

Outcomes in South African Higher Education: Imagine that!

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ABSTRACT Constructivism reasserts the importance of ‘meaning making’ in the sense that it assists students to internalise, reshape or transform new information .From this teaching perspective, students should be able to construct knowledge for themselves through goal- orientated activity. In other words, they need to engage with content in such a manner that it becomes meaningful and useful to them within their own context. Furthermore, it is only when students can apply what they have learned, that knowledge becomes meaningful. The fundamental principle informing constructivist learning is not what students learn, but how they learn, whilst the skills they learn are more critical than the given content. With the acquisition of effective learning skills, such as found within project work, excursions, interviewing, group- work, fieldwork, simulations, role play, research and debates, learners place themselves in a position to learn whatever they wish to learn. The South African education system, including Higher Education (for consistency this term, Higher Education, is preferred throughout the article), is based on outcomes. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) seems to be embedded within constructivist theory. However, the outcomes of OBE are predetermined and therefore seem to be behaviourist. Our contention is that predetermined outcomes that are seemingly behaviourist in nature, stunt critical and creative thinking and learning. The contention is that the critical outcomes should be re-conceptualised in terms of imagination. In this paper, we will explore outcomes reconceptualized in terms of imagination that can possibly break from behaviourist tendencies and thus open alternative possibilities to teaching and learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Having observed in a casual manner during the past two years of teaching over 400 undergraduate students, enrolled for the Baccalaureus Educationis degree in teacher training, it is quite astonishing that most of them find it extremely difficult to participate in learning activities which require a high degree of reasoning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, we have noted that these students have difficulty in relating pedagogical theory to their daily practices and contexts. It, therefore, seems that these students are not adequately prepared for Higher Education learning where greater acumen in terms of critical and creative abilities is demanded. Outcomes-based education has also been accused of being behaviourist because predetermined outcomes seem to be manipulative, thus having the capacity to limit and stunt creativity (Waghid 2003; McCambridge 2004).

In this paper we attempt to explore outcomes in terms of imagination that could seemingly break from behaviourist tendencies, thus opening up alternative possibilities to teaching and learning.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM

Since the democratic elections in 1994, South African education has been characterised by an unprecedented transformation process. The imperative to transform South African society by utilising various transformative tools stems from a need to address the legacy of apartheid in all aspects of human activity and in education in particular (National Department of Education - NDE 2003).

Prior to democracy in South Africa, education was implemented on race, class, gender and ethnic divisions (Naicker 2000) and further characterised by, among other issues, the provision of unequal access to schools, unequal educational opportunities, irrelevant curricula, inadequate finances and facilities, a shortage of educational materials, the enrolment explosion of learners and an inadequately qualified teaching complement (Botha 2002). In an attempt to break from its unjust, segregationist and racially controlled education policies of the past (Waghid 2003), the Department of Education introduced Curriculum 2005 in 1998.

Curriculum 2005 was viewed as South Africa's own unique format of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). The intention with this learner centred, activity based approach to teaching and learning was to replace the previous predominantly rote learning education system and 'emancipate' the majority of learners who had typically been ill-served by the past apartheid system (Alridge et al. 2006). This attempt was to purge the apartheid curriculum (school syllabuses) of 'racially offensive and outdated content' (Jansen 1998).

The enhancement of skills development throughout the school-leaving population, black and white was cardinal and strategic to the introduction of OBE (Mason 1999). Furthermore, a resurgence of government, business, organised labour and providers of education and training emphasised the need to redress educational imbalances which were prevalent in the country's rote learning/ traditional schooling system and that equal educational opportunities be provided for all citizens (NDE 1997a). The unbanning of political movements in 1992 found labour organizations, especially the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) spearheading campaigns for the overhaul of the education and training system (Cretchley and Castle 2001).

Emanating from the above, it may be argued that any new approach to teaching and learning within the South African context should be geared towards developing critical, creative and responsible citizens (Van der Horst and McDonald 1997). Thus, the fostering of learners and students in higher learning being confronted with a problem-solving approach to life and empowered to help build a positive future for South Africa was a most critical consideration.

These considerations ushered in the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) that currently forms the basis of the school curriculum in South Africa (Botha 2002). Spady and Schlebusch (1999) and Spady and Marshall (1994) view OBE as an approach to teaching and learning which strives to enhance learners' maximum learning potential by setting outcomes to be achieved at the end of the learning process. The outcomes of OBE are outlined as critical and developmental outcomes within the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which is South Africa's own unique curriculum response incorporating OBE. The critical outcomes (problem-solving via critical and creative thinking; group-work and co-operative learning; accepting

responsibility; research skills; communication skills, technological and environmental literacy and the development of macro vision) and developmental outcomes (learning skills; cultural and aesthetic comprehension; citizenship, professional skills and entrepreneurship) are broad, generic and cross-curricular outcomes, inspired by the South African Constitution and developed through a democratic process (NDE 1997c; NDE 1998 and EIC 1996). The primary focus of the NCS is to benefit society and learners by equipping the latter with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable meaningful participation in society. South Africa's outcomes-based curriculum also aims to provide a basis for continuing learning in Higher Education by developing learners who are critical and creative thinkers (NDE 2002).

From the above, it can be deduced that South African institutions of Higher Learning could be compelled to direct their mode of teaching and learning toward an outcomes-based paradigm. Furthermore, it may be assumed that school leavers at the Grade 12 exit level, having being exposed to this learner-centred and activity-based approach, might have certain expectations from their lecturers upon entering Higher Education.

Moreover, it seems that Higher Education institutions might be compelled to grapple with the notion of OBE. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of South Africa, to which all standards, qualifications, subject fields and learning programmes must adhere, endorses the OBE approach to learning and teaching (Van Tonder 2000; NDE 1996).

III. CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE OBE PARADIGM

However, outcomes are about demonstrating competencies and these competencies (foundational, practical and reflective) within the outcomes necessitate that the process of learning, its relevance and subsequent implication should be viewed within a multi-paradigm perspective of OBE. Schwartz and Cavener (1994) postulate that a multi-paradigm perspective on the organisation and sub-administration of OBE indicate clear contradictions; the structural-functional paradigm which is based on founded objectives and controls, whilst the constructivist approach refers to students and lecturers as independent producers and not only users of knowledge. The

characteristics of outcomes show prescriptive behaviourist tendencies, such as the teacher being in control of the learning process, the sequential manner in which the subject matter is being presented and teaching techniques which determine the success of the learning process (Capper and Jamison 1993; Wilkinson 1997). McKernan (1994) concurs with the viewpoints of the above-mentioned researchers and is of the opinion that the functional foundation of OBE is directed at reducing education and teaching and learning in particular, to forms of human engineering, as well as focusing on procedures that view education as an instrumental means to specific ends. Educators and even lecturers in Higher Education may find this unacceptable and may also interpret this as the moulding of students through behaviour modification. Outcomes designed in its present form are seemingly restrictive in nature and allow for minimal creativity and imagination (Waghid 2003) and we contend, may not engender critical and creative young citizens as envisaged by the South African constitution and the NCS.

Schwartz (1994) views OBE and its related outcomes as more constructivist in nature. A deep understanding of the purpose of outcomes within OBE and its related constructivist learning theory needs to be successfully integrated into the teaching practice of lecturers at institutions of Higher Education. For lecturers to encourage creativity beyond set outcomes, constructivist pedagogy is needed to facilitate and encourage thinking via the processes used to engage students with the content, as well as the content itself. Constructivist pedagogy models aim to develop learning by promoting the virtues of an individual's search for meaning, as much as the knowledge being gained from that search. The creation of knowledge from experience and the use of that knowledge to support new learning represent fundamental principles of constructivism. Furthermore, it is vital to note that there are two perspectives (cognitive and social) on constructivism which are inextricably linked to the enhancement of pedagogy, based on critical and creative thinking (Cooper 2007). On the other hand, Rovai (2004) states that cognitive constructivism refers to an individual's reality which results from isolated experiences, forming a network of neural connections. Individuals gradually build their own understanding of the world through experience, maturation and

interaction with the environment in which the learner/ student is viewed as an active processor of information. This is in sharp contrast to behaviourism which views the learner/ student as a passive recipient of information.

Social constructivism emphasizes the construction of an agreed upon socially constructed reality. Within a community, shared ideas are accepted and agreed upon. This implies that meaning is reflected in the social beliefs that exist at any point in time in a specific community. The experience of human interaction significantly affects the scope and sequence of cognitive development (Jonassen et al. 1999; Cooper 2007).

From the above, it seems that Higher Education needs to develop skills which students may require to actively participate in a constructivist environment. Exposing students to opportunities in which they could engage in meaning-making is of cardinal importance to their learning. This in turn, could lead them to acquire the capacity to excel in thought-provoking processes for which rigidly set outcomes in OBE curricula do not make provision.

Constructivism further implies that students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge in realistic situations with others, instead of in decontextualised, formal situations where they work on their own, such as propagated in traditional textbooks. The central idea behind constructivism is thus, that students build new knowledge upon the bases of previous learning (Schwartz and Cavener 1994). Jonassen et al. (1999) concur with Schwartz and Cavener, stating that constructivism is based on students' active participation in problem solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity that they find relevant and engaging. Students, thus construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience and in applying these in new situations. But is the criticality and creativity of constructivism adequate?

IV. OUTCOMES AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

According to Jacobs et al. (2004), Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) places the focus on clearly defined outcomes which learners are expected to demonstrate when they leave school or finish a course. Outcomes are therefore observable demonstrations of learning that occur at the end of a significant set of learning

experiences. Outcomes also serve as practical guidelines for learning content, methods and assessment. Furthermore, outcomes instil a sense of purpose and direction especially when educational goals are vaguely defined.

In contrast with the above, learning can also be unpredictable or unobservable; whilst it may be difficult to predict in detail how certain skills should be performed or what the new dimensions of knowledge might be. An example is the writing of poetry or doing inquiry-based research. It thus becomes a daunting task for the teacher to state all the outcomes in advance. Moreover, the demonstration of the achievement of an outcome is not always associated with meaningful learning. A learner may write down a perfect definition for constructivism if asked to define it, without understanding what he or she has written. Teachers and possibly lecturers in Higher Education could perceive the critical outcomes as being too prescriptive, restrictive, dogmatic and inflexible (Jacobs et al. 2004).

For knowledge to be considered more than information and for students to become constructivist in the classroom, the curriculum should be changed and we should develop methods of constructivist teaching. If constructivism is to succeed as a method of classroom learning within Higher Education, there is much to learn about the ways to make learning appealing, interesting, goal-directed and relevant.

Outcomes-Based Education as a teaching and learning strategy makes the goals or objectives of education explicit to every student. At the Higher Education level, it becomes critical then that the general teaching staff should have some familiarity with the principles and practical implications of OBE. Spady (1994) states that OBE means clearly focusing and organising everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning process. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organising the curriculum, instruction and assessment to make sure that learning ultimately happens. This theory of Spady articulates a holistic constructivist approach to learning; it significantly encourages educators and students alike to centre their efforts on demonstrating their achievement of pre-determined outcomes. In other words, OBE sets clear outcomes for learners that shape the curriculum, assessment styles and teaching

strategies which will enable them to achieve and display the designated outcomes (Kanuka and Anderson 1999).

Higher Education needs to be wary of prescriptive learning content in the type of teaching methods with which students are engaged. The teaching staff of Higher Education Institutions needs to be mindful of 'out of the box' situations with which students might express in a discussion of experiences, levels of critical discourse and creativity that learning outcomes may not readily recognise or accept. Structures are presently still crafted in grading systems, assumptions about the relationships between learning and time and an organisational structure which are potentially contrary to the transformational principles of OBE (Waghid 2003). Outcomes as pre-determined competencies for teaching and learning are viewed as the starting point for knowledge production processes.

If a constructivist approach is favoured, university teaching should view teaching and learning as a reflective and informed act of engaging students and lecturers in active learning tendencies. But is it reflective enough?

V. PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Hubbard (2001) has identified essential factors such as risk, trust and power that could assist in developing and changing the curriculum and teaching methods in the classroom. To begin the process of change, it demands that the teacher takes a risk with the expected outcomes. But in order to engage students and make topics relevant, lecturers must trust that students will choose significant and meaningful topics. This requires the lecturer to relinquish some power as the 'omniscient director' and assume a co-learner position. These factors are guiding principles for initiating immediate change in lecture rooms.

Setley (1995) is of the opinion that cognisance should be taken of learning styles and multiple intelligences. Aspects of Bloom's taxonomy and diversity might be considered when planning instructional activities; this could be seen as an attempt to engage students in risk-taking learning situations. Jonassen et al. (1999) postulate that Higher Education institutions need to engage students in opportunities for the enhancement of constructivist pedagogy with this action being perceived by students as a means to acquire new knowledge. Via constructivist approaches,

students might share and defend their newly acquired knowledge/content structures in the form of presentations, debates, etc.

According to Kanselaar (2002) and Jonassen (1994), the following seven factors could be crucial to cultivating constructivist pedagogy in Higher Education:

- (1) Learning should take place in authentic and real-world environments.
Authentic experience is a primary catalyst of knowledge construction. Accurate representation of the 'real world' is important to students so that they may construct mental structures that are viable in meaningful situations.
- (2) Learning should involve social negotiation and mediation.
Social interaction provides for the development of socially relevant skills and knowledge acquired via cultural mores and culturally arbitrary rituals (e.g. greetings, gender relations and dress), as well as language.
- (3) Content and skills should be made relevant to the learner.
Knowledge attained (i.e. content and skills) should be relevant to the students' current situation, understanding and goals.
- (4) Content and skills should be understood within the framework of the learner's prior knowledge.
Understanding a student's behaviour requires an understanding of the student's mental structures; that is, an estimation of the student's understanding.
- (5) Students should be assessed formatively, serving to inform future learning experiences.
To take into account a student's current level of understanding is an ongoing teaching and learning process. Therefore, continuous formative assessment should take place as a means of creating the next series of experiences and activities for the student.
- (6) Students should be encouraged to become self-regulatory, self-mediated and self-aware.
The construction of knowledge and meaning require that learners are actively involved in the mental manipulation and self-organisation of experience. Within a cognitive constructivist perspective, self-regulation, self-mediation and self-awareness would be subsumed under the construct of metacognition.
- (7) Lecturers should serve primarily as guides

and facilitators of learning and not instructors.

In cognitive constructivism, the role of the teacher is to create experiences in which students, by their participation, will lead to their appropriate processing information and knowledge acquisition, with the teacher taking on the role as a guide or facilitator in the teaching-learning situation. In social constructivism, students should be guided to an awareness of their experiences and socially agreed-upon meanings. The role of the lecturer is to motivate, provide examples, discuss, facilitate support and challenge and not to attempt to act as a knowledge conduit.

From the above, it seems that constructivist approaches are able to enhance the critical capacities of students as learners. Although we are in agreement with such constructivist approaches, we contend that the critical capacity engendered by constructivism may not be critical enough and that an element of imagination would lead to greater criticality, thereby capacitating students to imagine beyond the expected, the known and the predictable. But this contention would then necessarily exhort that the outcomes of OBE be conceptualised differently. This contention will now be explored.

We argue that OBE as implemented within the South African context is, however, not only constituted of constructivist theories to learning. According to Jacobs et al. (2004), OBE originates from four established theories, namely: experientialism, behaviourism, humanism, critical inquiry and constructivism. It should be noted that it is an immensely difficult task to describe how students learn, even within the framework of learning theories. Within OBE, learning theories could be viewed as an attempt to describe how human beings learn (Letele 2009).

In table 1 is provided an outline of five orientations to learning as reflected by the South African OBE approach.

Learning theories provide students and teaching staff at institutions of Higher Education with a platform for interacting with sources of knowledge and engaging in opportunities in reconstructing knowledge for him-/herself (Alexander 2004). Within the OBE approach to learning, Kotzé (1999) posits that teaching staff are mediators and facilitators of knowledge and should expose students to various strategies to enhance and give meaning to their own learning. Learning within the scope of learning theories

Table 1: Five orientations to learning theories

	<i>Behaviourist</i>	<i>Cognitivist</i>	<i>Humanist</i>	<i>Social/Situated learning</i>	<i>Constructivist</i>
Theorists	Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, Guthrie, Hull, Tolman, and Skinner.	Koffka, Kohler, Wertheimer, Lewin, Piaget, Ausubel, Bruner, Reigeluth, and Gagné Defined by internal mental processes (including insight, information processing, memory, and perception)	Maslow, and Rogers	Bandura; Vygotsky; Argyris; Lave & Wenger;	Bruner, Dewey, Vico, Vygotsky
View of the learning process	Change in behavior		A personal act to fulfill potential	Interaction with and observation of others in a social context	Construction of meaning from experience
Locus of learning	Stimuli in the external environment	Internal cognitive structuring	Affective and cognitive needs	Interaction of person, behavior, and environment	Internal construction of reality by individual
Purpose of instruction	Produces behavioral change in desired direction	Develops capacity and skills to learn better	Becomes self-actualized, autonomous	Models new roles and behavior	Constructs knowledge
Role of the designer	Designs stimuli to elicit desired response	Structures content of learning activity	Facilitates development of the whole person	Presents models of new roles and behaviors	Facilitates and negotiates meaning with learner

provides teaching staff at the level of Higher Education with a framework in which learning outcomes could be conceptualised.

VI. OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION RECONCEPTUALISED THROUGH IMAGINATION

McCambridge (2004) views imagination as the ability to conceive of what is not. According to him, teaching within an imaginative context implies the release of a variety of experiences, thoughts, feelings, insights, surprises, triumphs and disappointments, far beyond the individual's own repertoire. Furthermore, Peters in Waghid (2003) postulates that imagination is a form of action wherein an individual inquires, explores and makes complex judgements of perplexing situations. Outcomes in Higher Education curricula are specified in advance and are transmitted to students who are expected to uncritically accept and apply a 'stock of readymade ideas'. This in turn, according to Waghid (2003) and November (2005), constructs learners who will do according to what they are told and work unreflectively without learning how to think, imagine and enact themselves in relation to education.

Outcomes, thus framed in imagination is about releasing and connecting with the other. In this instance, 'the other' is our students (teachers-to-be) and the learners who they will eventually teach. Through deliberation it becomes possible to connect with the other. Deliberation in a democratic sense that is more inclusive, leads to ways in which voices not often heard or heard at all, can be given space to respond to the other, especially in the classroom. The other in this instance does not only refer to persons, but to life itself. Life (the act of 'being'), should be experienced as a 'risk'; that life has no guarantees but that it is a challenge to encounter the risks in life. Lecturers and teachers should teach in ways that encourage students/learners to take risks. If students/learners are able to take risks, they will have the courage to think beyond what is known and expected (preset outcomes) and to be excited and not fearful of the unexpected and the unknown. Lecturers/teachers often teach only what the curriculum prescribes, for what seems to be for them (teachers/lecturers) safe spaces in terms of 'having done' their work. It is these very safe spaces that stifle the imagination, for imagination is a way of reaching beyond the

knowable and acceptable. Imagination opens up vistas and windows upon life that have been shut. Oakeshott (1998) in discussing an understanding of what shapes education states: "Education is not about acquiring a stock of ready-made ideas, images, sentiments, beliefs etc.; it is learning to look, to listen, to think, to feel, to imagine, to believe, to understand, to choose, to wish". In discussing the general principle of education (that which makes it what it is), Waghid (2003) states that "the general principle of education explains that human beings ought to engage not in order to do 'this or that', but to learn how to think, understand, imagine and enact themselves in relation to 'wished-for outcomes.' Many students and learners are confined to desperate situations such as poverty, abuse, crime, hunger and HIV/AIDS. Imagination shows them that it is possible to think of the world as if it could be otherwise. It becomes possible to dream dreams that lift them from their desperate confinement and free them to encounter 'the other', something different.

When outcomes are conceptualised through imagination, "a certain level of creativity, innovation, thrill and amazement" become possible (Epstein-Jannai 2001). Outcomes that are preset cannot engender the same type of teaching and learning, for each step is methodically worked out in advance, leaving very little or no room for any deviation. Outcomes framed through imagination are more critical in nature since they looks at things as if they can be otherwise and do not accept what is given. The problem is that within the classroom, deviation in any form is perceived as a hindrance to attaining the preset outcome and may even be penalised. Preset outcomes may manipulate the way in which students/pupils are to attain the outcome (to reach success). Success is defined and prescriptive and in this way stifling and unchallenging to learners who would want to reach beyond the given and perhaps see a world and life different from the known in a quest to encounter the other. Greene (1995) asserts: "to understand how children themselves reach out for meanings, go beyond conventional limits (once doors are ajar), to seek coherence and explanations is to be better able to provoke and release rather than to impose and control. Young people have the capacity to construct multiple realities".

Our position as it relates to the above-mentioned concur with that of Waghid (2003), who states "specifying outcomes without being sensi-

tive towards rational reflection and imagination might not necessarily help teachers and lecturers predict, control, manage, overcome, or eliminate educational problems"

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF RECONCEPTUALIZED OUTCOMES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

We shall now briefly look at current notions of teaching and learning before exploring the implications of reconceptualized outcomes for the teaching-learning practice.

At present, educational policy in South Africa seems to be driven very much by forces outside of education that severely impinge upon the way education is conceptualized. An instance is the ideals of neo-liberalism that claim that education should prepare workers for a specific type of job-market. This notion of the aim of education seems to be contrary to the traditional or intrinsic notion that education should be acquired for its own sake, rather than for a seemingly extrinsic motivation such as financial prosperity. More and more, education and schooling seem to be about the abilities/skills that are inculcated during life at school. Furthermore, there is an extraordinary emphasis on skills in Higher Education as well, rather than the type of people/teachers education can enable students/learners and teachers to become (November 2005). Subjects such as mathematics and the sciences are given priority. In relation to American education, Greene (1995) states that "the familiar paradigms seem still to be in use; the need for alternative possibilities in the face of economic and demographic changes is repressed and ignored". These words also ring true for South Africa.

From 2006 (NDE 2005) it is compulsory for all learners to take Mathematics irrespective of ability levels and the implications for learners and society as a whole. There is a strong emphasis on the natural sciences in South Africa (DoE 2007). In America, it is declared that "All students in the academic disciplines should meet world-class standards and rank 'first in the world in science and math achievement'" (Greene 1995). In South Africa, students who wish to qualify as teachers with subjects such as mathematics and science are given special incentives such as bursaries. At the same time, subjects such as music, art and physical education have been downplayed to a large extent, with some of these subjects

disappearing altogether from the curriculum (van Wyk 2007). Other subjects exist only as learning areas where parents pay for the teaching of these as separate learning areas and this occurs mostly in the more advantaged schools where there is a greater pool of resources as well as wealth (Mukadam 2008). It seems that those learning areas, to which the aesthetics of life seem to be attached, are valued currently as being less important. Appreciation of 'the finer side of life' or the 'finer things in life' seems to be interpreted as a waste and a misguided effort at education and reserved for those who can afford it. This is the message that the National Department of Education is sending out to teachers, students and learners. Those who are disadvantaged seem to be getting the message that they need to get on with skilling themselves for the job market which includes skills that the market demands and expects schools and universities to provide. With regard to schooling and Higher Education, in this view, it is about utility value and should, thus have an instrumental bent to it to achieve this aim. This seems to be the current rationality about and in education, also called technical rationality. We shall briefly discuss technical rationality as it impacts upon education in a specific way which has implications for a teaching and learning practice.

Technical rationality is about finding the best means to an end. This shows that the thinking behind technical rationality is of a special kind in terms of education. As soon as the end goal has been determined, all that is left is to determine the best means to that end. Problems in education become technical matters that can be fixed technically. Principals of schools become managers and manage problems and are judged in terms of performance. Outcomes in education are conceptualised in terms of efficiency and responsibility and this, in real terms, means cost-saving measures and success that is measured in terms of outputs that include measurable results. Universities and university departments the world over are also currently judged in terms of neo-liberal performance standards (November 2005).

VIII. CONCLUSION

What seems to be lost is the type of people teachers (student-teachers) and learners become. Education should, we think, also be relevant to what society finds worthwhile in transferring to

the next generation. As soon as one thinks about education in this way, it includes what is valuable, that is, the virtues and not only the skills that citizens should practise in a democratic society. When we think about education in this way, education appropriates an ethical function that seems to be absent when thinking about education in a technical-instrumentalist manner. If teachers, students and learners are to be conceptualised as subjects in a teaching-learning practice it implies action, that is, that as critical learners they are able to take initiatives, be able to imagine what the future would be like, look for openings, inquire about possibilities, about moving in search and in pursuit of knowledge without requiring guarantees (Greene 1995). These are the qualities, we contend, that education in South Africa should engender if it is to produce critical citizens for a meaningful and pragmatic democracy.

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