment), about one quarter were of a very high standard. Our plan is to work with a few of these students to get their work into a form which can ultimately be published in academic peer-reviewed journals. To further communicate our research, the idea of an edited book on the development of leadership through the mechanism of the learner leadership clubs is appealing. In envisioning the book, our aim is to invite interested Honours students, drawn from across the South African and Namibian case studies, to contribute chapters in which they will share in their experiences of the leadership clubs they instituted.

Looking across the 44 academic journal articles drawn from the two case studies, there is scope for a meta-analysis of the data. A cursory read of the articles reveals some recurring themes which become immediately evident. The communication of these findings would offer a valuable contribution to this under-researched topic in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, this Honours elective has provided the rare opportunity to explore learner leadership as it intersects with teacher leadership. In this regard, the self-reflective journals of the Honours students are particularly rich in tracking the leadership development of teachers as they facilitated the leadership development of their learners. This leadership nexus is a hitherto unexplored area in the local literature.

Research opportunities emerging from Phase Two

As we proceed with the second phase of the project, a number of research opportunities are envisaged. First, two further case studies will be included in this longitudinal study, a South African one in 2015 and a Namibian one in 2016. Second, there is scope to investigate the levels of success of a sample of learner leadership clubs from the original two cases in terms of their contribution to the leadership development of learners. Third, a few students who completed the Honours ELM elective will retain a learner leadership focus and continue with their clubs towards their Masters degree. Fourth, it would be interesting to explore the nature of support needed by teachers to facilitate the development of learner leadership. Would the idea of a critical friend or a buddy system work for the lead teacher? This leads into my fifth

point which is about the school conditions necessary for the development of learner leadership. This, in turn, raises the sixth and final point – is there a place for parents in learner leadership development?

Concluding comments

While student disengagement from schools is an international problem (Mitra and Gross, 2009), this article has argued that learners can be a major contributor to school reform and have a key role to play in the change process. However, as Smyth (2006b) contends, when we fail to place relationships at the centre of schooling and instead focus on performativity and high stakes testing, we weaken our sense of community and trust and alienate increasing numbers of learners, particularly those already disadvantaged. In so doing, we make the reproduction of disadvantage for these learners much more likely and this works counter to the moral purpose of education and educational leadership which is “to promote in schools as social institutions the core values of social justice, democracy, and equity” (Angus, 2006, p.374).

Educational leadership which promotes these core values of social justice, democracy, and equity is difficult work. It requires a transformative approach (following Shields, 2004) which is based on dialogue and strong relationships and the ability to facilitate critical inquiry. Such a leadership approach is essential in order to review existing school practices and promote a just, inclusive and meaningful learning environment for all learners. Thus, the schooling experience needs to leave learners feeling empowered and enriched rather than disillusioned and denigrated. For Angus, the starting point is likely to be when “the school, its teachers and leaders reach out to such children, move to meet them rather than expecting them to adjust to the entrenched school and teacher paradigms, and attempt to engage them in relevant and interesting school experiences in which they can recognise themselves, their parents, and their neighbours” (2006, p.370).

This article is premised on the idea that the development of authentic learner leadership is critical if we hope to turn schools around. It calls on school leaders and teachers to draw on their own agency and develop strategies to invoke learner voice. This requires of teachers and school leaders “courageous forms of leadership that fearlessly promote the importance of student ownership and student voice in respect of learning” (Smyth, 2006a, p.282).

This article has argued that learner leadership clubs as an extramural activity in schools offers one such strategy to invoke learner voice and develop leadership. The clubs provide the mechanism – they offer a structure – through which teachers can reach out to learners, meet them and engage them in relevant and interesting experiences in the complex journey to turn schools around. Club activities are learner-driven and members take on various roles, including that of co-researcher, planner and intervention implementer in the process of becoming leaders, prepared to challenge the status quo but with alternatives (after Smyth, 2006b).

In conclusion, I want to comment briefly on the Honours ELM elective as a university service learning activity and its implications for higher education research and practice. The demanding context of Higher Education in South Africa has placed university lecturers under mounting pressure to find alternative ways to meet their commitments related to teaching, research and community engagement, the three pillars of a traditional university. In order to survive (and thereafter thrive) I have had to work strategically and adopt a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar. In line with the thinking of Boyer (1991), I contend that knowledge is acquired “through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching. . .” (Boyer 1991, p.11) and that these four scholarships – of discovery, integration, application and teaching – are inextricably linked to each other. Conceptualising the BEd Honours (ELM) elective as a service learning initiative with an explicit research focus (both for the students and for me) was thus a strategy I adopted to integrate my teaching, research and community engagement commitments. Despite some preliminary challenges, this integrated approach has proved successful and the ELM elective, conceptualised as a service learning initiative, has been retained within the Honours curriculum. Time will tell just how much purchase we get from the initiative in terms of school reform and research publication.

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Hastening slowly: insights about teacher development from an evaluation of courses at the WCED's Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute

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Abstract

In the area of teacher professional development, South African education administrators face the challenge of reconciling two imperatives that have entirely different implications for programme time frames and budgets. On the one hand, there is an urgent need to improve the pedagogic content knowledge of many teachers to improve the overall standard of teaching and learning in the public school system. Considering the scale and urgency of the matter, centralised course-based in-service training seems to be the only affordable alternative. On the other hand, researchers have long warned that once-off course-based training on its own has limited impact on teachers' practice, and has to be accompanied by further professional support in the school and classroom, or be abandoned in favour of more enduring professional learning communities. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has grappled with this dilemma in the Department's various professional development initiatives for teachers, a mainstay of which is the training offered by the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI). This paper presents some of the data and findings from an external evaluation that ORT SA CAPE conducted in 2011–2012 of courses offered by the WCED at the CTLI. The hierarchy of INSET outcomes proposed by Harland and Kinder (1997) was applied to record changes in the practice of 18 teachers at eight schools. The progress of five of the teachers is discussed to illustrate the interplay between school-level factors and the experiences of individual teachers which influenced the impact of CTLI training on their teaching.

Introduction

This article presents insights gained from an external evaluation by ORT SA CAPE of teacher training courses at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI). The evaluation was commissioned by the Western Cape

Education Department (WCED).¹ Here we discuss findings from the evaluation (Meyer and Abel, 2013) which followed a sample of teachers over a two-year period (2011–2012). We present vignettes of five teachers that illustrate some of the personal and contextual factors associated with teachers' successful take-up of training, as well as factors associated with poor take-up. Our research found that CTLI training had a positive impact on the practice of some participants, but made no significant or lasting difference to the practice of most.²

Scope of the research

The original brief from WCED required evaluation of CTLI's delivery model which changed in a number of respects in 2011, through specific evaluation of six courses in Language, Mathematics and School Management. To create scope for multi-level analysis, ORT SA CAPE opted to focus on individual teachers within their school context as unit of analysis.

The evaluation covered a number of research strands. The following are relevant for the purposes of this discussion:

1. A pre- and post-test written by one cohort of teachers attending each course in 2011 and in 2012, i.e. ± 300 teachers per year.
2. Case studies tracking 18 teachers from 2011 course cohorts in eight schools – one school per district (2011–2012).
3. Analysis of results the schools achieved in the WCED diagnostic tests (2002–2011).

CTLI's delivery model

Alongside various provincial and district-level in-service training initiatives, CTLI's offerings could be considered their mainstay of continuous

¹ The authors gratefully acknowledge the WCED for permission to publish the data which is reported in this article.

² The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the WCED, nor ORT SA CAPE.

professional teacher development (CPTD). Annually, CTLI offers extensive programmes of short courses and conferences for teachers. The courses are 1–3 weeks in duration, and run during school terms. Teachers from underperforming schools are the primary target group, but teachers from all public schools may apply. The target subjects for curriculum courses are Language (Home Language and First Additional Language), Mathematics and Natural Sciences. A range of management courses are offered for principals, deputy principals, HODs, aspiring principals and entire SMTs of select schools. Until 2010, CTLI courses included a follow-up support component which entailed two classroom visits by a trainer to each teacher after the training to provide the teacher with feedback on implementation. In 2012, this follow-up support was replaced by an assignment which participants completed back at school as proof of implementation.

Context of the evaluation

It is worth mentioning two features of the broader policy and institutional context in which the research was conducted:

- At the time (2011–2012) the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was being implemented in the Foundation Phase (FP), but was still due to be introduced into most grades in the Intermediate (IP) and Senior Phases (SP). An important implication for interpreting the data is that the Revised National Curriculum Statement requirements for coverage of the various content areas were far less structured than in the current context of CAPS.
- Standardised assessment of learners had become a prominent feature of the education policy context in the Western Cape. Grade 3 and 6 learners have written the annual WCED systemic tests in Language and Mathematics since 2002 and Grade 9 learners since 2010. These tests are administered and marked by external service providers and each school receives a report early in the following year, which gives a breakdown of the results by grade level, content area etc.

Literature review

To locate our research within recent and current debates about CPTD, we give a brief overview of South African and international studies that have informed our thinking.

Insights from international research

International research on in-service education of teachers (INSET) and – in recent years – continuous professional development of teachers (CPTD) shows that teachers' take-up of new knowledge and skills from training has been a long-standing concern (e.g. Adler, Slonimsky and Reed, 2002; Avalos, 2011). Since the 1980s, CPTD practitioners and researchers have moved away from conventional INSET models of once-off workshops or course-based training towards more multi-faceted professional development models to avoid the deficiencies of 'single-design' training, such as the following:

- INSET has often taken a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and lacked depth.
- Training has been disconnected from teachers' practical experience.
- The 'cascade' model whereby teachers are expected to pass on INSET outcomes to colleagues at school was not effective, mostly because new learning was diluted beyond significance.

The INSET model proposed by Joyce and Showers (first in 1980 and updated in 1995 and 2002) addressed these concerns. It was very influential in South Africa (SA) and internationally. Based on extensive empirical research on different INSET programmes in the USA, the authors suggested five components required for training to effect a positive difference in teachers' practice:

- Presentation of theory and content
- Demonstration (modelling new methods and techniques)
- Repeated opportunities for practice during training
- Structured feedback and reflection
- Coaching during the implementation period.

They documented the impact of these five INSET elements across different studies to substantiate their argument that longer-term, in-depth teacher development is more cost-effective than short, course-based interventions. Their research had shown that 10–15 opportunities to practice a specific skill or teaching strategy, with feedback, are needed to enable teachers to use this strategy effectively. While their INSET model informed the design of many teacher development programmes since the 1990s, it must be remembered that the model was based entirely on research conducted in the USA. Many differences noted between SA and the USA, suggest Joyce and Showers' model cannot be applied indiscriminately in South African contexts.

Worldwide, researchers have grappled further with the challenges of producing models and/or suggesting research methodologies to do justice to the complexity of CPTD. Harland and Kinder (1997, previously cited by Webb, Bolt, Austin, Cloete, England, Feza, Ilsey, Kurup, Peires, and Wessels, 1999) mapped three of their nine 'outcome types' onto the INSET components proposed by Joyce and Showers. However, evidence from empirical research in the UK did not support some assumptions that underpinned Joyce and Showers' model. They concluded that a more multi-dimensional model was needed to accommodate the complex range of variables and outcomes involved in teacher development, and added six further 'outcome types' to their proposed hierarchy. To emphasise the non-linearity of their model, they clarified that individual teachers followed unique pathways through the different outcomes, while progressing through the three orders of change. Although they did not claim that teachers must achieve all nine outcomes to demonstrate significant impact on their practice, "it was generally the case that the larger the number of outcomes met the greater the probability of a change in teaching behaviour" (p.80). Harland and Kinder clarified that categories in their typology might need to be expanded or refined, depending on the purpose for which the training is designed. For example, knowledge and skills could be elaborated to reflect the specific types of knowledge such as procedural, situational, propositional and practical knowledge.

In 2002, Joyce and Showers published a revised version of their original INSET model, based on more recent empirical research studies in the USA. They proposed school-based peer coaching as an effective alternative to mentoring and coaching by external specialists, a very costly option. Structured feedback was omitted from their revised model, as research showed that it led peer coaches to slip into a supervisory/monitoring role

rather than a mentoring role. In peer coaching, teachers would alternate the roles of both the subject (the teacher whose lesson is observed) and the coach to develop a collegial CPTD culture in schools. The authors reviewed the effectiveness of the remaining four training components – theory, demonstration, practice and peer coaching – and concluded that complex CPTD designs which include all four of these training components are much more successful than ‘single’ training designs or even those which include the first three components but exclude peer coaching. A major challenge is that schools with traditional school management structures and cultures need to adopt far-reaching innovations to accommodate co-operative planning and collective learning – hard to achieve in South African conditions.

Anderson (2004) noted that a standards-based curriculum demands complete transformation in teachers’ lesson planning. Whereas teachers traditionally focused on classroom activities aimed at teaching select curriculum content as their starting point in planning lessons, a standards-based curriculum requires them to plan ‘backwards’ from the specified assessment standards and create opportunities for learners to achieve the expected outcomes. A standards-based curriculum demands that teachers have a clear understanding of the prescribed standards in terms of concepts and skills to be taught, as well as knowledge of their learners’ current levels of knowledge and skills, so that teaching can start from the familiar and challenge learners to engage with more advanced knowledge and skills. This implies intermittent diagnostic assessment of learners’ work to inform teachers’ planning, whereas assessment was traditionally used primarily to determine learner achievement to qualify for progression to the next grade or phase.

Opfer and Pedder’s (2011) review offers insight into the challenges that affect the development and evaluation of CPTD projects and programme. They explain why and how the process-product logic, that dominated CPTD for 20 years, has had limited explanatory value. This tended to disaggregate information about the teacher, the school and the learning activities. They argue that teacher development should be conceptualised as the “concatenation of practices, learning orientations, and individual and collective learning contexts that must occur for teacher learning to take place” (Opfer and Pedder, p.394). To do this complexity justice, they propose that CPTD programmes should be designed and researched as ‘complex adaptive systems’, within which the teacher, the school and the learning activities exert reciprocal influence on each other in the course of the developmental process.

From the above review, the following insights and ideas appear to have particular value for CPTD in SA:

- Teacher training and development are complex, contextually situated processes.
- Course-based training has proven ineffective in the absence of follow-up support (coaching and mentoring).
- Peer coaching has become a preferred form of follow-up support, but requires fundamental change in bureaucratic school cultures and the conventional individualistic nature of teachers' work.
- The role of assessment as the driver of teachers' planning is critical and often neglected in favour of serving learner progression or promotion.

Findings from South African research over the last twenty years

On the basis of empirical studies in SA over the last two decades, researchers and CPTD practitioners employed a number of concepts and conceptual frameworks for designing and studying CPTD programmes. Abel (1997) described the structure of teacher development as a spiral and indicated that teachers must master both the skills of deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge for the process of professional development to make a positive difference to their practice.

In their overview of 35 education research projects undertaken in the 1990s for the President's Education Initiative (PEI), Taylor and Vinjevoold (1999) commented on the lack of empirical studies and impact evaluations in many CPTD and school improvement projects. In 2003, these researchers proposed a multi-level intervention model to improve quality through systemic interventions (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevoold, 2003). Effective curriculum delivery was placed at the centre of the model, with the emphasis on conceptual learning and a set of 42 indicators was proposed for monitoring and supporting development in four areas: social organisation of the school, language learning and proficiency, curriculum and pedagogy, and assessment.

The Rural Education Project (REP, 2007–2008) targeted teachers in 38 Western Cape schools, combining two years' part-time study towards an

Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with classroom support by a specialist coach. Following Lerman (1998), Gamble and Kühne (2010) applied the analytic device of a series of conceptual lenses to examine the project's outcomes. The researchers applied five lenses in their analysis: internal accountability in schools, interpretation of diagnostic test results, "instructional practice as a shared public good", knowledge-based teaching and "systemic synchronicity" (pp.17–18). They the authors adopted the term "proceduralised process", also applied by Taylor *et al.* (2003), to describe superficial or administrative ways in which many teachers interpreted and applied new knowledge. In our subsequent CPTD work, including the study on which we report here, we have found the concept of 'proceduralised process' valuable for distinguishing between teaching and curriculum management practices creating meaningful learning opportunities for learners from those demonstrating compliance with minimum departmental requirements, monitored by district officials and school management.

Adler and Reed's (2002) findings from teachers' take-up of CPTD are informative for CPTD initiatives in SA. Between 1996 and 1999, they conducted a three-year longitudinal study of 25 teachers participating in the University of the Witwatersrand's Further Diploma in Education (FDE) programme. Participants were from 25 schools in Gauteng and the former Northern Province and taught Mathematics, Science or English. It was striking that their main findings pertained to the effects of language on teachers' efforts to incorporate new knowledge, into their practice. They found increased use of code-switching by teachers and learners in most classrooms. More code-switching by Mathematics and Science teachers than English Language teachers, was seen. Adler and Reed attributed this to greater focus on modelling correct English use in primary Language classes. Teachers' use of codeswitching was "intentional but dilemma-filled" (p.50) When Outcomes-Based Education (Curriculum 2005) was introduced there was widespread take-up of cooperative learning techniques such as group work creating more opportunities for "learning from talk" (p.50), i.e. learners talking about the work in their everyday language. However, most teachers did not facilitate the shift to "learning to talk" (p.50) i.e. challenging learners to express their learning in formal, subject-specific language. Although the above-mentioned patterns were common to all teachers, there were significant differences between teachers working in different contexts, at different levels (grades and phases) and subjects.

Concerning methodology, the researchers endorsed the value of “fuzzy generalisations” (p.48) proposed by Bassey (1999), as a cost-effective approach to documenting findings from qualitative studies of CPTD programmes. Bassey was trying to address the context-bound nature of CPTD. He observed that findings from CPTD studies are often too specific to be applied in different contexts and proposed the term “fuzzy generalisations” for qualified statements about findings, which acknowledge uncertainties in the research. By extrapolating series of “fuzzy generalisations” from research about CPTD, it is possible to build an increasingly informed and coherent picture of what works and what doesn’t.

The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was designed as a large-scale multi-dimensional intervention which would provide extended in-depth CPTD to primary school teachers. Between 2011 and 2014, it supported teachers in about 830 schools in 15 districts in Gauteng. The model focused on three overlapping components: pre-designed daily lesson plans for teachers, high-quality learning and teaching materials and individual instructional coaching of teachers. The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2013a) identified the GPLMS as one of only two large-scale CPTD projects in the country that promised to bring about significant, lasting improvement in schooling. Fleisch and Schöer (2014) reported tentative findings that the project had demonstrated modest impact in learner achievement.³ Despite these positive findings, the GPLMS was terminated midway in 2014, reportedly because it had proven unaffordable.

The WCED’s Literacy and Numeracy Intervention was planned as an eight-year CPTD project, targeting Language and Mathematics teachers in all primary schools in the province. The Intervention, introduced in 2009, provided block training and school-focused follow-up support to teachers in successive cohorts of approximately 250 schools in two-year phases. This project also received a positive review by NEEDU (2013a). The WCED terminated the Intervention in 2015, reportedly because its activities were no longer aligned with the Department’s strategic objectives.

Findings from recent large-scale empirical research projects have confirmed the range and scope of challenges facing those aiming to improve the quality of teaching and learning in SA’s schools (NEEDU, 2013 a and 2013b; Taylor

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The authors avoided making strong claims about the project’s effectiveness due to limitations in the research design.

et al., 2012; Venkat and Spaul, 2015). They underscored the importance and urgency of effective, targeted CPTD programmes. NEEDU (2013b) identified a shortage of subject advisors (SAs) able to bring all teachers' practice up to the necessary standard for effective CAPS implementation. The authors argue that school-based CPTD is the most promising alternative, but acknowledge a problem – that teachers 'don't know what they don't know', which places a question mark over how and by whom teachers' development needs would be identified.

The National School Effectiveness Study followed the academic progress of a cohort of 8 383 learners in 268 schools in eight provinces⁴ from 2007 to 2009 (Taylor, Van der Berg and Mabogoane, 2012). The researchers found that teachers' and learners' proficiency in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) was a determining influence on teaching and learning and they reaffirmed that teachers' subject knowledge remains a key priority for CPTD in SA. They granted that training which focuses on teaching methods could bring about short-term efficiency gains, but predicted a low ceiling on these effects. Investment in in-depth subject-focused professional development was identified as critical. The authors cited CTLI block release courses as some of "the few programmes that have been shown to impact significantly on teacher knowledge and learner performance" (Taylor *et al.*, 2012, p.24). Two consecutive external evaluations of CTLI courses had shown substantial improvement in the subject knowledge of teachers who attended training (De Chaisemartin, 2010; Meyer and Abel, 2013).

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT, 2013) is a large-scale public-private partnership initiative which has been designed as a multi-year intervention, targeting specific districts in five rural provinces of SA. The programme will consist of various components, including CPTD in target subjects such as Language and Mathematics, school development, district support and parent/community involvement.

Spaul (2015) argues that there is an urgent need for "developing a comprehensive plan for meaningful teacher development". Deciding what should comprise such a plan is the biggest challenge. The very different approaches taken in recent projects such as the GPMLS, the WCED's LitNum

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Gauteng was omitted from the study as the research time-frames conflicted with dates allocated for administration of provincial tests.

intervention and the NECT initiative, show there is no consensus on the most effective form of CPTD to improve the quality of education in SA's schools.

The Department of Basic Education's Action plan to 2019 (DBE, 2015) constitutes a comprehensive education development plan within the government's National Development Plan. Alongside related areas such as improving functionality of underperforming schools, the plan identifies CPTD as a high priority for state investment and intervention over the next five years, with a particular focus on four aspects:

- Standardising and strengthening curriculum messages to teachers
- Creating a stronger enabling framework for teacher-initiated professional development activities, particularly professional learning communities.
- Promoting more opportunities for teachers to attend external in-service training of good quality, focusing on subject knowledge and teaching methodology
- Increasing teachers' access and educational use of digital resources.

The following insights from the above-mentioned SA literature are valuable for further work in the CPTD field:

- "Fuzzy generalisations" (Adler and Reed, 2002) are a useful methodology to develop our collective understanding of CPTD through qualitative research such as case studies.
- "Proceduralised process" (Gamble and Kühne, 2010) is a helpful concept for understanding superficial take-up of CPTD by teachers and schools.
- Teachers' and learners' competence in the LoLT – particularly English - require priority intervention to ensure teacher take-up of CPTD.
- School-focused CPTD interventions seem to hold most promise in the SA context.
- Coaching by specialists is not an affordable teacher development strategy for the public school system.

- There are insufficient SAs in the system to provide CPTD on the scale and at the depth required in SA schools. Peer coaching is the most viable option, but identifying teachers' development needs would be a challenge, as teachers and principals "don't know what they don't know" (NEEDU, 2013b).
- To address the CPTD challenges that research has identified in the SA school system, investment in in-depth subject-focused professional development will be critical.

It is evident that the DBE action plan has been informed by several of these research insights, e.g. the emphases on teachers' subject knowledge, the quality of external training and promotion of school-based teacher development. However, the plan specifies only priorities and indicators for monitoring implementation by provinces. By implication, the various provinces will have the freedom to design their own CPTD interventions within these broad guidelines. At this stage, it is not clear whether the DBE will prescribe or recommend that specific approaches adopted in teacher development programmes should take research findings such as those listed above into account to improve prospects for sustained impact.

Research design

The data that is presented here was obtained through case study research which drew upon multiple data sources. The analysis was framed by the hierarchy of INSET outcomes proposed by Harland and Kinder (1997).

Sample and methodology

We report on the take-up of CTLI training by five of 18 teachers working in four of the eight schools. The case studies (2011–2012), were designed to document teachers' take-up of new knowledge and skills from CTLI courses. The research covered teachers' immediate knowledge gains assessed by pre- and post-tests, implementation following teachers' return to school after training, as well as evidence of sustained take-up after one year. We also wanted to explore the relationship between dynamics in schools and the impact of CTLI training in more depth. Although the CTLI data presented

here was collected three years ago, the findings we report here are still relevant, as we grapple with the same issues today.

Apart from selecting one school from each district, the eight schools were broadly representative of different types of schools in terms of their size, the communities they serve (e.g. location, socio-economic status), the language profile of the learners and how frequently their teachers had attended CTLI courses over the years. Additional data was collected about the overall functioning of the school, curriculum management, teachers' professional development and district support. In both 2011 and 2012, the researchers observed a lesson taught by each of the 18 teachers and analysed all written work completed by two learners in each teacher's class during the first two terms of each year. Each teacher completed a questionnaire. A structured interview was conducted with the principals in both years. During the two research visits, the researchers conducted school observations, using structured observation schedules and analysed the School Improvement Plan (SIP), LTSM inventories, teacher registers and timetables. In 2011, semi-structured interviews were conducted with one or two members of the circuit team responsible for each school.

Theoretical framework

The hierarchy of INSET outcomes, put forward by Harland and Kinder (1997), was applied to analyse the data from 18 teachers who worked in eight case study schools. This hierarchy is represented in Figure 1, with one adaptation: the impact of INSET programmes is considered at the level of observable classroom practice and as measured learner achievement. The Harland and Kinder framework proved useful in previous research projects, because it provided unambiguous criteria for assessing impact of training and other professional development on teachers' work. Its key strength is its hierarchical nature that allows for impact of teacher training to be assessed incrementally. It makes specific reference to the institutional context of the teacher, whereas other frameworks focus mainly on the individual teacher. Nearly all items in the diagram (Figure 1) are self-explanatory, but 'value congruence' and 'individuated code of practice' require some clarification. These refer to teachers' personalised versions of the curriculum and teaching methods that correspond to the INSET providers' messages about 'good practice'. Harland and Kinder (1997) differentiated between three orders of

impact of teacher development programmes which teachers go through during their professional development. They noted that the more outcomes teachers attain, the greater the likelihood of impact on teaching and learning quality.

A HIERARCHY OF INSET OUTCOMES

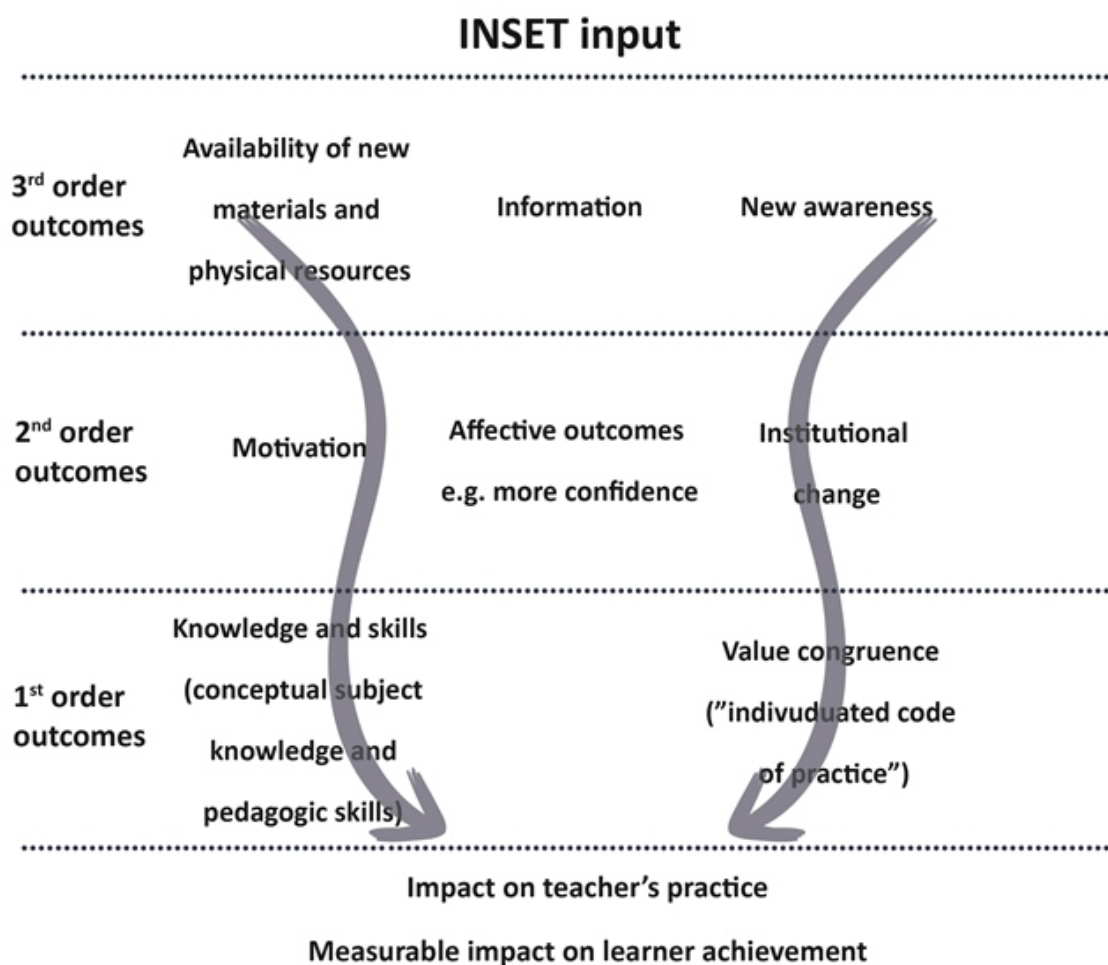


Figure 1: A hierarchy of INSET outcomes, adapted from Harland and Kinder (1997)

The following criteria were used to rate the professional development of 18 teachers in eight case study schools according to Harland and Kinder's hierarchy of INSET outcomes (the criteria are marked with asterisks to indicate their weighting in rating teachers' progress):

- Immediate knowledge gains, indicated by post-test score compared to group average*
- Volume of work in learners' books in 2012, compared to 2011*

- Increased coverage of curriculum content areas that were not covered/inadequately covered in 2011***
- Evidence of improved teaching of concepts and skills, and/or implementation of teaching methods****
- Quality of teachers' marking, and written feedback to learners***
- Evidence of differentiation in feedback to strong and weak learners, and its frequency**
- New knowledge or teaching methods shared with colleagues in the grade/phase/school**
- Evidence of mentoring and/or coaching of colleagues at school or in the district***

Analysis of the data about teachers' progress

Table 1 below gives a summary of the outcome levels the 18 teachers attained according to our analysis, having applied the above-mentioned criteria and weightings.

Table 1: Levels of professional development attained by teachers in case study schools, following Harland and Kinder (1997)

LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ATTAINED BY TEACHERS IN CASE STUDY SCHOOLS Following Harland and Kinder (1997)			
	1 st order outcomes	2 nd order outcomes	3 rd order outcomes
Placement of teachers	G16	A38 A39 C40 E13 F37 F41 G42	A4 B15 B28 B46 D10 D17 E21 E31 H22 H45
Total number of teachers	1	7	10

Vignettes of five teachers

For the purposes of this paper, vignettes of five teachers are presented: the teacher who was judged to have achieved first order outcomes, two teachers who achieved second order outcomes and two teachers who achieved third order outcomes. These teachers were selected because they represented particular types in terms of diverse training needs, different responses to training and the influence of different school contexts

The teacher who achieved first order outcomes

Teacher G16 was the only teacher of the 18 rated as having achieved first order outcomes in terms of implementing knowledge she had learnt at CTLI. The data indicated that she was a dedicated and fairly competent teacher, and

the CTLI IP English Home Language course helped her to improve her practice further. In 2012, she made adjustments to ensure more balanced coverage of the curriculum, emphasising comprehension and writing exercises. She applied methods and techniques learnt on the course and used a range of LTSM and scaffolding techniques to support learning. Some choral answers were observed in her lesson in 2012, but her questioning techniques were sophisticated. She challenged learners to explain answers and allowed time to absorb new concepts before moving on. Her most persistent weakness was inconsistency in the quality of marking. Less than half of weak learners' written work was marked with little or no comment, whereas most of the strong learners' books were marked with regular, positive comments.

Although relatively isolated in a rural district, School G was a relatively well-functioning school where curriculum management was prioritised by SMT. Apart from regular monitoring, which was the order of the day in all case study schools, the school had taken some significant steps to implement its literacy and numeracy strategy. In 2012 the time-table was adjusted to effect a shift from class teaching to subject teaching⁵ in Languages and Mathematics from Grade 4, and in the same year the school library was established. The school was also experiencing some of the challenges observed in other schools, but these difficulties did not appear to affect the work of Teacher G16 negatively. In particular, there was a mismatch between the mother tongue of Xhosa-speaking learners and the LoLT of the school (Afrikaans); however the 6% of affected learners were mostly in the FP, so the problem did not (yet) affect the classes of this teacher, who was teaching in the IP.

The principal indicated that Teacher G16 returned from the training full of enthusiasm for teaching and for sharing benefits from the CTLI course with her colleagues. Having done a presentation – in English - during the course, she presented a demonstration lesson at the school, based on CAPS. Some of her achievements attracted recognition from the subject head and in general, strong collegial and managerial support was evident in the school. Two teachers in other districts had kept in touch since the CTLI training and shared methods and ideas. In 2011, the school received six visits from the FP and IP SAs, who met teachers, supported them in class and checked files and

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'Class teaching' involves a teacher taking one class for all subjects – general practice in the FP, 'subject teaching' refers to teachers teaching certain subjects to several classes in a grade or phase, typically in the IP and SP.

documents. However, Teacher G16 did not mention having received classroom support from a subject advisor (SA). The principal reported that SA's visits mostly focused on monitoring – checking teachers' files and other documents. In an interview, the relevant SA also mentioned long distances and a lack of staff as challenges facing this rural circuit.

Two teachers who achieved second order outcomes

Teacher C40 attended the IP Mathematics course in 2011. Her post-test score showed a marked increase, almost doubling from 27.3% in the pre-test (the class average was 40.2%) to 63.6% (the class average increased to 55.8%) – evidence of substantial knowledge gains on the course. She reported that the practical approach to measurement and the division/multiplication methods helped her build a strong knowledge base. She noted some content areas were less well covered than others; and that her peers had contributed significantly to her learning. When she returned to school, she shared worksheets she had received with IP colleagues. She had regular contact with a fellow participant at another school, with whom she shared ideas on lessons and assessment tasks.

In her Grade 5 lesson (2011), this teacher did not use any planned resources. Learners were not allowed any discussion and the researcher reported that little teaching and learning took place. Choral answers were prevalent. However, in 2012 the teacher modelled correct answers, and used textbooks which were systematically referenced in lesson plans. Assessment activities in lesson plans met the expected outcomes of lessons. In 2011 DBE workbooks were only for homework, which was given fairly regularly, but unmarked; in 2012 minimal, controlled homework was given and DBE workbooks were used more effectively. The volume of work in learners' books more than doubled in 2012. There was a shift from numerous half-page exercises to more full pages of written work. Curriculum coverage was more balanced with more than twice as many numbers, operations and relationships exercises compared to 2011. However, fractions and some of the basic operations, particularly division, were still poorly covered.

There was a marked improvement in teacher-learner interaction with more learners answering questions and giving explanations. Although learners still often answered in unison, there were many more instances of learners asking

questions about the lesson and actively participating. The teacher encouraged learners to respond and modeled correct responses. Her method of teaching mental mathematics had improved and covered a more extensive range. In 2011, the teacher asked learners to illustrate quick operations on the chalkboard using only her methods. In 2012, she allowed learners more creativity in the lesson. The teacher marked all work and gave questions for follow-up. Informal corrective feedback was given to learners as well as comments to encourage struggling learners.

Teacher E13, the FP HOD, rated the Roles and Responsibilities of HODs course as excellent and said it had specifically benefitted her curriculum planning and time management. The teacher's school management portfolios had changed very little over the two years of the study. In 2011, it was IQMS, LitNum, netball and music. In 2012, it included IQMS, head of FP, non-teaching staff, netball and the HIV programme. This relative continuity in her work allocation allowed her to develop her knowledge and skills in certain areas of school and curriculum management over time. As IQMS coordinator, she was also potentially in an influential position and had the opportunity to direct teacher development at the school.

On her return to school, she shared her learnings with the other FP teachers, focusing on lesson plans, class diversity, class visits, lesson observations and control of work. However, one year after the training, she had not yet conducted any lesson observations. In her own teaching, she referred to the CTLI training materials and found them very useful. Initially, she kept in contact and shared ideas with others from the course, but this was not sustained. She reported that the focus at quarterly FP department meetings was on improving learner results. The school's part-time LSEN teacher provided input and extra lessons were offered on weekends and school holidays. Although recent documentary evidence showed improvements in meeting structure and minute-taking, agenda items were of a general nature with little reference to curriculum. The teacher reported on a new curriculum management system such as a year plan for the phase and checklists. However teachers who were interviewed were not familiar with these documents, e.g. they had seen no year planner by September 2012. As phase head, the HOD moderated exam papers and gave feedback. Files were checked at the start of each term and demonstration lessons given. This was done in a helpful and supportive manner. Control of teachers' work was still a concern. Teachers' late submission of work remained a problem and a culture of non-compliance persisted, despite reports that she was an excellent manager and easy to get

along with. Although there had been no support or encouragement from the district, she reported a strong interest in attending further workshops and courses.

Several second order changes were evident in this teacher's work, one year after she attended the CTLI HOD course: her enduring motivation and confidence, as well as her efforts to bring about institutional changes in administration and management of the FP department.

Two teachers who achieved third order outcomes

Teacher B28 attended the FP English Home Language course. She taught Grade 1 for the first time in 2011 and she appeared to be lacking in confidence. Class size (39), language barriers and disparity in the ability levels of learners were noted as difficulties. She found the course valuable, but only achieved small immediate gains in subject knowledge (her pre-test score was below average, and only slightly above the score she achieved in the post-test).

The teacher used course notes regularly to guide her teaching of reading. Lesson planning and structure had improved, but learner interaction and involvement remained poor. There was little mediation or explanation during the observations and weaker learners were not supported. Discipline was poor and the lesson that was observed in 2012 was unstructured. Learner engagement in the content had decreased since 2011 and monosyllabic and choral answers increased. Quality and variety of LTSM declined with worksheets, readers and story books dominating. The observations suggested that the teacher's post-CTLI enthusiasm had declined by 2012 and teaching was becoming increasingly procedural. In the 2012 interview she stated that she felt powerless and lacking in support despite having mentioned that she had received support from teachers and parents, as well as management.

The volume of written work completed by this teacher's class was well above the group average in both 2011 and 2012. In Language, curriculum coverage leaned more towards phonics and words (71% of learners' written work), with coverage of writing still inadequate at 29%. The teacher marked work regularly, with minimal comment and input, and no differentiation in the feedback provided to strong and weak learners. DBE workbooks were used

for homework and checked by parents, but were not marked or signed by the teacher.

Third order outcomes evident in this teacher's work were regular reference to the CTLI course materials and better lesson plans. However, she had lost the renewed enthusiasm she had gained from the training and she had failed to implement new methods to manage her class more effectively and to create opportunities for learners to participate actively in lessons.

IP Mathematics **Teacher E31** was impressed with the knowledge and competence of the CTLI presenters and rated the course highly. She achieved 13.6% in the pre-test (the group average was 32.1%) and her post-test score of 22.7% showed some knowledge gain, but lower than the class average of 49.1%. She reported that the course enabled her to improve her content knowledge, but that she needed further support with fractions. After the course she gave feedback to colleagues in her phase, specifically on 2D shapes and 3D figures. She kept in contact with others who completed the course to share ideas and methods. She had not received district support since attending the course.

She tried to involve the parents in the supervision of homework, using the DBE workbook about once a month. This was not very successful as most parents were uncooperative. Learners' books showed that less work was done in 2012 than 2011, although the percentage of written exercises covering different content areas remained constant. Numbers, operations and relationships made up 80% of the work covered in the first half of the year, as in 2011. The other content areas received little attention. In 2012, learners used textbooks more than half of the time, but not effectively. Assessment appeared unplanned, and the lesson was inconclusive and not recorded in any form. There was evidence of control marking and there were some remarks in the stronger learner's book, but none for weaker learner's. In 2011 both the stronger and weaker learners' books contained teacher's comments.

Discussion of findings

Analysis of the five vignettes cast some light on individual and institutional factors that hindered or promoted the teachers' professional development.

Different levels of outcomes achieved by teachers

It is striking that Teacher G16 achieved the distinction of having been rated most successful out of the sample of 18 teachers, despite having performed very poorly on both the pre-and post-tests. There is no straightforward explanation for this paradox. She demonstrated poor subject knowledge prior to the course and no immediate knowledge gains by the end of it, but aspects of her teaching practice improved markedly over the subsequent year. One possibility is that she needed time to assimilate the new knowledge she had learnt on the course; her limited proficiency in English could be another. Although she wrote both the pre- and post-tests in Afrikaans, the course was aimed at English Home Language teachers and was presented entirely in English, and she teaches Afrikaans Home Language.

All teachers rated as achieving second order outcomes, demonstrated 'affective outcomes', such as renewed motivation and improved confidence. These self-reported outcomes were largely confirmed in the empirical data collected from other sources such as perusal of learners' written work and lesson observations. Teachers in this group were implementing new knowledge and teaching methods they had learnt on the courses and most had made adjustments ensuring more balanced coverage of the curriculum. These improvements were sustained for at least a year after training, suggesting they would maintain these good practices in future. However, after the two-year study, it was still too early to have certainty about their future performance.

Teachers who attained third order outcomes also returned to school with renewed enthusiasm and increased confidence in teaching their subjects. However, these claims of increased professional competence and confidence could not be substantiated. Lesson observations and perusal of learners' books in 2012 showed serious shortcomings in teaching and/or their learners' written work. In some cases no improvement was seen since 2011 and in others, teachers' practice had deteriorated. A limited curriculum, geared to the lowest common denominator rather than the grade level required, and a lack of cohesion or progression in lessons pointed towards poor planning which was not identified through the school-level or district-level monitoring processes.

Teacher E31 attended the IP Mathematics course, which the evaluation team rated as outstanding, and the best of the five CTLI curriculum courses that

were evaluated, she achieved only third order outcomes. One possible contributing factor seems to have been her own limited prior subject knowledge. Although she reported increased confidence, she avoided teaching most content areas (apart from Number, operations and relationships), as she had done before.

The relationship between teacher development and school management

The research identified several links between school functioning and teachers' practice that appeared to support or undermine CPTD. For example, school-level factors may have contributed to Teacher G16's progress. Despite some problems, School G appeared to be a well-managed school: curriculum management was efficient with a strong culture of collegial and managerial support. On the other hand, the efforts of some of teachers rated as having attained second and third order outcomes, appeared to be hamstrung by conditions in the schools in which they work. The evidence showed that the efforts of some, such as HOD E13, were hindered by sub-standard performance by others at school.

Links between teachers' knowledge and their work allocation

School managers differed in the extent to which they allowed or encouraged teachers to develop specialised knowledge in the subjects they teach. School G was one of two schools in the study that changed from class teaching to subject teaching in the IP and SP in 2011–2012, acting on the advice of district officials. The intention was to make better use of teachers' specialist knowledge (and enthusiasm) – especially in challenging subjects like Mathematics and Natural Science.

The disjuncture between the LoLT and learners' mother tongue

At several of the schools, many learners do not speak the LoLT as their mother tongue. This presents formidable barriers to reading and learning. School B was the most striking example, but this problem was also present in School G. At School B there had been a gradual demographic shift in the learner population, so 30% of learners – 50% of Grade 1s, the grade taught by Teacher B28 – were Xhosa speakers learning through the medium of English

Home Language. Despite this growing problem, the school had not developed any useful measures to help learners address this barrier. Halfway through 2012, the SMT started to discuss possible solutions, such as introducing a Xhosa stream in the FP.

Schools' approaches to professional development of teachers

In most case study schools, CTLI courses constituted the main or only teacher development strategy. Some principals, like at School G, recognised that teachers returned with new enthusiasm and ideas for improvement, but they were not sure that CTLI training was making a real difference. On the other hand, the principals of Schools B and E seemed to assume that increased motivation on the part of teachers after CTLI was evidence that their teaching practice would improve. The evidence did not support this assumption. In three of the four schools, the data collected indicated that CTLI training had little or no impact on most teachers' practice.

Of the five teachers in this study, only Teacher G16 participated in substantive school-based INSET activities. In addition to reporting back at meetings and sharing new knowledge with colleagues, she presented a demonstration lesson, based on CAPS to other teachers in the phase at school. The other teachers reported back at subject meetings and Teachers C40 and E31 passed on some specific ideas and worksheets to colleagues. In Schools B, C and E, it was unlikely that new knowledge would be embedded systematically in the practice of teachers across subjects and phases. The knowledge base in the institution would not grow, even if individual teachers benefited from training.

Links between resource management and teaching

Availability of appropriate and sufficient resources for teaching and learning might contribute to teachers' ability to implement new knowledge learnt in their classrooms. The teachers in the study, rated as achieving second order outcomes, all had access to LTSM and made effective use of these in their lessons. It is noteworthy that the leadership of School G, where the two teachers in the study attained second and first order outcomes respectively, demonstrated significant commitment to provision of resources to support strategies to improve literacy and numeracy. In 2011, the establishment of a school library was prioritised in the SIP and teachers undertook the

preparatory work to qualify for WCED allocations of infrastructure and reading materials.

Conversely, several teachers who attained third order outcomes reported that their teaching was hampered by a lack of sufficient LTSM. For example, there was evidence of mismanagement of resources at School E: unopened boxes of textbooks were seen in a classroom in the third quarter of the year, in spite of obvious textbook shortages.

Effective management of classroom resources is a related but separate aspect and can impact significantly on the quality of teaching and learning. Instances were noted where sufficient and appropriate LTSM were available, but teachers lacked the knowledge and/or experience to utilise these effectively. For example, Teacher E31 had sufficient Mathematics textbooks available for use in class, but they were not used effectively to explain the concept being taught nor were learners given an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the concept in order to attain the outcomes set for the lesson.

District support

Apart from the complaint about declining district support for the FP at School B, the principals and teachers at all the schools reported adequate support from district officials. However, the main purpose of SA's visits was monitoring (checking teachers' files and documentation) rather than training, supporting or mentoring. None of the 18 teachers received follow-up support from district officials after they had completed their CTLI courses. A partial exception was Teacher C40, who reported the valuable support from the Mathematics SA in 2012. He gave her and her colleagues some guidance in the design of formal assessment tasks and provided standardised Mathematics question papers for all IP and SP teachers in the circuit for the June examinations. The same teacher also reported having attended a Mathematics course in the district earlier in 2012.

The systemic test results and external accountability pressures on teachers and schools

None of the five teachers indicated that they had personally engaged with the results their schools' learners had achieved in WCED systemic tests. However, Schools C, E and G were implementing stricter monitoring of teachers' work in response to pressures associated with these tests. At Schools B and E, teachers offered extra lessons for Grade 3 and Grade 6 learners after school or on Saturdays in 2012 to prepare for the tests, written every November.

Concluding remarks

The analysis of data from the five teacher vignettes led to some sobering insights, which resonate with findings from other South African studies cited earlier (Adler and Reed, 2002; NEEDU, 2013a and 2013b; Taylor *et al.*, 2012). The five teachers, all from underprivileged schools, clearly benefitted from the CTLI training, although to varying degrees. Two of the five teachers (Teachers G16 and C40) left training energised by new and deeper understanding of concepts and skills in their subjects. By 2012, these teachers had succeeded in many of their efforts to move away proceduralised practice, e.g. eradicating choral responses in their classes and restricting learners to prescribed methods for solving problems in Mathematics. Both were able to implement a range of new scaffolding methods and techniques to create opportunities for learners to 'learn to talk' about the concepts taught. There was also a significant improvement in Teacher C40's design of assessment tasks and the quality and frequency of corrective feedback given to learners.

By contrast, Teachers B28 and E31 whose prior knowledge in the subject/phase was poor, benefitted little from training. These teachers achieved third order outcomes only, and training made little difference to their practice. They could not translate what they had learned on the courses into well-structured lessons, they continued to demand limited written work from their learners and they gave little corrective feedback, especially to struggling learners. Teacher E31 was one of several teachers in the full sample whose post-test scores in Mathematics remained low, suggesting their prior subject knowledge did not provide an adequate basis for engaging with new concepts on the course. Particularly in Mathematics, there appears to be a need for

differentiated courses, for example, a foundational course in each of the phases to cater for teachers without any formal training or inadequate pre-service training, in teaching the subject.

In different ways, the teacher vignettes highlighted the importance of follow-up support after training to help teachers embed new knowledge and practice in their practice. Notably, the three teachers who had been rated as having achieved first or second order outcomes found or sought out further sources of professional support to help them consolidate and extend their knowledge. They kept contact with teachers who attended the CTLI course with them (even teachers in other districts) or worked with colleagues in their own schools and/or neighbouring schools. Only one of the five teachers (Teacher C40) specifically mentioned that she had received support from a SA after the training, which she found valuable. The SA responsible for School G, acknowledged that she visits schools in the circuit infrequently, mainly due to the distances she has to travel. One teacher who achieved third order outcomes (Teacher B28) complained that she felt unsupported, despite support from the school management and parents and the other (Teacher E31) mentioned that she had received no support from the district. These findings appear consistent with NEEDU's observation (NEEDU, 2013b) that the numbers of SAs in the system are insufficient to provide the support at the levels and frequency needed by teachers.

The experiences of teachers from three of the four schools in the study suggest school-based INSET is not practiced at most underperforming schools. Arguably, a policy initiative to promote school-based INSET and peer coaching as the mainstay of CPTD in South Africa, as NEEDU has proposed (NEEDU, 2013a), would have to include school development interventions of sufficient depth to shift schools from 'minimalist', compliance-based curriculum management to more developmental and professional cultures.

As in other SA studies, we found the mismatch between the LoLT and learners' mother tongue to be a major impediment to effective teaching. In this set of vignettes, the matter stood out as a challenge not only for individual teachers, but for schools. If schools do not address demographic shifts in the intake of learners speaking a home language other than the LoLT, the problem can escalate over a few years, as was evident in School B where teacher B28, expressed a sense of exasperation and hopelessness despite the support she received from management and parents.

Teacher E13 tried to apply new knowledge she had learned on the HOD course in her FP department, but with little success. This teacher's experience suggested that training in management skills, dissociated from subject-focused CPTD (or strong subject content knowledge prior to training) might achieve no more than minimal efficiency gains in curriculum management. The resistance she faced from colleagues - despite their declared respect and personal regard for her – also indicated that a culture of compliance and minimalist attitudes are deeply ingrained in the culture of the school. Unless uneven standards of professional commitment are addressed by managers of schools such as School E, the persistent malaise would undermine the enthusiasm and renewed professional commitment of returning teachers after training.

Although our findings were drawn from a limited sample, they underscore the importance of taking the complexities of CPTD into account when designing teacher development programmes. The experiences of the five teachers discussed here suggest that block-release training without ongoing follow-up support and targeted school development interventions, is inadequate to bring about real and lasting improvements in teaching and learning. The least costly option might not be the most cost-effective.

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Opening address at the 2014 SAERA conference

Angels in the wind: future directions for educational research

Michael Samuel

(Chair of the Local Organizing Committee)



Stanmeyer, John 2013. 'Sign', *National Geographic*

An annual prestigious event in the calendar of professional press photographers, photojournalists and documentary photographers is the World Press Photo Award. This event in 2013 was co-ordinated by the World Press Photo Office in Amsterdam and attracted 98 671 submitted images by 5 754 photographers from 132 countries (<http://www.worldpressphoto.org/awards/2014>). The independent jury of judges for the 57th annual event selected this photograph above by John Stanmeyer, a USA journalist of the National Geographic as the winning photographic image in the category 'Contemporary issues'. Stanmeyer had

simply titled his image 'Sign'. It was accompanied by the explanation of his attempt to capture the challenges facing the would-be migrants alongside the coast of Djibouti (North East Africa). These haunting 'army of shadows' (RADAR Worldwide, 2014) reflects groups of prospective migrants who are aiming to make the journey to better life opportunities by crossing over the oceans into the Middle East or beginning the journey into Europe. Coming from the surrounding countries of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, this image depicts a new kind of Exodus facing the participants who stand alongside the shores searching for signals on the cellphones, aiming to connect a last call to family and friends back home, aiming to connect with the traffickers who had promised a safe passage (legal or not) into the lands of prospects. Their sense of hopeless desperation is not the focus of the image itself. The picture captures instead glimmers of light as cellphone screens dot the darkness. The photograph is one of hope, the search for international connection, the need for making connections with others. An awarding judge, Jillian Edelstein (UK/South Africa) commented on the photo:

It's a photo that is connected to so many other stories—it opens up discussions about **technology, globalisation, migration, poverty, desperation, alienation, humanity**. It's a very sophisticated, powerfully nuanced image. It is so subtly done, so poetic, yet instilled with meaning, conveying issues of great gravity and concern in the world today. (my emphasis added) <http://www.worldpressphoto.org/awards/2014>

We all know that the journey of migration for some has been repeated several times over in many parts of the world, some with fatal consequences, when migrants are shipwrecked, stranded, abandoned or exploited by those who promise a better life opportunity. We know too that some migrants end up in the degradation of barricaded immigrant camps, sometimes tortured and humiliated by the authorities that police the borders of national geographies. Many are simply deported back to the countries of origin. Even when they enter the foreign lands, we know they become victims of xenophobia as nationalistic overtures interpret their conduct and agendas. We know also the resilience of many who repeat their previous failed journey several times over, searching, searching for means to escape their poverty, searching for economic or health security, searching for better qualitative education systems; escaping the ravages of natural, economic and political disorders. Migration is as old as history, and border crossings have always been points of contestation. In his classical novel *'Waiting for the Barbarians'*, J.M. Coetzee heightened our awareness of how border control camps become symbolic of our internal rather than external constructions of threat. Borders become the very spaces where our constructed certainties become questioned, become possibilities for thinking anew.

Susan Linfield, the USA judge commented on the selection process of finding the award winning image as follows:

What we're looking for in the winning image is the same quality you would look for in a great film or in literature – the **impression that it exists on more than one level**, that it makes you think about things you haven't thought about. You begin to explore the **layers** not only of what's there, but of what isn't there. So many pictures of migrants show them as **bedraggled and pathetic**. . .but this photo is not so much romantic, as **dignified**. (my emphasis added).

I believe that today as we begin this historical agenda of the second South African Education Research Association (SAERA) 2014 conference we are also on a journey of pilgrimage, a search for new directions, new beginnings. In this search we are connected into the debates and contestations around our pasts, our heritages, technology, globalisation, migration, poverty, desperation, alienation, and humanity. We know that there are many images to be presented and debated in this conference and that each image is capable of being interpreted on more than one level. Like the image of John Stanmeyer's 'Sign', the conference is a space to engage things that we have not yet thought about; to rethink how we police the boundaries of our own thoughts, habits, rituals and routines. This is a conference about layers: layers of people, positionalities, personalities, paradigms, organisations, spaces and methodologies. We must always be conscious not only of *what* people say to us, but also what are the silences: *what is not being said*. I encourage us all to focus on *what* or *who* is not heard in our debates, our deliberations. I ask you to pay attention to which participants and their foci are given supremacy over others. Are we creating sufficient spaces for a confluence of voices in the wind?

My belief is that South African education research has to move beyond simply the 'bedraggled and pathetic'. Instead we should be searching for a 'dignified form' of educational research activity that will harness the wonderful potential we already possess. Perhaps this is a time to put aside our obsession with the policy euphoria we noted in our early days of liberation in a new South Africa? Have we seen enough of the celebration of oppression and deficiency which dominate our fixations? Will dwelling on the failures of the system be adequate to move towards new directions? One is permitted to question whether a focus on success could elevate us out of the morass of deficiency, failure or toxicity? What are complimentary spaces within which we can activate an alternative society, an alternative quality education system? I wonder whether this is quest for a dignified pedagogy which will

challenge those who wallow in their complaints of systemic failure of education. Can we move away from a ‘pedagogy of disillusion’ to ‘pedagogy of hope, possibility, creativity, meaningfulness’? The many papers activated in this conference aim to share with you the possibilities and limitations for such opportunities.

For example, some of the papers in this conference ask the following questions:

- Are there alternative models of delivery, modes of recognition of self and others, recognition of the small glimmers of possibilities?
- How do we work beyond romantic protection of our small enclaves of excellence? How do we expand to become more than simply the consequences of the past? Are we slaves to our biographical (racialised) (contextualised) (essentialised) histories?

The papers in this conference should be exploring some of the major international challenges of alternative forms of education delivery using new technologies (for example: Massive Online Open Communication-MOOC's) as networks of teaching and learning which constitute a major possibility for thinking anew the classroom as a learning/teaching space. Can these new technologies usher in new possibilities or will they further divide the haves and the have-nots? Are these new technologies indeed new forms of equitable access to education?

What possibilities can “flipping our classroom” pedagogy bring (Tucker, 2012)? Can the classroom/lecture halls become spaces for consolidating and negotiating learning that happens outside of the classroom, in the home, through the media and the internet/electronic highways? Some may argue that the essence of education has always been on mediating the “outside world” with the “world of school”? So what is new? How do we move the central focus of the debate around pedagogy not to be about *teacher-* or *learner-centered* interaction, but instead on creating opportunities for *learning-centred* engagement?

SAERA 2014: A feast of inputs

This SAERA 2014 conference offers a range of opportunities in activating an extension of ourselves. These include challenges from the keynote speakers such as Prof. Elizabeth Henning (Centre for Education Practice Research, University of Johannesburg) who asks ‘whereto with the science and the social justice of child assessment in South African schools?’ In this presentation we will engage with the effects of assessment regimes within the new performativity cultures characterising our ‘modern education terrain’. Our visitor from the World Education Research Association, Dr. Felice Levine (President-elect of the World Education Research Association (WERA) poses for us as South Africans questions on ‘the international footprint of Education Research – A 21st Century Work in Progress’. The future links between SAERA and WERA are part of this discussion. Our plenary panel members (Day Three) pose their interpretations of critical issues in South African education research: searching for a relationship between educational research and sustainable learning environment (Prof. Sechaba Mahlomaholo (UFS); for systemic evidence in the choices for our South African classrooms (Prof. Servaas van den Berg [SU]). We are further challenged that boundaries of education research should not be confined within the classrooms of school (general or further education). Instead, we should look towards the relationship between post-school and the Labour Market (Prof. Peliwe Lolwana: Director of the Centre for Research in Education and Labour Markets (REAL). The shape, form and direction of post-school education and new planned legislation are repeated mantras across some papers of this conference.

Other highlights of the conference include +/-175 papers to be presented, the launch of the conference proceedings (OUP), 4 book launches and a pre-conference training for postgraduate supervisors and students. The conference is an opportunity to generate new forms of engagement in educational conferences such as the commencement of ‘Conversation Circles’. Another innovation is the presentation of Photographic/Artistic Exhibits (alongside poster presentations) as a representational form of delivery at a conference. The conference will also be an opportunity to start dialogue about the formation of Special Interest Groups. We will be engaging in an opportunity to question what implications there are for exploring the Mandela Legacy in our educational research. There are approximately 5 editors of educational journals present in the conference and there will be an

opportunity for you to meet them. All these innovations are listed in detail in the Programme and Abstract booklet.

The closing Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Kenton conference will occur during the course of this conference; the second AGM meeting of the new SAERA organisation will also take place. We have created opportunities for various associations/organisations to set up bilateral discussions with the new SAERA organisation, the world body (WERA) representatives about the current and future identity of their present organisations. There will be opportunities for social activities: browsing in bookstores, cocktail evenings, a conference dinner and closing with a bus tour of Durban, its cultural heritages and spaces. These are all opportunities for imagining ourselves anew – a look into the future.

RE-Search Association

So what are some of the questions which are an emergent new research association could be asking? I list my personal preferences which, I am sure, resonate with many others:

- What are some of the stumbling blocks to the realisation of the goals of educational research?
- If we argue that the trajectory to new forms of education research is NOT necessarily about the lack of finances to do the research, what is driving the nature, shape, form, type of education research in SA currently:
 - increasing commodification of the research agenda process?
 - increasing push to deliver simultaneously training, support, development, education, critique and research ('work intensification') within Schools, Faculties of Education or organisations of education research inside, alongside or outside governmental structures?
 - fundamental shifts to manage the university/ research systems to be 'business orientated' producers of research?

Increasingly reports of the dissatisfaction of new performativity identities being foisted onto the notion ('identity') of the university as a system dominates the critique of education research. We seem to be ushering new fashionable fads to provide semblances of 'better quality education' whilst not deeply attending to matters of what are the essences of relevant, adequate and meaningful teaching and learning. Some would argue that the very identities of institutions of teaching and learning are being derailed. For example, the notion of the university as a deliberative space of 'organised anarchy' (Teferra, 2014) is being mutated to reflect corporate-like structures. Models imported from the business world are imposed on a university structure which thrives precisely because of its 'systemic chaos'. These 'traditional' models of universities are increasingly being jettisoned to make way for an insidious accountability regime which demands tangible 'return on investment' (a logic from the market) (Torres, 2011). More attention to university teachers as siloed units of productivity are the flavour of managers of higher education who have embraced the 'market' logic. This has a tendency to subvert intellectuals into disciplinary enclaves, thus potentially thwarting the possibility of blurred boundaries thinking across the disciplines (Maistry, 2014). Output rather than innovation tends to dominate in such 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1979).

Education as a social discipline

In this section I would like to emphasise Frederico Matos' (2013) commentary on the status of education research within the broader terrain of university research. He argues that we do not sufficiently acknowledge the differences between how research is produced at the level of PhDs amongst the social sciences and within the natural sciences. Given the dominance of the Natural Sciences as an income generator from outside financiers ('third stream income'), the elevation of its models is positioned as the target towards which all higher education should aspire. He presents the following table outlining the major differences between the Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. If we locate Education and Education Research within the social sciences we can see how there are some emergent threats to the future of education research when we adopt too boldly/ blindly the Natural Science paradigms.

Table 1: Differences between PhDs in social science and in the natural sciences (Matos, 2013, p.631)

	PhD in the Social Sciences	PhD in Natural Sciences
Scope of the thesis	Student responsible for whole research project	Student responsible for a part of a wider research project
Topic of the thesis	Student's own	Part of a wider research project and selected/assigned by the supervisor/principal investigator
Results	Only positive results accepted	Negative results accepted
Proximity to supervisor	Meeting by arrangement	Constant presence of supervisor
Location	Student rarely has own space provided by department/university. Many students work from home.	In the lab
Proximity to other researchers	Lonely endeavour	Close to other researchers in same lab
Funding	Student has to apply individually for funding	Attributed to student as part of the overall funding for supervisor's project

Possible threats to education research

Matos (2013) predicts what would happen if we too categorically accept the Natural Sciences models and adopt the business model within (social science) education research. We are likely to see:

- a shift in the kinds of students we (social science supervisors) select to support in PhD studies: (we would tend to choose only those we know will succeed in minimum time);
- a restriction of the choice of the topics we choose that can be completed in 'allotted time': (simple rather than complex studies will be preferred);
- the possible replication of research studies that maintain quantity outputs, offering little but an 'expansionist' contribution to the body of knowledge or the field of study: (convenient research would aim to push back boundaries only of a contextual nature. This would entail merely filling in a 'blank spot' of research within contexts not yet not

investigated. This may have the effect of fostering an importation of models which may homogenise insight in education research. This challenges the possibility for deep theoretical or conceptual explorations in research. The latter Gough calls “blind spot” research: research asking what kinds of questions we need to ask about our research agendas or the field) (Gough, 1998).

- a potential dumbing down of the PhD to generate the ‘credentialed output’ in minimum time: (fostering a product chasing mentality);

Unfortunately these choices will then become the hallmarks of what will be regarded as ‘productive academics’.

Conference as dialogue

Therefore I believe that this SAERA 2014 conference and in its future iterations are an ideal opportunity to confer, to ask the following questions:

- How do we borrow; exchange; redirect our heritages from the past education research practices?
- How are we making selections of the kinds of paradigmatic positions in our research? What types of questions will we be asking in our research agenda: expedient, convenient or troublesome questions?
- How do we borrow our models (theoretically/methodologically) in term of what is considered valuable or not for educational research here in our situated contexts?
- Whose models do we inherit? What could we discard or reformulate?
- Can we dream ourselves anew?

Closing/opening thoughts

I close with the feminist researchers' reminder: '*History is an angel being blown backwards into the future*' (Lather and Smithies, 1997, p.54).



(<http://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium/angel-in-the-wind-claude-marshall.jpg>)

Are we prepared to be blown backwards into the future? Are we making choices that will avoid being buffeted in the wind? Are we the angels of the wind?

We wish all a productive thought-provoking SAERA 2014 conference.
Welcome to Durban.

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Presidential address presented at the 2014 SAERA conference

Equity, access and quality in basic education: a review

Shireen Motala (SAERA President 2013–2014)

Introduction

The democratic government which came into being in South Africa in 1994 has shown its commitment to Education for All, by ensuring equitable and universal access to meaningful learning opportunities. There has been significant progress towards equity, equality and redress in post-apartheid South Africa, and yet a sobering reality, noted by the National Planning Commission, is that an estimated 48% of the population live on less than 2 dollars a day, and, at 0.67, the Gini coefficient is the highest in the world (National Planning Commission, 2011). In 2014, the unemployment rate was 24.3% or 34.6% discouraged 'job seekers'. Among the unemployed, long term joblessness is at 66%, indicating how exclusion from the labour market undermines skills development. Unemployment for those in the 15 to 25 age group, remains a staggering 48.8 % (Budget Review, 2015).

In recent years, key education indicators have shown that mastery of basic competencies is at a very low level, leading to much policy and research, including that of the Consortium for Research on Equity, Access and Transitions in Education (CREATE), which formulated the notion of meaningful access to schooling (Lewin and Wang, 2011). This expanded on Morrow's notion of epistemological access (2006). In response, much attention has been given to developing numeracy and literacy skills (Department of Basic Education 2011a; Department of Education, 2009) including some specific strategies focussing on specific sectors such as the Youth into Science Strategy 2006 (Arends, *et al.*, 2014). The overriding objective of all these plans has been to improve the quality of educational delivery, particularly for historically under-served groups, and to achieve steady improvements in educational outcomes that will support other areas of growth and development.

This paper critically assesses access, equity and quality as key indicators of progress towards achieving the goals of post-apartheid education reform. It argues that despite improvements in both quality and practice, and significant resource allocation, educational access in South Africa remains incomplete in terms of attendance, limited in terms of grade progression, unsatisfactory in terms of the age grade norms, poor in terms of quality and inefficient in terms of learning outcomes. Equipping educators with better skills will significantly enhance cognitive skills amongst learners. Finally a much more explicit, proactive and equity driven approach is needed, which prioritises the neediest and most marginalised, so that we have an inclusive education system, based on the principles of social justice and fairness.

The policy context

Twenty years after the demise of apartheid, labour demand continues to be greater among those who are highly educated, with the long-term unemployment rate for degree-holders at only 4.2%. This is nearly eight times lower than the mean unemployment rate for individuals with only Grade 8–11 schooling. Unemployment rates for those that have completed Grade 12 and for Grades 0 to 7 are 25.9% and 23.8% respectively. The South African labour market is systematically oversupplied with those that have relatively low levels of education. The responsiveness of the labour market to certain education levels poses a number of key issues. Firstly, unemployment with regard to those with only a high-school education is significant, as they make up most of the unemployed population. The long-term mean unemployment rate for the Grade 8 to 11 cohort is 30.9%, while those who have qualified with a matric or Grade 12 also show a significant level of unemployment at a mean of 25.9% (Bhorat, Cassim and Tsheng, 2015). There are two aspects that may explain the high levels of unemployment observed. Firstly, high-school enrolment over the past 20 years has meant that more young people are entering the labour force and that the labour market is unable to absorb the numbers. Secondly, the quality of school-leavers' education has not afforded them vast employment opportunities. In terms of schooling, research shows that poorer children enter school with a 'cognitive disadvantage', because they have not had access to the resources and stimulation that well-off children enjoy (Van der Berg, Burger, Burger, De Vos, Du Rand, Gustafsson, Shepherd, Spaull, Taylor, VanBroekhuizen and Von Fintel. 2011). South Africa has a quasi-federal system, with nine provinces. The provincial

governments have legislative responsibility for schooling. The country has a population of 47.9 million of whom 79.6% are black African. Just over 15 million children are of school going age; 12 million learners between the ages of 5 and 19, of whom 49.8% are girls, are at school. Education is compulsory from 7 to 16 or to the end of Grade 9. The schooling system is divided into the primary (Grades 1 to 7), junior secondary (Grades 8 and 9) and senior secondary (Grades 10 to 12) sectors. In 2010 there were, including 1,086 independent schools, 26,065 ordinary schools (as distinct from schools for learners with special needs) in South Africa. There were about 12 million learners in public ordinary schools, 352 000 learners in independent ordinary schools and a total of 394 000 teachers (Department of Education, 2009).

The attendance of children aged 5 increased from 40% to 62% and of children aged 6 from 70% to 84% (Government Gazette, 2010). The percentage of 7–15 year-olds attending schools improved to 98% by 2011, and participation by 16 to 18 year-olds has also increased steadily, to 85% by 2011. The government aims to achieve full participation of 5 year-olds in Grade R pre-school education by 2014. However, while preschool coverage has improved, good quality provision is uneven, with a lack of qualified teachers in grade R classes. The independent or private schooling system, which incorporates institutions charging a very wide range of fees, comprises about 2.8% of the overall schooling system. Its coverage extends to poorer learners in areas where there is insufficient state provision (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Education ministers since 1994 have contributed to education reform, each with a distinct emphasis. Minister Bhengu (1994–1998) focussed on developing frameworks to address the inequalities inherited from apartheid, at the same time creating a broad based vision for the education system. The second period, overseen by Minister Kader Asmal (1999–2004), broadened policy to include areas not previously focussed on, such as equality and social justice, and inclusive education with a specific focus on early childhood and special needs education. The third phase, under Minister Naledi Pandor (2004–2008), marked a distinct departure from previous initiatives. With questions of access on the way to solution, attention turned to quality. Continued underperformance in basic literacy and numeracy led to the Foundations of Learning campaign (2008–2011), emphasising a back to basics approach.

Since 2009, a fourth phase has been under way, with new policies emerging and significant changes in how the education system is managed on a national scale. The national Department of Education has been reorganised into two departments: The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (headed by former Gauteng Executive Council Member for Education, Angie Motshekga) with responsibility for primary and secondary education as well as early childhood development centres and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), under Blade Nzimande, which oversees technical and vocational training, adult education and tertiary education.

During this fourth phase, several trends can be identified (Sayed and Motala, 2012). These include

1. **Setting output targets:** The action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 established key output goals, supported by guidelines which advocated a more utilitarian approach to education. Ten of its output goals focussed on improving numeracy and literacy, in a clear response to poor ongoing learner performance in the Grade Three and Grade Six national assessments and in the regional SACMEQ and international TIMSS and PIRLS surveys. There is also a strong focus on regular testing, in the form of Annual National Assessments (ANAs) which test the quality of language and mathematics learning in all public and government-subsidised independent schools.
2. **Introduction of curriculum and assessment policy:** The outcomes-based education (OBE) system, introduced incrementally since the late 1990s, has come under critical scrutiny. In 2009, the outcomes-based Revised National Curriculum Statement was reviewed by a ministerial committee, and a new curriculum document, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS), came into effect in January 2011, signalling the end of a 14-year attempt to focus teaching and learning primarily around outcomes rather than processes or inputs. Teachers as agents of change: Policy has begun to give systematic attention to the notion of teachers as agents of change. On 5 April 2011 the national departments of education jointly launched the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, which aimed to improve both initial teacher education and continuing professional teacher development, with training for CAPS a specific priority. The establishment of the National Education Evaluation and

Development Unit in 2011 indicated a more dedicated focus on the monitoring and supervision of teachers.

3. **Focus on skill development:** The separation of basic education and higher education at national departmental level has led to more focussed attention to skills development as evidenced in the National Skills Development Strategy III 2011–2016 and the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training. The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were transferred by Presidential Proclamation 56 of 2009 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011) from the Department of Labour to the DHET, a move intended to improve coherence across the university and college systems (Department of Education, 2010).
4. **Establishing norms and standard for funding:** Finally, a number of amendments have been made to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF), allowing for an expansion in the number of no-fee schools to 60% of all schools and for the widening of school feeding schemes. The most recent NNSSF amendment came in 2011, allowing schools to apply for compensation for fee exemptions each year, based on a formula determined by the DBE. This is a clear pro-poor development, though even more substantial adjustments will be required if current inequities are to be fully addressed. Currently close to 20,000 schools benefit from the no-fee policy. Another important pro-poor initiative is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which by 2012 provided a total of 8,756,893 learners in 20,905 primary and secondary schools with a funded lunch (Statistics SA, 2013).

In 2015, the proposed allocation to basic education will reach R650 billion, and continue to grow at an annual average of 6.3% .From a high point of 6.8% of GDP in 1998, education spending now comprises 5.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 17% of consolidated government expenditure, making education the largest category of government disbursement. In comparison to other developing countries, education spending in South Africa as a proportion of GDP is high although it is less than the UNESCO benchmark of 6%. It has been noted that these relatively high levels mainly reflect expenditure on educator salaries with spending on other inputs being below international norms (Department of Basic Education, 2010; Department of Basic Education, 2012). In 2015, 17% of the total expenditure was in educator salaries.

There have been improvements in funding equity between provinces and between schools as subventions were impacted by pro-poor funding norms. However questions continue about the impact of this funding shift, with some arguing that the impact has been less marked than expected in terms of real education opportunities and education quality. In particular the quintile system has come under scrutiny, with evidence that the ranking system is not an adequate measure of the socio-economic status of learners in schools, often disadvantaging the funding base of schools in which there are a larger proportion of poor learners (Wildeman, 2008, Sayed and Motala, 2012). Kanjee and Chudgar (2009), using empirical evidence, show that the quintile system is not an effective benchmarking measure, and that schools in the middle quintiles (Q3 and Q4), are often worse off than quintile 1 schools.

South Africa's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals is premised on the right to basic education enshrined in its Constitution (RSA 1996: Section 29(1)). Unlike a number of other developing countries, in South Africa there is near universal access to formal public schooling to the end of the compulsory phase (Perry and Arends, 2003; Statistics SA, 2006; Chisholm 2011). Estimates of a gross enrolment ratio of 99% in primary grades and 87% in secondary grades place South Africa above what are seen to be feasible targets for middle-income countries (Lewin and Wang, 2011). However, while South Africans enjoy substantial physical and structural access to schooling, this does not guarantee that learners have equal experience of or access to quality education. The specific policy challenge for meaningful access in South Africa is less one of enrolment in formal public schooling and more one of retention, attendance, achievement and completion on schedule for age, all of which contribute to quality outcomes.

How much do children learn?

In the Department of Education's systemic evaluation of Grade 6 in 2005, learners obtained a national mean score of 38% in Language, 27% in Mathematics, and 41% in Natural Science (Department of Education, 2008). Eight years later, the results of the 2013 Annual National Assessments show little improvement. In the latest assessment of almost 6 million primary school learners, Grade 3 learners achieved an average of only 35% for literacy and 28% for numeracy, while Grade 6 learners managed 28% for languages and 30% for mathematics (Department of Basic Education, 2013,). International

tests such as Monitoring, Learning and Achievement (MLA) administered to Grade 4 in 1999, the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SAQMEC) written by Grade 6 learners in 2005, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) administered to Grade 8 learners in 2003 and 2009, and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) conducted with Grade 5 learners in 2006, suggest that South African schools are among the worst performers in Mathematics and Literacy in comparison to their southern and eastern African counterparts (Bloch, 2009). In the 2011 PIRLS test, 43% of South African learners were not able to reach the low international benchmark (Howie, *et al.*, 2012). SAQMEC III (2011) focussed on education inequality, and noted that the poorest 20% of learners in South Africa perform far worse than their peers in other African countries. In the fifteen countries in the region, the poorest learners in South Africa are at 12th place for reading, and 14th for reading.

More recent research which reviews 20 years of TIMMs data, suggests that although South African learners were acquiring mathematics and science knowledge, they were doing so at a slower pace than learners in other countries. Therefore, children were learning, but the amount that they were learning in a given year was far below international norms. Most striking though, was that three quarters of South African learners had not acquired the minimum set of mathematical or science skills by Grade 9. A problem that persists in South Africa, and is specifically relevant to mathematics and science, is that emphasis needs to be placed on the fundamentals of instruction in the earlier grades, to reduce the large numbers of learners who lack the basic knowledge of mathematics and science on Grades 8 and 9. As the authors of the review note “it is worrying that these learners are stuck at the shallow end of skills acquisition” (Reddy, *et al.*, 2015). Earlier research has also noted the absence of prerequisite skills continues to be one of the main barriers to learner achievement.

The Diagnostic Report (National Planning Commission, 2011) notes that apart from a small minority of learners who attend former-white schools and a small minority of schools performing well in largely black areas, the quality of public education remains poor. Learners in historically white schools perform better, and their scores improve with successive years of schooling. In contrast, in the majority of schools with black learners, learner scores start lower, and show little improvement between grades 3 and 5. Where there has been some improvement as measured by the pass rate – 70% – of those who

sat the 2011 matriculation examination, only 23% achieved a university entrance pass (Department of Basic Education in National Planning Commission, 2011).

In the matric class of 2013, there were 562 112 full-time candidates, of whom 439 779 passed, yielding a matric pass rate of 78.2%. But how many pupils were there to begin with? Spaul (2011) looking at the 2013 grade 12 cohort, notes that there were 1,111,858 pupils in grade two (in 2003), 1,094,189 in grade 10 (in 2011) – but only 562 112 in grade 12 (in 2013). This suggests that 549 746 , dropped out of the school system, along the way.

Inequalities in learner achievement

Disaggregated results of 2005 assessment varied markedly between provinces and among quintiles. Across grades 1 to 6, learners in quintile five schools received scores 10–15% higher than their counterparts in other quintiles. Van der Berg (2010) has argued that inequalities in schooling outcomes are manifest in subsequent incomes, perpetuating current patterns of inequality. While poverty is often related to education outcomes, and achievement is strongly correlated with learner socio-economic status, recent research indicates that the effectiveness of the schools in which the learners are located is an important factor (Spaul, 2011). Other research also shows that high performing schools can contribute significantly to learning opportunities for poor learners. Taylor and Yu (2009), controlling for learner and school socio-economic status, demonstrate that African language learners in historically white schools out-perform those in historically black schools.

The achievement of equity has to be qualified since there are limits to how far education expenditure can be redistributive, since teacher salaries are based on qualifications and experience, and better qualified and more experienced teachers tend to be present in the better off schools. Sayed and Ahmed (2011) suggest that while for the state, equity/quality is conceptualised in a simple input-output model, it is in reality far from clear how these processes converge and diverge at the policy level and whether both are being addressed. The failure to come to a clear conclusion on the development of infrastructure and on minimum norms and standards for schools illustrates that much greater investment is required if the state's equity interventions are to be meaningful. Moreover, social equity and education equity need to be

addressed simultaneously, so that the low quality of education offered in poor communities does not continue to perpetuate their exclusion. Important progress is being made through the delivery of social grants (Bhorat and Cassim, 2013), which address poverty and inequality: Patel (2013) argues that there are real long term benefits to this social investment. There should be an attempt to treat educational and social provision as an integrated platform for an assault on poverty and underdevelopment.

Recent research (Reddy, *et al.*, 2015) shows that better off learners an advantage over children who were poor, although results for quintiles 1 to 4 were very similar. This pattern is in line with earlier studies of South African education conducted for different phases of the schooling system (Van der Berg 2005, 2008). In contrast, quintile 5 schools achieved results that were comparable to results for independent schools. Resonating with earlier research (Motala and Dieltiens, 2011), age and quintile rankings had different results depending on socio-economic status. Children from more affluent schools and independent schools were younger than children from poor schooling environments. This age differential seems to point to higher levels of grade repetition among learners attending resource-poor schools.

Curriculum delivery and reform

Curriculum 2005, which fundamentally shifted the content and pedagogy of the old syllabus-based system and introduced outcomes-based education, required substantial adaptation by role players, not least by the government officials implementing it and the teachers teaching it. However, its complex terminology, its lack of alignment with the orientation of learners and skills of teachers and its poor implementation support required a decade of revision and gradual introduction into all phases of schooling. The new Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) give more emphasis to basic skills, content knowledge and grade progression, and combine a learner-centred curriculum requiring critical thought and emphasising democratic values with an appreciation of the importance of content and support for teachers (Motala and Dieltiens 2011). It also aims to reduce the administrative load on teachers, and to provide guidance and consistency of approach for teachers.

The NEEDU report (2013) notes that the problems of absenteeism, late coming and disruption to the timetable still persist, and that the role of school

leadership is critical for efficient time management and supporting a culture of teaching and learning. There has also been a more distinct focus on assessment in Curriculum 2005. Quality assurance, certification and exit points, and control over norms and standards for curriculum and assessment, were important measures that complemented curriculum changes. Chisholm and Chilisa (2012) note that while Botswana and South Africa both adopted outcomes based curricula, they differ considerably in the content and results of the change. The biggest contrast between the two systems was that while in the curriculum model in Botswana learning and assessment were heavily aligned, in South Africa there was great emphasis on various forms of continuous assessment to support a relatively underspecified curriculum. Since 2008, the South African government has focussed more systematically on national tests, aligning curriculum and assessment more carefully.

Recent research has focussed more sharply on classroom practice. In the CREATE numeracy tests, learners performed way below the levels expected of them (Pereira, 2010). Prior learning for the majority of learners was poor, i.e. they were not on the expected level for their grade, and specific numeracy outcomes which required deeper analytical skills were poor. There are serious gaps in the pedagogical content knowledge related to many learning areas including Mathematics in primary schools. Attention has increasingly turned to teacher skills and pedagogy. The content knowledge of teachers, in particular in mathematics and English, tested in SAQMEQ111 showed low levels of achievement particularly in more complex topics in mathematics which had higher cognitive demands (Taylor, 2011). Chisholm and Carnoy (2012) identify a complex set of interrelated variables related to a teacher's knowledge and ability to teach as contributing to differences in learner performance across Botswana and South Africa.

Patterns of progression and school delays

Most learners in South Africa enrol in and complete primary education, despite numerous barriers to success, and even though substantial early childhood education and pre-schooling provision remain to be achieved. A negligible percentage of children of school-going age have never been to school, approximately 4% of learners drop out before completing primary school (Grade 7), and 92% of learners finish basic education (Grade 9) (Department of Education, 2008). Girls also persist longer through the higher

grades, unlike in a number of other developing countries. However, net enrolment rates drop significantly after Grade 3, suggesting that many learners fall behind age-grade norms. In addition significant numbers of children take more than nine years to complete Grade 9 (Deacon and Dieltiens 2007). Distinctive features of the South African context are ‘school delays’ (Hallman and Grant, 2004), slow progression (Anderson, 2005) and differential and inequitable access to public schooling (Motala 2006). What is clear is that patterns of progression are an increasingly important predictor of learning outcomes.

As in a number of other developing countries, massification of education has not led to an improvement in education quality. While it is true that fiscal resource inputs are not the only means to achieve the desired educational outcomes, they do, however, have an effect on learner performance. Fiscal resources do not necessarily translate into scarce real resources (qualified teachers and school management) required to improve school performance, and even where resources are available, their effective utilisation is not guaranteed. Nonetheless, according to Van der Berg (2007), equity of educational outcomes requires both well-targeted fiscal expenditure and efficient schools.

The 2011 Carnoy Chisholm study showed that teachers in the North West taught only 52 of the 140 daily lessons scheduled for the year (40%) compared with 78 in Botswana (60%). Given that unwarranted teacher absenteeism in South Africa is unacceptably high (particularly in certain parts of the school system) the department should be encouraged to clamp down on negligence.

An enabling infrastructure

Home support for learning reflects the racially divided and class stratified nature of South African society, with poorer parents lacking the time and cultural capital to support their children’s education adequately and middle class parents more likely to encourage learning and to send their children to higher performing schools. And yet school-going is highly valued by parents, to the extent of making the best of what one has, or keeping one’s child in a school one does not like but which is better than no school at all (Luxomo and Motala, 2012).

Poor children have limited access to reading material in their homes. Usually, their parents have lower levels of education and they often live in communities that lack public libraries or learning centres. Research suggests that children from impoverished homes in South Africa begin school at a distinct disadvantage, perform systematically worse at school and have fewer career opportunities beyond school (Branson and Zuze, 2012). Early patterns of disadvantage may remain if not addressed appropriately.

One potential area of improvement is in the school infrastructure. Schools in South Africa vary with respect to level of infrastructure and resources. There are often vast differences between communities where schools are situated. Many schools are located in areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment and have to contend with a lack of basic resources. Although the presence of modern facilities cannot guarantee that children will learn better, it is absolutely critical that basic services are in place. Some South African schools are already equipped with modern facilities but many school facilities remain inadequate. According to the National Education Infrastructure Management Systems Report (Department of Basic Education, 2011b), nearly 80% of schools are without library or computer facilities and nearly 15% do not have access to electricity.

Violence is a widespread phenomenon across South Africa and can pose a major challenge to the physical and emotional development of children (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). Exposure to violence is commonplace for a large number of South African schools, and school safety, particularly for girl learners is receiving much attention.

Teachers

Teacher and learner attendance have been identified as important factors for academic success (Gottfried, 2009; Miller, *et al.*, 2014). Learners with good attendance records achieve better results and learner attendance has even been used to represent the quality of the school (Coutts, 1998). While emphasis on teacher content knowledge is often a key component in international education studies, less attention is given to the way teachers view their profession and how they perceive their competence. And yet increased commitment levels among teachers are strongly linked to low teacher turnover and positive attitudes among learners (Day, *et al.*, 2005). Such factors are also

directly related to how committed teachers are to remaining in a profession that is already experiencing critical shortages (Arends and Phurutse, 2009).

Sayed (2015) notes that the most single important instrument or tool or resource any country has to effect equity is teachers and yet it can be an important neglected aspect of policy. The international experience is relevant here, suggesting that in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, students from disadvantaged backgrounds learn at the same rate as those from advantaged backgrounds (Hamre and Pianta, 2005). Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges (2004) also show that teacher effects are higher in low socio-economic status (SES) schools than in high SES schools and that in low SES schools it matters more that teachers are effective than in high SES schools. A meta-analysis of research conducted from 1990 to 2010 on the school-level factors influencing student outcomes in developing countries concluded that more knowledgeable teachers, teachers who are less likely to be absent, and teachers who assign homework, are among some of the few school variables with a consistently positive relationship to student outcomes (Glewwe, *et al.* 2011).

Concluding comments

This address shows that a number of strategies have been put in place to address the many intractable problems in education reform and the delivery of quality education. As always, policy is one thing: implementation another, and it is apparent that necessary conditions of the delivery of quality education are adequate finance and human resources, involvement and a sense of ownership by role-players, regular monitoring and evaluation and sustained effort. At school level, institutional functionality, a focus on instructional leadership, a clear-sighted emphasis on reading, writing and professional development and professionalising the divisions of the civil service dealing with education are critical to success. Above all, it is essential to embed the notion of education as a public good, and foreground the view that equality and social justice must drive educational reform. Widespread community mobilisation is required to ensure that the undoubted gains in terms of education access and participation in schooling become the foundation for meaningful learning which offer real life chances for our young people in further and higher education and in the labour market.

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What is SAERA?

The South African Education Research Association (SAERA) was established at a launch conference at Bela Bela in the Limpopo Province at the end of January 2013. SAERA's launch represents a historic attempt to bring together education academics and researchers from all over South Africa into a unified educational research organisation. SAERA's main aim is to professionalise, cohere and improve educational research and academic work in South Africa. SAERA's establishment follows three years of extensive consultation between a broad range of educational academic organisations with the intent of bringing together academics from different organisations, with their roots in the racialised academic traditions of the pre-democracy period.

The establishment of SAERA provides an opportunity for an umbrella body to bring together different research traditions in the country.

SAERA has the following aims:

- To promote research and academic collaboration, link research policy, theory and practice, encourage the promotion of research quality, and help develop the next generation of researchers.
- To establish a cohesive, coherent and inclusive education academic and research identity. The aim is to establish vigorous and responsive epistemic communities and provide us with a vehicle to continue vigorous intellectual and research collaboration.
- To promote interaction with national and provincial education departments, research organisations such as policy units and the National Research Foundation.
- To establish links with international educational research organisations and similar organisations in Southern Africa and the African continent.

SAERA is open to all scholars of education. Its activities will include an annual conference, establishing special interest groups (SIGS) in education which focus on capacity development, and providing publishing opportunities through the *Journal of Education*.

For more information and to become a member, go to www.saera.co.za

Journal of Education

Periodical of the
South African Education Research Association

School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal

The *Journal of Education* is an interdisciplinary publication of original research and writing on education. The Journal aims to provide a forum for the scholarly understanding of the field of education. A general focus of the journal is on curriculum. Curriculum is understood in a wide and interdisciplinary sense, encompassing curriculum theory, history, policy and development at all levels of the education system (e.g. schooling, adult education and training, higher education). Contributions that span the divide between theory and practice are particularly welcome. Although principally concerned with the social sciences, the journal encourages contributions from a wider field.

While it is intended that the journal will remain academic in nature, the readers are considered to be educational generalists and articles which are of interest to such readers will receive preference. Potential contributors are asked to ensure that submissions conform to the guidelines outlined at the back of the journal.

The *Journal of Education* is intended to serve as a resource for scholars of education, and such readers are free to make a limited number of copies of articles for non-profit research and teaching purposes. In cases where multiple copies are required for teaching purposes, we trust that South African institutions affiliated to the Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation (Pty) Limited (DALRO) will follow normal procedures with respect to the reproduction of publications.

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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 fee of R3 000 per article 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.

Copyright resides with the publishers of the journal.

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Educators or publishers outside South Africa wishing to reproduce articles in publications or compilations of readings should contact the Editor.

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 SAERA Special Edition).

Most journals now have a per article 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 R3 000 per article 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 2012 and 2013 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.