Education Policy Consortium
TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION REVIEW

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REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

CEPD

The Centre for Education Policy Development

CERT

The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg

CIPSET

The Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

NMI

The Nelson Mandela Institute for Rural Education and Development at the University of Fort Hare

REAL

Researching Education and Labour at the University of the Witwatersrand

EPC

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TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

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Editorial

We have great pleasure in presenting the 3rd issue of the EPC's (Education Policy Consortium's) Review for many reasons. The Review which started last year is becoming an established medium for publishing some of the work of especially the younger researchers engaged in the projects of the EPC. Through its dissemination a wider audience for its research is being reached for critical engagement. Amongst these audiences is the important group of policy and decision makers in the Department of Higher Education and Training, (and hopefully in government more generally), members of democratic social organisations and the trade unions, community-based activists, academic colleagues and collaborators, members of the media and others interested in the issues canvassed here. Although the Review does not represent the work of the EPC in its entirety it reflects on some of the important issues affecting post-school education and training in which its researchers are engaged.

As you will see from the articles here the Review has become a place where an especially youthful, engaged and developing cadre of radical educationists are exploring their ideas, voices and practices. Unlike much of conventional academic research which seeks mainly to focus on the development of theorisation, relying mostly on imitative knowledge produced in largely unfamiliar and unrelated contexts abstracted from engaged scholarship, here that is not an end. These intrepid educationists are no less social intellectuals and actors than they are rigorous researchers often making sense of empirical data and seeking to understand social phenomena through the process of engagement. They are steeped in both the realm of ideas and practice and are not empiricists oblivious of power and social relations. This may not result in the pretentious 'scholarship' that often passes muster in academic writing, but it has unquestionable value for strong learning through the contestation with ideas and their meanings for practice. In effect this process of engagement is not only important for reflective learning and practice through it, but also places on the agenda questions about the staid criteria for academic ways of knowing, its construction of knowledge and dissemination.

The critically important attribute of this writing – based on research which attempts to reconcile the development of knowledge inseparably from engagement with society - is essential especially for the rights of those who are most socially and economically marginalised. Fundamentally it is about the co-construction of knowledge through the process of engagement, and the forms of intellectually committed activist scholarship simultaneously exploring theory.

This approach moreover would seek to support and develop a cadre of younger scholars as researchers (in collaboration with other researchers and communities) who reflect on their research work (its conception, purposes and methods, etc) and how to write about it - simultaneously – not as distinct activities. It will explore how this can be achieved through the process of developing reasoned arguments and explanations about educational, social and human issues. Here intellectually engaged practices and academic lives become inseparable one from the other and from the necessity to find the mechanisms and the agency for transforming society. In this incipient community, the pressure to manically amass more and more accredited articles or rather units or 'widgets' - regardless of their quality - to satisfy the bean counters, is thankfully absent.

In this issue the articles cover a number of issues relating to post-school education including some that seek to engage directly and indirectly with issues of theory – as in the piece about critical social theory and critical pedagogy and their practical implications. There are reflections on various activities related to community based education; a Preface to a forthcoming book on the relationship between social activism, research and knowledge production and a book review on the National Qualifications Framework; a discussion of responsive curricula and teacher education in the TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) sector; a review of a discussion at a colloquium on PSET (Post-Schooling Education and Training) and reflections on the experience of TVET students in relation to employment issues. Breaking new ground there is a piece on the role of therapy in education which implies that in 'post-traumatic' societies such as our own the use of social forms of therapy is indispensable to the process of learning and the organisation of education in general.

In all of these, EPC researchers (and their collaborators) are getting to grips with descriptive accounts of the issues dealt with, examining policy, reviewing some literature, and even if briefly, providing explanations, developing critique and grappling with alternatives. These are capabilities indispensable to the development of engaged intellectuals and academics. In that sense the publication of this review plays, in our view, both an important formative and developmental role and opens the thinking and writing done by EPC researchers for critical review. We have no doubt that this process is important in its own right given the much vaunted need for the development of a cadre of researchers in and outside academia and more generally for the development of critical social thinkers as essential to the evolution of a democratic post-apartheid society.

Our practices and reflections are hopefully the basis of the development of deductive explanations grappling with the process of abstraction and theory building, reckoning at the same time with the paradoxes and contradictions that arise in the process of discovery and most importantly fueling the agency for social intervention and change. We hope that in this way the development of knowledge through the necessary engagements with its paradoxes will shape our collective and socially useful understanding so that the production of knowledge is concurrently a struggle in the realm of ideas and explanations and have meaning for social choice and practice. We hope that it also helps to inform social scholarship as a meaningful practice in and for society and as important to the development, even if haltingly, of the capabilities of the EPC researchers so engaged.

Enver Motala and Salim Vally

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Learning Against the Grain: Activist Knowledge, Education and Research[1]

Aziz Choudry

I am a bit of a hoarder. When I interviewed for a tenure-track academic position in McGill University's Faculty of Education in 2007, I arrived as a doctoral student without any university degrees except for a one-year graduate diploma but with some two decades worth of baggage of activism, popular education, and organizing work. This was not just metaphorical baggage. I actually turned up to the interview room with a suitcase full of publications, DVDs, and other documentation that I had written, edited, contributed to, researched, or had otherwise been directly involved with in the course of my activist work. This material was published in numerous countries across the Asia-Pacific, North America, and Europe by movements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, and independent progressive media, often with little or no involvement of academic researchers. I spread it out on a table before the interview began. I did this not just to illustrate my productivity but to make a point to the hiring committee—my soon-to-be colleagues—that this material was important. I wanted to show that popular/activist knowledge and academic scholarship can each have their own integrity, strengths, and weaknesses.

I played a film clip of a workshop on resistance against bilateral free trade and investment agreements that I facilitated at the November 2004 People's Convention on Food Sovereignty in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Among the publications on the table was a book I had edited on strategies for confronting transnational corporations in the Asia-Pacific, reports I had written on topics including childcare and workers' rights, and a controversial overseas aid-funded forestry development project in the Philippines. There were fact sheets on subjects like free trade and the Pacific Islands, intellectual property rights, corporate control over agriculture, and threats to the future of rice. There were pieces that I had written for Australian migrant and refugee activist networks on racism, colonialism, and immigration detention policies, and a critical analysis of a major US environmental NGO that was published in Spanish in a Latin American activist magazine on biodiversity. And there were interview articles with a range of activists and organizers adapted from transcripts of broadcasts of a radio show that I co-produced and hosted in Christchurch (Aotearoa/New Zealand) in the 1990s. All of these resources were shared as examples of the education, thinking, theorizing, and other forms of knowledge produced in movements and activist circles. This intellectual work is too rarely acknowledged in faculties of education or universities as a whole. This public show-and-tell activity with some of my personal activist archives was intended to emphasize its importance and to challenge the fact that these kinds of knowledge, research and ideas are not often seen to be on equal terms with academic knowledge.

The ideas in this book took shape out of reflections on the approximately 30 years of my own political engagements. By drawing on my experiences and research, I highlight the intellectual contributions of the knowledge produced, informal and nonformal learning, and research within activism. I also connect all of these to the fields of education and learning. Through this, I propose that social, political, and environmental activist movements can best be understood if we engage with the learning, knowledge, debates, and theorizing that goes on within them. I draw on my own experiences and learning in my activist involvements to share what I have learned and to inform and inspire further reflection and critical inquiry in others. These experiences and the ideas behind them are drawn from many places, times, and struggles. They range from organizing experiences in Aotearoa/New Zealand to progressive social movements and people's organizations in the Philippines, and from support for Indigenous Peoples' struggles for self-determination to migrant and immigrant worker struggles in Canada to the 2012 student strike in Quebec.

My own experiences inevitably shape what is written here—but this is not a memoir. I do not claim to have any special powers of divination or recipes for movement success. I do, however, strongly believe in the collective nature of most knowledge production. I don't claim to write on anyone else's behalf. But most of what I have written here rests on the shoulders of many people's work and generations of struggles for a better world.

This book also comes out of a life of personal and political struggles against racism and a grounding in anti-colonial politics, which are not always central to either scholarship or many of today's movements. I wish there was less need to address concerns about social and economic injustice, colonialism, and gendered and racial oppression today. But unfortunately there are few indications—in struggles for social change, in schools, colleges and universities, or society at large—that these have become less urgent or relevant. In Chapter 1 I outline this framework for understanding and action to ground the discussion throughout the rest of the book in these ideas. I have been greatly influenced by the crucial work of many anti-racist, anti-colonial, socialist, and feminist struggles and thinkers while insisting upon the continued importance of class politics and struggles. My thinking is also deeply informed by the tenacity and sharp insights of Indigenous Peoples who have refused to be silenced, brushed aside in an era of "free" market "democracy," or alternatively tucked into a watered down, liberal left set of visions, demands, and declarations of the kind frequently put forward in so many "civil society" initiatives.

Some of these struggles, people, and perspectives have been dismissed as marginal and radical; others are simply overlooked and ignored. Yet I believe that it is important for us to take into account how ideas about what and who is considered radical and what is thought to constitute the margins and the center can shift over time and place. It is also vital to grasp the significance of the insights from people who are viewed to be at the margins. and seriously engage with these ideas. Perhaps this orientation may feel a bit "outside of the box" for some scholars and students interested in social movements in North America (and beyond). Or perhaps not. But these perspectives are foundational to my own academic and movement collaborations and commitments—including this book.

Throughout my Ph.D. defence and a few months after I had started my faculty position, two members of my examining committee quizzed me about whether I was "now" an academic or an activist—as if a two-hour examination, being hired as a professor, or academic study for several years necessarily changes one's identity or vision. This book was partly born from needing to bridge academia and activist ideas and to explore what it is to work with both. In part, it is a product of questions and reservations about dominant academic trends, particularly in studies of activism, social movements, and social movement learning. This book is organized to encourage a deeper engagement with knowledge produced in activist contexts and learning processes within social movements. It does not offer a romanticized version of social and political activism. Indeed, my analysis has been influenced by examining and often challenging power relations within

[1] Preface to forthcoming (2015) book *Learning Activism: The intellectual life of Contemporary Social Movements. Permission obtained*

movements, and conflicts and contradictions within networks espousing social justice. It is informed by experiences arising from the co-optation or orchestration of dissent in the interests of elites. It is shaped by an exasperation with nostalgias—including some versions of history circulating in supposedly progressive circles—that both erase and exclude the experiences of many people in an attempt to conjure up imagined, better pasts. It challenges white saviours, professionalized "civil society" experts and lobbyists, NGO and trade union bureaucracies and other elites, as well as the subtle and not-so-subtle disciplining of dissent within activist groups and movement and NGO networks. Yet equally it draws inspiration and hope from the visions, ideas, and collective efforts of ordinary people engaged in struggles for liberation, self-determination, and justice.

This book addresses theoretical and analytical questions in ways that are relevant to both organizers/activists and scholars. It wasn't written to be a conventional textbook or a typical research-based text (although research has shaped and influenced its ideas). It also wasn't designed to make a "novel" theoretical contribution. Instead, it consciously falls somewhere in between, bringing a relatively light touch and a synthetic tone to a number of developments in the field. In order to do this, it is punctuated at points with personal reflections derived from my activist, organizing, and scholarly experiences. In more ways than one, this book was conceived as going "against the grain" of most academic texts.

To offer a better sense of how it works against the grain, I can provide an idea of what the book is and what it is not. It is neither a social movement studies reader nor a traditional text on social movement learning. Rather, it engages critically with some of the literature in the field of social movement studies as part of a broader project. It tries to break the serious analysis of social movement learning out of the particular sites where it usually takes place (like adult education programs and literature) to make it more widely accessible. Since it is not an exhaustive text on the study of social movements, I point readers to further sources that include many theoretical works as well as more popular or activist literature. By no means do I set out to provide an overview of the state of the world's contemporary protest and social movements.

Whether inside formal classrooms or outside of them, I have noticed that people interested in understanding social, political, and ecological struggles are hungry to read about other organizers' experiences. They want to read about how others think through possibilities and articulate dilemmas and ideas. They want to know how others have thought, acted, educated, and learned to make a better world. They might want to challenge or test their ideas and experiences.

This book fills this need by integrating examples drawn from experience in social struggles and the lessons learned there with critical scholarship. It is intended for teaching purposes as well as bridging the everyday worlds of activists and students and scholars. It is a critical intervention into debates on social movements, learning, and knowledge politics. It can be used as a complementary text in courses on social movements, critical adult education, and community education. It offers a grounded approach to thinking through questions of social movements combined with discussions about knowledge and learning. The chapters can be interwoven with more formal texts throughout a course, or they can be used as a base—as jumping-off points for deeper theoretical discussions—in a way that connects people's practical activities to scholarship. There are multiple points of entry here through the more "theoretical" sections or via the vignettes and examples given throughout the chapters; or indeed by going behind the powerful images of veteran activist/photojournalist Orin Langelle that are included throughout this book.

The structure of this book reflects its intended audience; it is meant to be approachable by students, teachers, and people involved in struggles for social change. I do not believe that activism can be neatly packaged into boxes labelled "organizing," "education/learning," "research," and "action." Academic scholarship commonly demands such rigidity, but it is not always helpful or accurate when attempting to carve up and analyze people's activities in the world. Thus this book's division into chapters and sections reflects convenience rather than rigid categorization or narrow compartmentalization. The book can be read in the order in which it is presented, or its chapters can be read to complement themes of courses in any order.

For teaching purposes, I am often drawn to books that incorporate, in different ways, narrations of the author's everyday observations and experiences—to make their points as well as review and reference selective areas of scholarship. As you read this book, you will see that I am upfront about my biases and where I am coming from. All knowledge is necessarily partial. I don't aspire to be an educator, concepts, and arguments, including some of the different ways in which these have been studied. You can explore how and why particular perspectives have been erased or silenced. In my own university teaching, and in the nonformal education work I do in community organizations, activist/movement networks, and unions, I draw from a range of ideas, texts, and films that span conventional academic work to the reflections of organizers as presented in activist media and other materials. I hope this book will also be useful to teachers and students who want to explore relations between the broader social, economic, ecological and political moment in which our classes take place. I hope it can usefully help to tease out the interconnections between what is being read and discussed in the classroom and the struggles of people down the street or around the world. I also hope that it helps focus attention on some questions that are relevant to organizers/activists.

I am often left with more questions than answers. Perhaps open questions can sometimes be more useful than what we think are the "right answers." Books can sometimes provide fuel for further reflection; they can hook us into thinking critically about historical lessons, concepts and understandings, new discussions, learning, education, and organizing processes. Through unsettling us and taking us out of our comfort zones from time to time, books can encourage readers to ask ourselves questions and challenge the assumptions we have about the world. Books can affirm that alternatives have been, can be, and are being built. Alternatives that are rooted in people's own activities and collective capacities allow us to critically think about and act upon the world we live in. At the heart of this book lies a belief that we can engage with ways of seeing the world and building counterpower to bring about social change - and all its tensions - without succumbing to either cynicism, the limited horizons of possibility and imagination seemingly on offer, or a disconnect born of too much abstraction. I hope that it spurs you - as a reader, student, teacher, organizer, or activist, as a person engaged in changing the world - to think about and take seriously the knowledge produced, the learning, and the research that happens in the course of struggles for a better future.

Aziz Choudry (Visiting professor, CERT)

Creating knowledge Through Community Education

Thalia Eccles

Introduction

This article will explore one of the intricate issues that we consider and deal with in our work: the issue of knowledge. Our work in the Community Education Programme (CEP) is part of a broader research and development programme into post-school education and training at the Centre for Integrated Post School Education and Training. It looks to create the practice and theory necessary within a participatory curriculum for community adult non-formal education. I will begin by laying out some of the ideas I have about "how we know what we know", and how this effects how we teach, learn and create new knowledge. It will also look at how our knowledge is interlaced with our beliefs about the world – for this stems from what we understand about power and agency and its relationship to the ways knowledge is created and can be used to recreate social inequality.

The work of the CEP is based upon a radical critical eco-pedagogy which draws on Freire's praxis of emancipatory adult education, as well as work done by other educationalists, some of whom are also strongly influenced by his theory, like the Adult Learning Project in Scotland. Our approach is radical because we consider the nature of society to be characterized by unequal power relations that create inequality which must be radically changed if we want a just society. We have a critical stance on education because we consider our position as non-neutral and resist the notion that education can be value free. We have an ecological orientation because we recognize the role education and our systems of knowledge have played in separating us from our nature and the natural world we inhabit. We see that this is connected to our role in climate change and habitat destruction that not only disproportionally affects the marginalized in society but is leading us toward a mass extinction which is likely to include our own species.

It should be noted that whilst this work is informed by strong concepts about the nature of human beings as creators of society and knowledge we consider the theory of education and adult learning to be a process rather than a product. As such the philosophical basis and pedagogy that informs our work is continually being made and remade by those participating in it. It, like all of us, is in a state of becoming.

A philosophical basis for the Community Education Programme:

It might seem odd for an education programme to be thinking about its beliefs about the world or about the nature and extent of knowledge rather than educational methods or teaching and learning principles. But all human actions come from an underlying belief system; one which provides a foundation for their other smaller ideas and actions. Sometimes our actions don't match our beliefs and sometimes they can conflict but we all have a layered way of understanding and making sense of the world around us.

The creation of knowledge about the world around us is part of our human capacity and society. However the racialised and gendered division of labour has meant that the creation of knowledge is placed in the hands of certain privileged people and the knowledge created elsewhere is not considered relevant – though it certainly is to those who use it. We are creating knowledge about the things around us and the ways in which the world works on a daily basis. Not all of this knowledge is critical, just as not all knowledge created in the academy recognizes its positionality. As such our work begins but does not end with the knowledge participants bring to a learning circle.

Part of the way we consider knowledge is in a particular context. Knowledge is dependent on where it is because we understand that human beings are subjects in the world (not objects) and as such have the ability to have a subjective relationship to others and objects. In this way knowledge is particular - it is bound by the fact that it is related to that specific person in that specific moment and is subject to change. We seek new knowledge through a process of participatory research – but this too must have as its foundation a radical critical orientation. Research seeks the evidence or knowledge which is most convincing, in order to enable us to act in the world. Often numbers and quantifiable data are seen as more convincing tools and evidence for interrogating the world – however this forgets that both the tools and the knowledge they create do not float above the world. The methodology of research cannot be 'objective' as is often assumed, because it is embedded in a social world.

So our critical understanding of knowledge – and how we know what we know – tries to find a balance between a phenomenological approach which gives importance to direct observations of the world and a critical interpretivist approach which seeks to go beyond both the descriptive and the quantitative (stressed by empiricism). We end up with a way of approaching teaching and learning which recognizes that it is "important to look beyond the commonsense knowledge of people to uncover the structures of oppression which lie behind everyday life." (Haralambos, Holborn and Heald) As such it takes as its basis a qualitative approach which relies on detailed interpretation of the lived and subjective aspects of people's lives. Through the research and education process community education emphasizes that: adults hold key information about their lives and context; that learning is contextual and relational; that if learning is contextual then it is also subjective – the learner as subject rather than object is primary in the creation of agency. If it is relational then it should deal with class issues – knowledge and education cannot be neutral. We can all create knowledge and collective learning in non-hierarchical ways. It is necessary to prevent hegemony of thought and cognitive imperialism. (Community Education Programme)

These perspectives are drawn and adapted from previous educational research and our own learning/teaching experiences; where we have confirmed that people are able to, and do, create useful and complex knowledge about phenomena in their lives. As such the research/learning process which we begin through Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) makes clear that '*in this process, the old, paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome. A peasant can facilitate this process for a neighbor more effectively than a 'teacher' brought in from outside. 'People educate each other through the mediation of the world.' As this happens, the word takes on new power. It is no longer an abstraction or magic but a means by which people discover themselves and their potential as they give names to things around them…each individual wins back the right to say his or her own word, to name the world*'. (Shaull, foreward in Freire, 2005, p.32-33)

By considering all knowledge creation as a socially embedded practice we can begin with an exploration of the context of our lives and through that identify areas of knowledge which need a critical response, things we might wish to unlearn, and questions we might want answered, whether through investigation or action.

Our beliefs about the nature of reality are also underpinned by the idea that everything is in a constant state of becoming; that no knowledge, person or action is complete, and therefore in our search for understanding or change, there can be no failures - only attempts. This has an effect on the ways in which learning is evaluated, and knowledge is pursued. It also alters the way individuals relate to one another and gives us the Freirian concept that learners can be teachers. If knowledge is embodied and we can all create it then the continuation of a "jug and mug" model of learning becomes nonsensical. Instead we work to create a learning environment in which subjects interact with and examine their own circumstances. From there developing their literacies, becoming able to read the word and the world, the text and the context that shapes the injustices of their lives. (Freire 2005)

Our approach would agree with Gouldner who proposes that since we necessarily must have values/perspectives we should be open and clear about them. This entails a good degree of introspection and critical self-analysis and to the problem of limited perspective. In trying to overcome this limitation of perspective we find that collaborative, supportive and critical spaces for a dialogical practice as espoused by Freire (1979) are helpful in shedding light on biases. This gives the group a broader and deeper overall perspective not only on the topics we are studying but on ourselves as a community of learners.

In our work we choose to uphold the idea that 'educators' and 'learners' as well as 'experts' are capable of creating knowledge about a relevant curriculum structure. We believe that the oppressed are not objects within a world that can be understood objectively but are 'subjects who can know and act on the world, whose task is to emerge from their conditions of submergence, and intervene in reality.' (Kirkwood and Kirkwood 2011,p35). We see that a just and humanizing society requires that we are all given access to this opportunity to "name" and change our world.

One way in which we extend Freire's thinking about the subjectivity of people is in the relationship between nature and culture. If we are subjects rather than objects then we are distinct from nature which is "everything that would be there without people: birds, fish, animals, rivers…" Whilst we would partly agree with Kirkwoods' summary of Freire that "Culture (and history) is nature transformed by people, through their work" (Kirkwood and Kirkwood 2011, p37) this concept also ignores the ways in which we continue to be shaped by our natural environment (or lack of it) and our evolution by the landscape and other inhabitants of our shared home. The distinction between humans and nature is in conflict with more recent theoretical developments from within a critical eco-pedagogical perspective which "establishes a dialogue between social and eco-justice 'wherein the destruction of the environment is taken up and fought alongside the battle to end the terrorizing of the poor and powerless.' This perspective provides the two main lenses, critical social and ecological justice, through which the data generated during the [CEP] participatory research process is interrogated."(Kahn R. , 2010 in (Community Education Program) This has become an important part of our research process as findings have emerged from initial investigations which highlighted the central issue of Environmental Injustice which is faced disproportionately by marginalised communities. When we talk about environmental injustice we refer not only to the destruction of 'natural' spaces – like the Chatty River - but also the whole experience of the spaces in which people find themselves living, the quality of their housing, and their access to water, their physical safety in the streets and their relationship to natural spaces.

A woman clearing the community waste site. GG's Ground - Missionvale, Port Elizabeth 2014

By working to alter our perpective on the relationship to and the nature of the spaces around us it becomes possible, in the words of David Abram, to 'practice a curious kind of thought, a way of careful reflection that no longer tears us out of the world of direct experience in order to represent it, but that binds us ever more deeply into the thick of that world.' Abram (2011) In the same way that a humanising pedagogy seeks to reconnect us to our humanity, and Freirian pedagogy seeks to reconnect us with the ways love intersects with knowledge and justice, eco-pedagogy seeks to reintergrate humans and the 'nature' which language and modernisation has issolated them from. This is partly due to an epistomology that leans towards an integrated and interpretivist perspective – where we make meaning within a context – but also due to the increasing practical pressures that are being placed on communities to understand and act against climate change and enviromental destruction. We agree that "Educators are complicit in the massive ecological crisis which encompasses all forms of life on earth. Kahn (2010) argues that progressive educators and concerned citizens should re-imagine the role of education; actively working to enable a critical ecopedagogy to emerge." (Community Education Program)

What is the purpose of an educational philosophy?

If we agree with Carspecken that the purpose of knowledge and education is to change the world and with Freire that the oppressed can create the conditions for their own emancipation, then this puts us in a position where the purpose of emancipatory education is in contradiction to the purpose of conventional education (which is the reproduction of existing forms of labour and living). This requires a new praxis for learning and research and prompted us to use a participatory approach to research (CPAR). Fundamentally it is about access and justice – who gets to participate and create knowledge? By creating a process which share the tools of knowledge creation whilst respecting the embedded knowledge in communities we are challenging who gets to do research – who can be involved and who can use the tools of research to create knowledge that is relevant. We are putting into practice the idea of Marx and Engles in which they remind us that the possibility for change always exists in every environment and is not only the preserve of those in power.

'The material doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating.' (Marx and Engels in Freire, 2005.p 53)

This reversal of roles in society about who holds knowledge and drives change has the potential to redefine what socially useful knowledge is and how our educational and developmental organisations are structured. Part of our understanding of knowledge is based around the idea that the active creation of understanding is not only emancipatory for the individuals involved but provides the agency for action. In exploring the underlying philosophy behind the Community Education Programme and the value of such an approach to the ways in which it manifests in praxis we hope that we can continue to develop and apply it in ways that can influence community education policy.

Thalia Eccles (CIPSET)

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Using Critical Social Theory in the Community Education Programme

Anele Dloto

Introduction

Social research is characterized by various approaches to research including interpretivist, positivist, post-positivist and critical scholarship. This reflective essay considers the importance of a variety of approaches to social theory, but favours critical social theory (CST) because it explains research practices in a variety disciplines and fields of research. According to Ruby Vine (2009), CST emerged from the ideas of classical scholars such as Georg Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, and Paulo Freire. It is a unique theoretical tradition which challenges other research traditions as well as raising critical questions about oppressive structures in society and the world.

CST provides a meaningful theoretical and analytical lens to understand the determinants of oppressive structures and offers us the methodological tool for social action. In this essay I argue that CST remains one of the most important Meta-theories in contemporary society, especially in disciplines such as sociology, education, economics, politics and health. As part of my argument, I explore some of the key tenets of CST and demonstrate how these key tenets apply to my own practice as an adult and community educator working with others in CIPSET's Community Education Programme (CEP). After exploring these key tenets, I summarize a few essential propositions of CST. This is followed by a demonstration of how CST can be applied or be of use to adult and community education. I pay specific attention to the work of critical social theorists such as Paulo Freire, Antonio Gramsci and other critical scholars. Lastly, I pay special attention to critical pedagogy as derived from CST and its value to community participatory action research as a methodological approach to my practice.

Critical Social Theory: Definition and Key Tenets

Critical social theory refers to the outstanding inheritance of conceptual and theoretical work developed by socio-political scholars commonly referred to as the Frankfurt school (Tripp, 1992). These scholars were mainly intellectuals influenced by Marxist thought. This group include prominent intellectuals like Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas, whose work established an interest in transforming social relations, arguing for a more just society where all people have equal access to the good aspects of life and equal distribution of all resources, but also and perhaps more importantly, where all people gain social, economic and political control. Critical theory was also influenced by national independence struggles and movements in Africa, Asia and South America as well as the struggle against racism and gender inequality in the North.

According to Henry Giroux (1997), CST is mainly concerned with the questioning of existing social relations. CST aims to understand and to analyse power relations and social structures as part of a process to change such relations and structures. It is a theoretical tradition that deconstructs unjust social relations in order to reconstruct these for a better world for all. Critical social theorists claim that society can be greatly transformed through emancipation, liberation and conscientisation. For example, Paulo Freire (1970) views emancipation as a process by which oppressed and exploited people, that is, the powerless members of society become sufficiently *empowered* to transform their circumstances for themselves by themselves. In exploring how education can be structured to enable an 'unveiling of the world' I have drawn heavily from the work of Paulo Freire, and we have also found much in our own practice that supports these ideas. For instance, Freire writes:

The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted. The first stage of this confrontation occurs through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the second stage, through the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order... (Freire, 2005, pp. 54-55).

Critical theory is ''critical'' because it is a theory which questions social paradigms and challenges the dominant order which progressive intellectuals, scholars and activists seek to change (Giroux, 1997). It is also called 'critical theory' because critical thinkers saw the route to emancipation as being a kind of self-conscious critique which problematises all social relations, in particular those of and within the discursive practices of power, especially technical rationalism (Freire, 1970). Critical theorists argues that traditional theory uncritically reproduces the existing society, while critical theory articulates activity striving to transform society. As Horkheimer (1972: 206-207) puts it:

There is a human activity that has society itself for its object. The aim of this activity is not simply to eliminate one or another abuse, for it regards such abuses as necessarily connected with the way in which the social structure is organized. Although it itself emerges from the social structure, its purpose is not, either in its conscious intention, or in its objective significance, the better functioning of any element in the structure. On the contrary, it is suspicious of the very categories of better, useful, appropriate, productive, and valuable, as these are understood in the present order.

Critical theory has been applied to education in a number of different ways, but most notably by Paulo Freire in his work with oppressed people (mainly in Brazil). Freire's pedagogical ideas, its ethical and methodological approach to education, gave rise to what is commonly known today as *critical pedagogy*, meaning teaching-learning based on the principles of critical theory. Critical theory observes that emancipatory transformation is necessary, since current society fails to satisfy the needs of people (Freire, 1970).

Unlike positivist theory, critical theory rejects the separation of facts and values, and sets out to analyse society 'from the standpoint of its emancipatory transformation' (Benhabib, 1986). Critical theory is critical in a sense that it challenges other research paradigms, such as post-positivist and interpretivist paradigms, it challenges the oppressive structures of the social world. Social reality, according to critical theory, is shaped by many dynamics, for examples social, economic, political and cultural. Critical theory claims that our knowledge of the world is not objective but subjective. Our knowledge of the world is influenced by our position in society.

As mentioned earlier in this reflective essay, critical social theory is a theoretical tradition developed most notably by Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse at the Frankfurt School. Their work is a critical response to the works of Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber.

This Marxist approach to social life assumes that some people in society are oppressed by others, and thus need to be empowered to deal with this unjust social relation. For this specific reason, it is necessary to continuously question the way the social world is organized and structured. This, according to Freire (1970) will lead to the recognition of oppressive structures in society and thus strive to find ways to deal with these structures. The fundamental categories of all disciplines should be questioned to achieve emancipation. The human capacities of individuals must be developed and linked to democracy to improve society. Furthermore, critical theorists argue that technological advancement is not always negative, but it is only when it takes priority over individuals' values and interests that it may become unethical.

Drawing from the previous section, it becomes apparent that critical social theory attempts to seek out contradictions and social inequalities in a variety of disciplines in order to empower those who are oppressed. They also attempt to take their ideas and to apply them to the real world. Critical theories oppose conservative scientific research, point to the limitation of the positivist research tradition and view it as a culturally produced and socially supported means of solving problems in a purely objective or quantitative manner that ignores values, morals and the interests of humankind.

CST also provides an understanding of the concepts of historical ontology, epistemology and methodology. Historical ontology assumes that there is a 'reality' that is apprehendable. This is a reality created and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based forces that have been reified or crystallised over time into social structures that are taken to be natural or real. People, including researchers, function under the assumption that for all practical purposes these structures are real. Critical theorists believe this assumption is inappropriate.

Epistemology refers to our inability to separate ourselves from what we know and this inevitably influences inquiry. What can be known is inextricably tied to the interaction between a particular investigator and the social relations represented in the relations between the investigator and group. Methodology as used by critical theoretical approaches tends to rely on dialogical methods; methods of combining observation and interviewing with approaches that foster conversation and reflection (Freire, 1970). This reflective dialogic allows the researcher and the participants to question the 'natural' state and challenge the mechanisms for order maintenance. This is a way to reclaim conflict and tension (Freire, 1970; Babbie, 2005; Niewenhuis, 2007). Rather than naming and describing, the critical theorist tries to challenge guiding assumptions (Freire, 1970; Babbie, 2005; Niewenhuis, 2007). Critical theorists are not just trying to describe a situation from a particular vantage point or set of values (e.g. the need for greater autonomy or democracy in a particular setting), but are trying to change the situation (Freire, 1970; Babbie, 2005; Niewenhuis, 2007).

Critical Theory and Community Education

Critical theory is one of the most influential theoretical frameworks within the field of adult and community education. Critical theory is a type of social theory oriented toward critically assessing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it. Critical theory aims to dig beneath the surface of the social world and uncover the assumptions that keep us from a full understanding of how the world works - to begin to challenge the oppressive social structural arrangements in our society and by so doing providing people with the knowledge and understanding intended to free them from oppression.

In this way Horkheimer (1993) argues, critical theory truly qualifies for that most overused of adjectives, 'transformative'. There is no assumption of theory being distanced from social intervention or political action. Critical theory engages with such interventions with the agenda to transform social arrangements.

Socially-critical research in education is informed by principles of social justice, both in terms of its own ways of working and in terms of its outcomes in and orientation to the community. It involves strategic pedagogic action on the part of classroom teachers, aimed at emancipation from overt and covert forms of domination. In practical terms, it is not simply a matter of challenging the existing practices of the system, but of seeking to understand what makes the system be the way it is, and challenging that, whilst remaining conscious that one's own sense of justice and equality are themselves open to question. (Tripp 1990a, p.161)

Tett (2010) argues that the primary purpose of community education is "education *within* and *for* communities" (in Baatjes & Chaka, 2012, p.5), what Choudry and Kapoor (2010) call "learning from the ground up" (p.6). Community education is "responding to people's own concerns; works to create a shared, active and political space where wider solidarities that encompass a multiplicity of perspectives can be developed" (p.5).

Community education usually has a different focus from mainstream education both in its curricula and in its methods. Community education is about encouraging and engaging people throughout life into learning that is based on what they are interested in, and that emerges in relation to problems and issues experienced on a daily basis. Education is developed that is relevant to the participating learners and is responsive to community priorities identified *with* people rather than *for* them (Baatjes & Chaka, 2012, p.6).

My Own Practice as an Adult and Community Educator

Now that I have given a detailed definition and description of 'critical social theory' I want to demonstrate how it relates to my own practice. I work within the field of Adult and Community Education. Dealing with adults is different from dealing with children, thus the concept of 'andragogy' is used instead of 'pedagogy'. Andragogy is the art of teaching adult learners. My use of critical andragogy goes beyond a simple instrumentalist or technical approach to applying the art of teaching and learning. Critical andragogy recognizes the significance of teaching and learning within a historical context. It therefore takes into consideration the social, political and economic conditions within which teaching and learning take place at a particular time. Based on the assumptions that teaching adults is different from teaching children, I describe how critical social theory influences my practice as an educator.

A critical question that underpins my work as an adult and community educator is how best to determine and address the learning needs of marginalized and excluded communities. There is no single approach to assessing the needs of adult learners. However, participatory approaches have been mentioned as the most suitable for developing programs in various contexts. Participatory approaches consider inputs from a number of people and convey the sense that programs do not derive their relevance from a single person's perception. People who are, or might be, affected by the program proposals should work with program developers. While other theories ascribe programme development to specialists, critical social theory asserts that the role of learners is equally important as that of the teacher in developing learning programmes.

Authentic experiences must be taken into account when developing learning programs. Values such as those of cooperation, consultation and mutual support are encouraged. By working collaboratively with the target group, program developers increase the chance of programs being accepted and supported by potential beneficiaries. Gboku and Lekoko (2007) identify five principles that should guide working relations in program development, such as the principle of acting together as opposed to acting alone; cooperation as opposed to fragmentation or competition; unity as opposed to friction; of collectivism as opposed to individualism; and a sense of belonging or connectedness to a group as opposed to a sense of isolation (Gboku & Lekoko, 2007).

Learning approaches suggested by critical social theory recognize the need for the participation of people at all stages of program development. Through this involvement, programs that reflect the real needs, problems and priorities of the target learner groups are possible. Learners learn best when their own needs form the basis of program design and they have the chance to participate actively in the design, development, and evaluation of the learning program (Gboku & Lekoko, 2007).

A critical social approach is important because it promotes program flexibility; it allows the program to adapt to the changing needs of the target groups as they progress through their learning experience. It possesses a strong capacity-building component of practical and participatory workshops for various groups. All involved parties work together for the continuous improvement of the program, through monitoring and ongoing evaluation as various components of the program are implemented. The participatory approach borrows from Freire's belief that the program beneficiaries are not ignorant or empty objects requiring all the information to be provided to them. Rather, the approach relies on the beneficiaries' knowledge, experiences, values, belief systems, and current practices. Therefore, it is necessary to start the process of program development by identifying the learning needs of the potential learners (Gboku & Lekoko, 2007).

Learning programs for adults are usually developed and implemented because there is a problem to be addressed – anything that presents itself as a challenge, concern or a gap. A program is thus seen as a way of addressing some of these problems. These problems are referred to as learning needs. CST argues for participatory approaches in development of learning programs. The program developers need to realize that their credibility, and that of the proposed programs, depends on meeting the real needs of adult learners (Gboku & Lekoko, 2007).

Conclusion

This reflective writing has argued that critical social theory remains one of the most useful Meta-theories in contemporary society, especially in disciplines such as sociology, education, economics, politics and health. As a critical reader and activist I believe that CST remains one of the most important research traditions that could be used to advance projects and programmes leading to authentic social change in society. I think that there is a need to reinvent CST and to develop social actions that respond to the oppression and marginalisation of increasing numbers of people across the world. I'm deeply concerned about the increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality in South African society. CST provides a meaningful theoretical and analytical lens to understand the determinants of oppressive structures and offers us the methodological tools for social action. I would argue that CST should be taught as part of a mandatory programme for all university students. This, I believe could provide them with a basis to develop a heightened level of critical consciousness about socio-political issues facing society.

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Beyond Good Teaching: Building a Critical Pedagogy for TVET Lecturers

Lucky Maluleke

Introduction

The South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has prioritised the broadening, consolidating and developing the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector (DHET, 2013a). TVET, as defined in the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* is a term used to refer to facets of education involving the "study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, and understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life" (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d. in DHET, 2013b, 3). This important sub-component of the post-school education and training sector plays a crucial part in developing a well-informed and skilled population who will be able to make meaningful contributions to the development of the country, both economically and socially (DHET, 2013b). For technical and vocational education and training to produce this kind of citizenry, it is essential that its programmes provide real-world skills required by both the public and the private sector as development of the country relies deeply on the development of a sustainable and effective education and training sector.

Studies have been undertaken to define and understand the role of the lecturers in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or vocational educators in general, such as by Lucas, Ellen and Claxton (2012) of City & Guilds: Centre for Skills Development, but their focus is mainly on the training of skills rather than about the theoretical approaches to vocational education. Studies of this kind focus on the instrumentalist and technicist role of lecturers in this field. They do not view these lecturers as facilitators of critical thinking and principles of democratic learning which is related not only to training for the workplace, but also to critical and creative thinking and democratization as a way to contribute to the creation of a participatory and critical contemplative population (Hyslop-Margison& Sears, 2010). In short, studies that attempt to understand and recommend pedagogy for vocational educators in general do not challenge the dominant view that TVET teaching and learning is technicist and instrumentalist – a rigid transmission of skills.

The purpose of this article is therefore to tap into this less known terrain of vocational educator development – arguing that qualifications for lecturers in technical and vocational education and training must equip them with necessary pedagogical abilities and knowledge to relate their teaching to the wider social, political, economic and cultural context. I examine the role of TVET lecturers not only as transmitters of skills for the labour market, but broadly as intellectuals whose mandate is to serve the public good and to critically "engage with curriculum models and pre-packaged learning programmes that subjugate their pedagogy to instrumental rationality" (Baatjes et al, 2014, 96). I argue that a technicist and instrumentalist approach to lecturer development does not empower lecturers to confront issues of social justice, critical citizenship, a broader role for education and training, democracy, as well as participation in the broader economy. Therefore, qualifications for lecturers in technical and vocational education and training must enable lecturers to apply more critical and humane approaches to teaching and learning in their working spaces. They are not meant to develop passive individuals who maintain the status quo, but to help develop competencies to apply creative strategies needed for survival in a world of extraordinary suffering and uncertainty. I take into consideration the problem of unemployment associated with human capital development in a capitalist system.

This article argues for a wider view of the role of lecturers, academia, and based on the literature around vocational teaching. The intended aim is to benefit lecturers in technical and vocational education and training, policy makers, universities that produce such lecturers, as well as the broader field of academia.

Some Contextual Issues

According to the DHET (2013a) it is necessary that lecturers be sufficient (in number), and be appropriately qualified and competent in order for technical and vocational education and training to flourish. Lecturers need more than just technical skills; they also need to have knowledge, understanding and expertise in both the academic and work-related dimensions of technical and vocational education and training in order for this sub-sector of post-school education and training to make a critical contribution to the development of the country. The TVET sector requires well-qualified and industry experienced lecturers, thus the DHET has developed and released a comprehensive policy on qualifications for technical and vocational education and training college lecturers - the *Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (Ibid.) which echoes the sentiments of the earlier *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*(DHET, 2012) and the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2013b).

Despite various policy interventions in this sector in South Africa, TVET lecturers remain largely marginalized as a consequence of their social position within education and training as a whole (Baatjes et al, 2014). The social status of these lecturers is further eroded by their "instrumentalist and technicist orientation to education that suppresses criticality" (Baatjes et al, 2014, 91). These lecturers have limited pedagogical knowledge and work-place based knowledge.

Furthermore, most universities do not offer qualifications aimed at TVET lecturer development, while the programmes of those who do offer such qualifications "lack any serious orientation to the philosophical debates about education and training and their relationship to curriculum design and classroom practice" (Baatjes et al, 2014, 92). This lack of criticality is a result of the expectation that lecturers must implement predetermined curricula and standardised content in a technicist manner. This process deskills and discourages the lecturers to think and act critically and innovatively about their teaching practice, thus the need for a transformative pedagogy for lecturers in technical and vocational education and training.

An instrumentalist and technicist approach to lecturer training and development has negative effects on the quality of technical and vocational education and training. Lecturers produced through technicist and instrumentalist processes are not well equipped to deal with the broader issues in education, economy and society. This process prevents development of critical thinking and smothers creativity and innovation. Furthermore, the technicist and instrumentalist approach to lecturer development does not equip lecturers to confront issues of social justice, critical citizenship and democracy, as well as participating in the broader economy (Baatjes et al, 2014).The best way to improve teaching is not to only equip educators with narrow, instrumentalist and technicist skills for teaching, assessment and classroom management; it is rather to allow educators to have access to a variety of pedagogical practices and broader knowledge about society. (Baatjes et al, 2014).

The Relevance of the Unemployment Crisis

The unemployment crisis is increasing in the world, with South Africa having the third highest youth unemployment globally (Fin24, 2014; World Economic Forum, 2014). It is prevalent even

amongst those who hold qualifications, for example college certificates, diplomas and university degrees. Therefore educating for the labour market is no longer an answer to the many socio-economic problems faced especially by citizens. This therefore necessitates education and training that not only prepares people for employment, but to enable people to be productive in the context in which they live, to realize that they are subjects of their own development, and to realise their potential to live fully as humans (Maluleke, 2013). For this to be achieved, the education and training system requires educators who are dedicated, skilled and knowledgeable to teach for transformation, democratisation, liberation and emancipation - as the seminal work of the Brazilian educator Freire (1970) and others have shown.

Thus qualifications for TVET lecturers must enable them to apply more critical and humane approaches to teaching and learning in their working spaces. They are not meant to develop passive individuals who maintain the status quo, but to help develop competencies to apply creative strategies needed for survival in a world of extraordinary hardship. Educators need to be equipped to understand that their students are at the heart of knowledge creation as opposed to being passive receptors of an uncontested body of knowledge.

The Role of TVET and TVET Lecturers

In South Africa and in the world TVET is mainly associated with the development of human capital through acquisition of skills necessary for employment in the labour market (Baatjes et al, 2014; Wedekind, 2014). This belief has led to an instrumentalist view of the role of technical and vocational education and training which, as a consequence, has led to the narrow view of lecturers in this field – merely seen as trainers of skills. For example, a 1973 article by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) claims that the role of vocational educators is to serve as links between the industrial society and the education system (Education International, 2009).

The role of TVET lecturers is not considered to be that of a critical teacher who not only teaches for the labour market, but whose teaching is intended to liberate the learners from various forms of oppression. Because vocational educators are seen as a link between education and industry, they are generally recruited and trained as practitioners of a certain field of work. They are expected to complete additional or specific courses in general teaching techniques, training, assessment and classroom management methods, specific subject matter and acquire general teaching skills in a designated programme (Grollman & Rouner, 2007, 17, in Education International, 2009, 15).

Some academics have explored the use of critical or transformative pedagogy to develop educators, although their focus is mainly on schooling (for example Zinn& Rodgers, 2012; Price & Osborne, 2000). Drawing from the philosophy of Paulo Freire, Zinn & Rodgers (2012) use practical examples of personal stories to explore how teachers can use more humanistic approaches to teaching. These approaches are at the heart of critical pedagogy as argued for by Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), *Pedagogy of Indignation* (2004), and other writings. There are other scholars who work broadly within this field, and although their focus is mainly on school teachers (Stinson, 2012; Salazar, 2013; Huerta, 2011); these scholars support the political, social and cultural role of education.

Conclusion

From the arguments in this article it becomes apparent that the TVET system in the country is faced with many challenges and that it is not able to generate enough energy to lead to its own revitalisation. The country needs a TVET system that develops in students a competence to apply the best available and creative strategies for survival in a world of unprecedented troubles and uncertainties. Education must serve as the chief medium for developing in students the attitudes and skills of social, political and cultural criticism, rather than accepting the status quo at face value. This has implications for the TVET lecturers and other educators in different sub-sectors of the education and training system (Postman &Weingartner, 1969).

For the TVET sector to make an impact in the country it needs lecturers who will go beyond the mechanical transferring of information. It needs lecturers who understand that teaching is an art, it is a living activity that is created by both students and lecturers who must be well equipped to teach beyond the existing political and economic system, lecturers who will instill in students attitudes of cooperation as opposed to competition, lecturers who will not only expect their students to accept the knowledge of the textbook, but who encourage students to challenge and discuss its content critically, including challenging the lecturer's interpretation of the subject at hand (Davidoff & van den Berg, 1990). This means that lecturers must teach beyond technical skills.

Classroom practice must enhance the human capacity to reason. Education need not be detached from the reality of the students since the experiences of students actually inform educational practices. Students have experience to share as well. Students are not objects but subjects in a dialogical exchange. When learners are taught from only one perspective, that is, the perspective of the teacher and the textbook, or exposed to only one worldview, they are being denied the opportunity to evaluate that perspective against competing forms of knowledge and understanding. The capacity to make decisions about the society they wish to create relies on exposure to knowledge about alternative social and economic, social and political models and priorities; it is critical that students are exposed to competing viewpoints on the preferred structure of the economy, society and the labour market, morally acceptable working conditions both locally and internationally as well as issues about citizenship and society.. Finally, a relevant TVET would take into consideration that social reality is dynamic, and that the role of learners is not to simply adapt or conform to the conditions they inherit. This means that students need to view society as a dynamic and transformable construct rather than as static and inexorable.

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Nelson Mandela Bay Voices on PSET: A View from New Brighton

Olwam Mnqwazi

Introduction

The Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) based at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) conducted a workshop with members of Vezokuhle Youth Development Project based in New Brighton, a township in Port Elizabeth. The purpose of this workshop was to learn about experiences that the community had at school, their understanding of skills and Post School Education and Training in general. This workshop is part of the continuing research work carried out by the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) of which CIPSET is one of five member Centres that constitute the Consortium. Although Vezokuhle was asked to bring a group of young people who have passed their grade 9 or grade 12 and are not working or those with incomplete tertiary qualification who might also be looking for a job, they brought a group that was quite diverse in age. The age ranged from 20 years to individuals approaching their 60s. This was unexpected but with the benefit of hindsight, all of these individuals had had their own experience with education and training and they all have some imagination of what PSET should be like especially considering their own past. At least everyone has some idea and hope of what their lives could have been if they had access and success in PSET. Perhaps CIPSET is in many ways deepening the discussion that took place at the VUT Panel Discussion on Post-Schooling which, among other questions, sought to answer the following as captured by Johnson (2014,7):

'The Big Question is: What is the role of education? Or what is the purpose of education? These kinds of questions tend to be focused on the kind of society the post schooling education system is aiming to support.'

This article is an account of the discussion that took place in the location where these community members are based, setting out their view on the purpose of education, their understanding of PSET and their thoughts on why there is so much unemployment in New Brighton and South Africa as a whole.

Understanding New Brighton

New Brighton is one of many townships around Port Elizabeth, now renamed Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, which includes Uitenhage and Dispatch. It is also known as New Bright or Blawa, and is surrounded by many multinational companies which are mainly involved in the automotive industry, like General Motors, Continental Tyre and Ford Motors which are based in Deal Party and an area called Straundale which borders Blawa on different sides. Many other companies feed these giant companies including the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage, a mere 20 minutes away. Other big corporations within a 5 km radius include big names such as Aspen, Coca-Cola, Fortune, Eveready and Kraft Foods to name a few.

With all the companies mentioned which are but a fraction of the whole list of big businesses in PE, one would be forgiven for thinking unemployment is a thing of the past for these communities. According to StatsSa (2011), Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) has a population of 1.1 million of the 6.6 million people in the Eastern Cape. NMB's unemployment rate is 36.6% and only 42.7 of the employed people are youth. Only 12% of the 20+ years old population managed to complete a Higher Education qualification and only 30.5% passed matric.

Workshop Setup

A group consisting of twenty-four members from Vezokuhle Youth Development Project from New Brighton, Nelson Mandela Bay (formerly known as Port Elizabeth) was invited to participate in an open discussion about the purpose of education and their experiences with the education system. The discussions sought to discover, from these views, new ways of thinking about the post schooling sector as it is informed by matters arising from the locals. Although the invitation was for young people (15-35yrs), the attendees were an even distribution from 19 years to 55 years and across sexes. Three groups of eight were formed and each of these was given a paper and markers to answer questions and to draw their responses. The responses were captured without correction to grammar so as to capture the original views. The responses that were given for the questions asked are seen in Table 1 & 2 and the last question was recorded on a Dictaphone. The rest of the data, including drawings and pictures, are kept for the main Emerging Voices 2 research which is yet to be published. The questions were:

1. What is the purpose of education?
2. What attributes and characteristics are desired from graduates of PSET?
3. Why are young people unemployed?

4. Results

Table 1 gives some perspectives about what education should be able to do for the people. The responses are typed verbatim from the papers that they were written on without corrections.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Þ We as the team believe that there is no need for one to study for a 3 year diploma, one must just study for 6 months and get skills Þ We believe that not all the time education is the key to success, because in some cases we don't get employed because they say you are over qualified if you get educated well. Þ Being well educated sometimes does not work well in our favour because the people in high places do not follow protocol they employ their family and close friends, so we the educated people don't get jobs cause of their problems. Þ If education is still the same, like in the 80's or 90's we believe our country would be a better place and the youth would be more interested in education to get better jobs.	Þ Education is to empower yourself Þ It is about acknowledging yourself Þ To open doors for us Þ It's about hope Þ it is an exploitation to human dignity Þ it's a dream **What has it done for me?** Þ It has made me poorer Þ Made me hatred, anger, jealous, greedy, etc. Þ There is no use for education because the skill I have taught myself	Þ To become/live the dream of becoming a priest Þ Knowledge/understand worldly things Þ Education is not just formal schooling Þ Be aware of our surroundings Þ Be able to express ourselves, read, understand Þ Education has been around for years Þ Education should not be aimed at secular or formal education Þ Education purpose is to teach people no matter how old to learn how to do things.

Table 2 also captured the original comments that were made by the participants where they bring their understanding and re-imagination of what the post schooling sector should produce.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Þ Sophisticated man Þ Has become more mature Þ Has a broader knowledge because she gone through the experience of being in high school and university. Þ Has learnt different ways of socializing with different human beings Þ Has obtained more knowledge emotionally, physically and spiritually. Þ More knowledge Þ Be adaptable Þ Be skillful Þ -Be connected Þ Self-Reliant Þ More effective in community and knowledgeable Þ Be Socialized Þ Give back to the community and family	Þ Matured Þ Graduate Þ Responsible Þ Working Þ Parent Þ Parents past on, now he has to take care of his siblings Þ Charity and development Þ Work in the community Þ Business Þ Punctual man Þ Drinking problem due to stress of life and holding the world without parents Þ Role model Þ Independent Þ Marriage life Þ Caring because of the experiences of marriage and having no parents Þ Manage to cope through all the stress of varsity and life he could succeed	Þ Leadership skills Þ A hustler Þ Achieved a certificate Þ Has responsibility Þ Used to public speaking Þ Sense of direction Þ Has an idea of where she is going Þ Clear career path Þ Good listening skills Þ Good communication skills Þ Advanced knowledge Þ Work seeker Þ Boyfriend – busy with phones Þ Self esteem Þ Social life Þ Going out on dates Þ Going out to parties Þ Must set an example to young ones at home Þ intrinsic motivation

The Purpose of Education

In this article I concentrate on presenting the voices of the people who participated in the workshop. The purpose of the exercise was to establish how they viewed or experienced the schooling system and PSET hence not a lot of time was spent on in depth analysis of their experiences. This is even more important as it reflected on how young people are starting to dislike or even blame education for their misfortunes in life. Education seems to symbolise broken promises and failed lives for the community as they have to deal with many of their members sitting without the jobs that were said to be the outcome of being educated. Take for instance what Group 1 & 2 (Table 1) presented about the purpose of education; the groups seem to agree that education is no longer necessary or reliable to give you a job. Although group 2 (Table 1) outlines the admirable purposes of education, they don't seem to think it has given them a better life that was promised after they 'got educated'. The tone that is used is 'It has made me poorer'; 'made me hate' [resentful], 'angry', 'jealous', 'greedy', etc. 'There is no use for education because the skill I have taught myself' suggests a resentment for the education that people have received. Of course, one would have to spend more time trying to understand what type/quality of education that has been offered to the participants and the length of time they were part of these classes or training.

The Eastern Cape (ECPC) Planning Commission's manual of the 'Public Incoko on Education' (2013) states, 'Education is a societal responsibility. In its broadest sense, education refers to all the contributions made by society to develop people that are productive individuals, responsible and self-sufficient citizen, and people with a sense of humanity, an appreciation of nature and the capacity to grow and adapt to their environment.' The ECPC has a comprehensive definition of what education is and succinctly captures the humanising aspect and environmental awareness necessary to education. The definition also captures that education should develop productive individuals, and this is where the members of Vezokuhle struggle to reconcile their experiences and expectations with this purpose of education. They see no productive output and contribution that they can bring to the world because of the education they have received.

Post-School Education and Training

Table 2 lists the various thoughts and expectations of the groups when they were asked to envisage a fully-fledged graduate of PSET without differentiating between its various sectors. The groups captured the characteristics of graduates as people and members of the community who experience real life challenges like losing parents, having to deal with problems in their marriages and even being a 'hustler' (someone who continues to struggle for a living daily). They also make it clear that, as much as these graduates are responsible, mature and more knowledgeable, they also need to have fun and live active social lives where they go out to dates at times. Most importantly, the groups did not show that they were different regardless of whether they came from FET and Higher Education sectors. For them the attributes of a graduate should resemble most of the characteristics referred to in Table 1 so that they could be regarded as educated beings.

Harris (2009) tries to compare and contrast the roles and differences between Higher Education and the Vocational Education and Training in the Australian context similar to the South African reality. He contrasts Higher Education as a general form of education that leads to high status jobs whereas VET is more focused on skills and work related training for employment. If things continue as they do in relation to unemployment, South African might see more and more frustrated young people who would move from one educational institution to another so that they can at the very least receive some kind of income through state bursaries and financial loans to survive.

Why are young people not employed?

As it could be expected, varying responses would always emerge when people answer this question. Unsurprisingly some of the respondents blame politicians:

> 'People have the mindset that because they have voted, automatically they should be employed. How can you be employed with negative attitudes towards life? Education comes in there, it's not about varsity or getting a diploma, it's about the basic skills, learning to adapt or adjust around others.'Others chose the more dominant views such as the argument which refers to a 'Scarcity of skills', '…those who occupy positions don't have the qualification…', 'Jobs are being scarce!' and the common,'Poor economy and lack of opportunities'.

Other views blamed nepotism, jobs being 'sold' by connected people and youth being lazy.

What is evident in these responses is that people are not unaware of the conditions that induce their unfavourable circumstances but they are simply bound and caught up in a system that is undermining their lives and that is not of their own doing. Mainly, the explanations about what causes them not to live their lives as they wish make them see the problems in the dominant media repetitions of how the economy needs to grow at a particular rate in order for workers to be employed.Regardless of this propaganda, the people use their tools of analysis to understand what is happening in and around them.

Conclusion

Although this is a short account and reflection of what three focus groups think about the issues around education, PSET and employment, it gives some insight into how the communities explain their lives and experiences. The communities are asking themselves about the purpose of education and how the economy, despite what they are being told, manages to hold their lives hostage and devoid of the basic freedoms which they should be able to enjoy twenty-one years into the democratic South Africa. The youth is beginning to show signs of intolerance to the type and quality of education that they are offered throughout their schooling years at the hands of the the present body of educators. There are generally good aspirations about what education could do for them but there seems to be a lot that needs to be done, indeed, a lot of restructuring of what is known as 'education and PSET' in SA so that the life of the people can improve.

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Book Review
Selling Out Education: National Qualifications Frameworks and the Neglect of Knowledge
by Stephanie Allais, Sense Publisher

Sheri Hamilton

Enabled by the unique 'happenstance' of combining the research for her PhD[1] with that of an international comparative study of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) carried out on behalf of the International Labour Organisation[2], Allais, in her book, 'Selling Out Education: National Qualifications Frameworks and the Neglect of Knowledge', stubs out any doubt that even sceptics may have about the value of outcomes based education (OBE)[3] or learning outcomes[4] and NQFs based on them. Hers is an expose' of the myths and fallacies that surround this popular policy instrument of educational reform that the author says, is 'spreading like wild fire' across the globe but whose harmful effects, are more severely felt in developing countries.

One of the reviewers of the book, Prof Michael Young, says that it is a first attempt at bringing together 'a critical political economy and realist sociology of knowledge with a broader based social theory'. According to its author, Allais, the book makes three main arguments across its eight chapters. To begin with, it argues that education is being modelled on the neoliberal market economy where individuals act rationally and in their own self -interest. Therefore, educational policy goals, in her view, reflect a 'lack of willingness' to deal with structural, political and economic problems. Her second argument is a continuation of the first which is that education has become increasingly seen as a solution to economic problems and that these developments correspond to the rise of neoliberalism whose consequences, amongst others, are felt in the rolling back of the state in developed countries as well as in a decrease in welfare provision to poor countries of public education. She explains further that while education is being promoted as the alternative to poverty, in reality it is being turned into an unaffordable commodity for the poor. Allais' third argument is about what she claims is the 'curious' agreement between radical or progressive thinkers and the ideas that have historically influenced educational reform such as in the opposition to the acquisition of bodies of knowledge as the main purpose of education. She claims that this results from confusion between curriculum and pedagogy or, as she suggests, between what is taught and how it is taught. In the context of Allais' criticisms of OBE's superficial treatment of knowledge, and more importantly, its link to neoliberalism, my main difficulty with the author's approach, discussed below is that she maybe is 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' in overstating the proposition about a return to bodies of 'scientific' knowledge - without appreciating the role of the interaction between 'everyday' knowledge and 'scientific', or more structured forms of knowledge.

In my view, the main strength of the book lies, in making visible the connections between neoliberalism and learning outcomes to expose 'The Selling out of Education' in South Africa's educational reforms. Her contribution is especially important in a context where, despite the growing rejection of OBE and to some extent also of the NQF, none of the critics have been as perceptive in marshalling the kind of evidence Allais has gathered to refute the efficacy of NQFs that are based on learning outcomes. She draws on her international comparative study of NQFs to make a persuasive argument against wasting any more of South Africa's scarce resources on educational reforms which she argues, at best, make very little difference and at worst, destroys what little good there is. Allais makes a compelling case for a re-examination of the many taken-for-granted theories about knowledge and learning and teaching associated with progressive and radical pedagogy which, its advocates claim, have been (mis) appropriated by mainstream educational discourse.

In her introduction in which she reverses Marx's aphorism explaining that history repeats itself 'first as tragedy and then as farce', Allais shows how many of the educational reforms which started out in rich countries as farces or fads, find their way into the developing world as tragedy. Essentially, her argument is that learning outcomes, 'come out of something' such as institutions of learning which serve as repositories of accumulated knowledge and experience contained in subjects or 'bodies of knowledge'. She argues that the shift in emphasis in favour of educational policies that have as their main concern, regulating outcomes of learning through qualifications frameworks, has had destructive effects which may be disguised in developed countries because of their strong educational institutions, traditions and professionals, but in developing countries, where educational systems are weak, these effects have been more visibly damaging.

At a micro level Allais describes in quite some detail the absurd extent to which learning outcomes came to be specified especially in skills training to compensate for the absence of the accumulated experience and knowledge found in strong educational institutions. As a result, thousands of unit standards are registered on SAQA data bases that are rarely used, diverting desperately needed resources that are expended on these futile exercises. Anecdotes abound of how history has come to be reduced to constructing a family tree and economics to entrepreneurship before CAPs[5] was introduced to mediate some of these extremes. The negative consequences of this system of education for developing countries are of course compounded in South Africa by the legacy of a deliberate policy to 'under-educate' the majority of the population under apartheid.

But how was it possible for a South Africa shorn of its apartheid past and emerging from a radical history of struggle, to be so easily duped by what OBE appeared to offer? Allais answers this question by drawing attention to the affinities between learning outcomes with their origins in the workplace and learner centred pedagogies associated with radical education. She argues that in the context of the post-Soviet era and the defeat of apartheid, the ground was fertile for 'third way' politics. This politics obscured class differences and interests and learning outcomes which appeared to be democratic in character, became the mechanism to improve the relationship between education and work. Moreover, learning outcomes appeared to offer more choice and easier access for learners because they enabled 'flexibility', 'mobility', 'transferability' and above all, recognition of prior learning and experience as one of the means by which to correct the inequities of the past.

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[1] Allais, 2007, The Rise and Fallof the NQF: A critical analysis of the South African National Qualifications Framework (Doctoral Thesis) University of the Witwatersrand.

[2] Allais, 2010, The Implementation and Impact of Qualifications Frameworks: Report of the Study in 16 Countries, Geneva International Labour Organisation

[3] Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and learning outcomes are used interchangeably.

[4] Ibid

[5] Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements

Learner centred pedagogies appeared to fit like a hand in the glove of learning outcomes because according to Allais, they "recreate the everyday world in the curriculum in the hope of making education more accessible to learners". She observes therefore that there has been an overemphasis of competence and skills at the expense of knowledge and in the extent to which the curriculum came to be seen as expressing ruling class ideology. It is this convergence of views around learner centred pedagogies and learning outcomes which for Allais promotes the idea of education as panacea to social and economic problems and that explains why for her, the left came to be co-opted into this way of viewing the world.

Starting in another aptly named chapter: *plus la meme chose* – 'the more things change, the more they stay the same', Allais goes to some length to trace the origins of both learner centred methodologies and learning outcomes as the basis for educational reform. She shows that already in the 18th century one of the earliest critics of subject based curricula, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued against an approved body of knowledge in support of discovering our individual nature by observing the mind's pattern of development and focusing attention on conditions to develop its full potential. In other words, he argued for a version of what came to be known as learner centred education incorporating 'everyday knowledge'. Following this logic, by the19th and early 20th century, the focus of the curriculum had shifted from the individual to the workplace especially after the industrial success of Germany which was attributed to its vocational educational model. Thus, the individual's learning needs were supplanted by those of the workplace.

Allais refers to many progressive educationalists that although arguing from the opposite end of the spectrum, associate subject based curricula with elites and advocate instead for a school curriculum that is more in line with societal needs but which contrary to their intentions, invariably is interpreted to mean workplace needs. Despite the contradiction between learner centred education emphasising humanism, autonomy and democracy and learning outcomes which emphasises the needs of the employer, Allais maintains that the ideas of left or progressive educationalists for learner centred approaches and for greater relevance of education have tended to converge with those of business for 'work ready' workers.

Allais' main argument against proponents of learning outcomes is their insistence on selecting knowledge based on whether or not it leads to the required learning outcome and not for any other reasons such as its intrinsic value and interest or because it could provide a foundation for the further acquisition of knowledge. She maintains that the assumption behind learning outcomes is either that people can acquire the same 'knowledges' both inside and outside of education institutions and courses of study or that different 'knowledges' can always have the same relationship with a given outcome. In this scheme of things, according to Allais, there is nothing specifically valuable about the education process and in effect, 'everyday knowledge' becomes the same as bodies of knowledge acquired through sustained and structured courses of study in education institutions and through apprenticeships. For her 'the implication is a flat, undifferentiated notion of knowledge' that 'relegates knowledge to pieces of information or tasks'. Moreover, she maintains that these ideas are implicit in the arguments made about how outcomes based qualifications frameworks support the recognition of prior learning and experience.

Allais acknowledges that while learning does take place everywhere and all the time, she sums up her position when she argues that good education provides access to knowledge that is not typically learnt in the course of everyday life. According to her:

'Organised bodies of knowledge enable us to treat the world as an object of study and not simply as an environment or place of experience; they are systematised because objects must be in the relations they maintain with other objects with bodies of thought and not only by direct connection to the individual referent…the distance from everyday life makes education and the knowledge acquired through education powerful, as it enables us to stand back and reflect on the world, as opposed to simply experiencing it by virtue of living in it'.[6]

She explains further that because of the internal structure of organised bodies of knowledge, conditions for their acquisition are different from the conditions obtaining in everyday life because they are often not directly practically useful. For example, she maintains that 'mastery of particular concepts, principles and facts is needed before progress is made and this requires uninterrupted, extended, well-planned and structured educational programmes'.

But this is where I believe that in her enthusiasm to restore the balance between an approach based on 'every day' knowledge and bodies of 'scientific' knowledge, Allais may be bending the stick too far in the direction of the latter and in this way undermining the dialectic that is at play in the construction of knowledge - especially as a social activity in which human beings are intimately implicated. In entering the centuries old debate about what counts as knowledge and how it is best acquired, Allais appears to be aligning herself with those theorists who lean firmly towards the 'insularity' of knowledge which according to Muller, cited in Cooper, (2005) highlights differences between systems of knowledge and forms and standards proper to them. 'Insularity' in this view, 'stresses the virtues of purity and the dangers of transgression. In contrast, ''hybridity' stresses the essential identity and continuity of forms of knowledge, permeability of classificatory boundaries and the promiscuity of cultural meanings and domains'.

Cooper, (2005), explains that debates around continuities or differences in systems of knowledge are not simply around the classification of knowledge but in the assumptions about how learning should take place, and what forms of pedagogy might best promote such learning. She observes further that different positions in these debates are also based on competing assumptions about the value of different forms of knowledge to society, which in turn relate to questions of power relations within society. She draws on the Vygotskian notion of the dialectical relationship between 'everyday' and 'scientific' forms of knowledge. His approach provides a means to recognise that not all knowledge is the same and that there are historical/contextual patterns in different forms of knowledge which the dialectical framework envisages not as static opposites but in dynamic interaction with each other.

Notwithstanding this important weakness in her approach to knowledge, Allais' discussion of the concept of 'economics imperialism' is a breath of fresh air and an important contribution to expose the connections between post modernism and neoliberalism and how ideas from both are reflected at every level in society including education. In an absorbing discussion about the origins of these ideas, she focuses on the link between post modernism and neoliberalism and quotes Harvey, (2005), who argues that neoliberalism was well suited to the ideological task of capturing the ideals of individual freedom and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state and in this manner protecting and even enhancing capitalist class interests. According to Harvey, the impulse of 'post modernism' proved more than a little compatible with the requirements of neoliberalism for a politically and economically constructed 'neoliberal market-based populist culture of differentiated consumerism and individual libertarianism'.

Allais uses 'economics imperialism' to help the reader understand how, despite the discrediting of neoliberalism, its basic tools of analysis continue to dominate thinking about education and through its philosophical affinities to postmodernism. In my view this permeates every sphere of society including, especially politics.

[6]Page 157

She traces how economics came to be stripped of its social character in its evolution from classical political economy to the academic discipline of economics, defeating attempts at a unified social science. She refers to Fine and Milonakis, 2009 to explain how the classical political economy drew on historical and social analysis and used deductive and inductive methods to analyse the function of markets and the nature of profit as part of a wider social and historical development. For Allais, this implied giving primacy to the social without precluding an analysis at the individual level. The whole was seen as more than the sum of its parts/individuals who were shaped and influenced by the nature of collectives, classes, institutions and society as a whole rather than individual action.

Allais maintains that the notion of education as autonomous can only be maintained, if we have a sense of what intrinsically is education. She defines education as 'a structured and social activity based upon knowledge which is structured and developed socially, through human contact and interaction'. She further highlights how these ideas have remained key to sociology which evolved out of classical political economy while the discipline of economics moved in the opposite direction with an increasing focus on 'methodological individualism' where the individual is the starting point of all analyses. She is critical of such ideas as popularised in notions of *hominess economici* or 'economic man 'who acts rationally and in his own self-interest and choice in the free market. Allais describes this development as the first phase of the 'economics imperialism' while its purveyors later conceded that individuals do not always make rational choices and that markets do not always work and therefore accepted that economic analyses had to be extended to more areas of social life than the market. This appears to contradict her position about 'scientific' bodies of knowledge because like capital, which Marx referred to as 'dead labour', living labour is required to produce a surplus or profit for capital in the same way that 'everyday' knowledge is required for 'scientific' knowledge to have any meaning and to be of any value to society.

Allais identifies a further tendency in this regard in the references to any kind of resource as 'capital' such as human or social capital or even the theorists, Bourdieu's and Bernstein's notions of cultural and linguistic capital. For her these references cede conceptual grounds to neoclassical economics. Drawing on Fine she reminds us that capital refers to a specific social system - capitalism - which has been dominant for over two hundred years of human existence and is based on wage labour forcibly coerced into the process of producing a surplus for capital.

Allais cites Young and Muller, 2010, who suggest a similarity between the much criticised instrumental focus of education policy by left wing commentators and their social constructivist and post-modernist views of knowledge and truth. She concurs with them that there are many overlaps between the ideas of a lot of left wing educationalists and competency or outcomes based education advocates despite protestations by the former that their ideas have been 'co-opted' and 'rearticulated'. She employs the concept of 'epistemological constructionism', as a form of postmodernism to refer to the position that knowledge is inextricably bound to interests and the standpoints of the individuals and groups producing it and therefore by implication, can never be 'objective 'and that there are only competing ways of looking at and knowing about things. Allais observes that postmodernism finds expression in ideas such as that 'meaning cannot respond to reality', that 'reality cannot be known', and that 'all knowledge is text'. Moreover, she asserts, such ideas support the claim that all knowledge is equal, that no forms of knowledge or methods of attempting to understand reality can claim precedence over others. In support of this view, critics of post modernism often invoke the argument that what such ideas imply is that apartheid and the holocaust never existed.

Following the doubts cast on the philosophic foundations of Marxism, postmodernism has usefully compelled a re-examination of Marxist ideas and has led to its further development and a greater appreciation for Marxist ideas - where knowledge is understood as drawing on its three sources and component parts, political economy, historical and dialectical materialism. It requires scientific knowledge to be historically rooted, becomes valuable through its dialectical interaction with 'everyday' knowledge and thought this finds its meaning and value for society today.

Spanning over 260 pages divided into nine chapters the breadth and depth of the book is a critical contribution to those who have argued along similar lines but less systematically against the dangers of the learning outcomes and the qualifications frameworks spawned by these. It offers a fresh look at the debates about knowledge and learning and the wider issues that need to be considered in South Africa's educational policy.

Sheri Hamilton (CEPD)

The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) and Employment

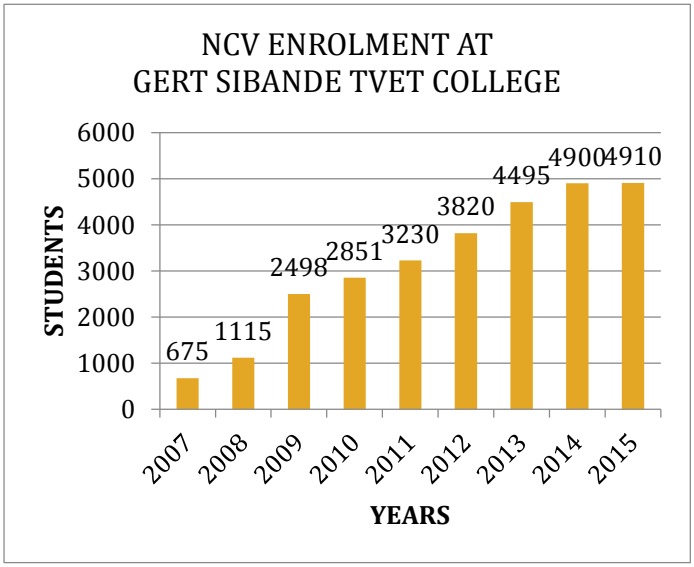
Gugu Mahlangu

A case study of Gert Sibande TVET College.

Gert Sibande College is a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institution, situated in Mpumalanga. The NCV qualification is a three year approved qualification which was implemented in public FET (now known as TVET) colleges in January 2007 at Level 2. The Gert Sibande College's website (http://www.gscollege.co.za/?page_id=5) states that the NCV qualification replaced the previous N1 to N3 with courses "to empower learners with skills to be employed to alleviate poverty and unemployment."

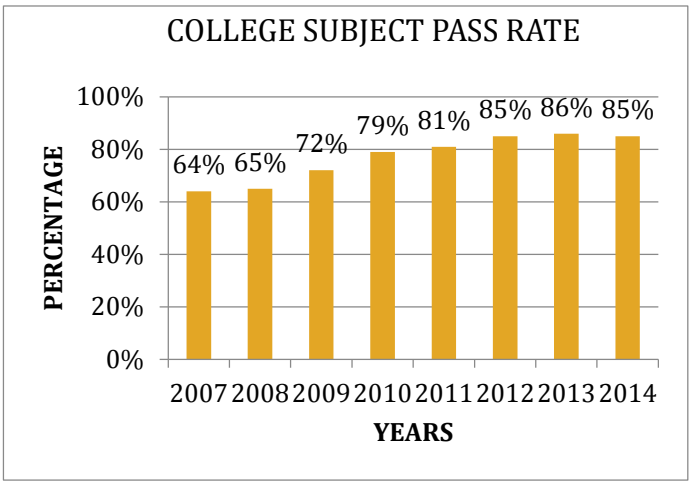
According to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), in order for a student to enrol for the NCV, they should have completed NQF Level 1 which is equivalent to Grade 9 or Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 4. NCV Level 3 and 4 followed consecutively in the two subsequent years. Students sat for the first Level 4 exam in November 2009. At the end of the programme, Level 4 graduates have a choice to either further their studies or to seek employment. In this article I use data from Gert Sibande TVET College 2014 annual report. According to the statistical data from the college, 675 students were enrolled in the year 2007 for NCV Level 2 and in 2015, which is eight years after its inception, the enrolment stands at 4910 students. These figures illustrate a rapid increase in terms of students entering the NCV programme. In terms of access the college is responding accordingly to the vision of the department. The question that arises from this phenomenon is that, does this guarantee employment if not employability and a sustainable livelihood at the end of the programme as the government anticipates? Providing skills for the youth is a government attempt to address unemployment, inequality and poverty.

Table 1: NCV Enrolment at Gert Sibande TVET College



The performance of Gert Sibande TVET College over the years has been remarkable as evidenced by the high percentage pass rates recorded focusing on the table below (Table 2). In 2014 Gert Sibande achieved an NCV certification rate of 55% (Table 3). This figure indicates the number of students that have completed the NCV program at the college and are now eligible to be employed, further their studies at universities or through the Report 191/NATED (National Technical Education) programme. When the NCV was introduced it was meant to replace the "outdated" NATED programme offered according to the government. After much resistance of the NCV programme by many employers, the government then decided to let the two programmes run parallel such that students who have completed the NCV programmes are eligible to enrol for NATED. NCV graduates of Business studies enrol at N4 and the Engineering graduates can enrol at either N4 (leading to supervisory management), N1-N3 (Artisanship). The candidates who pursue N1-N3 become eligible to train as Artisans upon meeting the requirements of a trade test. Unfortunately, most students who take the NCV already have the National Senior Certificate (NSC) which according to NQF levels is the same as NCV Level 4, and this situation not only shows an inefficient use of public institutions, but also fails to exploit the opportunities for labour market specialisation offered by the current system.

Table 2: Gert Sibande TVET College subject pass rate



What do students hope for when they enrol for the NCV? Essentially TVET colleges have been stigmatised as second best option relative to universities. It has been observed that a significant number of students that enrol at the TVET colleges do so because of their socio-economic background, limited access at universities and limited options to higher post school education. Issues of accessibility are central to Gert Sibande TVET College; one of its campuses lies on the outskirts of Mpumalanga in a rural setting. In January 2015 the rural campus alone stands at an NCV enrolment number of above 1000 students. At the end of 2015 it is projected that an average of 245 students from this particular campus are projected to be eligible for university or to enter the job market in the year 2016. The fact that there are no industries and that the economic conditions of this small community are dismal means that it is difficult to understand where the graduates are going to get jobs. As a result many of these graduates will be involved in urban migration in search of jobs and better opportunities. There is of course no guarantee that they will secure employment through urban migration.

The role of the Skills Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in job placements within the TVET College system

Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, on 3 March 2005 re-established and replaced 33 training boards into SETAs. The SETAs are concerned with education and training and their job is to help implement the National Skills Development Strategy and to increase the skills of people in their respective sectors. They cover every industry and occupation whereas the Industry Training Boards covered some sectors only and focused mainly on apprenticeships. SETAs are concerned with learnerships, the internships, learning programme type matrix and unit based skills programme.

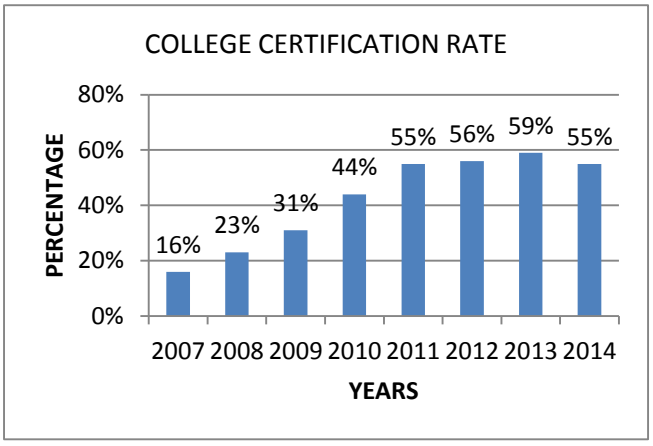
The question of facilitating work placement for college students and graduates is at the heart of the SETAs function. SETAs are responsible for creating links between TVET Colleges and employers, this according to the Minister of Higher Education Dr. Blade Nzimande. In view of this Gert Sibande TVET College just like any other of the TVET Colleges in the country, has established partnerships with the different SETAs to place students at different work places. However the success rate of this exercise is low in terms of achieving its intended objective as most of the students end up not practising what they were essentially trained for. Based on my discussions with some of the people who have completed the NCV qualification and entered the SETA programme it is clear that during their period at the appointed organisations, they were not given the adequate exposure and responsibility that is in line with the training they received.

Here is a case in point:

"*Tshepo is an NCV Electrical Engineering student, who completed in 2012 from Gert Sibande TVET College. He is the 3rd born in a family of five, his mother is a widow and relies on the social grants to survive. Tshepo is now working as a petrol attendant at filling station near one of the College's campuses.*"

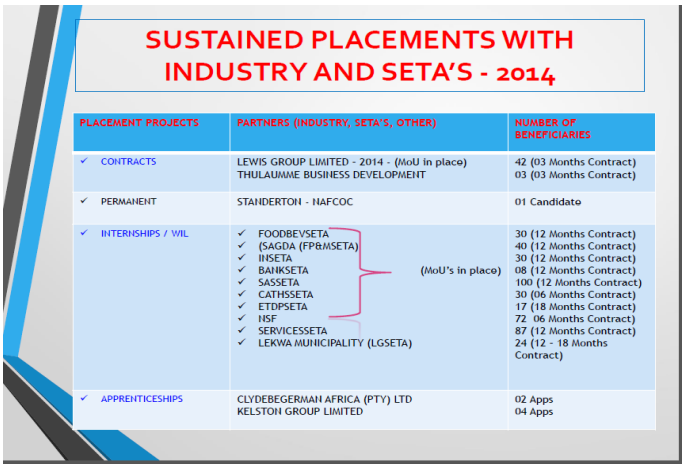
The case of Tshepo is one of many. This is a case of unfulfilled dreams and with the passage of time, frustration will set in. The NCV was originally designed as an alternative for the more academic grades 10, 11 and 12 – the idea being that these students could then leave colleges for vocational employment at the age of 18. In reality if a student has completed Matric but does not meet the requirements to enrol at university or even for the Report 191 programme and they also don't have the necessary skills to enter the job market it would appear that the only option is for the student to enrol for NCV. The majority of the students who fall in this category come from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, these students are able to do NCV because it is funded by NFSAS.

Table 3: Gert Sibande TVET College certification rate.



Looking at the table below, most of the people under the SETAs are on an average of a year's contract. What happens after the expiry of the contracts remains the big question for me. Of all the graduates that were placed in industry or SETAs the table indicates only one person is employed on a permanent basis. The rest will have to look elsewhere for employment after the expiry of the contract.

Table 4: Sustained placements with industry and SETA's - 2014 at Gert Sibande TVET

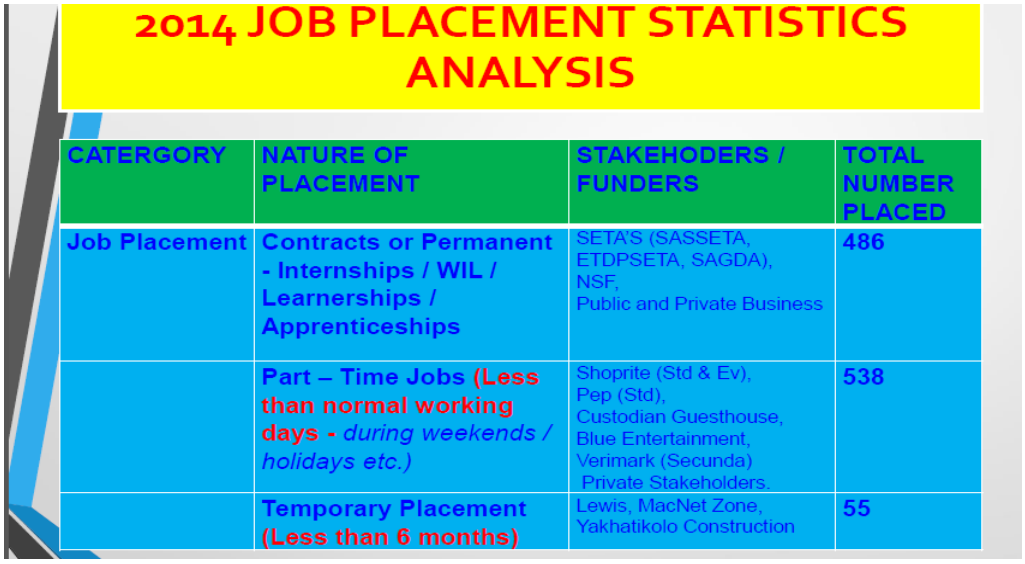


SUSTAINED PLACEMENTS WITH INDUSTRY AND SETA'S - 2014

PLACEMENT PROJECTS	PARTNERS (INDUSTRY, SETA'S, OTHER)	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
✓ CONTRACTS	LEWIS GROUP LIMITED - 2014 - (MoU in place) THULAUMME BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	42 (03 Months Contract) 03 (03 Months Contract)
✓ PERMANENT	STANDERTON - NAFCOC	01 Candidate
✓ INTERNSHIPS / WIL	✓ FOODBEVSETA ✓ (SAGDA (FP&MSETA) ✓ INSETA ✓ BANKSETA (MoU's in place) ✓ SASSETA ✓ CATHSSETA ✓ ETDPSETA ✓ NSF ✓ SERVICESSETA ✓ LEKWA MUNICIPALITY (LGSETA)	30 (12 Months Contract) 40 (12 Months Contract) 30 (12 Months Contract) 08 (12 Months Contract) 100 (12 Months Contract) 30 (06 Months Contract) 17 (18 Months Contract) 72 06 Months Contract) 87 (12 Months Contract) 24 (12 - 18 Months Contract)
✓ APPRENTICESHIPS	CLYDEBEGERMAN AFRICA (PTY) LTD KELSTON GROUP LIMITED	02 Apps 04 Apps

Looking at the tables below (on the next page), Gert Sibande College placed a one third of its students in job placements as part of the programme initiated by the Department of Higher Education and SETAs to provide students with the much needed work experience for the NCV students. Although the structure of the NCV programme consists of theoretical and practical/simulation, students still require real work experience. There has been an outcry from many students who complain that, although they enrol for the NCV programme and aspire to getting employment after completing the three year course most employers are not aware of the NCV programme. This poses a great challenge to the young hopefuls who have already spent three years at the college. I can attest to the fact that since 2007 to date I have hardly seen a job advertisement with NCV being a requirement or even an alternative to Matric since they are rated as being equal in terms of the NQF level in South Africa. Through the years Gert Sibande College has been a champion in meeting targets for job placement not only for their students but also for their staff members as an attempt to educate and market the NCV programme to employers. However, most employers still prefer the old NATED programmes although this programme offers theoretical knowledge only. Perhaps there is resistance from employers due to this curriculum transformation that has taken place in the post-school education sector. If there is so much resistance from employers on employing NCV graduates, why are we encouraging our youth to do this programme? The Minister of Higher Education announced a target of one million enrolments of NCV students by 2014. A thought that comes to mind is, does our economy have at least 60% of those one million jobs to cater to these NCV graduates?

Table 5: 2014 Job placements statistics analysis at Gert Sibande TVET College



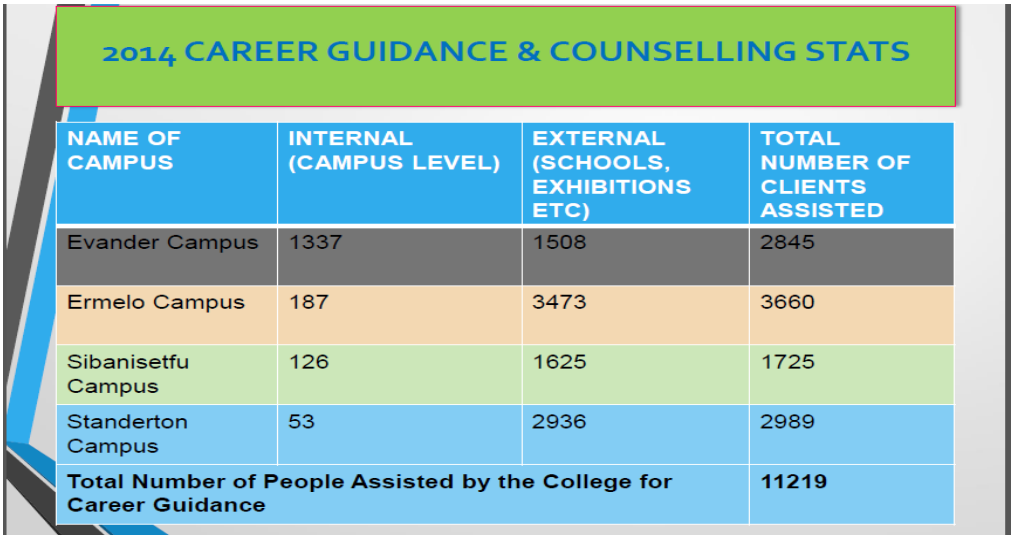
2014 JOB PLACEMENT STATISTICS ANALYSIS

CATERGORY	NATURE OF PLACEMENT	STAKEHODERS / FUNDERS	TOTAL NUMBER PLACED
Job Placement	Contracts or Permanent - Internships / WIL / Learnerships / Apprenticeships	SETA'S (SASSETA, ETDPSETA, SAGDA), NSF, Public and Private Business	486
	Part – Time Jobs (Less than normal working days - *during weekends / holidays etc.)*	Shoprite (Std & Ev), Pep (Std), Custodian Guesthouse, Blue Entertainment, Verimark (Secunda) Private Stakeholders.	538
	Temporary Placement (Less than 6 months)	Lewis, MacNet Zone, Yakhatikolo Construction	55

In the table below, we see evidence of career guidance offered by the college. In recent years there has been a great influx of students into TVET colleges. We have heard in numerous speeches and interviews how the education minister is urging students to enrol at TVET colleges. Subsequently, one should question this increasing influx and support of TVET colleges as the alternative option outside of university and also the stigma that TVET colleges are of less quality and offer less employment opportunities. Potential students receive career guidance before they enrol at the college. Most of the career advice happens in the beginning of the year predominantly at a time when students are usually desperate to get admission at almost any programme. In my opinion, the career guidance is not worth much. I can imagine myself coming from a disadvantaged background, not meeting the requirements to enter university coming to the college as my last option and therefore I would accept almost any advice that would get me enrolled. I have rarely come across a student who feels that they were aspiring to come to the College when they left high school. In the beginning of every year I always start my lessons with my students by asking the students why they chose the particular course. In a class of about 35 students only one or two would actually say that this is what they wanted to do but for the rest it would be because they couldn't get into university, because of financial reasons the family could not send them elsewhere and were hoping to get a job so they can look after the family.

There is an increase in enrolment at TVET colleges in recent years and especially since the inception of the NCV programme. The main goal of this programme is to prepare its graduates for employment. It is unclear whether the industry/market in the country has sufficient jobs to accommodate these NCV graduates particularly because they have to compete with university graduates for the job opportunities available to them.

Table 6: 2014 Career guidance & counselling stats at Gert Sibande TVET College



2014 CAREER GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING STATS

NAME OF CAMPUS	INTERNAL (CAMPUS LEVEL)	EXTERNAL (SCHOOLS, EXHIBITIONS ETC)	TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS ASSISTED
Evander Campus	1337	1508	2845
Ermelo Campus	187	3473	3660
Sibanisetfu Campus	126	1625	1725
Standerton Campus	53	2936	2989
Total Number of People Assisted by the College for Career Guidance			**11219**

Source for the tables Gert Sibande TVET College 2014 Annual Report – 18 March 2015

Gugu Mahlangu is a Lecturer at Gert Sibande TVET College and a Masters Student at the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg in a course jointly offered by CERT
Thanks to Dr Lesley Powell for comments on this article

On the Role of Post School Education and Training Educators

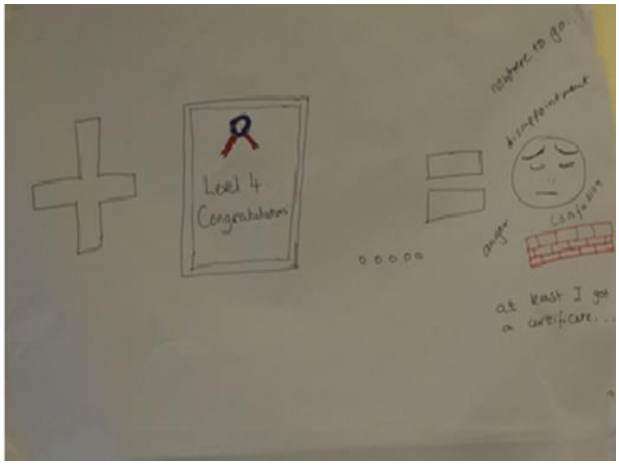
Sonya Leurquain-Steyn

What is the purpose of education? And what is the role of the educator? These are two of the many questions which have informed and guided our understanding of the data gathered as part of the Emerging Voices 2 project. Indeed, they have compelled us to question the assumptions that educators and students within the Post School Education and Training (PSET) sector have regarding their roles as educators and students and required us to explore their understanding of the purpose of education in their lives- both as it currently exists and as they would imagine it to be. The latter question will form the basis of discussion in this paper; the former question, although very broad in scope[7], will be used to argue that the education system needs educators who are able to teach confidently within a critical pedagogical paradigm.

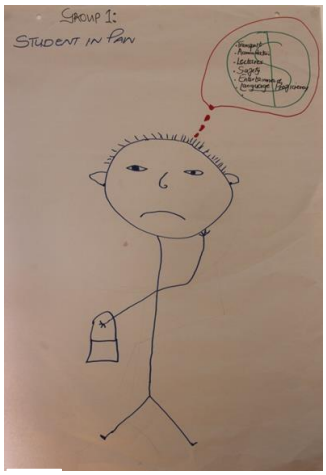
Consider the pictures below, drawn by ABET and TVET educators and TVET students in response to a question which required them to depict a typical student entering their respective institutions for the first time.

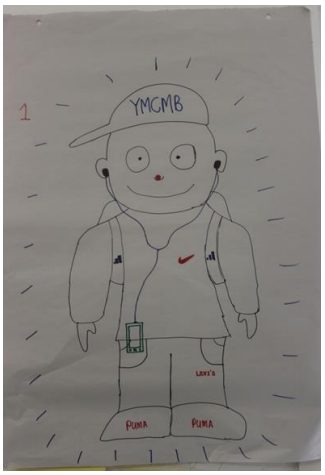
A

B



Pictures drawn by ABET educators





C D

Pictures drawn by TVET lecturers and TVET students, respectively

In picture A, ABET educators unwittingly depict what Paulo Freire referred to as the banking model of education. In it, to the right, one can see a stick figure which represents an educator, throwing ideas and concepts into the heads of their students on the left hand side of the picture. The students have incompletely drawn, "half" heads, with blank expressions on their faces as seen by the horizontal lines depicting their eyes and mouths. Here students are seen as empty containers into which educators "deposit" knowledge. This was confirmed by educators describing how they would "throw" ideas and concepts into the heads/ minds of students and hope that they "hit"- acknowledging that often they would "miss" instead. It is clearly evident in this image that knowledge is drilled into the minds of students with the expectation of regurgitation during examinations. This "knowledge" is completely decontextualized and often alien to the learner- confirmed by one ABET educator who said; "I say Pythagoras and miss" implying that students have not understood certain mathematical concepts due to the term "Pythagoras" which is foreign to them.

The problem with this model of education, largely adopted within mainstream forms of education, is that it suppresses critical thinking and engagement. Students have no ownership in their knowledge but instead are passive recipients. This is in sharp contrast to the government's vision for the sector as described in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, in which the Minister states that the sector…

> '…should not only provide knowledge and skills… [I]t should also contribute to developing thinking citizens, who can function effectively, creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society. They should have an understanding of their society, and be able to participate fully in its political, social and cultural life (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013, my underscore).'

Within picture A, one is also confronted with the dominant ideology which depicts the relationship between education and the acquisition of jobs within the formal labour economy as a liner one. Indeed mainstream hegemony dictates that education serves the labour market. This line of reasoning is clearly depicted within the picture by the thought bubble filled with the words "better job please" and the dollar sign, encircled by the word "skills".

[7]It is not within the scope of this paper to investigate this question in depth. It is also not the position of the author that there is a single, absolute answer to this question. The angle from which this paper argues presents one of many possible solutions and points to a possible solution.

Improving one's "skills" is therefore seen as a mean to secure a 'better job' and consequently, more money. Reality, however, couldn't be further from this. Despite a myriad examples which challenge this commonly held belief, educators are still implicated in uncritically thrusting students through this broken system which depicts the transition from school to work as a linear one (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011; Brown, Green & Lauder, 2001). There is no guarantee of employment in the formal labour market; employment has become more and more precarious forcing many people to work for low wages just to keep their jobs- this is also depicted in picture A, by a student wearing an orange garment, synonymous with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). In discussions with community members, it was explained how EPWP workers are employed for about 8 days per month and receive in the region of R76 per day. Contracts are terminated once the specific project they have been working on has ended.

The dominant discourse of our time would lead one to believe that the greatest challenge fueling mass unemployment is the lack of requisite skills needed for these jobs (Allais & Nathan, 2014; Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011; Brown, Green & Lauder, 2001). This makes it difficult for industry to employ more people as job seekers are not skilled enough- or don't have the right skills- for available jobs. This discourse permeates society deeply despite evidence to the contrary which clearly indicates that education levels over the last few years have been on the rise; (StatsSA, 2014; Treat, 2014) forcing even graduates into unemployment (Baatjes, 2014).

In considering picture B, educators essentially state that a typical student graduating from ABET classes is confronted with the reality that their ABET certificate does not translate into a job. In fact, they are met with a "brick wall" and struck by feelings of "disappointment", "anger" "confusion" and a realization that they have "nowhere to go". Educators need to start asking what the purpose of education is, if the apparent "skills" learnt become useless in the face of unemployment. They need to critically examine their roles as educators: do they merely maintain the status quo by teaching uncritically? Or do they understand the role of education as a form of emancipation through critically engaging with the complex issues that learners face in society?

The second set of pictures (pictures C and D) made by TVET lecturers and students highlights the dehumanizing nature of the current education system. In picture C, lecturers describe a typical student as having all of the "bling" while exhibiting a "silly smile" associated with their "unrealistic" expectations and views of the world; they wear branded clothing to symbolize their "bad priorities" and earphones depict how students don't listen to lecturers. Students however label their diagram of the same student entering the college for the first time as "student in pain". No focus is given to the glitzy clothing lecturers identified; the "silly smile" is replaced with a frown and a hand on the chin depicting deep thought given to the issues in the balloon to the right of the student's head- namely "transport, accommodation, lectures, safety, entertainment and language proficiency". Similarly to the ABET educators, TVET lecturers view their students as objects- empty vessels. For TVET lecturers, students are empty vessels bereft of any value as human beings; they have no positive attributes. The lecturers' depiction of a typical student reflects no insight or consideration of the experiences or realities of their students' lives.

In effect students are further dehumanised by the very system that should be serving them. The prevailing education system is biased in favour of serving the needs of the formal economy. It is a system which churns out labourers and not citizens; which sees people as 'human capital' and not as human-beings.

It can similarly be argued that educators too are dehumanized by an education system which compels them to view their students in this way. ABET educators depict themselves as walking a "tightrope" in terms of meeting the demands of their community and the demands to the Department of Education; both ABET & TVET lecturers describe very limited timeframes in which to complete a large amount of work, preventing them from engaging meaningfully with their students. In these ways, the education system dehumanises students and educators alike- seeing the former in terms of human capital and the latter as agents of maintain the status quo.

Educators need to encourage their students "to read the word and the world" to quote Freire- they should encourage a critical understanding of the world such that students are able to expose the problems within it; educators need to stimulate and encourage agency so that their students are ultimately able to do something to change it. Educators working within the critical paradigm understand that knowledge is not just about the transfer of facts from a textbook into the minds of their learners- the banking model of education referred to earlier. Neither is education obtainable in isolation from its context, because knowledge is deeply shaped by context. Educators using critical pedagogy know that education is bound by love. It is an essential aspect of what it means to be human- the capacity to feel emotively. Education is thus an all-encompassing endeavor which involves both the mind and the heart of the learner and educator.

Educators need to be deeply engaged in critical pedagogy and help develop institutions in which educators and students alike feel respected, valued and free to express opinions and engage with critical social issues without fear of ostracism or failure.

Sonya Leurquain-Steyn (CIPSET)

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The Language of 'Skills Shortage' and the Insufficiency of 'Skills Shortage' Language

Siphelo Ngcwangu and David Balwanz

Notes from the Q & A Session

On April 15, 2015, the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg invited Siphelo Ngcwangu and David Balwanz to present research titled *The language of 'skills shortage' and the insufficiency of shortage language: seven problems with the focus on 'scarce skills*.' The research is a critique of a recent DHET publication, *List of occupations in high demand: 2014.* The well attended seminar was moderated by Prof Salim Vally. Questions were posed by an animated audience which included members of SETAs, the Gauteng Legislature, trade unionists, unemployed youth, non-governmental organisations and academics. This article provides a summary of the seminar question and answer session.

Research summary. We agree with government that skills development is important to national, community and individual development and well-being. However, we believe that the DHET publication in question offers a narrow and inadequate definition of skill, is based on analysis which rests on highly contested theoretical assumptions and utilizes a methodology with significant biases. In our analysis, SETA sector strategic plans reflect these biases, but also provide evidence which contradict the dominant scarce skills discourse and point to a broader set of skills development needs and community development priorities.

Summary of question and answer session. Questions are in *italics.*

The presentation suggests that we have a lack of information and clarity in how to guide young people. What information is there to provide good career guidance?

We think that career guidance focuses too much on telling learners 'what to do' and not enough on broadly exposing learners to different knowledge, skills and occupational areas. Learners, especially younger learners, need opportunities to experience new things, try out new skills and reflect on their own interests. Career guidance tests are useful, but they also have drawbacks. People often focus on 'hot' careers: jobs in sectors which appear to be growing. While there are new opportunities in some fields (e.g., e-retail and financial services) it is unclear how many new and stable jobs will be created, especially since some of the functions in these fields can be outsourced and because of the general increase in casualised and contract work. While 'hot' careers are interesting, we should also remain mindful of jobs which are generally more secure and for which there is a regular replacement demand, such as in education, health, public safety, retail management, media, and engineering. While many people want 'more data' on 'skills demand' we argue that effective career guidance should help students understand who they are, remind them that they live in an insecure world, and highlight that each choice they make has pros and cons.

Are we seeing education inflation, a skills shortage, or both in South Africa?

This is a challenging question. However, we want to emphasize that phrases like 'education inflation' and 'skills shortage' both suggest a narrow definition of education: that is, that education be valued vis-à-vis its relation to a market economy. If we use this narrow lens, we could say that South Africa is seeing both education inflation, and in some very specific cases, a potential shortage of qualified professionals. On the first issue, we recognize that education is a *positional* good. That is, as access to formal sector jobs becomes more competitive, people will increase their level of education to better compete for these jobs. If the purpose of public investment in PSET is only to help people become more competitive for a job (which may only require a Matric), then we should question whether this additional education is necessary. That said, strong arguments can be made for expanding access to post-schooling and/or creating a surplus of skills.

Balwanz and Ngcwangu (2014) offer a critique of the skills shortage discourse. Here we emphasize three main points. First, in a dynamic society and economy, we should expect an evolving demand for skills. Many countries grant visas to workers with highly specialized skills, or send students overseas to learn specialised skills. Second, many examples of 'shortage' in South Africa are contested. The footnoted reference offers an example where a professional association of engineers argues that there are sufficient South African engineers available to complete work that was contracted to foreign workers.[8] Third, in some cases, a 'skills shortage' may reflect a particular case in point: for example, one seminar attendee indicated that, at a particular point in time, there was a shortage of 1,500 expert welders. While this may be true, a particular 'case' should not be used to characterise the developmental challenges of a society with over five million unemployed and discouraged workers.

Will the youth wage subsidy address the jobs problem?

A recent study by the UCT-based South African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) indicates that the youth wage subsidy, recently renamed the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) 'did not have any statistically significant and positive effects on youth employment probabilities,' (Ranchhod & Finn 2014). The authors of the report suggest the ETI is essentially an expensive subsidy to business and suggest that it be scrapped. These findings echo an earlier argument from Niall Reddy (2014). This critique should bring us back to the drawing board and forces us to ask: 'how else do we conceptualise the problems facing poor and working class communities?' Given the many other social problems facing communities (e.g., infrastructure, service delivery, and social cohesion) we argue that resources spent on ETI could be put to a much better use.

However, we also want to note, that there is a large body of research which indicates that 'work experience' and 'learning on the job' (i.e., internships, learnerships, apprenticeships, and work-integrated learning) can play an important role in helping unemployed youth learn skills and transition to stable employment. Wedekind and Muterero (2014) provide examples of effective partnerships between industry and post-school institutions. Such partnerships will not solve unemployment, but could promote more effective and contextualised learning and skills development.

[8] http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2015/03/02/sa-engineers-condemn-hiring-of-cubans-for-water-projects

How does DHET identify scarce skills? There are a lot of skills in the community that are not being recognized. We need to have a debate on this shortage of skills, because skills are there in the community, but they are not being recognized and identified.

This comment shows that there is a dimension of power here that we need to ask, 'who defines skill?' and 'who determines what makes a skill valuable?' Post-school institutions often focus on 'formal qualifications,' while DHET and businesses may focus on 'occupational' needs. However, individuals in poor and working class communities often have skills, interests and priorities which are unacknowledged in dominant perspectives.

For example, the informal sector employs over 4 million workers in South Africa, many in small, informal and community businesses. Post-school institutions could play an important role in supporting skills development in these businesses. *Another seminar participant asks whether we do enough to 'problematise' the concept of skills.* This is an important point: in the dominant perspective, a skill is a skill if it can be utilized in a market economy. However, story-telling, trauma counseling, creativity, or organizing protests could also be defined as skills.

What about outsourcing?

This question shows how broad global, social and economic trends are disrupting the 'education equal jobs' discourse. Two recent books, *The Precariat* (Standing 2011) and *The Global Auction* (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton 2011) speak to how trends in globalisation, casualisation of work, and outsourcing have played a role in reducing social protection in many countries. Outsourcing, contract work and casualisation are cost-cutting measures. However, we need to remind ourselves that the savings often comes from the reduction of salary, benefits and security to laborers who often have limited social or political power. While middle-class workers may see themselves as immune from these phenomena, as more people gain higher levels of education, skilled and semi-skills work may become increasingly outsourced and casualised.

The DHET list suggests that SA is facing a scarcity of engineers, while the merSETA is suggesting that a shortage may not exist. Please explain this discrepancy.

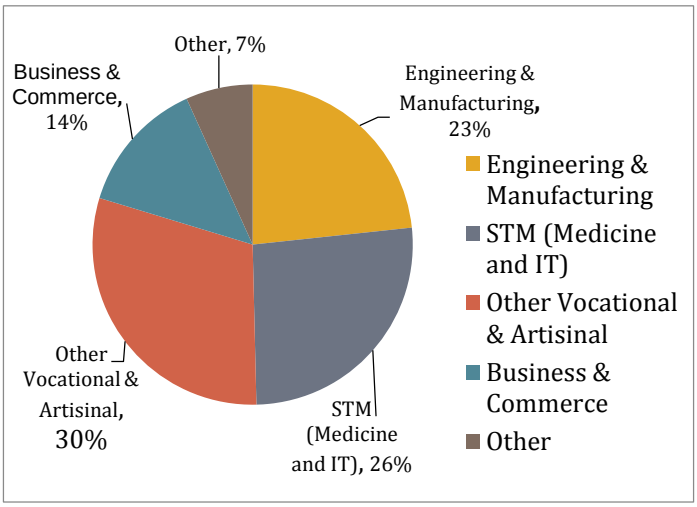
To be included on the 2014 DHET list, an occupation must be recognised in the Organising Framework for Occupations, be classified as 'professional', require three or more years of post-school education, and be classified by a SETA as a 'scarce' or pivotal skill. Notably, a 'pivotal' skill may not be scarce, but rather be designated as 'critical' to the functioning of the sector. The DHET list was based on a review of documents, many of which focused on the importance of engineering, and was vetted with several organisations, four of which explicitly represent engineers or the engineering profession. From our perspective, these factors appear to be the main reasons explaining the presence of a large number of engineering positions on the list of occupations in demand.

Referencing recent retrenchments, and limited growth prospects in the merSETA sector, the merSETA SSP states, 'the development of [former] 'scarce skills' lists ... did not in fact reflect genuinely 'scarce occupations' with any level of accuracy' (2013:129). It goes on, stating, 'the priority skills list presented in the SSP 2012/13 was not scientifically confirmed or quantified.' Instead the list was based on industry stakeholders 'intimate knowledge of working in the various sectors' and that added to the list were 'skills that their companies were struggling to find, which are difficult to train for and which are very important for the growth of the sector,' (merSETA 2013:130). We are not saying that South Africa will not need electrical engineers in the future. We are saying that the DHET list does not clearly quantify supply-side (education production) and demand side (e.g., market demand) issues nor does it offer a compelling argument as to why some occupations are included, or not included, on the list.

But skills are also in the humanities. Don't we also need people who can write from the humanities? What is the influence of this 'scarce skills' discourse on the humanities?

We're not sure, but the list, which seeks to influence higher education clearly shows a bias toward STEM, vocational and business/commerce occupational fields. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of occupations included in the DHET Occupations in demand (2014) list. Of the 133 occupations listed, 30% are vocational or artisanal, 26% are science, technology, maths (including occupations in health and IT), 23% are in engineering, and 14% are in business and commerce. A mere nine of the occupations (7%) included in the list are not in these categories. Many government policy and discussion documents have a language which suggests government support of the humanities, but not this one.

Figure 1: Breakdown of occupations included in DHET Occupations in demand list (2014)[9]



Source: Authors analysis of occupations in demand list

Why do we keep following a scarce skills discourse if, as you say, it is so misleading? Are there international examples of countries which have pushed away from human capital theory?

One of the reasons that the 'scarce skills' discourse persists is that it hard to argue against it: Of course we need skills. The skills discourse fits Gramsci's notion of 'common sense'- when hegemonic assumptions become part of a belief system and accepted as truth. We argue that this discourse needs to be unpacked. In the dominant discourse, addressing scarce skills is seen as the solution to national and human development. The dominant measure of national development is change in gross domestic product, GDP. However, GDP growth measures growth in national consumption. Promoting economic growth, increased consumption, at any cost, as the main goal of national development presents several problems. Two obvious issues are: economic growth by itself does not address issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment, and second, economic growth frequently leads to environmental degradation.

Because of these critiques, there have been several efforts to construct different measures of national *well-being*. These alternative measures recognize the contribution of income and monetary wealth to human and national well-being, but also identify other measures. In the 1970s, the government of Bhutan

[9]This chart is based on a rough analysis and categorization of occupations included in the occupations in demand list. It is not meant to explicitly characterise the list, but rather to evidence the relative absence of humanities and social sciences occupations.

conceptualized a *Gross National Happiness index*, designed to measure the development of an economy based on Buddhist Spiritual values instead of Western economic and material wealth development. A more recent development has been the creation of the *Social Progress Index* which identifies the extent to which a country contributes to (i) fulfilling basic human needs, (ii) providing foundations for well-being, and (iii) providing opportunity.[10] What these initiatives show us is that the notions of human and national well-being, and how we conceptualise the contribution of skills to a society and economy, are up for debate.

We need science skills for the development of the economy. We have plans to develop fuel cells and operationalize the square kilometer array, so we need some manpower planning. We can't demonise the sciences. In the late 2000s, Eskom brought foreign nationals to do welding, so we need some manpower planning.

We agree that skills are vital for the production and reproduction of society. We also agree that targeted science or technology initiatives, such as those mentioned in this question, will require many highly skilled professionals. Where we part company with the perspective of the questioner is in whether a 'scarce skills' discourse accurately explains the broad problems facing the economy, or, rather, simply speaks to a specific need (our argument).

One of the complexities of technological change is that it may create a slight demand for high skill workers, while at the same time, de-skill a large number of workers. The knowledge economy discourse paints a picture of a transition to a high-wage, high-skills economy, and implies that there will be a growth in demand for these jobs. However many of the fastest growing sectors in so-called knowledge economies provide insecure service sector jobs (Collins 2013).The shortage of 'welders' and artisans is a frequent topic in the press. However, if you look closely at the numbers, that shortage is quantified as perhaps 1,500 welders, or 40,000 artisans, small figures when you look at the total number of unemployed and discouraged workers in South Africa.[11] Notably, these shortages are often ephemeral, based on market demands: once the welders complete the work on Eskom's new plants, will there then be a surplus of 'unemployable' artisans, with skills irrelevant to the growing services sector?[12]

You have critiqued the 'scarce skills' discourse, methods and planning exercises, but can you suggest alternatives?

We should not expect skills planning to solve structural problems associated with capitalism and power inequality: these include poverty, social and economic inequality, and unequal access to varied forms of power (e.g., political power, wealth, ideological influence, etc.). If a scarce skills discourse prevails, post school education and training (PSET) will continue to respond to the needs of power and capital; ignore the demands of poor and working class communities; and perpetuate marginalization and exclusion – especially of rural communities.

That said, we agree that skills are vital, that PSET should ensure the development of a new cadre of professionals, and that some future planning is important. We only argue that such projections be modest in their claims. Sector specific and SIP occupational demand projections may be of use: how many secondary school teachers will we need over the next decade? How many engineers and of what types are needed for successful execution of government SIPs? If South Africa wants to promote 'one million green' jobs, what education and training is needed? In what industries are these jobs likely to be located? Also, while we want to be mindful of broad trends (e.g., use of cell phone technology, potential demand for software coders) we have to remain mindful that the impact of technology (among other factors) on labour demand at a national level can be difficult to predict.

How do you deal with the issue of social justice?

We did not sufficiently answer this very important question during the seminar. We leave it for a future debate.

Siphelo Ngcwangu (REAL) and David Balwanz (CERT)

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[10] http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi

[11] http://www.salabournews.co.za/index.php/home/archives/887-eskom-still-reliant-on-foreign-welders-at-medupi-and-kusile-fin24.html

[12] For a discussion of the changes likely to significantly affect artisanal jobs please refer to the recent booklet by Wildschut, Meyer and Akoojee (2015). Changing Artisanal Identity and Status, HSRC Press.

Post-School Education in the Vaal: Identifying possibilities for change

By Sandile Zwane, David Balwanz, Itumeleng Moabi

We begin by sharing three conclusions. First, while we met many dedicated educators and students during our research, we came to the conclusion that post-school education does not sufficiently serve the needs and interests of poor and working class communities in the Vaal. Our second conclusion: even if we do everything possible to 'improve implementation' of post-schooling (e.g., produce more graduates with qualifications), it will not be enough to meet the needs of the communities in which they are located. Put another way, education alone cannot solve the social and economic problems of the Vaal. Our third conclusion: youth and educators are becoming increasingly disillusioned, disempowered, and cynical about the promise of education to lead to a better life. Troublingly, this disillusion extends to expectations of local government – which several participants suggested was uninterested and self-serving. This article shares how we came to these conclusions while also identifying possibilities for change.

This article is based on findings from Emerging Voices 2 (EV2) project of the Education Policy Consotium (EPC). EV2 is a two-year DHET-funded research project which asks 'how can post-school education better meet the needs of poor and working class communities in South Africa?'[13] This article draws on findings from data collected from 2013-2014 in the Vaal. We gratefully acknowledge the support and participation of Vaal University of Technology, Sedibeng FET College (Sebokeng Campus), several ABET centres, the youth who we engaged with and several youth organisations and NGO's in the Vaal, Thetha FM, Sebokeng zone 13 library and its staff and the EV2 Youth Research Learning and Advocacy team in completing this research.

The power of myth: Does a qualification equal a bright future?

Our research findings conflict with a powerful myth: that expansion of post-school education is the solution to the problems facing South Africa's poor and working class communities. Individuals internalise a similar myth: if you work hard in school and get a qualification, then you will be rewarded with a job in the formal sector and material wealth. There are three problems with these myths. The first problem is the persistence of unemployment in South Africa. Compared to 20 years ago, a much larger percentage of the population in South Africa has gained access to post-school education. In spite of this positive trend, official unemployment in South Africa remains at 35%: the same in 2014 as it was in 1994 (Stats SA 2014).In 2011, of the 85,594 economically active youth (15–35 years) in the Emfuleni Local Municipality, 45% were unemployed (Stats SA). During our research we identified a large number of students who, while they once believed in this myth, are increasingly finding it to be full of holes. One student notes, 'it would really help though to study something that will enable you to live a better life at the end of your studies. Education was once called a key to success but now… No,' (VUT Student A).

The second issue: the myth promotes individualism and a 'qualifications' focus. A VUT student identifies this issue, stating, 'they'll say you need a degree if you want to be employed. If you come with a degree they say you need five years' experience to be considered for employment,' (VUT Student B). In this scenario, education becomes a 'positional good': to be competitive for scarce formal sector jobs, individuals seek increasingly higher levels of qualification and experience. This situation also places the blame on the individual for their own unemployment: a person is unemployed because they studied the wrong subject or didn't study hard enough – not because unemployment is a structural feature of the economy.

A third issue: the myth is silent on alternative explanations for the persistence of poverty and underdevelopment. Business interest in increasing profit is a double-edged sword: profit may enrich owners or shareholders, but savings may come from reducing labour costs based on policies of casualization, hiring contract workers or hiring fewer workers with degree qualifications. One interviewee states that in some cases, industry prefers to hire less qualified individuals for certain types of work, because they do not want to pay VUT graduates the remuneration determined by the government (VUT Student C).

Why do these myths persist? Because, even with these broad structural challenges, at an individual level, getting a post-school qualification remains one of the best ways for an individual to improve his or her life chances. While many youth expressed disillusionment with post-school education, they see no alternative. Instead they ask, 'Do we try our luck, or just give up?' (TVET College Student A).

Is education about doing what you're told or finding what you love?

Nearly all young people we spoke with said that education can play an important role in helping them to realisetheir dreams. But dreams are not created in a vacuum: as evidenced by the quotes below, students' dreams are shaped by several influences.

> There's this sort of culture in my family, if you have once failed in younger [earlier] grades, you have to do commerce subjects but if you didn't fail, you have to do science subjects. So I didn't fail, I was forced to do science at school. (VUT Student D)

> So then my parents now notice [that] but [name of student] is good in mathematics … she should become an accountant. But meanwhile I'm more into arts and design. (VUT Student E)

> Post-schooling institutions are too rigid. We need flexibility. We should be allowed to follow our dreams, take our chances and learn. We are not being challenged to speak our minds or showcase our talents, instead we are given modules that were created by some professors. (TVET College Student B)

Schooling here is associated with a set of 'informal' rules: the purpose of schooling is to get qualifications, some subjects are for 'intelligent' students, and student participation, as well as their interests and experiences are under-valued. For students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, there may be pressure from family members to earn an income. We do not draw on this data to argue that students should follow one or another particular path. However, we think it is important to highlight that students often feel pressure to 'do what they're told' as opposed to using education as a process to discover who they are and what they're interested in.

[13]A full description of EV2 is provided in the first edition of this journal.

The wishes of students and lecturers: support, resources, meaningful and practical learning

Students and lecturers want support, sufficient resources and learning that is meaningful and practical. Many students identified a strong need for academic and career guidance as well as counseling to help them deal with financial as well as personal and psychological issues. Here we emphasize that students from marginalised backgrounds face multiple disadvantages to succeeding in post-school education and thus require additional academic and personal support – especially in their first years of study (Johnson and Hlatshwayo 2015).

Nearly all students we spoke with emphasised the need for more practical experience, sufficient learning materials, more exposure to industry and work experience and better job-placement support. One student says, 'what is a technical college without technical skills/practical? You cannot teach me to operate a computer theoretically – No, not in a technical college! We don't have resources, we are taught only theory,' (TVET College Student C). One lecturer notes, 'industry does not want to cooperate with us, they don't want to take our learners and give them practical training,' (TVET College Lecturer). Here we see the tension between 'improved implementation' and structural unemployment. In fact, according to DHET (2013), one of the reasons the NCV includes practical training at the TVET college is because of 'difficulties in finding opportunities [for training] in the labourmarket,'(p. 14).

We also collected data on informal sector activities and from informal youth development organisations. In these spaces, people spoke of 'meaningful' skills: they sought education related to their personal and communal context; their interest in making life easier; and their goals of supporting their families and strengthening communities. Here skills development may be related to RDP houses (e.g., carpentry, electricity, plumbing, or design), using technology, substance abuse counseling, or community organising. In some cases, a post-school qualification is necessary, however, in other cases, other forms of skills development may be more appropriate.

Strengthening a social change process

Communities in the Vaal have a large number of unmet developmental challenges. Based on our research we believe that DHET's expansion of access to TVET colleges, community colleges and universities can play an important role in the social and economic development of poor and working class communities in the Vaal. Where we part company with government policy is that we question the belief that individualised and market-oriented solutions are the only answer. Based on our research, we offer two proposals.

Post-school institutions must be more deliberate in engaging with communities, inclusive of all groups, to identify local education and development priorities. For example, TVET colleges could establish centres for Local Economic Development (LED) and Local Community and Social Development (LCD) with missions to listen and respond to local developmental priorities as well as house expertise and research capability in how to design, establish, and run enterprises such as small scale businesses, cooperatives, and social service initiatives. In one of our research dialogues, ABET lecturers suggested,

> We can also go out and interview the community about the skills they want to learn in our centre. Already we have ancillary health care which is health, they learn more about health promotion. We also have sewing, plumbing and fashion design. (ABET lecturer A)

Wedekind and Muterero (2014) provide one example of how TVET colleges can co-develop skills programmes with local industries. During our research, we found a large number of skilled people, many of whom are unemployed or who work in the informal sector. TVET colleges could re-vitalise their mission by thinking critically about local social issues (e.g., poverty, crime, joblessness) and develop new ideas and programmes which harness existing local skills and potential in positive ways.

Our second proposal is: *Post-schooling should place an increased priority on exposure to a variety of learning experiences and helping young people recognise and explore their talents and potentials.* One student notes,

> You should expose learners, rather than talking too much, so after the exposure then you can try talking to them, maybe like career exhibitions at an early age, going to places like Mittal and all those kind of stuff, and after they see what's going on, that's when you can start saying, I'm talking to them, trying to open their mind and listen to what they think about it. (VUT Student G)

Here practical experience, work experience, participation in student groups and activities, and exposure to a variety of disciplines and activities are important, not only because they may help a student get a job, but because they help students learn who they are, what they are good at and where they want to go in life. We believe that such a change is important if we want learners to develop the agency needed to become responsible adults and citizens.

One major shortcoming of our research is that we did not sufficiently interrogate issues facing young women. Some of the issues requiring further research include the persistence of violence and sexual violence against women in communities and at institutions of education; sexual exploitation of women in the community and at work; and the persistence of gender stereotypes in academic and work settings. One of our interviewees argued that youth needed to be reminded that their freedom isn't something which 'fell from heaven' (ABET Lecturer B). In this sentiment, he summarises a new mission for post school education: engaging youth in an ongoing and collective mission of social change and transformation.

Sandile Zwane, David Balwanz, Itumeleng Moabi (CERT)

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Data

Sedibeng FET College Dialogue: Students and lecturers

VUT Student Dialogue: Students

ABET Dialogue

The Dialectic: Therapy Is Education in Action

Keith. U.C. Appolis

For too long South Africans have had their emotional health or wholesomeness compartmentalised as either non-existent or very separate from education, religion, socio-politics and socioeconomic involvement. Any work and serious engagement in this arena was and still is seen as a nuisance and an aside to our effectiveness and total health. Instead, even in the supposed new dispensation, for the healing, liberation and health of our peoples, political and economic betterment has become key. Yet our investment in the emotional wellbeing of our people has had no prominence.

To engage in the learning process is widely considered the noblest yet most profound enactment of empowerment proper. By the same token this same learning process can and has been applied to disempower and oppress leaving many, even nations, mis-educated and permanently scarred human beings in its wake.

The South African landscape is an example of this latter, and as such, an education based on intentional and genuinely revolutionary measures is a must to ensure the liberation of its peoples. Note for instance how Clement Vontress, eminent African American scholar, alludes to the importance of education within the therapeutic activity when dealing with the "underprivileged". However, what Vontress does not take seriously is the fact that traditional education in its agenda, content, and theoretical framework is not and has not been created for the oppressed. So will such education not cause more harm, rather than being therapeutic? As I see it, neither therapy nor education can ever be other than in a dialectical relationship, especially for the context of the oppressed. Simply put, education and therapy, to be effective and relevant for oppressed populations, demands a therapy-education dialectic.

Postman and Weingartner in their book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1980) posit that education and learning has various activities throughout its exercise. Two of these are crucial: "crap detecting" and "learning to ask questions rather than learning answers. " The former is the activity of sorting through material, being critical and critically aware, or better still, being suspicious when confronted with data. The latter implies that education has become an activity of teaching persons to memorise answers instead of asking questions which ignite the quest for exploration and the creation of more questions. These theorists' insights are phenomenal, but yet their agenda of education does not address the oppressed and their circumstances.

Invariably, it is imperative that a different learning process be given birth in this post-apartheid South Africa; a learning process wherein the shaping and the reshaping of this educational model remains in the hands of both learners and educators alike; hence the necessity of this dialectic: *therapy as education in action.*

Fact is, therapy and education is not only intertwined, but enjoys a very special relationship: dialectical and mutually exclusive. For if these are to become vibrant and dynamic entities, they must remain connected. And it is in this state of being connected, yet mutually exclusive, that their power to make wholesomeness and growth of personhood resides.

In the same vein eminent psychologist, Carl Rogers, in *Freedom To Learn*, makes a profound contribution when he states that education seems to occur where there is an environment of freedom to learn. On the other hand, for education to happen, Rogers demands that particular factors be in place to enhance learning and lead to real education. These factors are trusting relationships, positive regard, unconditional acceptance, genuineness, and empathic interactions. All of these are the same basic elements that make up his 'person-centered' therapy. Thus for Rogers, the therapy-education dialectic prevails for both therapy and education.

However, while Rogers speaks to the therapy-education dialectic in his understanding of education, he does not consider the context of the oppressed. For the context of the oppressed demands a therapy-education dialectic, not as an alternative for better education, but for life. Moreover, both therapy and education involve formal and informal activities. The therapy-education dialectic is for gaining and then sustaining the personhood denied not only by traditional education, but also via a myriad other forms of oppression on a daily basis. Therefore the therapy-education dialectic embraced by Revolutionary Therapy (Appolis, 1995) is not only central to its therapeutic activity, but an absolute necessity because of the oppressive reality of the people which has lead to economic, intellectual and psychological deprivation. Thus, the therapy-education dialectic is deeply resonant to the contextual reality of the oppressed in South Africa. For it is their livelihood and their very existence that is perennially disrupted and disenfranchised. It is they who are made impoverished, the unemployed with their cultures submerged, and families fragmented. Therefore education needs the therapy and therapy needs the education to effect the de-education and the re-education of the oppressed.

Indubitably, the therapy-education dialectic is not only engaging the oppressed as participants, but involves effecting structural changes within their context. The therapy-education dialectic is revolutionary and demands revolutionary action and changes. In all, the therapy-education dialectic leads to liberation and education proper.

To this end two theorists regarding education come to mind: Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. In his book, Deschooling Society, Illich uses the school paradigm to illustrate what institutional education has done to society. He says that education needs to be informal rather than institutionalised in order to effect liberation. He suggests peer-learning networks, which would involve the entire community: those with skills and resources share them by handing them down to others. Thus education is not a commodity held captive by a few, the "experts"; it is inclusive rather than exclusive.

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire clearly explains the oppressiveness of institutionalized education. While he does not completely refute formal education, he puts a higher premium on informal education, especially with regard to the oppressed population. For him, education's primary objective is to liberate the oppressed and guide them into becoming shapers of their own history. Thus they will become powerful in person and direct the content and intent of their own education.

Clearly, then, the ideas of Illich and Freire embrace the therapy-education dialectic for what it embodies: it demands a constant interaction between education and therapy; it requires revolutionary practices, meaning that both therapy and education by their interaction effect liberation and therefore structural change within the oppressed community. The therapy-education dialectic echoes the words of Freire: that neither education nor therapy can be neutral. Rather, they are partial to one ultimate objective: the liberation and wholeness of the oppressed, of those fragmented families struck down and kept captive in disenfranchisement, whether it be psychological, cultural, educational, political, or economic.

Inevitably, this approach to therapy and education begs the question: how, what, and where? So how do we embark on this mammoth process laid at the door of every activist, or better still, revolutionary – the choice of this distinct naming is deliberate. In this struggle there is no place for armchair revolutionaries, opportunists, or accidental revolutionaries since active engagement is key. I am reminded about another revolutionary, Camilo Torres, a Roman Catholic Priest during the height of the

liberation struggle in South America when he told his congregation at a Eucharist that he could not serve Holy Communion while his congregants are dying outside fighting in the liberation struggle. He thus left the church to join the liberation movement and consequently died alongside his congregants.

No mere lip service to fast becoming buzzwords such as 'Ubuntu', 'liberation' and others, will suffice. In the words of eminent Black theologian James Cone in a speech delivered at Vanderbilt University in the 1990's he stated: " …being in solidarity with the oppressed is to live with them, talk like them, and smell like them…" If this is not claiming therapy and education being turned inside-out, upside-down, then nothing is or ever will be!

The therapy education dialectic has to become the advance guard and the rearguard for our thinking, rethinking and doing when engaged in the learning and therapeutic activity. Theory and method are to be informed in active engagement with self and community – the experience of the oppressed is to become the bedrock for developing strategies and curricula to lead us out toward liberation proper as we effect actions toward structural change in academia and society. Now we will be remiss to merely educate without addressing the so-deeply buried scars of yesteryear and even more current ones. Healing and liberation cannot become a reality without our emotional upheaval being attended to in becoming a healthy space for continued growth and meaning making.

A recent study over a period of two years in the HIV/AIDS arena makes the point that after many years of intervention government still merely concentrates on legislation for medical relief and legal protection but persistently refuses to acknowledge and address the havoc wreaked on the lives of the affected and infected families - ignoring their emotional distress. (Weihs, Meyer-Weitz, Baasner-Weihs, Appolis, Ntlangu, 2013)

And even post this study and its presentation at a national forum, emotional trauma remains a constant companion of the HIV+ population; an emotional circumstance that at times proves to be quite debilitating, this population is not provided regular therapeutic intervention. And the lack of supportive structures of a therapeutic nature does not help to assuage the dilemma.

The necessity and impact of therapeutic interventions shows significant changes over all its phases. Through therapy we learn that shame needs much more time and work in therapy to effect change within this vulnerable population.

The often repeated dictum in South Africa: 'You, or a peoples cannot grow or change unless they become self-critical' pales in the face of the therapy education dialectic. For in this latter, we go beyond mere self-criticism, an exercise which while healthy often stops with the present circumstance and the individual per se. In the therapy education dialectic we have to look in the mirror, touching the mirror and then stepping outside of the mirror. The action-reflection-action activity starts with the self but always involves the otherselves[14] or community in the creation of new theory and the method to be tested, critiqued and implemented as we push for liberation proper for all.

The therapeutic activity informs the learning activity and vice versa for as we have fallen in love with self, our engagement with otherselves or community is informed and renewed. Coming back to the importance of a therapy and education in its practice, theory and method derived from the experience of the oppressed - the mirror experience of looking, touching and stepping outside is embedded in our painful journey with self and our involvement with community. With falling in love with self, I have to deal with my scars of the past so as to become effective in the present that transcends into the future as we recreate a learning process that is healthy for all. This effectively completes the dynamic loop: looking in the mirror, touching the mirror and stepping outside the mirror. It goes beyond mere self criticism, as while my personal growth and healing is vital, the new learning and the creation of new learning proceeds.

Turning to the what and the where of the therapy-education dialectic, allow me to roll these two into one as they are so beautifully portrayed in the work of Sapphire Community School and CIPSET (Centre for Integrated Post School Education and Training) both located in the Eastern Cape Province. The first, Sapphire Primary School after years of gradual yet painful growth has put in place systems for liberation and learning so that educators and learners, parents and volunteers are integrally connected and essential to learning. Further searching and planning by school management and prayer by the principal, the therapeutic intervention component are falling in place.

Via the Centre of Hope and Healing this institution applies itself to aggressively attend to the emotional wellbeing of their educators, learners, volunteers and parents. This task is humongous, but necessary and addressed one day at a time. Psychotherapeutic intervention, training, support on an individual or family or for groups have been made available to all – the Sapphire family - as well as the broader community. Throughout the constant refrain is: the dialect, therapy is education in action.

For instance, discipline has become a communal activity and not a mere learner to be disciplined - volunteers, learners, educators and families, through training and individual sessions are working on calming themselves to calm the school. This process will be ongoing and slow but its effects more permanent than the "quick fix" of merely punishing the identified perpetrator.

Also, addressing substance abuse among learners follows a similar therapeutic strategy, with the emphasis on identifying leadership to eventually assist in addressing this pandemic of substance abuse at primary schools.

For CIPSET via its CEP component the composite team – comprising CIPSET staff and community investigators – arrived at the need for the therapy agenda as essential in the educational endeavor. After a two-day reflection seminar, participants of their own volition presented themselves for working on emotional scars. This journey at its embryonic stage will in future yield a viable space for critical review especially about how it will impact the efficacy of participants in the learning interventions as well person-growth and wholesomenesss, as they interact with self and otherselves in meaning making within the oppressed populations of our nation.

In sum then, should our education or our therapy be devoid of the therapy-education dialectic, the effect will be nothing but an abject denial of opportunity for South Africans of their most basic constitutional right: a liberated peoples in a liberated country.

Keith. U.C. Appolis (CIPSET)

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[14] Otherselves are used in deliberate objection to the more accepted reference of 'them' and 'they' when referring to someone other than ourselves. Without fail the reference to 'self' remains coupled with pride and self-power. For we believe as liberated people that this sense of pride and power should be a constant when referring to our fellow human beings also. Hence the preference for otherself indicating at all times that other human beings are equal to self.

Closing address: Colloquium on Socially Engaged Scholarship

Held at the Missionvale Campus of NMMU on the 27 May 2015

Enver Motala

I have been asked to provide some concluding remarks to the day's proceedings and in doing so to capture some of the key issues that arose in the course of the deliberations today.

As we all know summaries are always partial since they reflect the proclivities, prejudices and the experiential background of the person doing the summary – in this case, myself. Others might have done this quite differently.

Let me start however by outlining what I thought were the purposes we set out to achieve today. I think we set out to examine three questions.

The **first** was to deepen our understanding, conceptualization, definition and even the theorization of the idea of **Socially Engaged Scholarship** - scholarship that engages the university in the production of knowledge through its co-construction with the communities of the university.

Secondly, we wanted to exemplify the problems of conceptualizing engaged scholarship though the practices of those who are directly involved in it. We wanted to see how the ideas about engaged scholarship are being taken forward in practice by academics and the communities of the university. This, we felt would allow us to understand the question of engaged scholarship in its diverse practices and further enrich our conceptualization and practice of engaged scholarship.

Thirdly, we wanted to explore the implications of engaged scholarship for the role of the university and by implication for that of its academics as researchers, teachers, and more generally as intellectuals and activists. And we wanted to understand this role at this historical conjuncture given the long history of institutions of higher learning, their evolution in the wide range of socio-historical contexts and the forces that have changed and propelled them over time. Universities have always reflected (sometimes by contestation) many of the ideas that are socially dominant at any particular time.

The presentations today went a long way towards the exploration of these questions and we learnt many important things which I will return to shortly. But we also learnt, **fourthly**, that there are many complex issues which could not be resolved in one such event and that we will have to continue to explore these so that we achieve greater clarity and understanding over time. These discussions can never be exhaustive since they are likely always to reveal new questions for deeper reflection and practice.

What are some of the things we learned from the various presentations?

Naturally it's not possible to reflect on everything and so I select just a few of the very important insights we got about socially engaged scholarship.

- Every presentation was based – even if not overtly – on some or other conception of change. As one of the presenters said, the work they did was intensely 'political'. Of course this was not in the party-political sense but more deeply in the sense of relating to the underlying values, principles, social philosophies and choices it sought to explore. Although the presentations reflected in some cases on the question of social change, they were inevitably also about political and economic change. If they were situated in the domain of changes to gendered relationships or the environment, they were simultaneously about political, economic, social, cultural and linguistic change. In effect they were about a commitment to a transformed society – a society of changed social relations of power, privilege, accountability and democracy. They were intrinsically about a different society from the present and about a role for knowledge and its uses in the evolution of such a society.

- They exemplified the difficult struggles that participants engaged in when developing their ideas and practices in the democratic co-construction of knowledge while using the variety of approaches relating to public participation, 'action research', 'social voice' and other strategies to achieve engaged scholarship. In fact these examples were richly textured and illustrated the possibilities for deepening the methods used to understand social reality more fundamentally through the building of relationships for the co-constructed of knowledge between academics and the communities in and of the university. These approaches went beyond the limits of 'inter-multi and trans' disciplinary knowledge even while maintaining the conventions of discipline-based knowledge. They transcend the limits of the unhelpful divisions pervasive in academia not by undermining the importance of disciplinary knowledge but by the process of co-constructing knowledge based on the diversity of its sources and forms – i.e. by re-constituting the very relations that are formed in the process of knowledge constructions in conventional academic approaches to this.

- We understood too that certain forms of knowledge are dominant and represent the power of hegemonic forces globally. These express themselves both locally and globally across nation states representing global interests which are the generative sources of inequality, poverty, unemployment and the militarization of societies that are recklessly committed to destructive and violent systems regardless of the consequences for both humanity and the planetary environment.

- These presentations were filled with the idea of agency – that is, that society, communities and indeed academics and their institutions were not without the power of agency - agency that could change existing oppressive systems, the cultures and practices associated with them and the ideas on which they feed. Agency represented the critical bulwark against the predations of those who can see nothing but self-interest through the power of accumulation, greed, unlimited consumption and the commodification of all things. These presentations about agency were at the same time about hope and possibility. They represented demonstrations of alternative ways of looking at knowledge production, different from some of the staid conventions of academia. They were a necessary antidote to the sense of hopelessness and defeat that strongly characterises so much social analysis. Indeed if anything – these examples show us alternative possibilities for social organisation, for other ways of understanding work, the environment, housing, health and gendered relations, education and other human activities and ultimately - for our purposes today – the possibility of reconfiguring our view of the role, purposes, and forms of knowledge in society.

These ideas, as exemplified by the practices demonstrating them, were exemplary and purposeful. Yet there were a number of questions for which there was not enough time to reflect. If there was time many of the presenters would have provided their insights on these questions too. As we know they were limited to 10 minutes only and that is hardly adequate for the kind of work being done. I would like therefore to reflect on some of the issues

which we might want to explore and engage with more fully in building our ideas about engaged scholarship.

The first relates to the university itself. The university is a contradictory space that struggles to reconcile a number of competing demands on its mandates. Some of these demands seek to reconfigure the very nature of those mandates refashioning them for narrower and narrower purposes privileging those already privileged in society. In its contradictoriness the university seeks to live up to its public purposes in the context of the global pressure of competitiveness, generated mainly by the impetus of corporate capital and its demands for appropriating knowledge for private purposes. The university has to reconcile the interests of the individuals who 'live' in it with the interests of the 'public' to which it is meant to be oriented. It has to be 'responsive' to a number of competing 'communities' and constituencies and 'role-players,' local and national, and of course its funding and legislative mandates make inroads into its 'freedom' to act as 'independently'.

In this diversity of constituencies there are unquestionably dominant players in the definition of the university as highly organised constituencies. In this, academics themselves and their immediate interests driven by a mixture of status mobility and financial imperatives make them key players in the development of the university. Their 'responsiveness' as expressed in their approaches to students, their academic colleagues and associations, the disciplinary conventions and rules shaping their practice and increasingly their role as consultants to corporate interests and the government, often defines the very nature of their calling and commitments and their academic 'being'. The contradiction this engenders – especially to the wider public purposes of universities – requires critical self-reflection about our roles as academics and how we interpret these. In particular this requires much greater introspection about the value to society of academic work since, despite the great body of knowledge produced in academia and the rapid accumulation of scientific and technological knowledge, dystopia abides in many parts of the world where poverty, oppressive and exploitative practices, violence and inhumanity remain. In effect therefore issues of power and powerlessness need to foreground the production of knowledge and the role of academia in society since power is unavoidably implicated in any discussion about knowledge.

Secondly, these contradictory characteristics of the university are compounded by the tension between the demands of producing 'outputs' which attract funding based on the policy criteria governing the financing of higher education relative to the demands of the kinds of engaged scholarship we saw today. This latter area remains largely un-and under-funded or funded through 'external' funding outside the priorities of dedicated financing policy. Moreover a great deal of the work we saw today is intensive and time consuming if it is to be done with integrity. The challenge this implies for every university relates to how such work can be sustained as very much a part of the scholarly mandate of universities and not simply as a nice-to-have appendage to its 'core' mandate.

Thirdly, the old and unhelpful division about the 'two cultures' (separating the physical sciences from the humanities and social sciences) remains pervasive in the culture of universities. This makes the reconciliation of a wider range of perspectives – social and scientific, natural and humanist, available for the analysis and resolution of social and planetary crises, impossible. Most academics seem committed to the disciplinary divides that mar the possibilities for understanding phenomena more comprehensively and completely. Conceptions of certainty, driven by misplaced ideas about the potential value of 'factual' and 'evidence based' data (as inherently bad or as 'empirically' necessary) lead to uninformed prejudice and bad practice. In reality facts and ideas are only as good as their critical evaluation would permit. The old debates about the 'two cultures' and about the divisions between quantity and quality are misleading since the real issue about any useful data or set of ideas is the analysis to which they are brought for the social and other choices which they inform.

Fourthly, the discussions today raised questions about how we conceptualize the idea of transformation as it affects the university. I could say that the way transformation is generally conceived in the public media and especially in the business practice, often emulated by state institutions, are inadequate for our purposes. In these conceptions of transformation the issue is far too often essentially about the single question of 'demographic representation'. Sometimes added to this issue is the references to governance and institutional structures, 'outputs' and markets – i.e. the discourse about the need to 'transform' all these things to meet the greater goal of competitiveness for profitability or public 'efficiency and effectiveness'. These are minimalist approaches to the idea of transformation so that even if we do these things in relation to the university (a la a factory, business or government bureaucracy) we only scratch the surface attributes of transformation. The transformation of the university and how it is conceived and acted on has to go considerably further. It implies most fundamentally how a public university understands its role in society and how its practices relate to this role. This raises a number of non-sequential and therefore contemporaneous questions.

Transformation in this sense means a critical examination not only of its demographics, structures, modes of organisation, 'performance' indicators, 'outputs' and the like but much more fundamentally what the process and purposes of knowledge construction are in relation to society and the public mandate. This in turn raises questions about everything the university does, its curriculum, teaching and learning, support for students and its academics together with the relationship between these and the administrative and financial structures. These include choices governing the university as well as the alleged 'culture' of the university and its very interpretation. Here the discussions about toppled statues are pertinent but they remain only the beginning of the road to transformation. In other words there is no doubt about the offensive nature of the egregiously celebratory symbols of apartheid and other oppressive regimes. There is little doubt about that in the minds of the great majority of the citizenry. But the offences symbolised in these symbols must be used to open up a broader and more fundamental discussion about how we understand transformation so that it is not an end in itself. Otherwise it will stultify any attempt at genuine transformation. In other words issues like the question of statues can be very productive once they are used to take forward a broader and encompassing agenda for change - a process that must go well beyond the limits of changing the symbols of apartheid and oppression – to the heart of the nature and purposes of universities as public institutions of society.

In effect therefore the discussions today, whether we recognised that or not - were about the very idea of 'university' – what it means to whom and for what purposes and the contestations around this. This discussion is therefore not only about 'community education' or engaged scholarship but about the heart and soul of the university and what it represents. And all of this implies the ability to mobilise the agency and power that lies in the communities of the university through the intellectual and other forms of engagement with and within the university.

It requires a deepening discussion, debate and dialogue, rethinking how we re-conceptualize the construction of knowledge socially while we widen the remit of these engagements. These processes – because they are not an end-point - must be deeper, more conscious, continuous and evolving within and outside the university and bring together the university and its communities in meaningful dialogue about what is meant by engaged scholarship and its framing premises. The struggle to achieve a higher level of understanding about the co-construction of knowledge that simultaneously reconfigures its social relations (in knowledge production) is what we should strive to achieve.It is something that the organisers of this event will hopefully continue to strive for as they take this process forward.

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