

Transformation through the Curriculum: Engaging a Process of Unlearning in Economics Education Pedagogy

Suriamurthee Moonsamy Maistry

Abstract

Debates on transformation in higher education in South Africa have been largely confined to how transformation and social cohesion play themselves out at an institutional level. Much energy has been expended on complex and elaborate plans for transformation, including enrolment and employment equity targets and other strategic interventions. However, there is a dearth of understanding on how tensions around issues of transformation and social cohesion manifest and become contested at the proverbial ‘chalkface’, that is, in our lecture halls. While some academics propose an approach to curriculum development and transformation that endeavours not to ‘contaminate’ either the curriculum or the purity of disciplinary knowledge, others actively embrace and engage the curriculum as a means to facilitate processes that open up spaces for deliberation on issues of transformation. This article reflects on how transformation elicits debate and contestation in a teacher education pedagogy course that is informed by the principles of critical curriculum theory. Using self-study methodology, discourses of transformation are considered at the classroom level. The article argues that while it is possible to scaffold a process of unlearning and relearning, several tensions are likely to emerge which the university pedagogue has to manage.

Keywords: curriculum transformation, economic education, pedagogy, teacher education

Introduction and Background

The 2008 Ministerial Committee report on Transformation, Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education presents a disconcerting finding, that higher education institutions in South Africa engage with transformation in various ways, with some opting for technical compliance as manifested in carefully scripted policy documents (Oloyede 2009). However, as Esakov (2009) notes, the political will to follow through with substantive transformation initiatives appears to be constrained by significant inertia on the part of various actors. There are several reasons for this, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to engage with them, except to note that the transformation process is likely to be slow, painful and fraught with challenges.

Higher education institutions may be able to produce statistics and data on student enrolment patterns that reflect the changing demographic profile of the student body. However, these somewhat sterile quantitative data are hugely inadequate to help develop a rich qualitative understanding of who our students are, and how they are likely to experience the academic programme. While programme co-ordinators develop and implement curricula, at times such efforts happen in a vacuum. In this respect, they occur devoid of an overt and sophisticated understanding of the academic learning model being endorsed, and more importantly, the nature of the students likely to receive the curricula. This inability to understand students in rich, qualitative ways is arguably the most serious impediment to substantive and meaningful transformation of our academic practice as well as student experience of our programmes.

This paper starts from the premise that students' experiences – whether positive or negative in higher education – is a direct function of the academic practice that they encounter. While there may be slight variations in academic practice across programmes, in the main the academic practice of an institution is determined by the nature of the prevailing academic learning environment.

There is a need for a meta-cognitive reflection and critical introspection of the model at work. What makes this kind of critical reflection particularly difficult is that the model is elusive and invisible, yet both pervasive and deeply entrenched. Unless an academic institution can unpack this model and reflect on how it determines the prevailing practice

they will fail to address – in any comprehensive manner – the pressing issue of transformation as it relates to academic practice.

To enable an institution to understand the nature of the model at play, reference will be made to the Cross *et al.*'s (2000) work at a large urban university in Gauteng, South Africa. The authors argue that the academic culture of the university is foreign to students, especially those from poor and working class backgrounds. It is far removed from their lived experience. More importantly, the demands and expectations with regard to teaching and learning present immense, and sometimes insurmountable, challenges. These students do not have the requisite social and cultural capital to meet the academic requirements of university. There is a fundamental disjuncture between the skills and competence that poor and working class students leave high school with, and the requirements of the higher education institution, whose model is predominantly performance-driven. Drawing on Bernstein's work, Cross *et al.* (2009: 33-34), describe a performance-driven learning environment as one that is characterised by the 'specialization of knowledge, competitive academic environment, and modes of transmission and evaluation that give primacy to individual academic achievement or success ... with limited peer collaboration or faculty support'. The major resource for success is students' accumulated social and cultural capital, their ability to work independently and their individual autonomy. In the process, students have to become self-reliant, resourceful and motivated.

From the perspective of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), in the decade leading up to the dawn of the democratic era in South Africa, the two merging institutions that comprise UKZN began to enrol larger numbers of African students. Following the merger, there is now a critical mass of so-called 'non-traditional' students, comprising mainly students of indigenous African origin, many of whom (like some Indian and Coloured students) are from poor families. Most of the African students have mother tongues that are not English, the language of instruction.

Given this shift in the student profile and the firmly entrenched performance-based model at play at UKZN, we need to interrogate the extent to which the university as an institution has responded to this changed profile of its student body. To what extent has the university transformed its academic practice, or has it been business as usual? There is a need to move beyond the brand of transformation that operates at the level of rhetoric and political

compliance, contained in carefully scripted policy. An important starting-point for this to happen is to reflect on the changed student profile of the university together with the pedagogical models in operation.

Clearly, the current hegemonic model has distinct power implications: as it exists, the model serves a particular ‘calibre’ of student, and sidelines the less able students, who end up struggling to survive or complete their degrees. The following questions beg to be addressed: how does UKZN disrupt, dislodge, deconstruct and reform what has been established as an unflinching canon, and how does the institution begin to shape a model that is responsive to the needs of the majority of students? An additional question is how to ensure the curriculum transformation enterprise takes root and gains momentum?

In this paper I reflect on my experience as a higher education pedagogue who has worked in teacher education for just over a decade. In particular, I present narrative accounts of the strategic pedagogical moves I have made, and reflect on the tensions that emerge. For every strategic choice one makes as a pedagogue, there are always consequences, both positive and negative. As a teacher education specialist working in the field of Business Education (Economics, Accounting and Business Studies), I draw on political economy as a philosophical critical pedagogy principle in the presentation and analysis of my practice.

Towards ‘Authentic’ Curriculum Transformation in Higher Education

Transformation as a conceptual construct has its roots in critical theory, as informed by the work of Paulo Freire and earlier classical theorists such as Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. My engagement with the discourse of transformation is informed by critical theory and critical pedagogy. It could be argued that transformation can only be authentic if the advocated change starts from the fundamental premise that there are inherent issues of power at play in the various facets of society. Curriculum transformation would then refer to fundamental changes to the core of the academic offerings of the institution, namely, profound epistemological, ontological and methodological moves that orientate towards a transformation agenda. These moves ensure change to the very nature of programme offerings.

Fundamental curriculum transformation requires both political will and academic stamina to see the process through its multiple phases. In particular, transformation as it relates to curriculum is complex, especially at higher education institutions whose constituencies carry substantially different and contested historical knowledge. This kind of paradigmatic shift is likely to be slow, painful and often hotly contested. As Thomas Kuhn reminds us, the paradox with a paradigm shift is that it is not a neat, linear movement from one curriculum space to another. Rather, it is fraught with tensions, conflicts and contradictions that are indeed necessary for change to occur. In the complex bureaucracies that exist in higher education institutions, making changes to the fundamental core of programmes require endorsement at various structural levels, which is necessarily a lengthy process. Proposed changes have to be vetted for quality and academic integrity at several academic quality assurance structures within the institution, and ultimately by the external, state-mandated quality assurance watchdog institutions.

The curriculum could be viewed as a site or vehicle for transformation. The nature of this kind of transformation is qualitatively different, and often not a mandated or contrived imposition by external pressure groups such as the state. This kind of work is often far-reaching and driven by intrinsic desires for social justice. It may include pedagogical processes and content selections that actively advance a transformation agenda. Such efforts are usually associated with critical theory and critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy questions assumptions, reveals power relations, acknowledges the authority of experience in developing ideas, and promotes the ideal of a society based on justice (Reynolds & Trehan 2001). A critical perspective entails not only a focus on course content, but also on procedures, assessment and teaching methods that value experiential and participative approaches which can engender a culture of consensus. In the discussion below I reflect on my experiences in the Business Education courses of a teacher education programme.

A Brief Note on Methodological Orientation

Educators' attempts to research their practice have been an ongoing enterprise that has taken on various guises. Whatever the nature of the initiative, the goal is always directed at the improvement of teaching and

learning. While each of the various approaches has its merits, they also present challenges in their implementation. In recent years I have been drawn to ‘self-study’ as a strategy for researching my practice (Kosnick, Freese, Samaras & Beck 2006; LaBoskey 2004; Lassonde, Galman & Kosnick 2009). I concede that in my initial years as a teacher educator the issue of problematising my own practice was not high on my list of priorities; neither did I value the methods that were available at the time (Cochran-Smith 2001). However, the pressure to develop and maintain a teaching portfolio as a living document, and more importantly, the need for me to model the expectations I set for my students, resulted in a search for an approach that would allow me reflexivity in researching my practice.

To this end, self-study as a developing and emerging field of educational research has particular appeal. The explicit focus of this genre of educational research is on the self, that is, problematising the self in practice by reflecting on experiences ‘with the goal of reframing ... beliefs and/or practice’ (Lassonde, Galman & Kosnik 2009:5). Self-study starts from the fundamental post-modern assumption that the self is implicated and complexly connected to the research process and educational practice. The self-study approach allows for multiple examinations of the ‘self in teaching’, ‘the self as teacher’ and ‘the self as researcher of my teaching’ (5).

Feldman (2009) draws attention to the very nature of an emerging field of research as necessarily implying an emerging set of theoretical constructs that may be subject to varying interpretations. Of importance for me as teacher educator is that self-study ‘makes the experience of the teacher educators a resource for research’, allowing me to use experience as data for research (37). To this end, I maintain a reflective journal in which I document my experiences with my pedagogy classes. These are not random entries, but capture critical incidents and issues in my teaching and learning experiences with my students. In the discussion that follows I reflect on my experiences as I engage with my ongoing transformation enterprise.

Reflections on Engaging a Critical Gaze in Business Education Pedagogy

I have been involved in teacher education for just over a decade, working in the broad field of business education. Essentially this entails working with

both pre-service and in-service teachers of Economics, Accounting and Business Studies. This paper draws on my experiences of teaching pedagogy courses across these disciplines, through reflection on my engagement with students on the fundamental tensions within the disciplines themselves, as well as pedagogical issues related to the teaching of business education content knowledge.

As a self-study scholar, I start from the premise that the self is complicit in educational practice; it is not possible to separate the self from one's practice. As such, the nature of (my) self, value system, aspirations, memory and theoretical orientation infuse and permeate every aspect of my practice. Having been schooled in resistance politics as a youth activist and a teacher activist, issues of equity, redress and transformation are central to the work I now do as a teacher educator. While I draw my inspiration from critical pedagogy, in particular the work of Giroux (2004), Kellner (2003) and McLaren (2003), I am also mindful of the critique of critical pedagogy as an educational project (Ellsworth 1994; Lather 1998). However, I do find myself in a somewhat tenuous position, namely, helping my students acquire and develop pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 1986) in disciplines whose genesis and fundamental epistemologies, ontology and methodologies are firmly anchored in market discourses (Maistry 2010).

In recent years the broad field of business education has been subject to interrogation and critique. Critical accounting education is beginning to emerge as an important field of scholarship (Boyce 2004; Broadbent 2002; Ferguson, Collison, Power & Stevenson 2009; McPhail 2004). Similarly, the hegemonic influence of neo-classical economics on the broad field of economics has also been aggressively contested (Bourdieu 1986; Fine & Milonakis 2009; Heilbroner 2003; Leander 2001; Lebaron 2003; Milonakis & Fine 2009; Sen 1999; 2005; Stilwell 2003).

The neutrality of entrepreneurship education and the role of the corporate sector around the issue of corporate social responsibility is beginning to gain some currency, although at a rather a slow pace in the South African context. The extent to which university students see corporate social responsibility as an aspect of the work of corporate enterprises is a matter that has not been sufficiently explored in South African educational research (Maistry & Ramdhani 2009). These tensions within the disciplines provide a challenging yet opportune space to creatively develop a pedagogy

curriculum in the business education courses I teach.

The key issue in these pedagogy courses is the disruption of the so-called received disciplinary knowledge (Jansen 2009) that students have acquired. This is a particularly painful process for students, especially when they are required to question the very foundations of the disciplines they have mastered, and made their own. In my Economics Education pedagogy classes, students are challenged to review and revisit the canonical positions articulated and espoused by the disciplines of Economics, Accounting and Business Studies. In particular, students engage in the fundamental neo-classical assumptions of the market, namely rationality, individualism and private property rights. Here lies the opportunity to bring to the fore the institutionalised assumptions about the world, and the economic world in particular. In this respect, the work of Harvey (2007), which analyses how neoclassical economics and neo-liberalism have informed and shaped the world economy, has particular currency and power in the Economics Education pedagogy classes. Of particular significance and evidence of neo-liberal ideological failings has been the recent global financial crisis that rocked the economic world. Neo-liberal ideals of individual entrepreneurial freedoms and rampant fictitious capital accumulation have resulted in arguably the most spectacular stock market and bank collapses in the modern era. So much so that Iceland and Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain face the prospect of bankruptcy should they not be bailed out by their more powerful allies in the European Union.

This crisis could have a devastating effect on the developing world. There is little contention that it is the poor and working classes who bear the brunt of this kind of economic calamity; the capitalist classes always find ways of reasserting their powerful economic positions. This is an overriding signal of the need for alternative approaches to economic education.

As a teacher education pedagogue, I start from the premise that teachers have a powerful role to play in the process of societal transformation. In the South African context this transformation has to be more than 'change for the sake of change'. It has to be a fundamental and nuanced kind of transformation capable of making a substantive material difference to the poor and marginalised people of our country. My experiences of working with novice student teachers reveals that they believe that they are handicapped and constrained by various mitigating contexts,

which bar them from making a significant contribution to societal change. The focus of my critical Economics Education project involves a complex process of debunking and demystifying the myth that student teachers lack the necessary capacities and potentials.

It is not unusual for student teachers to construct deficit identities of themselves, given that South Africa's main school and university education systems have constructed students as recipients of knowledge rather than co-constructors and critics of received knowledge. Disciplinary knowledge, as suggested above, especially in business education (Economics, Accounting and Business Studies), is presented as unquestioned doctrine by school teachers and university academics. So a typical Economics or Accounting graduate who signs up for a teacher education programme (a Postgraduate Certificate in Education in the case of South Africa) would have mastered an undergraduate programme and been schooled by disciples of the disciplines they selected. The issue of concern is the extent to which the business education disciplines have been presented as contested terrains.

My own experience as an undergraduate and postgraduate student, and the experiences that student teachers that I have worked with for the past 12 years, indicate in no uncertain terms that the canonical position of neo-classical economics continues to hold firm. If anything, the fundamental assumptions of the market as espoused by neo-classical economics and neo-liberalism are pervasive. Its 'naturalness' appears to blind both academics and teachers to the notion of any kind of disciplinary contestation. In short, disciplinary knowledge, as espoused and taught by schools and university academics, remains uncontested received knowledge.

The epistemological, ontological and methodological blueprints of such students have been cast in certain ways. In the first few years of my career as a teacher educator, I saw my role as primarily that of creating opportunities in the pedagogy curriculum for students to develop pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 1986) in their chosen business education subject specialisations. This knowledge had discomfiting neutrality to it. In recent years my attempts to review, reflect on and refine the work I do have been informed by my own research and engagement with critical theory and critical pedagogy (Giroux 2004; McLaren 2003). I have come to the realisation that a narrow focus on pedagogical content knowledge as it relates to the business education disciplines was insufficient and limiting. It was

clearly inadequate to address issues of poverty, inequality and redress that are germane to a South African context.

Business education teachers have to do more than reproduce the content of the disciplines they chose to teach. They need to be exposed to a pedagogy curriculum that will enable them to use the disciplines they teach as vehicles for developing critical citizenship (Giroux 2004). This shift in the focus and purpose of the business education pedagogy curriculum meant that there was a need for a substantive transformation of the core aspects of that curriculum. Of significance for me was the realisation (metacognitive awareness) that the pedagogy curriculum needed to be transformed at two levels: core content and delivery.

Transformation at the level of the curriculum content raises two important issues that come into play in a pedagogy course. The first revolves around the nature of the disciplinary or subject knowledge that student teachers have mastered and made their own. As discussed above, the nature of this knowledge, how it came to be applied, and specific selections that have been made for both university and school curricula, are subject to contestation. The opportunity then arises to create spaces where this received disciplinary knowledge can be contested. Through carefully selected materials that empower students to question the fundamental assumptions of the discipline of business education, student teachers begin to engage with alternative discourses. For most students this is a new experience. Students generally struggle with this, as the fundamental fabric of the disciplines they have chosen to become experts in are called into question. This kind of activity creates much tension and stirs up lively discussion.

As teacher educator I am aware that a single pedagogy course in the year-long programme is insufficient and inadequate to make substantive and fundamental inroads into students' thinking about the disciplines in business education, especially for those student teachers whose predetermined agendas have been to become competent teachers of the discipline in its 'purest' form. What this kind of exposure does, though, is to open the door to exploring the taken-for-granted 'neutrality' of business education disciplines. This can prove to be quite overwhelming to student teachers, who are required to learn how to teach disciplines or subjects whose fundamental, foundational assumptions have been brought into question.

This process of challenging these fundamental assumptions has to be

sustained especially since neo-liberalism has become such a pervasive and deeply entrenched ideology. These reinforce and create conditions for capital accumulation by the capitalist class at the expense of the working and middle classes, and have become largely invisible to the unwary observer. Business education is value-laden; that is, content topics and subtopics of Economics, Accounting and Business Studies, as scripted in the nation's curriculum statements, carry with them a neo-classical ideological position firmly embedded within a neo-liberal market framework (Maistry 2010). The challenge then is to create learning opportunities and spaces for student teachers to challenge the disciplines in which they will teach. This is similar to Dowling's notion of a 'mathematical gaze', which allows individuals to 'see' the mathematics in everything (Dowling 1988).

The competence aspired to in this case is to develop a 'critical business education gaze'. The key objective here is that student teachers will develop the proficiency and skills to be able to use the very content of the disciplines they teach as vehicles to address the transformation agenda. More specifically, the prospective teachers will be able to reveal the inherent tensions between neo-classical market economics and social justice issues, including race, class, gender and power. In the process, student teachers will begin to see that the purpose of education as substantially more than simply teaching business education.

The second curriculum transformation issue central to a pedagogy course is that of pedagogy itself as it relates to the business education disciplines. As stated above, in my initial years as a teacher education pedagogue under the guidance of a senior mentor, the pedagogical orientation I perpetuated was informed by what could be described as liberal approaches to education (Gwele 2005). More specifically, liberal ideologies informed my perceptions of the role of education, the role of the teacher, the role of the student and the nature of the teaching and learning experience. My higher education study enabled me to reflect on this particular orientation. My engagement with critical pedagogy discourse has allowed me to question the pedagogical advocacy project that my student teachers were being subjected to. Of particular significance was the 'realisation' that pedagogy was a profoundly political process, and that pedagogy was not neutral. This was a particularly important watershed moment for my work with teachers of business education in context characterised by stark

inequalities and injustices in almost every sphere. The relative blandness of the liberal education project began to create much discomfort and internal tension within me.

Consequently, the signature pedagogy of Economics, namely, that of problem solving in line with the nature of the discipline, was beginning to look increasingly sterile and benign. My engagement with critical pedagogy resulted in me constantly revisiting the purpose of education; the roles of the teacher and the learner; and the teaching and learning process. It required that I critically interrogate the ideology of the liberal pedagogical project I was advancing and reproducing through the student teachers enrolling for my courses. The ensuing tensions and contradictions that I experienced signalled the start of my ongoing curriculum transformation enterprise.

Liberal approaches to Economics Education pedagogy serve as a useful starting-point in the pedagogy curriculum I plan for my student teachers. Its application, merits and limitations within a peculiar South African context are interrogated by looking at what it allows us to teach as business education teacher trainees, as well as what it silences. This then serves as a useful point from which to explore the critical pedagogy project of business education. Here, too, the fundamental tenets of the critical pedagogy project are subject to scrutiny, which again enables post-modernist and deconstructionist debates to happen. However, these more sophisticated approaches remain largely at a superficial level as students struggle to transcend their existing beliefs. For many students, whose experiences of schooling and university education have essentially been conservative, and in some cases liberal, the paradigmatic shift to critical pedagogical thinking, and the prospect of possibly embracing such moves, proves to be quite traumatic. One way to help students overcome such trauma is to model critical pedagogy practice.

Teacher education pedagogues find themselves in a special space. In particular, those who teach pedagogy courses related to disciplines or school subjects are uniquely positioned to be able to model the pedagogies they advocate, for their student teachers to employ. For my teaching of pedagogy courses to business education teachers, this requires that I serve as a model for pedagogy in action. In other words, my own pedagogical practice should reflect the kind of practice I foreground in the pedagogy curriculum I design for my student teachers.

The reorientation of the core of the pedagogy curriculum has demanded that I transform my own practice, in line with the critical pedagogy approach that I use in my pedagogy courses. In order for my students to begin to engage with what a critical pedagogy might look like in practice – as opposed to dealing with an abstract phenomenon– I have had to enact the gospel that I preach. This shifting pedagogical orientation in terms of delivery means I have to pose the fundamental questions about education to myself, and attempt to make sense of my answers in particular ways. From a critical perspective, the answers to the following questions are challenging:

- What is the purpose of education?
- What is the role of the student?
- What is the role of the learner?
- What is the nature of the teaching and learning process?

These issues are fraught with tensions. Nonetheless there are immense possibilities in them. Arguably, the most challenging yet illuminating experience is how power becomes a central conceptual tension.

I have had to review and reflect on how I constructed my students and their roles in the development of the curriculum, as well as in the teaching, learning and assessment processes. Adopting a critical pedagogical orientation means much more than simply paying lip service to the ideology; it means living it. It entails a critical examination of all aspects of one's work as a university pedagogue.

From my reflections on the pedagogical shifts I have attempted, I am able to discern and manage elements of the canonical performance-based model at UKZN more effectively. With a rising level of critical consciousness about the nature of the models at play, and the nature of the so-called 'non-traditional' students that enter higher education, I am able to make conscious choices about various aspects of my practice that would lend themselves to a competency-based model with strong elements of a social justice orientation, a practice that is responsive to the needs of my students and the broader goals of societal transformation.

The challenge of occupying a critical pedagogic space has lead me to the realisation that the critical pedagogy project is indeed complex, and

fascinating. Of particular significance is that it allows me to reflect on the nature of my students' experiences of the pedagogy programme that I offer. The relative infancy of the critical business education research enterprise in the South African context opens up various possibilities. The work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) on the notion of rhizomatic theorising presents as an interesting and useful framework for beginning to theorise critical business education pedagogy.

Towards a Transformational Model for a Pedagogy Curriculum

In the discussion that follows I attempt to theorise a transformational model for a pedagogy curriculum (see figure 1 below). The nature of teaching and learning is indeed complex. The articulation and intersection of the pedagogue, the student, the curriculum and pedagogy make describing and theorizing of this intricate and elusive phenomenon particularly challenging. The elements that make up the model presented below are connected in complex ways (see figure 1).

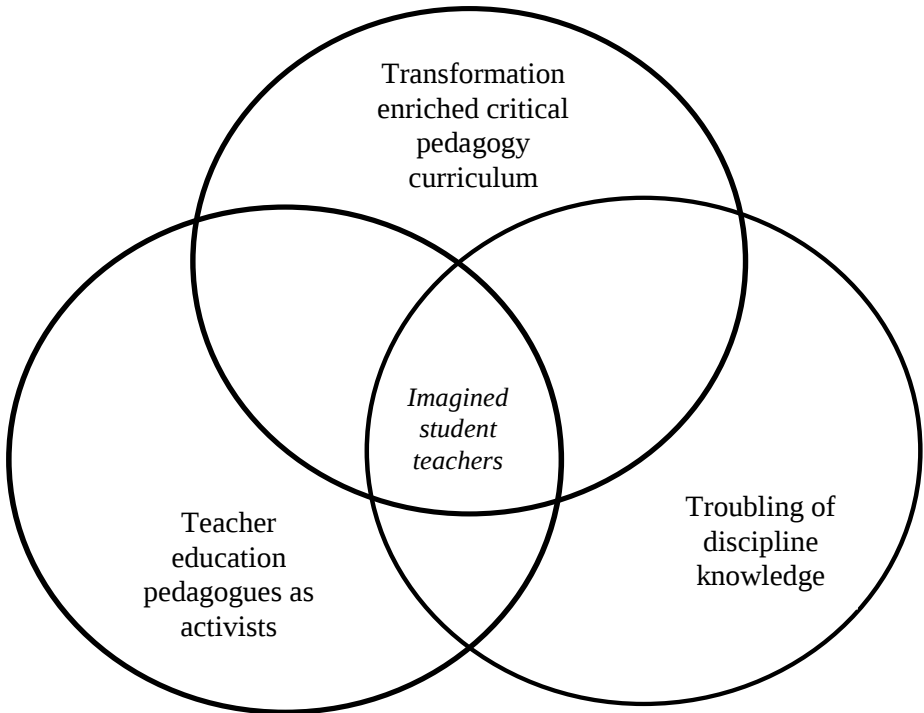
On a cautionary note, every model is in essence an abstraction of reality and will have limitations as to its explanatory potential. The elements that constitute the model are:

- transformation enriched critical pedagogy curriculum;
- teacher education pedagogues (transformation activists);
- the troubling of discipline knowledge; and
- the student teachers.

A transformation enriched pedagogy curriculum is a special pedagogy curriculum with an advanced and heightened awareness of transformational issues. The ideology of transformation is central to the pedagogical approaches advocated for potential teachers to master.

The notion of a curriculum that overtly and actively foregrounds issues of transformation is not new. Such a curriculum may draw on a wide range of theoretical roots whose principles emerge from the important starting point, namely, that the fundamental power-related inequalities and injustices in society can be brought into contestation.

Figure 1: An integrated transformation model for a pedagogy curriculum



A rich body of literature on what this pedagogy may look like does exist (Elbaz-Luwisch 2009; Green 2009; Jansen 2009; Jansen & Weldon 2009; Kahn 2009; Keet, Zinn & Porteus 2009; Robinson & Zinn 2007).

Teacher education pedagogues as transformation activists have a heightened sense of transformation issues as they relate to how power manifests in society and how powerful positions are reified through discourses that appear 'normal' and every-day. Such people are acutely aware of their own prejudices and embody the principle of mutual

vulnerability (Keet *et al.* 2009). They see themselves as active agents preparing novice school teachers to develop a transformation gaze, that is, the ability to see transformation issues in various aspects of daily life.

The troubling of disciplinary knowledge refers to the process of bringing into contestation the fundamental assumptions of disciplinary knowledge prescribed for schools. It entails identifying and recognizing how such knowledge came to be and how if transmitted unchallenged, serves to reify hegemonic positions of the powerful. This necessarily requires a critique of the ontological, epistemological and methodological canons that have shaped the existing disciplinary knowledge.

The student teachers are critical inquiring individuals who question what looks normal and institutionalized, with a view to developing pedagogical strategies that will actively foreground issues of transformation. They learn to engage in ongoing reflection and self-critique.

Conclusion

In this article I attempt to bring together several issues relating to transformation. I have drawn on my experiences to describe how transformation as a goal could be woven into the curriculum that is designed. I argue that transformation through the curriculum entails more than narrow alterations, it means change with a particular social justice agenda. A model for curriculum transformation as it may apply to a pedagogy curriculum is also presented. Transformation through the curriculum is clearly a tension-filled process that necessarily entails discomfort and disruption. Ideally, the transformation agenda should be in tension with a performance-based model but have resonance with competence-based social justice models. In higher education institutions, where powerful neo-liberal discourses have become the order of the day, transformation is likely to remain an elusive project unless conditions can be created for the development of a community of practice of critical higher education pedagogues (Wenger 1999; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002). Communities of practice are powerful learning spaces led by a core group of individuals who shape the agenda of the community. In this case it could be together with a core group of practitioners and theorists with a critical curriculum agenda. Such a learning community allows for fluid membership, either core or peripheral, ensuring

flexible movement between the types of membership as and when individuals deem fit. Such flexibility adds value to the agenda of the community. This kind of community arrangement provides creative spaces for the development of curriculum transformation serving the respective programmes, as opposed to institutionally imposed prescriptive models for curriculum transformation.

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Suriamurthee Moonsamy Maistry
Social Science Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
maistrys@ukzn.ac.za