Editorial

Taken together, the five papers in this edition of CRiSTaL point to the need for broad sweeping, deep transformations on the part of universities who are currently driven by the priorities of a massified, marketised, performative, and usually under resourced global higher education system. The papers particularly draw out how new challenges arise within the context of more technology-based learning. For example, technology infuses how morals, character education, knowledge, skills ,and values for social justice can or cannot become embedded within curricula, pedagogy, administrative processes, funding, and relationships between students play out through higher education. In some respects, the five papers confirm what Davids and Whagid (2021: 113) suggest is needed for progress towards social justice in South African universities, which involves identifying ways in which the universities' studied, neglect to 'actualise learning possibilities for humanity' and drawing attention to structures, processes and practices that are (sometimes in ways accentuated by the pandemic) preoccupied 'with massification and performativity'. Which, in many of their current forms are alienating for all students. However, in focusing on a critical issue within specific university contexts, each paper in this journal identifies and unpacks an oppressive practice that is embedded within the South African system, but each paper also develops a degree of optimism, by identifying concepts and practices that do or could help us build towards greater social justice through higher education.

The first paper by Ntimi N. Mtawa, 'Using partial justice to interrogate the meanings and applications of social justice in service-learning' provides a salutary reminder of the danger of using radical concepts to describe actions in universities that are not deeply transformative. It can exaggerate or distort their meaning. Hence, Mtawa provides a concept that can help to work towards social justice in a realistic way within the current context. Sen's notion of partial justice is offered as a realistic and fruitful representation of the changes that are usually achieved through students' service-learning. Drawing upon student data from a mixed methods study, Mtawa critiques those who unproblematically use the notion of perfect social justice to describe what is happening in service learning, because what happens does not adhere to Rawl's conceptualisation of perfect justice. This would require that students, staff, and communities were empowered to dismantle unjust structures, practices, relationships, and generate deep change towards a more just system. It is argued that if universities use perfect social justice to describe what is happening, then there is a danger of the true meaning of this concept being obscured and prevented from actualisation. In identifying four ways that some justices can be enhanced and some injustice can be at least partially dismantled by service-learning, Mtawa prefers the notion of partial justice. These map on well to Nussbaum''s (1998) view of what capacities can be cultivated through education. Capacities that for me resonate with the British Sociologist Basil Bernstein's conception of pedagogic rights (McLean, et al., 2013).

In the second paper by Thembeka Shange, 'Reconceptualising 'Caring' in E-tutor-Student Interactions during the Covid-19 Pandemic in an ODeL University in South Africa', an issue arising in Open Distance E-Learning (ODeL) universities is examined. ODeL universities provide distance courses online and, pre-pandemic, often incorporated posted material and in-person assessment at assessment centres. Whilst this form of Higher Education is a big part of the South African strategy to widen access to socio-economically poorer students, especially those who are rural, new injustices such as technological and internet inequities have emerged and have an important impact. ODeL universities in South Africa include students from the Southern African Development Community for example, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia, and Nigeria. Hence, identifying issues with regard to the inclusiveness of these far-reaching universities and developing ways of addressing them is important.

Shange's central argument is that an ethics of care is needed to support these students to develop into caring graduates and in order that they experience an inclusive education system that transforms them for the better. However, it is suggested that during the pandemic, the emergency move to total online teaching and examining was not underpinned by a relational model of the ethics of care: a mode of care that the author suggests will promote better outcomes for students and society. The author argues that care needs to be incorporated into online learning but finds that the focus on the technical aspects of teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic, undermined any efforts towards giving and facilitating the development of caring. The paper argues modelling (teaching and moral dispositions for care), dialogue between those prepared to care and those who need it, practicing caring, and confirming that to care will make the student better than they are now, would provide a good model for the future. This involves really getting to know students and what they want, are nervous of, desire, and so forth. It is through giving and developing caring through university teaching that it is believed that more just outcomes, as opposed to only economic focused ones, which in truth may lead to their exploitation, will be developed.

In paper three, Daniel Parker, Jo-Anne Vorster, Lynn Quinn, and Margaret Blackie develop a Bernsteinian perspective on hybrid approaches to teaching in the emergency context of the Covid-19 pandemic. They do this by analysing a foundational science module developed and taught by the lead author during the pandemic that was developed with Bernstein's principles in mind. As with all the other papers in this issue, the power of critical concepts in generating more just outcomes are therefore emphasised. The value of combining pedagogic and curricula approaches to relay instructional discourse (the knowledge of the discipline) and regulative discourse (aspects facilitating the development of the student's identity and their confidence in relation to being a science knower) is explored (Bernstein, 2000). Drawing upon the likes of Morrow (2008), Parker, et al. argue that the students who are based in a comprehensive university whereby knowers, particularly those from populations not usually associated with going to university, can be developed through blended learning, including online methodologies, if teaching is informed by sound principles. As with Shange, Parker and colleagues also emphasise the increasing importance of e-learning for facilitating or interrupting social justice. This paper

also brings out the way that these Bernsteinian concepts have purchase beyond the face-to-face context in which they were developed.

The fourth paper by Ingrid Marais issues returns us to an ODeL university and the issues raised by academic integrity during the Covid-19 pandemic. This fascinating paper illustrates how concepts such as academic integrity encapsulate, perpetuate, and sometimes transform the moral and ideological environment of universities for better or for worse. Drawing upon Bretag (2016) the concept of academic integrity is defined as being related to honesty, trust, fairness, equity, respect, and responsibility, and how they are relayed within universities. The paper takes those of us not familiar with the academic integrity literature on a wonderful journey that allows us to see the complexity of morality, codes, and practices that are embedded in a concept like academic integrity. It also charts the enormous rise in the number of academic integrity cases during the move to online exams, the way in which institutional practices and processes changed, and it excavates what all of this says about universities the current state of their values and approaches. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic gave rise to a moral panic fuelled by a belief that cheating was easier. If the evidence were followed there would have been less concern, as we are told that there are less cases of cheating online than in in-person universities. Readers are made aware of the range of practices that are usual for academics such as sharing, collaborating, proof reading, and editing can become problematic under individualised rules about academic integrity. It discusses the expansion of ways of potentially cheating when assessment and exams went online and much more. Universities purchased and prioritised an online proctor tool for safeguarding academic integrity which was not helpful operationally for academics working on large courses, some with up to 3000 students, and who would have to check and administer any actions. Marais is basically critical of approaches that focus on punishment, and a process that pitches staff against students; instead she sides with those who advocate an institution wide and whole culture approach to academic integrity that focuses on the morality of the institution and those who inhabit it.

In the final paper, Fhatuwani Ravhuhali, Hlayisani Mboweni, and Lutendo Nendauni make a case for the inclusion of students as an important part of the induction of new university teachers. In common with Shange, they prioritise an ethics of care and human care theory in research which explored the value of a student as partners approach to inducting staff. What this means is that care is thought of as a priority for staff and students and as an institutional value. Care, mutual respect, receptiveness, and other relationally driven values are held central to student as partner work. Hence, it is important that induction for new academics involves academics, students, managers, administrators, student unions, and university service staff, and that they work and make decisions together for mutual benefit. Collaboration in owning and generating knowledge and achieving justice for all, including hermeneutic justice, is important. The research explores the value of this approach of embedding students in a staff induction programme and identifies key strengths.

The stimulating and insightful range of critical perspectives and analysis offered in this edition of CRiSTaL raise important questions regarding whether the depth and scope of the issues

facing the global higher education system could be changed one practice at a time through a process akin to Aufhebung, as is suggested if we consider the papers collectively. Can elements of current practice be preserved, whilst others drop away and there are emergent new process and practices which transcend the current, through new concepts and dialectics (changing relationships between lecturers and students, technology, and the university for example) and entities (McKinnon, 2005).

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Using partial justice to interrogate the meanings and applications of social justice in service-learning

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Abstract

This paper provides an account of the concept of social justice and how it is loosely and uncritically defined and applied in service-learning context. Social justice is deemed as an approach to service-learning, which allows all actors to actively participate in decision-making, share power and benefit equally. This framing of social justice in service-learning is largely within the realm of John Rawls' perfect justice. There is relatively little attention given to small and actionable changes yielded in and through service-learning. As such, this paper uses the concept of 'partial justice' as purported by Amartya Sen to interrogate the meanings and applications of social justice in service-learning. The paper draws on qualitative data collected through document analysis, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with students, staff, and community members. The focus and contribution of the paper is timely and pertinent given the unexamined conceptions and use of social justice in service-learning context.

Keywords: Service-learning, social justice, perfect justice, partial justice, remediable injustice

Introduction

In the African, and particularly South African higher education context, service-learning is still conceptually and empirically an under-researched field. One of the salient features of service-learning in the mainstream literature is that it is often associated with the notion of social justice[1]. However, there is lack of critical analysis of what social justice in service-learning means, how can it be achieved and under what conditions. In fact, Hytten and Bettez (2011: 8) reveal that 'yet the more we see people invoking the idea of social justice, the less clear it becomes what people mean, and if it is meaningful at all'. Defined as a form of experiential education intended to address human and community needs together with structured

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[1] Most conceptions of social justice refer to an egalitarian society that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and value human rights, and that recognised the dignity of every human being (Zajda, et al., 2006: 9-10).

opportunities designed to promote student learning and development (Jacoby, 1996), service-learning is largely regarded as a contributor of social justice in its broader sense (Mitchell, 2008; Stoecker, 2016; Unfried & Canner, 2019; LaDuca, et al., 2020). The debate about social justice in service-learning context is twofold. The first debate is a result of disenchantment with the traditional but dominant approach to service-learning (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Britt, 2012). Through this approach, higher education institutions frame and practice service-learning as a charity agenda rather than an empowering and transformative endeavour (Stoecker, 2017; Mtawa, 2019). At the core of the charity approach is the emphasis on helping others and developing a sense of altruism through giving back to the community in a goodwill and voluntary basis (Bialka, et al., 2019). The second debate is that of the adherents of social justice model of service-learning through which they provide a counterargument that the charity approach to service-learning is narrow and limits its transformative potentials. Those who argue for a social justice model position it as both an approach to, as well as an outcome of, service-learning. When embedded in a social justice approach, service-learning can serve as a repertoire through which participants, namely university staff and students, and multiple external communities transform and dismantle structures and conditions that perpetuate inequalities and injustices within higher education institutions and in local milieu (Mtawa, 2019; Li et al., 2019). Those who take this perspective (such as Schulz, 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Bialka et al., 2019) seem to share common assumptions and argue alongside John Rawls' notion of social justice, which connotes having just institutional and social arrangements in search for perfect justice. Such is an ambitious and ideal ways of articulating what can be achieved in and through service-learning.

While the social justice approach to service-learning continues to receive support and attention in the literature and empirical studies (Jessup-Anger, at al., 2019; Lee & McAdams, 2019), questions of what kind of justice, how it is or can be achieved and under what conditions remain unresolved. As described by Richards-Schuster, Espitia and Rodems (2019) social justice is not always clearly articulated or is articulated in different and sometimes contradictory ways particularly in service-learning field (Hytten & Bettez, 2011).

There are two observations that can be made when social justice is linked to service-learning. One, despite social justice remaining an enigmatic, cryptic, and imprecise concept (Srivastav, 2016) literature continues to describe service-learning as repertoire through social justice can be promoted. Two, the contribution of service-learning to advancing social justice is mainly framed in line with John Rawls' 'perfect justice' position. This paper is concerned with these observations as it questions the ability of service-learning to alter structural and systemic inequalities to build a perfect society. In doing so, the paper takes up Sen's position and uses the idea of 'partial justice' to interrogate the meanings and applications of social justice in service-learning. It is premised on two propositions. One, the concept of social justice is loosely used in service-learning context. Two, the conditions under which higher education institutions operate in Africa in general and South Africa in particular are likely to impede the ability of service-learning to accomplish perfect justice in Rawls' direction even if the initial intention is to

do so. As such, this paper focuses on a partial justice by looking at what is possible to achieve in through service-learning. The paper draws on empirical evidence from the broader study that focused on the role of service-learning in promoting human development at one South African university.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first section is the review of literature that focuses on i) John Rawls' notion of justice, service-learning within John Rawls' notion of justice, and ii) the pitfalls of service-learning when approached from Rawls' notion of justice. The second section deals with an analysis of partial justice as an ideal framing and outcomes of service-learning. The methodology for this study is presented in section three. The fourth section provides findings and discussion. The last section concludes the paper.

Literature Review
John Rawls' notion of justice
In his path breaking book '*A Theory of Justice*' (1971: 112), philosopher John Rawls equates justice with fairness, which can be achieved if:

> A group of mutually disinterested individuals, unacquainted with their places in society, if given the charge to divide up society's resources, would inevitably arrive at the creation of a just society that would include an equitable distribution of rights and responsibilities and opportunities for self-development for everyone.

At the nerve-centre of Rawls' conception of justice are two principles, namely i) each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others, and ii) social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a) reasonably expected to be everyone's advantage; and b) attached to positions and offices open to all. An interpretation of these two perspectives is that 'the primary subject of the principles of justice is the basic structure of society, the arrangement of major social institutions into one scheme of cooperation' (Rawls, 1971: 47). For Rawls, justice is the virtue of social institutions, and no matter how efficient and well-arranged these institutions are, they must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust (Rawls, 1971). In this context, advancing justice depends on the existence of perfect social institutions, which are responsible for distributing the fundamental rights and duties or what Rawls describes as 'primary goods' efficiently.

One of the central features of Rawls' conception of justice is that of setting up just institutions and requiring that people's behaviour comply entirely with the demands of proper functioning of these institutions (Sen, 2009; Johnston, 2011). The emphasis on identifying and creating just institutional arrangements for a society points towards two perspectives. One is identifying a perfect justice[2] rather than relative comparisons of justice and injustice. A major weakness of this position is that it disregards comparing feasible societies in the process of

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[2] Perfect justice entails perfect institutions, social arrangement and society is a system of cooperation for mutual advantage between individuals.

promoting justice. Thus, it 'may fall short of the ideals of perfection' (Sen, 2009) as it does not take into account non-ideal conditions that impede the ability to achieve full justice (Johnson, 2011). In essence, 'if justice is fairness, then a fully fair and just society will intuitively be one in which individuals and institutions strictly comply with fair principles' (Arvan, 2014: 97). Two, the transcendental[3] institutionalism emphasises the centrality of getting institutions right rather than the actual societies that would ultimately emerge in the process of promoting justice (Sen, 2009). In this way, the second premise forecloses the importance of non-institutional features such as actual behaviours of people and their social interactions (Sen, 2009). Thus, this articulation of perfect justice is labelled as hypothetical and experimental (Srivastav, 2016). In this context, an important question to ask is 'can service-learning contribute to social justice in line with transcendental institutionalism claims for perfect justice?'

Locating service-learning within John Rawls' conception of justice

The narratives about service-learning for social justice take a radical and progressive view of disrupting and deconstructing systems and structures that perpetuate inequalities. The common thread that runs through this cluster of literature is that service-learning advances social justice in several ways. Some argue that service-learning awakens participants to injustice and catalyses collective action (Britt, 2012; Mather & Konkle, 2013; Johnson, 2014). Others reveal that it involves working towards distributing power amongst all service-learning actors, developing mutual and reciprocal relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective (Mitchell, 2008). In the more recent past, a social justice model of service-learning has been heralded for elevating community members' voices and agency (Mtawa & Fongwa, 2020) and allowing participants to reflect on their privilege and diverse ways of being and thinking (Halverson-Wente & Halverson-Wente, 2014; Mtawa & Wilson-Strydom, 2018; Mtawa, 2019). In the main, the ways in which service-learning is articulated and its contribution to social justice is largely embedded in John Rawls' perfect justice. The table below provides a summary of the assumptions of service-learning and its perceived contributions to social justice in the direction of John Rawls' perfect justice.

Table 1: Summary of service-learning assumptions

	Service-learning assumptions
Service-Learning from John Rawls' framing of perfect justice	• Contributes to dismantling structures of systemic inequalities • Leads to creating just institutions and practices • Operates in the context where power and benefits are distributed equally to all actors • Operates in an ideal society where there are perfect, just and right institutions • Dismantles unjust and oppressive systems

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[3] Transcendental is an approach, which is concerned solely with perfect justice without making comparative assessment (Sen, 2009).

Adding to the above table is Arvan's (2014) interpretation of Rawls' three distinct assumptions of an ideal theory of justice. For service-learning to advance the assumptions outlined in the above table, it would need to:

a) operate under the conditions in which people are generally able and willing to cooperate under common social-political institutions,
b) operate in society or communities that conform to a principle of equal basic liberties and conditions under which the full exercise of basic liberties can be enjoyed, and
c) operate in reasonably favourable conditions, which often do not exist.

The above assumptions indicate the complex issues that service-learning is expected to address when framed as a contributor of perfect justice. However, those who link service-learning to issues of social justice in Rawls' sense, their expectations are largely hypothetical rather than realistic. This leads us to the pitfalls of locating service-learning within Rawls' conception of perfect justice.

Pitfalls of John Rawls' notion of justice and a case for partial justice
A theoretical framing of service-learning

John Rawls notion of justice has attracted some criticisms. One of the critics is Amartya Sen. In his seminal book *The Idea of Justice,* Sen (2009) questions what he calls the 'transcendental institutionalism', which focuses on perfect justice through creating right and just institutions and behaviour. Simply put, Sen criticizes Rawls' idea of perfect justice by arguing that is not about the nature of perfect justice, rather about how we can proceed to address the question of enhancing justice and removing injustice. In the quest for an alternative idea of justice, Sen argues for a 'realization-focused conception of justice', which is a result of factual institutions, actual behaviour, and other influences. In Sen's sense, rather than conceptualizing justice in terms of certain institutions arrangements, we should also focus on what emerges in society, the kind of lives people can lead given the institutions, rules and actual behaviour that affect human lives. In other words, Sen is of the view that institutions and structures in society are not perfect and the quest for social justice should take into account these limitations. In defending his position, Sen uses the notion of 'partial theory of justice' to refer to incomplete justice or non-ideal justice (Sen, 2009). For Sen, it is not about perfect justice; rather, we should strive toward removing remediable injustices around us, which we want to eliminate, with the ultimate goals of striving towards the perfect justice. Broadly, Sen's conception of justices aims at exploring ways and means of making the world less unjust.

Using Arvan's (2014) interpretation, there are other three potential pitfalls of approaching service-learning in line with Rawls' ideal justice. First, it assumes that everyone has equal obligation to prefer a fully just society and the elimination of any and every injustice (natural duties of justice). Second, not everyone lives up to the obligation of natural duties of justice and

sometimes even some people even oppose the realisation of a just society. Third, given the structural arrangements, there is no fair treatment of all. For Arvan (2014), these are three non-ideal elements, which reflect the context in which service-learning exists. With service-learning operating in contexts which are different from these three dimensions, a partial justice approach seems to be an ideal framing.

In an ideal just society, all members of a society would have their basic needs and liberties guaranteed. They would have equal chances, voices, autonomy, and opportunities to actively participate in social, cultural, political, environmental, and technological activities. This, however, would depend largely on building and having perfect, right, and just institutions, practices and behaviour that ensure equality of opportunities. However, the reality is that we live in an imperfect or non-ideal world imbued with structural, systemic, and enduring inequalities. In fact, we live in a society made up of structures that are responsible for entrenching different forms of inequalities and injustice. Service-learning finds itself at the crossroad where on the one end of the spectrum it operates in the context of complex and imperfect institutional arrangements as well as structural and systemic inequalities. On the other hand of the spectrum, service-learning is expected to dismantle the very structures, institutions, practices, and behaviour that result in unjust society and imperfect institutional arrangements.

Given the conditions under which service-learning operates and the difficulties it faces to advance perfect justice, promoting partial justice appears to be the likely possibility (Mtawa & Wilson-Strydom, 2018). For the purpose of this paper, partial justice refers to incomplete justice or non-ideal justice, geared towards removing remediable injustices around us with the ultimate goal of striving towards perfect justice (Sen, 2009). In other words, partial justice in service-learning would entails possible outcomes that can be realised given the existing conditions. As Sen (2006: 226) points out, 'a partial ordering can be very useful without being able to lead to any transcended identification of a fully just society'. The use of partial justice in service-learning aligns with Sen's (2006: 226) view that 'even without the possibility of setting up some of these [right] institutions, it is, of course, possible to advance justice or to reduce injustice to a considerable extent'. Using Nussbaum's (2000) framing, it is about striving to reduce and remove inequalities in people's capabilities[4] to function in ways that are elemental to such a life. Acting justly within partial justice framework would then involve six objectives. Paraphrased from Drydyk (2012: 33), they include:

1) reducing capability shortfalls,
2) expanding capabilities for all,
3) saving the worst-off as a first step towards their full participation in economy and society,

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[4] Capabilities are the range of real opportunities from which one can choose (Sen, 1999, 1993).

4) which is also to be promoted by a system of entitlements protecting all from social exclusion, while

5) supporting the empowerment of those whose capabilities are to expand, and

6) respecting ethical values and legitimate procedures.

For service-learning, partial justice seems to be the realistic outcome given that it offers a glimpse of possibilities for promoting some elements of justice. Of critical relevance to framing service-learning from a partial justice theory is the longstanding criticism that if gone unexamined, service-learning may perpetuate the very injustice and inequalities it sets out to dismantle (Butin, 2010; Preece, 2016). Stith, et al. (2021: 9) are even more critical as they argue that 'enactment of social justice within service-learning is complicated because it has not been a universal aspiration or intended outcome among practitioner-scholars'. While several critics are of the same view as Stith et al., it is necessary to caution against dismissing the contribution of service-learning to achieving some form of justice even in some smallest ways. However, if we were to take a partial justice approach, some questions emerge. These are (i) what would be service-learning outcomes that can enable us to remove remediable injustice around us? (ii) how would that service-learning look like?

The table below provides some illustrative examples of what can be considered to partial justice outcomes of service-learning:

Table 2: Practical assumptions and possibilities of service-learning

	Practical assumptions and possibilities of service-learning
Service-learning from the idea of partial justice	Contribute behavioural change
	Promote social affiliation – obligation for others
	Cultivate actors' virtue in dealings with others
	Promote recognition of one's privilege and others' underprivileged circumstances
	Contribute to recognising equal human dignity and worth
	Promote awareness capability
	Advance a sense of active participation and inclusion
	Promote human agency and empowerment
	Cultivate a sense of caring/concerns for the common good

Sources: Partial justice expression adapted from Nussbaum (2000), Sen (2009), Drydyk (2012).

The assumptions and possibilities outlined in the above table align with those who criticise service-learning for its inability to transform structural unjust systems and practices (Mitchell, 2008; Stoecker, 2017). Central to these assumptions and possibilities is that they might not lead to creating perfect justice, rather they point towards the direction of achieving some form of justice.

Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative study that was undertaken at a select South African university. The bulk of the evidence supporting the claims for partial justice outcomes of service-learning is based on data collected between 2014 and 2015. The data collection involved interviews with lecturers and university's administrators, focus groups with students and community members and documents analysis of service-learning module descriptions. From the interviews and focus groups, the intention was to obtain the perspectives of lecturers, students and community members on the approaches, benefits and lived experience of their involvement in service-learning. The analysis of documents was intended to capture the articulation of goals and benefits of service-learning modules. The lecturers, students and documents were from the Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Humanities.

The interviews involved sixteen (n-16) lecturers and four (n-4) university administrators responsible for service-learning. The interviews were focused on four questions:

1. What is the dominant model or approach used in service-learning at this university?
2. What opportunities does service-learning provide to participants?
3. What are the intended benefits of SL to the university and communities?
4. How are communities' dynamics and conditions reflected in and influence service-learning?

The four (n-4) focus groups each with twelve students from the Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Humanities were guided by the following questions:

1. What kind of activities do you undertake in communities?
2. How would you describe your contribution to communities through service-learning?
3. How does service-learning experience impact or benefit you?

The two (n-2) focus groups with community members were centred on the following questions:

1. How can you describe your involvement in service-learning?
2. Do you think engaging with students/lecturers in service-learning has any value or impact in your life and community?
3. What do you think could be done for service-learning to have lasting impact in communities?

In terms of documents analysis, documents related to four service-learning modules offered in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Humanities were analysed. A special attention was given to the articulations of the module descriptions in terms of the intended

benefits of service-learning. In all cases, the data was collected after ethical clearance was granted by the university involved in the study (X-EDU-2014-055).

The data collected through interviews, focus groups and documents analysis were transcribed and manually coded into themes and sub-themes (Saldana, 2009). Specifically, the analysis involved an interactive process, which comprised of coding of patterns; building categories of meaning through aggregation of coding elements; and integrating diverse categories into themes (Babbie, 2007). Both deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis were employed whereby some themes emerged from the raw data while analytical tools (partial justice elements) guided the development of other themes. The data analysis paid a particular focus on the articulated and perceived approaches and benefits of service-learning across sources of data. There was no difference in terms of articulation of the benefits of service-learning between humanities and health sciences participants and documents. While the analysis looked at the benefits of service-learning broadly, a closer look at the data pointed towards partial outcomes, as evidenced in the following findings.

Findings and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the data revealed four findings that can be glossed as key elements of partial justice outcomes of service-learning. These include (1) advocacy, activist works, and awareness promotion between and among actors; (2) access to skills and knowledge; (3) fuelling a sense of empowerment and self-help; and (4) *Ubuntu*, affiliation, and diversity literacy. Central to these findings is that they are critical to service-learning particularly in contexts such as South Africa that is bedecked by unjust structural conditions, which impede its transformative potential in a perfect justice fashion. As such, achieving partial outcomes is better than doing nothing and it enables us to address remediable and intolerable injustice' around us (Sen, 2009). The findings below are examples of service-learning outcomes, which are largely at partial level and were common across the data gathered and transcribed.

Advocacy, activist works, and awareness promotion

One of the overlooked contributions of service-learning is its ability to allow participants (actors) to be involved in advocacy and activist work as well as raise awareness of different social, political, economic, environmental, technological and health issues in communities. In this study, students appreciated that service-learning provided opportunities for them to provide alternative solutions to some issues facing community members mainly. The students' voice with respect to advocacy are in line with Berke, et al. (2010: 13) 'the underlying principle of advocacy is a desire to make a difference by improving policies and practices as well as specific behaviour'. Some of the advocacy work that students pointed out are those related to women abuse, information sharing and raising awareness:

> *I have been involved in community service-learning at the police station advocating against women domestic abuse. The purpose of service-learning is that it helps you link*

people with resources, make them aware of resources that are available in their immediate environment because people are so overwhelmed, and they do not see what is around them. So, our project is called 'victim empowerment'. So, we increase women's awareness of their rights and make them aware that there are places they can go when experiencing abuse (Students – focus group).

The above excerpt captures elements of obligation for others, recognition of equal human dignity and worthy, and awareness but at a partial level. The advocacy work undertaken by students is valued by community members. When asked what they think students should focus on when they come to their community, one community member stated:

They can focus on issues of gender abuse, alcoholism, and counselling. Students doing psychology can help in these areas. Because we have OT (occupational therapy), medical students, nursing education students, sports students, we don't have law students, but they can do a lot. (Community member).

The above excerpt provides a classic example of the advocacy work related to issues of gender-based violence (GBV) as well as inequality in terms of access to resources and information. The advocacy work highlighted by students and community members may not address the deep-seated root causes of GBV issues and enduring inequalities in South Africa; however, advancing women rights and linking people with possible resources are the demonstration of partial outcomes, which can lead into addressing some injustice though in a smallest and positive ways.

Similarly, students reflected on the advocacy work aimed at mentoring underprivileged children regarding educational issues. A study of service-learning in Canada by Patel, et al. (2021) found that mentorship is one of the key components to advocacy-related programming focusing on high school students and at-risk youth, which impact health decisions and self-esteem. Consider this excerpt:

We started this group called 'Chosen Generation'. We realised that we are just students ourselves and we can't do much. We can't buy food each and every family every month but the least we can mentor children who are from less privileged backgrounds. Their parents do not work because they didn't go to school. So, they can't really encourage the child about education because they don't know the importance of education. So, we realised that it's all about mentoring the children and not just doing it once when it is close to final exams (Students – focus group).

With the existing socio-economic inequality coupled with a divided education system in South Africa (Spaull, 2013; Letseka, 2014), advocacy work focusing on addressing education inequality through service-learning though partially appears to be a useful project. While

education inequality in South Africa is a structural and systemic issue, what students do in communities through service-learning may contribute to removing some forms of inequality without creating perfect institutions and practice in the education sector. A good example is described below:

> *I started an organisation last year because I saw a gap between learners who go to public schools and those who go to the multiracial or model C schools. When they get to tertiary level the adaptation skills are not the same. So, we go to these schools in the locations[5] and we give talks to try to equip them with life skills and also academic skills. We have tutors who help them with home works and other things during weekends. We try to find bursary opportunities that are available and to give information on how to apply for bursary because most of them feel that because parents don't have money after I finish matric there is nothing they can do. Many think that maybe they will need to go find employment in construction sites. So, we are trying to bridge that gap between public schools and model C schools* (Students - focus group).

From the above excerpts, there are clear evidence to support that service-learning provides a fertile space for participants to understand, be aware of and take actions to address critical issues in society. For students, it allows them to practice advocacy and activist work through which they apply their knowledge, skills, talents, and different forms of capital (resources) with the hope of addressing social problems. The work students do in communities may raise awareness, inspire action on community issues and galvanise support for community cause. A case in point is students' focus on supporting the less privileged to have access to equitable education. The advocacy and activist work students are involved in appears to be at the level of removing possible and remediable inequalities. As such, the underlying structural inequalities and their root causes remain, thus, impeding the building of perfect justice.

Fuelling a sense of empowerment and self-help in communities

One of the criticisms levelled against service-learning field is that it positions community members as disempowered individual who lack control, agency and ownership of the activities that affect their lives (Mtawa, 2019). The analysis of the data reveals that community members are not disempowered, rather they have limited opportunities and access to an enabling environment and conditions that allow them to realise their potential. As such, what is needed in communities are programmes such as service-learning that open up opportunities for community members to actively participate in productive and valued activities. If we take it from a partial justice standpoint, service-learning makes significant contribution to stimulating a sense of empowerment and self-help capacity for community members. The voices of

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[5] Locations in South African context refers to areas where working class people reside and often in informal settlements.

lecturers and students who participated in this study pointed towards some dimensions, which promote community members' ability to act and bring about change for themselves. The views of some lecturers are captured as follows:

> *Through my students, young people especially from disadvantaged backgrounds are in a position to dream big, they are in the position to see beyond their poverty or poor circumstances. I am not for giving out food and giving out money and all that, but I would like these learners from underprivileged backgrounds to be in a position to dream and I believe that is how we can, not end poverty but getting to address the issue of poverty. We are empowering kids in poor communities* (Service-learning lecturer).

This excerpt emphasises the centrality of creating enabling opportunities for people to dream '*aspire*', to do things for themselves '*self-help capacity*', and removing the dependency mentality in communities. Similarly, another lecturer stated that:

> *[...] I love uplifting the community and empowering people so that they can help themselves. Sharing knowledge is important in helping people to help themselves you can go into health dialogue and where they can apply what you shared but you also understand from them problems that they have* (Service-learning lecturer).

The lecturers' perspectives are in line with what students think that they can and are doing in promoting a sense of empowerment and aspiration in communities. Of most relevance is that students do not describe service-learning as merely academic credit bearing exercise, rather they see it as an opportunity to contribute to social change in some ways. Students appears to understand empowerment in Davis and Wells' (2016) sense of the ability of community to be the author of their own lives. For example, one student expressed that:

> *For me going back to the purpose of service-learning I would say it is not about you, it is about creating opportunities for the communities that even when you leave at least there is something that they can hold onto. Empowerment is one of the things that you can bring, you are not going to teach them but just making them aware of their inner potential. So, service-learning is about trying to come up with solutions to issues, you don't solve problems for them. So, you help them to move forward for themselves* (Students – focus group).

There was a view from students, which mirrors closely with the perspective that 'students from regional, rural and remote backgrounds can see stories and examples of those from similar backgrounds who have successfully navigated the journey to and through tertiary education' (Heberlein, 2020: 23). The view of students acting as conduit to aspire young people

to realise their full educational potential was dominant during the discussion. This perspective is apparent in this excerpt:

> *Making it to the university I am a role model to some children back home because they are going to look up to me saying if I made it, they can also make it. I am from a small village in Lesotho, so when we do service-learning, and they see me from the university they get inspired. I do not go house to house to tell them what I do but by just sharing my dreams and hustles they get inspired* (Students – focus group).

The above view was supported by other students who proposed that:

> *We can do something with regards to empowering youth. People from higher education can come and encourage young people and help them apply for bursaries if they qualify. We should empower people to go to school. It is quite upsetting because sometimes I feel I can't do much. I am there and people say they need jobs can you help us, and you promise whatever you can but in your heart, you know it's impossible* (Students –focus groups).

> *Children are born, they go to school, after finishing school nothing happens, its only survival of the fittest. I really think we can do much, but it doesn't necessarily have to be about material things. There are other things, for example, maybe career wise, we can go there and encourage so that it's not only a matter of being given food every month and you are not doing anything* (Student- focus group).

The above example of students' voices points toward the dimensions of empowerment and aspiration that are or can be generated in and through service-learning. However, one can argue that the kind of empowerment and aspiration highlighted seems to be at the level of partial outcomes. Rather than creating empowering and aspiring conditions for community members to alter unjust structures and practices, what is highlighted in the above illustrative examples are some forms of service-learning contribution, which are limited to a small change. The evidence show that service-learning can only achieve partial outcomes, which cannot lead to perfect justice. In other words, empowerment and aspiration fuelled through service-learning are geared towards making some form of change but not transforming the unjust conditions in communities.

Stimulating a sense of empowerment and ability to aspire are linked to opportunities for learning and access to skills and knowledge, as evidenced below.

Learning and accessing skills and knowledge
One of the major challenges facing students and community members in a contemporary South African society is a lack of access to skills and knowledge, which are critical in

employability and addressing basic forms of injustice in society. An analysis of the data shows that service-learning provides opportunities for participants to learn and have access to skills and knowledge that can only be inculcated and shared in spaces such as service-learning. Of particular relevance in this theme is that the skills and knowledge developed and exchanged in and through service-learning can contribute to what is articulated in the South African National Development Plan – Vision for 2030 as the creation of opportunities and stimulation of hopes for a better life. Linking skills and knowledge to employment opportunities and active participation in socio-economic activities are common threads that run through service-learning course descriptions:

Community members are able to apply for better job opportunities due to the training they received in computer literacy. They also receive a certificate on completion of the course. In this manner, some members of the community are able to create their own job opportunities and to provide for themselves (Computer Information Systems, RIS242).

Members of the community participating in this project experience a greater understanding of economics, which will lead to better decisions regarding personal money management. Their self-knowledge is also enhanced, and economic literacy improved (International Economics, EKN314).

The community, including learners, their teachers and family members, gain knowledge and skills on how to manage health-related problems (Nursing Theory & Nursing Practical, VRT116/123, VRT 114/124).

The above examples of service-learning course descriptions illustrate the ability of service-learning to generate basic skills and knowledge that are often missing in communities. The skills and knowledge underlined in the select excerpts have the potential to address some forms of inequalities in communities. Some of these skills and knowledge summarised from the above extracts include:

- Needlework – income generation
- Computer training and literacy – ability to apply for jobs
- Economic knowledge – better financial management
- Health education and skills – better management of health-related problems and enhanced access to health information and services

Central to the skills and knowledge intended to be shared during service-learning, are the voices of community members, which affirm the need for such outcomes in communities. Reflecting in line with Agupusi's (2019) factors that determine educational achievement and intergenerational inequality, one community member expressed that:

What I value in service-learning is seeing our children in community gaining more knowledge and changing their life. This can help them to study and become better people in the future doing things for themselves and not depending on their parents or government. What kills the dreams they have is their backgrounds. They think that their background is what can determine their future not knowing that there is more that they can do and be able to sustain themselves and become better people in the future (Community member).

Another community member touched on elements of service-learning that have the potential to addressing unemployment, which is increasingly becoming a wicked social problem in South Africa and beyond. The alternative solutions that can be generated through service-learning might not be able to disturb or change the underlying and complex causes of unemployment. However, as expressed by a community member, service-learning can offer some ameliorative changes that affect community members' lives though in the smallest way:

Unemployment is the big problem in this community and there were people from the university who used to come during service-learning and train people on small businesses and entrepreneurs, but they stopped. So, educating people so that they make a living for themselves and remove poverty and unemployment and giving people the purpose. I think that is where the university through service-learning can help a lot by giving skills. Some people here registered their businesses, but they died because they couldn't manage them. There is need for skills like management skills on how to manage business and what procedures to follow and have access to information such as where to go to get funding for small businesses and connect them with the people who can help them to sustain their business and their small enterprises (Community member).

During discussions with students, they also mentioned several activities that they do with communities and their potential impact. Although the activities highlighted can be described as elementary, they might have an important contribution to promoting well-being in communities. Consider the examples of doll making and gardening in the following excerpt:

[…] we taught them how to do [i.e., make] the doll[s] […] we actually found out that she (the mother) had made more dolls and she also showed her friend how to make them. She had made them with different materials. When we got there, she had made six dolls, they were different dolls and different characters and she said she will be selling some. So, we were really proud that we taught her something. […] They had no garden and did not know how to do it properly, so we taught them the steps how to make one (Students - focus group).

The above excerpts are illustrative examples of possibilities of service-learning in contributing to skills and knowledge particularly for community members. The outlined skills and knowledge may have little transformative impact with respect to addressing social injustice. Nonetheless, they are likely to advance some elements of partial justice in communities. A classic example is income generation through selling dolls and gardening, which cannot address socio-economic inequalities and create a just society, but it can enable communities to have some source of income.

Ubuntu, affiliation, and diversity literacy

South Africa is characterised by a complex, diverse, and unequal society. This is due to the complex historical legacies of apartheid, ethnicities composition as well as the social, political, cultural, and economic arrangements and practices that have shaped South African society post 1994. Such characterisation plays as both strength as well as a weakness in determining the social fabrics and cohesion. A number of policy frameworks and programmes have been enacted in an attempt to build and consolidate what is often referred to as a 'rainbow nation'. While much more is needed, service-learning seems to serve as a repertoire through which elements such as *Ubuntu,* affiliation, networks and understanding and respecting diversity can be promoted among and between service-learning actors. These are some of the outcomes articulated in service-learning modules. For example, through these suggested modules:

> *Through service-learning, community members are enabled to participate in a variety of recreational activities. Through participation in the games day, various communities are introduced to each other. Social interaction and community integration is facilitated, and it is evident that these events help to foster a greater sense of tolerance and respect among different communities* (Clinical Occupation Therapy – KAB 205).

> *The community members also develop interpersonal bonds with the students and the University staff who then become included in their supportive social networks* (Social Research and Practice – SOS324).

The above excerpts emphasise the centrality of participation, interaction, tolerance, respect, and bond (affiliation), which are key ingredients in fostering Ubuntu and building strong social ties across the intersectionality of race, gender, culture, social and economic status, geographical location, and sexual orientation (Mtawa, 2019; Ngomane, 2019). An important element observed in the analysis of the data is that service-learning allows students to think and act in tandem with the above academic course intentions. Reflecting on service-learning experience, students expressed that:

> *It starts with us building relationships, going out every Thursday and seeing them all the time so that they know you don't just go there and get what you want and then you*

leave. You want them to know that you are interested in their stories and what they go through. It is about listening to their stories, showing empathy that you are trying to put yourself in their shoes. It is about understanding why they are on the streets and not judging them. People always say can't those ladies [sex workers] find other forms of employment (Students – focus group).

We come from different background[s] and we see things differently. Through service-learning, I learnt that we need to see the way people see themselves and be in their shoes so that we understand what they are going through not just judge them. Through service-learning, I realised that those kids have different challenges and problems and I realised that they have so much strength, skills, and talents (Students – focus group).

Of critical importance in the above excerpt is the comment on *trying to put yourself in their shoes*, which can be linked to the use of imagination with knowledge and actual experience to overcome the limitation of our own narrow worldviews (Nussbaum, 1998; Von Wright, 2002). What students are arguing for is similar to Nussbaum's (1998) three capacities that ought to be cultivated in and through education:

1) the ability to critically examine oneself and one's traditions,
2) the ability to see oneself not only as a member of a local group but as linked to all other human beings, and
3) the ability to put oneself in another person's shoes and to understand their emotions and desires, in other words, to exercise narrative imagination.

Related to the above capacities is the ability of people and specifically students to understand and respect diversity particularly in a complex and diverse South African society. Such is one of the outcomes of service-learning experienced and appreciated by students:

I learnt the skill of entering into other people's world. I am not Sotho; I am Zulu so it was hard for me I couldn't speak English I had to learn to say something in Sotho. That is really important that when you enter into communities you must understand them it is not about you, it was not about me it was about people, so I had to learn to speak even a bit of Sotho. I also had to learn how they do things in their way so that they feel comfortable in expressing themselves (Student – focus group).

Despite the positive outcomes of service-learning in relation to fostering elements of *Ubuntu,* affiliation and diversity literacy, these capacities are very much at partial level. The above highlighted benefits of engaging in service-learning can contribute to behavioural change and recognition of human dignity and worth in terms of how diverse people engage in society. Nevertheless, service-learning alone cannot lead into dismantling the structures and

practices that perpetuate deep seated forms of racism, discrimination and cross-racial/ethnic differences (Mtawa, 2019) in order to create a perfect justice and humane society.

Conclusion

This paper sets out to interrogate the application of the concept of social justice in service-learning context. The crux of the argument was that social justice is loosely interpreted and applied in service-learning with the assumptions that service-learning can contribute to advancing justice in the direction of John Rawls' perfect justice. There are assumptions that through service-learning, actors are able to engage in activities, which lead to perfect justice whereby institutions and social arrangements provide equal opportunities for all. The dominant view is that service-learning advances social justice in the direction of creating a perfect and just society. However, this paper challenges and interrogates the ways in which service-learning is described as strategy to advance social justice in perfect sense. The paper draws on an idea of partial justice, which while acknowledging the importance of creating perfect justice, it emphasises the centrality of removing possible and remediable injustice around us. Four main findings emerged, namely advocacy, activist works, and awareness promotion, fuelling a sense of empowerment and self-help in communities, learning and accessing skills and knowledge and Ubuntu, affiliation and diversity literacy emerged. A common thread that runs through these findings is that service-learning has the potential to contribute to outcomes, which are limited to advancing partial justice in terms of removing possible injustices in communities. The articulation of the practices and intended outcomes of service-learning in this paper is an indication that even actors such as academics, students and community members are aware of the limits and possibilities of service-learning.

As shown in this paper, there are complex conditions and structural issues, which impede service-learning from advancing perfect justice. In South African context, these include but not limited to historical legacies and current economic, social, cultural, political, educational, and geographical locations. In this way, the limitations of service-learning to promoting perfect justice are likely to be much more common in South Africa given its unjust and unequal society. Within these complexities, evidence in this paper indicate that service-learning seemingly fails to disrupt structural and systemic inequalities. Nonetheless, the contribution of service-learning, as evidenced in this paper cannot be underestimated. Opportunities to undertake and engage in advocacy, activist works, and awareness promotion, fuelling a sense of empowerment and self-help in communities, learning and accessing skills and knowledge, and cultivating Ubuntu, affiliation and diversity literacy are critical to South African society and beyond. Thus, service-learning actors must build upon and draw lessons from possible outcomes such as those highlighted in this paper. By doing so, they might be in a position to develop and practice service-learning initiatives, which eventually contribute to advancing perfect justice.

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Author Biography

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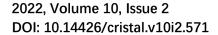
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Reconceptualising 'caring' in e-tutor-student interactions during the Covid-19 pandemic in an ODeL university in South Africa

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Abstract

In South Africa and elsewhere, the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 and the lockdown regulations forced both academics and students to adapt to a new reality of fully online modules and assessments. This catapulted relations in higher education into the spotlight. The concern of this paper is how e-tutors in an Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) university in South Africa have enacted care in online interaction with the students during this period. Available research focuses on online interaction; however, there is a paucity when it comes to care cultivated by e-tutors on students to increase online interactions during the covid-19 pandemic. Through the lens of Relational Care, this paper seeks to reconceptualise care during e-tutor-student interaction in one of the English modules at a mega South African ODeL university. Data were collected through a survey completed by e-tutors (n = 8) and lecturers (n = 4) of one of the English modules at this university. Through content analysis, patterns and categories emanating from the data were extracted. Findings indicated that e-tutors and lecturers had minimal understanding of how to enact care in this environment during the covid-19 pandemic. Future research should focus on how to manage student online interaction in an OdeL environment during crises.

Keywords: e-tutors, interaction, OdeL, Relational Care,

Introduction

Interaction in online learning has been widely researched; however, the problem of a lack of interaction by students remains an unresolved issue. This is echoed by Rose (2017) who asserts that digital platforms for the delivery of online instructions "amputate" teachers' and learners' faces, such that teachers and learners engage with others who are faceless. This seems to be the case concerning the interaction between e-tutors and students of one of the English modules at this Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) university in South Africa where poor interaction between these two entities remains a challenge. E-tutors are regarded as crucial stakeholders in an ODeL environment. It is well-documented in research that both e-tutors and students often feel isolated and neglected in the digital learning environment (Abdullah &

Mtsweni, 2014: Joubert & Snyman, 2017: Mare & Mutezo, 2021). It would be in the interest of both parties to establish how this turned out during the Covid-19 pandemic. Velasquez, et al. (2013) regard the ethics of caring as an essential model for understanding the communication of caring interactions in online learning. The unprecedented Covid-19 situation propelled a shift in lecturer-student engagement online, which required emergency response to address the problem. At the ODeL university where this research was conducted, the most remarkable change was the immediate migration from venue-based to fully online assessment methods. Added to this change was the move from a blended mode to a fully online delivery mode for all the modules at this university. In other words, students could no longer rely on posted learning materials due to lockdown regulations which prohibited the Post Office from delivering parcels to students. There was a sudden need to prepare both students and university staff for this novel mode of assessment within a very short space of time. It is under these circumstances that e-tutors would have been expected to play a major role in increasing student engagement online. In line with the main objective of this paper, the challenge is whether e-tutors were equipped to provide some sort of caring interactions while engaging with the students online.

Theoretical Framework

With the uncertainty that characterises this period of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting anxiety and trauma that learners, teachers, and parents are experiencing, the theme of a pedagogy of care has surfaced within educational institutions (Bozkurt, et al., 2020). Therefore, the framework underpinning this study is the theory of Relational Care Ethics espoused by Noddings (1984) who considers the ethics of care as relational and situated. This is the case in an educational space where e-tutors, lecturers, and students are involved as the carers and the cared-for. This theory was deemed relevant for this study as it sought to unpack how e-tutors cultivated care for their students, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Bergmark and Alerby (2006) opine that caring is a reciprocal act. Additionally, Noddings (1984) contends that people can learn to both give and receive care. In a later publication, she describes the task of caring as follows: Care theory displaces the lonely, principled moral agent at the heart of traditional ethics with a dyadic relation: the " carer" and "cared-for." (Noddings 2016: 85)

The dyadic nature of care theory indicates that ethics of care may not be an easy act to achieve if the relationship between the carer and the cared-for is not properly managed. In the view of Noddings, care theory describes caring encounters and caring relations, and gives us some guidance on how to establish, maintain and enhance such relations (Noddings, 2016). However, she cautions that because of the dyadic nature of care theory, caring cannot be operationalised into a prescriptive list of actions or behaviours (Noddings, 1984). When looking at the relationship between the e-tutors and students in this module, it may be a challenge to establish a commitment over time because this is a semester module where interaction may take place for two to three months due to issues like late appointment of e-tutors and late allocation of students to e-tutoring groups. In a study by Shange (2021), a similar impasse was expressed regarding the relationship between e-tutors and lecturers of this module where Rose (2017 as

cited in Shange 2021) contends that it may be a challenge to form meaningful relationships with 'faceless others' " .

In other recent research, Robinson, et al. (2021) referring to research by Noddings (1984) assert that educating from a care perspective consists of four elements:

(a) *Modelling*, or instructors' genuine demonstration of caring behaviours they expect of their students (e.g. honesty and promptness);

(b) *Dialogue*, which refers to a back-and-forth conversations with the learners with no pre-judgment in an attempt to build relationships, develop norms, reach a shared understanding and invite deeper conversations;

(c) *Practice*, or opportunities for students to practice the act of caring with an explicit focus on the act of helping and supporting peers (e.g., collaborative and cooperative learning activities); and finally,

(d) *Confirmation*, or the act of supporting the development of a better self by encouraging and affirming the best in others. Regarding e-tutors' and students' interaction in this study, it is of interest to unpack the four elements: modelling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation.

Modeling

In the view of Noblit (1993: 370), modelling entails the teacher showing herself to her students as one caring, as one who lives her ethics. In the same vein, Noddings (1988: 222) opines that teachers model caring when they steadfastly encourage responsible self-affirmation in their students. In her view, such teachers are concerned with their students' academic achievement as may be expected, but more importantly, they are interested in the development of fully moral persons (Noddings 1988). In the case of e-tutors for this English module at the ODeL university where the research took place, they would be expected to display a caring attitude toward the students who are the cared for. I believe that for this to happen, the e-tutors need to understand how care can be enacted in an OdeL environment.

Dialogue

Bajaj (2016) opines that a basic requirement in caring relations is *dialogue*. He further contends that it is through *dialogue* that we come to know one another, and it is in dialogue that needs are expressed. Without *dialogue*, those who want to care and those who have the best interests of the cared for at heart must work with inferred needs (Noddings, 2002 cited in Bajaj 2016). In his view, the teacher must engage in *dialogue* to identify the needs, motives, and interests of others. In the view of Borzkut, et al. (2020), a key part of a pedagogy of care is listening to students and engaging in open and authentic dialogue. The e-tutors at the OdeL university in South Africa are expected to maintain *dialogue* with their students through the learning management system called myUnisa. In the view of Dela Cruz (2020: 3), in a *dialogue,* the teacher is attuned not just to the response of the one cared for, but more importantly, to his

continued involvement with the subject matter. At this university, the situation concerning e-tutor-student interaction remains a challenge, and this may hinder this *dialogue,* as espoused by researchers like Dela Cruz (2020). Additionally, most of the students studying through this OdeL university come from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds. This sentiment is echoed by Borzkut, et al. (2020) who contend that marginalised and disadvantaged students who are struggling with the compounded effects of inequities that already exist in educational systems because of this sudden pivot to emergency remote education may find it hard to engage in meaningful dialogue with their e-tutors.

Practice

The element of *practice* involves collaborative learning among students, which seems to remain a challenge, as most students lack the self-confidence to engage in collaborative learning spaces. This may be because of the novelty presented by virtual contexts and new ways of communication. Dela Cruz (2020) opines that in *practice,* the teacher develops in the student the skills necessary to become one caring. The period during the Covid-19 pandemic might have caused more panic and anxiety, especially for students who were entering university for the first time, coupled with studying through a distant online mode. Bozkurt et al. (2020) state that due to the pandemic, learners, teachers, and parents were going through a great deal of anxiety.

Confirmation

Noddings (1988: 224) regards this principle as the most important of the four. She says the following about confirmation:

> When we attribute the best possible motive consonant with reality to the cared-for, we confirm him; that is, we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts.

In education, what we reveal to a student about himself as an ethical and intellectual being has the power to nurture the ethical ideal or to destroy it (Noddings 1984 cited in Noddings 1988: 223). It would appear as though there may be a tendency among educators of taking confirmation simplistically. Noddings (1988) suggests that teachers need to know what the student loves, strives for, fears, and hopes for. Additionally, an ideal situation would be when the teacher and student become partners in fostering the student's growth. In a distance learning environment, it may be challenging to know and understand the students' fears and what they love due to the limited interaction that lecturers and e-tutors have with the students in an online learning environment.

Literature review

Research in the field of online learning has highlighted the role played by the emotional aspect of the online learning experience (Robinson, et al., 2021). When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, it

became more urgent that the phenomenon of care in online learning be explored to deepen an understanding of the feeling of caring and being cared for. This view, as espoused by Robinson, et al. (2021), is relevant to understanding how to reconceptualise the phenomenon of care during e-tutor-student interactions in online learning. Some of the available literature on care ethics will be reviewed in this article to provide more insight into caring relationships in online learning.

Definition of care

Some researchers in different disciplines like Psychology and Education have provided useful definitions of care. Mayeroff (1971, cited in Owens & Ennis 2005: 393) opines that to care for other persons is to help them care for themselves. In another vein, caring is also defined as a set of relational practices that foster mutual recognition and realisation, growth, development, protection, empowerment and human community, culture, and possibility (Gordon, et al, 1996 cited in Owens & Ennis, 2005: 393). Additionally, Owens and Ennis (2005) contend that this definition emphasises that caring occurs within relationships. This study seeks to examine the caring in the e-tutor-student relationship in one English module at an ODeL university in South Africa. It is concerning that interaction of students with the e-tutors remains a problem if one considers the definition of care which encompasses relational practices which, among other things, foster mutual recognition and realisation of growth.

Even though academics grappled with the effects of the pandemic on themselves and their families, they also had a duty to continue supporting their students with their studies. As this was an emergency, no one, including the university communities, was prepared for this, let alone the e-tutors who might have been expected to enact care during their online engagements with the students under such anxiety-provoking situations. In the view of Rabin (2021), care ethics in online instruction became particularly relevant as the 2020 pandemic pushed all instruction online.

Care in universities

Some research in care ethics has highlighted controversies and contradictions in terms of caring practices in universities (Bartos, 2021; Grant-Smith & Payne, 2021). These controversies are what Bartos (2021) refers to as the "care revolution". This has, in turn, brought to light concerns about who cares and how (Bartos, 2021). Furthermore, researchers like Grant-Smith and Payne (2021), and Bartos (2021) observed that caring practices are highly contextual and contingent. This means that caring practices for one university may not be the same as in another different university as these contexts may practice caring differently. At face value, the notion of care comes across as a positive connotation, yet some researchers argue that care is not a pure act of goodwill (Robinson, 2011 cited in Bartos, 2021). To illustrate this point, Bartos (2021: 313) is of the view that, on one hand, some universities may be seen to maintain, continue and repair the 'worlds' of its students, staff, and alumnae, while, on the other hand, some may maintain, continue, and repair the worlds of some at the exclusion of others. Additionally, she refers to this as 'fraught caring practices' or 'benign caring practices in the university', Bartos (2021:

312). These terms emphasise the abnormal or ailing nature of caring in some universities. Therefore, it appears as though some researchers, like Robinson (2011) as cited in Bartos (2021), bring forth a different revolutionary angle as she explores underlying power relations inherent in caring relations. In a similar vein, Duncan-Andrade (2009: 182) presents a view that in some cases universities provide ineffective and "hokey programmes" which enable a culture of false caring in which more powerful members of the relationship define themselves as caring even though the recipients of the so-called caring do not perceive it as such. Bartos (2021) opines that false caring practices create false, and even harmful relations. As a solution to this, Grant-Smith and Payne (2021) suggest that universities need to enact deliberate, sustainable, and *care-full* engagement to shape pedagogical practices.

Care at this ODeL university in South Africa

The university under review prides itself on its 11 values, one of which is 'care'. In this context, care is defined as creating an environment in which members of this university community feel understood, respected, and accepted. It is thus expected that an ODeL university should already be well-placed to support students in their online offerings as teaching and learning took place in this mode before the pandemic. However, previous research indicates that lack of student engagement in OdeL remains an unresolved issue as students struggle to deal with 'technology-enabled bombardness' (Rose & Adams, 2014 cited in Shange 2021: 261). One of the e-tutor responsibilities, as stated in the College of Human Sciences (2019) advertisement for e-tutors, is that they are expected 'to provide students with academic and technical support online'. This became more crucial during lockdown when the University had to swiftly move the examinations from venue-based to online assessment, and very little training was provided for this. Consequently, as this was an emergency move, there would not have been an opportunity to prepare the e-tutors for this new type of assessment; yet, they were expected to support students on how to handle online exams. It is also puzzling that while the e-tutors were expected to provide support in line with the new changes under this emergency, these forms of support expected by the university and lecturers of the module were not communicated to the e-tutors. Noddings (2015) opines that for institutions to care adequately, they need to create conditions of care and trust between and among their members at all levels of the hierarchy. In a similar breath, Deacon (2012 cited in Feldman, 2020) asserts that creating a context of care is more pressing in online classes. However, this seems to pose a challenge for lecturers who may struggle with deciding to what extent they can extend themselves to their students' needs beyond the boundaries of normal workday hours (Rose & Adams 2014: 12). A similar situation may likely prevail with the e-tutors at this ODeL university who, in addition to feeling isolated and neglected, may also not be able to create a context of care in online interactions with their students. This may be because they do not know how to do this, or they need to be cared for.

Another challenge for e-tutors at this university is that their level is not well defined in the levels of the hierarchy, as they are regarded as independent contractors. When one considers the situation of e-tutors, external markers, and teacher assistants, one notices that they are at

the lowest level of the hierarchy as they are not regarded as employees of this university. This may often cause a mismatch between the expectations of this group and those of the university community.

Contextualising the research

The name of the module is Academic Language and Literacy in English, which falls within the Applied English Language Studies discipline. In this module, there are about 16 000 registered first-year students who are serviced by about 30 e-tutors, each responsible for 500 students, as well as 8 lecturers and two administrative officers. The purpose of the module is to develop students' ability to do critical reading and critical writing, which are essential academic skills. The module services various academic programmes and qualifications in the university ranging from higher certificates up to a BA degree. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the mode of tuition and assessment was a blended approach. Even though e-learning had been adopted as a policy at this university, there had been a slow move of modules to a fully online delivery mode. While only three modules out of about twenty undergraduate modules in the English Studies department had been converted to fully online, this module under review had not been moved when Covid-19 struck. This meant that e-tutors provided support for the students online through the university Learner Management system, MyUnisa, and the learning materials were available both online as well as through hard copies which were posted to the students' addresses. This had to change suddenly in 2020 when the country was put on hard lockdown, and the posting of learning materials had to stop abruptly when many students had just finalised their registration. Under these circumstances, the students had to depend only on materials posted online, while the e-tutors, just like the lecturers and students, had to forge ahead with teaching and learning under these peculiar circumstances without any prior preparation. To deal with this new mode of delivery, all these groups needed to have access to reliable technology including data. As a leader of this module myself at that time, some of the team members could not function as they either had limited connectivity or none. In the view of Corbera, et al. (2020), Covid-19 might have exposed inequities in confinement, thus making it difficult for students, lecturers, and e-tutors to perform their responsibilities in unusual workspaces during the lockdown. They further highlight other challenges faced by both students and other university members like giving attention or home schooling to their children while juggling that with e-tutoring or studying (Corbera, et al., 2020). Some care ethics researchers opine that care needs to be reciprocal and that there must be a dialogue between the carer and the cared-for. This raises the question of whether it would be possible for this to happen in circumstances where the people involved are grappling with the effects of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown.

Methodology

The objective of the study was to describe and explore how e-tutors have enacted caring interactions online during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following research questions guided the study: How have e-tutors enacted caring interactions online during the Covid-19 pandemic?

What is the e-tutors' understanding of care ethics in online relationships in an ODeL institution during the Covid-19 pandemic?

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the research questions on relational care ethics between e-tutors and students. This research approach was preferred as the relevant method because it sought to interpret the e-tutors' interpretation of care ethics, as they interacted with the students. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state that qualitative research studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. On another similar view, Creswell and Creswell (2018: 41) explain qualitative research as an approach geared to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This fits in with the study's intention to explore the e-tutors' understanding of relational care ethics in their interaction with the students of the English module.

The invitation to complete the survey questions that were sent by email to the e-tutors and lecturers included an informed consent procedure as approved by the College Research Ethics Committee of the university where the study was conducted. E-tutors who were participants in the study answered the questions in what is marked as Appendix A while lecturer questions appear as Appendix B. The participants' demographic information includes gender, age range, and the number of years tutoring or teaching the module. The survey was used to collect data on how the e-tutors enacted care on the students while they interacted with them online, as well as the e-tutors' and lecturers' understanding of relational care ethics.

A total of 8 out of 26 e-tutors and 4 module lecturers completed the survey which had been posted on the university's Learner Management System (LMS). Their profiles appear in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 E-tutor profiles (n = 8)

Respondents' labels	Gender	Age range	Number of years as an e-tutor
ETm1	M	>36	1
ETm2	M	32-36	5
ETm3	M	32-36	4
ETf1	F	>36	6
ETf2	F	>36	1
ETf3	F	32-36	6
ETf4	F	32-36	7
ETf5	F	>36	8

Table 2 Lecturer profiles (n = 4)

Respondents' labels	Gender	Age range	Number of years as Lecturer
Lf1	F	>36	4
Lf2	F	>50	2
Lm1	M	>36	6
Lm2	F	>50	10

The participants were purposefully selected as they were linked to this module during the semester when the research took place. An online survey was one of the options available, as the country was still on lockdown, and I was not able to conduct face-to-face interviews with the e-tutors and lecturers. To further understand caring relationships during Covid-19 in this module I also analysed two main channels of communication from module lecturers which are Tutorial Letter 101(TL101), as well as the welcome page on the LMS. The TL 101 document contains important information about the module outcomes, lecturers' contact details, the assessment plan, available student support, and library resources. The welcome page is a more interactive communication channel that the students access online, and it provides them with an opportunity to interact with their lecturers and other students when they navigate through their module site. This was done to understand how lecturers used these channels to interact with the students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data analysis

In this study, conventional content analysis was used to derive coding categories directly from the text data. This method was preferred because researchers regard it as a flexible method for analysing text data (Cavanagh, 1997 cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1277). Member checks were conducted before and after data analysis to preserve the accuracy of participant responses. Peer debriefings with two senior members of staff in the module were useful in developing the survey protocol, as well as in revising data collection and analysis methods. Obtaining information from three different sources helped to strengthen evidence of the themes. This was done to ensure that the themes that emerged were an accurate reflection of the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I systematically classified the process of coding and identifying themes and patterns as they emerged from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). This helped me to interpret the data from the e-tutors' and lecturers' comments, and from the two documents that I analysed, to determine their understanding of relational care ethics.

Limitations

Like all other studies, this research has limitations. Sometimes the limitations may have a negative effect on the outcome of the research. In the view of Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Elo, et al., 2014), it is required, for the trustworthiness of the study, to acknowledge limitations, as they may reveal areas for further research. Trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry aims to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 cited in Elo, et al., 2014). To ensure the *credibility* of this research, I ensured that the participants in this study are identified and described adequately. It was also important that data from the participants had to be recorded accurately. Shenton (2004) explains *credibility* as an attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is provided. To further increase *credibility,* I included member-checking of the findings by obtaining feedback from the participants on the data, interpretation, and conclusions. In this study, my colleague who is a

senior lecturer and a quality assurance co-ordinator in English Studies, acted as a 'peer debriefer', as he used his experience in ODeL to advise on the flaws in the approach, which were then identified and eliminated. In this study, one of the limitations was that e-tutors at this university should be activated as the need arises when students register. This means that at the time of this research, some e-tutors were not yet activated for the semester. It should also be noted that this study was based on a small sample drawn from e-tutors and lecturers of one module; therefore, the results may not be generalisable in a different context. However, the findings discussed may further influence future research about caring in online learning. Additionally, it would have helped to obtain the voice of the students on the issue of care during the Covid-19 lockdown, but this was a challenge because this is a semester module and once students pass, it is difficult to collect data from them. Even though a survey was sent to some identified students, the response rate was extremely low.

Another limitation of this study was that data could only be collected at the end of the semester when the e-tutors were done with their e-tutoring for that period. In some cases, e-tutors lose their access to the LMS if they are not activated for the second semester. This hurt the response rate of the e-tutors. With the lecturers of this module, four out of eight lecturers returned the survey since other colleagues battled with internet connection.

Findings and discussion

In this section, the data obtained using a qualitative research method is presented and discussed. The findings from the survey responses of e-tutors (n = 8) and lecturers (n = 4) will be presented and discussed in conjunction with data from the teaching documents analysed. In each case, an analysis of the data will be followed by a brief interpretation of the findings. As mentioned above, the data analysis was done by examining the e-tutor and lecturer responses to a survey they completed, and the teaching documents analysed. The views of the e-tutors and lecturers on 'caring' during the Covid-19 pandemic were used to further explore their understanding of the concept of relational care ethics. Some of the questions asked sought to unpack how the participants enacted care during their e-tutoring or teaching, what their understanding of this phenomenon was and what kind of support they received from the module lecturers, and how lecturers cultivated care on the e-tutors.

Theme 1: E-tutoring and teaching styles during the Covid-19 pandemic

When the e-tutors were asked to share their e-tutoring styles during the covid-19 pandemic, it appeared as though there was minimal or no change in how they tutored during this time. Some had not seen the need to do so, as expressed by this e-tutor (ETm7):

> No, was not necessary. As always, I use videos (YouTube), give students contemporary topics, and ask for their opinion. I seem to get a lot of interaction with this type of engagement.

For this e-tutor, the belief is that using digital learning materials would help increase interaction, but this is not the case. In the view of Liyanagunawardena, et al. (2013), the steep learning curve and an overload of information, especially for those who are not familiar with or experienced in online learning and teaching, could harm learners as they may feel demotivated and discouraged. In the view of Cicha, et al. (2021:4) they observed that according to studies conducted globally there was no one model for teaching classes online. This is concerning, considering that many students in this module are first-year students from previously disadvantaged schooling backgrounds and they may feel overwhelmed by the digital learning materials posted on the LMS. The concern increased when many students faced serious challenges with technology-related problems during lockdown like data, internet connection, and network problems in general since most of them had to go back to their homes. Researchers like Aruleba, et al. (2022) contend that when addressing these challenges, different factors such as the socio-economic challenges faced by lecturers, students, and universities, affordability, staff training, and access to computers and necessary software must be considered.

When lecturers were asked a similar question about changing their teaching styles during the Covid-19 pandemic, this is one of the responses that caught my attention:

> I did change by being involved in live stream sessions and conducting Microsoft teams. This is the only time I have available. There are just too many other aspects to work on in my role than to embrace a myriad of teaching methods. (Lm2)

From this comment, this lecturer had no planned intentions to change his teaching approach during the lockdown period as he felt that his workload was too much. The student support methods that he mentions have been in use before the Covid-19 pandemic period. In the view of Grant-Smith and Payne (2021), as educators at different levels of our engagement with the students, we struggled to ensure quality and care in our teaching in a time of unprecedented upheaval and change. It is, therefore, difficult to apportion blame on the lecturers as they were battling with the new changes of conducting online exams, as well as moving the module fully online.

One of the documents which contains important information about the module outcomes, lecturers' contact details, the assessment plan, available student support, and library resources are Tutorial Letter 101. What caught my attention about this document is that no mention was made of the e-tutors. The excerpt below emphasises the lecturers and not the e-tutors:

> Look out for information from your lecturer as well as other Unisa platforms to determine how to access the virtual myUnisa module site. Information on the tools that will be available to engage with the lecturer and fellow students to support your learning will also be communicated via various platforms.

One may assume that the role of e-tutors is downplayed, and lecturers are presented as important role players in this case. If one looks at the welcome page for this module the following message was posted:

> Welcome to the Academic Language and Literacy in English (ENG1503) module. This module aims to equip you with academic reading and writing for you to be able to handle your academic studies at university. The module is part of many different qualifications. We try to cater for diversity. In addition, we require you to give us feedback from time to time on how best we can address your language and literacy needs. This site will help you navigate through ENG1503 using information and announcements; official and additional study material; activities and assignments and forums for networking with other students and tutors. This is an activity-driven module, so the more you visit the site (and engage with what it offers) the better!

> You can download the materials, that is, the study guide and **Tutorial letter 101** where you will find your assignments. Please participate in the online self-assessment activities and the discussion forums for a fruitful learning experience and interaction with other students. It will also help you a great deal to actively communicate with your e-tutors. You will find this site, and module exciting and challenging. We hope you will also enjoy and learn from it.

What caught my interest in this message is that nothing was mentioned about the prevailing situation of Covid-19 as if everything was happening normally. Usually, when there are emergency situations that crop up, academics are able to edit the welcome message online and add the required information, yet, in this case, none of that was done. Therefore, it would appear as though no conditions of care were created and there was no evidence that a context of care was embraced. Corbera, et al. (2020: 194) highlight the importance of making sure that participants in online classes have the chance to express their thoughts about the crisis and to ask students to reflect on existing connections between Covid-19 and the studied issue at hand. In the view of Grant-Smith and Payne (2021) such outside-class communication of this kind not only assists students with academic issues but presents an opportunity to add an emotional dimension to student-educator relations. This would be useful for the students in this module which focuses on academic reading and writing skills as it would provide students with an opportunity to express their thoughts while practicing reading and writing.

Theme 2: e-tutors' and lecturers' understanding of care ethics
Both e-tutors and lecturers seemed to have a vague understanding of the concept of caring, even though they may have not been exposed to the principles of caring as espoused by researchers like Noddings (1984; 1988). The following comment indicated some understanding of caring as the e-tutor mentions the students' feelings:

To foster an environment where students want to learn, they need to feel that they are not alone in their struggles and hardships. (ETf2)

Another e-tutor seemed to feel strongly about caring and had this to say:

Very important. We need to foster an environment that will encourage students to study. A hostile and uncaring environment will discourage students from continuing with their studies. (ETf7)

Researchers agree that to foster care for the students, there is a need to understand what students love, what they fear, and what they hope for. Additionally, Cleveland-Innes and Campbell (2012, cited in Borzkut, 2020) opine that research has shown that emotions play a major role in the online learning experience itself, and not only during the transition to online learning. On the side of the lecturers, there seemed to be a consensus about the importance of care in their interactions with the students. Comments like:

Definitely. Because students need to know that we are there to support them. (Lf1)

Another lecturer who also recognised the need for caring in teaching expressed his view about this:

I think "caring" is ideal in small classes and not in big classes. Certainly, you cannot implement it in undergraduate modules. (Lm2)

Another lecturer who also saw the need for additional care during the pandemic provided an example of how he provided care for students during this time. He said the following:

… we also had to give more time to our students to do their assignments and accepted a considerable number of late assignment submissions because our students were faced with different challenges. (Lm1)

A comment like this shows that this lecturer responded positively to the students' needs.

Theme 3: E-tutor interaction with students during the covid 19 pandemic

When the e-tutors were asked about their e-tutoring style during the lockdown, (ETf6) had the following to say:

During the hard lockdown in 2020, there was a marked decline in student interaction; however, in 2021, more students participated by viewing the discussions and downloading

the additional resources I uploaded. Most of the interaction was related to the downloading of the notes I uploaded than contributing to discussions or completing the activities I posted.

When one looks closely at this comment, the marked decline was expected as most of the people panicked when they were caught unawares by the lockdown. Another reason for this is the inequalities regarding access to technology and internet connection since many of the students had to be locked down in spaces that were not conducive for studying purposes. This is in line with what researchers emphasise about the challenges with technology during the lockdown. Borzkut, et al. (2020) are of the view that the stark digital divide between those who had access to electricity, internet infrastructure, data, and devices, and those who did not was quite notable during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the view of Liyanagunawardena, et al. (2013: 4), learners from developing countries came from geographical locations with various levels of infrastructural facilities, the majority of which suffered from poor digital infrastructure. What also caught my attention was that some e-tutors viewed downloading of learning materials by students as interaction. This is problematic, as viewing and downloading learning materials does not necessarily constitute interaction in online learning.

Theme 4: Support from the module lecturers during this time

It was crucial to establish whether lecturers had provided any support to e-tutors during the lockdown. When e-tutors and lecturers were asked about this, comments like the following were shared by the e-tutors:

> Very limited support in terms of the course. There was some support when it came to assessments (why students hadn't received feedback, etc. (ETm1)

On a similar note, another e-tutor commented:

> I would hope that module lecturers take into consideration the obstacles during the pandemic, one of which is limited access to resources and the extra effort to function efficiently during this period of closure and lockdown. (ETm2)

From these comments, data points to lecturers who did not provide any additional support for e-tutors during this time. This confirms the view that they needed support. In a different vein, it is problematic to fault the lecturers because they were affected in one way or the other by the effects of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown. Corbera, et al. (2020) caution against expecting people to conduct business as usual in the wake of a global pandemic and maintain the same pace of productivity and engagement with their job duties. Regarding lecturers providing care to e-tutors, it is also possible that the issue of 'care' was not prioritised by the lecturers of this module. In the view of Bali (2020) cited in Borzkut, et al. (2020), prioritising the

issues of care, empathy and emotional/psychological support should not be limited to the classroom setting or only targeted towards students but also embodied in educational policy and decision-making that impact educators and staff as well. In a different vein, when lecturers were asked about how they should enact care on the e-tutors in the module, data from the lecturers indicated varied views on this. Comments like the following indicate that lecturers do not understand how to enact care on the e-tutors:

I currently do not see any care for e-tutors in the module I teach (Lf1)

…care when 1 e-tutor has a ratio of 500 students just means being able to render educational needs for massification. There is hardly a ratio for lecturers to students. (Lm2)

Conclusion

In this study, the survey questions that were answered by e-tutors of the Academic Language and Literacy in English module helped to obtain their perspectives on enacting care during their interaction with the students. Even though care is viewed as an essential component in online interaction, what became evident was that e-tutors' understanding of the concept of care in online teaching was very fuzzy. Therefore, it would be challenging to expect them to enact something they have little or no understanding of. An additional point to note is that it appeared as though lecturers were also not able to support e-tutors in how to cultivate care during their interaction with the students due to their workloads.

This study investigated how e-tutors of an English for Academic Language and Literacy in English module in an ODeL institution cultivated care in their students during the covid-19 pandemic. The literature review and the findings of the research confirmed the need for foregrounding care in e-tutor-student online interaction. Even though the concept of care in higher education has been the focus of much research, there seems to be no study on how e-tutors enact care in ODeL spaces. Future research should focus on foregrounding care in interaction among e-tutors, lecturers, and students to prepare in advance for any unplanned disruptions in the education process. I would recommend that interaction among these groups be explicitly integrated into the module design process so that e-tutors, lecturers, and students all understand care in online teaching and learning. The Covid-19 pandemic made it more urgent for ODeL institutions to re-think their operations and to plan for unprecedented emergencies like the #Fees Must Fall campaign and future pandemics. This will have implications for e-tutoring at this ODeL university.

Author Biography

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Appendix A: Interview questions to e-tutors

Dear colleagues

I am conducting research into using 'care ethics' to increase student participation in online interaction within the ENG1503 module. This is entirely voluntary and will assist us in planning for the future. Could you kindly respond to the following questions as honestly as possible? No names will be used in the reporting of the data and findings. This research falls within the English Studies project with the following Ethical clearance details: **NHREC Registration #: Rec-240816-052**
CREC Reference # :90258495_CREC_CHS_2021

1. How many students do you have in your e-tutoring group?
2. About how many participated actively in 2021? (You may provide statistics from myUnisa)
3. Did you change your e-tutoring style during the covid-19 pandemic? If yes, why? If not, why not? If yes, how did you change your e-tutoring style?
4. Did you notice an increase or decline in student interaction patterns during the covid-19 pandemic? Briefly explain your observations in this regard.
5. Did you receive additional support from the module lecturers during this time? If yes, what was the nature of the support?
6. What kind of support did you expect from the module lecturers during this time?
7. Do you regard "caring" as an important aspect of online interaction with students? If so, why, or if not, why not?
8. What do you think 'caring' constitutes in e-tutoring?
9. Any other comments about your interaction with students during the covid-19 pandemic?

Thank you for your participation.
Dr. Thembeka Shange
Department of English Studies
UNISA

Appendix B: Interview questions to lecturers

Dear colleagues

I am researching using care ethics to increase student participation in online interaction within the English Studies modules at UNISA. This is entirely voluntary and will assist us in planning for the future. Could you kindly respond to the following questions as honestly as possible? No names will be used in the reporting of the data and findings. This research falls within the English Studies project with the following Ethical clearance details: **NHREC Registration #: Rec-240816-052**
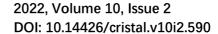**CREC Reference # :90258495_CREC_CHS_2021**

1. How many students do you have in your module?
2. About how many students participated actively in 2021? (You may provide statistics from Myunisa)
3. Did you change your teaching style during the Covid 19 pandemic? If yes, why? If not, why not?
4. Did you notice an increase or decline in student interaction patterns during the Covid 19 pandemic? Briefly explain your observations in this regard.
5. Did you provide additional support to e-tutors in your module during this time? If yes, what was the nature of the support?
6. What kind of support do you think would be expected by e-tutors from the module lecturers during this time?
7. Do you regard "caring" as an important aspect of online interaction with students? If so, why, or if not, why not?
8. How do you think lecturers can enact 'care' on the e-tutors of their modules?
9. Any other comments about your interaction with e-tutors during the Covid 19 pandemic?

Thank you for your participation.
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Hybrid approaches to teaching:
Re-imagining the teaching of a foundational science course during a global pandemic

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Abstract

Access to scientific knowledge, and teaching in the sciences, is believed to be about training because scientific knowledge is, generally, specialised. However, for students to gain full epistemological access in the sciences, they also need to be inducted as scientists and learners of science. We use Bernstein's regulative and instructional discourse to engage with the notion of epistemological access and effectiveness of a foundational science course. We examine how the course can cultivate scientific identities amongst first year students at a recently established South African university. Our analysis assesses the impact of the forced shift from contact teaching to Emergency Remote Teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We demonstrate that the course was able to begin to facilitate the cultivation of different kinds of knowers in science. However, several gaps remain. Thus, we argue that foundational science lecturers should focus on hybrid teaching approaches to promote enhanced learning amongst students.

Keywords: COVID-19, Emergency Remote Teaching, flipped classroom, hybrid teaching, mixed pedagogy

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly thrust all universities into what has now become known as Emergency Remote Teaching (Council on Higher Education - CHE, 2020). The choice of nomenclature was deliberate because the pandemic resulted in an emergency situation where most universities, and academics, had to transition rapidly from face-to-face, contact teaching to remote, online teaching (CHE, 2020). Significant adjustments to teaching and learning needed to be made quickly to ensure that the 2020 academic year could be successfully completed. It is not pertinent to our purposes here to discuss the full range of constraining and enabling factors during the transition and subsequent phases of Emergency Remote Teaching and this has been done in more detail elsewhere (for example, Kraft, et al., 2020). In this article we critically analyse

the pedagogic approach to the teaching of a foundational science course at the newly established University of Mpumalanga in South Africa (established in 2014). Our aim was to demonstrate, not only an innovative approach to teaching in the sciences, but also to show that learning in the sciences can be more than just the transmission of knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

Knowledge and knowers

Morrow (2009) suggests that to become a participant, or a knower, in a particular discipline requires an individual to learn the appropriate ways of working, and understanding the disciplinary-related knowledge/canon, and the logic of the field. Morrow (2009) refers to this participation as epistemological access, with such access being underpinned by discipline-specific norms, standards, and rules. Significantly, for students to gain epistemological access to a discipline, they not only need to learn the knowledge or content, but also need to learn how to actively participate in the discipline's normative processes and practices (Morrow, 2009). Epistemological access is, in many ways, analogous to access to specific academic discourses, or ways of being, and making sense of the world, which are secondary to our primary social discourses like our home backgrounds and prior socialisation (*sensu* Gee, 2012). Lave and Wenger (1991) take the concept of epistemological access further with what they call Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). LPP describes the process of students becoming part of communities of practice in their learning to transition from being newcomers or novices to mastering the discipline (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Crucially, Lave and Wenger (1991) underscore the importance of including the social-cultural practices of a discipline for achieving LPP. Moreover, empirical work in the South African higher education context supports the notion that early socialisation practices and past education experiences serve to either enable or constrain access to higher education discourses (Volbrecht & Boughey, 2004; Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

Boughey (2002) argues that to acquire a discourse, and thus enable epistemological access for becoming a knower of a discipline, the focus should be on making the norms, standards, values, ways of thinking, acting, speaking, reading, and writing in that field explicit to students through curricula and teaching. In other words, it is not enough to foreground disciplinary knowledge in a curriculum; more needs to be done to mould and shape students as knowers or to make explicit to them *how to be* in a specific discipline. In the natural and physical sciences, *what* one knows (strong epistemic relations) is deemed much more important than *who* one is (strong social relations) (Maton, 2014). These strong epistemic relations can result in a form of 'knower blindness' which is a distorted notion of scientific objectivity (Blackie, 2022; Hlatshwayo, et al., 2022). This focus on *what* to know can further result in content-focused, and overloaded science curricula that may not promote student learning (Ellery, 2018). Yet, recent research has shown that South African academics can be resistant to focusing on the knower (Adendorff & Blackie, 2022a, 2022b). Blackie (2022), therefore, calls for the development of 'knower awareness' in science education; that is the recognition that the person of the scientist – the knower – is

essential to the development of scientific knowledge. The focus of this paper is on the development of the 'knower'.

Science knowers

Knowers in any discipline can be distinguished based on who they are (kinds of knowers) and how they know (ways of knowing) (Maton, 2014). When a discipline foregrounds how someone knows, it requires the knower to see and do things in particular ways and involves acquiring an understanding of the discipline through prolonged participation and apprenticeship. Knowers, in these cases, can be said to have a cultivated gaze, where a gaze refers to a particular way of recognising and understanding what is valued by the discipline (Bernstein, 2000). By contrast, when a discipline emphasises who someone is, the kind of knower is important, and legitimacy stems from knowers' social positions (e.g., race, class, or gender), they can be said to be in possession of a social gaze. An individual is said to have a born gaze if they simply have naturally 'born' talent in a particular discipline or can master the knowledge and processes of a discipline without any additional learning. Disciplines that are dependent on knowers acquiring specialised knowledge, legitimate what is known as a trained gaze.

In the humanities, a cultivated, a social, or a born gaze is normally foregrounded. In contrast, in the sciences, a trained gaze is usually legitimated (Ellery, 2018). Since becoming a knower in the sciences is considered to entail training, Maton (2014) suggests that anyone, regardless of their social background, can be successful in science provided that they can acquire the appropriate disciplinary knowledge and skills, and acquire the trained gaze of a scientist.

Empirical research conducted on a foundational science curriculum at a South African university demonstrated that in addition to students needing to acquire the trained gaze of a scientists, students also need to take on the identity of being science learners (Ellery, 2018). Ellery argues that if students are to acquire epistemological access to the sciences, then curricula, teaching, and assessment methods need to ensure that students are explicitly taught how to be science knowers (or scientists) as well as how to be science learners. This explication of how to be is particularly important in the South African context where many students' home and educational backgrounds have not prepared them for working and learning in a scientific context. Ellery (2018: 31) shows that to become science learners, students require 'knower dispositions, values and attributes such as being engaged, critical, reflective, confident, independent, proactive, responsible, and autonomous'. By contrast, for students to be become scientists

> they would be expected to develop practices and knower dispositions based on scientific epistemic values linked to knowledge generation and claim-making, such as being rigorous, curious, reliable, and objective, working accurately and precisely, estimating appropriately, observing carefully, seeking simple solutions, and thinking analytically and critically. (Ellery, 2018: 31)

Our study attempts to provide some insight into how the advent of a global pandemic prompted a critical re-examination of the kinds of knowers (scientists and science learners) that are being legitimated in the curriculum of a foundational science course.

The context of the study

Since democracy in 1994, one of the structural mechanisms employed by the South African government to promote student access to higher education has been to promulgate the establishment of two new comprehensive universities – the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) in the Mpumalanga province, and the Sol Plaatje University in the Northern Cape province. Comprehensive universities in South Africa are universities that offer a range of programmes and attempt to balance the provision of formative and professionally oriented degrees (e.g., Bachelor's programmes), with vocationally and technologically oriented teaching and learning programmes such as diplomas (CHE, 2016).

One of the programmes offered by UMP is a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree. This qualification focusses on the biological, earth, and environmental sciences. In the first year, students take a fixed curriculum in which they do a full year of biology and earth or geographical sciences, and a semester of integrative environmental science. These courses are supported by a semester of chemistry, a semester of computer science, and a semester of mathematics. In second year, there are separate, year-long courses in ecology, environmental science, geography, geology, entomology, and integrated water management. Students select any three of these courses, contingent on the university rules for progression. In third year, the same courses from second year are offered but at level 7 of the South African Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF). Students select two of these year-long courses which represent their major subjects. All combinations of majors are designed to prepare students for further studies, or employment in a wide range of fields and it is expected that as UMP grows, additional elective options will be made available. Nevertheless, throughout the three years of the programme there is an emphasis on independent research, and third-year courses include credit-bearing research projects.

Theoretical and analytical framework

We used Bernstein's ideas of instructional and regulative discourse to engage with the notion of epistemological access (Bernstein, 2000). Bernstein (2000) was interested in how power and control influenced student learning. He was curious about the ways in which the classroom perpetuates (or disrupts) social stratification.

Bernstein (2000) argued that there are two kinds of processes (discourses) which reveal what counts as 'legitimate' within the social structure of the classroom. We are used to thinking about the 'instructional discourse' which comprises the skills and knowledge which we are trying to teach. But this is embedded in a 'regulative discourse' which implies a 'way of being' and gives strong messages about who 'belongs' in the space. Thus, in Bernstein's terms, a course which is proclaiming inclusivity through the knowledge in the instructional discourse can remain a place

of deep alienation for some students by virtue of the unspoken regulative discourse. For example, if participation in class is primarily through the raising of hands and articulating a question, then this strongly favours middle class students who are confident in speaking English. Although the regulative discourse can refer to the social order of the institution or society, the social order (i.e., how to act, speak and conduct oneself) of the discipline is arguably more important for regulating both staff-student interactions in the classroom, and the conduct of students as science learners. This regulation requires students to become more autonomous, critical learners who are responsible for their own learning (Ellery, 2017). The discipline-specific rules are also associated with regulating the conduct of students in the classroom, requiring them to attain the requisite knowledge, skills, norms, and values (Ellery, 2017).

Embedded within the regulative discourse, the instructional discourse pertains to the actual curriculum content and classroom activity – what is taught and how it is taught (Bernstein, 2000). The instructional discourse is underpinned by the rules of the discipline, and these regulate the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge, and the evaluative rules which define what is considered legitimate knowledge and learning (Bernstein, 2000). The regulative discourse can enable or hinder access to the instructional discourse. Using multiple methods of encouraging student participation in class and with one another lowers the threshold to actively engaging with the knowledge through conversation. Such activities enable epistemic access affording students a (relatively) safe space to ask questions and test understanding. Importantly, through 'speaking' science the student also begins to take on the identity of a knower of the science.

Empirical work has demonstrated that one of the many ways that lecturers can promote epistemological access in their courses is to employ a mixed pedagogy (Lingard & Mills, 2007). A mixed pedagogy is sometimes referred to as a mixed methods or flipped approach to teaching and learning (Simmons, et al., 2020; Aziz & Islam, 2022), whereby students are introduced to learning material outside of the classroom prior to engagement with the teacher and/or to learn through multiple methods (Simmons et al., 2020; Aziz & Islam, 2022). Within a mixed pedagogy approach, one can choose where to place the emphasis and where to hold strong boundaries and make clear connections, and where one can allow for a more dialogic, responsive approach. While this balance of strong boundaries and responsive teaching can be achieved in several learning contexts, Ellery (2017) suggests that the mixed pedagogy approach can better enable epistemological access of all groups of students. In the context of a foundational science curriculum, Ellery (2017) proposed strong boundaries and clear connections in the selection and sequence of knowledge acquisition, but weaker boundaries and fluid connections in terms of pacing and relationships with students (Ellery, 2017). In other words, students are aided when teachers drive the selection and sequence of what is taught but are flexible in terms of the pace of their teaching, and actively attempt to build meaningful relationships with their students.

We are of the view that the enforced move to emergency remote teaching by the COVID-19 pandemic forced new pedagogic approaches and practices which may well prove a beneficial augmentation of teaching practice. But this will only happen with careful reflection. We wished to analyse to what extent a remotely taught curriculum succeeded in ensuring that students were

given opportunities to acquire foundational science knowledge and were beginning to acquire the dispositions of science learners and scientists as described by Ellery (2018). We used student and peer feedback on one foundational B.Sc. course at the UMP (see details below), to analyse the effects of the Emergency Remote Teaching activities on student learning. Specifically, we wished to interrogate how course processes facilitated the cultivation of different kinds of knowers in science. Our discussion represents a reflection of the patterns that emerged over the two years of Emergency Remote Teaching in the course.

The course, its processes, and effectiveness at facilitating knowers in science

Biology 102 is a course which was designed and developed by the first author upon arrival at the UMP in 2016. The first author (DMP) has also been the sole lecturer for this course since then. The course is a second semester module (July to November) in the first year of the B.Sc. It is usually only offered in person (face-to-face), and normally takes 14 weeks to complete. The course has been allocated 15 credits of the total 120-degree credits required in first year and is at the NQF level 5. Because the course is also a prerequisite, foundational module for two other programmes at the UMP, it did not assume that all students taking it will have taken Life Science in Grade 12. The course is intended to provide the foundational building blocks of cellular biology for further study at the undergraduate level in the biosciences, and relevant elective modules in the B.Sc., B.Sc. (Agriculture), and B.Sc. (Environmental Science) programmes. In face-to-face mode teaching, there are normally four (50 minute) lectures and one (3 hour) practical/laboratory class per week.

Knowledge of cellular biology is foundational for any biologist because it is, in essence, the first principles upon which all other life science disciplines build (Zupanc, 2008). The course description, specified in the course documentation and developed by DMP, clearly articulates the importance of these first principles:

> The cell is the basic unit of life and cell biology is the branch of biology that studies the structure and function of cells. Cell biology is concerned with the physiological properties, metabolic processes, signaling pathways, life cycle, chemical composition and interactions of the cell with its environment. This is studied both on a microscopic and molecular level. The history of cell biology dates back to the 17th century when the term cell was first used. We now recognize cells to be the building blocks of all living organisms. The discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick in the 1950s provided the world with a new way of understanding cellular function at the molecular level which led to our understanding of patho-physiology of diseases, cancers, microbe structure and the discovery of many important drugs and their associated treatment pathways. The purpose of this module is to introduce students to the essential topics of cell biology. An understanding of the structure of cells underpins our understanding of how they function. Cell biology provides an important foundation for all science students. In this module we aim to provide you

with a framework that will allow you to fully appreciate how unicellular and multicellular organisms are structured and how they function.

Since Biology 102 is a second semester course, DMP had significantly more time than lecturers in the first semester of 2020 to plan his teaching after the announcement of the National State of Disaster and subsequent lockdown on 15 March 2020 (Declaration of a National State of Disaster, 2020) in South Africa. Crucially, this extra time allowed DMP to ensure that the course documentation foregrounded and included knowledge (the *what*) and *how* to become a science learner and a scientist. In addition, he was able to use his enrolment in a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDip (HE)) for academic developers at Rhodes University as a way of learning by doing (Stewart, 2012). Being taught under Emergency Remote Teaching conditions allowed DMP to think, feel, and experience how many of his students might be thinking, experiencing, and feeling. For example, DMP's first PGDip (HE) module was face-to-face, but the remaining five modules all had to be taken remotely. Because the remaining modules needed to be completed remotely, DMP had to balance domestic/household responsibilities with work and academic responsibilities. This situation allowed DMP to empathise with the challenges experienced by his own students. The experience of being taught remotely was crucial in promoting DMP's flexibility in terms of the pace of his teaching and intentional relationship building with his students.

DMP began the process of planning for the teaching of Biology 102 by firstly revisiting the exit-level outcomes for the B.Sc. programme and then the specific outcomes for the course (Barnett, et al., 2001). DMP then reflected on what he believed was important to teach in the module (the selection of knowledge), when it should be taught (the sequence of knowledge), and how to pace the teaching (Bernstein, 2000). In addition, through both of these initial processes he was cognisant of the issue of epistemological access as outlined above (Morrow, 2009).

The result of this reflection was a reconsideration of the instructional discourse, and a complete restructuring and presentation of the course on UMP's Learning Management System (Moodle). Given the circumstances, he elected to reorganise the course into weekly blocks, using a philosophical question to serve as inspiration for each week. The themes were linked to the overall theme for the course, "a voyage of scientific discovery", using the fundamental concepts of cellular biology as the theoretical framework. In addition, to begin to induct students into the discipline (Barnett, 2009), he chose to start the semester (the first three weeks) by posing two broad, provocative questions to the students; "Why am I here?" and "Who needs science?". His reason for posing these questions was to start introducing students to the dispositions they would need to become both science learners and scientists. The student evaluations in both 2020 and 2021 demonstrated that this critical course process was most likely having the desired effect. Specifically, students commented:

The module got me so interested as it teaches scientific writing, presentations, posters, etc. It made me to be a biologist in upcoming years. (Student respondent 79, 2020)

This module gave me an easy way to get information which is researching. (Student respondent 97, 2020)

It wants you to [be] active and always doing research while learning more new things. (Student respondent 7, 2021)

Learning all about the important scientists that played a huge part on our future. (Student respondent 19, 2021)

In these responses, it is evident that the students are beginning to grasp the importance of scientific skills like writing and some of the dispositions of a science learner, such as autonomy and curiosity. They are also beginning to see themselves as legitimate 'knowers'.

The importance of the initial induction phase of the course was also identified as being useful by one of DMP's peers in 2020:

I can see that the students are generally responding well to his approach and that is also encouraging. His ability to keep his formats simple, clear and well-structured demonstrates the value of working smart and not just working hard in his teaching that is very beneficial to the students. (Peer evaluator, 2020)

In the first week of the course, students were also required to join a peer group for the semester since collaboration is one of the key dispositions of a scientist (Fox & Faver, 1984) and learning to work with others is one of the critical cross-field outcomes of the programme. Rather than allocating students to groups, arbitrarily or otherwise, DMP used the group function in Moodle to allow students the freedom to select their group members and their group names to empower them and promote inclusivity. This approach gives the students agency through participating in the development of one aspect of the regulative discourse. This process, and the group learning, appeared to have been appreciated by the students:

Group assessments [in the context of what the student enjoyed the most during the course], it is because they brought us together as students even in trying times (Student respondent 53, 2020)

We had an individual and a group task for every week which kept us studying😁. (Student respondent 112, 2020)

Group tasks, having to discuss a topic with my group members, hearing different point of views. (Student respondent 55, 2021)

Taught us how to work in groups and to do research as a team. (Student respondent 122, 2021)

Although autonomy and independence are two of the cornerstones of a successful scientific disposition (Fox & Faver, 1984), so too is the importance of instilling a culture of collaboration and teamwork in science learners from early on in their careers (Fox & Faver, 1984). In addition, the desired effect of enabling epistemic access through 'speaking' biology does appear to be afforded by the regulative discourse. Indeed, one of DMP's peer evaluators, who is an active scientist, also touched on the significance of group work in his evaluation:

… the integration of group tasks into the Moodle sessions is commendable because this aligns neatly with social constructivism, i.e., learning is greatly enhanced when students work collaboratively with one another and when they are engaged in the construction of knowledge. (Peer evaluator, 2021)

Throughout the 14 weeks of the course, students were given one group task and at least one individual learning task for completion each week. In addition to speaking to the dispositions of science learners and scientists, the other core purpose of these tasks was to reassure the students that they were in this together with the lecturer and that he was available at the other end of the virtual line. The group tasks were set to try and promote more collaborative learning (Stewart, 2012) and feedback was formative. One student noted:

The fact that we were given space to actually process and understand the content bit by bit instead of being a whole lot of work at the same time. (Student respondent 52, 2021)

This student's response highlights how DMP's mixed pedagogy was visible to the students. His intention was not to overwhelm the students but to carefully pace the tasks to promote student learning. Thus, his attention to the instructional discourse was shown to be valued by the students.

The individual tasks also provided a mechanism for DMP to monitor online engagement by the students (i.e., identify if any students were having connectivity issues or struggling to access the material), and to provide students with important opportunities to practice assessment tasks in the course (Ellery, 2017). Importantly, some students were able to see the value of this assessment practice, with one student highlighting:

The weekly quizzes that train us to get used to how questions may be asked in the tests. (Student respondent 97, 2021)

To further promote more autonomous learning by the students, DMP required students to complete weekly tasks which were designed as scaffolded exercises (Wood, et al., 1976) building on the ideas and learning each week. For example, the group tasks moved from answering single questions in a *wiki* during the first week to submitting a detailed, written task about nanotechnology and the role of cell biology in the fight against COVID-19. This approach is at least a step in the direction of the contextually relevant engagement called for by Cross and Govender (2022) and Madondo (2021). These tasks were deliberately designed to be relevant to the global context in which all academics and students found themselves during 2020/2021. By being contextually relevant, DMP also hoped to make the content more interesting and engaging for the students and begin to inculcate a sense of belonging which he hoped would ultimately foster improved academic success (Krause-Levy, et al., 2021). His efforts appeared to have the desired effect i.e., the regulative discourse appears to be enabling epistemic access to the instructional discourse, with several students noting:

It is about real-life things what we mostly see and experienced. (Student respondent 102, 2020)

The fact that it covers chapters that are relevant to the survival lar living organism and the understanding if how they all merge into an ecosystem. Also, the fact that every process points something we can relate and see happening in the real life. (Student respondent 86, 2020)

Everything that I have learned is aligned with my future career path. (Student respondent 82, 2020)

Additional and optional weekly resources were also uploaded for the students to engage with as both a way to build foundational knowledge and provide enrichment for the students. Both of DMP's peer evaluators believed that these additional resources were useful:

I am impressed by Prof. Parkers multi-pronged approach to online teaching and use of a range of material and methods in his teaching. He's given me allot of ideas that I will incorporate into my teaching. (Peer evaluator, 2020)

Prof Parker uses voice notes and a combination of texts and graphics in PowerPoint presentations to provide clear and coherent descriptions and explanations of each session's topic and related subtopics. For each session, students are provided with a variety of learning resources which are categorized as 'core' and 'optional'. (Peer evaluator, 2021)

However, the overall engagement of the students with respect to the additional resources was somewhat disappointing in both years. For example, in 2020, approximately half of the enrolled students had not even attempted to open any of the additional resources mid-way through the course. Instead, students appeared to prioritise summative assessment tasks that contributed to their course record or class mark. When a quiz or assignment "counted for marks", engagement/completion by the students rose to close to 100% on all occasions in both years. This situation is analogous to the assessment "backwash" described by Ramsden (1992) where assessment tasks effectively signal to students where they should focus their learning efforts. Although DMP incorporated numerous formative learning activities during the 14 weeks of the course, he may need to consider other innovative tools like the inclusion of group participation grades to try and focus the learning attention of the students in the future.

As replacements for the usual, face-to-face practical or laboratory classes, DMP was able to motivate UMP to procure laboratory simulation software which was used to provide weekly practical simulation replacements from week four onwards. There were 10 of these practical simulations during the course that were related to the course content and theme for that week. Students were not graded on each simulation but were instead given a participation grade based on the number of simulations they had completed during the semester. For example, if a student completed 5 of the 10 simulations, she/he received a simulation participation grade of 50%. This grade contributed approximately 2.5% to the final class record grade. Although not all students engaged with the practical simulations in 2020 and 2021, 17% of respondents in 2021 stated that they enjoyed the practical simulations and that they believed that the simulations enhanced their learning during the course.

However, one of the major learning activities that was not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic was the running of practical or laboratory classes where students had the opportunity to explicitly practice and rehearse particular *ways to be* as a scientist (Boughey, 2002). Specifically, in the laboratory setting, students are actively taught how to dress, how to behave, and exactly what to do when in the laboratory. Importantly, the lecturer and any graduate assistants can use these laboratory sessions to role-model how to be 'good' scientists by, for example, always wearing their lab coats and closed shoes, keeping their workstations clean, etc. Such role modelling affirms the regulative discourse of laboratory practice and allows students to embody their identities as science learners and scientists. Such practical opportunities were not possible during 2020 and 2021 and this lack of opportunity was highlighted by several students as being a negative consequence of Emergency Remote Teaching:

> Students should be given a chance to complete practicals maybe once a week in a real lab. (Student respondent 85, 2021)

> I wish we were doing a more practical approach when learning about lots of things because that will increase the interest of students towards this module and learning will be fun. (Student respondent 111, 2021)

The fact that we didn't do the practicals physically ourselves being guided through every step. (Student respondent 85, 2020)

It was also not possible to have contact classes during the pandemic, and, in both years, students felt that this was something that they would prefer instead of a purely online offering (6% of respondents in 2020 and 10% of respondents in 2021). Although the contact lecture/discussion model could be viewed as a rather passive form of learning, there is evidence to suggest that first year student learning can be enhanced with contact teaching (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). However, learning can be enhanced even further when students are taught in smaller groups (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). Thus, a hybrid approach that combines online and contact forms of teaching and learning, with additional group activities, is likely to be the most effective. Indeed, empirical research at a South African university has demonstrated increased cognitive engagement by students and higher test scores in a "partially flipped" or hybrid ecology course (Le Roux, 2016).

Conclusions

The enforced shift from face-to-face and contact teaching to Emergency Remote Teaching in 2020 and 2021 provided us with the unique opportunity to reflect on both the benefits and constraints of remote teaching in a foundational science course. Traditionally, foundational science courses are taught in a didactic fashion, are content-heavy and riddled with jargon (Ellery, 2017). Such an approach to teaching foundational science courses does not adequately equip students to become scientists and science learners (Ellery, 2018). In addition, the traditional didactic approach also has the potential to alienate students and strip them of their sense of belonging (Krause-Levy, et al., 2021). While many of the knower dispositions of scientists and science learners could be taught effectively using Emergency Remote Teaching, some were more challenging to teach, and for students to learn. For example, DMP was able to promote autonomy of learning but was not able to role-model the 'real world' behaviour of a scientist because face-to-face laboratory classes were not possible. Thus, the Emergency Remote Teaching mode, in isolation, is insufficient to cultivate knowers in science. However, when combined with the judicious use of face-to-face contact in the form of classroom and laboratory time, our approach is likely to be highly effective.

Overall, we believe that our analysis has demonstrated that an innovative approach to the teaching of a foundational science course has begun to facilitate the cultivation of different kinds of knowers in science – science learners and scientists. The careful consideration of the conjunction of the instructional discourse and the regulative discourse paid off. Although there is still much work to be done, we argue that foundational science lecturers should focus their attention on the use of a mixed pedagogy that foregrounds hybrid or flipped approaches to their teaching to promote greater engagement amongst students and affords their taking on of the identities of science learners and scientists.

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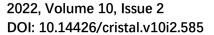
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Institutionalisation of academic integrity:
Experiences at a distance education university in South Africa during COVID-19

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Abstract

Academic integrity is an ongoing concern in higher education. Research dating back to the 1960s shows students self-reporting cheating, and with the advent of more online education, concerns about the integrity of degrees have become even more widespread. Due to this concern about academic integrity, especially in view of the changes brought about by COVID-19, I launched a research project that aimed to holistically understand how academics understand and teach academic integrity and institutional policies around academic integrity, and how these policies are employed through analysing five years' worth of student disciplinary records at a distance education university. I interviewed twenty-eight academics and academic managers and analysed sixty-six documents, as well as 3 383 student disciplinary records. Flowing from that larger project, I argue in this paper that there has not yet been institutionalisation of academic integrity at this university. I end by offering suggestions for how institutionalisation could occur.

Keywords: academic integrity, cheating, institutionalisation, policy

Introduction

Academic integrity is 'a commitment to the key values of honesty, trust, fairness, equity, respect and responsibility, and the translation of these values into action' (Bretag, 2016: 28). While research into academic integrity dates to the 1950s and 1960s (Marques, et al., 2019), COVID-19 and an increase in online education brought serious discussions and almost a moral panic (Goode, 2017) about academic integrity, with handwringing about technology making cheating easier for students and ideas that students are 'getting away' with large-scale cheating in the higher education system. Despite this moral panic, occurrences of cheating have shown to be relatively stable, and not insignificant over time (Curtis & Tremayne, 2021; McCabe, et al., 2001).

Comparing cheating over time is complicated because different definitions are used but McCabe, et al., (2001: 223-224) reported on USA based research that in the reported samples 75% of students admitted to cheating in 1963, and in 1993 82% admitted to cheating. A study in Saudi-Arabia at a medical school reported cheating by 59% of students in the 2014-2015

academic year (Abdulghani, et al., 2019).   And 94% of medical students in Zagreb University reported cheating in a 2004 study, as well as 61% of a sample of Taiwanese students in a 2007 study (Iqbal, et al., 2021). In a comparative study of South African and American students, twelve and fourteen percent of students, respectively, admitted to breaching academic integrity standards (Mwamwenda, 2006). Staff at UK and Australian universities estimated that contract cheating in their universities are around ten percent of students (Awdry & Newton, 2019), while other research places it between 2% (based on self-reports) and 16% based on other analysis methods (Curtis, et al., 2022). And in a Turkish study that compared students' self-reported cheating in face-to-face and emergency remote teaching during CVID-19, students admitted to slightly more cheating in COVID-19 however, the biggest correlation for online cheating was cheating in face-to-face education (Yazici, et al., 2022). While much more attention has been paid to cheating recently, it is not a new phenomenon that has inexplicably increased with COVID-19.

The concerns around academic integrity attracted educational technology companies, all offering technological solutionism (Swauger, 2020a; Teräs, et al., 2020) to combat the so-called scourge of cheating. Technological solutionism is "believing that technology will solve pedagogical problems [that] is endemic to narratives produced by the ed-tech community" (Swauger, 2020b). With the COVID-19 pandemic, more universities moved towards emergency remote teaching, and, in this context, more technological solutionism was adopted by universities (Barriga, et al., 2020; Eaton, 2020). Academic integrity must be a shared responsibility between institutions, staff, and students (Mitchell, 2009) in order for it to be successful. It is in this context of a switch to online exams and discussions around student cheating and technological solutions being offered, that my interest in this research was sparked. In this article, I argue that the institutionalisation of academic integrity is not yet a completed project because the institution and the academics in the institution have contradictory positions that ultimately frustrates institutionalisation of academic integrity.

Academic integrity

Wider access to university education and commercialisation of higher education led to increased concern regarding academic honesty (Bretag, 2016). Distance and online education universities are sites for widening participation in education, but they often have a negative reputation (Xiao, 2018). One reason for this is the fear that they might be perceived as vectors for cheating because of their reliance on technology (Minnaar, 2012). However, cheating behaviour is less common in distance education than in face-to-face universities (Harris, et al., 2020; Kidwell & Kent, 2008).

While academic integrity is often framed as a student issue, 'institutional and societal factors are increasingly recognised as having significant potential to affect academic cultures with respect to integrity' (Fishman, 2016:12). Academic integrity is often an assumed universal value, but the fact that students outside the main centres of academia (UK, USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia) are often identified as being transgressors of academic integrity values (Openo, 2019;

Velliaris & Breen, 2016) raises questions of its universality. And as Blum's (2009) work show even within the USA students had different understandings of plagiarism than faculty.

An important direction in research into academic integrity is the idea of the sharing economy and that students are likely to share notes and assignments with one another as part of the sharing economy (Bretag, et al., 2020). Blum (2009) uses the concept of performance self and authentic self of students, where performance self is less interested in originality and sees the boundaries between their own and others' contributions as permeable. This is re-enforced by joint authoring and crowdsourced contribution sites such as Wikipedia (Blum, 2009: 66-77) where collaboration is an important social value. Furthermore, students and academics have a different understanding of what constitutes cheating – students see certain behaviour as not cheating, while academics may judge it differently (Burrus, et al., 2007). Yet, collaboration is often devalued with unclear and excessively narrow definitions of collusion as an anathema to academic integrity, forbidding students actions that academics take for granted in the course of their own work (e.g., discussions with colleagues, proofreading and editing) (Crook & Nixon, 2019). In line with a reconsideration of the universality of academic integrity, the existence of this sharing economy may mean that we need to interrogate the universality of academic integrity.

Academic integrity: Institutional level

For institutions, the danger of academic dishonesty is something that threatens the very existence of the university and the perceived integrity of their degrees (Mwamwenda, 2012). Institutions must develop a culture of academic integrity because it is the basis of the higher educational enterprise (Thomas and Scott 2016), and a rise in the reporting of cheating in the popular media threatens this enterprise (Baijnath and Singh, 2019). There are concerns that academic dishonesty by students in university will / does lead to dishonest behaviour in the workplace (Guerrero-Dib, et al., 2020).

Academic integrity is best conceived as an institutional effort rather than an individual lecturer responsibility – these efforts include policy developments, training and establishing a culture of integrity on campus (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). Despite the centrality of the institution in institutionalising academic integrity, there is a lack of research around the how of institutionalisation (Bertram Gallant, 2017). One exception is the benchmarking of institutionalisation by Glendinning (2017). This benchmark evaluates ten components: institutional strategic commitment to academic integrity, clear and consistently applied policies related to academic integrity, fair sanctions when academic integrity are transgressed, community buy-in for strategies, an institutional culture of deep learning, student leadership towards academic integrity, transparency and communication around issues of academic integrity, continuously monitoring the effectiveness of academic integrity programmes and policies, engagement with new research related to academic integrity, and institution-wide understanding of what academic integrity entails (Glendinning, 2017).

Framing academic integrity as a social contract between students and academics may be one way of successfully combatting transgressions of academic integrity (Gregory, 2020). This

social contract approach to academic integrity might explain why institutions with academic honour codes are successful in maintaining academic integrity. Academic honour codes are a whole institutional approach where academic integrity is emphasised from a student's first attendance of the institution, to training of what it is, honesty pledges and having student-run disciplinary meetings (McCabe & Treviño, 2002; Tatum & Schwartz, 2017). Honour codes go deeper than asking students to sign an honesty or plagiarism declaration and actively involves mentoring students into what is considered acceptable behaviour, as well as involving them. Honour codes seem to lead to an institutional culture that values academic integrity (McCabe, 2005).

Rather than academic integrity being something that is narrowly focused on getting students to act in a certain way, it should be understood as a holistic enterprise for the ENTIRE institution as 'institutional integrity shapes individual integrity' (Gallant, 2016: 980). Individual integrity is necessary but not sufficient; there needs to be a ' "moral coherence" that encompasses an institution's structures, policies, and practices' (Gallant, 2016). Institutions have a responsibility to create an ethical environment through 'tone at the top' (Bristor & Burke, 2016: 4). Even if there are clear policies and training available to students and staff, institutions may not be perceived as ethical. For students to take the value of academic integrity seriously, they must feel that the institution itself is an institution of integrity, and that it does not have a culture where a lack of integrity is accepted (Gallant, 2016: 986). Furthermore, academic managers and top university structures must also create an environment where academics feel that they are supported when they implement policy (Bristor & Burke, 2016).

Institutionalisation of academic integrity can be thought of as a four-step process – recognising the urgency of institutionalisation of academic integrity; an institution-wide discussion on how to respond (response generation), which must be a thorough process and not merely a re-inscription of existing policies and practices; and implementation that goes beyond just stopping misconduct but a holistic approach that encourages academic integrity as a value. Lastly, academic integrity is considered an institutional value if it is integrated into the routine of the institution, including at policy and praxis level (Gallant & Drinan, 1969). In order for academic integrity policies to be implemented successfully, the process of policy development must be inclusive, not just of academics but also of students (Bristor & Burke, 2016), and academics themselves play a pivotal role (Gallant & Drinan, 1969).

Academic integrity: Academics

Academics are poorly educated about what academic integrity is (Ransome & Newton, 2018), despite being at the coalface of dealing with academic integrity. Academic staff should be the first to communicate what academic integrity is, and what possible sanctions exist if students transgress policies (Bristor & Burke, 2016). However, academic staff may have disagreements over who is responsible for teaching academic integrity, how (and if) it should be taught and who should handle cases of misconduct (Löfström, et al., 2015). Disciplinary and personal values, as well as policy and praxis between academic staff members might explain why there are such

diverse responses to academic misconduct. Consistency in policy and procedures, including having staff reflect on their own research practices, is one of the key elements of academic integrity (Bretag, et al., 2011).

When academics discover that students have committed breaches of academic integrity, they experience a breakdown in the pedagogical relationship and they experience a conflict between their responsibility of care towards students and their responsibility as quality assurance agents for degrees (Vehviläinen, et al., 2018). Academic integrity can be seen in two ways by academics – as a rule-based approach where the rules rather than discretion is emphasised and a principle-based approach where opportunity for self-correction and discretion is emphasised (Amigud & Pell, 2021). Academics do not consistently follow institutional policies regarding what to do in cases of breach of academic integrity, in many cases prioritising a relationship with a student over punishing a student for such breaches (De Maio, et al., 2020), but whether someone would view this disconnect in a positive or a negative light seems to be mostly down to whether policy or relationships are prioritised.

One way to decrease the likeliness of students to commit transgressions is by changing teaching and assessment practices to be more personalised and to require proof that plagiarism was not perpetrated; however, this has implications on academics' workload (Openo, 2019). However, academics are often not prepared for the ways in which assessments need to change in order for it to be successfully used online, especially with the advent of remote emergency teaching and online assessments (Eaton, 2020). One suggestion is closer relationships between students and academics in order for academics to notice when there are changes to a student's work, or a disjuncture between student talk and student submissions; this type of relational approach would imply more human resources in the academic sector (Singh & Remenyi, 2016). When students view their lecturers positively, they are less likely to engage in academic dishonesty practices (Stearns, 2001), which again highlights the importance of a relational approach to teaching. Other practices by academics that can lead to less academic dishonesty are through developing specific materials related to academic integrity and having open discussions on contract and other forms of cheating (Bretag, et al., 2019). Academics often take the lead in teaching students what academic integrity is, using a variety of methods, including a games-based approach (Vella, 2018) while institutional approaches such as a compulsory module on academic integrity for students and staff were also used (Sefcik, et al., 2020).

In South Africa, the massification of higher education is seen by some academics as being negatively associated with academic integrity – because of the impossible demands it places on academics (Mahabeer & Pirtheepal, 2019). This massification of student access has not necessarily been accompanied by an increase in academics, leaving academics overworked and emotionally drained when dealing with larger classes. Massification in African universities is often associated with larger enrolments without concomitant increases in funding and staff, a larger administrative burden, possibly compromised quality in teaching and a strain on physical infrastructure and library resources (Mohamedbhai, 2008). Massification can affect teaching and learning by, for example, creating fewer assessment opportunities, less individual attention, and less robust

feedback on assessments (Msiza, et al., 2020). This is not a uniquely African problem, with massification and class size being cited for increases in cheating in Australia as another example (Bretag, et al., 2019).

Methods

My interest in the topic was sparked by the emerging conversations about academic integrity amongst staff at a distance education university in South Africa. The article that this study is based on was a qualitative research project that aimed at understanding academic integrity issues in a holistic manner based on interviews with academics about how they understand and teach academic integrity to their students, a document analysis of policies in the university, as well as an analysis of five years' worth of institutional disciplinary hearings. In total, I conducted twenty-eight interviews with academics and academic managers from all faculties that teach undergraduate students (seven faculties), reviewed sixty-six documents (these included forty-five documents related to specific modules such as learning guides and tutorial letters, fourteen university policies and process documents which included policies that relate to academic integrity and disciplinary codes, teaching, learning and assessment policies, and two documents from the Council for Higher Education related to institutional audits and quality assurance) and the 3383 disciplinary records for cases from between January 2016 and December 2020.

Three separate ethics approvals were obtained – firstly, the ethics was approved at college level. Secondly, it was approved at institutional level as I requested student data (in the form a de-identified student disciplinary records) as well as university policies and access to staff in order to conduct interviews.. However, in engaging with the office responsible for the student disciplinary process, it became clear that there is no de-identified data available. I returned to the institutional committee to amend the original ethics application for permission to capture, and then deidentify the data for analysis (third approval). This amendment was also approved.

Participants were recruited in three ways. Firstly, I contacted academic managers for each undergraduate faculty to ask for referrals to possible participants; secondly, I asked within my own networks for participants or referrals to possible participants; and finally, through an institution wide email inviting academics to participate. In recruitment I was aware to trying to have at least some representation for each faculty, as well as in terms of race, gender and seniority, and that different sized modules were also represented. This was done in order to have as large a possible range of experiences and viewpoints. Table 1 provides an overview of the various participants.

The interviews lasted between 40 minutes to an hour and a half and were conducted online using Microsoft Teams. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then sent to interviewees for checking. I then imported transcriptions into Atlas.Ti and did thematic analysis. Other documents were also imported and analysed in Atlas.Ti. Disciplinary cases were captured in Microsoft Access, and both analysed quantitatively (e.g. how many students were found guilty, how many students appealed, what level were students at, what modules did the students take,

etc.) and qualitatively – what evidence was presented for the case and what can we learn from that.

Table 1: Table with participants

Field	Level
Academic Managers	
Accounting∗	Senior Lecturer
Humanities & Social Science	Associate Professor
Science & Engineering	Professor
Environmental Sciences	Associate Professor
Business & economics∗	Associate Professor
Special Projects∗	Senior Lecturer
∗Also involved at institutional management level with policies and organisation for online exams	
Academics	
Environmental Sciences	2 x Lecturers 1 x Professor
Accounting	4 x senior lecturer
Education	3 x senior lecturer
Business & economics	1 x professor 1 x lecturer 2 x senior lecturer
Humanities & Social Sciences	2 x senior lecturer 2 x associate professor 1 x lecturer
Law	1 x senior lecturer 1 x associate professor
Science & Engineering	1 x lecturer
Total	28

Data analysis was conducted in the spirit of ethnography, even though the research was not set up as a conventional ethnographic study. In my research, and especially my analysis I took the view that

> [t]he anthropologist, despite months of literature reviews … will have to eject hypotheses like so much ballast … The ethnographer must, like a surrealist, be *disponible* (cf. Breton 1937), and open to *objets trouvès*, after arriving in the field. (Okely, 1994: 19)

I was informed by the features of ethnography, namely exploring naturally occurring relationships or phenomena rather than hypotheses testing, open analytical categories, a small number of cases in detail, and data analysis that focuses on interpretations of meaning and action (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). My data analysis then departed from this openness. Although I had read, and sometimes do use data categories found in the literature, I also started from the

data, categorising it, then trying to find connections between categories, and making sense of the connections and disjunctures, within the data. In the coding classification system of Saldana (2013), I used descriptive and open coding to identify basic topics, with a preference for vivo coding to stay close to participant words and phrases.

After data was initially coded, codes were categorised into more overarching themes. Through a memo writing process these themes were then explored. Codes were also visually connected as themes. These themes have been (and are being) developed into journal articles. This paper is based on two primary themes – academic integrity as game play (based on Sherry Ortner's (1996) serious games), and institutional disciplinary process.

Rather than reliability and validity, I tried to ensure trustworthiness of my research – a trend in qualitative research dating back to the 1980s (Krefting, 1991; Adler, 2022). One approach to trustworthiness of qualitative research is through truth value (how well does the findings reflect the truth of the findings), applicability in other contexts, whether the findings would be consistent in other contexts, and whether the research is neutral in the procedures and results (Krefting, 1991: 215-217). A different way that trustworthiness can be ensured in qualitative research is by using a number of methodological techniques such as triangulation, self-reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement, an audit trail of decisions, peer debriefing and thick description (Hadi & José Closs, 2016: 643–644). Using the first set of criteria by Krefting, I believe the findings reflect truth value in that it is consistent with other research and speaking to other academics my findings often reflect their experiences, as well as reflecting published academic research in other contexts. In terms of the second set of criteria while I did not make use of all the methodological techniques I asked members to check transcripts for accuracy (but not analysis), used peer debriefing extensively (through discussions with two expert researchers, and more recently in presenting preliminary findings) and reflexivity.

Description of institution

The university serves working students wanting to upgrade their qualification for work purposes, lifelong learners studying just for interest sake, incarcerated students and increasingly newly matriculated post-secondary school leavers. It has also been an important site of accessing higher education – with many students not meeting traditional acceptance criteria and making use of entry and bridging qualifications.

The institution has been progressively moving towards more online education, away from a more traditional distance education mode, since the early 2000s. Progress was being made with this vision, especially in terms of the submission of assignments (although not necessarily online assignments), some progress in some modules starting to make use of continuous assessment (which is delivered online) and at least a minimal presence for most modules on the learning management system. Often, this would be the paper behind the glass model of uploaded PDF documents, and perhaps a discussion forum where students could ask questions. Most modules (courses), however, still maintained venue-based exams. Previous research was conducted on summative assessment cheating by students at the institution and it was found

that most student cheating took place in physical venues by means of notes (whether on paper, rulers, or the body) (Mokula & Lovemore, 2014). This was confirmed by my own analysis of the student disciplinary records for the period 2016-2019 (however, this changed in 2020 as explained elsewhere (Marais, 2022)).

Findings

COVID-19 and the institution

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered what happened with the institution in terms of exams. South Africa instituted a state of emergency to deal with the emergent COVID-19 pandemic and placed the country under 'hard lockdown' from 26 March to 30 April (Government of South Africa, 2022b). A risk-adjusted level system was later implemented in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19. The first lockdown saw the closing of schools and educational facilities (with schools that were able to, going online), closing of all nonessential shops and services, and a stay-at-home order (Government of South Africa, n.d.). After 1 May, a risk-adjusted strategy was implemented with five alert levels – the lower the level the more services, shops and education were opened, still with some restrictions. These levels were adjusted depending on where in a COVID-19 wave the country was; the more severe the wave, the more severe the restrictions (Government of South Africa, n.d.), although never quite as strict as level 5 again. The lowest levels did allow for a return to almost normality, although some restrictions remained, including on the number of people allowed in venues, which were only allowed to operate at 50% capacity or a maximum of 1 000 people (Government of South Africa, 2022b).

The initial hard lockdown was a period of great uncertainty. There was no indication of how long it would last and what would happen thereafter. One of the hallmarks of distance education is central planning well in advance. Two examples of this relate to exams specifically, the time needed to print and distribute exam question papers, and venues that need to be booked, furnished and supplied with invigilators. In the institution where I conducted research, this meant practically that exam question papers were set in January for mid-year exams, with exam timetables already provisionally available in January when students registered (and venue bookings made long in advance). It was clear that the institution could not carry on with face-to-face exams because there was no certainty that students would be allowed to travel to venues, whether venues would be open, and at what capacity (all actions that were prohibited during the initial hard lockdown). An added complication was that venue-based exams were administered not only in South Africa but also worldwide, so the institution would also have to deal with other countries' restrictions and not just South Africa's restrictions.

Considering this, it was decided that mid-year exams for the 2020 would take place online. Later decisions were to extend that to the year-end exam of 2020, and then, that all future exams would take place online. Academic staff were encouraged to change their assessment practices from time-limited exams to portfolio and similar assessments, as well as continuous assessments. While some academics did take this route, many modules still made use of time-limited exams that were administered online instead of in a venue. While not the focus of my research the

permanent switch to online exams is not uncontroversial or uncontested but is seen in line with the increasingly online nature of the university.

After the initial exam sitting in May and with all indications being that the change would be permanent, discussions started around academic integrity – with some academics believing that widespread cheating took place in the first exam period (Interviewees 10 & 26). This has led to the issue of cheating becoming a much more central discussion within the institution. Where institutional discussions previously were mostly centred on plagiarism, especially at postgraduate level, and how to deal with that, the new discussions became more encompassing of a broad range of cheating activities and how to deal with it (Interviewee 28).

Institutional response to academic integrity

As mentioned, despite being a long-standing distance education institution, the university largely used venue-based exams. In many ways, neither the institution, the academics nor the students were prepared for this shift to online exams. ICT systems went down at times due to the sheer volume of students trying to access the services at once and academics were insufficiently prepared for how an online exam would differ from a venue-based exam. Students often did not have the technology or technological knowledge to complete the exams.

From the second instance of online exams, there was a shift from survival to institutionalisation of online exams and talk around academic integrity started in earnest. While there had previously been initiatives regarding academic integrity at the institution, it was almost exclusively focused on postgraduate students and plagiarism and controlling plagiarism through similarity detection software (like Turnitin). The first institutional awareness-raising campaigns about academic integrity at a larger scale only started to take place from mid-2021 on social media platforms (Interviewee 10) – and they were always negatively framed with phrases such as 'don't do x, don't do y because you will be punished'. The threat of punishment was vague, and while students were referred to the student code of conduct, they would receive no clarity there either, as transgressions were not spelled out but rather kept very broadly.

Institutional policies were still very much focused on sit-down venue-based exams – even though there has been an increasing number of online assessments taking place before COVID-19. The student disciplinary policy was last updated in 2017. The bulk of the student disciplinary code is focused on student behaviour in terms of physical presence on campus and examination processes. This was not unique, as a 2006 study of South African institutions indicated that most institutions at that stage were concerned with behaviour on physical campuses such as sexual harassment, rape, and vandalism (Walter Lumadi, 2008).

Through studying the disciplinary records, it was also quite clear that even before the COVID-19 crisis, the institution was struggling to handle the scope of dishonesty in online assessments, whether it was the use of ghost writers or sharing information during exams on Telegram or WhatsApp groups. In a grouping of cases, students were first found guilty of academic misconduct for sharing answers on WhatsApp during an exam after a lecturer had made a case against the students. Later the students had their sanctions overturned because the

lecturer had not gathered evidence in a legally acceptable manner. The theme of cheating through Telegram and WhatsApp groups is one that became especially pertinent in the online exams, but as the disciplinary code was never updated, it remains one that most academics are not competent in dealing with as it requires understandings of legal systems of evidence gathering. Following this case, there was also no institutional effort made to train academics in how to deal with such cases and what acceptable evidence gathering would be. In view of a devolving of responsibility towards academics for building cases against students to serve on the institutional committee, the institution should give clear guidelines as to how academics should gather the evidence in appropriate manners, especially for those who do not come from a legal background. One participant did dispute that the institutional committee was dealing with evidence in an appropriate manner, indicating that only direct evidence was accepted rather than evaluating evidence:

> … to say this is substantive evidence, this is indirect evidence … and this is corroborative evidence. (Interviewee 6)

Combine this uncertainty with the administrative burden that disciplinary cases bring, as well as feeling unsupported by the institution when academics do bring cases (Interviewee 13 and Interviewee 15), some academics doubted whether their colleagues were acting against students' cheating.

The charges that can be brought against students are vague in the disciplinary code (for example, certain behaviours are not described, such as sharing answers on social media groups or making use of ghost writers). Cases were sometimes made against students on the basis of bringing the institution into disrepute, and ghost-writing cases (where a third party is paid to complete an assessment) were often prosecuted as plagiarism because there is not a specified charge for this in the disciplinary code. While there might be an argument to be made that cheating is cheating and we all know what it is, and therefore specificity is not needed, having specificity would lead to both staff and students being specifically aware of what is transgressions, what to look out for and make students aware about, specifically clear away areas where students and academics may have different ideas of acceptable behaviour and in what context (for example when is working together acceptable or not). This also need to be dynamic because students evolve more quickly than what academics can make rules about. Furthermore, while guidelines for punishments did exist institutionally, these were not available to students, either in printed material or on the web.

Larger tensions in the university also play out in the disciplinary process – two examples are illustrative. For most of the records that I analysed for the disciplinary committee, it was quite consistent with the sanctions given to students, and in most cases, these were quite harsh (for example, five-year suspension from studying at the university and deregistration of modules). In what could be described as politically sensitive cases (related to, for example, student protests), it was often negotiated to withdraw charges to stop further tensions. However, in 2019, the

disciplinary committee suddenly changed tack – students still received the same sanctions as previously, but the sanctions were all suspended by the committee *'in an attempt to be transformative and not punitive'* .

In 2020, the university switched to online exams, and with the October exams, there was a sudden explosion of disciplinary cases. From the between 50 and 100 cases per examination period in the previous years, suddenly 2 301 cases were reported (or put differently, 68% of all cases in the five-year period occurred in November 2020) (see Marais (2022) for further analysis). The already strained disciplinary apparatus of the university was completely overwhelmed with such numbers, and a new process was needed. Where, previously, students were called for a disciplinary case, evidence presented and deliberated by a panel, students were now given a warning on accusation and issued with a warning letter that stated that should students be found guilty of a similar offence, they would face harsher sanctions. If students disputed the charge, they had to appeal (or in the words of one interviewee, contest rather than appeal – interviewee 10). Thus, suddenly, the presumption of innocence was removed, and lenient sentences became acceptable to the disciplinary apparatus. Furthermore, the university was not consistent in their own process because approximately 100 students were issued with more than one warning letter in the same period for two or more different modules, without further sanction.

In reaction to perceptions of cheating in the May/June 2020 exams (despite no disciplinary cases having been logged), the university implemented a proctoring solution in the form of a cellular phone monitoring application that records sound while students are writing exams. The process was rolled out shambolically. Students and staff were alerted only a few days before the exam processes would start, leaving both students and staff uncertain about how the application worked.

But however, the introduction of it has been very unfair to students in that they were introduced in the last minute, and there was no training for students. Training for student was only a week or two weeks before, which was sent to them via [institutional] email. Majority of students sometimes don't even access these emails. (Interviewee 27)

Despite this application being used in November 2020, no disciplinary cases were logged using the proctoring tool as evidence in the November 2020 exams. According to an academic manager overseeing the examination process for both the November 2020 and May 2021 exams:

Students that have been identified through marking has been more effective than the other mechanisms that we have put in. (Interviewee 10)

In the face of technology, the human factor in identifying cheating proved more powerful. Despite this, the institution persisted in using proctoring solutions and, in fact, increased the number and types of proctoring solutions used.

An academic perhaps rightly identified the issues of institutional game playing that was about perception management.

> I think we're looking for a metric … that's simple enough that we can put it in a headline of a newspaper article. Yeah, that says, whatever, 'we installed a piece of software and our piece of software caught out 0.5 percent of students, meaning 99.5 percent of our students are now honest. (Interviewee 3)

This line of argument was strengthened when a prominent academic from a South African university[1] wrote an opinion piece for the national media indicating that the university has become a 'qualification factory' that is handing out degrees to anyone. This elicited several responses from people in leadership positions at the university defending the validity of the university's qualifications and pointing out its use of proctoring to ensure the validity of its qualifications, as the quote from the very astute academic above predicted.

Academics and academic integrity

One power contest between academics and the institution arose from the unilateral implementation of proctoring. While some academics may agree with proctoring in principle (as did a number of academics I interviewed), there were contestations around who then is responsible for the proctoring, watching or listening to associated video or audio files and then lodging disciplinary cases. One academic pointed out that when there were sit-down exams there was a department responsible for monitoring student behaviour during exams, and academics were only responsible for setting exam question papers and marking scripts.

> I have to sit there and match [matching student identities or faces to the student who wrote the exam] them; I mean that's just not: I'm not gonna do that, sit and match the student look at student, first I must match the student to see that the picture and the student is the same I must match, I have 62 students I have to do that for. So I did not do and I'm not gonna do. Even now if [assessment administration department] exams is not assisting⋯ Unless they do it, I'm not gonna do it … during face to face, who was responsible for invigilate during that period who was invigilate. I don't remember last year going to invigilate. I was only made, I was only told that on the day, my test is being written, I must be available. (Interviewee 27)

And I want to point out that this role is a huge burden when considering the sheer number of students at this institution. Whether you are considering the full proctoring that some departments use, or the audio proctoring that is more widely used, if you have 25 000 students where even 5% of students are flagged, that is still 1250 audio files that needs to be vetted. And while the assessment administration department has now become involved in the process, their

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[1] The details of the article have been withheld to ensure the anonymity of the relevant institution.

involvement seems to be on the level of sending academics a list with possible students to vet for cheating, rather than doing the vetting themselves (and subsequently taking responsibility for taking accused students to disciplinary hearings).

Academic complaints of increased workload are valid. In venue-based exams, the university employed a large number of invigilators (two invigilators for the first 30 students and thereafter an extra one invigilator per 30 students) (Mokula & Lovemore, 2014:263). Online exams has led to a perceived higher workload for academics as issues that were dealt with at an institutional level, has devolved more towards academics as this illustrate.

Cheating arising from venue-based exams was monitored by a department externally from academic departments, and disciplinary cases arising from venue-based exams were handled by this department with academics sometimes called in to give evidence on similarity between scripts. Academics would only become involved where they may have picked up cheating in written exam scripts but, more likely, if they picked up plagiarism from assignments or portfolios. With online exams, academics suddenly had an extra workload assigned to them; not only proctoring, but also now preparing cases to be tabled to the disciplinary committee. A recurring theme was that the academic workload had increased over a number of years, and that especially support departments have become ineffective, leading to academics using more of their time in a support role doing administrative tasks. The institution also had a huge increase in student numbers – some modules have enrolled 25 000 students, for example. One academic explained her process for identifying possible cases of cheating and the amount of time it took to work through her almost 3 000 students, identify and prepare files on possible cheaters, present it to a departmental committee and then send it to the college and university structure – where she felt it was then ignored (Interviewee 13). It is not just an increase in workload to monitor and prepare cases that staff identified, but also the feeling of being not supported by the university.

The fact that academics deploy the proctoring tools with their students is a form of power play, as is the institution implemented proctoring even though students were scantily prepared. It gave the academics and the institution power over students, caused anxiety through the process and communicated to students, 'I am watching you, I have power over your future, I am in your private spaces' (many critiques of proctoring has been written that touches on issues of power, privacy and human rights (cf Khalil, et al., 2022; Langenfeld, 2020; Scassa, 2020). This is different from existing unequal power relations of higher education because it invades students' private spaces and marks certain behaviours, and bodies (based on race, sexuality, neuro-typicality as examples), as normal, or not (Swauger, 2020b).

Student reaction to the invigilation applications has been muted in general. A student organisation did circulate a rather playful campaign through social media that #TheOwlMustFall. #TheOwlMustFall is a playful connection to the logo of one of the applications – but also neatly links the struggle against the application to the larger quest for decolonisation of higher education in South Africa to the #RhodesMustFall movement. Ultimately, the student campaign was rather short-lived, and the institution reacted quite strongly to attempts to question the use

of proctoring applications stating that the applications were brought in due to the huge number of cheating cases against students.

A few academics understood efforts related to academic integrity as a form of gamesmanship:

> I get the sense of we are busy setting up a game. We're busy setting up a game with our students, to say who can outsmart who? And in a sense, I get that I mean, I get that it can be fun for academic staff. I mean that kind of puzzle that kind of you know how can I better trace the data on this or the other? I mean, I like that as well … but if we set up that kind of game, where we say can I catch you out? Or can you outsmart me so that I am not able to catch you out··· it basically just boils down to, you know, we won the game and we are not going to win it, we are not going to win it. (Interviewee 3)

This conception is a battle of wits between the academic and the student. However, as the lecturer stated:

> This battle of wits is stacked against academics, because students innovate faster than we can catch them. This battle of wits comes at the cost of relationship building. (Interviewee 3)

The same lecturer recognised that relationship building could only happen when the student:academic ratio is at a reasonable level – which is not always the case in this institution[2].

One academic described student cheating as happening because students are bored with assignments that lecturers think out and said that she had minimal cases of cheating because her assignments were unique:

> So, they get an assignment. And they all have, 3 000 of them have to do this same assignment; it's the same thing. It's boring … So boredom, and that's one reason why I think they cheat. But you know, there's another reason. Students are having fun with academics. So, they cheat because their academics are sometimes fools … The academics are sometimes lazy, and they don't change their assignments. (Interviewee 17)

Since lecturers used one assignment for all students to do, but also used the same assignment year after year, students believe it is fair to cheat because academics did not play by the rules of the game through innovative assignments or at least differing assignments.

As already discussed, academic integrity needs to be seen as a part of the fabric of the institution. While my research did not set out to assess institutionalisation of academic integrity

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[2] There are some fluctuations on the academic:student ratio with one report placing it at 177:1. As comparison a similar type of university in a developing country reported a ratio of 16:1 while one in a developed country reported one of 188:1 (Garrett, 2016: 24).

at the university, I found it useful to think with Glendinning's (2017) benchmark of institutionalisation. When comparing each of her ten dimensions with my data presented here, it indicated that this university had a long way to go towards institutionalisation of academic integrity.

In terms of a governance and strategic commitment, I showed that the policies dealing with academic integrity were outdated in that it mostly focused on venue-based exams and physical presence of students on campus. Policies were also unclear because it did not state the range of sanctions on a platform available to students. This links with the idea of clear and consistent policies, as well as fair sanctions.

There was also not uniform buy-in from the academic community or the student community towards proctoring as a solution to enhance academic integrity, with academics pointing out that the university approached it as a game, or the problematics of proctoring on workload. Academic integrity strategies also did not originate from academics themselves. Very few of the academics I interviewed had created specific content to teach academic integrity, assuming that it is an institutional rather than academic imperative. For some, the extent of focusing on academic integrity was simply including a statement that plagiarism would not be tolerated without an engagement about what it is, why it is important and how to avoid it. Furthermore, academics indicated that they did not feel supported when they did decide to pursue cases against students for academic integrity infractions.

Discussion

In this paper I showed the ways that institutionalisation of academic integrity is an incomplete process at the case study university. There is no doubt that the university, and the academics, take academic integrity seriously, and recognise the threat to the academic project, the university, its graduates and its reputation. However, by looking at academic integrity institutionalisation at the hand of Gallant and Drinner (1969) and Glendinning (2017), the incompleteness can be recognised. This is an incompleteness that goes beyond dynamic student participation. Academic integrity is always on-going – a process rather than a singular end-goal. The process however should be institutionalised as described by the mentioned authors.

We can use Gallant and Drinan's (1969) four step process to evaluate the institutionalisation of academic integrity:

1. Recognising urgency of institutionalisation – while the urgency of stopping cheating is recognised that has not translated into an urgency of the institutionalisation of academic integrity. Awareness raising for students was around negative behaviour, and the institutional policies was outdated. Responses was also aimed at stopping cheating through proctoring solutions rather than building an academic integrity culture.
2. Institution wide discussion on a response – responses has mostly been top-down without discussion and consensus building. It was clear from interviews that there were a variety

of responses to cheating, and what is considered cheating, as well as what academic integrity is.

3. Holistic approach to academic integrity – the response has been towards putting (often contested) measures in place to stop cheating in exams rather than building academic integrity as a holistic value that permeates teaching and learning, but also administrative aspects.

4. Part of the routine of the institution – existing institutional processes was overwhelmed with the start of online exams, and at the end my fieldwork this had not been resolved. Pre-COVID-19 institutional routines focused on plagiarism at the postgraduate level rather than cheating at undergraduate level. Academics' experiences, and their feeling of not being supported by the institution when they lodged cases at the institutional level is an example of academic integrity has not been part of the routine.

Glendinning's (2017) benchmark for institutionalisation consists of ten components and echoes the four above:

1. Institutional strategic commitment – with the start of online exams the institution realised to an extent that they were unprepared for the online assessment environment, and have shown a commitment towards trying to stop cheating but that has not necessarily translated into wide engagements bout what the academic integrity culture of the institution should look like and how it should be achieved.

2. Clear and consistent policies – the policies are outdated and disjointed, neither describing specifics of offences and sanctions.

3. Fair sanctions – sanctions have been inconsistently applied especially in the last three years, and sanctions is not available to staff or students.

4. Community buy-in – the academics that I interviewed did not show buy-in with many contestations emerging especially around proctoring efforts.

5. Institutional culture of deep learning – I have no specific data around this

6. Student leadership – no students have been involved in efforts around academic integrity, and the only student voices was to run a campaign against one of the proctoring tools used.

7. Transparency and communication – at the time of my fieldwork very little transparency and communication existed around academic integrity with communication to students highlighting negative actions (i.e., don't cheat), as opposed to positive values (e.g. this is why academic integrity is important).

8. Monitoring the effectiveness of academic integrity programs and policies – there was no monitoring process that I became aware off and the institutional disciplinary body could not cope with the number of cases lodged during COVID-19 and had to change their process. This at least hint that the policies at that stage was not effective.

9. Engagement with new research – I have no specific data around this

10. Institution wide understanding of academic integrity – my research shows many contestations amongst academic around academic integrity and cheating. No institutional efforts during the period was centred around building consensus about what academic integrity is, how to teach it, and how to handle breaches.

Considering these fourteen elements, issues around academic integrity has not been institutionalised – despite the institution, and its academics, being committed to stop cheating. At the stage of my research there was no university wide dialogues about academic integrity as a value system, or agreement on how to stop cheating, and some academics indicated that they felt actively unsupported by the institution in their efforts. And in all of this, students were largely absent from the discourse, and instead of being seen as active participants, they are merely objects of efforts.

Conclusion and a way forward

It is clear that in this university, institutionalisation of academic integrity had not yet occurred. It was clear that efforts were under way towards this, but these were delayed and not as inclusive of academics and students as it could be. This became evident in policies that were not relevant in current situations, did not have academic and student buy-in towards some solutions, as well as the lack of university-wide discussions around what academic integrity would entail. This university is not unique in struggling with institutionalisation of academic integrity efforts, or in dealing with cheating.

Moving towards academic integrity as an institution would require a whole institutional approach where academic staff, management and students are involved in drawing up and accepting a student disciplinary code, where there is a joint understanding of why certain behaviours are accepted or not, and where everyone involved works with a shared responsibility and understanding of why academic integrity is the very fibre of what a university is about.

Author biography

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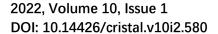
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Inclusion of students as key stakeholders and agents in the induction of new university teachers: Disrupting the induction status quo

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Abstract

Ample research exists on the induction of new academics (NAs) or new university teachers (NUTs), but scholars are silent on students' inclusion in such inductions. It is on this basis that this paper prompted the views of NAs on the inclusion of students in the induction of new academics. As academic development practitioners, who are part of the *New Academics' Transitioning into Higher Education Project* (NATHEP) from 2019 and 2022, we submit and argue that the inclusion of students as partners in the induction of NAs empowers students to take ownership of their learning as students and affords them an opportunity to amplify their voices and contribute meaningfully to higher education spaces. This paper, underpinned by the Theory of Human Care and the Ethics of Care Theory, adopted a qualitative research approach in which both exploratory and explanatory research designs were triangulated. Utilising thematic data analysis, the findings of this paper were drawn from the induction questionnaires distributed and collected from NAs during induction. This paper found that the inclusion of students during induction provides NAs with an opportunity to interact with students and understand students' challenges and expectations regarding critical teaching and learning issues. This paper has implications for both AD practitioners and higher education institutions on how the inclusion of students should be understood concerning professional development initiatives such as the induction of NAs.

Keywords: key stakeholders/agents, new academics, students' inclusion, students' needs, transitioning

Introduction and contextualisation

Many notable scholars have been advocating for students to be part of the learning and teaching process in higher education spaces (Bovill, 2014; Matthews, 2016; Cameron & Woods, 2016; Behari-Leak, 2017; Cook-Sather, et al., 2018; De Bie, et al., 2019; Sophia & Stein, 2020); however, very limited literature exists on how students may be part of the induction process of new academics in higher education. Garcia, et al. (2018) note that there have been some efforts made toward including students' voices in higher education over the years in terms of decision-making,

policy implementation, and curriculum design. However, students remain excluded during the induction process on the assumption that they cannot contribute anything since induction is HR-academic based. Recently, there have been calls for a stronger focus on understanding the key role of students' agency to ensure a better understanding of learning in higher education (Boughey & McKenna, 2021: 55). Universities, through their internal structures, cultures, practices, and external relations with wider society, continue to be powerful mechanisms of social exclusion and injustices (Rhodes University, 2020).

As one of the major professional development initiatives undertaken by new academics in many universities throughout South Africa, the new staff induction programme is crucial in assisting new academics (NAs) with settling in well in their new higher education environments. Such an induction, we argue herein, can be an inclusive professional development initiative that students are part of. It is worth noting that in the context of this study there are two types of NAs inductions i.e., Human Resource-led (focused induction), which focuses mainly on human resource matters, and academic induction process which focuses on learning and teaching-related matters and is, therefore, the focus in this paper. One of the major reasons for having such induction processes is that most NAs employed in universities mostly hold master's and Ph.D. qualifications and emanate from industries or own practices with little experience in terms of teaching and learning in higher education (McArthur, 2008). Since the trend has not changed over the years, it is, therefore, important to facilitate a smooth transition from practice to university spaces whereby recruited academics are inducted into the structure and culture of the university they have joined.

The knowledge that NAs acquire through the induction programme is to be utilised when engaging students in their classroom. It is, however, unfortunate that in most universities, students are excluded from this knowledge-building engagement or induction process even though it is meant to benefit them.

The Needs-Based Induction (NBI) Programme as a practical ground for this paper

As academic development (AD) practitioners attached to one of the rural-based universities, we are part of the *New Academics' Transitioning into Higher Education Project* (NATHEP). The strategic aim of the NATHEP project, as contained in the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG), now called the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP), proposal of 2018 is to offer training for academic developers on inducting NAs and New Generation of Academics (nGAP) into their roles as teachers in higher education (HE). Moreover, the project is specifically aimed at strengthening staff developers' agency and ability to conceptualise, convene, implement, and evaluate professional development programmes for the induction of new academics in universities. Through NATHEP and in alignment with our institutional context, we conceptualise and design our induction programme called 'the Needs-Based Induction (NBI) programme'.

The conceptualised NBI programme of induction has four (4) key features that are critical in ensuring that it is transformative, agile, and adaptable to the context of our university. The four

key features of our NBI programme are: Multi-Focal Theoretical Framework, Needs analysis questionnaire, Students Inclusion, and NBI programme as a process and not as an event. The notion of understanding induction as a process and not an event entails that every time NAs join our institution, provision should be made to ensure that they are inducted on teaching and learning-related matters before they embark on teaching and engaging students. Student inclusion is, therefore, central to our NBI programme of induction as a transformative element and disruptive feature.

Students' partnership as the adopted pedagogical approach for this study

Students as Partners (SaP) is a pedagogical approach that has been embraced recently by many higher education institutions primarily in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia (Cook-Sather, et al, 2017). SaP pertains students and faculty/academic staff working in collaboration, as partners, to improve teaching and learning experiences (Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2017). The SaP pedagogical approach challenges and scrutinises several foundational features of the current higher education system, which include non-democratic, hierarchical structures; predetermined learning outcomes; and the view of the student as a client (Cook-Sather, et al, 2017) describe SaP as 'a relationship in which students, academics, professional services staff, senior managers, student unions are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together'.

Bovill and Felten (2016) propose that the partnership between students and the university should be based on three principles: respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility in learning and teaching, thus extending to decision-making. SaP destabilises several aspects of the traditional dynamic between faculty and students which tends to be based on inequality and has given an almost unlimited decision-making authority on curricular development to university management rather than students. In the context of this study, SaP is adopted to include students as partners in the induction of NAs in the university. We believe this pedagogical approach will enable students to be recognised as stakeholders and partake in the decision-making process that affects the university structure.

Student components in our induction

Behari-Leak (2017) argues for the transformation of teaching and learning spaces to ensure inclusive participation for all, including students in higher education. It is on this basis that our induction programme includes undergraduate and postgraduate students, including students living with disabilities. The inclusion of student components is based on our beliefs that anything meant to benefit students cannot exclude them during its conceptualisation and implementation stages. Central to this argument is that the induction of NAs is meant to capacitate them to do well in executing their core duties of teaching students. We further argue that anything planned for students would only be successful if such students are involved in the planning and conceptualsation; therefore, it is one of our NBI programme strategies of placing students at the centre of the induction. The inclusion of students involves debriefing sessions with selected

students two weeks before the induction and seeking questions they would like to ask their lecturers. From the listed questions, the most appealing questions are selected and included in our needs analysis questionnaire (NAQ) form designed for our induction programme. During the induction session, such students are involved in the round table discussions and make presentations on challenges they face as students and their expectations of NAs. We believe that learning and teaching activities that the NAs will be involved in with students are largely influenced by how much students have participated in the induction as one of the purposeful activities noted by Coates (2005). It is worth noting that further study on this aspect would be ideal to ascertain if this pedagogical approach yields anticipated results and enhances educational best practice.

Students' inclusion in addressing epistemic injustice

Epistemic injustice is broad and in the context of this paper is presented as a way in which students are discriminated against in their capacity as knowers due to their social backgrounds. This could also be attributed to varying stereotypes widely held that students from high school lack knowledge of higher education spaces and therefore cannot add any value. This includes, amongst other things, the thinking that students cannot contribute meaningfully to discussions and engagements to knowledge core-creation spaces on matters relating to the induction of NAs.

Fricker (2007) notes that marginalisation tends to occur mainly because the community (of NAs) lacks resources to conceptualise, evaluate, or understand the experiences that members of those groups have of themselves and their world. Furthermore, such marginalisation, which is moral-political, entails subordination and exclusion from some activities that would be valuable for participants, in this case, students. Fricker (2007: 153) adds that when there is unequal hermeneutical participation concerning significant area(s) of social experience, members of the disadvantaged group are hermeneutically marginalised.

It is worth noting that the University of Venda, in advancing epistemic justice, stipulates in its strategic plan, that it 'strives to ensure a co-creation of knowledge that shifts students and community groups from being knowledge-consumers to knowledge-producers and become partners in problem-solving'' (University of Venda: Strategic Plan, 2021-2025:11). We argue that knowledge co-creation should ensure that students are not understood and treated as knowledge-consumers or customers in higher education, but that their roles be of key stakeholders and agents of teaching and learning. That should be seen in line with Mbembe's (2015) argument for the creation of conditions to ensure that students have a voice; they should also feel that they are part of universities and live freely without begging or apologising to anyone as they belong within the institution. It is on this basis that we argue for the inclusion of students as partners (key stakeholders) in the induction of NAs.

Sophia and Stein (2020) reason that it would be worthwhile to ask students about their experience on a variety of topics such as the rationale for them to sign up for a specific course. In disrupting existing induction cultural beliefs in higher education, we, therefore, needed to

rethink our approach to induction and ensure that knowledge shared during the induction does not only come from AD Practitioners, but also from the new NAs and students. It is for this reason that we create a collaborative knowledge-building platform where students share their experience and expectations with NAs about teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment and overall relationships with a diverse population of students, including those who are differently abled.

Student inclusion for enhancement of educational practice in higher education

As aforementioned and argued, the inclusion of students in the induction of NAs creates a platform for students to contribute to engagements to enhance their learning. In this quest, we developed the NBI induction programme to silence the injustices of alienating students from programmes meant to benefit them. Again, engaging and including students in induction is motivated by what Cameron and Woods (2016: 178) identify as concerns normally shared by early career academics or emerging teachers, which is about whether students like them or are impressed by them. By being part of the inclusive induction, our approach is on ensuring that new academics can benefit from engagements and interaction meant to create an awareness of students' needs and how academics can meet them through 'a student-centered approach to learning and teaching' (Cameron & Woods, 2016: 178).

Another consideration is the recent call for amplifying students' voices as expressed during #FeesMustFall movement or protests experienced around South African universities where students called for their voices to be heard in teaching and learning matters. Dickerson, et al. (2016) note the importance of staff-student collaboration in enhancing educational practice in higher education and how such collaboration can bring about varying practices that can benefit both the student and staff.

Creating collaborative knowledge-building platforms for induction of NAs

Collaborative knowledge building requires activities that are structured to encourage sharing of knowledge, expertise, and the development of one another's ideas (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008). As noted in one of the sections above, for us, it is about creating a platform for students to lead an engagement about contextual issues that influence teaching and learning in our institution. It is also about academics getting to understand the context they are entering, the nature of students they are going to engage with, and the enablement and constraints that influence teaching and learning in the context they are entering. Further, our argument for collaborative engagement between students and academics is drawn from Abbot and Shirley (2020) and Cook-Sather, et al. (2017) who argue for envisioning and creating a university for all and for the selected few.

For students, being part of the induction makes them feel valued and appreciated and most importantly, that they are partners in teaching and learning spaces and not just mere consumers. Though Nordensvärd (2011: 159) argues that the consumer metaphor is "the most unproblematic", we argue that it places students as people who consume educational services

for their benefit while they contribute. Our argument is sustained by Maringe (2011:144) who argues that in higher education, a consumer is entirely 'disempowered, poorly protected and subject to subtle machinations of powerful forces that seek to maintain the status quo through a covert process of guarded entry by the ability to pay that guarantees grades by riches process'.

Drawing from McMillan and Cheney (1996), Maringe (2011) argues that when students are viewed and understood as consumers, they are, in essence, being isolated and distanced from their key roles of being co-producers of knowledge and understood as just passive consumers ready to consume anything offered to them.

In support of Matthews (2016), our zeal to engage students in the induction process is motivated by the fact that such exercise is more of an interactive process between students and academics/staff by recognising that students are partners on matters that entail teaching and learning. Moreover, we value such engagement as one of the critical cultural aspects that should underpin not only our NBI programme but institutional values. For AD practitioners, engagement, and inclusion of students in the induction for NAs is part of what Matthews (2016: 3) highlights as 'quality enhancement efforts to enhance the educational enterprise'. This is so because their interaction with NAs go a long way in highlighting their expectations as students, their past and current experiences of teaching and learning.

Student inclusion as engagement and partnership - disrupting induction status quo

Although there have been several arguments advanced for the inclusion of students as partners and collaborators in teaching and learning activities, the inclusion of students in the induction of NAs has not been attempted in many higher education institutions across the globe. In our quest to disrupt cultural tendencies that have traditionally been a status quo, and notions that seek to refer to students as either customers, products, or consumers in higher education, we include students as key stakeholders. This is to empower and amplify their voices and place them at the centre of all professional development initiatives critical for learning and epistemological success in higher education. Our view is that students are important key stakeholders who contribute positively to how NAs are to be inducted. Klemenčič (2017), Healey, et al. (2014) and Boughey and McKenna (2021) argue for student agency in higher education for academics to understand learning better. Bernstein (2021) sees student involvement as finding ways in which leaders, educators, and any other adults in an institution of learning ensure that students are fully engaged in governance as well as decision-making processes.

This approach enhances student agency and a feeling of being part of their learning, as opposed to students as customers. On the other hand, even though we strongly view the notion of students as customers as problematic, if we look at the fact that customers need to be satisfied with their purchases, then their input should always be prioritized. This also has emancipatory powers in that, it provides students with opportunities to have a say in what they feel, and think is worth purchasing. This means that if students are happy, their happiness will flow to others who are not yet part of the university, for recruitment purposes. From a business point of view, it would ensure the viability and sustainability or longevity of such an institution. Even though we

do not subscribe to the notion of students as customers, we argue that if universities understand and treat students as customers, it is important to ensure that students are fully involved in any professional or academic development initiatives such as the induction of new academics. Moreover, when students are placed at the centre of a variety of professional development initiatives in higher education, that positions such institutions as responsive to the pedagogy of care and social justice agenda.

Waghid (2021: 4) argues that any university that does not disrupt its institutional culture of compliance continues to treat its students only as recipients of information. Waghid (2021: 2) also notes that if we need to decolonise the mind of students, there is a need for us to ensure that they are indeed liberated from all forms of human exclusion. It is against this backdrop that we see the need to include students in the induction process. It is believed that when students are involved, their attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion grow, with positive implications on their motivation and academic progress (Bernstein, 2021). The importance of student engagement is that 'it builds close and caring relationships with their teachers and makes them have a sense of belonging in a society, especially in institutions of learning' (Bernstein, 2021: 113).

Drawing from Boughey and McKenna (2021), the inclusion of students in the induction of NAs ensures that NAs can understand that learning is a socially embedded and cultural phenomenon with a better perspective on how an institutional identity is conceptualised and how much is experienced by students. Boughey and McKenna (2021: 72) further argue that if institutions fail to acknowledge and understand that both teaching and learning are socially, culturally, and politically situated, this will result in students feeling alienated from the very institutions they are enrolled in the study.

When students become partners on matters about learning, they tend to develop a greater sense of community and belonging, especially in communities within higher education institutions (Healey, et al., 2014; Curran & Millard, 2016). Unfortunately, as Boughey and McKenna (2021: 74) highlight, students in higher education are often understood and perceived as clients who, by paying tuition fees, are customers, which severely limits the understanding of students as critical citizens and fledging scholars. It is on this basis that the inclusion of students in our induction process ensures that we empower them and amplify their voices in understanding that they are also human beings who have experiences concerning their institution and are capable of sharing these and their expectations with the NAs. Our arguments regarding the inclusion of students in induction resonate well with the comments captured in the next section as shared by NAs when asked about their views on having students as part of their induction process.

Human Care and Ethics of Care theories as the theoretical framework for this study

Our paper is underpinned by the Theory of Human Care (Watson, 2007) and the Ethics of Care Theory (Noddings, 2002). The theoretical concepts of the Theory of Human Care emerge from Watson's personal and professional beliefs on what it means to be human and to care (Watson, 2007). To corroborate this, we also adopt Nodding's (2002) ethics of care. Both these theories

are about being sensitive to self and others by willingness to explore own feelings (Watson, 2007; Noddings, 2002). This requires recognising that students are humanly capable of contributing to the advancement of their learning through meaningful engagement. This is in line with Watson's (2007) Theory of Human Care, which is about engaging in a creative, individualised, problem-solving caring process; care is central to what the NAs should embrace while engaging with students on learning and teaching-related matters. This then relates to ethics of care or caring, which entails being in a state of relation and encompasses receptivity, relatedness, and engrossment as key characteristics thereof (Noddings, 1984: 2).

The inclusion of students as partners in the induction of NAs may provide opportunities for NAs to understand students' needs (expectations, beliefs, and views) concerning learning and teaching, and how they should foster a sense and culture of inclusivity in what they plan to do in their respective classes. This is mainly because care is relational, interpersonal, interactive, and social as well as transpersonal (Watson, 2007). Moreover, there is a need for NAs to advance loving-kindness, equanimity, and level-headedness (Watson, 2008: 34) and know that students in their classes are not decontextualised individuals but holistic personalities who need care to do well in their studies. It is on this basis that we argue for the inclusion of students as partners in the induction of NAs as we care about them; this is moral practice that we strive for in higher education spaces. Again, the inclusion of students resonates well with our quest to respond to some of their needs, as highlighted in their expectations.

Research Methods and Procedure

This paper adopted a qualitative research approach in which both exploratory and explanatory research designs were triangulated. Exploratory design entails 'gaining insight into a situation, phenomenon or individual'. The purpose of exploratory research is for the researcher to be acquainted with the situation to formulate a problem (De Vos, et al., 2005: 109). Additionally, the objective of explanatory research is to explain, since this study 'builds on exploratory research but goes on to identify reasons why something occurs' (De Vos, et al., 2005:109). Drawing from Babbie (2007) who notes that social research is aimed at explaining issues, this paper explores, explains, and argues for the inclusion of students in NA's induction process.

Primary data drawn from an opened-ended questionnaire was utilised to evaluate the induction programme in our university between 2019 and 2022 and reflect to improve on our practices as AD practitioners. From the opened-ended questionnaire designed, there was one question wherein we asked university academics about their views regarding students' inclusion in the induction of NAs, which read:

What are your views about the inclusion of students in the induction of new academics?

This study emanates from this question's responses, and we believe that future studies can be grounded on the findings of the current study. A total of fifty evaluation questionnaires were completed by NAs after each induction session, and very few responses were provided. We only

concentrated on the thirty (30) detailed responses to source rich data. Based on the reflective question included in the questionnaire, thematic content analysis was adopted for data analyses to categorise data into emerging themes. The findings are supported by verbatim quotes from NAs. Each verbatim response was given an anonymous tag name 'NA', for example, NA1-NA28.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, we provide NAs' views on the inclusion of students in the induction process. The findings of the current study are categorised into the following themes: providing opportunities for NAs to understand students' challenges; understanding student experience of being taught; understanding students' expectations; amplifying students' voices and placing them as key stakeholders in teaching and learning related matters; and NAs' differing views on student inclusion in their induction process. These themes are outlined in the findings below.

Providing opportunities for NAs to better understand students' challenges

One of the critical aspects of the inclusion of students has been to afford and amplify their voices on issues that are central to their success. This is central to ethics of care in that it is about trying to understand the challenges student face for NAs to assist them adequately. NAs indicated that students in the induction process provided them with an opportunity to understand what and how students feel about their engagement with them and students' experiences on teaching and learning matters currently and in the past. This enables NAs to reflect on their practices as university teachers. Again, it provides NAs with the means to create an inclusive learning environment that supports and enhances epistemological access and success as well as overall student learning. NA1 and NA2 said:

> The inclusion of students in the follow-up session was very good because it brought to the fore what and how the students feel about our engagement with them. It also assisted in better understanding of the dynamics of challenges they face. I suggest that this should be done continuously if the much-desired improvement is to be achieved. (NA1)

> The engagement of both students and lecturers to elaborate their experiences and hearing both sides of the story make matters and deliberation better. (NA2)

The above-captured responses of NAs show that the inclusion of students in the induction academics has the potential of yielding positive outcomes. Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2008) argue for the inclusion of students in collaborative engagements. Such collaborative engagements are engagement and knowledge building in which activities are structured to encourage sharing of knowledge, expertise, and the development of ideas. This is in alignment with what NA2 regards as better deliberation. In the same vein, NA1 supports the inclusion of students in the induction for academics to learn from how students feel about their engagement. The fact that NA1 suggests continuous inclusion of students in the induction of academics

exhibits his/her presumption that it can yield positive results, as suggested by NA2. Further, the views of NA1 and NA2 echo to our views as AD practitioners, as the inclusion of students is about creating a platform for students to lead an engagement about contextual issues that influence teaching and learning in our institution. This enables academics to understand the context they are entering, the nature of the students they are to engage with and the enablement and constraints that influence teaching and learning in their context. To understand students' challenges, NA4 and NA12 add that challenges uncovered by students during the induction process were an eye-opener.

> Challenges elaborated by students and hearing their side of the story was an eye opener. (NA4)

> The inclusion of students in the induction was…a much-needed eye opener. (NA12)

Boughey and McKenna (2021) argue for student agency in higher education, to enable academics to understand learning better. They further argue that academics should engage with students so that they can comprehend challenges endured by students (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). As AD practitioners, we support the arguments by Boughey and McKenna (2021: 72) who reason that if institutions fail to acknowledge and understand that both teaching and learning are socially, culturally, and politically situated, and this may result in students feeling alienated from the very institutions they are enrolled in to study. Throughout this paper, we have argued that having students participating in the induction provided NAs with an opportunity to engage with students on issues that affect them. To the NAs, having students as part of the induction is an eye-opener that makes it easier for them to understand the type of students they will be engaging with. It also enables them to undertake their teaching roles moving together with such students as they would have understood their expectations and challenges. In support, some of the NAs had this to say,

> It gives us proper perspective. (NA5)

> It was good that they have a slot. (NA14)

> It is very good to hear from them instead of assuming and having debates from both sides of the story. (NA22)

> It was on point because the only way to move forward is to move together. (NA2)

Understanding students' experience in teaching and learning

NAs often join higher education institutions with varying experiences. Some noted with concern that during the induction, students were not given enough time to share and present their

experiences even though they shared a few things that relate to academics. Some students' experiences included how they were treated by lecturers, as noted by NA3. NA6 adds the following in support of NA3:

> Real experiences and issues come from students. However, there is a need to view things from both sides. (NA6)

NA3 also noted that students were not given enough time to present their work or experiences, 'but touched some of the things that concern lecturers'.

Understanding students' perspectives on how they experienced teaching in the past may help NAs to engage and reflect deeply on ways through which they can improve their teaching practices as new university teachers. This is because the NAs come from different backgrounds that might have influenced the way they understand teaching and learning in HEIs. We argue that having a diverse population of NAs in the induction necessitates the need for students to share with them how they experience teaching and learning as a way of enabling the NAs to understand students' contexts.

Understanding students' expectations

Students' inclusion in the induction process is invaluable as it assists NAs to understand the expectations that students bring within universities since students are diverse. NA23 notes that it is through inclusion that NAs can understand students' expectations and areas where academics can improve their teaching practices.

> It was useful as it indicates the expectations students have for us and where we as academics can improve in our teaching practices and how we can understand and relate well with them. (NA23)

> It is a good idea because we can understand their expectations. (NA6)

Center on the Developing Child (2016) notes that as academics, we seldom investigate the expectations and needs of students, that is, cultural, emotional, academic, and personal. All these factors influence teaching and learning as well as engagements between students and academics and are worth investigating. This statement is echoed by NA6 who agrees that including students in the induction process enables academics to understand students' expectations. NA8 and NA9 also agree by stating:

> The students' presence was good as they shed light on student expectations. (NA8)

The engagement of both students and lecturers elaborating on their experiences. Hearing both sides of the story make matters and deliberation better; presentations by guest speakers were also very informative and helpful. (NA9)

NA 26 echoed the sentiments of NA 23 and noted thus:

Yes, it is useful. I believe that the inclusion of students not only helps students to gain knowledge of their new academics, but new academics can gain more knowledge on students' expectations, experience, and behaviour. (NA26)

Amplifying students' voices and placing them as key stakeholders in teaching and learning-related matters. (NA23)

The #FeesMustFall movement by students has changed the way we view students and the importance of understanding that they are key stakeholders with agential powers to express views concerning teaching, learning and curriculum-related matters. We argue that students' voices need to be amplified and platforms should be created during any professional development initiative such as induction where they can contribute meaningfully to learning and teaching matters. Some NAs highlighted the need to have students' voices heard. NA5 positioned himself as a reflective practitioner who believes that it is important to incorporate students' voices. Similarly, both NA5 and NA3 said:

The student's voice is always necessary. (NA5)

The need to understand a student in different ways. (NA3)

The NAs' views align with those of Mbembe (2015), who advises on creation of conditions that will ensure that students have a voice and feel that they are part of universities. In support, Waghid (2021: 2) notes that if we need to decolonize the mind of students, there is a need for us to ensure that they are indeed liberated from all forms of human exclusion. This includes listening to students' issues and addressing them accordingly. Moreover, in their study, Ravhuhali, et al. (2021) argue that listening to students' voices provides an opportunity for students to critique aspects of their lecturers' teaching, which provides room for reflective practices, sharing practices and improve on teaching and learning.

In addition, Barnes, et al. (2010:12) write, "only the user of a service can truly give an insight into its ongoing impact on their experiences". Therefore, engaging students and giving them a platform to have their voices heard enables to reflect on their experience regarding the university's policies, agency, culture, and teaching practices of the lecturers. This feedback is important for devising policies that align with stakeholders' expectations and context as well as

conducting future research. Consequently, we are arguing that engaging students' voices can be a powerful inclusive exercise key to social justice imperatives.

NAs Induction as a strategic tool to engage students in teaching and learning matters

Drawing from the participants' views, as AD practitioners, we concur and argue that students are stakeholders and NAs are engaged in induction to improve their teaching practices, agency, and culture, so that they can serve our stakeholders, who are students. NA7 advises that induction is all about students. NA8 and NA9 also support the inclusion of students as a helpful mechanism in shedding light on students' expectations. Ravhuhali, et al. (2021) argue that academic excellence is rooted in the integration of students and unmuting their voices in matters regarding teaching and learning. NA7, NA15, and NA16 highlight that new academics are appointed to teach or educate students, so students need to be involved in the induction. This is what they had to say:

> I think students are central and part of teaching and learning. (NA24)

> Yes, I think students need to be included in the induction of new academics especially now that we must focus on student-centeredness learning which should be aligned with the strategic plan of the university. (NA27)

> It's important to include them because this induction is all about them. (NA7)

> Yes, we are here to educate students and for education to be successful, our students must participate in the development of their program and lecturers. (NA15)

> Yes, I think it is very important as the student are expected to be on board with these new online methods of teaching and learning to ensure their well-being and success in their academic journey. Students are end-users who need to be capacitated, so that they can apply the knowledge and skill in their studies to make their lives at university much easier. (NA16)

NA19 echoed a similar sentiment and noted that the inclusion of students in the induction of new academics is important as it can provide such students with the opportunity to be part of the whole learning experience. NA20 indicated that although such inclusion may mean not all the students can be part thereof, it could be a helpful and important approach. NA18 noted the importance of including students in the induction of NAs as it would enable them to understand matters about the curriculum. This view is also shared by NA14 who notes, 'students should be involved in all sessions'. Other NAs added:

> Having a class/student representative could be helpful, but it's a delicate process since not all students can be involved. But it could be an important approach. (NA20)

> Yes, so they (students) can feel as part of the learning experience. (NA19)

> Yes, their representation can be included to highlight the needs and expectations of students to staff. This can also be done in two stages, where in the first stage they are excluded and then included in the second phase. (NA17)

> Yes, it is important. The involvement of students will enable them to understand certain curriculum matters. (NA18)

NA 22 highlighted that there is no academia without students, therefore, anything that could be planned for students may not succeed:

> Totally, at the end of the day, academia is not academia without students. Plans made for students cannot succeed without students. They are the heart of what we do. (NA22)

NA30 alluded to NA22 and noted that including students in induction provides them with an opportunity to grow, develop and improve their practices as they embark on a journey of teaching and learning.

> Yes, it gives one a chance for growth because they can indicate what needs to be done in terms of new changes, development and how can one improve on the journey of teaching and learning. (NA30)

Others echoed this sentiment:

> Truly useful as students are the best people to evaluate the way we deliver our lectures and can provide us with ideas on how to improve teaching and learning. (NA25)

> Yes, as academics, we can understand our students' needs better. (NA28)

Ravhuhali, et al. (2022) argue for the creation of communities of practices in which various stakeholders, including academic development practitioners, ensure that students are comfortable in their institutions of learning. For AD practitioners, the inclusion of students in induction is part of humanizing pedagogy (Freire, 1970) which provides opportunities and enables student agency, which is about understanding that they are not in universities to acquire knowledge but to stake ownership thereof as well as being empowered through and by it. This

is in line with understanding induction as a space or platform to create learning communities in which everyone acquires knowledge (Wong, 2004 cited in Ndebele, 2017).

NAs' differing views on student inclusion in their induction process

It is worth noting that not all NAs shared the same view on students' inclusion in their induction process. One such view was expressed by NA10 who indicated that the inclusion of students in an induction 'is not useful because the induction is about knowing the staff, being able to interact with other staff members and understanding the university culture'. This view was echoed by NA21 who notes, 'I think it will be proper to exclude students and focus only on new academics for now and have another training for lecturers and their students later'. The same sentiment is shared by NA29 as follows:

> I found it useful, but we must bear in mind that one student cannot be a true reflection of 500 students in my class. (NA29)

As AD practitioners, we do not agree with the view of NA10 because limiting students from being part of the NA induction gatekeeps important underlying issues that require critical and urgent attendance, such as ineffective teaching practices, policies, and disability matters. This is supported by NA11 and NA22:

> The discussion about decolonisation and challenges that students living with disabilities are facing and the solution thereafter that were discussed. (NA11)

> Yes, students are part of teaching and learning and including them would help them to familiarise themselves with learning platforms. (NA22)

It is important to highlight that NA11 recognises the need to include students in discussions to uncover hidden discourses from students. This can ultimately lead to decolonisation as an unfolding process. In support of this, Waghid (2021: 2) reasons that if we need to decolonise the minds of students, there is a need for us to ensure they are liberated from all forms of human exclusion. This was alluded to by Mathebula (2019) who notes that poor, black students from disadvantaged schools and communities are vulnerable to being victims of epistemic injustice. One such epistemic injustice is the persistent isolation of students and understanding them as customers or consumers ready to buy goods and consume ready-made knowledge and skills in higher education. Involving students in the induction of new academics, is, therefore our approach to avoid students' exclusion. As noted by Boughey and McKenna (2021), persistent exclusion of students was and still is perpetuated by the culture within various institutions. This, according to Boughey and McKenna (2021) is because all the power and decision-making is vested in one person who might be a professor in the position of HoD or (Executive) Dean. Due

to the power wielded by such an individual, the views of others such as students and even other academics are not considered valuable. Since the professor holds absolute power to decide, junior staff and students may not be afforded spaces and opportunities to amplify their voices when debates are taking place and decisions are taken (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Implications of the study

The South African higher education space has been dominated by many injustices such as the deafening silencing of students' voices in many areas of teaching and learning. In this study, we argue for and emphasize the inclusion of students' voices, participation, and agency during professional development initiatives as part of disrupting the status quo in the induction of NAs or university teachers. It is for this reason that we believe that induction cannot solely be meant for NAs. Students should also be provided with opportunities to engage with and participate actively as key stakeholders capable of co-creating knowledge through knowledge-sharing and engagements during the induction process. This implies that students can no longer be alienated from professional development initiatives meant to enhance their epistemological access and success.

Thus, student inclusion in the induction of new academics is a way of advancing and enhancing epistemic justice, collaborative knowledge building, knowledge-sharing, and knowledge co-creation as well as ensuring inclusive participation for all, particularly students. Further, the inclusion of students as key agents in the induction provides an opportunity for NAs to better understand students' challenges and for students to further share their expectations from NAs. This provides a platform for engagement between students and NAs, hence bridging the gap that exists between students and academics on critical matters that involve learning and teaching practices. This would also go a step further in disrupting the long-existing status quo of students' exclusion on matters that are central to their learning in higher education whereby they are constantly referred to as customers, consumers, and products.

For far too long, institutions of higher learning have always held a belief that students are unfinished products entering higher education spaces. Therefore, such institutions will produce products in line with their mission and vision statements. This mindset is engraved and supported by the neo-liberal mindset that sees a student as a customer or a product. If indeed we hold a view of students as customers (which of course is not our view at all), then why not involve such customers in decisions that affect what they would need for their livelihood? This would imply that on teaching and learning-related matters, students should not be excluded from the induction of new academics if we are to uphold a view that nothing related to teaching and learning should be done without students. It is, therefore, of importance that universities in South Africa reflect deeply on their induction practices for professional development that will silence the injustices of alienating students from programmes meant to benefit them. This could contribute to social and epistemic justice without waiting for a socially just higher education.

It is befitting to indicate that the findings reflected in our paper may not necessarily be generalised given that they represent only the views of the NAs from one institution of higher

learning. It is, therefore, important to indicate that more studies should be conducted to ascertain how students can be an integral part of the induction of NAs. One such study should involve students as participants and respondents whereby they share their views on ways through which their participation might benefit the induction of NAs. Moreover, it is critical that efforts be made to at least include students whose modules will be taught by the NAs who are part of the induction programme. This will provide platforms and opportunities through which both the NAs and their respective students have a robust engagement on a variety of teaching and learning matters during the induction process. Although we might not include all students during the induction process due to logistical challenges, we reason that the representation thereof will provide opportunities for robust engagement as well and ensure that students are positioned at the center of their learning and are partners and key agents in higher education institutions.

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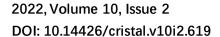
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Book Review

McKinney, C. & Christie, P. 2021. *Decoloniality, Language and Literacy: Conversations with Teacher Educators.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

This edited collection sets out to counter hegemonic and monolingual education and language practices, both in teacher education programmes and the schooling system where these trainee teachers will work. It developed from conversations between teacher educators at University of Cape Town during the student protest movements between 2015 and 2017, which called for both free and decolonized education (a focus of many articles in this journal; see, for example, Shay, et al., 2016; Sebidi & Morreira, 2017; Hlatshwayo, 2021). A deep sense of dialogue, reflexivity, and activism permeate the contributions, encouraging the reader to feel part of ongoing conversations for this collective and decolonial endeavour. Another real strength of the book comes in the inclusion of a variety of unconventional contributions, with interviews, reflections, visual essays, and poems alongside more traditional book chapters that include multimodal and multilingual data. This is entirely coherent with the decolonial praxis modelled throughout the book and points to new ways that we can all push at the boundaries of what is considered academic writing to enable epistemic justice.

As McKinney and Christie highlight in the introduction, while the book is firmly situated within the South African context, there are clear resonances across 'historically unequal contexts, particularly those in the Global South' (2). This can see most clearly in the central theme of the entanglement of language, power and coloniality, informed by McKinney's wider scholarship on 'anglonormativity'. This notion, which I have found very helpful in my own research on English medium education in Rwanda and Uganda, conceptualises 'the expectation that people will be or should be proficient in English, and are deficient, even deviant, if they are not' (McKinney, 2016: 80). There are also several other core concepts that are used throughout the book, including borderlands, contact zones, and third spaces (particularly well developed in Chapter 8 by Abdulatief). This brings a rich theoretical basis to the collection.

There are three parts. *Part 1: De/coloniality in Schooling* starts with a poem (Garuba) depicting his experience of schooling in Nigeria. It also includes chapters that focus on potentialities for decoloniality (Makoe), including in the third space of a literacy club (Guzula), and issues of identity, coloniality and schooling (Tyler). There can be a tendency for debates about language of learning and teaching in postcolonial contexts to focus on what children are able to understand and their learning outcomes (see Adamson, 2022). All four contributions remind us of the embodied and emotive elements of language and the human impact of exclusionary language policies and practices, alongside more hopeful articulations of what

learning could look like. For example, Guzula's chapter relays in vivid detail the ways that learning English through a game of 'we're going on a lion hunt' brings great joy as children's full linguistic repertoires are encouraged.

Part 2: Delinking from Coloniality in Teacher Education focuses on issues of learning and teaching in Teacher Education within the context of coloniality. Chapter 5 (Angier, McKinney and Kell) is a photo essay of the learning that the authors initiated during the student movements. This is a powerful portrayal of how teaching moments are not restricted to formal classroom spaces and pedagogies. Chapter 10 is a conversation between Catherine Kell, a literacy studies scholar for over 35 years, and Xolisa Guzulka and Carolyn McKinney, who position themselves as part of the younger generation of scholars in language and literacy studies. The intergenerational nature of the dialogue works to pull the reader in and made me feel like I was sitting in the same room. *Part 3: Conversations with Teacher Educators in Brazil, Canada and Chile* is the final section and includes reflections and discussions with scholars and practitioners in Brazil, Canada, and Chile. These contributions reflect on the resonances with the Teacher Education, and broader historical and socio-economic, contexts in these countries.

The book will be of particular interest to all who in University Education departments embody dual identities of being both teacher educators and educational researchers, particularly for those in postcolonial contexts. In different ways, the contributing authors share how they encounter and challenge coloniality in their daily research and teaching practices, particularly while preparing student teachers to do the same in their future professional lives. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this important collection, both for the variety of different contributions and the commitment to decolonial practice in research, teacher education and publishing.

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