

Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Spaces

Shaping Futures and Envisioning
Unity in Diversity and Transformation

Edited by

Zilungile Lungi Sosibo

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

and

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Series in Education



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the school teachers and university lecturers who have toiled under severe conditions to ensure that they provide teaching to their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also dedicated to the students who endured the pain of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of whom gave up and deregistered while others committed suicide or developed depression due to the psycho-social challenges they were faced with during the lockdown.

We also dedicate this book to our families who supported us while we worked on it. A special dedication goes to our children who inspired us to keep going even when the going got tough.

Introduction

Even though literature on the transformation of higher education in the post-apartheid South Africa is growing, there is a dearth of research on how teaching and learning spaces are used to create conducive environments for students from diverse backgrounds. Utilising scenarios from different higher education institutions from South Africa and from other countries in the Southern African Developing Community (SADC) region (viz. Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the objective of this co-edited book is to highlight how teaching and learning spaces are being used to advance the transformation agenda of higher education in these regions. In doing so, the book hinges on how teaching and learning spaces cater to or accommodate students from diverse backgrounds. Using the following key themes, the book will provide insights on:

1. Whether and how institutions of higher education utilise teaching and learning spaces to promote multilingualism as a central element of the curriculum;
2. The funding models used to make higher education accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, as well as how funding promotes sustainable teaching and learning environments for students;
3. The ways in which higher education institutions create effective learning environments and provide support systems for non-traditional students;
4. The quality of physical and online infrastructure provided by universities and how these are being utilised to provide conducive teaching and learning spaces for students;
5. The intersection of race, class and gender and how these factors affect teaching and learning spaces for students from diverse backgrounds; and
6. How higher education institutions promote decolonisation of the university curriculum.

The background data for this co-edited volume is derived from benchmarks as established by the Republic of South Africa (RSA), as informed by the following policies: The Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa (Department of Education (DoE), 1997); Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001); Transformation and Restructuring: A new Institutional Landscape for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, 2002); A proposal for Extended Curriculum Programmes in South Africa (Council

on Higher Education (CHE), 2013); Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2017); Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa (DHET, 2019). Building on these policies, the following research questions were formulated, which will also serve as the six chapter themes for this volume as highlighted below:

1. How does multilingualism promote conducive learning environments for some students?
2. How does provision of funding in higher education institutions in South Africa promote teaching and learning environments?
3. In what ways do HEIs create conducive learning environments and support systems for non-traditional students?
4. How are physical and online infrastructures being utilised as teaching and learning spaces to cater for diverse students?
5. How do race, class and gender intersect and affect teaching and learning spaces for students from diverse backgrounds?
6. How do higher education institutions provide spaces for decolonising the university curriculum?

These six-chapter themes served to guide the authors in this book on providing insights on how teaching and learning spaces are used to create conducive environments for students from diverse backgrounds in post-apartheid South Africa and the SADC region. The authors also share recommendations in this volume regarding how to further advance the transformation agenda in teaching and learning spaces.

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Foreword

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Transformation in education is a global phenomenon that transcends economic and social barriers to embrace inclusion and equal opportunities for everyone. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010), transformation occupies the centre stage of the global education agenda. Many scholars agree that Higher Education Institutions, as centres of knowledge, play a crucial role in leading transformation through debates in various platforms that aim at bringing about change in society (Badat, 2010; Mzangwa, 2019; Nkomo, Akoojee & Motlhanke, 2007). With regard to higher education, transformation entails institutional change that supports access, equity and inclusiveness in terms of language and culture.

In Africa, transformation reflects changes in the socio-political and cultural landscape due to the colonial legacy. After many decades of colonial independence in Africa, the influence of colonialism on the structure and content of our curriculum is still prevalent. Despite the social, economic and political pressures that confront our continent, there are other challenges, such as, limited funding, privatisation of education institutions, governance, leadership, language and gender issues, brain drain, etc. that tend to impact on transformation in education.

In post-apartheid South Africa, many policies have been adopted by the democratic government to enhance transformation in education, especially with regard to equity, students' access and participation in higher education. These policies are underpinned by democracy, equity and social justice principles. Referring to transformation in education in South Africa, Mzangwa (2019, p. 9) conceptualises it as "the need to ensure that the barriers to access are completely removed so that the Higher Education system becomes more inclusive, achieving widening access, improved throughput rates and participatory outcomes". However, this is not the case as many students, especially those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, remain excluded with regard to epistemological access to education.

While South Africa has experienced growth of higher education since 1994, with initiatives and policies to redress past inequalities, it is disheartening to note that transformation that is meant to address discriminatory practices of the apartheid education system remains a dream due to poor implementation of the policies and power relations with regard to knowledge production and dissemination.

Currently, South Africa is confronted with a number of challenges that impact teaching and learning, such as social inequality, racism, high levels of poverty, curriculum implementation, inadequate teacher training, limited teaching and learning resources, language and gender issues, including gender-based violence.

It is against this background that this valuable book has been conceived. Focusing on a number of critical issues in education, the authors have addressed some factors that are relevant to our context with regard to effective and sustainable teaching and learning spaces. Some of the chapters focus on the current discourse on access, equity and quality in education which aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4 that promotes inclusive and quality education. The chapters provide insights into a wide range of teaching and learning issues that are relevant for innovative teaching strategies for the twenty-first-century classroom. They range from sustainable learning, curriculum and pedagogical issues, learning abilities and inclusive education to funding in higher education. Furthermore, attention has been paid to students' experiences as a key component of effective teaching and learning, while taking into consideration the role of language in teaching and learning in culturally diverse classrooms. The chapters also cover other relevant issues in higher education, such as gender and indigenous pedagogy that is associated with the decolonisation of teaching and learning which is part of the transformation agenda in education. It is pleasing that there is a reference to information and communication technology (ICT) integration in teaching and learning, which speaks to digital literacy that is a key element of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The chapters bring a fresh perspective on the dynamics and complexities of teaching and learning in multilingual and multicultural spaces and how these spaces could be used to foster unity in diversity. The authors challenge us to rethink our practices in order to explore new epistemologies that advance the discourse on equal learning opportunities (access) and participation in education as part of the transformation agenda. They also expose us to teaching strategies that promote inclusive pedagogies for effective learning.

This invaluable book comes at a critical moment when the world is grappling not only with political, social and economic issues but also with a plethora of other harsh realities associated with social inequalities, such as high drop-out rates and failure, gender violence, funding in higher education, demand for curriculum renewal and decolonisation, and student protests. Some of the chapters directly or indirectly address some of these critical issues in order to highlight their impact on teaching and learning in higher education.

I cannot leave out the impact of the current global pandemic, the novel corona virus (COVID-19), and how it could change the teaching and learning spaces in our different contexts. In this instance, higher education institutions

will have to explore spaces that will foreground innovative, efficient and effective ideas for change, as well as inclusive, flexible and conducive learning spaces to ensure that all students get equal access to meaningful learning. This will demand research-driven pedagogical alternatives to enhance teaching and learning of good quality in order to shape the future of our education landscape.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all the authors for their valuable contribution towards this book that emphasises the need for accommodating diversity in teaching and learning. Finally, my appreciation goes to the editors of this book, Prof. Zilungile Lungi Sosibo and Prof. Eunice Ndeto Ivala, for their commitment and hard work in producing this invaluable academic resource.

I am confident that you will find the book inspiring and useful in understanding various approaches that can be employed in diverse teaching and learning spaces to promote inclusion and transformation.

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Preface

The integral role that higher education plays in economic development and in producing citizens that can contribute meaningfully to societal development cannot be overemphasised. With this in mind and the advent of globalisation and inclusion, global access to higher education has increased tremendously for the masses of students. Mohamedbhai (2008) and Kraak (2000) refer to this process as 'massification' of higher education. Among the masses of students who flocked to university to obtain higher education are those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds who, based on factors such as race, socio-economic class, gender and age, had limited access to higher education. In the context of South Africa, literature shows that access to higher education has not translated to equal success rates for students in South Africa. High access and disproportionately low output and throughput rates in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been widely documented (Fisher and Scott, 2011; Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2013). One of the reasons for this disparity is that when access was opened for students, universities, especially those that are known as historically White universities (HWUs), were not ready to accommodate masses of Black students, most of who came from low socio-economic backgrounds. Consequently, universities and their climate are perceived as not providing safe and conducive learning spaces for diverse students, including those who may need support because they are poor, disabled, homosexual or non-traditional based on age.

The purpose of this book is to gather and contribute scholarly ideas from diverse voices on how institutions can and should provide conducive and friendly teaching and learning environments for students, especially for those who may feel marginalised based on factors such as race; socio-economic class; geographical, national and cultural backgrounds; gender; age; migration; religion and language. Due to their sociocultural, historical and economic capital, some of these students may feel that the teaching and learning institutions are not transformed and that they do not embrace their differences but instead produce and re-produce inequalities among students. This book purports to deal with these issues head-on, by contributing knowledge and sharing ideas on how institutions can be transformed in a manner that creates sustainable spaces in which students from diverse backgrounds feel welcome, supported and embraced.

The call for book chapters was extended to the international scholars, organisations and postgraduate students who wished to address the theme of

this book from multiple perspectives. Contributions from a wide spectrum of international authors, including those from disciplines such as social sciences, humanities, sociology, psychology, philosophy and history, were solicited. This volume is aimed to be used in institutions of higher education globally, especially in those countries in which inequalities exist among students from diverse backgrounds, as well as those who survived colonisation. It is hoped that the readers will find the following collection of chapters informative and useful.

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Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 analyses the language needs of Grade R practitioners. It is written against the backdrop of a multilingual Language-in-Education (LiE) policy which was promulgated in South Africa in 1997. The chapter highlights how language constrains teaching and learning in multilingual Grade R classrooms if a second language is adopted as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and there is limited or no support available for the teacher. The implications of the study are that pre-service education should train bi/multilingual Grade R practitioners who can teach in their home languages and employ heteroglossic language practices. It recommends collaboration between Grade R practitioners and language specialists, focused language support for the teacher and that placement of teachers at this level should be informed by the teachers' linguistic profiles.

Chapter 2 addresses the linguistic situation in South Africa which is characterised by multilingualism at a societal level. The context from which data were extracted for this chapter was characterised by individual bilingualism, consisting of isiZulu, the mother tongue for the majority of learners and teachers, and English, the target language. In this bilingual situation, authors argued that both learners and teachers cannot avoid code-switching. Code-switching has for a long time been blamed for learners' and teachers' incompetence in the English language. This chapter reports on the utility of code-switching among English First Additional Language learners and teachers in writing classrooms. After obtaining necessary permissions and informed consent, data were collected through video-recording of the classroom writing lessons that were conducted in six high schools in Pinetown district, South Africa. The lessons recordings were transcribed and thereafter analysed through classroom discourse analysis. The chapter only presents extracts of the lessons where code-switching occurred. The analysis revealed different pedagogical reasons for code-switching, such as emphasising enhancing bilingual competence in the two codes, encouraging learners' participation and involvement, motivating learners to think, ensuring comprehension and for pastoral purposes. Findings showed that bilingual teachers employed code-switching and code-mixing strategies in bilingual contexts, which further proved that the existence of two codes should not be viewed negatively but should be used to enhance the educational experiences of both teachers and learners.

Chapter 3 presents the public higher-education funding model adopted in Ghana. Since colonial times, the public higher education (HE) landscape in Ghana has witnessed several funding mechanisms beginning with free HE, followed by the cost-sharing model and finally, the mixed funding mechanism. Like most African countries, historically, Ghana had free HE whereby the government was mainly the overall financier of public HE. Plagued with financial problems, the government adopted different types of funding mechanisms to enhance teaching and learning in public HE institutions. While Ghana has experimented with various funding mechanisms, the literature on the country's experience with these practices is limited. This chapter fills the knowledge gap by identifying and accounting for the shifts and movements in the conception and practice of public HE funding in Ghana. Data were sought from the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and scholarly literature from Google Scholar, Scopus database, SAGE and SPRINGER Journals online, JSTOR and CABI. The data were coded, categorised and thematically analysed in order to draw meaning and discover relevant insights about public higher education funding in Ghana. It emerged that funding mechanisms included government subvention, Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) and the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). Findings showed that the government had made a significant effort to support teaching and learning in public higher education institutions. However, the sector still experiences funding shortfalls, which may have implications for teaching and learning.

Chapter 4 highlights safe and inclusive spaces as a transformative pedagogy for integrating social justice in teaching and learning at a university of technology. In this regard, the chapter uses social justice theory to interrogate the understanding of safe and inclusive learning spaces by lecturers and how lecturers create safe and inclusive spaces within their teaching practices. The main objective of safe and inclusive spaces is to create a broad and effective learning environment in which prospects for composite intellectual, intrapersonal and interpersonal development exist for all students. In this chapter, the author highlights the fact that understanding safe and inclusive spaces for students does not mean that lecturers need to create a custom-made programme of learning designed for individual students' needs. Rather, they need to ensure safe and inclusive spaces where students play an active role and share their knowledge, experiences and backgrounds. This chapter contributes to the existing body of knowledge on transformation in higher education and sets a stage for robust dialogues on how teaching and learning policies and strategies can culminate in safe and inclusive spaces.

Chapter 5 focuses on the key aspects which can help in-service and pre-service teachers to achieve effective learning in rural multi-grade classrooms. Multi-grade classroom teachers are struggling to manage learning effectively in such

classrooms because the majority of them are not trained in multi-grade pedagogical approaches. This emanates from the fact that teacher education programmes in many South African universities continue to ignore multi-grade teaching. Multi-grade classroom teachers and pre-service teachers can use this chapter as a reference to understand how learners' learning can be approached in multi-grade classrooms. The importance of a constructivist approach to learning in multi-grade classrooms is highlighted. The chapter concludes that if learning in multi-grade classrooms can be effectively managed, sustainable learning spaces can be created and rural education can be transformed.

Chapter 6 highlights the psycho-social challenges that marginalised university students faced during the COVID-19 lockdown. Due to this virus, universities had to close their doors to students. Universities in South Africa and globally were forced to transition to emergency remote teaching and learning. In this chapter, the authors argue that inequalities endemic in South African society were the root cause of the psycho-social challenges that marginalised students faced during emergency remote teaching and learning. Data for this chapter were obtained from literature, anecdotes and authors' reflections, as they were at the forefront of remote teaching and learning during this period. The psycho-social challenges that are presented in this chapter included anxiety, depression, deregistration and in some cases suicide. The authors contend that since COVID-19 has long-lasting effects on the future of higher education, universities have to find ways of creating learning environments that will mitigate challenges for marginalised students.

Chapter 7 discusses and maps a model of peer assessment in a teacher education institution. A model that seeks to respond to the increasing numbers of students in higher education. Massification, which started in the post-1994 in South Africa, required alternative forms of assessment as large classes present challenges in the design and management of assessment practices. In teacher education institutions, there are different types of assessments that are used, amongst others are assessment-*for*-and assessment-*of*-learning, peer assessment is often neglected despite its benefits. Methodologically, we adopted a qualitative case study design and interviewed nine academics. However, in the chapter, we present three selected narratives of the participants' experiences regarding peer assessment. We theorised the chapter through the conceptual framework of scaffolding and further found that the partnership between the lecturers and students has a potential to demystify the punitive perceptions of assessment. We argue that through the model, peer assessment may alleviate some of the assessment frustrations for academics while capacitating the student-teachers with practical assessment skills essential for their professional teaching practice.

Chapter 8 explores incoming first-year students' expectations of university experience as one approach to gain a more realistic understanding of students' needs and expectations. The study sought views of students from two different schooling contexts on their expectations of university studies. The rationale was to determine if schooling contexts have an influence on students' expectations of university studies. A descriptive research design was used to report on quantitative and qualitative data collected. Key findings from this study indicate that first-year students from inner-city and township school contexts had varied expectations with regard to academic preparedness, seeking academic support and making social connections at university. The findings from this study will be valuable to the school and university stakeholders when addressing access and success in higher education.

Chapter 9 analyses professional teacher development (TPD) in the context of South Africa. The authors argue that TPD is not a straightforward process. Instead, they perceive it as an area fraught with challenges partly because it is not defined the same way by everybody. In this chapter, while the authors acknowledge the challenges associated with teacher professional development, they also highlight factors that positively contribute to sustainable and effective learning for teachers. This chapter gives hope that not all is lost and that these factors can be used to influence and inform policy on teacher professional development in a positive manner. The chapter emphasises that structures should be put in place at all the strata of teacher professional development hierarchy, including schools, districts and provincial levels.

Chapter 10 explores what blended learning means for a University of Technology. Moving beyond the binaries of offline/online learning, the authors unpack their extended understanding of blended learning, drawing from Laurillard's 'Six Ways of Learning' and applying a design thinking methodology that focuses on learners and their needs, promotes co-creation and considers the disciplinary context to innovate teaching and learning practice. Readers will be taken through the steps of learning design, from developing a persona, to establishing a design challenge, brainstorming solutions, creating a knowledge tree, storyboarding and reflection. Beyond these activities, however, authors will emphasise that learning design implies an important shift in culture, in the ethos of a department, a faculty or an institution, emphasising the importance of relationality and the interconnectedness of individual and societal needs.

Chapter 11 set against Lesotho's herding context, argues for the value that Inclusive Education (IE), through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), could add to the formal education provision of herders in Lesotho. Emphasis is put on exploring the use of mobile gadgets as resources for education delivery for marginalised groups of Basotho herders. Herders are males who look after or care for livestock at home as well as in the cattle posts.

Their herding job exposes them to extreme weather and rugged topography, which makes the herders inaccessible for the provision of social services like education. The authors interrogated best e-learning practices that proved effective elsewhere and the possibility of such models being adopted in Lesotho. The highlight of the chapter is the proposed conceptual framework, which could guide Lesotho in her bid to integrate ICTs as learning tools that may help the country in accommodating the herders into the mainstream education system.

Chapter 12 presents a discussion of the provision of student support services that are available, at one public higher education institution and the support services staff's views on the adequacy of these services with some recommendations for strengthening support. The model of intersectionality was harnessed to explore how identity constructions link to GBV, that is, how aspects of identity (poverty, rurality, age, class, culture) interlace to predispose female students to GBV at this institution. The qualitative interview data for this chapter was drawn from a mixed-methods study on gender-based violence at universities in South Africa. The case study locates itself within an interpretivist paradigm. The findings indicated that support staff were of the view that intervention and prevention support could be fortified beyond the existing gender-based violence policy. The data revealed the relationship between power, sexuality and predation and the need for educational empowerment. The author argues for a multi-ribbed and multi-tiered strategy on this campus that is responsive to the needs of students as advanced by the support staff.

Chapter 13 employs the legitimization code theory (LCT) and racial contract (RC) theory to critique the liberal theorisation of academic development (AD) practices in South African institutions of higher education. Having analysed some theories underpinning the Extended Curriculum Programme and First-Year Experience as contained in two seminal publications: *Beyond the University Gates* (Hutchings & Garraway, 2010) and *Teaching in the Extended Curriculum Programme* (Coleman, 2018), authors make a call for a 'radical' transformation of AD that builds on a critical humanist curriculum and re-centres African ontological being and epistemologies. This chapter has implications for how academic literacy and development practices in South African higher education institutions could be radically transformed to address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and in relation to creating safe and inclusive teaching and learning spaces.

Chapter 14 calls for the reconceptualising of epistemic freedom in South African higher education. The chapter critiques traditional understandings of epistemic freedom in the academy and draws on Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device to rethink Santos's abyssal line regarding the zone of being and nonbeing. In this chapter, it is argued that Bernstein's theory is not

sufficiently useful in responding to the calls for transformation and decolonisation. The chapter suggests that the pedagogic device offers a useful framework in exploring the epistemic progression of how knowledge is produced, recontextualised and evaluated in curricula. The chapter ends with a conclusion and recommendations regarding the importance of rethinking epistemic freedom in the South African academy and the theoretical and empirical possibilities offered by the pedagogic device in revealing the struggles for epistemic freedom.

Chapter 15 focuses on the need for decolonisation of the curriculum in higher education (HE) in South Africa. Practical ways of making curriculum decolonisation a reality are presented with theoretical groundings. Curriculum theory is used as a lens to explain the authors' notion of a curriculum. The chapter further highlights challenges to decolonisation of the curriculum, which include: the epistemic environment that favours western knowledge, marketisation of higher education curriculum, lack of practical ways of curriculum reviews to infuse decolonised content, contestations on the meaning of decolonisation of the curriculum in various disciplines and reliance on English as the only medium of instruction and discourses in universities. In pursuit to mitigate the above challenges, this chapter presents enablers of curriculum decolonisation, which include: a need for well-articulated body of theoretical literature, use of decolonial graduate attributes during curriculum decolonisation process, a clearer process of decolonisation of the curriculum and pro-decolonisation curriculum policies. The chapter expands on how each one of these can make curriculum decolonisation a reality in universities in South Africa. Authors argue that having clear enablers of curriculum decolonisation has a potential to assist academic developers, leaders and lectures in navigating the journey towards a decolonised higher education curriculum in South Africa.

Chapter 16 explores the application of the principle of progression during policy development, focusing specifically on the CAPS Further Education and Training Band (FET) Grade 10 Life Sciences content and the General Education and Training Band (GET) Grade 7-9 Life and Living Natural Sciences content. The study from which data presented in this chapter were extracted was prompted by existing literature indicating that the Grade 10 Life Sciences content is uninteresting and difficult. The author sought to assess whether during the development of CAPS, the principle of progression was applied between the GET Grades 7-9 Life and Living Natural Sciences content and Grade 10 Life Sciences in the Further Education and Training Band. Findings from both documents analysis and focus group interviews indicated that progression was lacking at some points, leading to failure to create connectivity between the contents in the two bands.

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