

**THE IMPERATIVE OF
COGNITIVE JUSTICE IN
TEACHER EDUCATION**

SAERA conference

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TO BEGIN WITH

- Students of #Blackthought at UJ, in their inquiry into decolonization: “What the education system is doing to us...”
 - “Our heads are filled with book knowledge”
 - “Knowledge is too much. We feel fragmented”
 - “We cannot speak our minds. I cannot say anything in Tswana”
 - “It is difficult to see the connection between the module and community life”
- QUESTION TO PGCE STUDENTS LAST WEEK:
Is there a knowledge problem in schools?

COLLEAGUES TEACHER EDUCATORS, ENGAGED WITH THEIR OWN INQUIRIES INTO DECOLONIZATION

- + Considerations about content and pedagogy
- + Who are the knowledge holders?
- + What knowledge beyond textbooks?
- + Studying of current theories of learning – Whose theories? Where from? Which assumptions?
- + Research projects on learning interactions in class - methodologies, world views and practices beyond mainstream?

THE COGNITIVE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

- GLOBAL contexts - cognitive injustice inherent within the hegemonic **neoliberal ideology**; neoliberalism mandating market principles in education..." (Chan-Tiberghien p 193); dismantling of public good institutions, extreme wealth polarization (Sturges (2015), ([Harvey, 2005](#)))
- The **ideological use of science** is characterised by objectification, materialization, dichotomization, oppositional thinking (Odora Hoppers 2001a: 7).
- **Dominant practices of western science** and "... epistemologies that rewards mimicry, docility and passive assimilation of the good old ethos of indifference to others, individualism and "competitiveness unto death" that underpin the new globalisation imperative" (Odora Hoppers 2001: 4).

COGNITIVE CRISIS

The cognitive crisis in Africa is a knowledge crisis, and a **crisis of the academy** (Odora Hoppers 2014) and of the modern university (Fataar and Subreenduth 2014) requires rethinking on levels of worldview and practice – in terms of the ways in which disciplinary knowledge is organized and developed, and ontologies, epistemologies opened up and rethought to become truly representative of Africa.



CONSEQUENCES

- + Education is reproducing, preserving **an-other** society
- + Millions of **people are suspending and sacrificing what they take for granted**; bearing the **burden** of living in **unfamiliar** cultural idioms within all areas of everyday life; they live with **functional tolerance**
- + ‘...cultural imperialism – misrepresentations resulting in **insecurity, self-doubt** (Odora Hoppers 2001a: 7; 2009).
- **The crisis needs to be understood on the deepest levels of humanity, of community livelihoods, of human rights, of democratic citizenship**

CONCEPTUALISATION OF COGNITIVE JUSTICE (Visvanathan)

- “Cognitive justice is the right of every individual or group to pursue and perpetuate the forms of knowledge that their ways of life depend upon... it seeks to protect the group from modern western science or any other form of knowledge that seeks to hegemonize eliminate or museumize it. It is a concept which seeks both the survival of communities and to protect the logic of their creativity ... The idea of cognitive justice is not about an abstract notion of rights. It seeks not an empty universalism for an abstract idea of humanity but it is a pluralistic search for an embedded idea of the social in which each form of the social is anchored in a particular way of knowing.”
(Visvanathan 2011: 8).

CONCEPTUALISATION OF COGNITIVE JUSTICE (Odora Hoppers)

- “Cognitive justice is about the right of different forms of knowledge to survive, creatively and sustainably... returning to life Indigenous Knowledge Systems, restoring their ‘... place in the livelihood of communities so that they can, without coercion, determine the nature and pace of the development they require” (Odora Hoppers 2009: 16). Knowledge rests in people – for Africa the challenge has to be that of how to build on local knowledge that exists in its people as a concomitant to working with global knowledge and information (Odora Hoppers 2009: 2).

TOWARDS A COGNITIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

For the rethinking of education and teacher education

KNOWLEDGE CONCEPTIONS, TRADITIONS, SYSTEMS

- + Recognizing the existence and value of knowledges
- + Caring for subjugated knowledges
- + Building knowledge plurality for democratic citizenship
- + Connecting knowledge with worldviews and holistic living

KNOWLEDGE INCLUSION, EXCLUSION AND EQUITY

- + Openness to knowledge politics
- + Recognizing that knowledge anchored in the social, community experiences; rooted in livelihoods, community
- + Valuing knowledge diversity and dialogue as democratic project
- + Redefine knowledge to include what is indigenous

COGNITIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

KNOWLEDGE RIGHTS AND RESTORATION

- + Distinguishing knowledge privilege and priority
- + Acknowledging the rights of knowledges to co-exist without duress
- + Restoring Indigenous knowledge systems to their rightful places

KNOWLEDGE IN-USE

- + Accepting knowledge as living, dynamic
- + Encouraging dialogues between knowledges
- + Recognizing knowledge plurality
- + Forging the link between knowledge and livelihoods
- + Growing the public good
- + KNOWLEDGE morality

COGNITIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

MORAL AND COGNITIVE RECONSTRUCTION

- + Promoting knowledge of citizens, for human dignity
- + Sharing moral responsibility to grow knowledge
- + Advancing a moral epistemology embedded in African life; (Odora Hoppers)
- + Advancing moral epistemology (SEP 2015) – moral knowledge with its social, personal, ontological and methodological dimensions – e.g. studying how moral standards are biased against for example women (Campbell 2003)
- + An ethics of plurality; ethicality of practice opening to ‘alterity’; breaking with sameness ([Ippolito, 2010](#))

RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION

Current policies and practices of TE in SA is modelled on

European/American benchmarks and ignores the cognitive crisis

Rethinking is required in terms of general policy and practice criteria of authenticity, relevance, responsiveness, equitability, ethicality

Rethinking WHAT:

- + Teacher and teacher educator agency
- + Conceptualization and conceptual categories of education
- + Curriculum, as content, as process
- + The science of teacher education - scientific methods of research – theories, paradigms, assumptions

Rethinking in terms of concepts, philosophical assumptions - Phelan's notions of subjectivity/agency, historicity, and practice



RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION PHILOSOPHICALLY

Anne Phelan – investing in the very texture of TE

a. **Subjectivity in education and teacher education**

- + Who is the subject, and who is bearing witness?
- + Sidelining of the subject by the production and circulation of knowledge (Foucault – power knowledge nexus)
- + Myths – teacher does not have exclusive responsibility; is not an expert [the problem of knowing...]; talents, intuition is shaped by historical forces/institutional structures...
- + What lies hidden in the life of one who is learning to teach?
- + Tension between life and life story – programmes reinforce particular normative identities and curricula p. 231
- + Pressures to conform

RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION PHILOSOPHICALLY - Phelan

b. Historicity of teaching and teacher education

- + Historical understanding and consciousness
- + Rethinking the self in terms of historical -
- + Actions as historically effected events
- + Need to challenge commonsense ideas of teacher education
- + Problems of “frozen futurism” p. 234
- + Teachers’ ethical awareness and biographical relation with people/communities – indigenous ways of knowing
- + Recognizing that the emotional, spiritual, intellectual, material can be erased by dominant discourses of education
- + Education for the public good – solidarity in common purpose

RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION PHILOSOPHICALLY - Phelan

c. The question of practice

- + History produced the science of Teacher Education
[teacher effectiveness training; competency based; process-product; theory-practice in the empirical analytical tradition]
- + TE research – to determine effective interventions for predetermined outcomes
- + Technical rational premises of TE
- + Praxis as conversational relationship
- + Personal-practical knowledge including environmental insights, and wisdom
- + Education as decisions about the future - to be fully human

RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IN TERMS OF THE COGNITIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

RETHINKING OF

AGENCY

CURRICULUM

RESEARCH



WHAT COGNITIVE JUSTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION CAN BE – VISIONS OF TEACHER AGENCY

- + Teacher Educators and Teachers who are **knowledge developers in the full sense of the word** – they are knowledgeable in their domains, not in narrow academic/disciplinary sense, but in domains of integrated knowledge relevant to their roles in community
- + Knowledge agency goes beyond the role of educators as curriculum implementers – it requires **agency for knowledge creation and development** - This is necessary since teacher educators and teachers are in themselves members of diverse communities of problem solving, working with knowledge upon which lives depend, connected to people's livelihoods, life cycles, creative function, enabling life chances [Visvanathan].
- + Teachers and teacher educators accepting the moral responsibility for the development of expanded /plurality of knowledge.

VISIONS OF CURRICULUM

- + Education curricula revised to include knowledge content and pedagogies beyond the current “scientific bases”. Legitimizing pluralities of knowledge.
- + Working with expanded notions of knowledge and knowledge status and value - knowledge as the livelihood and creativity of communities, as a moral epistemology embedded in indigenous life; privileging local ecologies of knowledge, and the citizen as a person of knowledge.
- + Rethinking education philosophies and theories to be inclusive of African worldviews.
- + Knowledge protection against knowledge dominance, cultural imperialism; and science as ‘enclosure movement’[Visvanathan]; misrepresentations in curricula which lead to self doubt, insecurity [Odora Hoppers].

VISIONS OF RESEARCH

- + Rethinking the constitutive rules of education and the academy, aimed at cognitive justice (Odora Hoppers).
- + Encouraging teacher educators to share knowledge and pedagogical expertise with university faculties.
- + Research and knowledge creation not as expert, but as collaboration of memories, legacies, heritages – citizen taking power and knowledge in his own hands (Visvanathan)
- + Privileging indigenous social order (Odora Hoppers)

IN CLOSING

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER INQUIRIES INTO THE EXTENT/DEPTH OF THE COGNITIVE CRISIS, PEDAGOGIES /MEANINGS OF COGNITIVE JUSTICE, AND THE NEED TO RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION AS COMMUNITY FUNCTION

