

Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde Lefapha la Thuto

CDSC Newsletter

Center for Diversity and Social Cohesion Faculty of Education

Think Piece

(How) can the university engage students in their educational becoming?



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This short think piece presents ideas for developing a platform for engaging students in their university education. It responds to a crucial aspect of the imperative to decolonise education, which is the educational becoming of university students.

Students navigate precarious family and community circumstances to carve open a path into their university education. They go on to develop mitigating strategies to establish a complex education life. They transact their educational paths relatively parallel to the university's formal structures and through strategic engagement with their courses, lecturers, and academic structures.

Their educational becoming mainly occurs in peer networks on the margins of the university. They, therefore, experience their educational becoming as alienating, never becoming properly 'homed' at the university.

In this light, I question the conceptual and practical terms on which universities can, meaningfully and adequately, connect with and educate students whose educational pathways often remain unrecognised and unsupported. I argue that it is incumbent on universities to meet the students from their 'side' of it – i.e., for universities to change their terms of recognition so that students can gain greater possibilities of fruitful actualisation via their university study. This urgent task beckons a response in the reframing of the university's identity and purposes.

The core challenge for a compelling university education is to develop a broader social-structural commitment to social justice. Whether universities can transform their institutional orientation for greater inclusiveness is dependent on developments in the broader social-reproductive apparatuses of society. Universities cannot serve as progenitors of social change in the absence of a broader set of political commitments to transform society. It is thus clear that, firstly, responding to universities' structural arrangements and material dimensions to address institutional inequities, and secondly, developing radically inclusive institutional cultures are necessary conditions for processes of university decolonisation. These two issues are necessary conditions for reframing the purposes of universities in ways that challenge their current instrumentalist orientations. They are not sufficient.

The sufficiency condition resides around curriculum knowledge selection. The reframing spotlight for educationally engaging students must fall on the nature of the knowledge taught at the university. I suggest that facilitating students' educational agency comes prominently into view when considering what knowledge is most worth teaching in the decolonising university. In other words, the debate should centre on the type of curriculum knowledge that universities offer to address students' educational becoming.

I suggest that the 'knowledge of the university' must engage students' educational becoming, via their programmes, courses, and broader support experiences, as citizens located in complex Africa-centred contexts. Decolonised knowledge involves considering all knowledge forms bequeathed to humanity for inclusion in the curriculum, including African, indigenous, Arab-Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, Indo-American, Asiatic, and western knowledge forms. While not all of these knowledge forms can logically be included in the university curriculum, such an all-inclusive approach is based on recognising multiple and heterodox forms of being human. This approach would seek to undermine 'knowledge parochialism', which is the idea that one's knowledge system is superior and thus sufficient for complex living.

My core argument is the view that students' ability to establish their educational becoming must be engendered in respect of their capacity to work productively with all knowledges in light of their posthuman articulations. Such a perspective would address the need for students to acquire the reflexive capacity to establish socially just planetary existences.

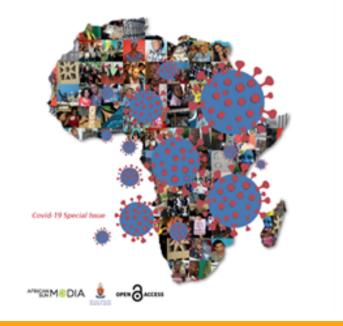
Appointment of an Administrator

Welcome, to Ms Bronwin Sebonka who joined the Centre for Diversity and Social Cohesion on the 1 July 2021. Ms Bronwin Sebonka is the administrator of the Centre of Diversity and Social Cohesion (CDSC) as well as the Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA) and works part-time in the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Office. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration and Governance from the North West University in Potchefstroom and a B Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Public Administration and Management from the University of Pretoria.



Journal for Student Affairs in Africa now housed in the Centre for Diversity and Social Cohesion

Journal of Student Affairs in Africa



The impact of Covid-19 on Student Affairs in Africa

Meet the members of the Centre for Diversity and Social Cohesion



Name: Prof Saloshna Vandeyar
Position: Director
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Prof Vandeyar's research is in the field of social/cultural/cognitive justice in education; addressing all kinds of (in)equalities, namely, race, identities, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, class, language, gender, religion, nationalities, political orientation, disabilities, rurality that are produced and reproduced in educational spaces by educational processes, discourses and practices. She is a National Research Foundation rated scientist and the winner of four international research awards and three national research awards. She was the recipient of the Gauteng Woman in Excellence award in 2018. She was also a finalist in the Standard Bank Top Woman awards in the category Woman in Science (2019); the first runner-up of the Women in Science Award (2017) a finalist for the NSTF Lifetime Award (2014), and for the Shoprite Checkers Woman of the Year (2006). She has also won five institutional research awards from UP; two community awards for research, and two merit awards for teacher professionalism and teaching excellence. Vandeyar is a member of AERA, CIES and EASA, and serves on a number of international and national editorial boards; has published widely, internationally and nationally (six scholarly books; 45 journal articles, 14 book chapters, numerous conference proceedings); has numerous international networks and has presented many invited keynote addresses. She is the primary researcher of several funded projects, and has supervised numerous PhD and Master students.



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Ms Bronwin Sebonka is the administrator of the Centre of Diversity and Social Cohesion (CDSC) as well as the Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA) and works part-time int the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Office. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration and Governance from the North West University in Potchefstroom and a B Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Public Administration and Management from the University of Pretoria.



Name: Dr Roy Ventsekamy Position: Senior Lecturer Office: Aldoel Building 2-68 Telephone: 012 420 5516 Email: roy.ventsekamy@up.ac.za Dr Roy V enketsamy is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Roy completed her Doctorates in Educational Psychology and is a registered counsellor with HPCSA. He envisions an education system whereby teachers are developed to meet the needs of young children within diverse classroom. His is a strong advocate of inclusive education and the implementation of playpedagogy and curriculum transformation. His current research focus areas are improving mathematics teaching and learning in the early grades, inclusivity and comprehensive sexuality education. He has a keen interest in the Japanese Lesson Study approach. He hopes that his research will contribute to improving the quality of teachers in the education system through in-depth knowledge, understanding and implementation of the curriculum; thus, accommodating all learners within a diverse school environment.



Name: Dr Riata Steyn Position: Lecturer

Office: Aldoel Building 1-119 Telephone: 012 420 5637 Email: <u>riata.styn@up.ac.za</u> Dr Raïta Steyn is currently a Senior Lecturer in Art Education at the Department of Education, University of Pretoria and the External Examiner in Design for Umalusi. Her research covers two fields: religious art and art education. Religious Art: it refers to Afro-Byzantine religious art and cultural traditions in Nubia and Ethiopia, with special attention on influences and cultural interactions with Southern Africa (especially Limpopo, Venda). She has published a book, several articles. and two book chapters. Abroad, her papers presented in International Congresses have been also published. Art education: through innovative approaches in teaching Visual Arts, and in the context of 'We' and the 'Others', she promotes social awareness, inclusiveness and human empathy. On international level, she established a platform of collaboration between the UP and AUT (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) Art students. In 2016, she received the Excellence Award for research on 'Byzantine Art in Africa' (Lyceum Club for Greek Women) and in 2019 the Leadership and Innovation in Teaching and Learning Award (Faculty of Education, UP). On personal level, apart from participating in numerous art exhibitions, she exhibited her artworks on the celebrated African singer, Brenda Fassi, at the State Theatre of Pretoria, July 2010. She took part in an exhibition hosted at UJ to celebrate George Bizos's 85th birthday, October, 2013. She also painted Byzantine icons for Orthodox churches in South Africa, and coorganized a FIFA Art competition in conjunction with the Greek Embassy, in 2010.



Name: Prof HB Ebrahim

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Hasina Banu Ebrahim is a research professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education at UNISA. She also holds the UNESCO Co-chair in Early Education, Care and Development. She is a rated researcher with the National Research Foundation. Her research coheres around the theme Early Childhood at the margins with special reference to policy, practice and workforce development. Equity, Diversity and Inclusionis are at the heart of her work. Professor Ebrahim won the 2017 & 2020 UNISA Women in Research Leadership Award. She was the first runner up in the South African Women in Science Award in 2018. She has numerous publications in national and international journals. She is the sector editor for the South African Journal of Childhood Education and serves on editorial boards of a number of international ECD journals. Prof Ebrahim is the convener of the knowledge generation working group in the Early Childhood Cluster in the African Union and a core team member of the ECD fellowship programme in the African Early Childhood Network. She headed national projects on curriculum and professionalisation of ECD. She is currently involved in two international projects on ECD systems and African-based Capacity Building for ECD. Her forthcoming co-edited research-focused books are as follows: Responding and speaking back to a global pandemic in ECCE, Sankofa in the time of Covid - Reflections on ECD. To transform ECD teacher education she has co-edited a scholarly text entitled Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment: A Handbook for ECE.



Name: Dr Connie Makgabo

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Dr Connie Makgabo is a lecturer at the University of Pretoria. Her research focus and interest is African languages and culture with the focus in Sepedi. In addition to that, she is involved collecting, documenting and publishing the Sepedi oral literature such as folktales, folksongs and nursery rhymes. As an African language Methodology lecturer, she is involved enhancing the teaching and learning of the indigenous languages by integrating technology in this digital era, by exploring and using both online and offline apps.



Name: Prof Thiru Vandeyar Position: Associate Professor Office: Technika Building 1-13 Groenkloof Campus Telephone: 012 420 2372 Email: thuri.vandeyar@up.ac.za Prof Thiru Vandeyar is an associate professor in the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education in the Faculty of Education. His prior teaching experience includes being a head of department for mathematics, deputy principal and principal at schools and a lecturer at a teacher training college. During his extensive teaching career, he obtained a BA degree and a Diploma in Datamatrix. Currently he holds a Masters and PhD degree in Computer Integrated Education. His main research interests include e-learning, teacher professionalism, diversity education, education policy implementation and best practices in the use of ICT in teaching and learning.



Name: Marisa Lombard
Position: Lecturer
Officer Alded Building

Office: Aldoel Building 3-1 University of Pretoria Humanities Education Marisa.lombard@up.ac.za Marisa Lombard is a lecturer and Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. She obtained her MEd degree Cum in Education on the cultivation of the racial identity of a white Afrikaner juffrou in 2020. Mrs. Lombard's research focus is on understanding the transgenerational cultivation of whiteness to develop anti-racist andragogy for tertiary teacher training programmes.



Name: Dr Gerhard Genis Position: Senior Lecturer Office: Aldoel Building 1-115 Groenkloof Campus University of Pretoria Telephone: +27 12 420 5547 Fax: +27 12 420 5594 Email: gerhard.genis@up.ac.za Dr Gerhard Genis teaches literacies and English methodology at the University of Pretoria. His fields of interest include poetry teaching and learning, conflict/war poetry and literacy/language education. His monologue, Poetic Bodies and corpses of war: South African Great War poetry, was published by Unisa Press in 2018. He is the consulting editor for the 2019 publication, Multiliteracies in education: South African perspectives (Van Schaik)



Name: Dr Lerato Mokoena Position: Lecturer Office: Theology Building 2-39 Hatfield Campus Telephone:(012) 420-5157 Email:lerato.mokoena@up.ac.za Dr Lerato Mokoena is a Lecturer at the University of Pretoria in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, Departments of Religious Studies, Old Testament, and Hebrew Scriptures. Lerato's future for Theology is that of a corpus built and curated in such a way that it becomes an immediate consolation to us, that we can privilege ourselves in order to build our own societies. A space where the church is an active member and participant in this intellectual stampede. The university in a quest to redefine itself and its role in society is beneficial ground for scholars like Dr Mokoena who want to make the university a place of creating citizens that can advance their society and not just intellectuals and ministers. Theological education should not be removed from any struggle and mission to redefine our lives as we navigate oppressive structures and try to break strongholds of power designed to ensure that we are not cocreators of the body of knowledge that seeks to talk about us but not to treat us as interlocutors. Theology should be allowed to take its rightful place in society, and that is being the shop steward of God. Dr. Mokoena has subsequently been inducted into the Mail and Guardian list of Top 200 Young South Africans in the Education Category and also the Avance Media Top 100 Most Influential Young South A fricans for 2020. She is now a Jakes Gerwell Fellow mentoring matriculants who aspire to be Educators and a Inspiring Fifty women South Africa Nominee for



Name: Ms Kim Ting Chong Position: PhD student Email: u11023580@tuks.co.za I'm a passionate researcher and educator specialising in gender and the sociology of education. My Phd research being undertaken in the Department of Humanities Education at UP focuses on the experiences of first generation women of colour in higher education. I also currently teach ks3 humanities and IGCSE Global Perspectives at a Cambridge Curriculum School in Qatar.

Research making a difference in practice

Dear Professor Vandeyar,

I hope that this email finds you well in what has undoubtedly been one of the most intense years. I imagine that you are very busy and definitely don't want to waste your time but I wanted to thank you for your work.

I taught for 15 years. Over the past year I have been working on creating and running a number of teacher workshops and have found your papers on Pedagogy of Compassion to be incredibly useful as a framework to ground our design. I had hoped to do some research and use my work and your framework for a masters level dissertation but that has been put on hold. Nevertheless, we, my colleagues and I, continue to refer back to your paper regularly as we design and implement our programs.

I can't tell you how much I love being able to be vocal and have academic grounding for the necessity of love and hope and courage and in this project we call education! I wrote a paper for one of my coursework modules last year that gave me back my love of learning and it was largely informed by your paper. I do hope that I can find a way back into writing academically on this. Thank you so much!!

Kind regards,
Danielle van Rooyen
12 August 2021



Dear Prof Vandeyar

I hope you are well. I recently watched a recording where you presented at the UP Institutional Culture. I enjoyed your presentation so much, and for once I can relish openly in being, feeling and enjoying being an Indian! I've often felt unseen but you just put things in perspective.

All the best,

UP Staff member from another faculty 24 August 2021

Dear Saloshna

I am writing this email in my capacity as the Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Faculty

On behalf of the Committee I want to extend you an invitation to address our committee. I attended the UP institutional culture webinar and was very impressed by your insightful presentation.

Unfortunately most of the members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee

(Transformation Committee) could not attend the aforementioned webinar and therefore I believe it will be great if you can share a few ideas from your presentation with the Committee.

9 July 2021

Webinars Presented

Profs Laura Hauerwas of the Providence College, USA and Shea Kerkhoff of the University of Missouri–St Louis, USA presented their research on teacher education

On 16 April, Profs Laura Hauerwas of the Providence College, USA and Shea Kerkhoff of the University Missouri-St Louis, USA presented their research on teacher education. The title of their presentation was 'Preparing teachers to serve in a global through critical landscape teaching'. They introduced participants to the special issue of the Journal of Research in



Childhood Education, which they had edited together with Prof Sandra Schneider and in which Prof Saloshna Vandeyar published and invited paper titled 'Pedagogy of compassion: Negotiating the contours of global citizenship'.

Profs Hauerwas and Kerkhoff shared a new framework for critical global teaching that offers four features of teaching praxis: glocality, reflexivity, interculturality and worldmaking. Glocality reflects practices that are situated in connections between the personal, local, national and global. Reflexivity involves individuals examining motives for, and implications of their actions in a way that disrupts systemic dominance of one over another. A third feature addressed by interculturality is how individuals interact with one another from their understanding of diverse perspectives and identities. Lastly, worldmaking is teaching that inspires imagination and actions ensuring justice and equity to sustain our world. Sharing this frame with the Faculty at the University of Pretoria they continued the conversation with global educators who are transforming their practices to prepare teachers who will 'build a more just and sustainable global landscape [than] yet imagined' (Hauerwas, Kerkhoff & Schneider, 2021:199).

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Institutional Culture

What needs to change at higher education institutions?



The institutional culture at higher education institutions is widely recognised as a significant factor in shaping students and staff's experiences and sense of belonging. On 2 June 2021, Prof Saloshna Vandeyar from the Centre for Diversity and Social Cohesion in the Faculty of Education, was one of six panellists who spoke about what needs to change to transform the institutional culture at UP.

Prof Vandeyar argued that changing institutional culture depends on the answers to two questions: (1) How do systems need to be transformed? (This entails changes in respect of policies, initiatives and so forth.) and (2) What can individuals do to develop their effectiveness as change agents, despite the system? Her talk focused on the latter.

The institution has moved through a number of phases, namely colonialism, coloniality and the decolonisation of education. Prof Vandeyar argued that in order to achieve significant lasting and sustainable change, we need to decolonise the mind (Thiong'o, 1986). There needs to be a change in mindsets; in other words, deeply embedded beliefs, attitudes and values, all of which constitute the core or essence of a person, need to change. Subjective realities have to be addressed. However, she queried, are institutional stakeholders ready to 'decolonise their minds' and their ingrained belief and value systems after two and half decades of democracy in South Africa (Thiong'o, 1986)? Are they ready to unlearn, re-learn and fundamentally transform as individuals? And are they familiar with the historical injustices and diverse intellectual debates within their disciplines?

Changes in beliefs and understanding are fundamental as they lead to changes in conception that relate to and influence knowledge, skills, materials, contexts and institutional culture. The challenge, however, is to negotiate the relationship between new change efforts and subjective realities embedded in individual and institutional contexts and personal histories.

Making use of very effective metaphors, such as mirrors, windows and the institutional mirror, Prof Vandeyar suggested a number of ways in which the institution could consider changing its culture. She also highlighted issues such as the 'ethos of reception' and drew attention to 'first-and second-order' changes, 'equality of cultural trade' and the 'invisible knapsack', to name but a few. She emphasised the need to aim to create an inclusive culture in which all can experience a sense of belonging and feel at home. Furthermore, for sustainable educational change to happen, it needs to be a university-wide initiative. Of special interest was the novel theoretical framework of Pedagogy of Compassion that she developed (Vandeyar & Swart, 2016) and which consists of the following tenets: dismantling polarised thinking and questioning one's ingrained belief system and changing mindsets by compassionately engaging with diversity in educational spaces and instilling hope and sustainable peace.

Prof Vandeyar concluded her talk by claiming that the 'colonial ghost of institutional culture' will only be exorcised if we deal with what Ramphele (2008) calls 'my own ghosts'. Any attempt at changing the institutional culture that ignores attempts at changing mindsets will be futile and at most superficial and cosmetic in nature. The will, agency and change in the mindsets of institutional stakeholders are key to changing institutional culture.

Prof Vandeyar's notion of the three Rs are: Restore, recognise and respect human dignity. We are so busy focusing on people's outer appearances (shells) that we forget to nurture the soul within.

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Thiong'o, N.W. 1986. Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature. London: J. Currey.

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Curriculum Transformation-How do we do it? Whose knowledge counts?

delivered Professor Saloshna Vandeyar Curriculum Transformation live-stream lecture at the first instalment of the UP-Curriculum Transformation Lecture Series on 13 August 2021. She shared with the University community initiatives and innovative ways and practices to realise the strategic objective of having a transformed curriculum that is inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to the changing educational contexts. A curriculum aimed not only at preparing students for the future, but one that nurtures the humane element by addressing the dynamics of power and social, cultural, and cognitive justice education. Professor Vandeyar argued that the transformation of the curriculum should focus on race (in)equalities and all other kinds of inequalities that are produced and reproduced in educational spaces by educational processes, practices, and discourses.



The University is a microcosm of the broader society and by extension the world. Thus the transformation of the curriculum cannot be viewed in isolation. A number of variables are at play. Professor Vandeyar claimed that curriculum transformation is framed by contexts such as, the historical, political, social, geographical, ideological and global context; by agents of curriculum delivery, namely academics; by the language and mode of instruction; by a diverse and heterogenous group of students; by institutional culture and a paradigm of power. Transformation of the curriculum has to be a university-wide initiative.

The praxis of institutional stakeholders should thus be responsive to these differing variables and should create conditions that democratise educational spaces; make room for both individual and group identities within the institutional context and create shared and negotiated understandings and practices while knowledge is being generated and disseminated.

Professor Vandeyar argued that educational change should address both first and second order changes. Transformation of the curriculum is a second-order change. She claimed that the curriculum should reflect and affirm diverse groups of people. It should be grounded in the lives of our students; be critical, multicultural, anti-racist, pro-justice and informed by an ethic of care and compassion. She argued that transforming the curriculum is not a clinical process. It is characterised by a 'messiness' that not only embraces academic rigour but is culturally sensitive, participatory, experiential, hopeful, joyful, kind, visionary and incites a form of activism by creating agents of change for a better society and world.

Professor Vandeyar shared some practical and innovative ways of transforming the curriculum and the institution such as, addressing both first and second order changes; participating in experiential learning workshops that allow us to walk in the shoes of another; showcasing good practice in culture-rich institutions and embracing various schools of thoughts. Transforming the curriculum requires a critical consciousness of diversity and the adoption of an asset-based approach. Equality of cultural trade in conversations about the broader pool of knowledge is important. It is imperative that we draw on evidence-based research on pedagogies and practices in working with diverse students.

Any attempt at transforming the curriculum that ignores changing mindsets will be futile. The will, agency and change in mindsets of the institutional stakeholders is key to transforming the curriculum and the broader context within which it operates.

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