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Postal Address	**Physical Address**
Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)	Nelson Mandela University
Faculty of Education South Campus	Summerstrand Campus (South)
Nelson Mandela University	University Way
PO Box 77000	Summerstrand Port Elizabeth South Africa
SUMMERSTRAND, 6031	6001

For editorial inquiries, contact the Co-Editors:

Faculty of Education of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU)
∗ Assoc Professor Mathabo Khau (mathabo.khau@mandela.ac.za)
∗ Assoc Professor André du Plessis (andre.duplessis@mandela.ac.za),

Faculty of Education at North-West University
∗ Prof Lesley Wood (lesley.wood@nwu.ac.za).

Email: edjournal@nmmu.ac.za or edjournal@mandela.ac.za (Amina Brey)

Production and business matters: Contact the Production Editor and Web Master, Assoc Professor André du Plessis, andre.duplessis@mandela.ac.za. Desktop Publishing (PDF versions by André du Plessis)

Managing Editor & Language Editor: Moira Richards

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Editorial

After the Rain Comes the Sun: Hope, Faith, and Healing in a Wounded World

Mathabo Khau
Nelson Mandela University
Mathabo.khau@mandela.ac.za

As the world grapples with the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, there is hope that eventually we will achieve herd immunity as vaccines are dispatched to all corners of the world to enable citizens to get vaccinated against the virus. However, the storm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over! There are still people who are against vaccination due to various myths about the contents of the vaccines and their effects on the human body. The challenge that we face is that such myths travel faster, and are more easily believed, than the facts about the different vaccines that have been developed and tested against the virus. While people still wonder whether to vaccinate or not, the virus is wreaking havoc across the globe by mutating and infecting people at an even faster rate. There is already a Lambda variant, which seems to be heralding a fourth wave of infections. In South Africa alone, there were more than 2,8 million cumulative positive COVID-19 cases, with more than 85,000 deaths by mid-September 2021 (National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD, 2021).

Yet, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus, life goes on. Education systems across the world are grappling with the challenges of online learning including cyber security, technical challenges, data costs, connectivity issues, social exclusion, depression, and lack of human contact—to name a few. We continue to live in a world where our tears flow daily like the rain in a storm, and our hearts never seem to get time to mend from the brokenness of lost lives and livelihoods. As if that was not enough, the storms created by COVID-19 have escalated the incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) in many contexts. The situation in South Africa got so bad in 2020, that the president announced GBV was the second pandemic in the country. To make a bad situation worse, a total of 23,226 teenage pregnancies were recorded by the Department of Health in the Gauteng province between April 2020 and March 2021, with some mothers as young as 10 years old (Bhengu, 2021).

These statistics demonstrate the negative impact of the pandemic on lives and livelihoods in a country whose economy has taken a serious knock down. What caused such a spike in teenage pregnancies and GBV? Where can girls and young women be safe and protected from such occurrences? If homes are no longer safe spaces for the most vulnerable in society, then how can we protect the places we know that our loved ones love? This situation has scholars asking questions about the effectiveness of school-based sexuality education in the Life Orientation subject in South African schools, the effectiveness of law-enforcement agencies, and the challenges posed by persistent gender inequalities within communities. What is the role of academics, scholars, and education institutions in a world held hostage by COVID-19? Can education be used to heal the world of its brokenness, and is there hope for a better future post the pandemic? While we grapple with these questions, I believe that after the rain, comes the sun—and I have faith that we will overcome the current challenges someday!

In this hopeful spirit, this issue includes a review of the book, *Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research With Girls: Transnational Approaches*, edited by Relebohile Moletsane, Lisa Wiebesiek, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, and April Mandrona, which responds to questions regarding ethical practice with vulnerable and marginalised groups. `Mathabo Khau notes that the book offers a critical insight into how researchers grapple with questions of methods and tools related to participatory and visual research while placing importance on the lived experiences and agency of girls and women who are often marginalised in their communities. She states that the authors of the book focus on sexual and gender-based violence, which are skewed against girls and women across the world and argues that, despite the numerous protective international treaties that support gender equity and address GBV, the phenomenon continues globally. The book contributes to knowledge about ethical research practice and will be of interest to both emerging and experienced researchers investigating marginalised spaces and people.

Continuing with the positive vibrations, Jarosław Lubiak reports on the conference, *Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time*—a hybrid conference at the Trafo Centre for Contemporary Art, Szczecin, Poland on the 24–28th May 2021. The conference's aim was to reflect on the social and artistic experiments conducted during a research collaboration between Poland, Taiwan, Ecuador, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, the Netherlands, and South Korea, which focused on developing ways of being together and cooperating in the Anthropocene crisis, especially through digital media. According to Lubiak, cultural differences were one of the two most challenging issues in connecting, relationship building, and being together virtually. The collaboration started in February of 2020 and soon needed to be reshaped to meet pandemic restrictions. A key learning from the conference, according to Lubiak, is that instead of trying to recreate traditional forms of social relations in the virtual sphere, one should invent specific forms of socialising through new but still undeveloped communication technology. He argues that the conference contributed significantly to inventing new protocols for education, art creation and research, and social connectivity through digital technologies. It provided knowledge on how to use a virtual environment to reshape behavioural patterns and enhance creative processes of learning, cooperation, and action.

To enable such processes, we need strong leadership. Thus, the first research article of the issue, by Schnepfleitner and Ferreira, titled "A Leadership Development Programme: A Case Study of Transformative Learning in Qatar," focuses on transformative learning experiences that change the deeply held beliefs, worldviews, and frames of reference of what it means to be a 21st century leader in Qatar. They present a case study of an executive leadership development programme to identify key success factors or inhibitors that either fostered or hindered transformative learning experiences from occurring. Their research includes in-depth interviews conducted over a 10-month period, and which revealed 11 themes. They did find that the intensity of the programme pushed participants beyond the required state of disorientation necessary for transformative learning and into one of being overwhelmed and stressed.

Once we have strong leadership, there is need for resource mobilisation to enable successful implementation of projects. Mkhize and Davids's article titled, "Towards a Digital Resource Mobilisation Approach for Digital Inclusion During COVID-19 and Beyond: A Case of a Township School in South Africa," discusses the "new normal" created by the COVID-19 pandemic within educational institutions. They discuss how the transition to online teaching and learning highlighted the economic hardships and deepened the digital divide between the rich and the poor. Educational institutions capable of transitioning to online modes of delivery made the shift, while most of South Africa's schools remained excluded due to lack of technological infrastructure and poverty. Their paper asks the question: "What are the online teaching and learning experiences of school stakeholders?" Based on responses to the question, they developed a digital resource mobilisation theory, which they offer as a viable approach to pursue digital inclusion and social change.

Continuing the discussion on resources, Jasmine Matope's article, "Making Wine Without Grapes: The Case for Quality Teaching With Limited Resources," illustrates the significant role that creative, conscientious, dedicated, motivated, and committed teachers play in guiding, directing, and developing students' thinking, perspectives, and future lives. It highlights the importance of teacher agency in connecting learning to students' lives. It argues that good teachers can employ pedagogical practices that are not dependent on the availability of resources. Matope uses life history to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding their schooling in limited resource contexts, and uses Bourdieu and Fraser's theories to explain his findings. The findings of her research stress that it is the inventiveness, competence, and attitude of the teacher that are the defining factors in the provision of quality education—not merely the availability of material resources.

Although we acknowledge that material resources are not the only resources needed in education, we also acknowledge that the most important resource we have as human beings is our planet, Earth. Muller and Wood remind us, in their article, of the importance of "Raising Awareness of Agency to Address Climate Change: The Do One Thing (DOT) Strategy." They warn that children will suffer most from the effects of climate change. Hence, they argue that environmental education is one way to prepare children to cope and enable them to educate their families and friends about the need to act now to minimise the danger climate change poses. The article presents results from a research project that aimed at integrating education for sustainable development (ESD) into the Grade 7 curriculum, with a specific focus on climate change. Their findings indicate that not only did the learners gain knowledge about the causes and consequences of climate change but the potential of the learners and community members to identify possible actions for change was increased as well. They provide suggestions for how teachers can use the DOT strategy as part of an action research approach to integrating environmental education for sustainable development to raise awareness of local environmental threats and encourage learners and their families to behave in a more environmentally friendly way.

Continuing the conversation on climate action are Berman and Sarra, whose paper is titled, "A Visual Conversation From South Africa: Climate Resilience and Hope for a Green Recovery." They examine how visual art students in South Africa used the pandemic period to imagine a better world, a green economic recovery, and a closer connection with nature and biodiversity. They generate inspirational and resourceful ideas, calling on us to be participatory and inclusive as a fundamental aspect of being human, evoking imagination to create alternative visions in collaboration with others. This article highlights the importance of visual research in providing a foundation for developing collective strategies toward economic and social security and flourishing individually and as community.

Highlighting the importance of community in education are Sathorar and Geduld whose article is titled, "A Critical Approach to University–Community Partnerships: Reflecting on the Diverse Realities." They focus on engagement with the community as a way of enhancing a university's social responsibility through establishing partnerships with the communities it serves. Using a collaborative self-study, they provide suggestions on how to enhance university–community partnerships and propose a critical engagement process to enhance collaboration in engagement projects. They argue that despite legislation and efforts to enhance university community engagement, this remains a contested space where power relations, inequality, and claims to knowledge ownership continue to pose challenges.

Inequality is a challenge across all education systems. Thus, Rens and Louw's article on "Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners With Severe Intellectual Disability" is an important addition to the discussion. It focuses on a participatory process in which the experiences of teachers regarding the implementation of the Life Skills Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (SID) in schools for learners

with special educational needs were investigated. Based on the results of their qualitative arts-based discussions, they created opportunities for the teachers to talk and work together to develop a training manual for beginner teachers and form a learning environment that would permit a rich inquiry-based dialogue among the teachers.

The conversation on inequality also touches on gender issues as exemplified by Sadati and Mitchell's article titled, "Narrative Imagination and Social Change: Instructors in Agricultural Colleges in Ethiopia Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence." These authors highlight the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Ethiopia, and how it is skewed against female students in post-secondary institutions. They used narrative imagination to work with instructors in four Ethiopian agricultural colleges to explore how they understood SGBV issues at their colleges and what they imagined their roles could be in combating such problems. Sadati and Mitchell employed participatory visual methods such as interviews, an interactive storyline development workshop, and cellphilming with the instructors across several fieldwork phases. Based on this work, they argue for the broadening of participatory methodologies and narrative imagination as frameworks to include in the promotion of art for social change.

Continuing the conversation on the importance of collaboration and participatory visual methods in teaching and learning is Khulekani Luthuli whose article is titled, "Using Photographs and Memory-Work to Engage Novice Teachers in Collaborative Learning About Their Influence on Learner Behaviour." He offers an account of using photographs and memory-work in research conducted by a deputy principal with novice teachers in a South African primary school to help the novice teachers express the uncertainties and challenges they encounter regarding learner behaviour. The article illustrates how novice teachers came to see their critical role in influencing learner behaviour and the value of positive teacher-learner relationships in supporting learner behaviour. It also illustrates how working with photographs and memory-work can facilitate the expression of participants' viewpoints and understandings and intensify educational researchers' learning from and with others in the interests of social change.

Lastly, Athiemoolam student-teachers' understanding of social justice was enhanced through their participation in the theatre-in-education process and its contribution to their learning in the article titled, "An Exploration of Pre-Service Student Teachers' Understanding of Social Justice Issues Through Theatre-in-Education." Data for his study comprised students' written reflections based on their theatre-in-education experiences. The article indicates that students' understanding of social justice in education was enhanced through their participation in their theatre-in-education presentations.

The most important aspect of this edition of the journal is that there is still hope. We might be traversing troubled waters and navigating unknown territories, but we can make it to the end of our journeys if we work together. Perseverance is key!

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A Leadership Development Programme: A Case Study of Transformative Learning in Qatar[1]

Frances Maureen Schnepfleitner

ORCID No: 0000-0002-1239-4006
University of Liverpool
fschnepfleitner@gmail.com

Marco Paulo Maia Ferreira

ORCID No: 0000-0002-5547-4188
Higher Institute of Education and Sciences, ISEC Lisboa, Portugal
marco.ferreira@iseclisboa.pt

Abstract

Leadership development is an important issue for Qatar as it strives to achieve the ambitious goals set out in its 2030 National Vision (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2015). Various resources are being invested, but often with minimal results, forcing Qatar to continue to rely on expatriate expertise. Transformative learning experiences that change the deeply held beliefs, worldviews, and frames of reference of what it means to be a 21st century leader in Qatar are needed. This paper presents the case study of an executive leadership development programme to identify key success factors or inhibitors that fostered or hindered transformative learning experiences. It includes in-depth interviews conducted over a 10-month period during 2015. Additional rich data of the participants' experiences were obtained from their blogs, written assignments, and organisational documentation. A thematic analysis identified 11 themes, the inclusion of which fostered transformative learning or, the absence of which, hindered transformative learning: (1) identifying stakeholder expectations, (2) conducting a respected selection process, (3) appropriate English levels, (4) alignment between content and the participant's educational and cognitive skills, (5) time and commitment allocated to a well-structured pre-programme and a (6) post-programme stage, (7) in-depth awareness of the participants' professional and cultural contexts, (8) inclusion of autonomous components, (9) inclusion of personal and cultural interactions, (10) an acceptable balance of travel, stress, uncertainty, and course intensity, and (11) a group dynamic. There were indications the intensity of the programme pushed the participants beyond the required state of disorientation necessary for transformative learning and into one of being overwhelmed and stressed.

Keywords: transformative learning, leadership development, case study, discourse, critical reflection, lived experience

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[1] Ethical clearance: The EdD Virtual Program Research Ethics Committee from the University of Liverpool gave ethical clearance to this study on 9 February 2015.

Introduction

Regardless of culture, organisational context, or industry sector, the issues surrounding leadership have essentially remained constant. Recognition of the importance and benefits of gaining understanding of leadership has made studying those issues a legitimate use of resources. Yet, due to its complexity, there are still gaps in knowledge and areas of contention in basic themes such as whether a leader is born with inherent qualities of leadership or if it is a learnable skill and, if so, the best way of encouraging development of those leadership skills (Northouse, 2012). This article presents a case study based on an executive leadership programme (ELP) that was run for leaders and potential leaders of a sports industry organisation located in Qatar during 2015 (Schnepfleitner, 2017).[2]

Qatar has stated its ambition to become the regional leader in a variety of sectors and is striving to align tradition with new ways of doing things within its organisational context (Dorsey, 2015; Kamrava, 2009). Research has shown strong indicators that the competencies associated with transformative learning—being receptive to alternative viewpoints, emotionally open, capable of change, being reflectively aware and astute at guiding actions, and being able to motivate others—have the potential to help executives become better leaders (Brock, 2010; Ciporen, 2010; Mezirow, 1997).

Only in the last 30 years has some research focused specifically on the field of leadership development as a separate topic of scholarly attention (Day et al., 2014). This means research on executive leadership development programmes, through the lens of transformative learning in the areas of Qatar and the Middle East are rare, making it both relevant and timely to attempt to answer the following question: "What are the key success factors and inhibitors of a transformative learning experience in a leadership development programme designed for a Qatari organisational context?"

The approach was a single, qualitative, local knowledge case study. It was both instrumental, with the clear purpose of attempting to improve future programmes, and explanatory by seeking causal links or interrelationships between the programme, the context, and the phenomenon of transformative learning (TL) in order to build a story with a rich understanding. The data were drawn from multiple sources that included pre- and post-programme, semi-structured, conversational interviews with the three main sets of stakeholders, documentation from the involved training institute, their final report, and the participants' blog diaries and final written assignments.

Theoretical Framework

Three areas of interest were taken into consideration to theoretically support the research: leadership development programmes, the Qatari context, and TL theory.

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[2] This paper is derived from Frances Schnepfleitner's doctoral thesis.

The first leadership programmes were developed in military schools and academies and concentrated on identifying the "great man" in their midst and then teaching them by example (Thomas, 2008). The earliest organisational programmes were skill and management focused and aimed at the top tier employees. In the 1980s the divide between leadership and management behaviours became the focus (Hunt, 1999), which made organisations acutely aware of both the complexity and importance of leadership.

In some fields, participation in a leadership programme has become a rite of passage for aspirant leaders and "telling CEOs these days that leadership drives performance is a bit like saying oxygen is necessary to breathe" (Feser et al., 2015, p. 1). Managers understand leadership is related to profitability and in multiple reports have identified leadership as their most pressing organisational issue, but feel it is not being effectively addressed by business schools and development programmes (Daily & Johnson, 1997; Lucy et al., 2014; Saloner, 2010).

House and Aditya (1997, p. 418) stated, "Leadership is embedded in a social context," but research has largely ignored the kinds of organisation or culture leaders are functioning within. The consensus is that there remains insufficient research in relation to the precise effects of context and there is an emergent realisation, there should be an approach that "embraces local context and embraces the complexity and chaos that is present" (Grandy & Holton, 2013, p. 431).

Qatar is a tribal society and divided into hierarchical classes. Although tribal connections are beginning to blur, they still play both overt and covert roles in all aspects of Qatari society through social status and political affinity (Al-Muhannadi, 2013). The religion of Islam is an additional, binding, identity factor between families, tribes, and Gulf countries and encompasses all aspects of Qatari life, with personal identity coming from the place within the family and the family's status and origin in society (Schwartz, 2014).

The average Qatari organisation is rich in complexities that include specific human resource laws, distinctive managerial and leadership practices, and strong influences on work practice from culture, religious, and gender norms (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). The culture is deemed fatalistic and collective, high in power distance, low in individualism, high in masculinity, and high in uncertainty avoidance (Al-Omari, 2008). These traits mean that an unequal distribution of wealth and power is acceptable or legitimised; Qatar concentrates power among relatively few, with seniority coming from connections and "who you know" rather than merit (Bogdan et al., 2012; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014).

Challenges facing individuals, leaders, and whole nations require adjustment or change to their inherent frames of reference. This makes it relevant to research an ELP through the lens of TL, an adult learning theory that, in an educational setting, is based on promoting change and challenging learners to "critically question and assess the integrity of their deeply held assumptions about how they relate to the world around them" (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p. xi). As a theory with constructivist underpinnings, it presupposes that a person's established and taken-for-granted frames of reference are capable of change and are then able to guide a "deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings and actions" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 104). Transformations can occur suddenly and be epochal and life changing (Snyder, 2008), or can arise from an accumulation of insights. It will involve, to some degree, parts of critical reflection, individual experience, and voluntary dialectical discourse and will also include, either fully or in part, the following ten identified phases:

1. A disorientating dilemma

2. Self-examination

3. A critical assessment of assumptions

4. Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action

6. Planning a course of action

7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan

8. Provisional trying of new roles

9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

   (Mezirow, 2009, p. 19)

Currently, TL practice and research are most prevalent in formal educational settings, but there is growing interdisciplinary interest and a call to broaden the focus of TL research because some aspects are deemed as having been researched to the point of redundancy (Taylor & Laros, 2014). Therefore, this research aimed to contribute to the TL literature in two areas. Firstly, little emphasis has been put on identifying factors that trigger or foster TL, nor on the challenges that cause hindrance—especially given that not all adults are self-directed learners capable of bringing about their own transformations (Taylor & Laros, 2014). Secondly, Taylor (2009) suggested that awareness of context is of equal significance to the core elements of critical reflection, individual experience, and dialogue. Therefore, context was taken into account in addition to the role of the three core elements.

When challenges to our perspectives bring us to the edge of our comfort zone it is human nature to resist emotional changes or a reframing of our existing worldview by using defence mechanisms such as intellectualisation or denial (Malkki, 2010). However, by using the deepest kind of critical reflection, we can "become more aware of their presence and influence in our lives" (Dirkx, 2012, p. 403), which leaves us better informed as to whether we will intentionally change or maintain those perspectives. Mezirow (1997) posited that the only way to judge the authenticity, the intent, or meaning behind a statement is to "engage in discourse to validate what is being communicated" (p. 6) because it is through reflective discourse that a person can better examine the evidence, arguments, and any alternative points of view. This discourse with others is the "safety net for an individual's newfound or revised assumptions" because they are reassured of their objectivity, and it becomes the medium to put critical reflection into action (Lewis, 2009. p. 9).

Most of our meaning perspectives are acquired through cultural assimilation whereas specific stances we take, such as "positivist, behaviourist, Freudian, or Marxist perspectives, may be intentionally learned" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1). Because we are moulded by those perspectives, we may be biased in our interpretations of individual experiences without realising it. It is only by exposing our own lived experiences to critical reflection and dialogue and comparing them to the lived experiences of others that we can begin to uncover those biases or reassure ourselves of their objectivity. This is one of the driving forces of TL (Fullerton, 2010; Lewis, 2009; Mezirow, 1990, 1997). In this way none of the core elements stands alone, but each supports and enhances the rest (Taylor & Snyder, 2012), and all three lie within a context.

Methodology

How any research is designed should depend on what the researcher wants to know (Cohen et al., 2011) and "different kinds of questions will lead you to different kinds of projects" (Thomas, 2014, p.

1). In this instance, by using the criteria of a case study, outlined by Thomas (2014) as subject, purpose, approach, and process, the posed question led the researcher towards a qualitative case study design. Firstly, it was a local knowledge case study because the question stemmed from the researcher's desire to look at the complexity of something specific within their professional context, from multiple angles or perspectives using many data sources (Thomas, 2011). Secondly, it was instrumental and explanatory because it was done with a clear purpose of informing and improving future leadership development programmes, specifically within the Qatari organisational context. Thirdly, the research approach aimed to test the existing theory of TL by using it as a lens to identify those factors and give explanation in an illustrative way.

To ensure research validity, rigor, and trustworthiness, the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adhered to. Participants, when confronted with the research outcomes recognised them as fair, credible representations of their experience. According to the literature, one of the core strengths of case study is its ability to answer the what and the how questions and, as in this case, to tease out thick, descriptive explanations of what factors fostered or inhibited the phenomenon of TL to occur and how to encourage them to be transferred to future programmes (Thomas, 2011). Dependability and credibility were ensured by constant auditing by the lead researcher's university to demonstrate how conclusions had been reached and confirm the findings were indeed derived from the data.

Participants

Eight participants attended the ELP. One was in a senior leadership position, three had low- to mid-range seniority, and four were not in leadership positions but held various levels of responsibility. All were Qatari nationals and aged from late 20s to late 40s. All but one was married with family responsibilities. To travel to this extent outside Qatar was a new experience for all and none had participated in such a programme previously. Additionally, three of their direct managers, also Qatari nationals, were interviewed. The twelfth interviewee, an expatriate, acted as the liaison between the organisation and the training institute that developed the ELP, and was also responsible for obtaining feedback, results, and writing the final report and recommendations.

Data Collection Methods

In a distinctly qualitative social research approach, data were collected using methods "flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced" (Ormston et al., 2003, p. 4). As a good case study attempts to treat phenomena holistically and in alignment with qualitative data collection, the researcher gathered data from multiple sources including in-depth face-to-face interviews and diverse documentation (Cohen et al., 2011).

Pre-programme interviews of 20 to 30 minutes were conducted with all 12 participants. Second interviews of 35 to 45 minutes were conducted with the ELP participants within three months, and with the representative and managers between six to seven months, post programme. All were recorded and professionally transcribed and quality controlled. All pre-programme organisational documentation and information handouts were reviewed and during the 9-week programme, the researcher collected copies of the eight participants' blog diary entries. At three months post programme, the researcher received copies of all the participants' final 1,500-word assignments and the training institute's extensive final report. With data being gathered over a 10-month period, a longitudinal aspect was incorporated into the research. Ethical requirements specified by Liverpool University's Ethics Board were adhered to. All participants were individually informed, orally and in writing, of the scope of the research and given the right to refuse involvement or withdraw at any stage without prejudice to themselves, their role in the organisation, or their continued involvement

in the ELP. For reasons of anonymity, the specific sport, names of entities, and the stakeholders have not been mentioned. The participants are referred to by number and not by gender or culturally specific pseudonyms. Signed consent was given by all stakeholders, including the training institute, managers, and the participants to access organisational data, blog entries, final assignments, and the final report.

Data Analysis Procedures

Given that a case study takes a holistic view of phenomena, Thomas (2011, p. 170) suggested choosing a method of analysis that "explicitly frames our analysis in a holistic context" as a means of helping the thinking process see patterns and develop connections. Qualitative approaches tend to winnow the data and aggregate them into a limited number of themes on which to focus (Guest et al., 2012). These themes become the fundamental building blocks, the data to think with and use to interpret the meanings being constructed by the participants involved in the case. For this case study, a 6-phase thematic analysis developed and defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was systematically followed, as outlined below. It is a foundational method "for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data," which is compatible with "both essentialist and constructivist paradigms" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

The first phase involved reading and re-reading the entire data set for familiarisation and noting of initial ideas. Then the data were read again, and notes made of interesting features pertaining to the research question or the theme of TL. Review of those data extracts elicited the initial codes, which were transferred to a mind-map. As required by the third phase, all extracts related to those initial codes were sorted, clustered, and transcribed into potential thematic groups. The fourth stage consisted of further review to ensure each extract related to the theme to which it had been assigned and was retained, reassigned, or discarded accordingly. A thematic mind-map was generated. The fifth stage concentrated on refining the individual themes, generating clear titles, and creating a logical way of fulfilling the sixth stage of telling the story the analysis revealed.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of this case study identified 11 factors which, when present, fostered TL experiences or, in their absence, hindered the occurrence of TL experiences. For TL to occur, the basic core elements of group dialogue, critical reflection, and individual experience need to be present and a general awareness of context considered. Further, Taylor and Jarecke (2011) outlined several principles which, when placed in relation to those core elements, create opportunities for fostering TL in an educational setting. Therefore, the 11 identified factors will be briefly discussed through the lens of the basic core elements and the principles outlined by Taylor and Jarecke while also taking context into consideration. Recommendations are made when relevant.

Identification of Stakeholder Expectations

A theme raised by all stakeholders was the absence of consultation as to their needs or wants, leaving most with broad and vague expectations and a wait-and-see viewpoint as to whether the programme would be a relevant use of their time or have practical application to the organisation.

> *Interviewee: I hope this will give me something, add something to my personality.*

> *Interviewer: Something specific?*

> *Interviewee: Anything. (Pre-Interview, Participant 6)*

> *I want to improve myself from any parts, from any course. I want now to improve everything. (Pre-Interview, Participant 8)*

The art of leadership development involves "crafting each employee's expectations so that each is encouraged to deploy and hone his or her natural talents" (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001, p. 22). Not crafting their expectations left a vacuum that influenced the participants' initial attitude and expectations and a fatalistic "hope for the best" attitude. Such expectations are not purposeful and lack the heuristic quality of openly seeking possible answers or solutions to fulfil them (Taylor & Jarecke, 2011).

The ELP could have gained increased legitimacy by conducting a relevant needs assessment to separate needs from wants and ascertain whether those needs should be addressed through a leadership development programme or general skills training (Ciporen, 2008). This would have ensured "coherence between programme and organisation and between facilitator and participants" (Carroll & Nicholsen, 2014, p. 1418), resulting in greater management buy-in and long-term commitment.

A Respected Selection Process

Snyder (2008) suggested a gradual accumulation of insights as an acceptable approach to bring about changes in a person's views or habits. For the participants, that accumulation began when they were nominated to compete for selection into the ELP. They expressed pride, happiness, and increased confidence at being noticed as potentially key persons in their organisation. The evaluation process was made up of an online psychometric test, a 500-word, personal statement, an oral English test by telephone, an interview, and a 5-minute presentation to a panel of training institute representatives and organisational management.

The interview and presentation were viewed as the most valuable sections because they could not be cheated on and showed the candidates' real thoughts, experience, and calibre and not those of a paid writer, translator, editor, or telephone stand-in as was honestly spoken of regarding the other sections.

> *Why not? Nobody knows. I'm cheating myself also, for example. This can be. I know some people did it . . . but in the presentation, you are only the one . . . so it will be equal. (Pre-interview, Participant 7)*

The sense of accomplishment and attitude change came about because they closely aligned with Taylor and Jarecke's (2011) general principles and the essential core elements (Brock, 2010). There was a clear definition of what was expected and the tasks challenged their skills, stretched their imaginations, and made them aware of their own contexts, roles, and individual experience. Because they interviewed with, and presented to, the highest level of the organisational hierarchy, they were led to the edge of their comfort zones to confront power and argue their case.

There were doubts and questions raised regarding the rigor and validity of the selection process and concerns the nominations were not based on merit, character, loyalty, seniority, or contribution—nor were measured against accepted standards from a leadership competency model. Additionally, because it occurred too close to the start date of the ELP, it stressed the participants and the managers spoke of having to choose candidates quickly, without enough information. This did not sit well in a culture that has a low tolerance of uncertainty (Bogdan et al., 2012; Hofstede, 1994).

In general, the selection process was not a good fit for this Qatari organisational context. It lessened the candidates' sense of accomplishment and confidence and did little to foster an inclusive, open,

transformative mind-set but, rather, created a negatively competitive one. This, according to their own statements, influenced some dishonest actions and did not encourage the participants' assumptions or expectations to be more open, reflective, and emotionally primed for change. These findings suggest there should be more focus on the role and competency of ELP candidates over an extended timeframe. A suitable inclusion might be a 180- or 360-degree appraisal, which would have the advantage of being a before-and-after resource for comparative purposes.

Appropriate English Levels

The results of the pre-programme English test indicated that the participants entered the ELP with a mix of lower to upper intermediate language skills. Andrade et al. stated "academic proficiency takes as long as seven years to acquire" (2014, p. 208), therefore, without extensive additional language study, it is doubtful the participants understood all the content, or its subtleties, within the ELP's lectures and tours. Several participants admitted struggling with the hours of high-level theoretical content, with their tutor's speed of delivery, and the different and confusing accents. As one manager pessimistically stated regarding his candidate:

So, it isn't just a case of spelling and grammar, right? (Pre-interview, Manager 3)

Low language levels impact higher education outcomes (Andrade et al., 2014) and, indeed, may have been one of the most inhibiting factors that prevented a larger number of TL occurrences. The easiest solution would have been to conduct the ELP in Arabic but, being seen taking such a programme in English from a high status college was a source of pride and empowerment for the participants and created high levels of cultural and linguistic capital (Lueg & Lueg, 2015).

Inclusion of Sufficiently Time-Framed, Designed, Pre-Programme Stage

The lack of a well-designed, time-framed, pre-programme stage emerged as a strong theme from the data. The information pack and brief outline of the blog and assignment requirements were deemed insufficient. Participants' cultural avoidance of uncertainty, unknowns, and risk was not addressed and became an inhibiting factor (Hofstede, 1994). As one manager noted, the entire pre-programme or preparation stage was missing. This lowered the pre-programme's stage perceived value and legitimacy.

The short time frame between selection and travel to the United Kingdom led to varying degrees of stress. Over and above the need to consider an 8-week work absence, there was the bureaucracy Arabs typically face when travelling, customs regarding family commitments and women travelling alone, and anxiety regarding the amount of travel and the English weather. While it is accepted that disorientation is an identifier of one possible phase of the TL experience, there should be a clear distinction made between a person experiencing disorientation and one experiencing undue stress. For the stages of TL to occur, it requires participants who are "willing to engage in self-exploration and self-experimentation" and a "safe environment where people can play with cognitions, emotions and behaviour" (Ciporen, 2008, p. 200).

Awareness of Participants' Professional/Cultural Context

The participants often experienced disconnection between what they were learning and their daily Qatari context; the programme was heavy on theoretical information and light on practical application, compounded by their skills not being mature or developed enough to mould it into their own context.

I saw the people who was working in the sport, it's totally their structure and their tradition, their society is totally different from here. We cannot take what they have. The economy there or the people there, the style of their life assist to go through their planning, their strategy, so for that they succeed. Maximum, we can take two or three percent from their system to work here in Doha. (Post-interview, Participant 7)

They were looking for cut-and-paste solutions to their organisational issues and were, instead, given tools to build solutions with. At times they felt overwhelmed, frustrated, and overloaded with no safe and trusted context for self-reflection or critical assessment of assumptions (Taylor & Snyder, 2012).

Although participants need to be led to the edge and encouraged to engage with differences, Carroll and Nicholson (2014, p. 1418) stated that successful leadership programmes establish "legitimacy by ensuring coherence between programme and organisation and between facilitators and participants." When this does not exist, resistance can be the result. A balance needs to be found between being led to the edge—and feeling you are being pushed over into an abyss. Resistance or withdrawal are the natural result, which can be seen from the body language in numerous photographs of the group during lectures. The only exceptions were during the leadership module's theory and application sections, which were conducted by specialist tutors in an interactive learning style.

Gurdjian et al. (2014, p. 3) suggested explicitly tailoring "from-to paths" for participants using contextual awareness and individual, group, and organisational expectations. Analysis of this case study data and the ELP outcomes clearly show the advantages that could be gained by taking context into account alongside the traditionally accepted three core elements. For instance, the collective nature of the Qatari culture would suggest providing conditions for smaller increments of cognitive engagement and relevant dialogue and reflection, thereby more closely fulfilling the general principles for fostering transformations (Taylor & Jarecke, 2011). "Collective cultures are traditional cultures which respect tradition and resist sudden change, especially if it is imposed" (Al-Omari, 2008, p. 39).

Personal and Cultural Exchanges

As Qataris, used to a strong hierarchical, tribal society that takes account of a person's position, age, and experience, the participants were unanimously impressed by their tutors and any personal interactions were highly valued and sought out (Bogdan et al., 2012). Additionally, coming from a high context, predominantly oral and anecdotal, culture they appreciated hearing their tutors' stories of hands-on experience in the field of sports.

Dr [name] at the end he gave us some his personal experiences with all the [entities] in the world. (Blog entry, Participant 4)

I think it was very important to sit longer time with these professors. I don't think it's about the student and the teacher. It's not. It's more about you need to start a conversation with them, talk to them . . . and I was insisting sometimes you know, to take even the break time to just go and chat with them. (Post-interview, Participant 2)

Qatari culture puts emphasis on relationships, hospitality, and personally getting to know anyone they are working or dealing with (Al-Omari, 2008). The participants took note when opportunities for such contact occurred. They felt they were being paid respect, making them more open to listening and returning respect to those people and institutions. Such interactions were mentioned so positively it is recommended to include as many as is feasible in future ELPs.

> *I was surprised [by the] warm welcome and hospitality unprecedented where we [were] greeted by [the dignitary] at the entrance to the meeting room. (Blog entry, Participant 4)*

Autonomous Components

For all participants, it was empowering when they exerted self-will over their experience by requesting changes to the ELP content. This supports the proposal that transformations can be shared when a group collectively questions, reflects, and acts on conditions (Fullerton, 2010).

Two other autonomous instances stood out as positive contributions to the participants' experience. Firstly, two participants took it upon themselves to organise a visit to a major sporting event, giving an opportunity to see practical application of some aspects of classroom work. Secondly, one of the professors invited two participants to speak to one of his university classes. This had a profound, transformative impact on both. They felt great pride in being able to present their country and organisation and answer questions in a university setting. It required them to undertake a premise reflection on their country, culture, and their personal and organisational identity while overcoming personal limitations (Kitchenham, 2006).

> *Students started to ask different questions about lots of things. We were very open and doing our best to answer all of these questions . . . for me this was a unique experience to be in front of master's students from one of the top universities in the world. (Blog entry, Participant 3)*

Writing the individual blog was not viewed favourably. Blogs can be valuable tools to encourage critical thinking, decision-making, and independent action, which can foster rather than hinder TL (Dalgarno et al., 2015). However, on this ELP, the participants viewed it as a time-consuming burden that added little value. The principal problems may have been the lack of understanding of the value of the blog to reflect and gain a deeper understanding of the ELP, and its limited readership and feedback (Dalgarno et al., 2015).

> *I didn't understand why. . . . It's like agenda. . . . We wake up at nine o'clock, we went to blah, blah, blah and we blah, blah. (Post-interview, Participant 7)*

For adults used to managing others, becoming students with little input or control caused some frustration leading to resistance and withdrawal. This could have been mitigated by activities deemed more relevant to the individuals' roles, and facilitating an opportunity for participants to present or teach an aspect of their cultural or organisational context to others. This would require powerful use of premise reflection and imagination and induce ownership of a true lived experience, all of which have been identified as transformative factors (Brock, 2010; Taylor, 2009; Taylor & Jarecke, 2011).

Acceptable Levels and Balance of Travel, Stress, Uncertainty, and Course Intensity

This ELP included extensive travel and multiple visits to sporting venues and points of interest. Although Morgan (2011, p. 247) stated that travel "represents a potentially fruitful vehicle for transformative education and learning," there is a vast difference between actual physical movement and psychological movement or growth. While interaction with different cultures rates highly to facilitate a worldview transformation, forms of mass tourism and spending long hours in buses did not. They became a resented and resisted manifestation of the misalignment of the programme to their expectations and the lack of control they felt over their lived experience (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014).

> *Too much travel, for nothing. For the same, you travel to other cities. It was the same, the same. (Post-interview, Participant 5)*

The stress and frustration were compounded by their confusion about how to implement what they were experiencing into their own culture and context. Although we need "to live with some discomfort on the edge of knowing, in the process of gaining new insights and understandings" (Taylor, 2007, p. 187), there should be a balance between discomfort and stress. When participants feel they are too often balancing "on the edge," it may begin to feel more like balancing on a knife's edge: potentially painful and damaging. It is more beneficial to engage, challenge, and stretch participants at the limit of their comfort zones within an environment where they feel safe enough to play with their emotions, behaviour, and frames of reference (Ciporen, 2008).

Small changes could have brought about a reduction in stress and more balance—such as some access to, or chance to share, their own culture, food or context; to return hospitality; a shortened programme, or some parts conducted in Qatar, allowing time for reflection, assimilation, practical application, feedback, and more on-going support.

Inclusion of a Designed and Implemented Post-Programme Stage

Their final assignments and interviews showed evidence the participants were drawing on concepts and learning gained in the ELP. A change in their mind-set or worldview had occurred and they took this revelation seriously by undertaking personal changes in their interactions that were noticeable to their managers and peers.

> *If he sees that I'm overworked, he'll always walk into the office, ask me, "How's everything going, man? Is everything OK? Can I do anything for you?"—which he never did before. It shows you that now he's more self-aware or more aware of other people, which is something that I think most employers strive to pull out of their employees. (Post-interview, Manager 3)*

However, TL is defined as "any type of learning that has a lasting impact on how individuals interact with others, frame problems and view themselves" (Ciporen, 2010, p. 177). Most of the participants did return to their organisation with new feelings of accountability and a desire to give back to their organisation. First and foremost, they expected to be looked upon as leaders and challenged to put their new skills and concepts into action. But while keen to share, rather than hoard prestigious knowledge (De Atkine, 1999), no participant was invited to present or disseminate any feedback, information, or reports to their departments or peers. No assignment projects were undertaken and managers claimed to have not seen their participants' final assignments or the institute's final report.

> *I want to do something, what can I do? There is nothing handed to me to do. There is nothing the project they give it to me so I can lead. There is nothing. Just I took the course, I just come, sit in the office. Okay, what is your plan? (Post-interview, Participant 7)*

Of the 10 stages of the TL process, the data suggest Points 1 to 7 being fostered within the ELP, but no indications of Points 8 to 10. Therefore, provisionally trying on the new roles, then building competence, self-confidence, and relationships in them and finally reintegrating that role into their life based on new perspectives were not brought to maturity (Mezirow, 2011). Bushell and Goto (2011, p. 1249) pointed out that the after-programme environment is important "to continue the transformation process, particularly exploring ways to build on their personal growth and to put into practice the leadership skills and strategies focusing on sustainable development in their own society." Longitudinal studies support that in college graduates, at least, the last stage of "contextual knowing",

"rarely occurs until after graduation" but rather takes place in the subsequent work and organisational life (Brock, 2010, p. 124). The post-programme stage was devoid of further fostering.

> *It absolutely is all about follow-up and it's about keeping certain key messages top of mind. You gradually just forget things. It's like a dream. . . . If you don't remind people or give people actions in their daily life to try, then it's just simply going to be lost. (Post-interview, Manager 3)*

A second 360-degree feedback would have been beneficial as a critical reflection on their post-ELP status as leaders and to show how deep, transformational and lasting any changes were (Chappelow, 2004). Opportunities to disseminate aspects of the ELP and implement one of their assignments for organisational change would have been supportive in bringing to maturity the full cycle of the TL experience as outlined by Mezirow (2011) and giving them necessary validation in the eyes of their peers, subordinates, and managers.

Cognitive Skills and Educational Level Appropriate for Content

The research data strongly suggest a misalignment between the rigour of the ELP content and the skill set of several participants, which were not developed enough to cope with such a massive input of new concepts and models in order to assimilate or manipulate them into their own experience or context. At times, the participants felt frustrated, overloaded, and overwhelmed—which went well beyond a sense of disorientation and led to alienation, avoidance, and withdrawal (Weinberg et al., 2010).

Although tools and models are part of best practice in leadership programmes, for participants who are already at their cognitive limits, the number used should be reduced to those best suited to the organisational context the participants will be attempting to apply them in. A smaller selection, reviewed in greater depth, with time for examples, case study exercises, critical reflection, and group dialogue would have been of more benefit.

A Group Dynamic

The group proved to be of real importance by producing a stabilising effect and enhancing the participants' lived experiences, thereby increasing the likelihood of TL.

> *We helped each other . . . we supported each other. (Post-interview, Participant 5)*

> *I discovered these people. (Post-interview, Participant 7)*

Facilitating a transformative group experience should not be left to chance. Every opportunity should be afforded at pre-, implementation, and post stages for participants to form a strong, supportive dynamic. During the ELP, the participants described their cohesion into a group as "discovering each other" and indeed, our need for membership of a group becomes stronger when faced with extreme situations that threaten our personal identity or performance (Lewis, 2009).

It is essential to find a balance between creating inclusive engagement with group dialogue and problem solving, where each person's experiences are valued, with the individual also being encouraged towards autonomous, critical thinking, and reflection (Mezirow, 1997). This balance is necessary to avoid the group taking on the collective need and then building a fortress against any change in the group view (Lewis, 2009).

Conclusion

Transformative capacity can be understood as the ability to turn transformative potential into transformative impact (Strasser et al., 2019). This case study produced new insights into 11, previously unresearched, key factors which, when present, have the potential to foster a TL experience and, when absent, can hinder a TL experience within the Qatari organisational context.

It could be argued it is not possible to generalise from an individual case and therefore this research makes limited valid scientific contribution, but that also holds true for a single experiment. This case study did not set out to make statistical generalisations but, rather, to expand and generalise on a theory, which it lays claim to accomplishing by focusing on a unique, real-life situation and revealing a multitude of details.

It suggests there first needs to be an opportunity for genuine, lived experiences and safe spaces for individuals to use the core elements associated with TL to progress, in their own way, through the phases of a TL experience. Additionally, it reinforces previous research that claims there are general principles that, when applied in a traditional educational setting, can increase the likelihood of a legitimate, transformative experience. However, the main conclusion to be drawn from this research is that it is not enough to design and implement an academically sound ELP and leave TL to chance. When an organisation sends participants on an ELP, all involved stakeholders have a shared responsibility to create the optimal conditions for legitimate, purposeful experiences. This means buy-in and support during all stages. Sufficient time, and the development of pre- and post-programme activities, should not be considered as extras to the programme but as integral, equally important stages that will affect both the ELP and its TL outcomes.

This case study highlights that by being more aware of key success factors, taking into consideration the cultural and organisational context, using some general principles, and creating opportunities to challenge in a realistic way, legitimate transformative experiences can occur in a Qatari organisational context and thereby contribute to developing the future leaders Qatar needs to realise its vision.

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Towards a Digital Resource Mobilisation Approach for Digital Inclusion During COVID-19 and Beyond: A Case of a Township School in South Africa[1]

Themba Ralph Mkhize

http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3549-2714 iD
Department of Educational Foundations
University of South Africa
mkhizet@hotmail.com

Mogamat Noor Davids

http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2894-3951 iD
Department of Educational Foundations
University of South Africa
davidmn@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

COVID-19 is affecting the functioning of most countries globally, creating a situation now described as the "new normal"—a time of unexpected educational change. The national lockdown, accompanied by the closure of educational institutions, brought economic hardship and deepened the digital divide between the rich and the poor. Educational institutions capable of transitioning to an online mode of delivery made that shift, while the majority of South Africa's schools remained excluded due to poverty and lack of technological infrastructure. The educational sector is at wits' end to find strategies to curtail the growing digital divide. This paper offers a digital resource mobilisation approach as framework to keep schools on the path to achieving the National Development Plan's aim of ICT capacitation. To consider developmental possibilities and respond to the digital exclusion of township schools, we asked the question: "What are the online teaching and learning experiences of school stakeholders?" Responses to this question assisted development of a digital resource mobilisation theory that is offered as a viable approach to digital inclusion and social change. Data were collected by telephonic interviews with three teachers, three learners, three school governing body parents, and one school principal. Based on the findings, recommendations for digital inclusion are suggested.

Keywords***: COVID-19, digital exclusion, township schools, digital divide, resource mobilisation**

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Introduction

COVID-19 has impacted most societies in the world, particularly exposing the educational inequalities between the rich and poor—as demonstrated in their responses to the pandemic and the resultant growing digital divide (Sayed & Singh, 2020). In a country like South Africa that is faced with multiple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, quality education has a critical role to play in eliminating poverty and bringing about economic transformation (Mahaye, 2020). Educational leadership remains responsible for managing educational change and the deepening digital divide during the COVID-19 pandemic. Agency and social change are paramount because quality education is part of the main goal of the National Development Plan (NDP) that was designed to catalyse the dynamics for socioeconomic transformation (National Planning Commission, 2011). South Africa subscribes to the United Nations (2015) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which highlight access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) as important for human development. Furthermore, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (2015) implored African countries to acknowledge well-resourced education as important for human capital development and quality education. Unfortunately, despite the adoption of progressive treaties including a democratic constitution after the fall of apartheid in 1994, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies, globally (Mckeever, 2017). In South Africa, where township and rural schools lag behind in online learning, the inequality between rich and poor communities will increase. The purposes of this paper are to highlight the need for school stakeholders to be sensitised to online learning challenges that township schools are facing, and to suggest a resource mobilisation approach for online learning. The social and economic changes that communities are experiencing during this pandemic directly influence current policies and practices in the educational sector. Therefore, this paper intends to contribute to a better understanding of the changes that schools will have to make in order to mitigate the negative consequences of socioeconomic changes and digital exclusion (Mack, 2010).

On announcement of a national lockdown by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 26 March 2020, more than 14 million learners in the country became temporarily out of school (Mahaye, 2020). To alleviate the educational effects of COVID-19 lockdowns, well-resourced schools migrated to online learning and continued curriculum delivery after adjusting the school programme. Learners attending these schools generally come from families who have the means to support online learning. On the other hand, most South African families live in apartheid-created rural and township communities and their children attend township schools that are under-resourced. In South Africa, the term "township" refers to under-developed urban areas that were established for "non-whites" during the apartheid era (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Mupira & Ramnarain, 2018). Schools in townships lack online learning infrastructure and are deprived of online learning devices such as computers and a sustainable internet connection. According to Bashman (2020), COVID-19 exposed an additional reality of educational inequality: the digital divide, also known as the digital exclusion of the poor. The development of a postapartheid educational system cannot ignore the imperative of working towards a digitally inclusive society to allay threats of a growing gulf between rich and poor.

To remain true to their mandate to contribute to improved social conditions, researchers confronted the educational challenges posed by the pandemic, head-on. During the early stage of COVID-19, a group of scholars were proactive in sharing their ideas and imaginings of a post-COVID-19 educational future to engender informed predictions grounded on an ethics of possibilities (Peters et al., 2020). In South Africa, this urgency was evidenced by some accredited journals' special editions dedicated to

COVID-19: *Southern African Review of Education (SARE)*, Alter*nation*, *Yesterday & Today* (all 2020 editions), to mention a few. These journals sought to tap the intellectual capital of researchers to best respond to an unexpected tsunami last experienced during the Spanish Flu of 1918. Little memory of the educational devastation caused by the Spanish Flu remained in the public domain (Phillips, 1987). The 1918 pandemic infected over 500 million people and caused an estimated 50 million deaths, worldwide, with about 675,000 occurring in the United States (Mamelund, 2018).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational researchers have responded by considering how best to adapt to an uncertain educational future. Ideas about theoretical and policy perspectives were explored with limited work done empirically (Badroodien & Fataar, 2020). This lack of empirical work on COVID-19 is understandable given the contemporaneous nature of the pandemic and because lockdown restrictions, such as social distancing and travel bans, are raising new ethical and methodological concerns are central to the research enterprise. As participants of another project not reported on here, the authors encountered a disturbingly poor uptake of technology and curriculum integration during Covid-19, which supports the need to research the technological challenges that schools experience. In this paper, we report on an investigation of one school's experience of teaching and learning under COVID-19 conditions. We hope to harness this on-the-ground experience to develop a feasible response to navigate education in poor township schools that are, arguably, under threat of becoming more disadvantaged compared to their privileged counterparts. In developmental terms, these schools will be left behind in the country's race for national digital inclusion as envisaged, for example, by South Africa's NDP (National Planning Commission, 2011). The NDP defined clear ICT targets for the educational sector to achieve by 2030. Given the negative impact of COVID-19, the meagre resources that township communities struggled to muster have gradually eroded.

Regrettably, the South African government's initiative, Operation Phakisa, to address the digital divide in South African township and rural schools, will also be affected (Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, 2019). Operation Phakisa had ambitious aims to roll out broadband internet connectivity to all schools by 2020. South Africa now finds itself in 2021, yet township schools remain marginalised and digitally excluded to this day. Because of COVID-19, school governing bodies (SGBs) are saddled with the additional task of saving their institutions from sliding into further mediocrity. Given the lack of ICT infrastructure, the growing digital divide will deepen the level of inequality that exists in the educational sector.

With COVID-19 conditions on our hands, we argue that there is an urgent need for governance to respond to the advancement of fourth industrial revolution (4IR) technological innovation that promises to bring social change through digital inclusion (Penprase, 2018). With full attention on digital inclusion for all, the COVID-19 moment should be turned into an opportunity to bring about positive educational and social change for now and beyond. Therefore, the very act of engaging in educational research with a view to effecting positive change may prove to be educationally beneficial for participants and researchers (Koen, 2021). This article unfolds under the following sections. First, we explore digital exclusion in township schools. Second, a brief explanation of the theoretical framework and third, a note on the methodology, are presented. Fourthly, a discussion of the findings is presented to support our argument for a digital resource mobilisation approach that could provide a framework for digital inclusion and social amelioration. The article ends with some conclusions and recommendations.

Digital Exclusion in Township Schools During COVID-19

National commitments to ICTs that were to be aligned to the NDP remain unfulfilled intentions in the light of the continued digital exclusion of poor and marginalised communities in townships and rural areas. The National Development Plan (2011, p. 170) provided a framework in which to realise South

Africa's vision that "by 2030, ICT will underpin the development of a dynamic information society and knowledge economy that is more inclusive and prosperous."

According to Philip (2010), structural inequality in South Africa has its origins in the key legacies of apartheid. These legacies include centralised monopoly of the core economy, the highly skewed distribution of assets such as land and capital and the impacts of migrant labour, the spatial legacy of Bantustans and apartheid cities, and the deep inequalities in the development of human resources (Philip, 2010). We argue that the interface between the structure of the economy and issues of socioeconomic inequality and digital access, made worse by COVID-19, are important in understanding the nature of economic marginalisation and digital exclusion. We maintain that even today these forms of structural inequality continue to entrench digital exclusion of impoverished schools and learners in South Africa. While imposing old forms of economic marginalisation, it seems that new forms of discrimination are appearing. Brown and Czerniewicz (2010) identified that those who are socially disadvantaged (like township schools in this study) are more likely to be digitally excluded. According to Naidoo and Raju (2012, p. 34) "the digital divide refers to the gap that exists between those with ready access to information and communication technology tools and those without such access or skills to enable access." Thus, digital exclusion describes "a situation where a discrete sector of the population suffers significant and possibly indefinite lags in its adoption of ICT through circumstances beyond its immediate control" (Warren, 2007, p. 375).

This paper acknowledges that the government is considering how to adjust the education system to meet the competency needs of a smart society across school levels, including developing curricula for coding and robotics for Grades R to 9 (Motshekga, 2019). However, we caution that these developments will be meaningless if technology integration at classroom level is not addressed as a matter of urgency. The introduction of coding and robotics will require appropriate teacher training and resources for this project to deliver the intended outcomes. Not only the NDP but also COVID-19 should be harnessed to address a potentially undermining digital divide. We propose a digitally informed approach to navigate the consequences of COVID-19 on education—in the form of a digital resource mobilisation theory as discussed next.

Towards a Digital Resource Mobilisation Theory

Digital resource mobilisation theory has its origin in the resource mobilisation theory (RMT) that emerged in the 1970s (Edwards & Kane, 2014). The key idea of RMT is that the capability to mobilise and drive collective action is facilitated by the presence of certain social structures and resources (Zald & McCarthy, 1987; Zald, 2017). McCarthy and Zald (1977) pioneered research that showed movements have the potential to organise and expand their activities through external financial resources and skills as well as increase formalisation of their protest actions. RMT acknowledges the role that can be played by social movements (SMOs) in advocating, expressing, and addressing challenges of resource scarcity in township schools. For example, Kendal (2006) and Manky (2018) argued that social movements succeed through efficient mobilisation of resources and the creation of both economic and political opportunities for members. Kendal (2006) and Manky (2018) further maintained that movements could mobilise material and non-material resources. Material resources include money, organisations, human resources, technology, means of communication, and digital and print media, and non-material resources include legitimacy, honesty, relationships, social networks, public attention, authority, moral commitment, and unity. Resource mobilisation therefore, stresses the ability of a movement's members to acquire resources and to mobilise people towards accomplishing the movement's goals. School stakeholders and SMOs may have access to different resources identified by RMT such as material resources, human resources, social-organisational resources, cultural resources, and moral resources (Kendal, 2006; Manky, 2018). Resource mobilisation theorists (Kane, 2013; Koch, 2010; Zald, 2017) have advised that new and existing networks, partnerships, and affiliations to effective

organisations that advance the mobilisation of resources are critical for social movements and organisations like schools to thrive, and to enable a collective mobilising action and voice. We argue here for resource mobilisation theory that is rooted in an asset-based approach (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) rather than in deficit thinking that limits school stakeholders to underestimate their capabilities to mobilise ICT resources and facilitate social change in their context.

We suggest adding the concept *digital* to resource mobilisation to accommodate digitality as a resource (Mkhize, 2018). Digital resources refer to hard- and software resources and connectivity to the internet. COVID-19 accelerated the need for digital integration for education by highlighting the realities of digital inclusion as opposed to digital exclusion. When considering strategies to develop sustainable resourceful communities, a bridging of the digital divide should aim at providing equal access to digital resources to provide all learners equal opportunity to perform optimally (Khoza & Manik, 2015). Our study investigates experiences of online teaching and learning in a KwaZulu-Natal township school during the COVID-19 pandemic to better understand digital exclusion. To answer the research question: "What are the digital experiences of participants working under COVID-19 conditions at a Kwazulu-Natal primary school?" we adopted a case study design that we explain in the methodology section below. We employed digital resource mobilisation theory derived from resource mobilisation theory (Mkhize, 2018) to integrate digitality as a resource for development. Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of our theoretical framework and illustrates the intersections between resource mobilisation theory and various dimensions of an ICT infrastructure.

Figure 1

Digital Resource Mobilisation Theory
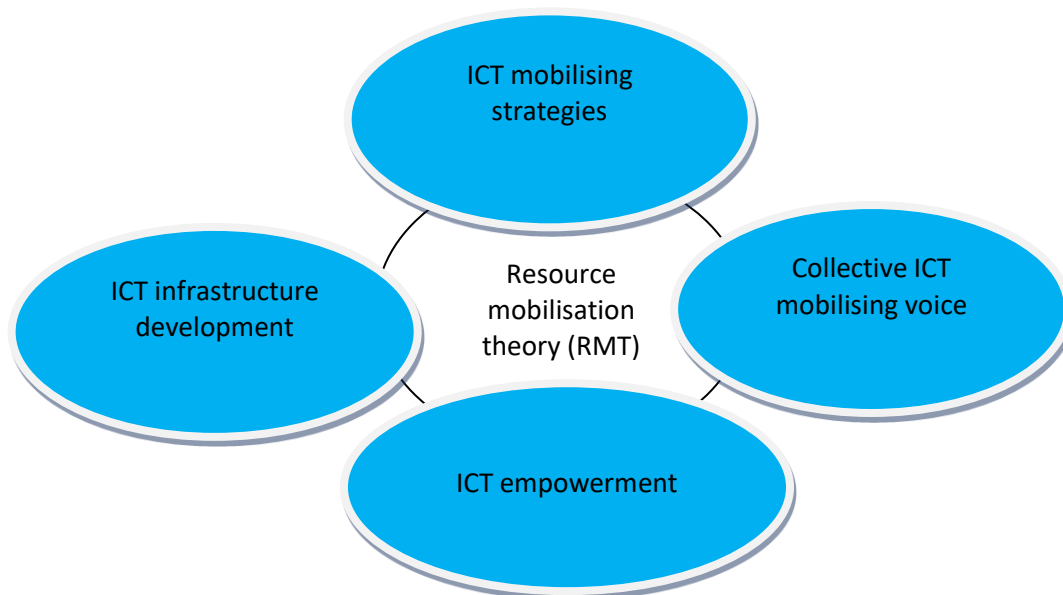
Methodology

A qualitative case study design was used to investigate the experiences of a convenient sample of stakeholders in a bounded context of one school. According to Liebenberg et al. (2019, p. 30), "critical theory is concerned with personal agency to effect change in situations that are oppressive and unjust," which is relevant to our study given its apartheid background as history. We reviewed the resources mobilisation theory to explore and interpret data gathered from a school in Umlazi township, KwaZulu-Natal. This school was selected because of its location in the township context. The

school was also selected for its accessibility and convenience to conduct this study. Considering COVID-19 health protocols, data were collected using telephone interviews with one principal, three parents, three SGB teachers, and two learners. Telephone Interviews allowed participants to share their experiences freely while also providing in-depth data that might inform change in their context (Asghar, 2013; Farooq, 2015). The researchers and participants were cooperative communicators creating a space where they jointly and critically reflected on issues to effect social transformation (Kemmis et al., 2014). Interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify and develop emerging themes. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the identities of participants.

Ethical Considerations

According to Bless et al. (2006), research ethics assists in avoiding research pitfalls and misuse; it also promotes the accountability of researchers, who need to be guided by, and respect, ethics. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the institution ethical clearance committee in the College of Education. Further approval for conducting the research was obtained from the Department of Basic Education in KwaZulu-Natal. The study is informed by ethical principles that include non-maleficence, autonomy of research participants, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study emerged during data analysis and support the argument for a digital resource mobilisation approach for digital inclusion. Five main findings are critically discussed with supporting citations as evidence and with reference to relevant research conducted in the field.

Structural Inequality as Historical Legacy

Data sources revealed that township schools are situated in communities faced with socioeconomic challenges that exacerbate inequality and digital exclusion. These inequalities have their origin in the apartheid legacy of unequal educational provision. For example, the principal, Mr Zikhona, had this to say:

> *Most learners are from poor backgrounds. That is why we made sure that the DBE [Department of Basic Education] provides a nutrition programme. Even Grade 12 when they have afternoon extra classes they get something for the stomach. The school falls under Quintile 3. This is a non-fee paying school.*

Another participant, Mr Sibanye, a member of the SGB, concurred with the principal and explained the socioeconomic challenges faced by learners and educators that hindered their efforts to move to online learning. He said:

> *Some parents cannot afford to buy learners smartphones. Some learners will not have access. Sometimes you have learners who are bright at school but due to poor financial background, parents cannot buy smartphones and laptops. These learners will be left behind and end up being discouraged should we move to online learning without making sure that they can at least have access to online platforms through the school.*

The achievement of digital inclusion requires action and the hard facts of the past, which impact directly on the present, cannot be ignored. According to Tapala et al. (2020), socioeconomic environment is matched to the school, learner, and community in a hierarchy according to access to wealth, power, and social status. In addressing socioeconomic challenges and a digital divide, theories of social movements (e.g., resource mobilisation theory in this paper) emphasise the importance of

action. According to Koch (2010), the success of social movements depends largely on their ability to act and mobilise people to acquire resources that enable them to achieve their goals. Therefore, this paper argues that, to tackle this socioeconomic and digital exclusion, collective action as proposed in resource mobilisation theory is of critical importance and is a necessary strategy for social change (Edwards & Kane, 2014).

Digital Exclusion of Township Learners

COVID-19 exposed the digital divide when township schools were not able to transition to online teaching. Township school stakeholders recounted the non-responsiveness of the DBE in providing support to enable online learning and ensure continuity of teaching and learning during the pandemic. For example, Mr Ngusi, chairperson of the SGB, expressed his disappointment at the lack of action on the part of DBE to address imbalances of the past and digital exclusion in township schools. He had this to say:

> *Our learners wish to be like those in urban or previously Model C schools where they will also be able to learn using new technology like laptops, smartphones etc. Government seem to be ignoring township schools when it comes to providing these new ways of learning. I do not know why.*

Teacher Mr Khazi confirmed the inability of DBE to respond to resource scarcity and inequality in the provision of ICT and learning resources in township schools. He said:

> *When we said we need ICT resources and assistance, DBE said: "Use what you have." They said just swim the best way you can. No tangible support.*

Another educator, Mr Kuboni, noted inaction on the part of government in addressing the digital divide and had this to say:

> *Learners cannot afford online tools like laptops and smartphones. Parents are unemployed and poor. DBE need to act and ensure that township schools have ICT infrastructure.*

We argue in this paper that DBE non-responsiveness to digital exclusion does not stem from a lack of ICT policy but, rather, from poor political leadership to mobilise resources, and poor policy implementation. Effective transition to online teaching and learning requires digital devices and infrastructure such as internet connection and appropriate software programmes. Without ICT resources, learners attending township schools will always be disadvantaged. In addressing the challenge of ICT access at home, the authors concur with Chisango and Marongwe (2021) that all learners should be provided with ICT devices such as tablets and computers, and should receive subsidised data.

School stakeholders should face up to this challenge despite the odds that may weigh against them under COVID-19 conditions. The task may seem daunting but a delay in raising this matter at an appropriate management level will result in an inevitable growth in the existing digital divide. Given the potential that a digital resource mobilisation approach offers to school management and leadership teams (Edwards and Kane, 2014), community mobilisation should be initiated for all to put shoulder to the wheel and become serious about providing quality education. Needless to say, poverty reduction should also be addressed urgently to minimise digital marginalisation and offer hope for a better future (Mbele, 2020).

Lack of ICT Infrastructure

A lack of ICT infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic was exposed as the main challenge in advancing online teaching and learning. Principal Mr Zikhona had this to say about lack of ICT infrastructure in township schools:

> *Truth be told, we do have a challenge when it comes to ICT and online learning. We are a township school. We are different to the ex-Model C schools. The ICT gap was apparent during quarantine period and school closure period because the learning platforms that were used by Model C schools were not available to us. Remember, being a township school, our learners do not have resources. Some stay with their grandmothers, data is a problem, and even access to the phone itself is a problem.*

One learner stressed the importance of developing strategies for mobilising ICT resources and said:

> *We need support to get online necessities for our school. We do not like the fact that we are left behind when it comes to online learning.*

Another learner expressed the challenges arising from a lack of ICT infrastructure. She had this to say:

> *Learners don't have laptops and at school there are no computers or laptops. We do not even have internet both at home and at school.*

Another teacher's response confirms the lack of ICT resources as a challenge:

> *The kind of learners we deal with are from poor backgrounds. Most of them are from the shacks around the school. Some don't have access to a cell phone let alone a laptop. Even our school is not fully equipped with ICT to cater for all learners.*

Economic inequality in South Africa, as shown in the excerpts above, will continue to deprive learners in township schools. Dube (2020) recommended that the DBE provide learners and teachers with devices they can use for online learning. These devices could include smartphones, tablets, or general phones that support the installation of software learning packages such as Blackboard. Reimers and Schleicher (2020) confirmed that without devices, internet connectivity, and simple physically conducive environments, it is a challenge for children to learn.

This article argues that ICT deprivation also promotes feelings of inadequacy, thereby maintaining the status quo and narrative of township people as passive recipients of government aid rather than active participants in determining their future. Resource mobilisation theory (Edwards & Kane, 2014) identifies the role of the private sector as a dynamic contributor to services and infrastructure development. Therefore, resource mobilisation theory argues that schools should identify and mobilise their own material and human resources to address digital exclusion in township communities (Edwards & Kane, 2014).

Paucity of Digital Literacy Skills

An integral part of ICT infrastructure is the ICT capability of the teaching staff. The lack of the school's teachers' and learners' ICT skills highlights a need for skills development to promote digital inclusion for school improvement. In this regard, a teacher commented that:

Some of our teachers are familiar with IT but the majority will need to be really trained.

Another participant, Mr Sibeko an SGB member, added similar sentiments on the importance of ICT empowerment and said:

Our teachers are not fully trained on ICT. Younger educators are the ones who welcome ICT better.

Although access remains a condition for the use of ICTs, even after barriers to access are diminished, inequalities regarding skills and usage patterns remain. As Witte and Mannon (2010, p. 147) have clarified:

In the end, poor and rich alike might have access to the Internet, but only a privileged few are able to turn to the Internet as an asset, a lifestyle, and an incentive, unless people are capacitated to effectively utilise ICT.

Digital literacy skills facilitate technology integration in education, and a paucity of digital literacy skills becomes a barrier to making the shift to online teaching and learning. The lack of appropriate skills to bring technology alive at a classroom level was clearly evident during COVID-19 when teachers showed that they were not qualified to navigate the route to online teaching. Studies focusing on the effects of technology on pedagogy have shown that educational technology contributes tremendously to the quality of teaching of all subjects, and to all students (Bashman, 2020; Peters et al., 2020; Winn, 2002). However, we argue that the advancement of online learning can only be fully achieved once teachers and learners integrate and embrace technology in their pedagogy. Graham et al. (2020) recommended a fundamental shift in teacher pedagogy that can be attained through professional development programmes that model functional pedagogical changes to teachers and education in South Africa.

Thus, empowerment and participation in educational advancement are the main goals of digital inclusion (Stewart et al., 2013). According to Chetty et al. (2018), digital skills provide the poor with a catalyst to break out of the cycle of poverty and to empower themselves. The monopoly on knowledge and information are weapons to keep the status quo of unemployment, inequality, and poverty in place (Mahaye, 2020). Sikwebu and van Greunen (2020) also noted that the digital divide in under-resourced schools is worsened by the lack of ICT-trained teachers.

This article argues that the need for capacity building remains a valid concern, especially in the area of mobilising ICT resources in township schools. At the centre of resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1987; Zald, 2017), is empowerment and capacity building, which provide the main reason as to why this theory anchors this study. Resource mobilisation theory (Manky, 2018; Tilly, 1998; Zald, 2017) sees a lack of training as a challenge for social movement organisations in mobilising resources such as digital access resources. Human resources in digital resource mobilisation theory are viewed as critical to capacitate and canvass for effective implementation of ICT and social change (Zald, 2017).

Stakeholders' Voices as Resource Agent

In this study, the voices of school stakeholders suggested a strong need for a collective voice to mobilise against online learning resource scarcity and advocate for the interests of all schools in township contexts. The principal, Mr Zikhona, highlighted the need for a collective voice for social change and said:

> *In this township, we have schools that have ICT and those that do not have. As school principals, we need to speak with one voice and fight for change in all schools to bring ICT resources and training.*

Mr Khazi (a teacher) had this to say about mobilising resources as collective township school stakeholders:

> *We cannot move online at this stage. The circumstances we are currently in do not allow us. We must make sure that the school has online resources. Schools must come together and bring change.*

Mrs Dumani, SGB member, added the importance of formulating different strategies for mobilising for online resources and said:

> *We have started to talk about online teaching and learning since this COVID-19 crisis started. We say as a leader within the SGB, take the letter and take it to the business you know and request assistance.*

We argue that through the collective voice of school stakeholders, strategies for mobilising resources for digital inclusion in township schools can be brought into play. Mkhize (2018) found that resource mobilisation strategies, such as creating sustainable partnerships, multi-stakeholder engagement, building on the rich past, and income generating projects, were key strategies for mobilising resources in deprived school contexts such as rural and township schools. Digital resource mobilisation theory calls for the collective framing of issues, which include digital exclusion. Thus, we argue that participation is important in unlocking resources. If township communities and school stakeholders have no political voice, the transformation and social change agenda will suffer, widening the digital divide and leaving already disadvantaged schools further behind.

Conclusion

As a qualitative study conducted in one school within the context of a township, our findings cannot be extended to other schools. However, we argue that the intention of this study was not to generalise its findings but, rather, to understand a real case that can be used to open debate about the state of technology in township schools and to suggest practical ways to address the digital divide.

In response to the research question formulated to guide this study, and based on our findings, we conclude that COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated long-existing inequalities in the South African education system. Educational stakeholders have called for the technological support of township schools. We suggest a broad digital resource mobilisation (DRM) approach as a management framework. DRM incorporates Paulo Freire's (1974) philosophies of critical conscientisation and critical pedagogy. According to Freire (1974), people reflect on their social situation to conceptualise individual and collective actions that can be pursued to emancipate themselves from oppressive social conditions. We endorse Freire's advocacy of education for emancipation as being related to digital resource mobilisation (Edwards & Kane, 2014). In this context, the concept of *agency* is evident because social change remains a guiding thread in the study (Evans, 2007). In practice, agency is manifested as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities (as expounded in this study), which offer DRM as a way forward and towards digital inclusion (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

The insufficient ICT support experienced by stakeholders presented another concern to be addressed by the school leadership. School stakeholders should, for example, capitalise on the strategic capability of the school, in terms of its resources and competences, to provide competitive advantages and

create new possibilities for mobilising resources (Zafar et al., 2013). We recommend creating sustainable partnerships, multi-stakeholder engagements, and building on the past as income generating projects (Mkhize, 2018). We advocate that every learner at school be provided with an appropriate device and that township schools provide internet connection to teachers and learners on a permanent basis. However, we argue that ICT resources mobilised and provided to teachers and learners should be managed and cared for. The case of 55,000 missing Samsung tables that were loaned to the Eastern Cape DBE for the matric class of 2020 provides a good example of mismanagement of available resources that must be avoided to ensure sustainability of resources (Dayimani, 2021). Munje and Jita (2020) cautioned that in some instances resources in the classroom are either non-utilised or under-utilised, with negative implications for teaching and learning.

An absence of ICT infrastructure militates against a progressive digital literacy environment at schools. We recommend the employment of DRM that involves the use of material resources, human resources, social-organisational resources, community-cultural and moral resources that could be harnessed by school stakeholders for digital inclusion. The need for teachers to become fully trained in digital literacies, and for stakeholder involvement to be mobilised, form an integral part of the solution in terms of a digital resource mobilisation approach. Thus, DRM, as suggested in this article, requires the reimagining of a post-COVID-19 future that embraces digital inclusion for all, where teachers and learners are fully trained and capacitated to participate fully in ICT technologies and be part of the 4IR. Needless to say, these noble intentions require active leadership that shows commitment and activism in mobilising all conceivable resources in the fight against the digital exclusion of township and rural schools.

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Making Wine Without Grapes: The Case for Quality Teaching With Limited Resources[1]

Jasmine Matope

ORCID No: 0000-0003-0818-8258
IIE Varsity College Cape Town
40794@iieconnect.co.za

Abstract

This article illustrates the significant role that creative, conscientious, dedicated, motivated, and committed teachers play in guiding, directing, and developing students' thinking, perspectives, and future lives. It highlights the importance of teacher agency in connecting learning to students' lives. It argues that good teachers can employ pedagogical practices that are not dependent on the availability of resources. It employs Pierre Bourdieu's theories of capital, field, and habitus to show how teachers can develop students' dispositions, consciousness, perceptions, perspectives, and lives. It also uses Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice to show how teachers can develop in working-class students, the essential knowledge, skills, and understandings that enable them to compete on a par with middle-class students. It uses life course theory to understand how the participants' schooling experiences, relationships, interconnectedness, and transitions influenced their thinking, doing, and lives. It employs a qualitative paradigm to explore five students' and one teacher's notions of how teaching and learning practices assisted the students to overcome the issue of inadequate resources. To locate the participants' perspectives and to analyse how their schooling experiences in the period 1968–1990 influenced their lives, the article uses the life history technique. The findings of the research stress that it is the inventiveness, competence, and attitude of the teacher that are the defining factors in the provision of quality education—not merely the availability of material resources.

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Introduction

Literature highlights how a lack of adequate material resources impedes effective teaching and learning, giving rise to most underprivileged schools failing to produce competent students and good results (Khan & Iqbal, 2012; Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Sedibe, 2011). Elucidating the adverse effect of a lack of adequate teaching materials on teaching and learning, Sedibe (2011, p. 133) highlighted how "learners and teachers will lack opportunities to empower themselves and implement practical skills in any teaching and learning situation, thus hampering their critical and creative thinking." This article does concede that easy access to teaching materials and resources makes teaching and learning easier. However, considering the reality in most developing countries, and from personal experience, I contend that dedicated and imaginative teachers can effectively employ pedagogical strategies to develop students' critical thinking skills, reasoning, assertiveness, competency, agency, sense of self-worth, and responsible citizenry—irrespective of inadequate resources. It is in difficult circumstances that the great minds prove their ingenuity. This article hopes to add value to the debates on poor performance of students in disadvantaged schools as reported by various authors (Baker et al., 2017; Banerjee, 2016; Rammala, 2009; Shalem & De Clercq, 2019; Sibanda, 2014), and to national and international debates on connecting students and their learning to life outside school (see, for example, Cloete, 2009; Sheppard & Cloete, 2009). Given that there is little literature on, or evidence of, what makes good schools work—or on the cultures students are exposed to that allow them to go on and connect their learning to their future lives in productive ways—the article highlights what a reputable "previously disadvantaged" school under apartheid did to provide its students with the tools and understanding to engage with the social world after leaving school, and describes what the students say about what they took with them into life.

The motivation for this article originated from a concern that educationists tend to "blame" a lack of resources for the underperformance of students. Yet, I was intrigued by the performance of Victoria High School in the period 1968 to 1990, when education in South Africa was probably at its most repressive stage. Victoria High was one of the disadvantaged schools of that era, yet managed to provide educational spaces in which the students were able to develop their critical thinking capabilities and act as agents of personal change.

This article questions current debates on quality education in South Africa that suggest that good teaching happens only in former Model C schools. The discourses argue that these schools have adequate resources (infrastructure, playgrounds, textbooks, tablets, and a small teacher-to-pupil ratio), which promote high standards and meaningful learning (Lacour & Tissington, 2011; Maserow & Isaacs, 2015; Mitra et al., 2008; Sedibe, 2011). What these debates imply is that, when there are scanty resources, good teaching and learning do not take place. This preoccupation with resources and good teaching is not peculiar to South Africa; it is a global phenomenon (Khan & Iqbal, 2012; Reardon, 2011). When most people talk about good education, they generally think of access to resources. Such perspectives suggest that, without adequate resources, teachers cannot promote the students' confidence, optimism, common sense, problem-solving skills, inventive thinking, and imagination.

I contend that ingenious teachers are capable of developing and broadening students' various skills and knowledge and their understanding of, and perspective on, the world—with or without adequate resources. Underscoring the primary role that creative teachers play in the learning and lives of students, Fafunwa (1969, pp. 36–37) noted that:

> *The demand for more and better schools, the need to relate curriculum to the needs of the child and the environment, the crying needs of the child and his other instructional materials, the desirability of training in vocational and technical skills, and indeed the overall problem of preparing the future citizens of Africa who will be fully oriented to their environment cannot be fully accomplished without the aid of competent teachers.*

Indeed, a competent teacher has the capacity and will to work unwaveringly under any conditions to facilitate a positive change in the thinking and doing of students. I suggest that, when learning connects to individual dispositions and understandings, students develop the necessary tools to construct and navigate different pathways in the rest of their lives. Such learning provides them with mechanisms to exert their agency and transcend their social circumstance, as well as adopt different dispositions for subsequent challenges—highlighting how and what students are taught influences who they become. Malaguzzi (1998, p. 83) asserted that "learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning how to learn."

To better understand the significance of pedagogical practices that connect learning to students' lives and develop students' agency, critical thinking, and reflexivity, I find Pierre Bourdieu, Nancy Fraser, and life course theories useful.

Theoretical Framework

I use Fraser's (2007, 2008) concept of *social justice* to understand how the greater representativity, access, and agency exercised at Victoria High School created and embedded tangible frameworks of social justice. I use the notions of recognition and redistribution to understand how one under-resourced school, Victoria High School, in the period 1968 to 1990, engaged with statuses of difference—political, social, educational, and economic—and how the students sought to advance their positions under conditions of limited opportunity, poverty, poor schooling performance, early school leaving, severe economic deprivation, and social discontent (Ladd, 2012). Fraser's (2007) social justice theory suggested that the application of social justice to encourage parity in participation would overcome a variety of injustices and help dismantle institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating "on par with others as full partners in social interaction" (Keddie, 2012, pp. 263 –254).

I use the notion of social justice to demonstrate how redistribution does not only comprise economic capital, but also entails collective sharing of intellectual goods that deliver levels of critical thinking that allow students to operate in their new worlds in more equitable ways. I show how the notion of recognition is more than "equitable relationships" that foster understandings of the world and lead to more productive social interactions and mutual respect for different identities. Furthermore, the notion of recognition helps me to understand how, when students are not rejected and are encouraged to regard themselves as full human beings, they are able to compete effectively.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capitals, and field are particularly important in providing means to understand the possibilities for schools and teachers to act in ways that improve the educational outcomes of marginalised students. Bourdieu's theories also offer useful and important ways to analyse the role and power of education in the lives of students, "linking pedagogy to social change, connecting critical learning to the experiences and histories that students bring to classrooms, and engaging the spaces of schooling as sites of contestation, resistance and possibility" (Giroux, 2003, p. 6).

The concept of capital assists me to understand past students' "ways of thinking and dispositions to life" that provided them with the "expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic culture required for success in school" (Henry et al., 1988, p. 233), despite access to inadequate resources. The notion of capital reveals how "accumulated labour," when "appropriated on a private basis by agents or groups of agents," enables students with the "appropriate social energy" to convert it into "forms of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 15).

Life course theory helps me to overcome the challenge of capturing both the conscious (what participants remembered) and unconscious (what participants chose not to remember or what they did not speak about) aspects of their personal narratives (Reissman, 1993). Life course theory importantly emphasises human agency in shaping life trajectories, the influence of socio-historical and geographical location, the relevance of past conditions or developments in informing present thinking, and the extent to which individual lives are linked and connected across time and space. This enables me to understand how cultural, political, economic, and social circumstances in the period 1968 to 1990 were tied to important human and historical developments and transitions that inevitably shaped the ways in which students experienced schooling under apartheid and how they thought about their futures.

These theories depict how teachers have the capacity to empower students with understanding, doing, and thinking to perform academic and social functions, as well as to adapt to changing circumstances. In this respect, Bourdieu (1971, p. 193) noted that "it may be assumed that every individual owes to the type of schooling he has received a set of basic, deeply interiorised master patterns." I now discuss the methodology I used to obtain information on students' perspectives on the quality teaching and learning at Victoria High School, which developed their knowledge and the skills they used in their transitions to life.

Methodology

I used a qualitative approach because I was dealing with past students' opinions on how Victoria High influenced their schooling and lives. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2001, p. 22) noted how such an enquiry is most appropriate for research on individuals or small groups if the objective is "to understand the subjective world of human experience and so to speak, to get inside the research participants' heads and understand from within." In utilising the qualitative paradigm, I followed a blended approach of life history and life course theory, described earlier, to gather data on the learning experiences of five participants who attended Victoria High in Cape Town as students in the period 1968 to 1990. The utilisation of a life history perspective was stimulated by Foucault's (1977) prompt that the challenge is not to think historically about the past but, rather, to use history to rethink the present. The life history approach helped me to obtain data from the participants on how the school framed their experiences, thinking, behaviour, and future lives in particular ways, and also to then locate this within their subsequent lives through their subjective gaze. In this respect, Wicks and Whiteford (2006) highlighted that:

> Life stories are narratives used to reconstruct and interpret whole lives to obtain a comprehensive, over time, view of people's experiences. That is, they can be used to understand not only one life across time, but how individual lives interact with the whole. (p. 98)

Importantly, "comprehending some of the complexities, complications, and confusions within the life of just one member of a community" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 11) provided important ways to

understand larger communities, how individuals are placed within those communities, and how meanings are made therein.

To recruit participants, I contacted staff members and other people connected to the school who provided initial leads on past students who I then contacted. This rapidly spread into a web of contacts that I followed up, one by one. This network of relationships proved invaluable because different people provided different kinds of information on potential contacts and the school itself. This process was perhaps the most exciting part and probably yielded the richest data, overall (Ortner, 2003, p. 6). I used in-depth interviews as the most useful method to gather deep and detailed information from research participants. The interviews offered me ways to observe how the participants thought through and expressed their feelings about how the school connected learning to their lives, and to understand how they attached meaning to the way the teachers developed their agency, skills, and knowledge in particular ways. I held three interviews of roughly an hour each with each of the participants. To check the trustworthiness of the data, I read widely about the history of Victoria High, the kinds of students who attended the institution, some of the history of the areas in which the students lived, and the general history of Cape Town (political, social, economic, and educational between 1948 and 1990). Developing these prior insights was important to help facilitate interviews and also to triangulate and guide what was being said. To validate the students' responses, I interviewed one senior teacher who was also a former student at the school. I audiotaped and personally transcribed the interviews. I used a thematic approach to analyse the data. In Table 1, I display details of the participants' schooling years, pseudonyms, and their professions.

Table 1

Participants' Details

Participant	Years at Victoria High	Pseudonym	Eventual occupation
1.	1973–1977	Cheryl	Teacher
2.	1976–1980	Ashley	Artist and designer
3.	1977–1981	Noor	Lecturer
4.	1978–1982	Meshack	Educational psychologist
5.	1979–1983	Wallace	Cape Town city council
6.	1960s/1970s–1990s	Mr Walters	Teacher (was a student at the school in the 1960s/1970s and returned to teach there in the 1990s)

I sought ethical clearance from my institution, and fieldwork approval from the Western Cape Education Department and district officials. I also sought permission from Victoria High School, although it appeared not to be necessary given that all the participants in the project had left the school more than 25 years previously. Nevertheless, I had envisioned visiting the school and using its documents.

Discussion of Themes

This section presents the two themes that emerged from interviews with the participants. I discuss how the school culture and teachers' pedagogical practices that connected learning to the students' contexts, and engagement with limited schooling resources influenced the students thinking, doing, and being.

An Enabling Schooling Environment

Davis and Jordan (1995, p. 570) noted that the culture and operation (culture and climate of school, classroom activities, kinds of curricula, teacher actions and instructional methods, and school-wide policies and standpoints) of the schools that students attend influence their learning and experiences in ways that have broader implications for their future educational attainment, employment, and family relations. The students who participated in the project commended Victoria High's school culture and their teachers for providing quality teaching with minimum resources. The teachers used various pedagogical strategies that challenged them to think differently about their situations, potential, and lives. This highlights how the quality of learning that students experience in school influences what they become when they exit school.

Cheryl outlined how the teachers effectively used pedagogical strategies that utilised every situation as an opportunity to learn. Illustrating how she benefited from the quality teaching, she noted:

> There was a debating society. Especially in language classes, we had lots of debates and discussions. We invited speakers to come and address us and we would ask questions. I was part of the SRC [student representative council], and they provided opportunities for us within class time and outside of class time to discuss and to debate. In Grade 11 and 12, I had a German teacher. At first, I could not understand her methodology. After a while, I came to appreciate it because what she could do was teach us language through literature. That was brilliant, you know, she taught us sentence structure while you are busy reading your novel in German. What I also liked about her was her knowledge of German literature. She had an immense interest in the world, which she could share with us.

Reiterating the teachers' ingenuity, Cheryl highlighted that the teachers successfully encouraged students' extensive reading without a school library. The teachers "circulated the few books among the students and urged them to make use of the local municipality library." They guided them to select books that exposed them to quality, meaningful, relevant, and intellectually engaging materials and debates that stimulated their self-esteem, imagination, induction, reflection, critical thinking, world outlook, and contribution to society. This exposure, she asserted, empowered her to read between the lines, value teamwork, critically analyse work, and respect herself and others. These valuable skills became forms of capital that enabled her to successfully navigate her schooling. In this regard, Bourdieu (1987) highlighted how, when exposed to highbrow culture or middle-class habitus, working-class children are capable of reasoning and thinking analytically and decisively.

Elucidating how the lack of resources was never considered a setback to all forms of teaching and learning, Cheryl outlined:

> This may be funny, but I remember the school toilets, that's where I learnt to squat because we didn't have toilet pans/toilet seats. So, we would have very strong thighs because you had to sit like this [demonstrating]. The toilets were pathetic. We never had any toilet paper you had to take your own. The school grounds were small. We didn't have fancy soccer fields or stuff like that. Irrespective of this, we still did sport, excelled in sport, and loved sport.

Ashley corroborated the teachers' commitment to giving quality education. He explained how, even without a sports field and a school bus, the teachers promoted their extensive and successful participation in sport. He observed:

We had a teacher, Mr Willies, he had a car. We played rugby and rugby team has 15 guys. He took us with his car from the school to our venue. Take a group of boys and go back to take others. He was a white man and he never mourned about his petrol or time. We played till five, and he will drive each person to the nearest point. Also, our woodwork teacher, Mr Leonard told us every week to pay a R2 because of his passion for woodwork. Every week maybe 10 or 15 boys pay, and he saved for us. When the department would give us limited quantities of wood, he would put hands in his pocket and buy us extra wood for us to make big tables because the department would like us to make small tables. He did this because he knew the circumstances of the places we came from.

Echoing how the teachers' ingeniousness was not incapacitated by their lack of academic and sporting facilities, Wallace explained:

Victoria High is not a school known for facilities. For many years, the school has used a row of stables, which they converted into classrooms. So, Victoria High never had good facilities. It didn't have a swimming pool, didn't have a big sport field, and didn't have a hall, a fully equipped gymnasium. We went to Victoria High because it was known, and I believe even today is still known for a good standard of education. Parents didn't send their children to get better facilities at the school. They sent them to get good tuition.

Cheryl, Ashley, and Wallace attributed their success and great accomplishments to the teachers' diligence, commitment, and aplomb. They were encouraged to be optimistic and constantly reminded that their capacity to perform could not be hindered by the school's lack of material resources. Although the school had no sporting fields and equipment, this was never regarded as an excuse to deprive the students of fully engaging in sport. The teachers thought on their feet and sought permission to use the local municipality swimming pool and sport grounds for several sporting disciplines. At times, they only had to access some facilities after school hours or over the weekend but this was gladly accepted. These students' narratives challenge some authors (for example, Jeroh, 2012; Mchunu, 2008) who contended that sport cannot be performed successfully if there are shortages in the amount and kinds of equipment and sporting facilities. The teachers at Victoria High School thought outside the box and improvised to overcome their conundrum. In this respect, Ladson-Billings (1994) considered imaginative teachers to be capable of successfully incorporating texts and pedagogical strategies that are culturally and linguistically responsive in order to increase students' efficacy, motivation, and academic achievement.

Wallace further outlined that many children travelled long distances because they wanted to get the good education that was offered at Victoria High School: "Even some of the children from wealthy families came to the school because the quality of the education surpassed some of the well-resourced schools by that time." According to Wallace, the teachers provided students with competitive learning skills and knowledge, notwithstanding the inadequate resources:

Victoria High didn't charge high fees and I believe, even today, its fees are very low. My daughter goes to an ex-Model C school in Newlands, a lovely school. We couldn't go there when we were children as it was for whites only. The school has fantastic facilities. They have intelligent white boards that you can write on, massive swimming pools, tennis courts, cricket fields, massive fields, halls where you can have these fancy auditoriums, but Victoria High never used to have these in the 1980s. We had no hall and when it was raining, we would open the doors that separated two classrooms and we would stand there for the assemblies, but what we learnt at assemblies was fabulous, high intellectual stuff.

Wallace further outlined that the high quality of learning provided at the school, despite the limited resources, lured many students to the school from both near and far. He explained:

> *A lot of children came from township—Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Langa, Habibia, Mitchell's Plain, Strandfontein and Manenberg—to Victoria High in search of good education at a cheap price. Even parents who could afford to send their children to better resourced schools sent them to Victoria high because it was highly competitive.*

This translocation of students to a poorly resourced school to get good education depicts how poor schools can develop positive dispositions in students, which raise their individual expectations and agency, and their ability to overcome their social class disadvantages. In this regard, Bourdieu (1990, p. 82) highlighted how teachers can assist working-class students to adopt middle-class habitus, deportment, preferences, and expectations that mark out their various social positions. This develops the students' "creative, active, inventive capacity" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 13) to overcome their poor social class background and limiting circumstances.

Also demonstrating how the academic reputation of the school attracted students, Noor noted:

> *I heard other students from other schools saying Victoria High was sort of a bourgeoisie school because everybody wanted to attend Victoria High and there was always a long waiting list of over 100 students who wanted to come—come to Victoria High, but then the school was full. I tell you if you were to come to Victoria High 1977 to 1981, the school was full. We used to be about 40 or 50 in a class. We sat in the prefabs, which were either very, very hot or very, very cold. Windows were broken but everyone wanted to be at Victoria High, you see. We sat in prefabricated classrooms, which were temporary classrooms; but we sat there because we wanted to be educated so you would not mind sitting in a Victoria High classroom with 40 or 50 students/learners or go to another school with fewer learners. We always had the ideas that they might not give you the same academic lessons we got.*

Noor further explained that, although classes were overcrowded, they did not experience congestion as a hindrance to learning because there were no cases of indiscipline, disengagement, or unwarranted absenteeism because the teachers were passionate about their jobs and demonstrated their high knowledge and skills. He outlined that, although the teachers had no fancy teaching resources or well-resourced staffroom with computers, they were widely read and very critical. They created a supportive and caring classroom atmosphere that stirred the students' confidence and zeal for lifelong learning and gave them an understanding of their various subject contents. Noor attested that extensive reading and critical thinking became core features of the teaching and learning at the school.

Reiterating the teachers' efficacy, he said*:*

> *The teachers never complained that we do not have facilities; they realised that it is the effort, the work that matters more than the facilities, that's why you look at Victoria High today it is a school to be proud of. Not just mourn over resources like most schools do today. The teachers and the parents were committed to keep the flag of the school flying.*

Noor further explained that what made the students successful were not resources, but their knowledgeable and diligent teachers who were committed to making a difference in the students' lives. In this respect, Bourdieu (1986) said that teachers can possess strong knowledge of the *codes of power* that give them a clear understanding of the value systems and discourse patterns prevalent in

the educational system, which they can use to promote the academic success of students. Thus, teachers can assist working-class students to gain access to the codes, or rules, of the middle class and enable them to participate confidently in their schoolwork and lives.

Similarly, Meshack highlighted how the dedicated teachers were not daunted by inadequate material resources and remained resolute and visionary in doing their utmost to promote the intellectual and social development of the students:

> *When we were at Victoria High School, we would not talk about resources. We learnt in the prefabs, very cold in winter. We had another block of bricks towards the back of the stables. As a school, there was more to it than resources. We didn't have a hall or sporting fields. We were a disadvantaged school, and the teachers had a calling for the job and not money.*

Meshack accentuated how the commitment, devotion, passion, critical thinking, inspiration, and guidance of the teachers at Victoria High School promoted the students' agency, optimism, and enthusiasm to make a difference in their lives. They were empowered to challenge their limitations intellectually. Their audacity and proficiency to occupy different key positions of leadership and authority were promoted. Elaborating on the school's focus on achievement, despite not having sufficient material resources, Meshack explained:

> *Most of our present political leaders came from Victoria High. There is a guy who went with me to school and is a chief executive of one of the big companies in the country. Quite a number of ministers with key positions in the government came from Victoria High School.*

The students ascribed their profound success not only to the discourses that prevailed but, more importantly, to the pedagogical practices of the teachers, as outlined in the following section.

Teaching With Limited Resources

Mr Walters, a teacher and former student at Victoria High School, said that when he was recruited to teach at the school, he received induction sessions that encouraged him to rack his brains. He was inspired to be diligent, erudite, a lifelong learner, to work in teams and, most importantly, to be a good role model to the students. Explaining the school's position and stance on its lack of resources, Mr Walters noted:

> *What made the school overcome the insufficient resources about which most schools complain, was the fact that the school considered the teachers as great assets with the ability to transform the students' schooling conditions and future lives.*

Mr Walters further highlighted that the school management regarded the role of the teacher as prime in the students' learning and encouraged all teachers to be subject pundits who employed appropriate teaching methods. This, he asserted, empowered the teachers to do their best with the limited material resources at their disposal. Elucidating how the school overcame the issue of resources, Mr Walters said:

Victoria High School never complained about the lack of resources because the teachers were encouraged (by the school management) to be widely read and knowledgeable. Most of the teachers were studying through University of South Africa. Myself, I started with the basic teacher's certificate, but I had to study to perform better. That was the kind of resource. You can't be a source of motivation if you have nothing within you. You have to develop yourself, to be that resource and, as teachers, we were studying; some through formal studies and others through mere discussion groups among the teachers—with other schools, among ourselves, we had discussion groups. This was the message that was then disseminated to the students, and it motivated them to work hard.

Mr Walters' view of the importance of teachers studying further resonates with the assertion by Rabindranath Tagore, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913:

A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lesson to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them. (as quoted in Dutta & Robinson, 1997, p. 66)

Further outlining how the teachers were urged to be authorities on their subject content, Mr Walters noted:

We had lots of arguments and debates and I think these were important at the time. For example, when the University of the Western Cape [UWC] was opened, there was a debate because the first intention of that university was to serve a particular group of people. It was a coloured university and there was a heavy debate as to whether we should boycott that because it was giving credence to the intentions of the state. And that was a heavy argument, heavy debate, which you know, we ultimately had to say there were alternatives, because you needed to have a subject not offered at the UWC to get to Cape Town University. Say a student had to do an odd subject like architecture, a subject not offered at UWC to get to Cape Town University. So that was a major debate which caused lots of tensions and discussions among the staff, but in the light of where else to go to, many including myself conceded that they must go there. Do what you have to do; under protest, get your qualification and get out. Some decided we will go there, and we will not graduate at the graduation ceremony, so there were a lot of tensions around that and you will understand these difficult decisions.

Mr Walters reiterated that the national and international debates not only connected the students and their learning to life outside school, but developed critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and identity in key ways. He highlighted assertively that the teachers were instrumental in nurturing the students' problem-solving skills and yearning to learn. Besides the debates, they used discussions, group interaction, peer teaching, sporting activities, and social welfare (civic) clubs to empower the students to participate actively and take responsibility for their learning:

One of the debates at that time was whether South Africa should be called Azania. It was a fierce debate. Some highlighting why it had to be called Azania and others why it should not be called Azania.

Importantly, such vigorous debates encouraged the students to imagine and think deeply and analytically about what was happening around them and how their decisions and choices would

influence the kinds of future lives they were to lead. The debates empowered the students to embrace challenges on an informed level.

Mr Walters further asserted that passionate teachers can always make a difference to the learning and lives of students using minimum resources. Substantiating the greater role that teachers played in teaching, Mr Walters recounted his working experience with the national department of education, noting:

> *There was excellent teaching and learning in some mud schools in the Eastern Cape. The schools had barely the basics; even in the mud schools of the Eastern Cape, you can get excellence. So, what is it that makes a teacher in a mud school in the Eastern Cape get children to read better than urban children? No resources, no Wi-Fi phones, no electronic tablets, and what not. I believe that if you have a dedicated, competent teacher, it's your greatest asset. You can have your white board and I have seen it, white boards and all that, those things only work well with good teachers. In the hands of poor teachers, they are useless.*

Mr Walters argued that the teachers were the mobile resources who were tirelessly ready to direct and guide the students' learning. Significantly, while Fraser (2007, 2008) suggested that teachers should redistribute economic resources to marginalised students to help them compete on a par with well-resourced schools, Mr Walters highlighted that the teachers at Victoria High School redistributed knowledge and skills to the students that developed their self-esteem, confidence, and agency, thereby enabling them to work hard and overcome the constraints posed by the limiting resources. The teachers created spaces that developed the students' capacities to participate in equitable ways as full members of society—which Nancy Fraser termed *participatory parity* and which is the goal of social justice.

Implications for Teacher Development

Mr Walters said:

> *Teachers are the tremendous resource for children, not only in terms of knowledge, but motivation as well. I believe that resources are important, make no mistake, they are important, but they are only beneficial in the hands of a good teacher. In the hands of a poor teacher, they are useless, because there is no resource that can take over the role of a teacher.*

Mr Walters' narrative depicts that the greatest resource in a teaching and learning environment is the teacher. As stated earlier by Tagore (in Dutta & Robinson, 1997, p. 66), "a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself," therefore there is need to continually develop teachers. This would improve and maintain their intellectual and social capitals, as advocated by Bourdieu, to be able to develop their students' agency. Therefore, in teacher development and training programmes, the teachers should be equipped to be highly innovative to the extent that they can convey their lessons effectively even with limited resources. In other words, the teachers should become highly intuitive, ingenious, and creative in their teaching and learning such that lack of resources would be a minor issue.

The government, non-governmental organisations, and school governing bodies should provide workshops and training sessions that help teachers to share their methods of quality teaching with limited resources. At governmental level, the teachers might also be provided with research grants and study leave to allow them to advance their qualifications, for example, those with diplomas could

obtain degrees in their teaching areas. At school governmental level, teachers could be afforded subject enrichment courses in which they engaged with their school contexts and in productive discussions to share constructive ideas and teaching strategies to enhance quality teaching and learning, even with limited resources. When teachers are encouraged to keep their intellectual batteries charged, they become motivated and can innovatively employ pedagogical strategies that meaningfully promote students' participation, critical thinking, autonomy, flexibility, responsibility, and agency.

Conclusion

The narratives of the participants highlight that teachers are the greatest resource in teaching and learning. Pierre Bourdieu's theories of capital, field, and habitus enabled understanding of the significant role of teachers in developing students' language codes, behaviours, consciousness, perceptions, perspectives, and lives. Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice showed how teachers can develop in working-class students, essential knowledge, skills, and understandings to enable them to overcome their disadvantages. The themes outline how motivated, committed, diligent, and innovative teachers are capable of using effective pedagogical strategies and engaging with the curricula in ways that promote social norms, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that make students' learning meaningful and interesting despite limited resources. The article argues that ingenious teachers connect teaching and learning to the students, and promote the students' dispositions, enthusiasm, optimism, confidence, courage, respect, responsibility, agency, citizenry, problem solving and critical thinking, and acquisitions of necessary tools to use to construct their schooling, transitions, and life pathways. Given that teachers are the greatest resource in the teaching and learning environment, it is essential that they constantly engage in staff development sessions to enhance their substantive subject knowledge and effective pedagogical strategies to deliver quality teaching even with limited resources.

Acknowledgements

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Raising Awareness of Agency to Address Climate Change: The Do One Thing (DOT) Strategy[1]

Irene Muller

ORCID No: 0000-0001-9018-5771
COMBER, Faculty of Education
North-West University
12765074@nwu.ac.za

Lesley Wood

ORCID No: 0000-0002-9139-1507
COMBER, Faculty of Education
North-West University, lesley.wood@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

The United Nations Children's Fund 2008 report, *Our Climate, Our Children, Our Responsibility,* warned that children will suffer most from the effects of climate change. Environmental education is one way to prepare children to cope and enable them to educate their families and friends about the need to act now to minimise the danger climate change poses. This article reports on findings from a participatory action research project aimed at integrating education for sustainable development into the Grade 7 curriculum, with a specific focus on climate change. Critical participatory action research has a transformative intent, engaging participants in learning to cultivate a sense of purpose and increase their capacity to solve local problems. Learner responses to qualitative questionnaires and recorded discussions related to the Do One Thing (DOT) strategy were used to determine learning about climate change and enable both learners and community members to identify action for change. Thematic coding was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the DOT strategy in increasing awareness of agency and resultant learning. The findings indicate that not only did the learners gain knowledge about the causes and consequences of climate change but the potential of the learners and community members to identify possible actions for change was increased as well. We provide suggestions as to how teachers can use the DOT strategy as part of an action research approach to integrating environmental education for sustainable development in order to raise awareness of local environmental threats and encourage learners and their families to behave in a more environmentally friendly way. The explanation of the research process offered in this article also highlights how participatory learning activities can help engage learners as active agents in their own learning.

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Introduction

The 2008 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, *Our Climate, Our Children, Our Responsibility,* indicated that children are among those most exposed to the effects of climate change (Bangay & Blum, 2010). In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012a) supported the widely held view that formal education, public awareness, and training are all critical elements in community response to the challenges of climate change. The current global trend in climate change education calls for the integration thereof into broader approaches, and recommends focusing education about climate change on a specific age group such as the senior phase learners in primary schools (UNESCO, 2012a). The integration process calls for more complex links in the provision of, and access to, the development of climate change educational initiatives (King et al., 2007), including inter- or transdisciplinary approaches and opportunities to share experiences regarding climate change. This article explains the usefulness of a project-based learning strategy, Do One Thing (DOT), to enable learners to research the consequences of climate change in their communities and use this knowledge to engage with the wider community to find ways to combat its deleterious effects.

A 2011 report issued by UNICEF in South Africa*, Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa*, indicated that climate change negatively influences children's emotional and social status as well as their health, nutrition, education, and developmental pathways. The report also confirmed that children are willing and able to confront issues related to climate change that have an impact upon their own well-being and that of their communities. Effective means of enabling children to address issues of climate change include education, mitigation, and adaptation—all of which engage them actively and provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to address these issues (UNICEF, 2011). To begin to implement the recommendations of this report, strategies such as DOT, as part of a wider education for sustainable development (ESD) agenda, enable learners to act as citizen scientists (Conrad & Hilchey, 2011) to identify climate change indicators in their communities, analyse and interpret data, and identify possible actions to lessen climate change. By communicating their understanding of climate change, and how to address it—both locally and globally—they can be powerful influencers for action to mitigate the effects of climate change in their communities.

Along with colleagues, we, as researchers, are currently part of an international climate change project to empower teachers to develop learners as citizen scientists who can advocate for environmentally friendly behaviour. The focus of the findings in this article is linked to research in one of the project sites in Gauteng, South Africa. In the third cycle of the project, teachers used a project-based learning strategy, DOT, to enable learners to identify the causes and consequences of climate change in their communities and to consult with their families and other community members to decide on one specific action that each could take to mitigate these consequences. We first present the background to the project, and the underlying theoretical framework, before explaining the methodology used in the third cycle. The findings are then discussed and their significance for future teaching of ESD in primary schools explained. The main research question that guided the third cycle of the project was:

"How can Grade 7 teachers use the DOT strategy to raise awareness about, and encourage action to mitigate, climate change?"

Integrating ESD Into the Curriculum: Some Pedagogical and Theoretical Perspectives

Project-based learning (PBL) is one approach to integrating ESD into the curriculum. This type of learning is centred on learning in the real world and allows for the active participation of learners to obtain both subject knowledge and skills (Killen, 2010; South African Institute for Distance Education, 2012). As an approach, PBL is grounded in experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The outcomes of both PBL and experiential learning theory follow the cyclical process innate to action research: identification of the problem, determining how to address it, taking action, reflecting on the outcomes, and disseminating the knowledge to others (Efstratia, 2014). However, PBL presents some challenges such as difficulty in determining the learning of the individual, relying, as it does, on collaboration. The impact of the affective domain on participant experience is another intricate concept to determine (Brundiers et al., 2010). However, the benefits of PBL outweigh these negatives.

McCright (2012) reported that learners who are exposed to experiential learning and PBL are actively engaged in and learn from collaboration and sharing ideas with their peers. Learners are encouraged to maintain their curiosity and apply their knowledge in real-life situations (McCright, 2012). They benefit from participation in experiential learning and PBL linked to climate change education because these promote deeper learning that fosters comprehension, cross-referencing, and independent thinking relevant to ecological and sustainability issues. Deeper learning also encourages internal motivation (Otto & Pensini, 2017). Boylan (2008) pointed out that learners' understanding of the concept of climate change is not often addressed in research. This research study therefore responds to the need to deepen our understanding of how young learners and their adult family members interpret and respond to the topic of climate change.

Schweizer et al. (2013) indicated that the relevancy of climate change projects is increased if they are situated in appropriate cultural values and beliefs meaningful to the participants, and action-orientated. Anchoring this project in a specific community of interest, a primary school in Vanderbijlpark, allowed for the features posited by Schweizer et al. (2013) to be incorporated. Brownlee et al. (2013) used the concept of *place attachment* or *place bonding* to indicate the cognitive and affective bonds people build with places of interest and specify that participants' beliefs, values, and attitudes determine their understanding of climate change. The behavioural change of participants thus depends upon psychological, human-evolutionary, and social-ecological circumstances (Brownlee et al., 2013). Otto and Pensini (2017) reported that both environmental knowledge and connectedness to nature are necessary components to nurture positive ecological behaviour; to them, motivation is a key factor to enhance responsible behaviour towards nature. Brownlee et al. (2013) were of the same opinion, and indicated that possible psychological processes that can hinder climate change education include the following: (i) an ability to ignore relevant evidence, (ii) loss aversion, which refers to the trends in communities to maintain the status quo and to avoid short-term losses despite the potential of long-term gain, and (iii) the inefficacy of individual action—where individuals believe that changing their behaviour will not make a difference to a global problem such as climate change.

Human-evolutionary processes include the interaction of humans with the natural environment and comprise two dimensions. The temporal dimension in the human-evolutionary process involves the desire to receive immediate rewards instead of waiting for future gains, for example, loss aversion. The spatial dimension indicates that most humans react in their immediate household and personal space. Climate change as a phenomenon demands action on a wider scale or spatial dimension, but

change should also start at a local and individual level. Furthermore, research has shown that knowledge about climate change is best converted with small-scale resources known to the participants (Brownlee et al., 2013).

Social-ecological processes in communities include human–environment and human–human interactions. Examples of these processes in communities are the consumption of fossil fuels (e.g., the heating of food, watching sport, and driving to parks and natural environments) and the governance of natural resources. The belief in science and trust in scientific evidence rely on the ability of community members to interpret scientific data and relate the data to their situation (Brownlee et al., 2013). In this project, we aimed to develop learners as citizen scientists to be able to counteract the negative effects of these hindrances and encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviour. Next, we detail the background of the larger action research project in which the DOT was used.

Background of the Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Climate Change Project

In 2019, an opportunity arose for the North-West University Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Climate Change project to join a global participatory action research (PAR) project to implement initiatives on climate change education by developing primary school learners as citizen scientists (De Sousa, 2018). This project allowed participants to share initiatives with their counterparts in other countries (South Africa, the United States of America, Germany, the Philippines, and Norway). This inter-university, inter-country participation aimed to align the learning and development of climate change educational opportunities among primary schools in diverse countries using a PBL approach (Tyler-Miller & Spoolman, 2019).

Although the South African leg of the project was implemented in three primary schools situated in disadvantaged communities, we only report on the findings from the site in which the first author was the lead researcher. The primary school is in a suburb of the town of Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng. The school has about 900 learners and 40 teachers, a better teacher-learner ratio than most primary schools in the country. The school is in a residential area with homes, small businesses, open public parks, and sports fields. The local community is exposed to a high level of pollution (air, water, and soil) due to the activities of large-scale corporations such as SASOL (the organic carbon-chemical industry in nearby Sasolburg) and ArchelorMittal (an iron refinery situated in Vanderbijlpark). Due to technological advances and the dwindling demand for such products, the community has suffered a lot of job losses and, therefore, the unemployment rate is very high. Coal mines in the area and the power plant run by ESKOM, the national power utility, also contribute significant air and water pollution. Vanderbijlpark is within an hour's drive from Johannesburg, the biggest city in South Africa. Many of the parents bring their children to school and then travel on to Johannesburg for their working day. Private and public transport thus adds to the high level of air pollution.

The first cycle of the project entailed meeting with teachers and community representatives to identify and discuss the environmental issues they were facing in this specific area. The meetings provided rich contextual detail on a range of challenges experienced by residents and teachers who were troubled by the degradation of the natural environment, a lack of waste management or removal of waste, water and air pollution, and sewage leaks, which they said had a severe impact on the health and well-being of the community and were threatening food security. The group agreed that climate change education was needed to enable change in community attitudes and behaviour. They captured these ideas in a logo to indicate their vision of, and commitment to, communal environmental concerns (see Figure 1). This completed the first cycle of the project.

Figure 1

Logo for the Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Climate Change Initiative

The second cycle of the project was aimed at building the capacity of Grade 7 teachers to integrate ESD into their respective subjects. Grade 7 was targeted in response to the recommendation of UNESCO (2012a) to target senior primary school learners. Other colleagues in the larger project helped to facilitate a workshop where teachers learnt strategies to enable them to infuse climate change into various subjects, and appreciate the real-life relevance of climate change by linking subject knowledge to possible sound environmental action (see De Sousa, 2018). Various teaching tools, such as the use of graphical information and case studies from newspapers and international media, were used to explore the topic. Table 1 summarises the national Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents for Grade 7 (Department of Basic Education, 2011) that refer to topics that link well with climate change in subjects that grade. The table displays the CAPS subjects and topics and their relevance to climate change initiatives.

Table 1

Possibilities for the Implementation of Climate Change Content in Grade 7 CAPS

Subject	Topic in CAPS	Connection to climate change	Classroom initiative proposed
Life skills	Health and social and environmental responsibility	Environmental health—community and individual projects and strategies to prevent and deal with environmental problems	Design of an action plan to address environmental health problems and formulate sound environmental choices and actions
Social science	Population growth and change	Responses to growing populations	Identify reasons for this and propose action to meet the demands of the growing population on the local environment
Natural science and technology	Energy and change	Renewable and non-renewable forms of energy; energy in biological systems; heat and heat transfer; the solar heating system and ways to keep objects cold; useful and wasted energy; the interpretation of energy in the national grid	Designing and building systems using relevant materials such as renewable energy to transfer heat or prevent the transfer of heat; investigating electrical apparatus at home (e.g., which use the most energy?); suggesting, writing, and discussing ways to preserve heat or reduce energy consumption; investigating possible careers in the energy field

The DOT Strategy

Across countries, the decision was made to use the DOT strategy in the third cycle as one way of integrating ESD into the curriculum. The name indicates that small changes to how people interact with the environment can make a big difference given that individual actions have a cumulative effect. This idea was taken from a global project, championed in South Africa by Braam Malherbe, an environmental activist. He identified the four vital areas of concern for climate change in this country, namely, water, waste, conservation, and energy (Malherbe, 2020). The DOT project supports the infusion of climate change knowledge into a range of school subjects such as life skills, social science, and natural science and technology. Teachers who attended the workshops linked topics in their respective subjects to climate change. Learners were tasked to explore subject content and use the information gleaned to guide action on climate change in their communities. We decided to use the DOT strategy because it raises awareness of local environmental threats and also initiates ideas for action for change. The learners were requested to discuss what they had learnt in the classroom about climate change with a responsible adult at home (a family member or family friend) and ask them to indicate on a paper "leaf" (provided by the teacher) one thing they could think of to lessen the harmful effects of climate change in their community. The learners were to do the same on another leaf. The next day, the learners came to school with the two leaves that indicated their ideas on the action they could take to combat climate change. They were asked to post the leaves on a "DOT tree" (see Figures 2 and 3). The strategy also doubled as a source of data.

Figure 2

Learners Posting Leaves on the DOT Tree

Figure 3

Examples of Pledges Displayed on the DOT Tree
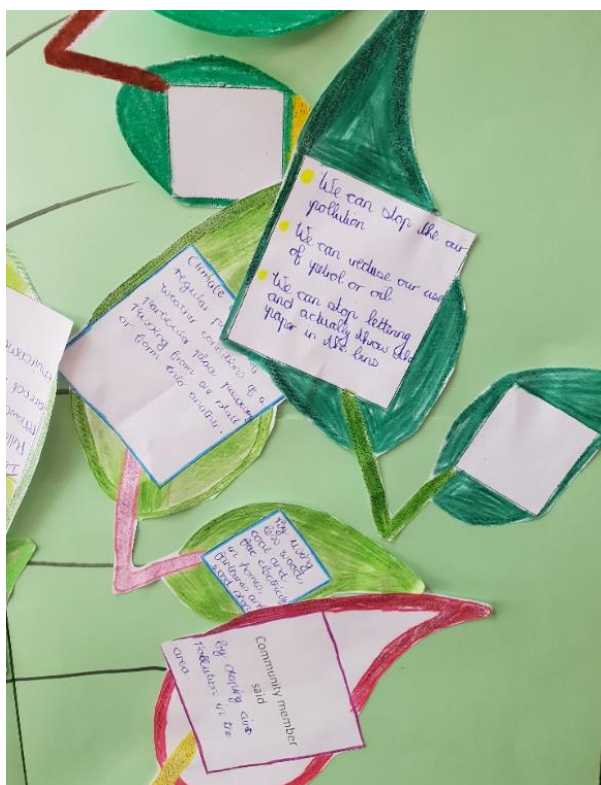
Research Methodology for the Third Cycle

Working from a social-constructivist paradigm (see Grauer, 2012), we positioned ourselves as participants in the PAR project group. The contribution of the first author to the project was her expertise in ESD and how to integrate it into the school curriculum; the second author shared her

expertise in the PAR process. To gain the trust of the other participants, including community members, teachers, and learners, the larger project demanded an extended investment of time (2017 and onwards). Fals-Borda (2006) explained that PAR is based on "an examination of local social, cultural, historical, and environmental roots in order to explain, describe, systematize, and transform contexts and existing conditions" (as quoted in Santos, 2013, p. 498). As participants, we converged our different, but equally valid, knowledges (see Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2003) to come to a better understanding of the climate change issues facing the community and how to address these. The project was conducted in cycles of action and reflection, as befits PAR, and we used the DOT strategy in Cycle 3, where learners, as citizen scientists, shared their learning about climate change with community members and committed to actions to minimise the negative effects thereof (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

The Cycles of the Climate Change Project
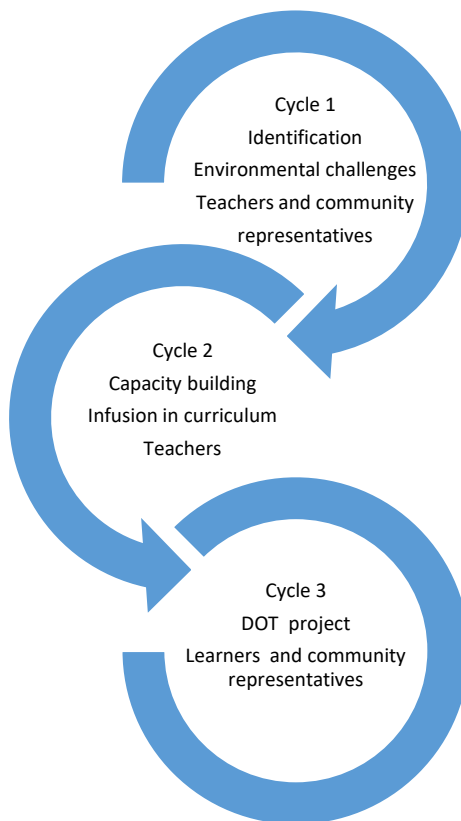
According to Minkler (2000), PAR relies on a bottom-up approach with a focus on social learning to promote change in communities. Furthermore, PAR develops the self-efficacy of participants and increases their capacity to solve local problems (Minkler, 2000). Consequently, the climate change project accommodated three basic aspects of PAR: (i) active participation of teachers and learners, (ii) the creation and dissemination of knowledge by learners through sharing experiences in the project locally with their families (and later, globally via Skype interviews with their peers in other countries), and (iii) the development of learners as researchers or citizen scientists who learnt about climate change, identified specific local consequences, and advocated for behaviour change to mitigate the impact of climate change.

The research methods used in Cycle 3 are explained next. The school was chosen because of the commitment of the management to promote environmental education (e.g., by planting trees and enforcing strict policies about littering). The school also runs an ongoing recycling project in which learners place glass and plastic in separate bins to be sold to a local recycling business to raise school funds. The principal was keen for her school to be involved in this project. She formally invited the Grade 7 subject teachers in natural science and technology, social science, and life skills to participate. Two subject teachers in natural science and technology and social science volunteered to implement the various climate change content and activities they had learnt in the workshop with 49 Grade 7 learners in the classroom. The DOT strategy required learners to participate as producers of knowledge about climate change issues in their communities by providing their ideas, and those of their family and friends, on how to take action to mitigate the effects of climate change. The DOT strategy was rounded off with a Skype conversation with learners of the same age group at a school in Louisville, United States of America who had also done it in their Grade 7 class. The Skype conversation was regarded as a review opportunity for the learners to share experiences with peers and communicate their findings of the DOT activity to others.

The data set consisted of (i) pledges of both the community and learners captured on the DOT leaves and (ii) learners' responses to open-ended questions: (a) Explain your understanding of the concept climate change, (b) Discuss your learning from the Skype meeting with the USA learners, and (c) Indicate three more things you can do to lessen the impact of climate change. We compared the answers to (a) with the transcribed discussion with community members in Cycle 1. Thematic coding of qualitative data (Tesch, 1990, as explained in Creswell, 2009) provided insight into the dynamics of teaching climate change and the influence of the DOT project on the learning of Grade 7 learners. Trustworthiness, an indication of the authentic experience of the climate change project (see Creswell, 2009), was enhanced by adhering to the following requirements: the use of multiple data sets, and verifying the findings and controlling for bias by recoding the data by the two authors of this paper. This was done independently, before coming to a consensus through discussion. The Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Climate Change project was approved by the Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering, and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMELTEN REC) of the North-West University, indicating that it complied with strict ethical guidelines concerning voluntary participation, respect for the participants' rights, and fairness in selection and treatment.

Discussion of the Findings

In response to the research question, three themes emerged from the data analysis. We were especially interested in finding out how the DOT strategy enhanced the knowledge and influenced the attitudes, and perhaps even behavioural intentions, of both the learners and the community members.

Theme 1: Increased Awareness of Climate Change Impact

Climate change education "helps learners to understand the causes and consequences of climate change, and fosters the acquisition of skills and dispositions that individuals and communities need to achieve low-carbon and climate-resilient development. It also enhances the education system's preparedness for and responses to climate change, both in terms of mitigation and adaptation" (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 2). However, the multidimensional nature of climate change as a social, environmental, and political issue, as well as a scientific phenomenon, makes it a difficult concept for participants to understand (Trott, 2019). The DOT strategy aims at simplifying the concept by requiring learners to explain the implications of climate change in simple language to their adult family members, and to exact a commitment to adopt one behaviour to help mitigate these implications. Studies have shown that informal environmental education has a more direct impact on awareness,

attitudes, and motivation to behave in an environmentally friendly way than does formal education (Grosseck et al., 2019). The DOT project, however, enabled formal education to influence the community response to climate change.

The diverse responses of both adult and learner participants indicated that they had not quite grasped the multidimensional nature of climate change—focusing only on the link to changing weather patterns rather than on the extensive social and economic effects it produces. According to Adult 4, "climate change occurs when changes in the earth's climate system result in new weather patterns that last for at least a few decades." Learner 5 said, "a long period of time [passes as] . . . the climate changes [occur]. As the climate warms it changes the nature of global rainfall, evaporation, snow, stem [steam?] flow and other factors that affect water supply and quality."

Moreover, the participants understood that climate change resulted from the actions of humans. The ability of participants to link climate change to specific environmental indicators, such as ozone depletion, air pollution, and the loss of natural life, suggests an enhanced awareness of climate change effects from a scientific perspective. According to Adult 6, "due to human emission of greenhouse gases, atmospheric air pollution has increased . . . due to the release of methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution." Learner 10 pointed out that "the weather changes . . . maybe because of the litter, chemicals, and fumes." Adult 8 said, "climate change affects all kinds of animals, plants and humans and can place a negative input on our environment."

This superficial and generalised understanding of climate change impacts points to the need to relate ESD to the lived experiences of specific communities in order to make it more meaningful (Schweizer et al., 2013). Otto and Pensini (2017) found that connectedness to nature, where learners can investigate the local effects of climate change, is more likely to influence behavioural change in learners. In addition, investigating local issues has an emotional dimension that also has a positive relationship with behaviour (Otto & Pensini, 2017). The teachers had continued to teach from a theoretical perspective instead of using local examples to explain the impact of climate change. This is something we will have to focus on in our future interaction with the teachers. The second theme expands on the commitment of the participants to take action to mitigate climate change.

Theme 2: Increased Commitment to Adopt Environmentally Friendly Behaviour

Responsible action, displayed as commitment to mitigating climate change, can be regarded as activities that promote a healthier natural environment. Such activities can include the reuse and recycling of material to reduce pollution, the planting of trees, walking more and driving less, and using water as a natural resource, responsibly. As stated, the personal connection of people to climate change is enhanced by their understanding of its local impacts (Zanocco et al., 2019). Adult and learner responses to motivate the theme are discussed separately because the learners, who had been taught about climate change in different subjects, responded, in comparison to the adult participants, with more diverse answers.

Most of the adults' comments on the DOT leaves were linked to the mitigation of littering, thereby reducing the pollution of natural resources, and saving natural resources. Littering is one of the most problematic environmental problems in the low-income areas in South Africa, where abandoned plastic bags are often referred to as "township daisies" because they are strewn over the ground like flowers. Townships also tend to be devoid of trees because poverty forces people to use the wood as fuel for cooking and warmth. This highlights the problems that poverty poses for environmental health. Even if people are environmentally aware, and would like to live in a way that conserves natural resources, they often do not have the freedom of choice to do so.

The adult participants indicated that they would "stop people from littering" (Adult 15) and take action themselves—"we can stop the way we litter and stop all pollution around the world, we can put rubbish in bins" (Adult 16). The adults were also concerned about natural resources and were aware of actions to minify the use of water by indicating that people should "use less water" (Adult 2) and there should be "no dripping taps" (Adult 8). Furthermore, people should "not cut trees" (Adult 10).

The learners, who had been taught about climate change in different subjects, responded with more scientifically based ideas compared to the adult participants. They had learnt in social science about how the growing population affected climate change, so they pledged to "use less fossil fuel by investing more in renewable energy, for example solar power, wind and water generated power" (Learner 24) and "consume less, waste less" (Learner 8). Regarding the theme of energy and change in natural science and technology, the learners suggested they should "use less wood" (Learner 1), "create litter committees; spread awareness of what factories are doing by damaging the environment; re-using, reducing and recycling" (Learner 36), and "use electric cars" (Learner 27). The assumption can be made that exposure to climate change in the curriculum has enabled the learners to propose strategies to mitigate climate change on a wider scale. Although it is unlikely that the learners could influence change in the way local factories produce their goods or afford to buy any car, let alone an electric one, their increased awareness of the dangers posed by this form of pollution may in time influence them to take action where they can make a difference.

The response of both groups of participants can be linked to their immediate environment and context, where littering and pollution are the most visible effects of the role of humans in environmental degradation. Although they are not able to "stop all pollution around the world," the participants were inspired to pledge to put their litter in bins instead of discarding it in public spaces. Such pledges can help to overcome the psychological barrier of the inefficacy of individual action (Brownlee et al., 2013). The learners' responses indicate that theory learnt in the classroom relates with real-life contexts and can inspire positive activity towards the natural environment by youth (see Curtin & Fossey, 2007). They also pledged to make changes that were in their control, such as "we must keep the environment clean" (Learner 25), "stop people from littering" (Learner 7), and "plant more trees" (Learner 8).

The responses of the learners addressed the three prime foci of DOT projects in South Africa, namely, waste, conservation, and energy (see Malherbe, 2020). The display of increased knowledge and commitment to responsible action to lessen the impact of climate change can be linked to the active participation of the learners in the project, as suggested by McCright (2012). The responsible actions indicated by the learners and adults were thus an application of knowledge to real-life situations (Boylan, 2008) as recommended by UNESCO (2019), which suggested that environmental education not only provides learners with knowledge and skills, such as critical self-reflection, but also encourages them to undertake transformative actions for sustainability. The DOT project can thus be seen as having increased the participants' sense of action competence, which may ultimately facilitate social change. The learners' willingness and ability to participate successfully in a discussion regarding climate change are indicated by the third theme, which mostly emerged from their reflections on their experience of discussing the DOT strategy with their peers in the United States of America.

Theme 3: An Improved Ability to Communicate About Climate Change

Learners acted as citizen scientists in the DOT project. "Citizen scientist" is a term to convey the involvement of lay people in collecting and analysing data in scientific projects—although they are not usually the project planners (Grauer, 2012). We adopted this approach because climate change learning is supported when learners are actively engaged in carrying out projects (see Monroe et al., 2017). The DOT project also served as a platform to expand agency and informed action to mitigate climate change by involving learners in written and verbal communication about this important issue.

The Skype discussions with peers at a school in Louisville, Kentucky, in America provided the learners with an opportunity to showcase their knowledge on climate change as capable, informed citizens. It also helped to improve their ability to discuss the global issue of climate change, linking it to a positive emotional experience. According to research conducted by Grund and Brock (2020), there is a strong positive correlation between affirmative emotional links to climate change and sustainable behavioural change. The learners were requested to reflect on their experience of discussing the DOT project and climate change issues with children their age from a different part of the world, and to indicate what they had learnt from the experience.

The learners were excited about the interview because it was a novel experience to communicate via Skype (they did not have access to computers at home and had only very limited access at school) and also because they had never conversed with children from another country. As Learner 4 said, "I only see American children in movies." They also expected that the American children would know more than them—"I expected a lot of answers from the USA learners" (Learner 2). The affective domain and emotional gain of PBL, as in the DOT project, are often neglected (Brownlee et al., 2013; Brundiers et al., 2010). Sustainable behaviour change in terms of ESD is positively related to a conducive affective environment (Grund & Brock, 2020), and so we were glad the learners experienced the interaction as positive—"exited, happy and glad" (Learner 1) and "felt appreciated to get a chance to speak to a person living on another part of the world" (Learner 10). Even those who were initially nervous and anxious seemed to relax once the meeting started: "I got more comfortable as the meeting went on" (Learner 5).

They learnt that, even though their living conditions were very different (e.g., the American learners did not live in the extreme poverty experienced by the South African learners), the impact of climate change was equally negative on both sides of the world. The South African learners spoke of the water and air pollution they faced daily. They shared their concerns about the spillage of sewage in the nearby Vaal River, which made it unsafe for swimming and caused terrible odours in the community. The American teenagers shared that they too, were concerned about air pollution due to the use of fossil fuels. They also discussed what their respective schools were doing to mitigate climate change.

The Skype interview enabled the learners to learn from one another—"they told us about the causes of climate change and we tell them our good and bad effects of climate change" (Learner 22). The learners indicated that the DOT project allowed them opportunity to think about the long-term effects of climate change, and how their individual and collective actions as a community could help protect the environment. After the project, they understood more about the urgency of "saving our world" (Learner 20).

Learners in their teenage years are still forming their value system and worldview. Self-transcendent values, such as concern for the welfare of others, are associated with positive engagement with climate change while self-enhancing values linked to wealth, status, and power, are generally not (Corner et al., 2015). The reflections of the learners on the DOT project were more indicative of self-transcendent values, such as mutual concern for their shared environment, which hopefully would encourage them to sustain their interest in climate change issues.

Climate change initiatives compete for the attention of young people against social media, technology, and teenage concerns and worries. All these require from young people a more immediate response than the gradual process of climate change measured over decades (Corner et al., 2015). Climate change education can evoke feelings of anxiety, stress, and despair about a future that cannot be easily predicted or controlled (Grund & Brock, 2020). Some learners were emotionally affected by the discussions arising from the DOT project. For example, Learner 1 wrote: "A bad experience. We talked

about what affects our world and what could we do to reduce climate change." Learner 17 called it a "bad experience, because animals die because of us." Although such negative emotions can inhibit action by inducing feelings of powerlessness that are a hindrance to self-efficacy, pro-environmental engagement, and behaviour change (Corner et al., 2015), it is important that teachers learn to contain these feelings in learners instead of using them as an excuse to avoid discussing climate change (Pace, 2019). Verlie (2019) suggested that teachers need to cultivate "openness to emotional challenges, a capacity to endure, live through, welcome and encourage changes and to guide others in their efforts" (p. 760). Given the existential dilemma posed by climate change, it is normal that young people may experience fear, worry, and anxiety when discussing the potential threat to future life (Grund & Brock, 2020). This was not something we touched on in our workshop with teachers, but it is an area we need to explore in future cycles.

Interacting with peers across the world helped the learners learn about themselves and their world while, at the same time, learning about the effects of climate change in another country. Moreover, the learners indicated that collaboration with peers, via Skype interviews, motivated them to learn more about the effects of climate change in their community. The additional information shared, despite diverse cultures and living conditions, developed their understanding of themselves as citizens whose actions are relevant to the health of the environment—which will, hopefully, influence their future behaviour in this regard.

Sen's (2010) capability theory posits that (sustainable) development is hampered when people do not have the freedom to choose behaviours that they would like to enact (capabilities) and, instead, have to act in a way that is harmful to the environment (e.g., cutting down trees for fuel) because their economic status does not allow them the luxury of purchasing alternative options. So, although environmental education informs people about what behaviours they should be adopting, real-life circumstances constrain their capability for making healthy choices. Consequently, the participants in the research study decided to take action to survive despite the degradation of the environment. Our research therefore agrees with the view of Otto and Ziegler (2010), who pointed out that formal education tends to stress capabilities (making sound choices) over functioning (actions people have no choice but to do). The DOT strategy thus helps to close this theory-practice gap by encouraging the adoption of behaviour that is feasible and sustainable, even in contexts of poverty. The DOT assignment increased awareness of climate change by advocating a pragmatic course of action that learners and their families could take to address climate change on an individual level (Trott, 2019). It also inspired interest and engagement (Trott, 2019) by requiring learners to act as educators and advocates of more environmentally responsible behaviour.

Conclusion

This research was grounded in the moral obligation, as indicated by UNESCO (2012a) and UNICEF (2011), to include children as key stakeholders in the mitigation of climate change. The use of a participatory teaching approach and the DOT strategy, rather than didactic forms of teaching, prepared the participating learners for future realities and emphasised their role as partners in the mitigation of climate change. The Grade 7 learners were able to act as agents of change in their school and local community by constructively engaging in this as citizen scientists through learning about climate change in their various subjects, sharing this knowledge with adults in their community (parents, family friends, etc.), asking them to make a commitment to mitigation of climate change, and making similar commitments themselves. As future adults, young people are potentially in the most suitable position to lead long-term societal responses to climate change. They have the most to gain and are also the most vulnerable in a changing climate. Their engagement in this cycle of the PAR project enhanced personal awareness of climate change in their local communities and empowered them with knowledge and skills to share findings regarding the impact thereof.

A highlight of the DOT project was the sharing of scientific and personal information with peers in another country. The collaboration of young energy from around the globe to mitigate climate change is part of a global phenomenon spearheaded by Greta Thunberg, and it is only fitting that education systems around the world enable learners to become actively involved in influencing more environmentally friendly behaviour in their communities. Not all learners can be extreme activists like Ms Thunberg, but initiatives such as the DOT project can make a difference in raising awareness and building commitment to change. The learning in this project was not confined to the classroom but was shared in the community by the learners in their role as citizen scientists. The learners were thus actively involved as producers of knowledge, which they then mobilised in their communities. We also learnt valuable lessons from this project about the need to connect teaching about climate change more closely to the impacts thereof on learners' own communities, and to train teachers to cope with any negative emotion learners may experience. The DOT strategy proved to be an effective way to make young learners aware of their responsibility towards society and the need to promote a healthy natural environment in their communities. Although social change regarding positive activities cannot be concluded by one cycle in a project, the findings of this small-scale study indicate that PAR projects incorporating participatory pedagogies such as the DOT strategy are useful, not only to reach educational outcomes but also to enable learners (and community members) to become advocates, if not activists, for climate change in their communities. And, as Greta Thunberg has warned, if adults do not recognise the urgency of addressing climate change and educating their children to act differently, they will be responsible for destroying the lives of millions of children to come.

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A Visual Conversation From South Africa: Climate Resilience and Hope for a Green Recovery

Kim Berman
ORCID No: 0000-0003-1537-9714
University of Johannesburg
kimb@uj.ac.za

Janis Sarra
ORCID No: 0000-0002-2725-7661
University of British Columbia
sarra@allard.ubc.ca

Abstract

As the world copes with two parallel catastrophic events—climate change and COVID-19, this article examines how visual art students in South Africa used the pandemic period to imagine a better world, a green economic recovery, and a closer connection with nature and biodiversity. The visual conversation that this new generation of artists created provides a lens for engaging with a world in change. They generate inspirational and resourceful ideas, calling on us to be participatory and inclusive as a fundamental aspect of being human, evoking imagination to create alternative visions in collaboration with others. New understandings through visual research can provide a foundation for developing collective strategies toward economic and social security, and flourishing individually and as community.

Keywords: visual research, green recovery, climate resilience

Introduction

The world is experiencing two catastrophic events in tandem—the growing impacts of climate change and the rapid rise of morbidity and mortality from the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. While both are extremely damaging physically and psychologically, they also attest to the resilience of a new generation of young adults at a time of deep uncertainty, as well as to their capacity to envision a better world. This article examines one such initiative; visual art students in South Africa used the

pandemic period to imagine a better world, a green economic recovery, and a closer connection with nature and biodiversity.

During the height of the pandemic, the Canada Climate Law Initiative (CCLI) of the University of British Columbia (UBC), in collaboration with Artist Proof Studio (APS) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ), asked art students to create a "visual conversation" on the impacts of climate change and their hopes for a safe future. The two coauthors, professors in visual art and law, respectively, identified a gap in the extant literature in terms of the contributions that visual art can make to our cognitive understanding of the profound challenges posed by climate change, and the hopes of a younger generation that they can shift the trajectory of this threat to humanity. APS is a community art centre in Johannesburg cofounded by coauthor, Kim Berman in 1991 that raises funds to subsidise development of artists with passion and talent who do have the financial means to attend university. APS collaborates closely with UJ's visual art department. CCLI examines the legal basis for effective climate governance, including fiduciary obligations; it is situated on the ancestral territory of the *xwməθkʷəy̓əm* [Musqueam Peoples]. CCLI scholars' research is grounded in notions of fairness and equity in examining the obligations of corporations, governments, and civil society to work collectively to create a sustainable future, drawing on theorists such as Amartya Sen (Sarra, 2020).

Climate Change and the Hope for a Green Recovery (https://artistproofstudio.co.za/pages/climate-change-the-hope-for-a-green-recovery) inspired a powerful set of images and conversations across the globe. The images express the artists' feelings of instability, despair, anger, and optimism, and communicate everything from deep knowledge of the devastating physical effects of global warming to messages of hope and resilience.

Visual arts can serve to raise awareness, foster positive social change, and serve as a mediating tool to improve understanding of different living circumstances. Art is intimately connected with a deeper understanding of the human condition and our capacity to be resilient in the face of extraordinary adversity. South African jurist, Albi Sachs, referring to his time in exile in Mozambique, described art as life, as death, as hope, and as despair (as cited in LeBaron, 2018). Recent neuroscientific research has found that art directly impacts our intellectual and emotional responses and how we see the world (Sarra, 2018). Art can be empowering during perilous life circumstances because it reminds us of the strength of the human spirit to transform internal and external realities, encouraging us to have faith in our ability to make a difference (McNiff, 1981). Nicholas Mirzoeff wrote that visual culture allows us to "understand change in a world too enormous to see but vital to imagine" (2015, p. 3).

Methodology

This project formed part of The Lockdown Collection, a civic campaign by and for artists, which raised over 2.5 million rand, distributing over 500 grants to vulnerable artists and art students during the first six months of the South African lockdown. The multifaceted campaign was not established as a research project, but it provides a valuable case study to reflect on deeper insights into ways that visual research pedagogies can develop collective strategies toward individual and community flourishing. We have treated artists' quotes below as if they were quotes from research participants.

The process of initiating the project was integrated into the online and blended learning programme at APS. Coauthor Janis Sarra provided the students with research on climate change drawn from the extensive scientific literature and United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). Kim Berman convened colleagues and young artists at APS to design the competition. APS teachers prepared art-material kits, including smartphone devices that enabled students to load data and access voice notes and references on climate change. A young activist, Maru Attwood,

shared examples of climate change activism in South Africa, and engaged the educators and students on different methods of creating awareness. The students had 10 weeks to develop their vision, supported by APS faculty through discussions on climate change research, artistic direction, and use of different materials.

The students viewed their Green Renewal portfolio as a means of visual action for social change. Each student from first- to fourth-year level was invited to participate by responding to their own environment and story. Thirty-five works were submitted, and the final selection was voted on by a committee of seven teachers, student representatives, and a guest environmental activist. The final round involved the authors identifying core themes revealed by the students' poignant artworks. Sixteen images, generated from photographs, collage, drawing, painting, or home techniques of printmaking were professionally photographed and digitally printed in limited editions. Each of the final works in the portfolio was accompanied by an artist's statement and video clip and released on social media as a knowledge-sharing campaign for climate change and green renewal post-pandemic. Their art formed the centrepiece of a discussion on climate change at a virtual CCLI-hosted international research roundtable in September 2020. The powerful visual expression was paired with narrative to illustrate the daily impacts of climate change as it intersects with the structural violence of poverty, abuse, and environmental neglect that young people are facing. As Mirzoeff might describe, the project was not aimed at being a comprehensive mapping of capitalised/visualised materials but, rather, deployed visual activism as a means to map change and then make social change, using contextual expressions of the artists' own living conditions (as in Barreiros, 2017).

Visual research has long been a methodology for the visual arts. It became essential during the lockdown period, when art students were not permitted to attend class and thus were required to deeply examine the visual world they inhibit in order to identify their insights on climate impacts. The artists provided informed consent for their participation in the project and the sharing of their intellectual and artistic property. It was an iterative process, each image powerful on its own, with the reflective descriptions adding further depth and insights into their representations of the climate crisis amidst a global health pandemic. Proceeds from sale of the artworks helped support these artists through the pandemic and directed funds to the South African Vulnerable Artist Fund.

The works by the student artists illustrated in this article represent a selection of those presented at the CCLI conference. Each student gave their consent to use their text in subsequent platforms consistent with their interest in "artivism" or visual activism. The authors have linked images and themes without always explaining associations, leaving the reader to imagine possibilities and the images to activate their potential in these particular contexts (Bal & Bryson, 2001).

Tumisang Khalipha's *Bokgakala (Beneath*) introduces the visual conversation (Figure 1). Born in the rural village of Mahikeng, Khalipha wrote:

> *My work explores the dangers of chemical waste in oceans, dams and rivers. This water pollution kills these beautiful creatures as they ingest the litter and toxins dumped in the water. My work captures the environmental loss of a home and food for aquatic creatures.*

Figure 1

Bokgakala (Khalipha, September 2020)

His visual exploration of damage to the environment is then linked with damage to humans, with Figures 2 and 3 capturing the inward and outward effects. Khalipha draws inspiration from his father, a miner, and the need for villagers to collect water from polluted streams and open casts, with children often getting sick from contaminated water. Khalipha talks about using his artwork to search for "inner peace and purification" as his physical relocation and his health have improved. His etchings explore the water pathways in the body as a metaphor for the imperative of transformation to maintain the health of our environment and ourselves.

Figures 2 and 3

Rising Up (Khalipha, September 2020)

Differences in how we, collectively, individually, globally, tackle these issues will continue to exist, but the visual arts offer opportunities for new understandings and new exchanges that can assist in creating policies aimed at fairer and more equitable outcomes.

Convergence of Catastrophes

Climate change has been identified by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as the top economic risk globally, with economic damage totalling US$165 billion in 2018 (WEF, 2020). Internationally, courts have found that anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming poses an existential threat to

humanity (Ontario Court of Appeal, 2019). As 197 countries agreed under the 2015 Paris Agreement, there is urgent need to reduce annual emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by 2030 if we are to have any hope of holding the increase in global average temperature to below a level in which humanity can survive (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015). Six years on, as the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) approaches, progress towards decarbonisation is slow, and the impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere, particularly in emerging nations such as South Africa.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018), representing consensus of over 800 scientists on behalf of 150 countries, has reported that human-induced global warming has now reached 1°C above preindustrial levels, with some impacts, such as loss of ecosystems, predicted to be irreversible. The IPCC (2018) reported that without drastically stepping up climate action, global average temperature increase could reach 1.5°C within eight years and continue rising, significantly increasing risks associated with sea-level rise for many human and ecological systems. A 2015 empirical study in *Nature* concluded that globally, a third of oil reserves and over 80% of current coal reserves should remain unused in order to meet even a target of 2°C warming (McGlade & Ekins, 2015). Climate change represents a significant risk in financial markets, yet while corporations and institutional investors are moving towards commitments of net-zero GHG emissions, progress is deeply uneven across the globe (WEF, 2020).

Even as climate change becomes urgent, the COVID-19 pandemic has surpassed it in its immediate and profound impacts. Globally, 183 million people had contracted COVID-19 and 3.9 million died—and in South Africa, over 2 million had fallen ill and 61,000 died—as of June 2021 (Johns Hopkins, n.d.). Wooyoung et al. (2020, p. 1) asserted that

> *for millions of South Africans, vulnerability to COVID-19 infection is amplified by other pre-existing adversities, such as hunger and violence, an overburdened healthcare system, a high prevalence of chronic and infectious disease, and alarming rates of poverty (55.5%) and unemployment (29%).*

In the Global North, citizens' confidence about security has been deeply challenged. In the Global South, communities are far less equipped to control the pandemic's spread and must cope with the serious consequences of lockdown, the economic effects of which will reverberate for years. Student artists have lived the lockdown in South Africa without access to any water, some living in abusive situations, others having to sell phones or other possessions for food, losing the ability to connect to classes or peers. The "mental health consequences caused by the rapid and dramatic societal changes from the lockdown, however, cannot be overlooked in a country with considerable psychiatric morbidity, limited mental healthcare infrastructure, and high rates of poverty" (Wooyoung, et al., 2020, p. 1).

The combined catastrophes of COVID-19 and climate change are having severe health impacts on youth globally. Yet new vulnerabilities have inspired a spirit of community and compassion. It may open new windows of opportunity for meaningful dialogue and, hopefully, change. The pandemic has reminded us not only that global crises demand swift and coordinated international responses, but also that profound social, environmental, and economic change can happen quickly. These reminders offer hope that our global community can tackle climate change.

Art as Resilience

Visual arts can open dialogue and deepen our understanding of the inequities associated with a warming planet. The Global North and South can learn much from one other through a visual conversation about climate change impacts and potential for a sustainable and equitable economic recovery. The arts are particularly important in South Africa for offering the space to address deep wounds, using artistic collaborations to contribute to resilience and wellbeing (Sarra & Berman, 2017). As LeBaron has observed, "the arts are being embraced with increasing urgency and legitimacy, both as resources for development work and as ways to recover from trauma and revitalise individual and community life" (2018, p. 1). Artists have "the power to reveal the underlying meaning of any period precisely because the essence of art is the powerful and alive encounter between the artist and his or her world" (May, 1975, as quoted in Gupta, 2020, p. 601).

The COVID-19 pandemic has been exceptionally devastating for young artists, who often live in deep poverty. The artists here offer poignant insights into the impacts of global warming, generating a visual conversation that focuses on decarbonisation and vastly increased food and water security as the way forward. These powerful images have generated new insights, new conversations, and new hope that this existential threat can be overcome.

Including the arts in policy discussions, as an integral part of understanding climate change, attests to how a visionary approach is needed to influence policymakers. When artists are included, they bring a range of values, including aesthetics, multiple modalities, imagination, alchemy, and reciprocity—all of which deepen and enrich understandings and, ultimately, social change outcomes. Action based on science is essential, but so too is imagination, and the visual arts can transform despair into hope and vision. The visual conversation that these talented artists created provides a lens to engaging with a world in change. Their visions are of ongoing hard lessons of renewal, adjustments, and resilience. Their ideas continue to reverberate globally, opening dialogue with business and government about the responsibility that comes with having benefited economically from a carbon-intensive world. Visual responses to climate change can continue to open dialogues with business and government who have direct responsibilities for the damage resulting from a carbon-intensive world, as the next section demonstrates.

The Impacts of Climate Change

Storms are Increasing in Frequency and Severity

Global warming is resulting in increasing frequency and intensity of acute climate-related events. Coastal communities are exposed to multiple climate-related hazards, including intense tropical cyclone winds, tornados, extreme rainfall, storm surges, and sea-level rise (IPCC, 2019b). Figure 4 poignantly demonstrates the devastating effects of increasing tornados destroying homes and lives.

Figure 4

Chaguwa Ni Kwetu, Mayisha Ivo (Landu, September 2020)

Artist Tusevo Landu was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and currently resides in South Africa as he completes his third year at APS. In his artist's statement regarding *Chaguwa Ni Kwetu, Mayisha Ivo* [The choice is ours, so is the life], he writes:

> *In my work, I present a drawing of future weather conditions in our continent. Climate change will have catastrophic negative effects on our weather in Africa. We Africans have already been experiencing extreme weather conditions because of global warming. In the past, tornadoes were not a part of African weather conditions and were only seen in other continents. In the near future, tornadoes will become part of both urban and rural weather patterns, caused by global warming. I have hope for the improvement of our world because we can use more environmentally friendly products to save the earth, benefiting everyone's health and environment.*

Landu has used his visual voice to speak out against the severe ongoing cycle of exploitation of the Congolese people, their suffering, and mutilation of their land's vast natural resources. He points to child mining, the extinction of animal species in the Congo region, and how the world benefits from technology at the expense of nature—illustrated by his linocut (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Shashamane (Landu, personal communication, November 2020)

Another result of acute climate-related events is increased flooding, making homes uninhabitable, and displacing thousands of people. Impacts associated with sea level rise are loss of freshwater due to ocean inundation into rivers, increased flooding and damage to infrastructure, and flooding rendering small islands and low-lying coasts uninhabitable (IPCC, 2019a). Businesses are being forced to relocate and migration is increasing as populations begin to search for safer places to live.

Cinthia Sifa Binene's *In Your Space* (Figure 6) highlights that climate change acts as a leveller—the interior of a luxurious home is flooded. While, to date, climate change has disproportionately affected the poor, as its impacts accelerate, no one is protected.

Figure 6

In Your Space (Binene, September 2020)

Born in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997, Sifa Binene's image reflects the magnitude of the damage, and how tiny we are in the face of impending climate impacts. She writes:

We can no longer hide in our fancy homes and pretend only poorer communities of people will suffer the effects of climate change. In using collage, I was able to deconstruct and reconstruct the devastation and chaos of the present and future . . . the act of collaging mimics the tearing apart of our environment because of our actions. The plastic packaging floating in the water is plastic waste generated from the beauty and cosmetic industries, most of which is not recyclable, takes longer to decompose, and generates methane gas into the atmosphere, harmful to the environment and contributing to heating up of the earth. We, as women, who are consumers of these products, should think about the harm they produce on the planet.

Sifa Binene's work draws from her feelings of displacement as a Congolese woman living in South Africa, and the multiple identities she is expected to fulfil. Her visual sophistication of recycling waste materials as collage elements in her artwork, illustrated by the materials in Figure 7 combined with her commitment to exploring women's empowerment and agency, position her to be an important emerging African voice on these issues.

Figure 7

Source for Figure 6

Increasing Pollution Due to Carbon Emissions and Global Warming (September 2020)

Air pollution is now exacerbated by global warming. Increased energy demand and production increase anthropogenic air pollutant emissions, causing hundreds of thousands of people, especially in developing nations, to die prematurely every year (IPCC, 2018). Lucky Bongani Mahlangu's print (Figure 8) graphically illustrates how burning fossil fuels and car tyres contribute to global warming and environmental destruction.

Figure 8

Let There Be Light (Mahlangu, September 2020)

An emerging artist and printmaker from Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, Mahlangu highlights how air pollution dominates the daily lives individuals living in communities situated in the shadow of major polluters:

> *My artwork highlights how the burning of oil, coal, and car tyres contributes to air pollution. With the incompetence of the state failing to provide sustainable energy leading to load-shedding, it results in people having to make their own way to ensure they have light and heat. I use colour to depict the element of fire and a monochrome palette to introduce the feeling of darkness or load-shedding. I try to depict the dark aftermath of the human race if we do not change the way we treat nature. I reference images from my surrounding reality.*

Mahlangu's sensitive work speaks out against the hardships that he and his mother, a single parent and breadwinner, experience. His artist's statement refers to the failure of the state in securing the basic needs of clean water and air. Despite poor living conditions in shacks, Mahlangu pays tribute to the beauty and grace of simple household objects such as the spoon, honouring his mother's story (Figure 9). His work shines a light of hope in the some of the darkest places.

Figure 9

Fasters Live Longer (Mahlangu, September 2020)

Africa is particularly at risk because of the high rate of climate-sensitive diseases and low response capacity at the institutional and community levels (World Meteorological Organization, 2020). Older people are more likely to suffer from health conditions that limit the body's ability to respond to stressors such as heat and air pollution (Smith, et al., 2014). Figure 10 is a powerful reminder that people living in conditions of extreme poverty and pollution experience climate impacts every moment of every day.

Figure 10

Nomzamo Park (Xaba, September 2020)

Artist Sibusisu Xaba was born in Soweto. His digital image reflects extremely difficult living conditions that are exacerbated by air pollution. Xaba writes:

> *My home is dumping ground for human waste with factories in the distance. In my community there is litter everywhere and people burn their trash to get rid of the litter, but it pollutes the air we breathe, later making us sick. In our squatter camp, we don't have electricity. People burn wood to cook and keep warm. There are no trees because we have cut them down to use as firewood. No evidence of nature anywhere, where I live in Nomzamo Park. People are just trying to survive.*

Xaba's living conditions, and his inability to find food security during the COVID-19 lockdown, led him to turn to Indigenous cultural knowledge to explore renewal through his artwork, particularly exploring *Ingoma*, a traditional Zulu dance that young men and women perform to prepare their bodies for transition ceremonies. This dance becomes a metaphor of his own resilience for survival. Figure 11 is an aluminium etching of *Ingoma* and the idea of creating art through nature. The etching is a process of pushing his own footprint into soft ground to record the imprint onto an aluminium plate, which is then processed using copper sulphate salts as a saline etch. This process is "green" printmaking that has allowed the students to explore safely in their own home environments over the lockdown. Finding green ways of practising printmaking carries a powerful message that can at once change behaviours and advocate for safe and Indigenous approaches to change.

Figure 11

Ingoma (Xaba, September 2020)

Companies can make a profound difference in preventing the devastating health effects of pollution. They can drastically reduce GHG emissions and associated co-pollutants in their production and distribution by using new technologies and cleaner renewable energy, in turn reducing chronic and acute respiratory illnesses, lung cancer, and preterm birth (Smith et al., 2014). In particular, massively reducing coal mining and combustion would reduce many health-damaging emissions.

Water Security is Essential

Fresh water is a fundamental resource for natural ecosystems and human livelihoods, and access to it is considered a universal human right (Sarra, 2020). About one half of the world's population is projected to face water shortages by 2030, with demand exceeding water supply by 40% (UN, 2019). Globally, 2.2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water and more than 840,000 people die each year from a water-related disease (UN, 2020), which means that it is not only water scarcity that is a critical risk to human life, but access to safe water is crucially important. The image by Clement Mohale (Figure 12) is a poignant message regarding the need for water security, highlighting the devastating effects of climate change on agriculture and the hope of new generations for a more symbiotic relationship with nature.

Figure 12

From Nature We Take and To Nature We Give (Mohale, September 2020)

Land degradation, decreasing water resources, loss of biodiversity, and excessive use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides are some of the environmental challenges that influence preparedness to adapt to climate change (IPCC, 2019a). Increasing urbanisation is reducing the amount of land available for growing crops. Mohale observes:

> *Access to improved drinking water is still a challenge in African countries, which has had a terrible effect on the deaths caused as a result of its need. Therefore, with the current COVID-19 pandemic, the situation can drastically worsen as sanitisation is important during this devastating time. It is essential that we learn the importance of preserving the environment that we live in by being eco-friendly, so that the next generation does not bear the catastrophe we have left behind.*

The life-threatening need for water is illustrated by the devastated landscape, but, as Mohale's title indicates what we take from nature, we must give back.

In another work by Mohale, the figure holds out a pill to a personification of the coronavirus as if to say, "Can this provide a cure?" (Figure 13). The drawing highlights the lack of available vaccines. One can intuit different meanings for the box-shaped head, possibly that decisions as to who is given priority in addressing health and water stresses are made in a "black-box" by faceless decisionmakers under opaque rules. Mohale's artwork is a call to action—access to clean water is critical, not only for hygiene during the pandemic, but for life itself.

Figure 13

Unprecedented Times (Mohale, September 2020)

The next image, Figure 14 by Gugulethu Mnguni, shifts the conversation from severe water shortages to new collaborative strategies to create water security, suggesting that we can capture nature's gifts to begin to address water security.

Figure 14

Hope for Tomorrow (Mnguni, September 2020)

About *Hope for Tomorrow,* Mnguni writes:

> *A few years ago, Cape Town struggled with water shortages. In 2017, there were Level 7 water restrictions, where the municipal water supplies would be switched off and residents would have to queue for water. The artwork here is about one's ability to save water. The black and white figures represent different races of people. In the work, I am trying to convey that whatever your race is—whether black or white—you should be able to value water and never pollute in it. The colour blue represents a hope that, at the end of the day, it will all be okay. We will all look back at these hard times and rejoice that we made it through. I use the upside-down umbrella as a metaphor showing the struggles that we all face, not just Cape Town alone, but the whole world this year.*

Mnguni's image is powerful and hopeful. She highlights the need for all races to work together to protect the planet's fresh water and to share access to it equitably.

The UNSDG seek to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030, recommending that we improve water quality by eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals; ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity; expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries, including water harvesting, desalination, reuse technologies; and strengthen participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management (UN, 2020). As with Mnguni's *Hope for Tomorrow,* we need to be innovative and forward looking in policy choices that will secure safe water for millions, globally.

The Need for Rapid Decarbonisation

There is need for rapid decarbonisation of the planet if we are to protect humanity from extreme heat waves, water scarcity, and permanent loss of biodiversity. GHG emissions are a prime driver of rising global temperatures and thus must become a key focal point of policy, regulatory, market, and technology responses. Scientists have stressed that if we are to avoid "tipping points" beyond which

humanity cannot survive, we need to take immediate and deep decarbonisation action (Houghton et al., 2001, p. 6).

Jason Langa's *Green Pastures* (Figure 15) is a powerful evocation of the notion that our carbon footprint needs to radically change from one that is carbon intensive to one that embeds nature and sustainability in each step. The green footprint over Africa is an iconic visual call that Langa presents as a challenge for action. It is evocative of the beauty of the land and human capacity to reduce our carbon footprint.

Figure 15

Green Pastures (Langa, September 2020)

Langa writes:

> *In Greener Pastures, focus is on promoting habits that could help to slow down or even halt the effects of climate change, including activities that seek to reduce our carbon footprint and the detrimental effects which our everyday lives have had on the planet. Activities that could help with this reduction include driving less, using water sparingly, recycling waste materials, and switching to renewable energy. Reversing the effects of climate change can be possible by working together as a planet.*

Decarbonisation strategies include generating, storing, and using clean renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, phasing out fossil fuels, and establishing energy infrastructure to enable decarbonisation (Sarra, 2020). It requires an entire systems approach, from our daily industrial activities and supply distribution strategies to our personal choices such as how we travel (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2020).

In South Africa, one challenge is that two million businesses are micro, small, or medium enterprises (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020). They require infrastructure support to transition to decarbonisation of production, including information and financial support to adopt energy efficient and renewable technologies, resources to retrofit buildings, and to facilitate partnerships with businesses to design waste out of productive processes (Sarra, 2020).

Protecting Food Security and Biodiversity

Climate change is already affecting food security through increasing drought, loss of arable land, changing precipitation patterns, and extreme heat, with temperatures in 2019 frequently exceeding 45°C in parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique (Sarra, 2020). Drought affected parts of Africa in 2019, with rainfall less than half of the average in most of the western half of the continent (World Meteorological Organization, 2020). There is severely damaged production capacity of staple crops and biodiversity loss is growing rapidly, creating severe food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa for 29.8% of the population (Sarra, 2020). Africa cannot grow enough food to feed its rapidly growing population. Climate change has strong gender and equity dimensions, given the huge role women play as the primary producers of food from the land. Amanda Motsegoa portrays these powerful images in *Rebellion and Rebirth* (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Rebellion and Rebirth (Motsegoa, September 2020)

Born in Soweto, Motsegoa writes:

> *Most plants and animals survive under strict climate conditions. Temperature and water supply enable them to thrive. Changes in the climate can greatly affect the production of agriculture in some areas. In this work, I depict how one solution to reduce the effects of climate change can overturn the future of agriculture and our extreme climate conditions.*

Motsegoa's art explores survival and resilience. As a young woman living with depression, her artist's statement reveals some of this despair and hope: "I live my life wrapped in an invisible straitjacket as an aid to my own self destruction and as a façade to the rest of the world". This powerful and painful message must extend to a deeper understanding of self and environmental protection (see Figure 17).

Figure 17

Strait Jacket (Motsegoa, personal communication, November 2020)
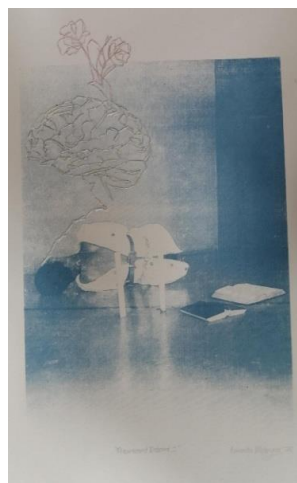
Negative impacts of climate change on vegetation affect all four pillars of food security: availability (yield and production), access (prices and ability to obtain food), utilisation (nutrition and cooking), and stability (disruptions to availability) (IPCC, 2019b). Scientists urge coordinated action to address climate change to simultaneously improve land, food security and nutrition, and help to end hunger.

Companies have a role and responsibility to provide economic support that will build capacity of peoples in emerging nations to develop resilient production, including strategies to produce food while preserving ecosystems based on conservation agriculture, more effectively manage rainwater and water use, and implement new economic models that enable youth and women to access credit. These strategies should build on local knowledge, culture, and traditions. Transformational adaptation is needed, including better storage and food processing, adoption of harvest technologies that minimise food waste, and development of new opportunities for farmers to respond to environmental and economic shocks (IPCC, 2019a).

Renewable Energy

Protection of biodiversity and food security are deeply linked to shifting to renewable energy sources. Both governments and the private sector need to act with some urgency to scale-up net-zero carbon technological innovation and move in a meaningful way towards renewable energy sources (Sarra 2020). Solar energy is the most abundant renewable energy source, yet it still only represents a small fraction of total energy (IPCC, 2019a). Samukelo Gqola's inspiring watercolour (Figure 18) draws together Xhosa tradition and culture and advocacy for renewable energy as a key mechanism to combat climate change.

Figure 18

Wind of Power (Gqola, September 2020)

Of *Wind of Power,* Gqola writes:

> *My work focuses on migration and how people have to migrate and move towards a future with renewable energy sources. In my work, I also pay tribute to my grandmothers' Xhosa tradition and culture as I was raised in Eastern Cape, South Africa. I created this work in response to climate change, which shows how Indigenous people and culture are under threat from global warming. We need to migrate and to embrace new clean energy to be able to preserve our Xhosa culture and sustain living off the land. The Xhosa male figure with a windmill head is wearing a blanket as a symbol of protection. It is a difficult time for human beings and creatures because of global warming and climate change. There are ways to prevent these challenges and protect the earth, but we need the government to be on our side.*

Gqola uses initiatory symbolism in Figure 19, transitioning in time and space, anticipating a future of transformation. Eagles and other large raptors are represented in this artist's work, symbolic of far-seeing vision, wisdom, and nobility of spirit.

Figure 19

Culture Respecting President (Gqola, September 2020)

The deep interlinkages between global warming, forced migration, and protection of Indigenous rights are poignantly illustrated in this powerful piece. Indigenous peoples are stewards of the earth and provide leadership in renewable energy projects that protect land, air, and water, while creating employment (Sarra, 2020). Solar technologies can improve the health and livelihood of many of the world's poorest populations by closing the gap in availability of energy services for 1.4 billion people currently without access to electricity. Most areas in South Africa average 2,500 hours or more of sunshine per year, and solar and wind energy are readily accessible resources (South Africa Government, 2020).

While the potential is tremendous, the challenge is how to distribute the social and economic benefits of renewable energy in a fair and equitable way. Renewable energy cannot simply benefit the propertied, and both public and private resources must be utilised to afford many communities access to safe and affordable renewable energy and the employment it generates.

The Move to a Circular Economy

The term "circular economy" envisions a new approach to economic activity in which the existing paradigm of produce–use–recycle or trash is replaced with a much more sustainable framework that seeks to use only renewable energy and natural production components that can be returned to the earth after productive use. It designs the eventual elimination of waste into the system of production (Sarra, 2020). The goal is net-zero carbon emissions and the use of any production outputs (formerly waste) in new productive activities.

Figure 20

Daily Dance (Sithole, September 2020)

Artist Anthony Sithole of Alexandra, Johannesburg pays tribute to local recycling pickers in *Daily Dance* (Figure 20), observing that:

> *In Alex, we have recycling guys who come around to collect our plastic waste every day of the week. They help us get rid of our waste and they get some money to survive, in order to use it to eat and feed their families. They have a hard job, but they help keep Alex clean.*

Sithole, a young artist living with a disability, is moved by the waste pickers who control the pollution in Alex. This green renewal initiative assisted him to focus and consolidate his personal advocacy of recycling and waste management at his special needs school. His linocut (Figure 21) speaks to the waste pickers dressed in space suits of protective clothing as heroic science fiction figures overcoming contamination and making the environment safe for humans and animals (Figure 22).

Figures 21 and 22

Daily Dance II (Sithole, personal communication, November 2020)
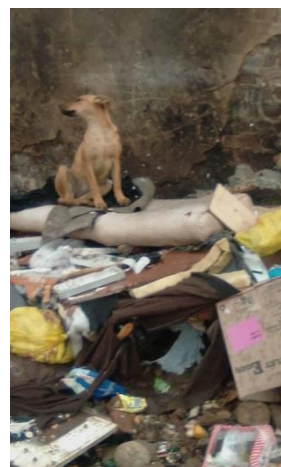
There are inspiring examples of circular economy activity in emerging nations. China's *Circular Economy Promotion Law* requires factories to embed themselves in a circular network; its Rizhao eco-industrial park is one of a growing number in which 98% of solid waste has been eliminated because it is reused in other production (Sarra, 2020). The artists' images, which spark the imagination, help us to visualise a future that eliminates waste and distributes economic benefits more equitably.

Justice Requires Economic Recovery To Be Fair and Equitable

The young, "born free," generation of urban black poor of the townships have been betrayed repeatedly by the promise of the new South Africa. The hope for a productive future and green renewal ultimately rests with this emergent generation.

Fairness can inform how we link strategies to reduce emissions with efforts to design and redeploy materials used in every sector. Yet there is need to reach meaningful and equitable decisions between different governments on decarbonisation and on achieving the UNSDG. "Fairness and public interest doctrines can serve as guideposts and principles for effective climate governance of companies, institutional investors, and the national authorities that regulate their activities" (Sarra, 2020, p. 142). Perspective-taking can deepen our understanding of climate change and its relationship to corporate governance and financial markets and encourage a substantive aspirational goal of more equitable treatment of individuals differently situated (Sarra, 2020).

The visual arts can help reveal that vision of fairness, of conceptualising a world that is "other regarding," taking account of others' needs and perspectives in envisioning a more sustainable planet. Simphiwe Dlamini, born in KwaZulu-Natal, challenges us to imagine a better world. *Imagine* (Figure 23) is evocative of a planet in which pollution can be replaced with clean air, trash with plants, and petrol with power that is renewable.

Figure 23

Imagine (Dlamini, September 2020)

Dlamini uses images that express a fantasy of exuberance and abundance of colour. The scale and style of the landscape is reminiscent of children's illustrated fairy-tales. However, the girl at the edge of the water is faceless and her arms burnt, possibly from exposure to toxins. The fish are held in a precarious safety net that could be spilt onto the earth. Things are not as they seem. She compels us to imagine a more beautiful and hopeful earth.

While we are amid concurrent catastrophes, it is difficult to envision a fair and just economic recovery but, equally, it is essential to undertake exactly that project. There is need for public–private cooperation, but where public resources are expended, there need to be guarantees that the benefits accrue fairly and equitably to a wider range of people, particularly Indigenous and racialised people and women (Sarra, 2020). Here, the South African concept of *ubuntu* and its relationship to the visual arts may guide our path.

Elsewhere, we have explored ubuntu and its relationship to resilience (Sarra & Berman, 2017). Arguably, ubuntu can be used as a guide to a new conversation about fairness and equity in developing climate resilience. As Thaddeus Metz (2011) has observed, ubuntu is experiencing life as being bound up with others and considering oneself a part of the whole. This notion of being part of the collective, making decisions with a view to both individual and collective well-being, grounded in ethical considerations, offers a starting point for thinking climate governance (Sarra & Berman, 2017). Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating risks of climate change provide poignant evidence that we are inextricably bound to one another. Beginning this visual conversation from South Africa on hope for a green recovery, we acknowledge that our own good is intertwined with the good of others. Ubuntu can serve to support resilience and inspire individuals to actively and collectively engage with one another to address the challenges—and, hopefully, can inspire thriving rather than simply surviving.

The images created by this new generation of artists let imagination and play give the space to conceive new ways of seeing. They call on us to be participatory and inclusive as a fundamental aspect of being human, evoking imagination to create alternative visions in collaboration with others. Coauthor Sarra has written:

> *Countries in the Global North, which have caused the vast majority of emissions, need to direct significant resources to the Global South, which is experiencing the most devastating impacts of climate change. Such financial support can produce positive synergies for all countries, but cannot be structured in a manner that fails to empower emerging nations to make their own decisions, control their own resources, benefit from circular economy innovations, and protect their own populations. It needs a massive shift to the circular economy, to literally save our planet. It requires that all of us become stewards of the earth. (2020, p. 312)*

We are not underestimating the profound challenges. We understand the powerful economic forces at play and the huge stakes for humanity. We understand that consensus will not be developed in the short term. However, as economist Amartya Sen observed, there are "inescapable plurality of competing principles of social justice that may conflict with one another," which must permit partial agreements on issues of justice, making room for incompleteness and diversity of inputs, with a view to creating greater fairness informed by "vaguely shared but far-reaching concerns about injustice and inhumanity that challenge our world" (2009, pp. 90, 107–9). What he articulated over hundreds of pages, our young artists have captured with the images we share here.

Business, government, and civil society all have a critically important role in this urgent global imperative. Those who have long benefited from the revenues that high-carbon-emitting activities have generated must act quickly to decarbonise their activities and move to sustainable activity if there is to be any hope of reversing the mounting effects of climate change. We need to develop solutions that can bridge the gap between corporate and community visions of a safer, fairer, and sustainable planet going forward.

Conclusion

The visual arts nurture and enliven our humanity; they facilitate the imagination, enrich resilience, and create spaces for hope and self-reflection. The art students represented in this green renewal portfolio see themselves as agents for change. Their voices enable us to see the urgent calls for renewal, the complexity and the agency to transform the challenge of hardship into one of opportunity. Each work is a reminder of what we need to do to make changes in our own lives. The visual arts can transform despair into hope and vision, working with science-based climate-related evidence to build crucially important strategies for protecting humanity. These artworks assist in contributing to the vision for environmental and economic activism and justice. Let us actively engage with possibilities for a new future. Artists can lead the way in the search for new and imaginative possibilities for change.

Acknowledgements

Figure 24

Rene Mathibe demonstrating at APS

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A Critical Approach to University–Community Partnerships: Reflecting on the Diverse Realities[1]

Heloise Sathorar

ORCID No: 0000-0002-4947-0885 iD
Nelson Mandela University
Heloise.Sathorar@mandela.ac.za

Deidre Geduld

ORCID No: 0000-0001-6175-0508 iD
Nelson Mandela University
Deidre.Geduld@mandela.ac.za

Abstract

Postapartheid South Africa has seen a greater focus on community engagement by universities, and its inclusion as one of the core focus areas of higher education in addition to teaching and research. This focus on engagement with the community was ignited by a requirement to enhance the university's social responsibility through establishing partnerships with the communities it serves. Higher education institutions have traditionally positioned themselves in engagement projects as the singular organisation that has knowledge to offer when compared to what the community can offer. In this paper, we propose a critical engagement process to enhance collaboration in engagement projects. Our qualitative study resides in a critical theory paradigm, and we used drawings as well as narrative free writing to reflect and explore our perceptions regarding community engagement. We used the collaborative self-study methodology because it provides opportunities for critical and self-critical reflection that could lead us to discovering valuable insights, as well as provide suggestions on how to enhance university community partnerships. Our findings suggest that, despite legislation and efforts to enhance university community engagement, this remains a contested space where power relations, inequality, and claims to knowledge ownership continue to pose challenges.

Keywords: collaboration, collaborative self-study, critical community engagement, critical pedagogy

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Introduction

Ernest Boyer (1990) introduced the notion of an organisation that is intrinsically linked to the public in which it resides, referring to it as an *engaged institution*; he postulated that universities were not merely located in a community but were active members of the community. Thus, the university has an integral role to play in the welfare and development of the community. The idea that universities can contribute to, and learn from, the communities around them is increasingly gaining attention (Bhagwan, 2017). Community engagement has emerged as a top priority at universities—to collaborate and facilitate the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources for both universities and communities (Jadhav & Suhalka, 2016). This supports the task given to higher education institutions (HEIs) by the national government to address societal challenges in a way that will contribute to societal transformation (Department of Education, 1997).

Despite forefronting community engagement, and legislation encouraging the establishment of collaborative and mutually beneficial university–community partnerships, this has remained a contested space. University–community engagement in South Africa continues to be characterised by universities engaging with communities to extract data to further their own research agenda and, in the process, not acknowledging community needs and also not contributing to sustainable benefits for the community. Community partners claim that they have no say in what issues are researched and complain about being exploited through the power imbalance in the partnership (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). Thus, universities have to ask why and how do they engage with their communities, as well as whether their engagement would contribute to social transformation and the development of a socially just society. Universities have to acknowledge that their structure and culture can simultaneously serve as opportunities and also create barriers to community engagement that would contribute to social transformation. In this paper, we highlight the disjuncture that exists between the objectives of the university and community regarding community engagement. We propose a critical approach to community engagement by drawing on the three educational aims of critical pedagogy—humanisation, conscientisation, and problem posing—in order to enhance the collaboration and collective outcomes of community engagement.

Background and Problem Statement

HEIs in South Africa (SA) have not brought about the desired outcome of improving their engagement agenda with their communities (Wood, 2016)**.** In this paper, we grapple with the question: "For *whom* and *how* is community engagement done?" We operate under the assumption that the university, as a public institution with a mandate for the public good, has the power to facilitate mutual growth with communities in relation to who they are, who they are in relation to others, and who they are in relation to the larger society (Giroux, 2006). Currently, universities in SA follow community engagement practices that support reproduction of the status quo, which is one that supports the neo-liberal agenda by ignoring the political nature of community engagement, amongst other things (Bhagwan, 2017). This has pushed us to ask: "How do we get university academics to embrace engagement critically, and what can be done to help them to see themselves as public intellectuals working towards a common good?" Reflecting on our work in university–community partnership projects, we investigate how we can bridge the gap between how university–community engagement has been done traditionally, and the potential and possibilities of critical and participatory university–community partnerships.

The aim of critical university engagement is to bring about social change; however, not enough attention is given to the fact that the university serves diverse personal and societal purposes and that these purposes are deeply contested. Fataar and Subreenduth (2016) were of the opinion that public education policy in HEIs in SA is currently dominated by an overemphasis on education throughput and educational productivity where university academics are increasingly asked to reproduce knowledge structures at the expense of committing epistemicide (De Sousa Santos, 2014). In other words, universities ignore the knowledge and value systems of the communities they serve and impose their own knowledge and value systems on these communities. In this paper, we reflect on the disjuncture that exists between the objectives of the university and community regarding community engagement, and endeavour to provide suggestions to enhance the relationship between universities and communities in engagement projects.

Importance of University–Community Engagement

In this section, we unpack the concept of university–community engagement and what it entails, and we also look at the challenges experienced in these partnerships. We conclude by providing suggestions on how university–community partnerships can be enhanced.

Definition and Purpose of University–Community Engagement

The discourse on community engagement has remained prominent and not without challenges in the HEI environment over the last couple of decades (Mtawa et al., 2016). Despite government's encouragement and the general support for universities to become involved in community engagement, there is no uniform understanding of what this entails (Kruss, 2012). There is no commonly accepted and agreed upon definition for community engagement. Cooper and Orrell (2016) explicated that university–community engagement involves a relationship between universities and the community that will support research and facilitate learning through teaching practice, community service, and other public engagement. Even this broad description of what university–community engagement entails seems to be problematic because it forefronts the objectives of the university rather than common objectives identified through collaboration with the community. This reinforces the hegemonic notion that the university is the knower and the knowledge creator.

There has been a transition from using a one-way model to a two-way model for community engagement. The one-way model emphasised delivery of knowledge and service to the public whereas in the two-way model, universities embrace a collaborative approach to knowledge exchange with the communities it serves and thereby contribute to the development of mutually beneficial partnerships (Mtawa et al., 2016). This understanding of the two-way model has initiated various definitions and theoretical conceptualisations of what university–community engagement entails. Cooper and Orrell highlighted that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's definition of community engagement refers to a partnership between university and communities:

> *[It] is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (as quoted in Cooper & Orrell, 2006, p. 109)*

Holland and Ramley also drew on the Carnegie Foundation's definition but added the notion of reciprocity:

> *Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. (2008, p. 35)*

Similarly, Wood (2016) emphasised collaboration with community partners to enhance the development of sustainable and ethical community engagement. This raises awareness of the potential and possibility for change amongst participants. We support the definition suggested by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, which defined community engagement as:

> *a systematic relationship between Higher Education [Institutions] and [their] environment [communities] that is characterized by mutually beneficial interaction in the sense that it enriches learning, teaching and research and simultaneously addresses societal problems, issues and challenges. (2003, p. 4)*

This definition advocates for community engagement to be collaborative and to focus on mutual objectives through co-inquiry and co-learning; contributing to research but simultaneously addressing real community problems (Mtawa et al., 2016; Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2020).

Challenges Experienced in University–Community Partnerships

Despite universities explicitly forefronting community engagement in their policy documents and referring to it in their social responsibility profile development, there are several hurdles to the implementation of these plans. Mtawa et al. (2016) explicated that institutional culture can serve as a barrier to community engagement. In most universities, there is not a dedicated department that promotes community engagement, and academics are left to seek their own link between their teaching, research, and engagement projects. At Nelson Mandela University, this challenge was acknowledged by the vice-chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa, in her inaugural address where she proposed the establishment of a Hub of Convergence to create a space for academics to launch engagement projects (Muthwa, 2019). The commitment to create an institutional culture that would support community engagement was strengthened by appointing a deputy vice-chancellor whose portfolio specifically included community engagement.

However, the above practices are not commonly followed and community engagement is not prioritised but, rather, done as an add-on or afterthought (McNair & Ramaley, 2018). This results in limited and very superficial interactions between academics and communities. Furthermore, it leads to limited incorporation of community engagement activities into the teaching and research projects of the university. The differences in resource availability, as well as the circumstantial realities between the university and its community partners, pose a further barrier to engagement projects (Bhagwan, 2017; Smith et al., 2017). Inadequate resources and lack of infrastructure in communities encourages universities to bring communities to well-equipped university campuses for meetings that are distant from the contextual realities that the communities experience (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). Thus, community members claim that universities start engagement partnerships with pre-determined objectives to satisfy specific teaching and research goals that are far removed from the societal challenges the community is facing (Strier, 2010). The lack of resources, including funds and infrastructure, also contributes to the power imbalance in university–community partnerships.

Thus, communities doubt the authenticity of universities' commitment to community engagement because they believe the university is only interested in social matters to facilitate student learning and research. Community scepticism is increased when university engagement projects exclude ethical procedures, agreed upon guiding principles, and empowering involvement in projects that would result in mutual benefits (Bhagwan, 2017; Cooper & Orrell, 2016; Strier, 2010). Communities claim that

engagement project outcomes seem to be in favour of universities and not the community. It seems as if academic institutions prioritise their goals in engagement projects in an uncritical way. Community partners further claim that even when they raise concerns, the concerns are not addressed (Smith et al., 2017). Finally, communities mention that their experience and indigenous knowledge are not acknowledged (Strier, 2010) and that the outcomes of these partnerships are often not sustainable (Bhagwan, 2017).

How to Enhance University and Community Engagement?

Cooper et al. (2010) argued that effective university–community partnerships must seek to ensure lasting mutual benefit for all stakeholders. Similarly, Shannon and Wang (2010) advocated for university–community partnerships to be established to address mutual issues, which do not just focus on research issues identified by the university. They further advocated for university–community partnerships to be prioritised and not seen as an add-on to academic activities—and also, for stakeholders to be convened around a common issue (Shannon & Wang, 2010). Community engagement would benefit from the provision of a neutral space and leadership that embraces collaboration among diverse participants to identify common goals that would encourage action and bring about social transformation (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014).

Bhagwan (2017) supported the above views and described community engagement as mutually beneficial partnerships between communities and the university. This definition emphasises the notions of mutuality and reciprocity and supports co-designing solutions for common issues. Co-designing, which can also be called participatory design solutions, assists in making the community feel less exploited and reduces their scepticism regarding community projects. Understanding the community needs, discussing, co-designing, and developing an implementable solution would no longer make the community feel as if the university were imposing a solution on them (Bhagwan, 2017; Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014). It allows the community to develop a voice, and it helps with the re-configuration of the power relations in the partnership.

In this paper, we reflect on the disjuncture that exists between the objectives of the university and community regarding community engagement. Furthermore, we advocate for university–community partnerships and engagement projects that go beyond opportune coalitions and aim for mutual benefit and reciprocity for all stakeholders. This would require the university and the community to fully understand each other's goals and, in the process, align their own goals with those of their partners (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). Mutual benefit will only be obtained if universities and their community partners do not only focus on their own goals but, rather, work towards the achievement of common goals that would contribute to the good of all and, in particular, to the good of their partners in the project. This type of reciprocity in university–community engagements would be achieved through mutual respect between partners that understand each other's agendas and work towards obtaining common goals.

Furthermore, these partnerships are characterised by trust amongst partners, honesty, sincerity, and a dedication to resolve challenges that might arise in the partnership (Smith et al., 2017). They further suggested that fairness, justice, honesty, and a commitment to shared authority and respect for one another's goals be used as guiding principles for reciprocal partnerships (Smith et al., 2017). Such partnerships honour and respect the goals of both partners and encourage the use of the university's resources to work towards achieving common goals that will benefit all (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; McNair & Ramaley, 2018; Smith et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Based on the need for university–community partnerships in engagement projects to be mutually beneficial and reciprocal, we have framed the research that was done for this paper in a critical paradigm, and have drawn on the three educational aims of critical pedagogy, namely, humanisation, conscientisation, and problem posing.

Humanisation is closely linked to true dialogue and Freire (1970) highlighted that changing the world into a humanised place is only feasible through true dialogue occurring under the following conditions: profound love for the world and human beings, humility towards each other and the world, faith in humanity and in its power to create and re-create, mutual trust between dialoguers, hope for a better future, and the ability to think critically. Moreover, Freire (1970, p. 17) postulated that "only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is capable of generating critical action." Without dialogue, there is no communication and, without communication, there can be no true social transformation (Sathorar, 2018). In this paper, we advocate for true dialogue during university–community engagement projects.

Community engagement is essentially a learning process and, from a critical perspective, conscientisation is one of the most important characteristics of authentic learning (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Freire (1970, p. 17) defined conscientisation as "to learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality." The process of conscientisation occurs when the university and its community partners "know that they know"—and act upon this knowing (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014, p. 80). Thus, conscientisation involves a type of knowing that includes understanding and also the ability to act on this knowing in such a way as to bring about change (Sathorar, 2018). Shor (1992) identified four qualities of critical consciousness that enhance problem solving: power awareness, critical literacy, permanent de-socialisation, and self-education. He elucidated that power awareness is constructed on the assumption that social structures are developed by human effort and it can thus also be changed by human effort (Shor, 1992). Critical literacy enhances critical consciousness and involves the analysis of readings and engaging in deep reflection to determine and understand the origins of social issues (Darder, 2017). The third quality of critical consciousness is permanent de-socialisation; it involves questioning dominance and discrimination in the existing state of affairs, as well as investigating socialised values in human consciousness that hamper democratic change, both in the individual and in the larger society; this quality promotes a passion for social justice (Shor, 1992). Shor's (1992) final quality is self-education, which refers to having the knowledge to participate and learn from others in transformative projects. In this paper, we argue for conscientisation in university–community engagements and propose the application of the above qualities during engagement projects.

Freirean critical pedagogy focuses on tapping into silenced voices and determining why these voices have been suppressed (Sathorar, 2018). Freire (1970, p. 21) proposed a problem-posing education that encourages the questioning of all knowledge as opposed to accepting it as "central bank wisdom." Problem-posing can be seen as a pedagogy of questioning (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014), and it encourages the university and the community to analyse and interrogate their own knowledge and experiences in relation to those of others to reveal larger public issues and processes of domination and liberation (Darder, 2017). Shudak (2014) emphasised that the aim of problem posing is not to generate a solution but, rather, to collectively explore the complexity and inter-relatedness of individual, organisational, and social issues to engage with and learn about a problem and its context, and to identify ways to take collective actions that constructively respond to the problem. We advocate for problem-posing strategies to be applied in university–community engagement projects.

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study draws on the experiences of two critical researchers to explore their understanding of university–community partnerships. A qualitative research approach was followed because it focuses on phenomena that occur in the real world. The phenomenon under investigation in this research is how to enhance community engagement partnerships between the university and the communities it serves. Hammersley (2013) described qualitative research as a form of scientific inquiry that can be used to understand complex social processes such as the focus area of the current study. Furthermore, we refer to Leedy and Omrod's (2018) description of the purpose of a qualitative approach as justification for the use in this study. A qualitative approach allows for the description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation of data that will assist to reveal the nature of a certain situation as well as allow the researchers to gain insight about the particular phenomena (Leedy & Omrod, 2018).

The research that informs this paper resides in a critical theory paradigm. Critical refers to one's ability to think deeply about an issue and to ask investigative questions. Criticality is concerned with conceptualisation of the theory that informs the taken-for-granted knowledge and methods used; it will expose existing assumptions and understandings that maintain unequal power relations and unjust social position in phenomena (Maxwell, 2012). Critical theory is relevant for this study because it allows the researcher to analyse a social phenomenon and to identify what is wrong with the situation as well as who would be able to rectify it to bring about social transformation (Flick, 2014). This theory supports social justice and seeks to bring about a society that is based on fairness and equal rights for all people. It identifies the untruths and incorrect assumptions, as well as dishonest behaviour, that brought a certain individual or group to power or powerlessness and interrogates the rightfulness and validity of this power relation (Maxwell, 2012). Furthermore, Flick (2014) explicated that critical theory investigates issues of discrimination and oppression, and promotes freedom of expression and equality for all. Thus, the purpose of a critical theory paradigm in research is practical and focuses on bringing about a more free, democratic society in which equality for all is secured. A critical theory is not just focussed on enhancing existing knowledge or beliefs but also strives towards making a meaningful difference in the actual lives and real circumstances of a community. This confirms the relevance of the paradigm for this research, which is based on how to enhance university–community engagement.

Collaborative self-study was employed as a research design to allow us to reflect on our personal experience and practice of community engagement projects. Stenhouse (1975), in his seminal work on collaborative self-study, proposed a systematic and methodical approach to research that would allow researchers to enhance their practices. He mentioned that an imperative characteristic of a researcher is the ability to focus on self-enhancement by engaging in systematic self-study and then comparing what they discover with the work of other researchers. Self-study is a research strategy that allows researchers to investigate their own practice and the role they play in it (Brookfield, 2017). Furthermore, it allows them to identify the underlying motivations, beliefs, and values that inform their practices. This process involves the participation of critical friends (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2016) comparing practice to theory to gain a better understanding of practice, and meticulous analysis of one's own practice (Bruce & Chiu, 2015). Using a self-study approach will not only allow us to reflect and improve our own practice but also allow us to contribute to the debate regarding university–community engagement and, subsequently, to the knowledge available on community engagement practices.

We used self-study as an empowering method to examine and learn about our own understanding and experiences of community engagement. It necessitates the building of a relationship between the individual and collective cognition of researchers, and employs dialogue to establish a collaborative learning community (Bruce & Chiu, 2015). We chose to engage in collaborative self-study because it

allowed us to collectively reflect and critically analyse our own practice regarding community engagement through systematic inquiry; and because it allowed us to contribute to the broader knowledge base regarding community engagement projects. Furthermore, collective collaboration enhances one's view of an issue because it provides you with alternative views regarding it. Comparing different views helps you to confirm and justify the quality and validity of each of the different views (Bruce & Chiu, 2015).

In this study, we engaged in collaborative self-study by using drawings and narrative free writing to tap into our own experiences of community engagement. We explained our drawings and analysed our narratives collaboratively to enhance our understanding of what community engagement entails and how it should be done. Rose (2016) highlighted that drawings are available to all because they are inherently human, social, and communicative and thus there is no cultural group that does not have a relationship with them. The drawings were used in conjunction with narratives as we engaged in free writing (Gilbertson, 2013) as a data-gathering tool. Furthermore, we are reminded that drawings can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, and the subconscious (Gilbertson, 2013). Drawings can give expression to the lived experiences of those who produce them.

Rose (2016) emphasised that it is up to the creator of the drawing to decide when, how, and with whom they will share the story behind the drawing. We reflected on our experience in university–community partnerships by utilising the prompt: "How do we experience university–community partnerships?" Our drawings communicated a range of perspectives regarding understandings of how we experience university–community engagement, and exposed significant challenges regarding mutual benefits, shared goals, and power relations. The drawings also reflected the tensions we experienced as we were reminded of what we went through when we were community members engaged in university research and we compared that with what we are currently doing as university researchers. This tension was reflected in all the drawings that were made and there were no specific drawings that only depicted our experience as community members.

In our contact session, we used coloured pencils and A4 print pages, and each participant had 120 minutes to respond to the prompt through drawings. Our rough drawings were later enhanced by a computer application to improve the colour and dimension. However, none of the original images was changed by this process. These drawings were supported by narrative free writing we did to explain them. According to Elbow (1973), free writing is a process of learning and growing during which thinking is stimulated, enhanced, and expressed. Furthermore, Elbow (1998, p. 5) held the opinion that the spontaneous nature of free writing eases the mental burden of trying to "think of words and also worry at the same time whether they are the right words." The prompt that informed our free writing was: "Explain your drawings." We allocated 10 uninterrupted minutes to describe each of our drawings. We used narrative free writing because it allowed us to express ourselves without any reservation regarding the flow and structure of our words, and to tap into deep feelings about what the drawings meant.

Afterwards, we had to highlight the main points of our narrative free writing and shared these with each other. We allowed for clarifying questions to be asked. Thereafter, we had to make individual lists of key words from our narratives and subsequently compared our lists to identify common key words that would serve as themes for further discussion. These common key words validated the identification of the following two themes: power and divide; shared goals and mutual benefit. We agreed to record our discussion and later transcribed it verbatim.
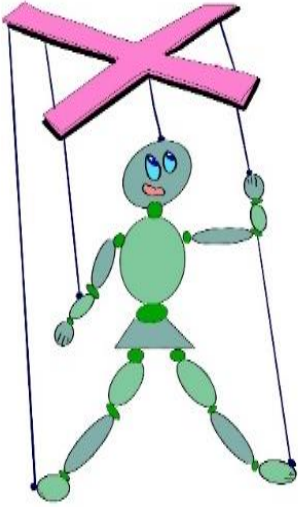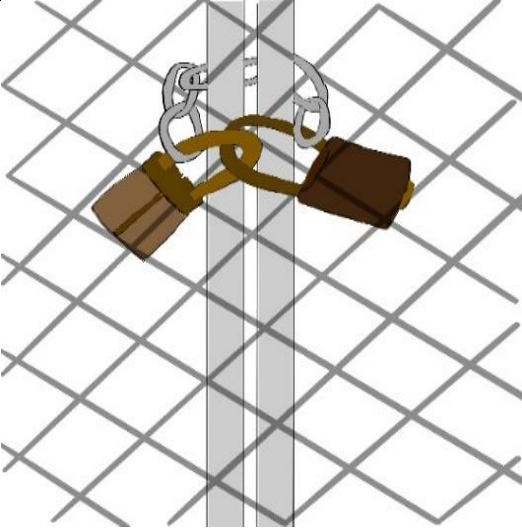
Presentation of Data

Table 1 outlines our drawings as well as provide extracts from our narratives.

Table 1

Drawings and Narrative Extracts

Number	Drawing	Extract from narrative
1		*The Goliaths from the university come with all the resources. People with academic titles are recognised and respected within the university as well as the community spaces. The university is an Ivory Tower far removed from its community. Community engagement is characterised by a power imbalance and unequal distribution of resources. Communities need to take huge steps and go out of their way to collaborate and bring their knowledge to the partnerships, yet they are still not recognised nor accepted by the university as an equal partner. The main question that comes to mind is: "Research for who?"*
2		*The university is perceived as the creator of new knowledge, which comes with ideas and does research on the community. The drawing shows this wide bridge which indicates the connection between the university and the community without being mindful of the big divide and the challenges that this divide causes between the university and the community. The university flies or drives into a community to extrapolate data. However, it does not create opportunities for communities to solve real problems in their communities. The community feels exploited because once the university achieves its research goals, the community is left to fend for itself, with no sustainable change in the community. Thus, I am left to ask: "Research for what?"*

| 3 | | *Communities experience multiple forms of discrimination in spaces of HEIs where their members automatically benefit within the socially constructed spaces of society. I was also once a community member who worked in a school where university research was done under the banner of engagement and felt exploited after participating in multiple university activities that made no real change to the school or the community. It felt as if I was a stringed puppet that did just what the university wanted as they pulled my strings. My own concerns were not taken into account thus I keep on asking myself: "How will this research be done if we want to see change in our community?"* |
| 4 | | *Whilst making this drawing, I had more questions to ask. As much as I wanted to write my own narrative, I was left with questions and more questions. My own inability to move beyond this point left me with shackles around my mind, my heart and my body. Thus, I opted for a non-human image to try and represent my own tensions, my own lived contradictions. "How aware are we/am I that I reproduce the status quo daily in the way I do or don't do things?" Whenever I enter or leave the premises of the institution, I grapple with how I participate in dehumanising practices. "How do I regain my own humanity?"* |

Discussion of Findings

We now proceed to an explication of our findings. An exposition of the themes identified in the methodology section is provided, with an explanation of our perceptions regarding how we experience university–community partnerships.

Power and Divide

From the data analysis, common key words that informed the theme of power and divide include imbalance of power and unequal resource distribution. We referred to the university as a "Goliath" or an "ivory tower" rich in resources such as skills and capacity to access, create, as well as apply knowledge. Although the community might have skills, they do not have the resources to use the skills

to create knowledge. This reinforces the idea that community partners feel shackled by their circumstances and that they will not be able to make an equal contribution to the engagement partnership. This imbalance of power and unequal distribution of resources causes division and tension in engagement projects where the community is made to feel as if it has nothing to offer. Members are taken from their community context to well-resourced university campuses that are far removed from their lived realities and the challenges they experience daily. So how do we, as the university, start to question the structural inequalities and injustices that operate in university–community partnerships? How do we encourage the community to question the collective lie that continues to convince them to buy into the interests of the privileged and powerful without making a change to their own realities and challenges?

We experienced the above challenges as teachers in community schools and this history of how engagement was managed from the perspective of the institution makes it extremely difficult to forge engagement partnerships. Conscientisation is a dialectical process that demands researchers to respect their relationship with community members and the knowledge they own, as well as to acknowledge the lived realities of these communities (Freire, 1994). What is required is for university researchers to step down from the comfortable positions of power that institutions place them in and become co-learners with communities while upholding the required ethical protocols, adhering to respect, and doing no harm (Wood, 2016). They need to recognise that they are part of a structure that perpetuates the dominance of power and divide that leads to dehumanisation

We confirmed that the HEI system is characterised by bureaucratic structures that hamper the establishment of collaborative partnerships. This structure assumes that the task of engaging with communities has been delegated to universities and that their role is to "deliver" this engagement outcome. Ultimately, then, this leaves little room for the knowledge and lived experience of the communities to be acknowledged. Thus, this study postulates that because researchers are expected to produce knowledge they consciously or unconsciously reinforce the unequal power relations in engagement projects to achieve their research goals. These findings are substantiated by De Sousa Santos (2014) who suggested that real changes in HEIs will only take place when the relationships of power begin to change, that is, when the concerns of the community are taken into account and the focus of HEIs reflects the values of all. This will only happen when universities remove the locks from their gates, open themselves to alternative spaces of learning, and acknowledge the contribution that communities can make to knowledge construction.

Shared Goals and Mutual Benefit

We alluded to universities inviting communities to participate in engagement projects with pre-constructed objectives and a research plan. This plan is usually one-dimensional and focuses on reaching the funders' objectives. So, when does the university put the sacred contract aside and ask the questions: "If this is meant to be a partnership, where is my partner (the community) in this plan?" "How are their (community) goals articulated in the research plans?" "How do we ensure that our research plans meet our shared goals and are mutually beneficial for both parties?"

Freire (1998) was of the opinion that the university agenda regarding community engagement will not change spontaneously. There is a need to create a learning context that questions and assists communities in how to make connections between their lived experience and the structures of society so that they can voice their goals and expectations in the engagement partnership (Ledwith, 2011). This facilitates problem posing in community engagement. We propose that these partnerships be democratic spaces in which partners can engage in critical dialogue to align their goals and objectives for mutual benefit. This will provide a common lens for the university and the community through

which the world can be viewed. It will also serve as the foundation for co-designing solutions for real societal problems (Bhagwan, 2017).

Ledwith (2011) reminded us that our first priority in an engagement project is to get to know the community and its needs, and how these relate to the needs of the university and society at large. Critical pedagogy supports the above and compels us to listen actively to people's goals, expectations, ambitions, and dreams and to determine how it links to our own goals and expectations (Sathorar, 2018). This can only be achieved through dialogue amongst partners and it will, in turn, enhance the humanisation in the partnership. This will address community scepticism regarding engagement projects. As the data showed, they believe that the university comes to engagement projects with preconceived objectives. Thus, it is important to answer the following questions: "How does the university generate a sense of belonging and a sense of collaborative ownership for the community in the engagement project?" "How can the university create a space in the engagement project that will enable co-learning and co-creating of knowledge so that the community members do not feel as if they are puppets on a string—adhering to every command of the university at the cost of their own needs?"

The above discussion highlights the fact that there is a need for a renewed look at how universities engage with communities with a specific focus on ethical engagement practices (Wood, 2016). This does not just refer to doing no harm but also to ensuring that community members are treated as equal partners and that the community would be left with a sustainable benefit that will address real needs at the end of the engagement project. Below, we propose a critical engagement process that could enhance the way university academics engage with communities in engagement projects.

The Way Forward: A Critical Approach to Enhance Community Engagement

Freire (1994) posited that if universities want to fulfil the role of change agent through community engagement, they should be willing to share their authority with the community in community engagement projects, and they must encourage community participation through dialoguing and problem posing. It is imperative for universities to recognise the knowledge and experiences that the community bring to the engagement partnership, and to draw on these lived experiences when addressing societal problems in the local context (Wood, 2016). In this paper, we advocate for the application of a critical approach in university–community engagement projects. We propose the use of a critical engagement process as illustrated in Figure 1 to enhance the relationship between the university and the community and also to increase the mutuality of the outcomes of a project.

Figure 1

Critical Engagement Process

Our findings suggest that before researchers embark on engagement projects, they must ask themselves *why* they want to do the engagement activity. Similarly, they have to establish why communities might be interested in such a partnership. This forms the core of what drives any engagement process as can be seen in Figure 1 above. Universities, in collaboration with communities, should identify common issues of concern and develop overarching goals (*what*) that will bring about mutual benefit (Shannon & Wang, 2010). Thus, the purpose of the engagement needs to be negotiated and it must be mutually beneficial. This will also ensure that universities engage in ethical research—because it will ensure that the community voice is taken into account and that the project results in a sustainable benefit for the community. If the community knows what the project is about and how they will benefit from it, it will reduce their scepticism and enhance their participation.

Researchers have emphasised the importance of *how* university–community engagement is done (Cooper & Orrell, 2016; Strier, 2010). In the critical engagement process illustrated in Figure 1, we also focus on how engagement should take place and identify four critical interactions that will enhance how universities engage with communities. It is not envisaged that these critical interactions should take place in a linear or set manner; they can happen interchangeably. Furthermore, they are intrinsically and dependently linked to each other, and the process will not be complete if one of the interactions is dispelled. The university and the community are represented in the illustration of the process as people—highlighting the humanisation of the process and that both parties need to actively engage in the process for it to be mutually beneficial.

Moving in a clockwise direction from the bottom left of the illustration, the first interaction proposed is for university and community members to get to know each other and to understand the processes that will be followed in the project. True dialogue is required, and it needs to take place under the following conditions to enhance the humanisation of the project: profound love for the world and human beings, humility towards each other and the world, faith in humanity and in its power to create and re-create, and mutual trust between dialoguers (Freire, 1970).

In the next interaction, the focus is on the university and community collectively establishing project plans. Understanding community needs, discussing, co-designing, and developing an implementable solution will no longer make the community feel as if the university is imposing a solution on them (Bhagwan, 2017). Co-designing solutions will allow for the community to develop a voice. The collective collaboration will contribute to conscientisation and allow for the university and its community partners "to learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 17). Applying a critical approach requires tapping into all voices and recognising all knowledge that is available to contribute to a plan. Thus, a problem-posing strategy is required where the university and the community analyse and interrogate their own knowledge and experiences in relation to those of others to reveal larger public issues and processes of domination and liberation (Darder, 2017).

The third critical interaction refers to the collective and collaborative implementation of project plans. Here, the focus of mutuality and reciprocity will involve the university gathering data while, at the same time, community leadership needs to be developed and skills provided to address the needs of the community. This will ensure that communities do not feel as if they have been exploited in a process where the focus was just on the research outcomes for the university (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). The skills development will contribute to the sustainability of the project.

The final critical interaction proposes a process of reflection and analysis that will allow the university and community to critically look at what has happened in the project and to identify where they need to change what they are doing. This interaction, like all the others, is dependent on true dialogue between the university and the community, and this will only be possible if a trust relationship has been developed.

This model embraces the participatory action research (PAR) strategy but differs from other PAR models in that it focuses on engaging in an ethical manner by applying the critical pedagogy principles of humanisation, true dialogue, conscientisation, and problem posing. In order for university researchers to embrace the application of a critical approach to community engagement, they need to be exposed to the critical pedagogy principles. These principles need to be explained and practically demonstrated to researchers and we propose that, before they participate in community engagement projects, they participate in a short learning programme or workshop during which they are introduced and allowed to practically experience the critical approach process. During this programme, researchers and their community partners can respond to *why* do the engagement project, *what* is the purpose of the project, and *how* will they engage in the project.

Conclusion

In this paper, we reflect on the development of meaningful university–community partnerships capable of bringing about mutual benefits and reciprocity by the equal and lived inclusion of excluded communities. The building of a lasting partnership demands balancing power relations between partners, as well as the coordination of contrasting perceptions. The scholarship of community engagement requires a critical academy that will prioritise community development instead of focusing on increasing institutional research outputs. This requires researchers to link their research to real community problems that will not just bring about research outputs but also contribute to sustainable solutions that will bring about social transformation.

When the notions of mutuality and reciprocity are forefronted in university–community partnerships, authentic engagements emerge that support the development of collaborative communities that work together to create new knowledge. In conclusion, university–community engagement should be a

priority at universities and not seen as an add-on to teaching and research because it is a philosophical belief that can help evolve, shape, and progress higher education.

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Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners With Severe Intellectual Disability[1]

Julialet Rens

ORCID No: 0000-003-2727-2834 iD
COMBER, Faculty of Education,
North-West University
Julialet.Rens@nwu.ac.za

Hannelie Louw

ORCID No: 0000-0003-2314-4464 iD
COMBER, Faculty of Education,
North-West University
Hannelie.Louw@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

This article focuses on a participatory process where the experiences of teachers regarding the implementation of the life skills curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) for learners with severe intellectual disabilities (SID) in schools for learners with special educational needs were investigated. This curriculum for learners with SID has been developed to be more effective in meeting the needs of these learners. The curriculum ensures that learners can meet the requirements of the national CAPS used in ordinary public schools at a reduced depth and width, or at a more functional level, in accordance with their cognitive abilities. Although a descriptive mixed research method was applied in the study, this article reports on the qualitative part of the research. In the qualitative phase, collages and arts-based discussions with core project groups were used to generate data. Four schools, 13 core project groups, and 51 participants (teachers) were involved in the research. The transcribed data from the core project group discussions were analysed using thematic analysis, and the themes that emerged were discussed by the participants. Based on the results of these qualitative arts-based discussions, the findings were used to create opportunities for the teachers to talk and work together to jointly develop a training manual for beginner teachers and to form a learning environment that would permit rich inquiry-based dialogue among the teachers.

Keywords: CAPS, curriculum development, life skills, special needs curriculum, special schools

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Introduction

Prior to 1994, learners in South Africa were divided not only according to race, but also according to disability or ability (Engelbrecht, 2020). Walton and Rusznyak (2014) noted that in the previous dispensation, there was a well-resourced special education system for white learners with special educational needs. One of the key issues the South African government wanted to address after 1994 was the discriminatory and exclusionary educational practices against children with severe and profound disabilities—by placing learners in inclusive settings according to their disabilities and not according to race. This was done through the introduction of the Education White Paper 6: Special Education Needs—Building an Inclusive Education System (EWP6; Department of Education, 2001), which declared that the state has an obligation to protect the basic human rights of children without discriminating on race, class, gender, creed, or age. Children must have the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities in order to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Thus, "inclusive education" can be broadly defined as the process by which learners who were previously taught in a separate special education system because of their barriers to learning are now taught in ordinary schools that accept responsibility to change and improve to provide the support needed to ensure access and participation for all learners (Department of Education, 2001). In addition to EWP6, Section 5 of the South African Schools Act (1996, p. 8) affirmed that a "public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way." Section 12(4) of this Act declared: "The member of the Executive Council must, where reasonably practicable, provide education for learners with special educational needs at ordinary public schools and provide relevant educational support services for such learners" (South African Schools Act, 1996, p. 10).

There are some critical international events in the movement towards inclusive education that also influenced the transformation of the South African education system. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) affirmed that it was discriminatory to refuse learners with special educational needs admission to regular education settings. The transformation of schools to cater for all learners and to introduce an inclusive education approach was encouraged through this statement. Furthermore, the United Nations' (2006) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities promoted inclusive education for learners with severe intellectual disabilities (SID), and has gained a lot of ground and support around the world in the past few decades (Chowdhury, 2011). However, it is important to emphasise that inclusive education is not only about placing learners with disabilities in ordinary public schools but also includes thinking wisely about multiple facets of education such as assessment, access, support, resources, and leadership (Mitchell, 2015). In addition, research has shown that the implementation of such an inclusive education system continues to be challenging—specifically regarding an appropriate curriculum for learners with SID (Engelbrecht, 2020).

This article focuses on the experiences of teachers in the implementation of the Differentiated Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Life Skills (hereafter, Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID; Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2017a)[2] in schools for learners with special educational needs. The American Psychiatric Association (2020) stated that SID involve problems with general mental abilities that affect functioning in two areas: intellectual functioning (e.g., learning, problem

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[2] Although this document is available by request from the Department of Basic Education, it is still under review by the Department, and will only be generally available when it is declared a policy.

solving, and judgement) and adaptive functioning (activities of daily life, e.g., communication and living independently).

The writing of the differentiated CAPS for Learners with SID originated from a judgement delivered in the court case, *Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability v. Government of the Republic of South Africa* (2010). In the judgement, it was stated that the Western Cape DBE had failed to meet the educational needs of severely and profoundly intellectually disabled children, which was a breach of the children's rights to basic education, fairness, and protection from neglect or humiliation. The South African government had to take reasonable measures to protect severely or profoundly disabled learners in the Western Cape to ensure their access to quality basic education (*Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability v. Government of the Republic of South Africa*, 2010). The writing of an adjusted SID curriculum based on the CAPS was approved in 2013 by the Minister of Basic Education (M. Schoeman, personal communication, 26–28 October, 2017). The CAPS for Learners with SID was implemented in pilot schools in 2018. After the implementation in pilot schools, other schools for learners with special educational needs also began to implement the CAPS for Learners with SID. The first round of public comment was written at the end of 2018 (C. Vlachos, personal communication, October 14, 2020).

With the implementation of the SID curriculum, teachers experienced various challenges, for example, limited resources, extremely heavy workloads, and too much assessment for each subject. These challenges were discussed during training sessions and in the public comment session (C. Vlachos, personal communication, October 14, 2020). These challenges are consistent with what international research has found regarding the implementation of a new curriculum. In New Zealand, Australia, England, and the United States of America, the implementation of new curricula has led to an increase in the workload of teachers (Ingvarson et al., 2005). According to van Tonder and Fourie (2015), 28% of teachers in New Zealand have considered leaving the teaching profession due to the workload. This article reports on a collaborative investigation into challenges experienced by teachers in schools for learners with SID.

Theoretical Perspective

Given that it is important to build research on a theoretical perspective, Paulo Freire's (2005) humanising approach was applied to this research. Freire (2005) stated that curriculum planning is a process where people are the starting point; it is a human-orientated process that involves people, their expectations, and their needs (Mahmoudi & Babae, 2014). Curriculum planning is, according to Freire (2005), a continual and participative process in which all stakeholders (teachers, learners, and experts) involved in teaching and learning should play a role. The Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID was written by teachers in schools for learners with special needs to take into account their specific needs (DBE, 2017a). Thereafter, it was reviewed and approved by subject specialists from the DBE (C. Vlachos, personal communication, October 14, 2020). This corresponds with Freire's statement that curriculum planning should not be a top-down process (as cited in Mahmoudi & Babae, 2014).

According to Freire (2005), curricula can either liberate or domesticate groups in society. In this case, the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID aims at liberating these learners. This is evident given that the curriculum for learners with SID was launched to strengthen respect for human rights, fundamental freedom, and human diversity. It aims to provide learners in ordinary schools and in schools for learners with special educational needs across the spectrum with competencies and aptitudes that ensure dignity, self-assurance, and active participation in the school and the community (DBE, 2017a).

Contextualisation of the Curriculum for Learners With SID

In South Africa, a new school curriculum was introduced in 1997, namely Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 1997). This curriculum was grounded in an outcomes-based approach and was specifically developed to address the learning paces of all learners, including those with disabilities. However, after several reviews, the curriculum was adapted to become the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) CAPS (DBE, 2011). It was evident that schools for learners with special educational needs struggled with adapting the CAPS, and that is why the DBE gave the instruction to form a working group for SID with the goal to formally adapt the NCS CAPS to the CAPS for Learners with SID (M. Schoeman, personal communication, 26–28 October, 2017).

Table 1 illustrates the differences between the two curriculum documents as developed by Schoeman (personal communication, 29 September–3 October, 2014) during the first writing session for the curriculum for SID learners in 2014.

Table 1

Differences between the NCS CAPS and the CAPS for Learners with SID

NCS CAPS	SID CAPS
13 years of education	14 years of education
Grades are not subdivided	Grades are subdivided into 2 or 3 years
Each grade equals 1 year	Each grade equals more than 1 year
Learners receive a National Senior Certificate	Learners receive a Certificate of Attainment
Grade 9 equals Level 1 on the NQF	Grade 6 is below Level 1 on the NQF
Learners may enter a TVET college after they have completed Grade 9 successfully	Learners with potential may enter the Technical Occupational Stream when they turn 15
Learner instruction time per 5-day week: Grades R–2 = 23 hours Grade 3 = 25 hours Grades 4–12 = 27,5 hours	Learner instruction time per 5-day week: 27,5 hours
Learners choose subjects at age 16	Either three or four skills subjects are instructed from age 14
Formal and informal assessment	Formal and informal assessment
Assessment focuses on all the levels of Bloom's taxonomy	Assessment focuses on the knowledge and understanding levels of Bloom's taxonomy
Focuses on theory	20% focuses on theory, and 80% focuses on skills development
Single-level teaching and learning	Multilevel teaching and learning and multilevel tasks
Grade-focused learning	Straddled learning
Limited scaffolding/unwinding/designing down and up	Scaffolding/unwinding/designing down and up often takes place

The frame of reference for the curriculum development working group for learners with SID was, according to Schoeman (personal communication, 26–28 October, 2017), to compile a learning programme (that was in line with the NCS CAPS) to be rolled out in schools for learners with special educational needs as well as ordinary public schools. This programme aimed to use functional content of all subjects and provide guidance on how learners with SID could straddle subjects on either side of their specific grade in both public schools and in schools for learners with special educational needs. To address the needs of learners with SID, it was, therefore, important to adapt the curriculum and, at

the same time, assist in the progression of SID learners to a level where they can make a contribution to society.

The importance of the abovementioned differences is that all learners, whether they are following the NCS CAPS or the SID CAPS, will be able to complete the curriculum and achieve the set outcomes. This will also give learners with SID the opportunity to progress at a special pace with the guidance of the teachers in these schools.

Methodology

In this article, we are reporting on the qualitative part of a larger research project (Louw, 2021) in which we used a participatory action research design and a social constructivist paradigm to collectively engage teachers in conversations (Masinga et al., 2016) to construct new understandings of their experiences of implementing a new curriculum. The research about the experiences of teachers during the implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID contributed to the community of practice that developed from the discussions and notes that were compiled by the participants. Participatory action research is a collaborative mode of inquiry that seeks to find solutions to existing problems and challenges (Ebersöhn et al., 2019).

Four schools, 13 core project groups, and 51 participants were involved in the research (see Table 2).

Purposive sampling was used to choose four schools in three provinces to be part of this phase. We distinguished between well-resourced and under-resourced schools because we also wanted to find out whether the location of the school and the resources or lack of resources had an influence on the challenges the teachers experienced. The participants of the core project groups were selected using the following criteria:

- Participants must be part of the staff of the selected pilot schools.
- Participants must teach the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID in their classes.
- The Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID had to have been implemented from January 2018 or earlier.

Table 2

Participants

Schools	Group discussions
School 1, North-West **(Well-resourced school)**	Core Project Group 1: 5 participants Core Project Group 2: 3 participants Core Project Group 3: 2 participants Core Project Group 4: 4 participants
School 2, North-West **(Under-resourced school)**	Core Project Group 1: 6 participants Core Project Group 2: 4 participants Core Project Group 3: 5 participants
School 3, Gauteng **(Well-resourced school)**	Core Project Group 1: 5 participants Core Project Group 2: 4 participants Core Project Group 3: 5 participants
School 4, Western Cape **(Under-resourced school)**	Core Project Group 1: 4 participants Core Project Group 2: 2 participants Core Project Group 3: 2 participants

To generate data, we used arts-based methods. According to Weber (2014), arts-based methods enable participants to understand themselves while engaging in critical inquiry. They work together and, in the process, exchange ideas, stimulate self-reflexivity and reflect on their own and others' experiences. Arts-based research can be both scientific and artistic. In this case, it was scientific in that the research was done through empirical research, as well as artistic, given that the participants expressed their meaning through visual art forms (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). The collage images created by the participants led to communication with the self and with other participants taking part in the project. After creating the collages, the participants engaged in a discussion of the meaning of each artwork to give participants the opportunity to express and add meaning to their lived experiences (see Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2016).

Having completed the collages with the participants and having conducted the discussions with the core project groups, all the discussions were transcribed and coded. With the help of the researchers, the participants used thematic analysis to group the data into themes while the researchers did the theoretical analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. By focusing on meaning across a data set, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

In qualitative research, integrity is one of the most important aspects of ethics. We, therefore, use a set of five quality criteria (process-, dialogic-, catalytic-, democratic- and outcome-validity) developed by Herr and Anderson (2014) to explain how we addressed trustworthiness in this project. In the first place, validity refers to the quality of the research process and the relationships among participants. Democratic and collaborative relationships were maintained by giving a clear explanation of the cycles and actions we used. Also, the research questions were discussed with the core project groups. Space was created within the research process for all participants to engage in and contribute to the project. The collages that the participants created and the group discussions gave each participant their own voice. Democratic validity involves the knowledge that the different core project groups can generate information that is relevant to all the participants. The participants engaged and contributed within the project by helping to analyse the transcriptions, thereby enabling mutual learning and understanding in developing knowledge. This concerns the success of the research in reaching the identified goals. Another outcome that was a result of this research is that more of the participants became aware of the use of recycling in obtaining resources for Life Skills.

The instruction to participants was to make a collage to show how they experienced the implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID in relation to suggested subthemes. The participants made collages by choosing pictures for each subtheme and writing a concept map on the back of the collage. A concept map assists in "compiling an inventory of denotations for the collage by listing the constituent elements systematically and cataloguing the literal meanings of the images and pictures posted on the collage" (Van Schalkwyk, 2010, p. 683). The participants were divided into groups for the making of the collages, but each participant made their own collage. The following cycles of action and reflection were followed in each group of teachers:

Cycle 1

Plan

The results from the quantitative phase already completed (Louw, 2021) were used to collaboratively develop subthemes for collages (see below).

Act

We used an arts-based approach of making collages for data generation. Using collages to generate data encouraged the participants to connect and stimulated dialogue about their experiences in implementing the curriculum (see Masinga et al., 2016). Collage making is a "creative arts-based method in which separate images are cut from magazines, news articles and/or books and glued together to create a new image" (Raht et al., 2009, p. 229). These images symbolise the experiences of the participants and boost active involvement, critical engagement, and the ability to reflect on their experiences. The end products are a complete representation of their ideas and feelings (Van Schalkwyk, 2010).

Eleven subthemes were used:

- The creative arts curriculum

- The beginning knowledge and personal and social wellbeing curriculum

- The physical education curriculum

- Workload of teachers

- Relevance to the world of work

- Resources or a lack of resources

- The CAPS for Learners with SID—the attitude of teachers and implementing the curriculum

- Training

- Time management

- Assessment

- Difficulty of the curriculum.

Observe

The researchers observed the participants making the collages.

Reflect

Arts-based discussions were held with the different core project groups at the different schools to discuss their collages and the concept maps they had created and to explain how the collages represented their feelings about the curriculum. Solutions to the challenges they had experienced while implementing the curriculum were discussed as well.

Cycle 2

The participatory action research cycle was used again as the participants helped to analyse the transcriptions of the previous discussion and establish more themes. Knowledge and experience were shared among the participants by discussing the positive and negative aspects of each theme and giving solutions for the negative aspects. During these discussions, challenges experienced by the participants during implementation of the curriculum, as well as the solutions suggested by the participants, were discussed. With the help of the participants in the core project groups, a training manual that could be used during in-service training at the school was developed.

As the core project groups began to understand themselves and the central issue, they realised that they had the potential to improve the situation. They decided to contribute by being a mentor school to schools that are still struggling with the implementation of the CAPS for Learners with SID.

Ethical Aspects

Ethical aspects relating to confidentiality, privacy, and autonomy were discussed with the participants in the informed consent form that they received before they started with the focus group discussion. Letters of informed consent were completed and signed by all the participants.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the North-West University. The respective provincial education departments granted permission to conduct research at the schools and to send out the questionnaires. Permission was also obtained from the principal and the school governing body of each school. Letters of informed consent were completed and signed by all the participants.

Discussion of the Findings

The three themes that emerged from the subthemes given to the participants during the making of collages focused on the participants' attitudes about the adapted curriculum, the aspects of the curriculum that influenced the implementation thereof, and its influence on the participants, respectively. Throughout the participatory research process, the contribution of social change was very important to all the participants. The participants had the opportunity to reflect with other teachers on the adapted curriculum and, by sharing their own experiences, helped other teachers to also verbalise their feelings and experiences—which led to a positive community of practice between the participants.

Theme 1: The Attitude of the Participants About the New Adapted Curriculum as a Whole, and the Different Parts of the Curriculum

It is clear from the participants' discussions that they were in favour of a functional life skills curriculum. This confirms Alwell and Cobb's (2009) opinion that there is increasing tension between the curriculum content of a typical academic-general curriculum versus the content of a functional life skills curriculum.

The CAPS for Learners With SID: The Attitude of the Participants and Implementing the Curriculum

The participants agreed with the specific objectives of the CAPS for Learners with SID, namely to provide a basis of standardised general quality education that will meet the needs of these learners and help them prepare to become more independent for life after school (DBE, 2017a).

The participants were positive about the curriculum. One of the participants even described it as a luxury. They felt that it was good to have a curriculum with lesson plans that they could use in their classes. It helped them to know what to do each week and how to plan and work according to the topics provided in the curriculum.

> *With the previous curriculum, it felt to me as if you're falling around; you do not really know if what you do is correct. This one, it is really, it tells you straight forward what you have to do. I think it makes it much easier. (School 3, Core Project Group 1, Participant 1)*

> *I first felt like a small boat on a big ocean. Now I feel like a small boat firmly in someone's hand. (School 4, Core Project Group 2, Participant 1)*

Moreover, the participants felt that there was scope for differentiation in the curriculum. The meanings that the participants assigned also correspond with the aims of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID to "provide a foundation of quality, standardised general education that will suit the needs of these learners and help prepare them to be more independent for life after school" (DBE, 2017a, n.p.).

The Creative Arts Curriculum

One of the specific aims of Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID (Creative Arts) is to "give learners the opportunity to express their feelings through music, dance, drama and visual arts and to encourage them to be creative, imaginative individuals with an appreciation for art" (DBE, 2017b, n.p.).[3]

Figure 1 illustrates the opinion of a participant who was very positive about the creative arts curriculum.

Figure 1

Collage 1

In Figure 1, Picture 1, it is shown that the creative arts curriculum was the participant's favourite ("gunsteling") curriculum. Although the participants' opinions differed, most of them were very positive about the creative arts curriculum. This participant said that the specific curriculum was her absolute favourite of all the different curricula, whereas another participant mentioned that it was the curriculum she "stole" time from to do other work.

> *Researcher: Is it your favourite curriculum of all the different curricula or just your favourite of the life skills curricula?*
>
> *No, of all the curricula. It is really, yes, you can really feel you are putting your whole life into it. (School 1, Core Project Group, Participant 1)*
>
> *Let me put it like this: for me it was always, the children enjoyed it, it was nice, but for me, as I am a department head, it was usually the curriculum that I, with physical education, the first curriculum that I did not really finish, as I spent more time on Life Skills—Beginning*

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[3] Although this document is available by request from the Department of Basic Education, it is still under review by the Department, and will only be generally available when it is declared a policy.

> *Knowledge and Afrikaans and Mathematics. (School 1, Core Project Group 3, Participant 3)*

The Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Wellbeing Curriculum

The fact that participants were positive about the skills and values incorporated in the curriculum is confirmed by the specific aims of the Life Skills SID curriculum given that the document states that the subject encourages learners to acquire and practise life skills that will assist them to become independent and effective in responding to life's challenges, and to play an active and responsible role in society within their personal capability (DBE, 2017a). Figure 2, Picture 2 shows the opinion of a participant about the beginning knowledge and personal and social wellbeing curriculum.

Figure 2

Collage 2

Figure 2, Picture 2 shows two hands holding a butterfly, indicating that this curriculum is teaching learners different skills. The participants were positive about the skills and values incorporated into this curriculum. They did not like all the topics that were prescribed but were positive about the fact that the curriculum described in detail what should be taught each year.

> *It just felt, if I work through this, it would feel like, it is almost like a hug. I don't know how to say it. A hug makes you feel good; it feels to me you did everything you can. It helps the teacher, it helps the child, and it makes you feel better. Especially with personal and social wellbeing. Our children are, some of the small children are poor. They don't learn all the knowledge they need at home. (School 2, Core Project Group 4, Participant 2)*

The Physical Education Curriculum

The Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID (Physical Education) focuses on perceptual and locomotive development, rhythm, balance, and laterality. The focus in the early years is on games and activities that form the basis for later participation in sports. Physical growth, development, recreation, and play are all emphasised (DBE, 2017c).[4]

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[4] Although this document is available by request from the Department of Basic Education, it is still under review by the Department, and will only be generally available when it is declared a policy.

The participants were positive about this curriculum although they mentioned that they missed lesson plans, which were not included in the curriculum.

> *I think I can, but I have to give a lot of guidance to colleagues who doesn't understand it or doesn't have the experience to understand what they can do with the information in the curriculum. (School 3, Core Project Group 2, Participant 2)*

The participants also felt that if the school had sports practice during school hours, the learners (and teachers) did not always recognise the need for doing physical education as well.

Although the implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID was, in general, successful, there are still some problems that need to be addressed such as time management, the workload of teachers, resources, and assessment. A positive aspect is that most of the participants agreed that it was good to have a structured curriculum that gave teachers guidelines and provided them with lesson plans so that they knew what was expected from them. Moreover, the fact that most schools for learners with SID now use the same CAPS for Learners with SID creates a community of teachers working together. The participants felt that the successful implementation of the curriculum depended a lot on the attitude of the teachers; if the teacher was fully committed, the curriculum would be a success.

Theme 2: Aspects of the Curriculum That Have an Influence on the Implementation of the Curriculum

Particular aspects of the curriculum have an influence on the successful implementation thereof, such as its relevance to the world of work, resources, training, assessment, and the difficulty of the curriculum.

Relevance to the World of Work

The participants had different opinions about the world of work. They all agreed that it was very important to include this topic in the life skills curriculum but mentioned that it was included only in the senior phase of the curriculum (DBE, 2017a).

The DBE felt strongly that the world of work topics must be aimed at preparing the learner for life after school. The content should be adapted to enable the reality that the learner experiences after school and, therefore, was developed to make learners with a severe intellectual disability "street smart" and teach them other coping mechanisms to be fully included in their communities and society (DBE, 2017a).

> *I really think it is important because even if it is only one child you can equip with the necessary skills to one day go and do something outside the school, that is one child you have helped. Each child, in the end, needs skills to generate a future for himself. (School 4, Core Project Group 2, Participant 1)*

One participant mentioned that it was also a factor whether a learner was really severely disabled and would never manage to have a job they could do independently. Other participants felt that the elective subjects played a more important role in the world of work and felt that the beginning knowledge curriculum should include more ways for learners to acquire skills in the world of work.

Resources
Poor resources (or a lack of resources) can limit the performance of even the best teacher, and undermine learners' efforts to focus on teaching and learning (Furiwai & Singh-Pillay, 2020). This is in

line with the finding of Onwu and Stoffels (2005) that a lack of resources adversely affected teachers' involvement in practical work. Figure 3, Picture 6 shows the opinion of a participant about the resources at her school.

Figure 3

Collage 3

Figure 3, Picture 6 shows that the participant experienced the budget for resources at her school as painless ("pynlose begroting"). In the discussion of this aspect, there was a big difference among the schools. The participants from well-resourced schools felt that they were blessed with ample resources at school and, if they did their planning well, they could use waste or recycled material to do the work, especially in creative arts. Picture 6 in Figure 3 shows empty pill boxes, indicating that a teacher can use recycled material for resources.

> *From the day I started teaching, we saved everything. I saved my used teabags, you saved eggshells, and I think if early childhood teaching is in your blood, then you do it. You save everything. (School 4, Core Project Group 4, Participant 3)*

The participants felt that the physical education curriculum needed some resources and that it would be difficult to successfully implement the curriculum if teachers did not have the prescribed resources.

Training

Molapo and Pillay (2018) emphasised that intensive teacher training is vital in implementing a new curriculum. Without quality training, teachers will find it difficult to successfully implement the curriculum.

There were different opinions about the training of teachers regarding the curriculum. The participants who had the privilege of having two of the curriculum writers at their school, felt that they had an advantage because all the challenges they experienced could be solved by talking to the curriculum writers. They felt positive about the training they had received from the DBE, while participants teaching at other schools felt that they had been thrown into the deep end given that they had first received training two years after they had started to implement the curriculum. Some schools failed to implement the curriculum due to the lack of training. Also, not all the facilitators providing the training were up to standard, and the participants felt that they had wasted valuable time.

The proposal of some schools acting as mentor schools to schools that struggled to implement the curriculum was seen as a good idea.

> *And I think if everybody helps one another, it can only get better. It doesn't help if one school is doing everything correct and another school is doing nothing; in the end, it is the child who is suffering. (School 1, Core Project Group 1, Participant 1)*

The participants felt that the in-service training they had received at their own schools was more valuable than the training the DBE had provided. They stated that there had been too many teachers at the various training points and the teachers did not have the courage to ask questions because it took a long time to answer all the questions.

> *That is how I see my colleagues . . . each time I didn't understand or didn't know what is going on, there was someone who helped me or supported me. (School 2, Core Project Group 4, Participant 3)*

Assessment

As learners function at different levels, assessment, recording, and reporting must provide for the level of each individual learner to be reflected—as set out in the individual support plan to be developed at the beginning of the year in accordance with the procedures set out in the *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* of 2014 (DBE, 2014b).

The participants were positive about the fact that the assessment was provided in the curriculum. Some pointed out that there were too many assessments that should be done, whereas others felt that assessment showed them exactly how the learners were progressing.

It is black and white; there is no grey area. It tells you straight out what you have to assess. You can still compile your own rubric within the assessment. It makes it more personal. (School 3, Core Project Group 4, Participant 3)

The participants agreed that it was important to use rubrics to do assessment. Some of them stated that they had to succeed in implementing the curriculum first before starting to compile rubrics, and that they struggled with assessment.

Difficulty of the Curriculum

The degree of difficulty of the curriculum provoked a wide response. Learners who need high levels of support struggle to master the content of the curriculum, especially in the beginning knowledge and personal and social wellbeing curriculum (DBE, 2017a). Here, differentiation, according to the participants, is the answer.

The opinions of the participants differed on this point. Those participants who had implemented the curriculum successfully did not have a problem with the difficulty of the curriculum. However, participants who were still struggling with implementation felt that the curriculum was too difficult for learners with severe barriers to learning. The participants said that when they followed the curriculum for the second or third year, they managed to do more work with the learners because they had the experience of what worked and what not, which helped them to cope with the difficulty of the curriculum. It is also important to know that the provision of appropriate support services is essential for learners who experience barriers to learning to gain equal access (DBE, 2017a).

> *With experience, the learners will find it easier. The more comfortable I am with presenting the curriculum, the easier it will be to teach the CAPS to the children. (School 1-, Core Project Group 2, Participant 1)*

Looking at Theme 2, we concluded that the above five aspects caused difficulty in the implementation of the curriculum and the participants had strong opinions about them. These aspects have to be addressed by the school management teams as well as the different provincial education departments.

Theme 3: The Influence of the Implementation of the Curriculum on the Teacher on a Personal Level

The two aspects that have a significant influence on teachers on a personal level are workload and time management.

Workload of Participants

Figure 4, Picture 4 shows the perspective of a participant about the workload she experienced during the implementation of the curriculum.

Figure 4

Collage 4

Picture 4 is a picture of a fox. In Afrikaans the proverb is, "Dit is die klein jakkalsies wat die wingerd verwoes," meaning that it is the little things that happen every day in class that increase the workload of teachers. A concept map for Collage 4 was also included to show what was written by the participant about Picture 4 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Example of a Concept Map
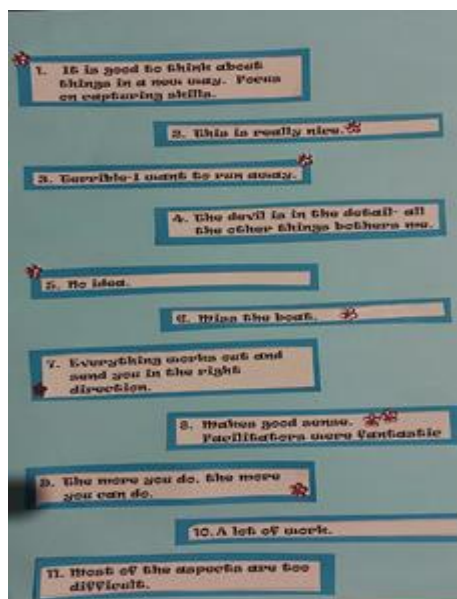
The participants felt that the new CAPS for Learners with SID influenced the workload of the teacher but, if they managed to work hard in the first year of implementation, the workload was less in the following years. They agreed that the diverse learners in each class had an impact on the workload and working out lesson plans because differentiation must be included in the planning. All the participants said they used their weekends to do their weekly and daily planning. The participants in the rural schools, who did not have all the resources needed, such as wi-fi and interactive whiteboards, felt that the workload had a greater impact on their personal time. According to van Tonder and Fourie (2015), research indicates that 28% of teachers in New Zealand have considered leaving the teaching profession due to the workload. However, participants who had previously worked at a public ordinary school felt that with the new CAPS for Learners with SID, they had much more personal time.

> *I now have much more personal time. I do it in a jiffy. It feels as if I can kick off my shoes and watch TV programmes. It makes it much easier. (School 3, Core Project Group 2, Participant 2)*

The participants at one of the schools felt that because two of the curriculum writers of the CAPS for Learners with SID were employed at their school, they had the advantage of getting more personal information and help.

> *We got a lot of support from you who had written the curriculum. We were in the privileged position to know, okay, you are struggling with something, there is someone nearby who can help you with the problem. (School 1, Core Project Group 4, Participant 3)*

Time Management

Teachers experience pressure from the DBE, the management team, and parents to ensure accurate record keeping. Because this is an ongoing process, it leads to teachers spending much time on administrative duties. This can lead to teaching time being reduced and workload increase (van Tonder & Fourie, 2015. The participants felt that the curriculum had been written in such a way that they were able to manage their time successfully.

I am happy with the time management. I feel free if I realise there is extra time for the children to daydream and still finish their activity in time. (School 2, Core Project Group 4, Participant 4)

However, one participant, who was a department head, said she struggled to manage her time between her responsibilities and the learners in her class. The participants stressed the fact that proper time management would not be possible without the help of their class assistants. Participants who had more than 15 learners in their classes struggled with time management.

To summarise the findings of the three themes, we want to focus on the following:

- The participants were very positive about the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID, especially the Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Wellbeing programme, but they were negative about the implementation of the curriculum.

- Personal factors, such as workload and time management, made the participants negative because they have to use their personal time and weekends to complete their preparation.

- A lack of resources, especially the lack of handbooks developed specifically for the curriculum, is a big problem.

- Training was not done in all the provinces, and the participants needed proper training to successfully implement the curriculum.

- It is still better to have a structured curriculum with lesson plans to help teachers prepare for their teaching and learning, therefore, the participants were positive about the curriculum.

Limitations

The implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID only started in 2018 and, therefore, published research on it is still limited. COVID-19 regulations forbid schools to allow researchers to come to schools, consequently, some focus group discussions were done by using Zoom. This method, which restricts the time of a meeting to 40 minutes, influenced the personal relationships we could build with the participants of some core project groups.

Conclusion

We wanted to answer the question, "How successful is the implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID in schools for learners with special educational needs?" We conclude that, although there are many challenges in successfully implementing the CAPS for Learners with SID, more than half of the participating teachers were positive about the fact that, for the first time, there was a structure according to which teachers could work, with fixed guidelines and weekly planning they could use. It is also clear that the Life Skills CAPS for Learners with SID does not dampen teachers' creativity; to the contrary, there is much more room for innovation and originality. The fact that electives prepare learners from 14 to 18 years of age for the world of work and that, in some cases, they can obtain a certificate of competency, contributes to the success of the CAPS for Learners with SID.

If we look at the long-term change potential of this participatory research, it is evident that it will contribute to social change on all the different levels of this partnership. We gained insight into the challenges the participants experienced by listening to their reflections during the discussions. According to them, their positive attitude will have an effect on the way they teach the curriculum, which will result in motivated learners and happier parents. The skills and values indicated in the

curriculum will also contribute to the quality of life of the learners and help them to make a positive contribution to the community.

Based on the results of the qualitative focus group discussions with the core project groups, the findings were used to do a qualitative exploration with the participants to collaboratively develop a training manual for teachers and to inform future curriculum developers.

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Narrative Imagination and Social Change: Instructors in Agricultural Colleges in Ethiopia Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence[1]

S. M. Hani Sadati iD
ORCID No: 0000-0002-2729-7989
McGill University
hani.sadati@mail.mcgill.ca

Claudia Mitchell iD
ORCID No: 0000-0002-9790-2486
McGill University
claudia.mitchell@mcgill.ca

Abstract

Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the world, making female students particularly vulnerable in its post-secondary institutions. Although there is extensive literature that describes the problem, mainly from the students' perspectives, what remains understudied is the role of instructors, their perception of the current issues, and what they imagine they can do to address campus-based SGBV, particularly in rural settings. In this study, we used the concept of narrative imagination to work with instructors in four Ethiopian agricultural colleges to explore how they understand the SGBV issues at their colleges and what they imagine their own role could include in efforts to combat these problems. Using qualitative narrative-based methods such as interviews and an interactive storyline development workshop, as well as cellphilming (cellphone + film) as a participatory visual method, the data were collected across several fieldwork phases. We consider how we might broaden this framework of narrative imagination to include the notion of art for social change.

Keywords: sexual and gender-based violence, post-secondary education, narrative imagination, professional learning, storytelling

[1] Ethical clearance: McGill University's Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans (File #: 27-0618)

Introduction

"Imagination gives us images of the possible that provide a platform for seeing the actual," according to the well-known arts in education theorist, Elliot Eisner, who went on to say that "by seeing the actual freshly, we can do something about creating what lies beyond it" (2002, p. 4). This is crucial to imagining solutions to urgent global concerns such as the high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), an issue that affects one in three women in their lifetime, according to the World Bank (2019). This report draws attention to the individual and socioeconomic costs of SGBV for communities and to the fact that it needs to be addressed throughout the Global North and the Global South. As has been evident in much of the global research on SGBV in educational settings, learning institutions are often breeding grounds for power imbalances that result in high rates of SGBV (Leach & Mitchell, 2006). The situation for young women in colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is particularly worrying. In their meta-analysis and systematic review of studies that targeted SGBV among young women in educational institutions (schools, universities, and colleges) in SSA, Beyene et al. (2019) reported a high prevalence of various types of gender-based violence with Ethiopia having one of the highest rates. A more recent systematic review and meta-analysis that considered two decades (2000 to 2020) of studies on the prevalence and related risk factors of SGBV in higher education settings in Ethiopia, showed that "the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence among female students in [such] institutions . . . was high," ranging from 14.3% among female students at Hawassa University to 76.4% at Ambo University (Kefale et al., 2021, p. 3). A review of the literature from Ethiopia shows that various types of SGBV are problems faced by significant numbers of females in post-secondary education contexts in different regions (Adinew & Hagos, 2017; Arnold et al., 2008; Gelaye et al., 2009; Kassa et al., 2019; Mamaru et al., 2015; Shimekaw et al., 2013; Takele & Setegn, 2014; Tora, 2013).

To date, most of the studies conducted in post-secondary institutions in SSA are typically student surveys that attempt to document the magnitude of SGBV. In previous work with agricultural colleges in rural areas of Ethiopia, a survey of more than 1,500 students captured their perceptions of many different types of SGBV in four colleges (Mitchell & Starr, 2018). In follow-up work with a group of instructors from these four colleges, these scholars engaged in a participatory data analysis exercise of the survey data and it was clear that the instructors were committed to finding strategies to address the situation, as Starr and Mitchell (2018) have noted. While documenting the extent of the issue is a crucial first step in combating SGBV, there is clearly a need for interventions that align with the growing recognition that learning institutions should not only be places where it is safe for everyone to learn, but should also be spaces of transformation—particularly in the context of gender equity and social justice. In these places, it should be possible to imagine more equitable futures. Taking into consideration the positive response of instructors, what might we learn from their engaging in a "narrative imagination" process that Brockmeier (2009) identified as "pivotal in probing and extending real and fictive scenarios of agency" (p. 215)? How might this work contribute within a broader art for social change framework? Building on the idea of storytelling from the perspective of narrative imagination and using participatory visual arts-based tools, we explore how instructors at four Ethiopian agricultural colleges imagine and visualise what their roles as instructors could be in addressing issues of campus-based SGBV.

Imagination and Storying: A Framework for Studying Social Change

The term *change* inherently contains the meaning of moving toward a goal, or target, or desired condition. Similar to the concept of *intentionality* in phenomenology, which identifies the experience of consciousness as being directed toward something (Smith, 2018), social change is also aimed in a specific direction. How do change agents visualise this direction toward altering symbols, rules, values, and organisations? Hawlina et al. (2020) have referred to imagination as a key element in social movements and in social change. Human beings are able to make social and political change because

they "not only shape and imagine the world around them and their position in it, but also . . . *re-shape* and *re-imagine* it" (Graef et al., 2020, p. 433). Jenkins et al. have called this process "civic imagination" and defined it "as the capacity to imagine alternatives to current cultural, social, political, or economic conditions"; the civic agents of change are capable of imagining the process of change because "one cannot change the world without imagining what a better world might look like" (2020, p. 5).

But, as Zittoun and Gillespie (2015) have asked, "How can we have access to imagining?" (p. 11), and how can we study it? In response, they offered a methodological strategy that explores externalised examples of imagination such as writings, self-reports or other artifacts, and multimodal texts. An externalised imagination could take the form of narrative and storytelling, both of which have already been considered as strategies toward achieving transformation and social change (Müller, 2019; Razack, 2006). Graef et al. (2020) considered storytelling's "co-constructed and dynamic nature" to be the driver of "social and political change" (p. 433). In this context, to be able to identify the required steps of transforming from "current reality" to "a hoped for but as yet unrealised reality," as Andrews (2014) has pointed out, "one must first create some sort of narrative emplotment, which includes characters, plot (or action), and a desired endpoint" (p. 5). Narrating the stories leads to better understanding and enables the agents of change to visualise their desired world and transfer their thoughts and meanings to others. Brockmeier (2009) considered storytelling to be an innovative means of communication, negotiation, and meaning-making and recommended "narrative imagination as a form and practice of human agency" (p. 227). From the perspective of narrative imagination, bridging the pathways between the current situation and the desired one or between the present and a potential future is key (Andrews, 2014). Sools (2020) provided a brief review of future-oriented approaches or what she termed "prospective methodologies" (p. 451), and noted that scholars with this viewpoint commonly highlight the connection between future and present and use this framework to understand "how imagining possible and preferred future guides and motivates present thought and action" (p. 451–452).

Closely linked to the idea of Sools's (2020) prospective methodologies, is the work on community-based visual methodologies for social change using arts-based methods such as photovoice, participatory video/cellphilming (cellphone + film), and digital story-telling as the contributors to de Lange et al. (2007) have highlighted; see, too, Mitchell et al. (2017). Located within the broad area of art as an agent for social change (see the chapters in Mreiwed et al., 2020), typically, these methods engage participants in picturing change. Seen through the eyes of local participants, what are the issues and what are the solutions? And notwithstanding the critique of sometimes being overly celebratory (Low et al., 2012), such methods are, in a sense, utopic in relation to imagining a different future at a local level, such as imagining the creation of safer toilets in a primary school (Mitchell, 2009). Applied to studying the potential for the narrative imagination of instructors in agricultural colleges to contribute to addressing SGBV, we consider the words of well-known curriculum theorist, Maxine Greene. As she explained, "engagements with the arts [can] release the imaginative capacity into play [and foster] a commitment to the risky search for alternative possibilities" (Greene, 1999, p. 47–48).

Methodology

Our study is located within what Mertens (2008) referred to as a transformative paradigm. As researchers, we are committed to finding ways to work directly and through participatory approaches with communities to support the idea of *research as intervention* (D'Amico et al., 2016).

Participants

The fieldwork was led by the first author and carried out with instructors from four agricultural colleges in four regions of Ethiopia: Maichew, Nedjo, Wolaita Sodo, and Woreta. Located within a large project, Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger Vocational Education (ATTSVE), which focuses on the transformation of agricultural colleges in Ethiopia,[2] the fieldwork involved five instructors from each of the four colleges with at least one to two women from each college to make sure we have women's voices in each group.[3] In total, 20 instructors with the age range of 23 to 60 years, and work experience of 3 to 31 years, participated in the data gathering processes. Aligning with the structure of ATTSVE, most of the participant instructors were attached to the gender clubs in their colleges as gender officers. Involving these instructors meant that they had already had some exposure to issues of gender and SGBV and also, that they were key actors in the transformation agenda of these colleges.

Data Collection

The fieldwork was part of a larger study that tested a participatory game design process for developing a serious game that could ultimately become a self-educating tool (Sadati, 2019)[4] to support instructors in addressing SGBV on agricultural campuses (see Sadati & Mitchell, 2021). Serious games can create entertaining experiences that are also educational (Abt, 1987). To create our educational game, we first needed to carry out research to explore the educational needs of the instructors and develop the game's learning objectives. Under the general participatory action research approach, the entire data gathering process included five techniques: individual interviews, group discussions, cellphilm production, participatory game storyline development, and feedback collection. In this article, we focus on the narratives of instructors across three of five data collection techniques.

Individual Interviews

Twenty instructors, five from each college, participated in individual semi-structured interviews during which they spoke about their knowledge, experience, and observations of SGBV on campus, and its causes and consequences. Interviews were carried out in instructors' colleges and in closed rooms where they felt comfortable to speak about their experiences. Each interview, on average, lasted about an hour. We took notes of the conversations and obtained instructors' consent to record the interviews for later review.

Cellphilm (Cellphone + Film) Production

This is a participatory visual research approach (see Tomaselli et al., 2010) that is used to involve research participants in a process of making short videos in response to a question or a prompt about a community issue. Within the framework of participatory visual methods (Mitchell et al., 2017), cellphilm production is a collective activity during which participants are co-producers of knowledge through sharing their understandings of, experiences with, and solutions to, a community issue. As Mitchell et al. (2016) have highlighted, typically, this is done through a workshop approach based on a

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[2] The ATTSVE project aimed to help improve Ethiopia's agricultural system by strengthening Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVET) colleges. As part of this six-year study, the second author led the component that focused on gender equality and inclusiveness in the colleges.

[3] In keeping with the critical area of gender transformation in the colleges, we would like to have had an equal number of men and women in the sessions. This was not possible given the small number of women holding permanent positions as lecturers so we tried to have at least one to two women from each college.

[4] *Mela* ("find a solution" in Amharic), is a role-playing serious game that aims to build the capacity of agricultural college instructors to prevent SGBV incidents and promote gender equality on campus. Throughout the six chapters of the game the player takes an instructor's role and is expected to address the gender-based issues that are raised on campus. Mela was developed in collaboration with a team of young Ethiopian game designers who supported the technical aspects of the process. See www.melagame.com or contact the first author.

series of steps including working with a prompt or question (usually provided by the facilitator), brainstorming about issues in small groups, storyboarding, filming and screening, followed by reflecting. In our fieldwork, instructors were engaged in the process of cellphilm production in response to two prompts: "What are the potential roles of agricultural instructors in addressing SGBV issues on campus?" "What are the barriers that prevent instructors from addressing SGBV on campus?" In total, six cellphilms were created and were transcribed into text for analysis.

Participatory Game Storyline Development Workshop

The focus of our two-day workshop was to engage instructors in creating non-linear stories for a game as opposed to cellphilms, which just included linear narrations. Here, instructors from the four colleges developed four interactive storylines based on their lived experiences, and regarding the potential roles of instructors in preventing SGBV or promoting campus-based gender equality. These storylines offered alternative options for the audience to choose their path among the narrations. Instructors wrote and drew their ideas on flip charts and a representative of each group presented their overall story to everyone. With the consent of the instructors, we filmed the presentations and transcribed them later for analysis. We also photographed the flip charts for further review.

The cellphilm stories and the game storylines give a good sense of how the instructors were imagining and picturing change, and they also provided local and culturally relevant material that guided the game development team to develop the prototype of the serious game, Mela, and then the full game in later phases (see Sadati & Mitchell, 2021, under review).

Findings

Individual Interviews With Instructors

The general thematic analysis steps outlined in Nowell et al. (2017) were adapted to analyse the interview data. We first familiarised ourselves with the data by reviewing the texts multiple times, generated initial codes using colour coding, created the themes, searched the data to ensure we had covered everything, and finally, we generated the report. Here, we categorise the findings from interviews in three groups: forms of SGBV on campus, causes of SGBV on campus, and consequences of SGBV on campus.[5]

Forms of SGBV in the Agricultural Colleges

Among the forms of SGBV shown in Table 1, are some that most of the instructors mentioned as being common problems (patriarchal practices; verbal and physical sexual harassment) whereas there are others that only a few instructors mentioned, such as coercive sex perpetrated by male staff members.

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[5] Quotations in the tables are direct quotes from instructors.

Table 1

Instructors Commenting on Forms of SGBV in the College

General theme	Subcategories
Patriarchal practices	Patriarchal behavior by male students such as: ▪ "Seizing the mobile phones of female students," ▪ "Keeping the educational resources (e.g., course handouts) to themselves and not distributing them to female students," and ▪ "Undermining the abilities of female students."
	Stereotypical patriarchal division of work between male and female students at shared places such as: ▪ Cooking in group houses (which is a long process in this context) is done by young women, thus giving them less time to study, while other services (e.g., providing the cost) fall on men.
Sexual harassment	Physical harassment of females such as: ▪ Touching, ▪ Biting, ▪ Taking women's scarves, ▪ Holding women against their will.
	Verbal harassment such as: ▪ Insulting women, ▪ Using impolite words to and about women, ▪ Making prejudgments like suggesting that women are weak mentally.
	Non-verbal signs or offensive body language such as: ▪ "Using inappropriate facial expressions," ▪ Making inappropriate gestures.
Sexual assault	Spreading rumours about women engaging in sexual intercourse.
	Male staff members forcing sex on female students (and on female staff members).
	Men raping women (just one interviewee pointed to this item without providing details).
Transactional sex	Female students agreeing to have sex with male students in exchange for having the latter do course assignments for them.
The implications of poor physical infrastructure	Considering the gender ratio, "the number of toilets for female students is inadequate."
Gender inequalities in organisational structure	There is no equal division of jobs between women and men, The employment rates are higher for men, and Women usually are not involved in management nor in decision-making.

A significant point about the interviews was the instructors' tendency to highlight that they were not personally aware of any of the incidents mentioned, particularly those they called "hard or serious cases" such as any incident that involved sexual intercourse. In such cases, they usually started their responses with phrases like "I am not sure . . ." or "I have not seen myself . . ." "I have just heard that. . . " or, "There are rumours around. . ."

Causes of SGBV in the Colleges

The instructors referred to eight main causes of SGBV on campus, highlighting the role of a culture of toxic masculinity and the relative poverty of female students. As one participant stated: "The root cause is cultural beliefs." Table 2 shows the detail of synthesised data in response to the question, "What are the causes of SGBV on the campus?"

Table 2

Instructors Commenting on the Causes of SGBV in the College

General theme	Subcategories
Toxic masculinity culture	Male students believe in their superiority, and this is shown in their behaviors. For example, "males think they know everything," and, because females have less intellectual capacity, they should obey them.
	There is a risk of harassment/assault by male students against female students when the latter disagree with them.
	"Females (specifically from rural areas) are shy" and afraid to report the SGBV incidents.
	The relatively better financial status of male students enables them to use their money for harassment purposes.
	Internalised stereotypical gender-based attitudes are held by women and men.
Lack of knowledge and awareness	There is a lack of awareness in the males (students and instructors) about the consequences of SGBV against females.
	There is a "lack of education about sex in families." Students (specifically girls) do not get adequate sex education.
	Females lack knowledge about gender equity and about their rights.
	Migration and mobility from rural to urban areas exposes females to violence because they do not have enough knowledge or the skills to combat it.

	The "lack of knowledge among some instructors regarding the consequences of SGBV for the country's development" leads to their lack of commitment to become actively involved in combating it.
Economic conditions	Poverty and economic problems lead female students to have transactional sex outside of the college.
Lack of rules and regulations	There are no comprehensive and separate regulations against SGBV in the colleges.
Religious beliefs	"There is an article in the Bible and Quran that females should always respect and accept the power of their husband," according to one instructor.
Lower age and less experience	There is a "lack of maturity in students," many of whom are under 18 years of age, and this leads to an inability and/or unwillingness to address such violence.
Differences in individual attitudes and understanding	The managers, instructors, staff members, and students all have different attitudes towards, and levels of understanding about, SGBV issues.
Poor physical infrastructure	There is a "shortage of facilities for female students," specifically toilets, and rest areas for pregnant women and nursing mothers. There are few facilities for the use of students' children, and this leads to discriminatory practices.

Here, we note that instructors identify cultural elements and poor infrastructure as both *forms* of SGBV and as *causes* of it. For example, the lack of proper toilets for females was identified as an example of gender-based discrimination, and, at the same time, as a reason for the lower attendance of pregnant female students in classes. Both affect their academic achievement.

Consequences of SGBV in the Colleges

Six themes were identified by instructors as consequences of SGBV on campus (see Table 3). Notable here, is the cause and consequence chain; each cause brings a related consequence, and, in turn, the consequence becomes the cause of another consequence. For example, shyness and lack of self-confidence is the psychological consequence of different forms of SGBV, and, at the same time, it can prevent SGBV survivors from reporting the incidents—and this leads to their insecurity on campus. Furthermore, unwanted sexual intercourse can cause unwanted pregnancy, and, in turn, can lead to a female student being rejected by her family and community which, in turn, leads to her increased poverty.

Table 3

Instructors Commenting on the Consequences of SGBV in the College

General theme	Subcategories
Psychological issues affecting female students	Mental stress is suffered by females who fear males and what they might do.
	Females become shy and uncertain and participate less in activities, exhibit a lack of self-confidence, and become isolated.
	The overall environment demoralises women.
Unwanted pregnancy and its consequences	This may lead to suicide or to the rejection of a woman by her family and the community.
Effects on females' academic achievements	Affected females might fail, withdraw, or stop learning.
Effects on females' career and economic status	Women who suffer SGBV may come to believe that their lower economic status is justified. Given the inequality in job opportunities for female students, they might become sex workers (bar ladies) in off-campus bars.
Health problems for females	Women might contract HIV and other STDs with related consequences such as increased poverty.
Unbalanced development of the country	As an ultimate consequence, SGBV negatively affects the development of the country.

It is evident that forms, causes, and consequences are intertwined and real change would need the involvement of various sectors of, and stakeholders in, the community.

Imagining Stories and Storylines

As discussed in the methodology section, the instructors created narratives through two different activities: they produced short cellphilms, and they participated in a game-oriented storyline development workshop—both focusing on the role of instructors in gender transformation. These two participatory activities were used to encourage instructors to think about their real-life experiences on campus (e.g., their observations of SGBV issues and their conversations with students or colleagues about these) and to imagine what could reduce or prevent instances of SGBV in the colleges. The narratives of these two techniques were different mainly in terms of their structures: the narratives developed during cellphilm production aimed to be used in a short video, so they were linear with a fixed start and end point. However, the narratives developed during the participatory game storyline development workshop aimed to be used in a role-playing game, so they were non-linear including story branches and different paths for the player to select.

Storying Through Cellphilm Production

Although there were various genres that the instructors could have chosen for their cellphilms (e.g., media messages, documentary style reporting, melodramas), all the groups chose to use what we have referred to elsewhere as melodramas (Sadati & Mitchell, 2020), in which the group creates a type of role-play or a scenario.

The cellphilm, *Providing Advice*, seeks to raise awareness of instructors' potential role in intervening and solving some SGBV problems related to verbal harassment in the colleges. A male student uses verbal violence against a female student in a class and continues to do so even when the female asks him to stop. After class, the female student goes to the instructor's office and reports the issue. The instructor calls the male and female together to his office and explains why the male student's behaviour was wrong. Then the instructor asks the male student apologise to the female, which he does.

How to Report GBV focuses on how instructors can support female students in reporting incidents to gender clubs or other concerned bodies. A male student verbally harasses a female student who is on her way to a class. The female student runs away from the perpetrator, but she looks frustrated. An instructor sees her, asks about the problem and, after learning what happened, accompanies the female student to the gender club office to report the incident.

Supporting Survivors aims to inform instructors of their potential role as active bystanders and as advocates for female students. In the college computer lab, a male student is shown harassing a female student verbally and physically. The young woman, clearly in distress, leaves the lab. She explains to an instructor what happened and he helps her to meet the college's discipline committee. In the reconciliation meeting that is organised by the discipline committee, both perpetrator and female student are called in. During the discussion, the male student learns about his wrongful actions and understands that he was committing an abuse. He says that he will not repeat this. Then the female student returns to the lab and is able to work.

Rural Female Student and Communication targets the communication difficulties and shyness that some female students have, and which lead to their lack of participation in class. The cellphilm shows how instructors can address this issue specifically in relation to girls from traditional settings. In a class at an agricultural college, the instructor notices that a female student from a rural background does not participate in the class because she is shy. The instructor asks the student to meet him after the class when he takes the counselling role and advises her to stop feeling shy and to develop communication skills. In the next class, the female student participates more. Later, she demonstrates the courage to report an incident that happened in the class, which results in a male student being sent out. Finally, when the instructor announces the examination results, the grades of the female student have improved significantly. The instructor gives her a prize.

The Effect of Early Marriage on Female Students in Agriculture College highlights two ways in which instructors can support pregnant students (who might have difficulties on the campus and in their studies). The instructor introduces a pregnant student to the gender club and explains the facilities that they provide for females and specifically for pregnant students. The student goes to the gender club and learns about the waiting room where she can get some rest while at college. After the student gives birth, she comes to the college carrying her child to class. The cellphilm also shows how another instructor supports the female student by providing a special tutorial class to help her improve her work and compensate for the classes she missed during her maternity leave. However, despite all this support, the female student leaves the college because of the lack of proper childcare infrastructure.

Lack of Instructor's Commitment to Respond to GBV Problem addresses the lack of commitment and sense of responsibility among some instructors regarding their college's SGBV issues. Two students (one male and one female) go to the instructor's office regarding an incident of gender-based violence that happened to a female student. The instructor is not in his office, and the students wait for him to come. After a long time, the instructor comes to the office and students share their concern, but the instructor notes the time and goes out of the office while telling the students to come back later because he does not have time for them.

Storying Through Participatory Game Storyline Development

In this phase, the instructors entered a new level of story development in creating storylines. A storyline in game development is defined as a sequence of events, and can be either linear or non-linear/branching (Schell, 2020). In this stage, the instructors at each college formed a group, with each group selecting a topic about one of the potential roles of instructors in combating campus-based SGBV. The stories in this activity were developed with the intention of being used as game scenarios, so instructors made them in a choose-your-own-adventure style. In this type of storytelling, the creators of the story provide options throughout the storyline for the audience to choose between.

One of the storylines was about a college instructor who is supposed to contribute to *creating awareness [among female students] on how to report and whom to report SGBV*. In their story, one female student comes to the class but before she enters the classroom, a male student blocks her way. An instructor, who is on the way to their office, notices this situation. Here the instructor has two options: a) ignore the situation or b) try to intervene by providing advice. In the first case, the female student will be morally, psychologically, and academically affected. But in the case of the second option, the story continues with the instructor inviting both students to their office and providing advice to both. In this case, the instructor specifically gives directions to the female student about how to report such incidents to concerned bodies such as the gender office or the dean of students.

Another storyline was about the instructor *providing advice to students in his office to address SGBV*. In this story, the instructor is available in their office and a female student comes to share an insulting incident perpetrated against her by a male student. The instructor is given two options: a) the instructor welcomes the student and asks what happened and b) the instructor welcomes the female student into the office but after listening to an account of the insulting incident that happened to her, asks her to leave the office without helping her. Following the instructor's choice of the first option, the student informs the instructor about the problem and the fact that she cannot focus or actively participate in the class because of the insults. The instructor advises her not to be afraid and calls the insulter into the office. This student comes in and the instructor advises him to stop this disturbing behaviour not only towards this particular female student but also towards all female students. The male student regrets his action, accepts the advice, and promises to share this advice with other students and friends. In the second scenario, the student leaves while the problem is still unresolved. In this scenario, because there is no attention paid to the problem nor any suggested punishment, the male student not only continues insulting the same female but starts to insult other females as well. In this scenario, we see the impact on the examination results of female students, and we see that the number of females who attend the classes decreases. They struggle to achieve academically and drop out because of the verbal harassment that leads to their demoralisation.

A third story is about *maximising self-confidence and minimising inferiority of female students*. Before narrating the story, this group noted that although in most classes 59% of the students are female, they do not actively participate in the course activities and the class is dominated by males. The story starts in a classroom where the instructor asks a question and only one female student raises her hand to respond. The instructor wonders why only males respond. Here the story can continue with two

alternative scenarios: a) the instructor can take action to address the issue somehow or b) the instructor can ignore the issue. In the first case, the instructor decides to encourage females to participate more in the class. Again, two options are given to the instructor: a) provide awards or recognition to females if they participate or b) provide more chances for them to participate. Providing awards or recognition leads to creating highly competitive students by increasing their self-confidence, and providing more opportunities by, for example, establishing rules like Ladies First, enables the females to participate and thereby increase their confidence. However, if the instructor chooses to ignore the situation, the female students might fail the course or withdraw.

A fourth group developed a storyline to show how an instructor can contribute to *encouraging female students to break their silence and report SGBV incidents*. In this story, about 40 students are in the practice or demonstration site and, in the meantime, a female student has been affected by an act of physical harassment. No one reports the incident to the instructor, but the instructor notices that something is wrong. To continue, there are two options: a) the instructor decides to follow the issue somehow and help the female student and b) the instructor ignores the case. In the first option, the instructor does not follow up with the female student directly, but informs another instructor to guide the affected female student to the college's gender club. The gender officer encourages and advises her, and she reports the case to them. The gender officer provides additional advice and takes her to the class. At the end of this scenario, the instructor invites the gender officer to the class to encourage and provide advice to all students. In the second option, the instructor ignores the case, and the female student stops attending the class. The instructor asks other students why this student does not come to the class anymore. The instructor also calls her family to ask why she stopped attending classes. The family attach a name, *Kashalabeh* [a local insulting label] to the female student and she becomes sad and goes in search of a job as a daily labourer. The instructor continues searching for her. Finally, the instructor finds her and takes her to the gender office so that they can help her.

Analysis

What can be seen in these cellphilms and storylines is, first, that although the overall number of stories is limited, the instructors were able to cover many of the items from all three categories: forms of SGBV, causes of SGBV, and consequences of SGBV. Second, all images of a better future and the instructors' role in creating a SGBV-free campus are based on changing the attitudes of individuals—male students (to cease engaging in their offensive behavior), female students (to stop being shy, and be brave enough to report these incidents), or instructors (to be more careful and responsible). None of the cellphilms or storylines offered ways of solving SGBV issues by addressing structural causes such as the patriarchal culture or the poverty and economic issues that were noted by most of the instructors in the interviews. Obviously, the instructors' capacity is limited to contributing to combating SGBV issues. Nevertheless, as discussed with one of the interviewees, trying to overcome some structural challenges, such as the poverty of some female students, by collecting money from volunteer instructors and staff is an example of a possible strategy. Third, all cellphilms and storylines that addressed issues of physical or verbal harassment (which are very common in the colleges, based on the interview data) suggested reconciliation as a solution. However, this is a traditional conflict resolution process that is taken for granted as the only (or main) method of solving harassment issues. In essence, although the instructors attempted to imagine change, they were often limited in the extent to which they could break out of conventional social norms.

What was significant about going beyond the cellphilm scenarios to develop the various choose-your-own-adventure options in the storyline workshop was the fact that in storylines, the narratives were non-linear and had different paths. This makes the storylines more interactive, and, in the final product (the serious game), gives the audience agency to choose their own adventure. Non-linear storyline

development is one of the methods of creating interactive environments used in serious games to situate the player in decision-making spots similar to those that occur in real life circumstances.

Clearly, there were gaps in the range of scenarios imagined and this was also reflected in the interviews. For example, while most studies of campus-based SGBV have highlighted that instructors themselves can be perpetrators of SGBV (see Wende, 2016), this was not a scenario put forward in any of the cellphilms or storylines. However, the research team and game development team were able to integrate possible scenes and story paths in working with the storylines, which they, of course, took back to the instructors during the time of testing out the prototype of the game. To illustrate, in one scenario where a male instructor must meet with a female student in his office, one of the choices is to close the door for privacy or to keep the door open to make sure the interaction is completely safe for the student.

Discussion

SGBV is a social problem in Ethiopia that creates challenging and discriminatory situations for almost half of the population at different levels, including in post-secondary institutions. The studies that have explored such issues in the colleges and universities confirm the need for intervention programmes and yet the role of instructors, as potential agents of change in educational settings, has been understudied. Focusing on a narrative imagination or from the perspective of picturing change, we learned about instructors' knowledge of the current SGBV situations in the colleges and about their narratives of what they imagine an instructor's role could be in bringing change to the campus.

The cellphilms and storylines created a platform for instructors to externalise their imaginings of their roles in addressing SGBV, and, as such, they are tangible and transferable products that can be shared among all concerned bodies. Mitchell et al. (2017) have referred to the potential of cellphilms to be digital artifacts or "digital dialogue tools" that enable a diverse group of audiences (instructors and stakeholders) "to see the issues being raised [and] also to engage in dialogue with the issue under study for the purpose of facilitating social change" (p. 122). As people internalise the cultural and social meanings, they externalise their understandings in words, symbols, and artistic products (Zittoun & Gillespie (2015); in that sense, "the only access we have to people's meaning making is through externalization" (p. 12).

Returning to the idea of Sools's (2020) prospective methodologies, we posit that such approaches are strategic and productive as interventions in and of themselves, feeding into pedagogies that are forward looking and, as Cherrington (2020) has noted, hopeful. Considering the devastating impact that SGBV can have on the lives of female students enrolled in colleges and universities, this position of hopefulness may seem somewhat naïve. However, without a view to making change, and without a process that allows the instructors to become actors, institutions will maintain the status quo. It was clear in the interviews that instructors are aware of many of the issues, but they have not been significantly engaged in imagining any what-next scenarios. But, through this cellphilm making and this creation of storylines, these instructors' thinking processes can be made available to various other stakeholders. This work could contribute to ensuring common understanding and lead to effective dialogue and real action to effect change.

Cultural resources provide us with materials such as experiences, images, narratives, and meanings that enable us to dream and explore promising futures (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015). Their socialisation into their culture is evident in the narratives of instructors—particularly when they perceive reconciliation to be a solution for verbal and physical harassment. Writing of the significance of peace building practices during the recent conflicts in Ethiopia, Tuso (2020) drew attention to peace and

reconciliation in the broader African context. These reconciliation practices, based on the concepts of repentance by the perpetrator and the forgiveness of the victim/survivor, are used to resolve tensions. However, we know that such encounters can be highly distressing to the victim/survivor and alternative mechanisms and solutions, such as developing anti-harassment policies and regulations or launching anti-harassment training for male students, staff, and instructors should be considered. Establishing standard policies is key because the institutions are suffering from a lack of comprehensive rules and procedures that respond to sexual and gender-based harassment on campus. This is not to say that cultural practices should be ignored. Rather, it is an invitation to pay attention to Zittoun and Gillespie's (2015) point that "even individual experience is filtered through cultural meaning" (p. 56). We need to be conscious about and evaluate "the received residues of culture" that Bell (1978, p. 33) defined as the answers to our predicaments that we learn in society. The past affects our perceptions of the present, and our present images of the world shape our process of imagining the future. As Müller (2019) noted, in a social change process, past experiences can create the potential for us to move beyond the current situation toward new ways of being.

Conclusion

We acknowledge the role of Ethiopian agricultural college instructors as potential agents of change in their institutions. Yet, we consider the lack of a full and common understanding of current issues related to SBGV and some of those "received residues of culture" (Bell, 1978, p. 33) noted above, as potential challenges. Instructors occupy a strategic position in colleges in that they interact directly with students and also work directly with administrators. This position has a great deal of potential for developing intervention programmes that put these instructors in the centre. But instructors need to have an accurate image of the existing problems, and they also need to have the opportunity to externalise and share their vision of how to reimagine and reshape the current discriminatory realities.

We recognise, of course, that this utopic approach does not take full account of the actual in relation to the everyday lives of instructors and, especially, the time taken up by projects like the imaginings that were carried out in this small one working with 20 instructors and meeting four to five times over a few months. This was particularly difficult for the women instructors who participated in the project and who were often juggling a career as a scientist, and as a gender officer on top of their regular teaching duties and family responsibilities. For all instructors, this project of imagining and creating storylines was an add-on to their regular professional responsibilities. Moreover, the opportunities for professional learning are sparse in rural areas and even if instructors have a chance to participate in any, they face a variety of challenges such as balancing time, meeting budget, and infrastructure barriers. However, in having them participate in a process of creating an interactive self-educating tool (or serious game) for themselves in Ethiopian agricultural colleges to address campus-based SGBV, we see the findings as hopeful in supporting the notion of instructors being agents of change.

Finally, this article advocates for tools and methods that are future-oriented and that acknowledge the critical place of narrative imagining in transformation. It calls for further attention to the role of imagination and arts-based narrative techniques in addressing social issues. Also, it highlights the role of narrative imagination in designing intervention programmes that aim to prepare the members of a community to be agents of change in their local environment.

Acknowledgement

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Using Photographs and Memory-Work to Engage Novice Teachers in Collaborative Learning About Their Influence on Learner Behaviour[1]

Khulekani Luthuli

ORCID No: 0000-0002-5706-350X iD
University of KwaZulu-Natal
mshibek@gmail.com

Abstract

This article offers an account of using photographs and memory-work as a visual participative method in research conducted by a deputy principal with novice teachers in a South African primary school. The study was prompted by observations of how novice teachers struggled to manage learner behaviour in socially just and compassionate ways. It aimed to help novice teachers express the uncertainties and challenges they encounter, and prompt candid discussions on learner behaviour. The article shows how visual participative methods can facilitate collaborative learning with novice teachers. Additionally, it illustrates how the novice teachers came to see their critical role in influencing learner behaviour and the value of positive teacher-learner relationships in supporting learner behaviour. This work will be valuable to educational researchers in diverse contexts interested in growing their participative research methods repertoire. Furthermore, it illustrates how working with photographs and memory-work can facilitate the expression of participants' viewpoints and understandings and intensify educational researchers' learning from and with others in the interests of social change.

Keywords: learner behaviour, photographs, memory-work, novice teachers, visual methods

Introduction

I am a deputy principal and seasoned teacher in a multicultural urban primary school that accommodates learners and teachers from diverse backgrounds. I started working as a professional teacher in a primary school in 1994, and was promoted to deputy principal in 2013. Over the years, I have observed with compassion the many challenges that novice teachers encounter. I aspire to

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[1] Ethical clearance number: HSS/0054/018D

stimulate a positive, socially just school culture by putting into practice my belief in the value of every novice teacher. Thus, I was inspired to learn more about working with novice teachers to enhance their understanding of, and responsiveness to, learner behaviour[2] (Luthuli, 2020).

An observation that haunted me was that novice teachers in my school battled to maintain discipline and manage learner behaviour. Field (2005) confirmed that discipline and classroom management are the two most pressing concerns that novice teachers face. Many novice teachers feel that it becomes difficult to teach if positive learner behaviour and classroom management are not supported; novice teachers can feel incapacitated and helpless about dealing with learner misbehaviour in their classrooms (Dicke et al., 2015; Field, 2005. Against this background, I aimed to work with novice teachers to help them express their uncertainties and challenges and prompt candid discussions on learner behaviour in- and outside the classroom.

During apartheid, corporal punishment was widely used in the South African education system to maintain school discipline. However, in 1996 the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) abolished corporal punishment. Payet and Franchi (2008) affirmed that the prohibition of corporal punishment was a sign of the political break with the former apartheid system, which had rewarded dictatorial educational practices.

Learner behaviour support is the approach advised by the Department of Education (2000) to enhance the teaching and learning milieu. The term "learner behaviour support" implies developing and managing positive relationships among learners and between learners and teachers (Department of Education, 2000). Furthermore, learner behaviour support is based on mutual respect, caring, knowledge of others' feelings, and willingness to take responsibility for one's actions and deeds (Western Cape Education Department, 2007). Additionally, Venter (2010) noted that learner behaviour support can help novice teachers and learners develop positive social recognition, increasing social involvement and constructive communication.

Nevertheless, as Oosthuizen et al. (2003) attested, corporal punishment remains the preferred approach to discipline in many schools, even though prohibited; these authors argue that, despite the policy changes, many teachers lack alternative strategies for positive behaviour support. Govender and Sookrajh (2014) also observed that corporal punishment remains a regular part of the school experience for many South African learners. When corporal punishment was outlawed, my school struggled to devise a comprehensive behaviour management alternative for novice and seasoned teachers. In addition, teachers, parents, and learners seemed uncertain about what was permitted or forbidden by the new legislative framework for schools.

Hence, I set out to work with novice teachers to communicate their doubts and challenges and hold forthright deliberations on learner behaviour. Furthermore, by engaging intensively with novice teachers, I intended to work collaboratively to stimulate and encourage novice teachers to view learner behaviour from different perspectives. This article offers an account of using photographs and memory-work (Mitchell et al., 2019a) as a visual participative arts-based method with novice teachers. It focuses on using photographs and memory stories to help novice teachers express their apprehensions and insights and prompt frank discussions on learner behaviour. The article demonstrates how working with photographs and memories can elicit participants' perspectives and reflections and deepen educational research learning for social change.

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[2] This article is developed from my doctoral thesis (Luthuli, 2020).

I begin by explaining why I adopted a sociocultural theoretical perspective. Next, I clarify my choice of methods. I continue by describing my position as a researcher and a research participant. I also indicate how the study participants were chosen and invited to participate. Then I consider issues of ethics and trustworthiness. This is followed by explaining how the novice teachers and I worked with photographs and memory-work as a visual participative method. After that, I show how I learnt by listening to and reading about novice teachers' experiences in their classrooms and their own school days. I illustrate how novice teachers shared and reflected on their memories of unruly learner behaviour by referring to pertinent photographs they had taken. I then reflect on what I discovered through discussions with the novice teachers. To end, I consider implications for what my study can offer to other school leaders and educational researchers.

Theoretical Perspective

Employing a sociocultural perspective allows individual teachers to understand their learning as embedded in personal and social experiences. As Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) maintained, a sociocultural perspective is grounded in the belief that learning is not an individual activity but a social experience. Similarly, Samaras et al. (2014) asserted that learning is active and social and that interchange shapes individuals' mental capacity. Likewise, McMurtry (2015) observed that social interaction can help teachers adjust and restructure their understanding of the context in which they function; he further pointed out that a sociocultural perspective on learning concentrates mainly on how learning occurs when people interact—it is concerned with both cultural and social surroundings. Therefore, I anticipated that taking a sociocultural approach when engaging with novice teachers would facilitate interesting and valuable interactions based on personal experiences and social and cultural relationships. Furthermore, I expected to learn as a deputy principal by getting to know and understanding novice teachers' backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. Thus, communication channels between and among us could be unblocked.

Methodology

Research Participants

Because this was a participative research project that I was leading, I must introduce myself. I am Khulekani Luthuli. I was born in Durban 52 years ago. I am a Zulu, and I speak isiZulu as my home language. I attended primary and high school near the village where I grew up as a child. I also went to a teacher training college. I have been teaching for 27 years. I have had the privilege of teaching in three different schools located in three socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The first school where I taught was located in an impoverished area for black people. The second school was in a township for middle-class residents. Finally, my current school is in the heart of Durban's central business district.

My study aimed to acknowledge and embrace novice teachers' experiences and viewpoints. Four Post Level 1 novice teachers were employed at my school and I decided to invite all four to participate in the study. They represented the junior, intermediate, and senior phases of schooling in a primary school in the South African context. A Post Level 1 teacher is employed at the base of the professional teacher hierarchy. The Junior Phase in the school covers Grades R–3, the Intermediate Phase, Grades 4–6, and the Senior Phase in a primary school covers only Grade 7.

For this study, a novice teacher was defined as a teacher employed by the Department of Basic Education for up to 5 years. All four novice teacher participants had been at the school for less than

five years. They all happened to be female teachers. Ms Mashobane,[3] an African teacher, taught isiZulu in Grades 5 and 6. She was 27 years old, had one year of professional experience, and had taught isiZulu for one year in the Intermediate Phase. She held a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree. Ms Mthethwa was 29 years old. She held a BEd degree and had two years of teaching experience in the Foundation Phase. She taught isiZulu in Grades 1 to 3. Ms Zwide was also 28 years old and taught Grade 3 in the Foundation Phase. She held a BEd degree. Finally, Ms Mabunda was 32 years old. She held a BEd degree and taught isiZulu in Grades 6 and 7.

Methods

Photographs and Memory-Work

I chose to use photographs and memory-work to engage novice teachers in reflective discussions on learner behaviour. I anticipated that a creative and participative approach would prompt novice teachers' perspectives and experiences. Additionally, as Samaras (2011) explained, such methods can be used to stimulate self-reflection.

Mitchell et al. (2019a) stated that taking photographs allows participants to comprehend incidents and issues, and attribute importance to these events. Thus, I expected that taking photographs and reflecting on their meaning would enable novice teachers to open new doors for discussion and come to meaningful conclusions about what the images could mean. Furthermore, Mitchell et al. (2019a) noted that looking at photographs can elicit emotions as well as understandings.

I invited the novice teachers to take photographs by asking, "Can you identify and take photographs of areas where learner misbehaviour occurs in our school?" I explained that it was essential not to photograph anyone without consent (Wiles et al., 2008). Individually, the novice teachers wandered around the school. Using their cellular phones, they took photographs of areas that they felt were "hot spots" for learner misbehaviour such as the learners' toilets, the school parking area, and the back of the school hall; these were areas where many misbehaviours had occurred. They then explained in writing why they felt those were hot spots. The photographs and written explanations were used to prompt oral discussions. To maintain anonymity, when using the images, I ensured that learners, teachers, and the school name were not visible. All photographs are reproduced with the permission of the novice teachers.

Mitchell et al. (2019a) pointed out that looking at photographs can encourage recalling memories that have lain dormant. I thus saw that photographs could be meaningful tools for memory-work. Samaras (2011) explained that memory-work as an educational research method can serve to unearth events that established the foundations of who we are today as teachers. Likewise, Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2019) emphasised that memories play a pivotal role in teachers' thoughts and actions; they argued that recalling and reflecting on memories can help teachers become alert to, and intervene creatively in, their own behaviour patterns.

To prompt memory-work, I asked the novice teachers if their photographs reminded them of similar areas where they had displayed unruly behaviour when they were school learners themselves. This questioning was inspired by the work of Cole (2011), who claimed that sharing memories as a group of teachers can stimulate recall of unremembered experiences, contributing to a more self-aware understanding of pedagogical experiences, beliefs, and practices.

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3 Pseudonyms have been used for all the novice teachers.

Audio-Recorded Discussions

The novice teachers and I met to engage in deliberations promoted by the photographs. Audio recordings of the discussions with the participants helped me capture and store relevant data. Additionally, as Masinga (2012) pointed out, I found that one could gain further insight into the data generation process using an audio recorder. For example, one can listen to how one engaged with others and how one responded to situations that arose during data generation. The audio recording of the session to discuss the photographs allowed me to listen attentively to every participant's input. It also helped me to generate more questions or to ask for clarity in future sessions. I then transcribed the recording of each interactive discussion. I reproduced spoken words, sounds, laughter, giggling, and body language. In this article, quotation marks and block quotations are used to indicate the direct words of the participants.

Reflective Journal Writing

Additionally, I kept a journal throughout the research process. Masinga (2012) explained that a reflective journal allows deep reflection and can enhance the interpretation of all aspects of the experience gained from each data generation session. As Meyer and Willis (2019) suggested, "reflection entails looking back on experiences to make meaning of the past" (p. 579). I used reflective journal writing to capture my research's critical moments and document my learning in progress.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

I used thematic analysis to construct themes from selected data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) clarified that a theme captures a vital aspect of the data regarding the research question and constitutes some level of outlined response or meaning from the data set. I familiarised myself with the data by listening attentively to the audio data, rereading the transcribed conversations and participants' written memory stories, and revisiting the photographs and my journal entries. I created codes to identify and provide labels for [feature] of the data that [were] potentially relevant to the research question (Braun & Clark, 2019). The coding process led to the sifting of relevant extracts and images that elicited meaning about the data. I developed themes by gathering codes that seemed to share the same merging features so that they reflected and described a consistent meaning pattern in the data in response to my research question. Braun and Clark (2019) explained that "this form of thematic analysis is data-driven" (p. 83); nevertheless, as these authors pointed out, "data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum" (p. 84). Therefore, I was aware that my sociocultural theoretical perspective strongly influenced this data-driven meaning-making process.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

The novice teachers were not expected to consent to participate in the study before knowing what they were agreeing to. My focus was on protecting the participants and ensuring that they would not be exploited or harmed in any way. I initially called an information-sharing meeting with the novice teachers to explain the reasons for the research and the procedures to be followed. According to Locke et al. (2013), the researcher must be transparent regarding the assumptions they bring to the research, focusing on the topic and all aspects of the research design. Thus, my participants were assured that their contributions could contribute to their professional growth and benefit the entire school community.

Considering the potential power dynamics in the relationship between me as deputy principal, and the novice teachers, as participants, I was careful to reassure them that they were under no obligation to participate in the research. I also assured them that their decision to participate or not would not affect my relationship with them. I informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any

time. I adhered to what Locke et al. (2013) described as the theory of straight talking in that I communicated with the participants in a way that would be easily understood.

Etherington (2007) cautioned that the researcher needs to be aware of gender sensitivities when engaging with participants. I was conscious that these female participants might have been conscientised that they were inferior to their male counterparts given that women's voices are still given less regard than those of men in most communities. As a man, I, therefore, needed to create an environment in which the novice teachers would speak to me willingly and openly and know I would hear them (Mitchell et al., 2019b). I assured the novice teachers that we were partners in this project and that everyone's voice was important.

It was also essential to attend to issues of trustworthiness. Feldman (2003, p. 27) advised: "We can increase the trustworthiness . . . by paying attention to and making public the way that we construct our representations of our research." In my study, this was done by providing a comprehensive and detailed narrative of how the data were generated, of my understandings of the data, and giving evidence of the potential value of the study for the teaching community.

Using Photographs To Learn With the Novice Teachers

Discussing Photographs of Areas in the School Where Misbehaviour Was Likely To Occur

We held the session to discuss the photographs in a novice teacher's classroom. I started the session by asking them to discuss the photographs and describe regular learner misbehaviour incidents they had witnessed or experienced.

Without hesitation, Ms Mabunda produced a photograph (Figure 1) and, with a sad smile, shared the following:

> *This photograph is of the area where I usually take my learners for PE [Physical Education] periods. Because our school does not have a playground, we take them to the tarred parking lot for PE. Unfortunately, there is not much a teacher can do on a tarred surface regarding learners' physical training, as it often requires doing exercises on the ground. Therefore, you often find learners getting out of control when they play soccer or netball.*

Figure 1

The Tarred Surface Used for Physical Education Lessons

I then asked Ms Mabunda to describe the misbehaviour patterns that the learners displayed during the PE period. She said:

> They get over-excited to such an extent that they often kick the ball hard towards teachers' cars. If not that, the boys play a chasing game that leads them to the toilets. It is hard for me to take charge of the whole class because I have to concentrate on one particular group of learners at a time. No matter how hard I try to give other learners some activities to do unmonitored, learners are reluctant to follow instructions. I do not know whether it is because I am a new teacher or that these learners misbehave because this is the only opportunity to play, apart from recess at lunchtime. Lunchtime is also not enough time for them to play because it is short—it only lasts 30 minutes.

Ms Mashobane nodded in agreement. Then, she gave her views of why learner misbehaviour occurred:

> Whenever I have to change classrooms between lesson periods, misbehaviour erupts. I have noticed that the few minutes teachers take to move from one class to another also gives learners a chance to be unruly. There is this tendency among teachers [sighing] to spend a few minutes chatting with another teacher between classes. To be honest, I have done this . . . I have observed that this sometimes leads to learners making a lot of noise, resulting in extra time being wasted before everybody gets back to the regular learning routine.

Ms Zwide cut in with a question:

> If that is so, Miss, what is stopping you from doing the right thing, which is being in class and starting to teach as soon as possible without entertaining your colleague?

Before Ms Mashobane could say anything, Ms Mthethwa was quick to answer. From her facial expression, I could tell that she was perturbed by the question. She said:

> You know very well, Miss, that we are newly appointed teachers here in the school. Do you think it would be easy for us to just ignore a seasoned teacher when they talk to you? No. Even if you see that they are the ones who initiate these annoying conversations in between the lesson periods, there is nothing you can do because you do not want to be labelled after all. At times, you try to be early in class to avoid learner misbehaviour, only to find a seasoned teacher still engaged with learners during your lesson period, and you have to wait outside for that teacher to come out. This is a dilemma we find ourselves in as novice teachers.

Ms Mthethwa also verbalised her concern about learner misbehaviour when she said:

> As far as I am concerned, the unwarranted behaviour of our learners begins way before the first period. For example, have you ever noticed the chaos that happens when we have combined assemblies on Fridays?

Figure 2

The Assembly Area for the Foundation Phase Learners
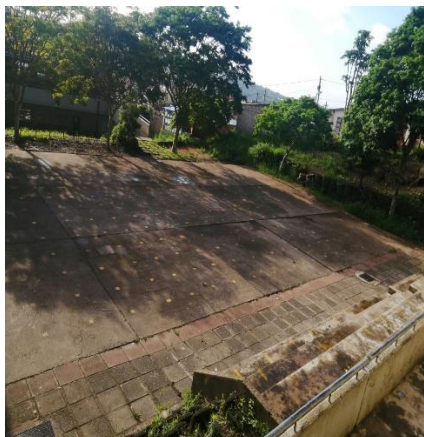
The Foundation Phase usually had an assembly on Mondays and Wednesdays (Figure 2). The Intermediate and Senior Phases had theirs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The whole school would then have an assembly in the school hall on Fridays (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Pandemonium Is Created by Unsupervised Learners When They Enter or Exit the Hall During the Assembly
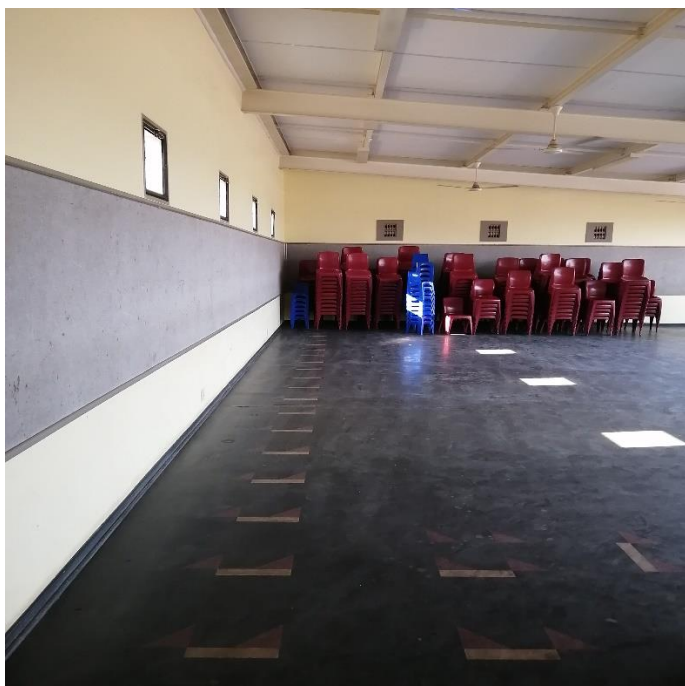
Ms Mthethwa further stated:

> *I am very distressed about the undisciplined way learners enter the hall without being monitored by us teachers, especially the Senior Phase learners. Some teachers often stay in their classrooms and rely on school prefects to supervise learners independently, which is unfair to everyone. The misbehaviour level increases even when learners are supposed to be led by their teachers to their respective classrooms.*

Ms Mashobane, who was now sitting on the edge of her chair, corroborated this frustration:

> Sometimes assembly will take too long and last into the second period. I feel that we should do away with assemblies. It would be best if the form teachers conduct prayers with their learners in the classroom and then have combined assemblies only on special occasions. Not only are the assemblies the cause of learner misbehaviour, but teachers and learners also miss precious teaching and learning time. The learners tend to deliberately drag their feet on their way to the classrooms, and, at times, a quarter of them divert to the toilets [Figure 4], thus derailing teaching and learning on purpose. If you want to get things started as a teacher, most learners are not in the classroom. In this way, they disrupt the whole class on their way back from the toilets.

Figure 4

The Toilet Area Where Learners Take Time To Get Back to the Classrooms

I then asked the participants to go down memory lane and talk about incidents of misbehaviour during their own school days that came to mind when they looked at the photographs they had taken. In my view, memories are an essential part of our daily lives. Therefore, I anticipated that engaging the novice teachers in sharing memories promoted by the photographs would give me insight into their backgrounds and perspectives. I also hoped that it would encourage them to consider how past experiences can form a foundation for behaving and reacting to present situations.

There was a momentary pause until Ms Mashobane broke the silence. Then, smiling awkwardly, she said:

> To be honest with you, Sir, I do not feel comfortable discussing misbehaviour incidents in my mind right now because they are too embarrassing or awful to speak about in front of you. However, is there any other way we can do this without discussing it openly, if possible?

Ms Zwide cut in, saying:

> You will get some interesting feedback from me because I have just recalled the primary and high school areas where we did all the wrong things as girls and got away with it. I am also ashamed to recall some memories in your presence, but you should also understand that those incidents happened when I was still immature.

I understood their hesitation and asked if it would be possible for them to write about their memories of misbehaviour anonymously on a piece of paper. Ms Mabunda said, "I do not have a problem writing my name after I have jotted down my memories." Therefore, the participants agreed to recall and write about their experiences of misbehaviour when they were at school, and to give their writings to me the following day.

After the session, I wrote in my reflective journal:

> *This was a very informative and engaging discussion with the participants. They raised various aspects of school life that proved to be stumbling blocks to learner behaviour support. As a teacher and deputy principal, I also learnt that I should try to do the right thing all the time. People will never forget those teachers who did not do justice to them during their days of schooling. From these thought-provoking comments, the participants could also learn from one another as critical points were raised regarding how learner behaviour and discipline are often dependent on teachers' fairness and professionalism.*

Recalling Memories Through Photographs

The next day, all participants handed in their written recollections of misbehaviour when they were at school. The photographs the novice teachers had previously taken of hot spots for learner misbehaviour prompted these memory stories. For example, Ms Mthethwa pointed out that the photograph she had taken (Figure 5) reminded her of an area behind the school hall where she and her friends used to go and be quite mischievous. Her narrative read as follows:

> *When I was in Grade 6, we had free periods between contact time on our timetables. No teacher monitored these free periods. We would cause havoc in the classroom during this time by making intolerable noise or aimlessly walk the corridors. I remember that my friends and I saved our lunch money to buy benzine, which we set alight and smoked during these free periods behind the school hall.*
>
> *We would do this at least three times a week until we got caught by one teacher. After that, my friends and I were punished severely, and we decided never to smoke benzine again, at least not on the school premises.*

Reading Ms Mthethwa's story made me realise why the novice teachers were reluctant to talk openly about their own unwarranted behaviour as learners.

Figure 5

"Puff and Pass": In Unmonitored Areas Such as This, the Novice Teachers and Their Friends Misbehaved

Ms Mthethwa also wrote the following:

> *Some teachers allowed us to have our lunch in their classrooms on rainy days. I was in Grade 10 and felt that I was mature enough to have a boyfriend. I remember how we used to sit among the boys, having our lunch. Some boys made us feel special by proposing love to us. Sometimes we even kissed in the classroom. The classroom would be a love zone during lunchtime that lasted 45 minutes. We would do this [kissing and touching] knowing that all the teachers were sitting in the staffroom. Even the school prefects were into this game. Being attracted to boys in my class was somewhat disconcerting because I was now afraid to raise my hand to answer a question . . .*

Ms Mthethwa provided thought-provoking insight into how teachers' actions—or lack thereof—could play a significant role in evoking learner misbehaviour. She used a photograph (Figure 6) to illustrate an unmonitored classroom where misconduct could readily occur during her high school years.

Figure 6

An Unmonitored Classroom Can Be a Paradise for Young Love

Ms Mabunda shared the following:

> *I used to express my feelings by writing nasty things on the toilet walls. Although corporal punishment was still rife during my primary school years, it did not stop me from writing what I felt about some of the teachers I hated in my school. I would insult or draw ugly pictures of people, especially teachers who I felt were cruel and unfair towards us learners.*

The photograph in Figure 7 by Ms Mabunda depicts writing on toilet walls as typical of the misbehaviour that she engaged in during her primary school years.

Figure 7

Walls of Naming and Shaming: This Is Where I Expressed My Feelings About an Individual

Ms Mabunda also wrote:

> *I remember that I brought a pornographic magazine to the classroom. That day I asked my friend to be my desk mate. Since the morning, we had been looking at the magazine until one of the boys got a glimpse of it. He then went to inform the teacher. I tried to hide the magazine as soon as we realised that we had been reported, but it was too late. I was sent to the office. After confiscating the magazine, the principal made me choose between him informing my parents or corporal punishment. I chose the latter. After the punishment, my teacher had a field day calling me names and mocking me. She mentioned the incident every time I made a mistake for months. I retaliated by writing abusive things either in the textbook or on the chalkboard when nobody was looking.*

Ms Mashobane shared the following:

> *There was this male teacher in Grade 10 who could not hide that he hated me. It was unfortunate that he was also teaching us accounting. I ended up hating him and the subject he taught as well, which prompted me to be disruptive every time he was teaching us. I deliberately passed nasty comments when he was teaching because he would also do the same to me at every opportunity. I remember saying that he had a big butt and that he talked like a woman. One day those who had heard me could not stop laughing, and he wanted to know what was going on. He then went to fetch a cane to punish those who were laughing. One learner told him what I had said about him. I was beaten so severely that day that I was admitted to the hospital for a whole week. On my return to school, I was forced to apologise to this teacher.*

At our next discussion session, I first explained that I felt it would be valuable to discuss what the novice teachers had written about their school memories. They agreed to discuss their written responses, although it was a sensitive issue for them. But putting that aside, they were eager to discuss how we could learn from the memory stories.

With their agreement, I read their responses aloud and then asked, "What do you think aggravated the kind of misbehaviour you had written about?" Ms Mthethwa was the first to respond:

When I look at it now that I am a teacher, I realise we had so much time to misbehave when teachers were not in the classroom. Teacher-learner engagement was very minimal in my high school life. At times, teachers would not honour their lesson periods, giving us ample time to misbehave.

Ms Zwide added:

For me, it was all about the teacher's attitude towards the subject. One teacher would come to class, write notes on the board, and sit on his chair while we copied from the board. I would make sure that I copied the notes fast so I could find time to misbehave. At times, Sir, the teachers were the ones who caused chaos in the classroom because of the methods they employed when teaching the learners. In other instances, I would finish copying work from the board and ask to go to the toilet. Sometimes the teacher would only allow us to leave the room as soon as we had finished copying the work from the board. I would spend as much time as I wanted in the toilet because I would become bored in the classroom with a lack of activities that would keep us on our toes concerning academic excellence.

Ms Mashobane said:

I still remember that I would display misbehaviour patterns towards teachers I felt did not like me. When I was in high school, I could quickly notice a teacher who did not like me. I would then reciprocate by being nasty and disrespectful towards him or her. I would simply voice out without any fear of what was bothering me so that the teacher concerned would know my stance about him or her. I remember one teacher who was always on my case about attracting male teachers by wearing a short skirt to school. I ended up responding in a very disrespectful manner by telling her that no one was stopping her from wearing a short skirt herself and that she was jealous of my body. Since then, I would pass remarks, such as she was ugly, every time she entered the classroom. Therefore, sometimes teachers themselves are the cause of learner misbehaviour.

I then asked the participants, "How do you manage learners who display the same kind of behaviour you exhibited during your schooling years?" Ms Zwide was quick to respond:

Maybe it is a matter of reflecting on our ways of doing things in the classroom. These discussions help because now I can see that we make the same mistakes our teachers made when we were learners ourselves. Unfortunately, in this discussion, the fingers are pointing at teachers as those who contributed to our misbehaviour. My worry right now is that I have learners in my class who are unruly and I wonder if it is because of me that they are behaving this way.

Ms Mashobane cut in:

I think Ms Zwide is spot on. One part I have not done is looking at myself and doing proper introspection about why I still experience unwarranted behaviour by the learners in my classroom.

Ms Mashobane stated:

I think it boils down to the attitude a teacher has towards his or her learners.

Ms Zwide continued:

> *If we treat these learners as our children, we will not encounter so much misbehaviour in our classrooms. There is a tendency among teachers to send learners outside the classroom every time they start misbehaving. That, to me, does not show any love for a learner—instead, it worsens the situation. We are challenged to understand every learner in our classroom.*

After this session, I reflected in my journal:

> *I think this was a critical discussion. It came to light that teachers are often at the centre of misbehaviour as they cause disruption in the classroom. I learnt through our conversation that one becomes a better teacher if one refrains from emulating one's own adverse experiences of the past. Teachers should reflect on their past experiences, heed those lessons, and make a positive change in today's learners' lives. Teachers should be consistent in how they administer and require discipline and how they conduct themselves in the presence of learners.*

Discoveries

Visual Participative Methods Can Facilitate Collaborative Learning With Novice Teachers

As I reflected, several points stood out for me from the conversations and written memory stories prompted by the photographs. First, using photographs and memory-work as a visual participative method opened new doors for discussion with novice teachers. Sharing and discussing photographs taken by novice teachers to elicit their experiences and viewpoints enabled us to learn collaboratively. As Samaras (2011) acknowledged, meaningful teacher learning occurs when it is a collective effort. Interacting and sharing knowledge with novice teachers enabled mutual understanding. Overall, I learnt that the significance of teacher collaborative learning, particularly among novice teachers, should never be underestimated. During the discussion sessions, it emerged that such meetings, where novice teachers feel comfortable sharing even their most shameful experiences, could ultimately elicit valuable support and inputs. Working with novice teachers through photographs became a useful tool to facilitate meaningful interactions with colleagues.

I also learnt firsthand, how working with photographs can be an aid for teachers' collaborative memory-work. Novice teachers and I deliberated on the pictures they had taken to prompt their memories of unwarranted behaviour when they were school learners. I realised that working with photographs could allow novice teachers to share and reflect on past experiences to understand teacher influences on learner behaviour.

Working with photographs as a group also created an opportunity to remember and revisit occurrences that words alone could not explain. Moreover, it enabled us to bring out and witness the emotions that were attached to the specific photographs taken. For instance, Ms Mabunda recalled strong feelings of hatred towards teachers she saw as cruel and unfair. And Ms Zwide relived how her feelings of boredom in uninspiring classes would trigger her misbehaviour. Thus, working collaboratively with photographs intensified the novice teachers' understandings of self and self-acceptance. As Brunke (2018) affirmed, such "memory-work helps us discover what we need to heal" (p. 32).

Visual Participative Methods Can Help Novice Teachers See Their Critical Role in Influencing Learner Behaviour

A participative approach allowed novice teachers and me to use photographs to prompt discussions to increase understanding of the vital role of teachers in learner behaviour support. I observed how recollections of past experiences through visual participative means can contribute to accepting who we are as teachers and what influences us. For example, I saw how our understandings of learner misbehaviour were enhanced when we discussed the novice teachers' memories of their own ill discipline in school. We noticed that it is helpful for novice teachers to reflect on their schooling experiences before giving corrective measures for unruly learners. This was a valuable discussion because the novice teachers could relate their own experiences to those of learners in their classrooms. This was illustrated by Ms Mthethwa, who provided insight into how teachers' actions or lack thereof could play a role in evoking learner misbehaviour. For instance, she explained how a photograph of an unmonitored classroom reminded her of how misconduct readily occurred in such classrooms during her high school years. These discussions allowed the novice teachers to reflect on how their own ways of doing things could be influenced by their former teachers' missteps. As Ms Zwide highlighted, "Now I can see that we make the same mistakes our teachers made." The novice teachers and I learnt through our conversations that one can become a better teacher by acknowledging one's own adverse past schooling experiences and seeing possibilities for disrupting negative patterns from the past.

Visual Participative Methods Can Help Novice Teachers See the Value of Positive Teacher-Learner Relationships in Supporting Learner Behaviour

Reflecting on the photographs and memory stories allowed us to draw meaningful conclusions about the critical role of teacher-learner relationships in learner behaviour support. As Hosseini et al. (2017) noted, teachers' constructive relationships with learners can activate development and motivation to learn. In contrast, a negative relationship could stimulate and exacerbate rude and disruptive learner behaviour. For example, suppose a learner notices that a teacher disapproves of, or shows some kind of dislike of, them. In that case, the learner will likely reciprocate and deliver the same hostility towards the teacher. One example of this was when Ms Mashobane expressed the feeling of being hated by the teacher who taught her accounting. Ms Mashobane shared how this resulted in her disruptive behaviour in his classroom. This was further demonstrated by Ms Mabunda concerning the photograph she took that depicted writing on a toilet wall. She described this as typical of misconduct that she engaged in during her primary school years. Ms Mabunda explained that she misbehaved when she felt a disconnection between the teacher and herself, or that the teacher was harsh and unjust towards learners.

Our discussions highlighted that classrooms and schools should be places of emotional security and affirmative relationships to influence learners' attitudes and behaviour positively. Cheon et al. (2019) observed that it builds learners' social abilities and relationships within the school community when teachers display compassionate and courteous behaviour. As Lindo et al. (2014) indicated, "the relationship between teacher and learner is paramount to the academic and socio-emotional success of learners throughout their educational experience" (p. 294). Thus, learners' prosocial behaviour is founded on the positive attributes that teachers transmit and model.

Baker et al. (2016) advised that novice teachers should be supported in creating nourishing classroom environments based on mutual respect and trusting relationships. As a deputy principal, I saw that I should open opportunities for novice teachers to attend as many workshops and seminars as possible to enhance their skills and knowledge in this regard and thus cultivate their professional growth.

Moreover, as a school leader, I saw how I should always emphasise and model the crucial role teachers play when engaging with learners. For example, narratives of the sense of rejection that some participants felt, and which manifested in misbehaviour, showed that we teachers should embrace every learner in our classrooms despite their background or academic capabilities. Engaging novice teachers in professional development activities may help them become experts in nurturing vulnerable learners in their classrooms. This could also address learner misbehaviour because the teachers will put themselves in the learners' shoes. Alber (2017), who stated that showing our compassion as teachers permits us to be human and not just teachers, supported this notion. I thus was reminded that "teaching is a socio-ethical act" (Samaras, 2011, p. 79). This means that teachers should respect moral values such as diversity, dignity, honesty, fairness, and the rights of every member of the school community.

However, constructive teacher-learner relationships are not built in one day. Roffey (2011) cautioned novice teachers that relationships with learners are built over time and that every communication teachers have with individual learners is significant. In this regard, discussion with the novice teachers highlighted that having a parent-like relationship with learners could establish strong bonds. For example, Ms Zwide noted the importance of such a rapport by saying, "If we treat these learners as our children, we will not encounter so much misbehaviour in our classrooms. . . . We are challenged to understand every learner in our classroom."

Conclusion

In this article, I conveyed how I learnt by listening to novice teachers' experiences in our school and in their own school days. They shared past and present experiences of unruly learner behaviour by referring to pertinent photographs. Using photographs in deliberating with the novice teacher participants on learner behaviour support, a learning curve was created that brought to the fore the crucial role of the teacher in influencing learner behaviour. Dhlula-Moruri et al. (2017) attested that teacher learning occurs when teachers interact and share ideas in their quest for knowledge. By looking at the photographs and listening to the novice teachers, I put myself in their shoes. In this manner, I came to a better understanding of novice teachers' perspectives and how I can support them as a school leader.

Through visual participative methods, the novice teachers and I saw how we need to influence learner behaviour constructively and purposively. I advise my colleagues of all ages that, if they want to find themselves and illuminate what makes them who they are and act the way they do, the use of photographs and memory-work is an approach to consider. Such methods can allow teachers and school leaders to share ideas, deliberate, and discuss their struggles and joys— to become better professionals.

This research provided novice teachers with opportunities to share their perspectives and experiences to garner insights about themselves regarding learner behaviour. I believe that this understanding is essential to improve our educational endeavours in socially just ways. In this context, my study shows how visual participative methods can inspire collaborative dialogue that also recognises novice teachers' voices. Just telling novices what to do is counterproductive.

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An Exploration of Pre-Service Student Teachers' Understanding of Social Justice Issues Through Theatre-in-Education[1]

Logamurthie Athiemoolam

ORCID No: 0000-0002-7844-1434
Nelson Mandela University
Logamurthie.athiemoolam@mandela.ac.za

Abstract

The aim of this qualitative study was to establish how students' understanding of social justice was enhanced through their participation in the theatre-in-education process, and its contribution to their learning. The population of the study comprised all students registered for the third-year education module, Issues and Challenges in Education-PGED 302. The population included Bachelor of Education (Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and FET) students. Of the population of 300 students registered for the module, only 72 Bachelor of Education (Intermediate Phase) students who participated in the theatre-in-education presentations, constituted the sample for the study. Data comprised students' written reflections based on their theatre-in-education experiences, which were coded and analysed thematically. The study indicated that students' understanding of social justice in education was enhanced through their participation in their theatre-in-education presentations.

Keywords: theatre-in-education, social justice education, pre-service teacher education, critical performative pedagogy, drama pedagogy

Introduction

If teacher educators are to prepare pre-service teachers adequately to teach in diverse learning contexts, it is imperative that they make their students aware of the importance of promoting social justice in teaching and learning environments. For this to be realised, however, teacher educators need to implement strategies in their classes that will create the conditions in which pre-service teachers become aware of and develop their own voice, power, and agency. The adoption of such a process will enable students to challenge multiple social injustices that privilege some groups on the basis of

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language, religion, class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability—amongst other social signifiers—at the expense of others (Kumashiro, 2000).

Although schools contend that they are making concerted efforts to address issues of oppression, they often, as highlighted by Kumashiro (2009, p. xxxvi), reinforce it "or at least allow it to continue playing out unchallenged and often without realising that they are doing so." Hence, it is imperative that teacher educators embrace appropriate pedagogies in their classes that will serve to create opportunities for their students to think critically about social injustice in school contexts, and to make their voices heard. This could be achieved through, amongst others, embodied learning, which entails that students use both their bodies and their minds to convey meaning. Having used embodied learning in the form of drama and theatre-in-education in my classes over a number of years in my role as a teacher educator, I can attest to its significance in enhancing students' critical and creative thinking skills. Hence, I resolved to use theatre-in-education as a strategy to stimulate pre-service teachers to reflect more broadly on their experience of social justice issues in the context of their own teaching practice experiences through sharing their personal stories, which lead to the creation of group plays.

It was envisaged that, through the implementation of drama pedagogy and motivating my students to create their own plays based on social justice, they would reflect more closely on both social justice issues and on the ways in which we are socialised into certain patterns of behaviour through habitus. According to Österlind (2008), theatre has the potential to physically represent the power dynamics manifest in society thereby making habitus visible. In this way, as pointed out by Werner (2017, p. 16), "these manifestations of social forces can help students recognise the power structures that lead to oppression; a necessary step on the path to achieving social justice." In so doing, students will be better predisposed to identifying how power and privilege are manifested in school contexts.

Hence, this study aimed to explore how pre-service Intermediate Phase teachers' understanding of social justice issues was enhanced through their participation in theatre-in-education productions. Further details relating to the conceptualisation of theatre-in-education and its application are provided in the literature review section.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Pedagogy and Critical Performative Pedagogy

The study was informed by critical pedagogy and critical performative pedagogy because these are closely aligned to an interrogation of social justice issues in society at large. According to Elliot (2007, p. 1) critical pedagogy conceives the school "as a problematic space of racial, economic, moral and social tension requiring deep interjection of social justice and civic courage." Consequently, teachers have a crucial role to play in conscientising their learners to the ways in which social injustice manifests in society by perceiving them as co-constructors of knowledge and by relinquishing their roles as custodians of knowledge (Freire, 1970). This is how I perceive my role as a lecturer teaching the third-year Education module (Issues and Challenges-PGED 302) to my Bachelor of Education (BEd) Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6) pre-service teachers.

Given that schools are characterised as sites of struggle, "critical pedagogy approaches the classroom as an opportunity for doing political and social work with and for students, teachers and the communities in which they live" (Giroux 1993, p. xxiv). In the context of this study, critical pedagogy entailed my willingness to recognise my students as co-constructors of knowledge so that they could gain enhanced understandings of social justice in the schooling context, based on their lived experiences.

The performative component of critical pedagogy is realised when critical reflection is embodied, and when teachers create opportunities for learners to experience theory in action by recreating lived experiences through dramatic performance (Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 1989; Pineau, 1994). The aim of critical performative pedagogy is thus to integrate students' critical reflection with their potential for social engagement and transformation through embodied learning (Botha, 2009; Dalrymple, 1997). Through embracing critical performative pedagogy as a theoretical framework, the pre-service student teachers were perceived as co-constructors of knowledge, while I perceived my role as a facilitator of learning. This contributed to enhanced learning, since the students were afforded opportunities to create their own plays and to critically reflect on their experiences based on the process.

Literature Review

Social Justice Education

According to Bell (1997, p. 3), "social justice is both a process and a goal that involves full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs." The focus of this collaborative process is thus on democracy and freedom to exercise one's full humanity (Belle, 2019) so that one is afforded equal opportunities to achieve one's goals and ambitions in society. In the context of the educational environment, this implies that all learners need to be supported to achieve academic success through the development of critical and creative skills. Social justice education thus encourages all learners to play an active role in their own education and supports teachers in the creation of "empowering, democratic and critical education environments" (Hackman, 2005, p. 103) for their learners. Teachers thus need to recognise that their learners have valuable contributions to make to the classroom space, as opposed to what Belle (2019, para. 1) referred to as "social, cultural and academic burdens on the so-called master in the room—the teacher." Furthermore, because education is a political act, we cannot talk about schools without addressing issues of race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and politics (Belle, 2019). Hence, in preparing pre-service teachers to understand the crux of social justice education in their future roles as teachers, it is imperative that teacher educators guide their students to an awareness of reform traditions, particularly social justice philosophies, and implement pedagogies that will enhance their understanding of social justice during their teaching (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009). In my role as a socially just teacher educator, I aim to conscientise my students to the ways in which the school contexts and practices militate against learners from disadvantaged communities. The process, as highlighted by Dover (2013, p. 5), involves challenging the political neutrality of the classroom and curriculum, pedagogy, and education system and seeking to "develop students' socio-political consciousness through co-investigation, problem-posing and dialogue." Through this process, as pointed out by Belle (2019, para. 5), pre-service teachers come to terms with the ways in which their education has been oppressive, "while thinking through solutions for not repeating this cycle, once they step into the classroom." In the context of this study, the theatre-in-education presentations focused on identifying various manifestations of social injustice in specific school and classroom contexts and providing solutions to the issues highlighted in the plays.

Drama Pedagogy and Theatre-in-Education for Social Change

According to Siegesmund (1998), the aim of drama pedagogy for critical pedagogues is to focus on the development of critical consciousness through social transformation. In this sense, as pointed out by Davies (2014), it has the potential to challenge social injustice thereby contributing to social change. This is further supported by Dalrymple (1987) who, as the first South African to recognise the value of theatre-in-education as an "applied problem-solving arts practice" (Durden & Tomaselli, 2012), used it as a strategy to effect behaviour change among young people. By focusing on the liberatory nature of education through the adoption of Boalian theatre-in-education practices for behaviour change with a focus on HIV and Aids, Dalrymple (1992) explored how theatre-in-education could lead to behaviour

change. In her arguments, she opined that the holistic nature of drama pedagogy, which is also participatory and experiential, "provides a broad framework in which to explore ideas from a range of different perspectives" (Dalrymple, 1997, p. 84).

This is further supported by Greene (1991, p. 166) who argued that the arts and aesthetic experiences "provide ground for the questioning that launches sense making and the understanding of what is to exist in the world." Drama pedagogy, which is closely aligned to critical pedagogy, and which applies the ideas of Freire (1970), aims to impact participants' lives in positive ways for their own personal transformation (Neelands, 2007). Such an approach is closely linked to "identity recognition and personal transformation (empowerment) as a means to social change" (Giambrone, 2016, p. 18). According to Boal's (1979) theory, in this sense, individuals can influence reality through their dramatic performance in which they might highlight how social transformation could be achieved to impact the lives of those on the periphery of society.

Theatre-in-education, which is one of the strategies of drama pedagogy, is an approach that uses interactive theatre and drama practices to help aid the education process. Its main goal is to offer creative learning opportunities through theatrical experiences (Lu, 2002). According to Tarlington & Michaels (1995), the theatre-in-education process commences with the sharing of ideas on a social issue that constitutes the theme for the creation of a play to an audience. The teacher facilitates the play building process through various drama-in-education techniques such as tableau and improvisation. However, the students select the theme for the play, write the script, and develop, produce, direct, and present the play on their own to an audience. This collaborative process, according to Tarlington & Michaels (1995), involves the entire group being engaged in the process of improvisation for the creation of the performance text.

After presentation of the play to the audience, the participants and audience reflect on the issues that the play engages with and provide their insights based on their experiences. According to Jackson (2001, p. 1), the aim of theatre-in-education is to "actively engage the audience in the learning process." In this study, pre-service teachers wrote, directed, produced, and presented their own plays based on social justice issues to the lecturer and their peers in a university classroom setting. Generally, as pointed out by Lu (2002), the play presents an identifiable situation about the leading character (protagonist) whose crisis needs to be resolved. Because the play evokes the students' thoughts about the theme behind the protagonist's dilemma, the students can recognise the issues involved, reflect on them, and critically interrogate them.

Research Methodology

An arts-based qualitative research methodological approach referred to as performative inquiry, and that shares characteristics of ethno-drama (Fels, 2004), was used for the purposes of this research study. According to Fels (1998), performative inquiry is a research methodology that uses drama to understand critical issues affecting society. The implementation of this qualitative approach involves the participants' engagement with a theme of concern and the use of performative inquiry to showcase their issue of concern (Fels, 2004). In this study, the pre-service teachers were involved in performative inquiry by conceptualising and presenting a play on a social justice issue of concern, based on their school-based learning experiences (Tarlington & Michaels, 1995).

The characteristics of arts-based research is that it, as described by Finley (2005, p. 686), "provides a formula for a radical, ethical and revolutionary qualitative inquiry." In this case, the play was used for the purposes of "self-reflection, self-expression and communication" (Finley 2005, p. 686) among the participants in the production.

The study's design was phenomenological in nature in that it aimed to construct detailed descriptions of social reality through using natural language to understand the world (de Vos et al., 2011). The population of the study represented a group of third-year education students registered for the PGED 302 (Issues and Challenges in Education) module at Nelson Mandela University. The students registered for this third-year education module included BEd students registered for the BEd Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3), BEd Intermediate Phase (Maths and Science, Grades 4–6), BEd Intermediate Phase (Language, Grades 4–6), and BEd FET (Grades 10–12). Of the population of 300 students registered for the module, the sample only included the BEd Intermediate Phase (Language) group, comprising 72 students. This sample represented students in the third-year education module from diverse linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The students from this group participated in the plays and agreed to write reflections based on their understanding of social justice derived from their theatre-in-education experiences.

Data were collected from students' written reflections on their understanding of social justice based on the plays that they produced, presented, and participated in. The prompt that guided the students' written reflections was: "Write a reflection on the insights that you gained on social justice through your participation in, and viewing of, the theatre-in-education presentations." The written reflections were coded by using numbers, #S(student)1–72 to refer to each of the narratives representing students' insights and experiences and analysed thematically. Before the commencement of the study, permission was sought from the university's ethics committee and was granted by the provision of ethics number H17-EDU-ITE-019. Thereafter, informed consent was sought from the students and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so. They were also informed that the written reflections would not be used for assessment purposes.

Furthermore, the students were informed that all written reflections would be confidential and that their anonymity would be safeguarded given that they were not required to write their names on the written reflections.

The limitations of the study were that this was a small- scale study that only focused on one group of third-year education students in the PGED 302 cohort, namely, the BEd (Language) students. Consequently, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to the other PGED 302 groups registered for the module and who also covered the theme on social justice (PGED 302, Unit 3).

Overview of the Module and the Theatre-in-Education Process

The PGED 302 (Issues and Challenges in Education) module is a compulsory third-year education module of 15 credits spread over two semesters that all BEd students have to register for. The module consists of 10 themes covered over a period of two semesters (28 weeks) with a time allocation of one double period (70 minutes) per week. The following themes are covered in this module:

- Unit 1: Theory and practice in shaping democratic schooling
- Unit 2: Paulo Freire and the humanising pedagogy
- Unit 3: Social justice in education
- Unit 4: Emancipation and empowerment in the context of schooling
- Unit 5: Social constructivism
- Unit 6: Teaching diverse learners
- Unit 7: Discipline in the diverse classroom
- Unit 8: Teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms
- Unit 9: Curriculum development to cater for diverse learners
- Unit 10: Collaborative action and schooling

This article will only focus on Unit 3 (Social Justice in Education) to uncover the students' insights into social justice education based on their theatre-in-education experiences.

The Drama and Theatre-in-Education Process

During my reflection on how to present Unit 3 (Social Justice in Education) to my students, I surmised that the implementation of drama pedagogy could represent an effective approach to enable students to present their insights on social justice in the context of their school-based learning experiences. The theme was covered over three double periods. In the first session, I initiated a discussion on the students' experiences of social justice in school contexts and discussed various theorists such as Freire (1970), Giroux (2011), and Bourdieu (1990), amongst others, and their contributions to social justice education. During this session, I also introduced them to tableau, which makes use of frozen scenes by using body sculpting to convey a message in a nonverbal manner. According to Valverde (2003, p. 1) the aim of the process is to capture an event, frozen in time, "as a way to achieve a deep understanding of the elements involved." The students were asked to divide themselves into nine groups and to identify a social justice issue in education that best captured their experiences of the issue while on teaching practice, and to present their frozen scenes to the class. During each of the presentations, those observing posed questions to the characters in the scenes. The class reflected on the issues raised through the tableau-building process with reference to their school-based learning experiences and by providing their own insights.

In the second session, I facilitated a workshop in which the students divided themselves into groups of eight, and were required to relate their stories on social justice issues based on their learning experiences to the members of their group. The group selected the issue from the stories narrated that best captured their experiences of social justice in their school-based learning experiences, and used this as the material for the creation of their theatre-in-education presentations. The students were thus afforded an opportunity to produce their own content on social justice for the theme covered during the series of sessions.

The plays were presented during the third session. The nine plays presented focused on the following themes and contexts as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The nine plays

Play	Social justice issue	Context of the play	Resolution of the play
1	Language inequality	The teacher teaches maths in English to a group of learners whose home language is isiXhosa. When the learners tell her that they don't understand, she calls them idiots.	The teacher realises that she has to make provision for including home language in her teaching and does so through peer help.
2	Inequality based on socioeconomic factors	A learner from a poor background, and who is academically gifted, is marginalised by a teacher because of her socioeconomic status and a wealthier learner is favoured at the awards ceremony.	After realising what has happened, the principal steps in and gives the learner recognition in the assembly after the awards ceremony.
3	Gender inequality	The teacher reinforces gender stereotypes by asking a boy to carry a box while a girl has to sweep the floor.	One of the learners in the class questions her as to why genders are stereotyped in this way. On reflection, the teacher realises that she needs to promote gender equality. Later, we see role reversal in the class.
4	Inequality based on socioeconomic factors	A girl whose mom is a single parent and a sex worker is exposed to sex at a young age, becomes one herself, and drops out of school and the vicious cycle continues.	A social worker helps her to rise above her circumstances, places her in a centre for abused girls where she discovers her talent as a fashion designer.
5	Inequality based on socioeconomic factors	A learner from a poor background, who is physically and emotionally abused at home and school, is rebellious and aggressive.	A friend at school helps him to come to terms with his situation and to rise above his circumstances by being intrinsically motivated to achieve success. He becomes a teacher and motivational speaker and inspires others.
6	Inequality based on socioeconomic issues	Parents on the school governing body select wealthier learners as prefects. When a learner from a poor background is nominated, they reject the learner—claiming that learners may be equal in value but different in function.	Teachers on the school governing body highlight the learner's academic and leadership qualities and, in this way, she is selected as a prefect.
7	Disability	A learner who loses her leg in an accident struggles to attend school and is ridiculed, but she remains resilient and positive	The community rallies to support her and raises enough money for her to get a prosthetic leg.
8	Socioeconomic challenges	A learner attends school without stationery and is ridiculed by classmates and teachers who have no sympathy for him.	One of the teachers in the school, on hearing about the learner's plight, hands him a shoebox with stationary.
9	Discrimination based on academic ability and reading challenges	A reader struggles to read and the teacher ridicules him in front of the class, describing him as a dunce.	One of the better readers in the class assists the learner after school to improve his reading and comprehension and his reading ability improves.

Findings

The analysis of pre-service teachers' written reflections based on their theatre-in-education experiences on social justice issues led to the identification of the following themes: awareness of social justice issues and manifestations, identifying with themes of the plays, gaining new insights on social justice issues, awareness of the teacher's role in embracing social justice issues, and personal engagement with social justice issues. The themes illustrate that the students' viewing of the theatre-in-education presentations and their participation in the plays enhanced their understanding of social justice issues on multiple levels (Desai, 1991). The findings emerging from the study are discussed thematically and verbatim excerpts from students' written reflections are used to elucidate themes.

Awareness of Social Justice Issues

In their written reflections on their understanding of social justice by participating in the plays and viewing them, some participants indicated that their understanding of social justice issues was enhanced. Their reflections indicated that they were more aware of how discrimination manifests in society and the various ways in which learners in schools could be marginalised. One of the students summed up this view as follows:

> After I watched all the plays, I started to gain more knowledge on social justice issues such as gender inequality, sexual abuse, racism, sexism, and socioeconomic issues. (#S10)

In reflecting on his own experiences of the plays, #S20 indicated that his understanding of social justice was enhanced on so many levels and the insights that he gained from the plays enabled him to conclude:

> Social justice is many things; it is anti-favouritism, anti-judgemental, anti-discrimination, uplifting, empowering, encouraging, and a whole lot more. It is about being fair and treated with the same respect; but also saying that some may need more attention than others and that we as teachers must balance those scales.

The insights he gained enabled him to reflect on social justice from a variety of perspectives, thereby enhancing his understanding of social justice. In reflecting on his understanding of social justice, #S22 had the following to say:

> I found the plays very good and inspiring and I now know what social justice is and how to strive for a better social justice future.

Another student, in reflecting on the value of the plays, indicated that the plays aimed to demonstrate the importance of embracing diversity, equity, and fairness in the class so that all learners could achieve success. This was articulated by the student as follows:

> The plays set a framework aimed at resisting unfairness and inequality while enhancing freedom and the possibility for every student. (#S28)

The advantage of theatre-in-education presentations was that both the participants and those viewing the plays elicited invaluable lessons from specific plays that enhanced their understanding of social justice. In reflecting on one of the plays that she viewed, #S45 indicated that the play based on the learner who lost a leg in an accident (Play 7) made her realise that:

> *One doesn't always think what such a person can or will go through and what effect social justice has on her. By just giving her a little support and not judging or discriminating against her, she came far.*

The viewpoint expressed above indicates that the pre-service teacher has developed a greater sense of awareness of how she needs to engage with learners who may be physically handicapped in her classes. The fact that she alluded to support that such learners need to receive is indicative of her awareness that she needs to embrace social justice principles when teaching her classes.

In reflecting on the play on language barriers where learners are taught through a LOLT (language of learning and teaching) that is not their mother tongue (Play 1), one of the students described this as a major crisis in South African government schools, which he articulated as follows:

> *The play on language barriers in class is a true reflection of a major crisis in government schools where English is being used as a language of learning and teaching, but the majority of the learners come from homes where English is used as a second language. These learners fail dismally because little provision is made to incorporate their home language to help them grasp concepts and ideas. (#S55)*

The student's reflection on the play demonstrates that he has gained an enhanced understanding of how learners could be discriminated against if they are being taught through the medium of a language that is different from their mother tongue.

In reflecting on her experiences of social justice in the context of her school-based learning experiences and with reference to Play 8, #S25 felt that teachers tend to discriminate against learners based on socioeconomic backgrounds. She expressed this view as follows:

> *The play that stood out for me the most was the one on poverty and how teachers discriminate against learners because of their socioeconomic status. I chose this play because in SA, most of our learners don't finish their schooling because of poverty and even if they do attend school, they are discriminated against because of their socioeconomic status.*

This viewpoint was further enhanced by another student as follows:

> *Another issue that kept arising was the issue of the "teacher's pet" and how most of the time the teachers' pets were the more privileged learners. This issue linked with the issue of privileged vs. non-privileged, and how many teachers and learners are not aware of this in their classroom and this leads them to judging the less privileged learner. (#S36)*

The student's engagement with the theme of the play on how learners are sometimes discriminated against based on socioeconomic factors (Play 2) has conscientised him to the plight of learners from poverty-stricken backgrounds who will need to be supported and motivated if they are to succeed in the schooling system.

In reflecting on how the plays enhanced their understanding of social justice issues, students felt that a crucial lesson was to ensure that they made a concerted effort to include all their learners in their lessons so that they feel valued. This viewpoint was summed up by one student as follows:

> *Through the plays, I could see the inclusion of everyone. I saw some empowerment of people to participate fully. (#S20)*

The students' viewpoints on the plays indicate that the plays enabled them to be more engaged with social justice issues and to reflect more fully on these issues within school contexts.

Identifying With Themes of Plays

A number of students felt that they could identify with the themes on social justice, as their peers produced plays that focused on their teaching practice experiences. One student summed this viewpoint up as follows:

> *Many of the social justice issues that we addressed was based on things that we student teachers face every day in schools, and coming to class sharing what we experience and what we do to make changes brings such a good and overwhelming feeling. (#S70)*

This viewpoint was also highlighted by one of the students as follows:

> *The fact that some of the plays were based on students' lived experiences made them so much more real. (#S18)*

And another student advanced the following view:

> *One thing I noticed about the presentation is that my fellow colleagues imitated what was really happening at their chosen schools for their practical teaching. (#36)*

Because the plays touched on social justice issues that many of the students could identify with from their school-based learning experiences, the theatre-in-education process showcased lived experiences, thereby enhancing their knowledge in the field of social justice.

Multiple Perspectives of Reality

The students' participation in and viewing of their fellow students' plays enabled them to gain new insights and perspectives on social justice and the range of issues they were likely to experience in their future roles as teachers.

This was succinctly summed up by one of the students who came from a different schooling context from most as follows:

> *Coming from a reasonably privileged background and having attended an ex-Model C, school I was quite shocked to see what some of my fellow students depicted in their social justice presentations. A lot of these things I have heard of before, but having seen dramatic illustrations of the issues made it so much more of a reality. (#S36)*

The focus on how one's insights could be enhanced on issues based on experiences of social justice through the theatre-in-education presentations was succinctly summed up by #S68 as follows:

> *Our own idea of teaching can have an impact on others and working with different cultures can broaden one's knowledge and change our ideas of what is ideal and what is right.*

This was further elaborated on by #S52:

The case studies I observed through theatre was interesting as everyone had something different and it made me think differently about things.

The students' viewpoints illustrate that the plays served to enhance their understanding of social justice issues.

Awareness of Teacher's Role in Embracing Social Justice Issues

The students' written narratives indicated that their viewing and participation in the plays enabled them to reflect more carefully on their future roles as teachers who will be required to teach in diverse learning contexts.

One of the students contended that by viewing the plays he has come to the realisation that:

It is in the classroom where we could make the biggest difference in our roles as teachers, but I will need to be aware of injustices they face and support them. (#S63)

This is an important realisation because it demonstrates a sense of awareness that teaching has broader connotations than merely conveying knowledge, and that the learners' experiences also need to be considered. This realisation of adopting a humanising pedagogy (Freire, 1970), that considers how teachers should engage with learners, was further enhanced by one of the students as follows:

We must take into account that we do not know everyone's circumstances and so we need to be careful what we say and how we treat our learners. (#S46)

There was a further realisation that, because these plays portrayed issues that the students have either experienced personally or are likely to experience in their future roles as teachers, they will have to adopt classroom practices that take their learners' needs into account and avoid being judgemental. One of the students expressed this viewpoint as follows:

What I take from this is that I need to be careful in my classroom not to make quick judgements regarding students and I should be aware of possible injustices they face and try to help them transcend their circumstances. (#S33)

This was further elaborated on by #S41:

Some teachers may have favourites while others have a child who is being abused. How we handle these situations, as teachers, could affect the children's lives.

In reflecting on specific lessons that the plays conveyed to teachers to make them more aware of challenges they will experience relating to social justice, one student indicated that they needed to be more aware of their learners' circumstances, as depicted in the play on the silent child (Play 4). The student expressed this view as follows:

We as, future teachers, will come across learners who come from abusive and violent homes and cannot concentrate. In most of these cases, these learners end up committing suicide because they have no one to talk to or help them out of their situation. (#S59)

Some students expressed the viewpoint that the plays enabled them to reflect on the kind of teachers that they would like to be. Student #S55 felt that the plays made her more aware of how she saw her future role as a teacher, which she expressed as follows:

> *I really enjoyed watching the different plays and scenarios that were portrayed in the class. It gave me a sense of what kind of teacher I would want to be one day, which is a humanising teacher.*

The plays enabled students to become more aware of their future roles as humanising teachers who should aim to develop their learners holistically and not just academically.

Personal Insights Gained

Students were able to engage with social justice issues on a personal level through viewing the plays. This enriched their insights and made them more aware of how social justice issues could be manifested within the schooling system.

One of the students, in reflecting on her group's play (Play 7), indicated that the value of the play was that it cultivated resilience among the students, which she expressed as follows:

> *In our group presentation, we did a play about a girl who lost her leg in a freak accident. I think we showed everyone that anything is possible if you put your mind and heart to it. No matter what the circumstances, there is always a way out. (#S10)*

Another student, in reflecting on the same play, described her personal engagement with the play as follows:

> *The story about the little girl who was in an accident and never gave up even though her legs were hurt really inspired me to never give up no matter how hard or tough life could be. (#S16)*

In reflecting on how the plays promoted personal engagement with the issues, one of the students indicated that the play enabled her to understand why learners exhibit anti-social behaviour. She expressed this viewpoint as follows:

> *The one play showed me, as a teacher, not to look down on the learner who is anti-social, awkward, and always quiet in class because learners and even we, as teachers, do not know what the situation is at home for that learner. (#S54)*

An important lesson emerging from the plays relating to teaching and learning was valuing all voices in the classroom. This viewpoint of providing multiple perspectives of reality by making all learners' voices heard was expressed as follows by one of the students:

> *My idea of social justice from the plays that were presented is allowing every person or learner's voice or opinion to be heard and respected. By doing that, we create room for democracy that is fair and honest where exclusion does not exist. (#S6)*

In their engagement with the issues arising from the plays on a personal level, the students' reflections indicate that the plays stimulated them to reflect on their future role as teachers. This future role

involved embracing democratic teaching principles that embody humanising practices as espoused by Freire (1970), Giroux (2011), Bourdieu (1990), and others.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the students' active participation in the development of their own improvised plays contributed to their understanding of social justice on multiple levels. The participants indicated that they gained a better understanding of how social justice issues manifested in the schooling environment, and acquired insights into social justice-related themes and issues. The theatre-in-education process furthermore enabled them to develop multiple perspectives of reality, made them more aware of their roles as socially just teachers, and motivated them to engage personally with the social justice issues highlighted in the plays (Desai, 1991).

The embodied learning that characterises critical performative pedagogy enabled the students to "take the classroom stage, create their own roles and develop their own voices to shape their own learning and to make it their own through the process of co-construction" (Even, 2018, p. 102). In the context of this study, because the students could engage with the social justice issues on a more personal level by relating them to their teaching practice experiences, the learning was more purposeful and transformative. Indeed, the findings indicate that students developed new insights on social justice based on their viewing and involvement in the plays, which, for some of the students, was a cathartic experience (Dalrymple, 2006). Furthermore, the insights that they gained from the plays enabled them to reflect more closely on the social justice issues that they needed to take cognisance of in their future role as teachers. This demonstrated that they were able to relate their own learning on social justice issues from the plays to their role as transformative teachers who embraced social justice education (Bourdieu, 1990). The implementation of theatre-in-education involved a change in the focus "from the production of correct answers to intense exploration of content through the engagement of minds, bodies and emotions" (Even, 2018, p. 104). The process enabled the students to make learning matter to them as they recreated social justice issues in school contexts through co-constructed performance while the lecturer became a "co-traveller in [the] journey of discovery" (Even, 2018, p. 104). This led to the development of their critical reflective skills as demonstrated by their personal accounts of their engagement with social justice issues emerging from the plays (Dalrymple, 2006; Freire, 1970). The development of critical consciousness on social justice issues through the use of drama, according to Teoh (2012), is significant in that it serves as a vehicle for deeper understanding of concepts and culture through enactment, dialogue, and exploration.

The students' viewpoints indicate that they gained more enhanced insights into social justice in terms of inequality and discrimination in the classroom, and the various ways in which teachers are responsible for promoting such inequality. Hence, the emancipatory knowledge that was co-constructed through the theatre-in-education process, as highlighted by the findings of this study, enabled them to understand how relations of power and privilege distort and manipulate social relations (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Ebewo, 2017).

In their theatre-in-education presentations, the students engaged with themes such as language inequality, inequality based on socioeconomic factors, disability, and gender stereotyping that were of concern to them. According to Gallagher (2016), one of the advantages of drama pedagogy is that it could lead to a leap in the imagination between what participants previously knew and what might be newly, imaginatively, known. This was clearly articulated by student #S36 who indicated that the plays conscientised her to social justice issues that she was unaware of, thereby making her more aware of her privileged position. Through the plays, she was able to come to terms with her own privileged position, gain new insights, and question her habitus (Bourdieu, 1990).

There was also a realisation that social justice education "involves full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (Bell 1997, p. 3). This was demonstrated in their analysis of those characters in the plays who were privileged and had power, and those who were marginalised and disadvantaged. Through their interrogation of issues of power and privilege in school contexts, there was a greater sense of awareness of how societal rules have the potential to govern our behaviour. According to Werner (2017, p. 15) these rules "reproduce traditions and the status quo through physical manifestations" and because these "rules, habits and behaviours" are inculcated in us from a young age, it is difficult for us to change them. Bourdieu (1990, p. 56) referred to these patterns of socialisation as the habitus, which he defines as "embodied history, internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history; as the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product." According to Werner (2017, p. 15), we can effect social change and interrogate the roles prescribed for us by society, by "challenging our habitus; the status quo that is unconsciously and unquestioningly manifested through our very bodies." Given that creating pieces of theatre and enacting roles in plays involves "the conscious choice of bodily movements and physical mannerisms," they provide ideal opportunities to "confront and change our habitus" (Werner 2017, p. 15). In this way, we are able to question social injustice in the school environment, come to terms with our own prejudices, and arrive at new insights in terms of societal norms and how social injustice is manifested in society.

In reflecting on their roles as future teachers through drama pedagogy, the students were conscientised to the struggles of disadvantaged learners and the discrimination that they have to contend with on a regular basis (Durden & Nduhura, 2007). This motivated them to reflect on the importance of embracing humanising approaches to teaching so that learners become co-constructors of knowledge with the teacher and so that their voices could be heard (Freire, 1970).

The personal insights the pre-service teachers gained through the play building process led to a greater understanding of how learners are discriminated against based on socioeconomic factors and learning challenges. This enabled them to reflect more carefully on their own philosophies of teaching, and how the adoption of a humanising pedagogy could contribute to a pedagogy of hope among their learners. As Clifford et al. (1999, p. 17) reminded us, it is "through bringing our mind, body and spirit to drama, [that] we gain insight into ourselves." In doing so, personal understandings can be validated and affirmed, which can be both empowering and liberating (Boon & Plastow, 2004; Clifford et al., 1999; Ebewo, 2017). The students' understanding of social justice issues through the play building process demonstrates that they were able to engage critically with the issues, thereby enhancing their understanding of social justice education.

Conclusion

Teacher educators have a crucial role to play in making pre-service teachers aware of how social injustice is practised in classroom and school contexts. This could be achieved through implementing pedagogies in their teacher training programmes that contribute to students' sense of agency and that provide them with skills to confront social injustice in these contexts. Pedagogies such as critical performative pedagogy and drama pedagogy provide invaluable opportunities for critical engagement with social justice issues on multiple levels—as highlighted in this study. The implementation of a theatre-in-education approach enabled pre-service teachers to be conscientised to the various manifestations of social justice issues and to engage with the issues on both personal and societal levels in their roles as future teachers.

According to Gjaerum (2013), because applied theatre is a relatively new field in theatre studies internationally, there is a need to conduct more focused research in the field. In his review of the literature in the field of applied theatre, he identified the following discourses: the legitimating, the

effect, the ethics, the outsider-visitor, the global economy, and the aesthetic discourse (Gjaerum, 2013). This study builds on knowledge in the legitimating discourse in that it legitimates the value and power of theatre-in-education in making participants aware of how social injustice manifests in schools and classrooms.

The liberatory function of drama pedagogy enables students to provide accounts of their personal experiences of social injustice in school contexts during their teaching practice experiences, and to translate them into embodied performances through the theatre-in-education process. In this way, learning proceeds from a cognitive to a visceral level that has the potential to uncover and shape values and provide rich learning experiences.

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Book Review

Ethical practice in participatory visual research with girls: Transnational approaches, edited by Relebohile Moletsane, Lisa Wiebesiek, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, and April Mandrona

New York: Berghahn Books, 2021. 240 pp.

Mathabo Khau, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa
Mathabo.khau@mandela.ac.za

This new edited volume, Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research With Girls: Transnational Approaches, responds to questions regarding ethical practice with vulnerable and marginalised groups. It delves deeply into the ethical considerations of doing participatory visual research, especially with girls and young women. While focussing on participatory visual fieldwork with young women in Indigenous and rural contexts of Canada and South Africa, this book also contains chapters of work done in Cameroon, Kenya, and other sites in Canada that are not necessarily related to Indigeneity. It offers a critical insight into how researchers grapple with questions of methods and tools related to participatory and visual research while placing importance on the lived experiences and agency of girls and women who are often marginalised in their communities.

The work presented in this volume focuses on sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) which are skewed against girls and women across the world. Despite the numerous protective international treaties that support gender equity and address GBV, the phenomenon continues globally, with girls and young women living in Indigenous and rural communities being especially vulnerable to various forms of GBV. This has resulted in university Research Ethics Committees (RECs) being particularly stringent when researchers propose to work with these so-called vulnerable populations. Although these measures are necessary, they tend to discourage scholars wishing to work with young women, thus hindering much-needed research. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a balance between recognising the complex challenges faced by girls and young women in different contexts, and acknowledging their voice and agency. Specifically, there is need for studies that focus on understanding girls and young women's needs and being directly informed by their perspectives.

There is a growing interest in academic circles and communities regarding the different forms of participatory visual research. This book draws on the idea of building connections between the academic RECs that regulate research and the real-life worlds of ethical practice in participatory visual research and argues for the need to foreground concerns on levels of participation, data production,

ownership, and usage in research as part of regulated ethical practice. Despite being mandated with ensuring that researchers working with communities follow structured university research ethics evaluation protocols, such protocols barely cover most of the ethical concerns raised in this book.

While research ethics protocols place emphasis on protecting vulnerable and marginalised groups, they never reference the unique situation of girls and women—or the special circumstances of engaging with rurality or Indigenous groupings using visual data. This timely volume reminds us that there is need for special attention to the situated and relational nature of ethical issues and the promotion of thoughtful and reflexive research practice around such concerns. The chapters of the book foreground the notion of informed consent when working with girls and women as producers of knowledge addressing sexual and gender-based violence using visual methods, and the challenges of gaining approval from RECs. They highlight the issue of ongoing negotiated consent in research participation and the usage of produced visual data.

In her foreword, Claudia Mitchell[2] praises the editors and contributors of this volume regarding the production of complex work that "lays the foundation for deepening an understanding of what the global pandemic can teach us about transnationalism and ethical practice in working with girls and young women" (p. xi).

The book focuses on four central themes, namely, ethical practice, Indigeneity, rurality, and transnationalism. The first three chapters focus on the ethics of using participatory visual methodologies (PVM) with girls in different rural contexts. Naydene de Lange uses examples from her participatory visual work with young women in South Africa, in Chapter 1, to explore the questions: "Who is going public?" and "Who allows the going public?" She argues for university RECs to rethink what counts, and should count, as ethical practice in various forms of research, especially pertaining to participants sharing their visual work in public. Chapter 2 focuses on the challenges involved in seeking ethical approval for a research project aiming to create cellphilms with young people from rural areas who are non-binary. Casey Burkholder acknowledges the difficulty of claiming ethical practice in research conducted in Indigenous lands. Along the same lines, in Chapter 3, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, Lisa Wiebesiek, Naydene de Lange, and Relebohile Moletsane draw on their experience of working with girls in rural communities to reflect on how PVM facilitated transnational connections between girls living in Canada and South Africa in ways that did not put them at risk of harm. They suggest that PVM can offer traditionally marginalised participants opportunities to engage directly in research and produce visual media about their localised experiences despite their presumed vulnerability and systemic marginalisation.

The next three chapters focus on Indigeneity by exploring the ethical dilemmas arising from working with rural and Indigenous young women. Anna Chadwick, in Chapter 4, engages with the ethical and theoretical foundations of researching with Indigenous girls in northern Canada about sexualised violence. She reflects on using arts-based workshops with Indigenous girls and the ethical problems she encountered as a racialised diasporic researcher in a settler colonial country. Chapter 5 presents how the authors, Katie MacEntee, Jennifer Altenberg, Sarah Flicker, and Kari-Dawn Wuttunee, analysed the negotiation of consent during a project using cellphilm to explore young Indigenous women's perceptions and responses to GBV. These authors draw attention to the importance of ethical conduct for research with young people and Indigenous communities. They conclude that allowing for the negotiation of terms of involvement in research by young women and their guardians

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[2] Mitchell is a Distinguished James McGill Professor in the Faculty of Education, McGill University where she is Director of the Institute for Human Development and Well-being, founder and director of the Participatory Cultures Lab, and co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the award-winning journal Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal.

could develop an ethical PVM practice. In Chapter 6, Tamlynn Jefferis and Sadiyya Haffejee reflect on disseminating their findings of research with black adolescent girls in rural South Africa and the ethical challenges that arose in this endeavour. They draw attention to the need for RECs to reevaluate their policies to incorporate PVM research processes in their principles. They argue for prioritising young women's voices in dissemination and social change agendas, and for negotiating anonymity with young women while foregrounding their voices.

Chapter 7 presents Milka Nyariro's negotiation of ethical tensions in a photovoice project with young mothers in Kenya and argues that RECs should consider the contextual differences between individual projects and acknowledge that ethical practice in research is not a linear process but a series of ongoing negotiations, reflections, interpretations, and experimentations. On the other hand, Jennifer Thompson, in Chapter 8, brings our attention to the complexities of using PVM in multilingual contexts. She draws on her photovoice and participatory video work with young women in Southwest Cameroon, exploring the power relations between researcher and participant by focussing on the politics of language. She concludes that little research has been done to investigate the ethical and methodological implications of language in participatory visual research. Hayley Crooks, in Chapter 9, reflects on the ethical issues of participatory video workshops with young people living in Montreal, Canada. Crooks draws attention to the impact of GBV on young people living in an urban community in Canada by uniquely focusing on the issue of cyberviolence, a form of GBV that affects young women in diverse transnational contexts.

A coda, which concludes the book, highlights the motivation for this volume on the ethical issues encountered by participatory visual researchers and the strategies they adopt to address them. It invites readers and researchers to consciously reflect and think about the ethics of doing participatory visual research with young women in rural and other marginalised communities. An important message that runs through the book is that researchers should recognise all participants in their projects as coresearchers, and cocreators and owners of knowledge.

This book is an important addition to girlhood studies, which is a growing field of study aimed at understanding and transforming the long-standing and paternalistic assumption that girls and young women are passive, incompetent, and inherently vulnerable research subjects (Clark & Moss, 2011) by working directly with them as both producers of knowledge and agents of change in their lives.

Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research with Girls: Transnational Approaches contributes to creating knowledge about ethical research practice and will be of interest to both emerging and experienced researchers investigating marginalised spaces and people. The book successfully shows readers different possibilities for working ethically and inclusively to bring about communal, individual, organisational, and professional change. Clearly, the authors and editors are promoters of ethical participatory community engagement for social change.

References

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Conference report

Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time

Hybrid conference
On-site: Trafo Centre for Contemporary Art, Szczecin, Poland
Virtual: Academy of Art, Szczecin, Poland; Tunghai University,
Taichung, Taiwan; Central University of Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador
24–28 May 2021

Jarosław Lubiak, Academy of Art, Szczecin
jaroslaw.lubiak@akademiasztuki.eu

The International students' symposium, *Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time*, consummated a long-term art research collaboration aimed at developing ways of being together and cooperating in the Anthropocene crisis, especially through digital media. The collaboration started in February of 2020 and soon needed to be reshaped to meet pandemic restrictions. Initially, it involved the participation of teachers and students from Poland, Taiwan, and Ecuador; later, it was joined by students from Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, the Netherlands, and South Korea. The primary channel of communication for the international group was digital media and, as a result, narrowed the subject of joint research on building interpersonal relations and community experience in the virtual environment. The conference's main aim was to reflect on the social and artistic experiments

conducted during the collaboration and develop a theoretical background to interpret them. Another objective was to evaluate the social protocols for virtual relationship building that were elaborated during experiments. It also sought to discuss the educational dimension of experiments and consider if they could be developed into an arts-based teaching method.

The conference was attended by 62 teachers and students from all the countries involved in the artistic research collaboration. It included lectures, project presentations, artist talks, panel discussions, and art performances.

To enhance interpretation of art research collaboration, the keynote lectures delivered at *Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time* discussed theoretical issues connected with communication, relationship building, and methods for augmenting common space. Mathabo Khau, in her keynote lectures, "One Love: The Importance of Practising Transcultural, Translingual and Transgeographical Collaboration to Heal the World" and "'We All Stand Together': Collaborative and Participatory Practices for a Sustainable Future!" emphasised the affective dimension of any collective action for setting its objectives and selecting a proper methodology for cooperating. In the first, she developed a set of solid arguments for advancing exchange across cultural, language, geographical differences by referring to her research and teaching practices. In the second, she discussed participatory visual methodologies, especially with instruments such as cellphilms (made by cellphones without editing), photovoice (photographs to address sensitive issues), and drawings and collages (to objectify the troubling issues). All these instruments were developed to address issues pertinent to life in a particular social environment. Khau also presented the idea of research as a tool for social change and intervention based on providing the participants with a safe space for expression and a total sense of ownership over the process.

Cultural difference was one of the two most challenging issues in connecting, relationship building, and being together virtually. This was addressed in a keynote lecture, "About Cultural Differences," by Meysis Carmenati González. Starting from the historical background of Hobbesian ideas of individualism, enlightenment's claims for universalism and equality, social Darwinism of the 19th century, and 20th-century neoliberalism, she presented a theoretical framework for understanding cultural differences, referring to the sociology of culture, cultural studies, anti-colonial narratives, and epistemologies of the South. She rejected multiculturalism as a neoliberal form of erasing cultural differences to reflect on how differences are historically created.

The limitations of digital communication was the other source of difficulties in art research collaboration. Cheng-yu Pan analysed it in his keynote lecture, "An Analysis of the Symposium Activities With the Use of Digital Tools," in which he developed a theory of communication based on Paul Virilio's idea of shifting the "entrance/exit" paradigm, meaning displacement of the border between inner and outer space. In a recent reformulation of the paradigm, the personal computer screen became an entrance/exit point. The shift—enhanced by the pandemic—radically reshaped the mechanisms of communication. Pan's central claim was that instead of trying to recreate traditional forms of social relations in the virtual sphere, one should instead invent specific forms of socialising through new but still undeveloped communication technology.

The participants' reflections on the art research collaboration were introduced by Karolina Breguła, who initiated both the collaboration and the conference. In her lecture, "Instructions for How To Be Together," she focused on the cooperation and teaching methods invented for the collaboration. Called instructions, they involved activities in small groups with members from different countries. They aimed to practise connecting and relationship building with digital technologies through joint

exercises (like "sharing" food across screens). Breguła also reflected on difficulties and failures met in the process of collaboration.

Eileen Legaspi Ramirez in "Making a Stir," analysed the art research collaboration, starting from the initial idea of the whole endeavour, which was the influence of the Anthropocene on social life. Referring to Alana Jelinek's (2020) concept of artistic research, she stressed that collaboration was a genuine social experiment within which specific contextual knowledge was created. She also discussed how this knowledge might be used in art teaching.

Project presentations provided rich research materials documenting the course of exercises. They illustrated how participants created a sense of community through digital technologies despite language barriers, cultural differences, and distant time zones. The most efficient methods to overcome these difficulties were cooperation on artistic activities like joint—and still remote— performing, filmmaking, and exhibition making. The exercises developed into practices of mutual learning and methods of changing social patterns.

The conference, *Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time*, contributed significantly to inventing new protocols for education, art research and creation, and social connectivity through digital technologies. It provided knowledge on how to use a virtual environment to reshape behavioural patterns and enhance creative processes of learning, cooperation, and action.

References

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