



Towards an integrative philosophy of education: The contemplative case of economic education

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Abstract

Acquiring a basic knowledge of philosophy is usually a deprioritised choice for students in undergraduate programmes. Even a basic philosophy course is seldom mandatory in the hard sciences, although it may be an option in the social sciences. While many undergraduate teacher education programmes have stand-alone courses in the philosophy of education in general educational studies courses, philosophical inspiration is largely drawn from continental philosophy. The extent to which preservice teachers see the wider relevance and application of philosophy of education to the school subjects they teach is uncertain. Also, contemporary philosophy of education courses in the (South) African context may still be paying homage to Western, Eurocentric philosophical canons, despite calls by the student collective in South Africa for African contextual relevance. I present an account of a curriculum initiative in a teacher education course that attempts a disruption of traditional western canons that underpin economics and economic education. I argue that disciplines such as economics are fertile spaces for engaging teacher trainees in a philosophical exposé, with a view to contesting the universality of the philosophies of (economic) sciences to explain contemporary societal crises. I present insights into how the philosophy of education might be conceptualised as an *across curriculum competence* as opposed to an insular, stand-alone offering.

Keywords: philosophy of education, economics, economics education, undergraduate teacher education, preservice teachers, South Africa

Introduction

In this article I consider the potential that philosophy of education might have for me as teacher educator, as I engage with preservice teachers while they contemplate the nature of their future work in schools. How can student teachers provoke the macro question of the broader purpose of education and micro questions of knowledge and teaching methodology choices with which they constantly engage? There is limited knowledge on the extent to which education students find the philosophy of education relevant, or their ability to connect such learning to other elements of their studies.

There is anecdotal evidence of a transfer blockage that teacher education students encounter in extending or applying basic philosophy from general educational courses to the teaching methodology courses in their programmes. There is also limited knowledge of the extent to which pedagogy teachers (myself included) undertake to collaborate with philosophy of education teachers. Again, anecdotal evidence suggests that a fair level of insularity is prevalent even within the same teacher education programme, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). My purpose in this article is to explore the integrative possibilities of philosophy in a pedagogy course and the potentialities and implications thereof, using the Deleuze and Guattarian philosophical concept of assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

I reflect on my attempt to invoke philosophical thinking in a teaching methodology course for teachers of Economic and Business Sciences (EBS). Interweaving philosophy into non-philosophy courses is not unusual (see Olivier, 2016, for example). I appropriate key conceptual insights from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), not merely as (a)priory frameworks for analysis but as post-priory heuristics for ruminating on the ideological work I do as teacher educator. I also attempt to assist my student teachers to use theory and concepts that philosophy offers as they consider the ideological project they have chosen as their vocation.

I argue that the teacher educator's (course designer's) selection of knowledge and pedagogical approach is intrinsic to the theoretical/philosophical tenets to which they subscribe as they undertake to prepare potential teachers to work in schools. I contend that while the philosophy of education as taught in general education courses might be useful, teaching specialisation pedagogies might well supplement this with discipline-specific philosophical knowledge or, in other words, the invocation of philosophical inspiration directly related to the aims and objectives of the teaching methodology course.

In the teaching specialisation course that I design and offer in the field of EBS, I set the need for student teachers to critique the nature of the subject knowledge they will teach to school learners as a key aim. The course is also fashioned to help students to develop an understanding and critique of tenets underpinning what they perceive to be the purpose of school education and of EBS as a school subject. Students need have to have a theoretical/conceptual repertoire to effect such critique (Biesta, 2014). This means moving the focus of the pedagogy course beyond the mechanics of how to plan and deliver a lesson in the field, to exposing students to advanced thinking on what and how they choose to teach. The pedagogy course in EBS starts from the premise that subject knowledge in the field is not sacrosanct or unchallengeable. As such, it warrants philosophical analysis of what presents as universal canons in the discipline, and how this serves particular ideological ends. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 7) assert, "The first principle of philosophy is that Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained."

EBS as a field grounded in the tenets of neoclassical economics and neoliberal economic principles (Maistry & David, 2018) warrants the invocation of critical philosophy. The latter argues for critique and criticism, a constant judging of what counts as knowledge, who is served by particular knowledge selections, and who is subjugated by the process. A key

purpose of the pedagogy course is to help student teachers move beyond technical preoccupation with lesson planning towards developing their own philosophies of teaching that might be informed by relevant theory.

Invoking Deleuzian assemblage

In Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) provocative book *What is Philosophy?*, they argue that philosophy is essentially a discipline that constantly offers new concepts that may allow us to observe and analyse hidden, unobvious, and subversive knowledges that parade in the world. It is a "pedagogy of the concept" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 12) in that learning is constructed as problematic as opposed to being envisaged in relation to pre-existing knowledge. In his assessment of the thrust of this book, Bell (2016, p. 23) notes that it might be considered a

meditation upon what constitutes a life well lived . . . how the creation of concepts, or how a thoughtful, engaged life of learning, can lead to a rethinking of our lives as lived in all their social, political and historical variety . . . to set philosophy to work.

The profundity of this aspiration has appeal, especially as it relates to envisioning teaching and learning as multiplicity, as the "condition of possibility of thought itself" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 3), as we encounter "the problem of life (as) a problem of learning, and philosophy . . . (as) inseparable from this problem . . . and the importance of asking the right questions" (Bell, 2016, p. 61). As a teacher educator, these insights present as a powerful heuristic with which to contemplate the pedagogy courses I teach.

Deleuzian philosophy, more especially the concept of assemblage, has been widely appropriated by the social sciences to describe and understand the interconnectedness of elements in social systems or in social constructions. Deleuzian philosophy has had limited application in education, especially in the South African context, save for the work of Le Grange (2014). Invoking Deleuze for educational research and theorising might well be considered a deterritorialisation of Deleuze "while simultaneously reterritorializing him in a new (education) context" (Semetsky & Masny, 2013, p. 1). The PGCE programme as composite qualification can be analysed as a Deleuzian assemblage, one of many embedded in a broader assemblage, namely the teacher education programme of a faculty of education. The PGCE programme as machinic assemblage of desire can be viewed as the "coming together of forces into a relatively stable configurations with particular capacities to affect and be affected . . . (and may) include heterogenous processes of material practices" (Lorraine, 2011, p. 38).

It follows that assemblage (as translated from the French word *agencement*) is associated with the concept of agency (Due, 2007), a heuristic to analyse dynamic systems of heterogenous forces that produce a power formation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, pp. 22–23) remind us that "(a)n assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously", thus pointing to a non-essentialist interconnectedness of individuals and elements within assemblages—a non-fixity of identity.

Lorraine (2011, p. 12), drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's inspiration, argued that "[t]he question is not how to connect with the world around us; it is rather the kinds of connections we want to foster and sustain . . . (in) becoming a working part of a whole that makes something happen." These insights are particularly useful for understanding my location and that of my pedagogy course in relation to the broader PGCE programme with its history in South Africa of wide variation across universities, despite the Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) (2015), issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training, that attempts to streamline it. This might be related to the fairly recent acceptance of education into the university arena as a bona fide discipline (Furlong, 2013), as I discuss below.

Philosophy of education: Struggle for a meaningful stake in the teacher education assemblage

Unlike established, traditional disciplines like mathematics or biological sciences, education has struggled to establish its authenticity in the modern university, largely because it is viewed as "epistemologically weak" (Furlong, 2013, p. 13), and "lacking consensus and . . . coherence of some of the more established disciplines" (p. 4). It is criticised for its preoccupation with developing professional practice and its inability to demarcate a coherent epistemology. Despite this, education schools and faculties have expanded and grown in terms of academic personnel and student enrolment, given South Africa's strategic decision to recognise teacher education in particular as a higher education competence to be serviced by the university sector. The epistemological looseness described above manifests in what might be described as a smorgasbord of course offerings within a single programme (like the PGCE), with competition for time and substantive positioning by subdisciplines.

Philosophy of education as an element of many teacher education programmes also struggles and competes with other education subdisciplines (like sociology of education and psychology of education). Unlike psychology of education, that has successfully developed and advanced the field because of its professional status and immediate vocational/employment potential, aspiring philosophers of education have limited occupational prospects. Philosophy of education as a subfield of education is not usually offered as a major subject in undergraduate teacher education programmes in South Africa, especially since it does not exist as an official school subject in the national school curriculum (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), Department of Basic Education, 2011). Philosophy of education thus suffers from a lack of status. While it may exist as a mandatory inclusion in general education studies courses, a prescript of MRTEQ, the jury is out as to whether preservice teachers would choose philosophy of education if it were an optional/elective course in their undergraduate teacher preparation programmes.

Invoking self-study methodology: Aspiring to be the Deleuzian teacher

“The Deleuzian teacher . . . is both master and apprentice, a master apprentice engaged with the apprentice in their mutual apprenticeship . . .” (Bogue, 2016, p. 22). This pedagogical stance may appear confounding, but it speaks aptly to how I perceive and enact my role as teacher educator, especially as it relates to the appropriation of philosophy in an economics pedagogy course. As apprentice in, and co-learner about, my practice, over the years as teacher educator I have engaged in the systematic study of various aspects of my practice (see Maistry, 2012) by drawing on key principles of self-study research, a methodology that has its genesis in teacher education (LaBoskey, 2004). Ritter (2020) contended that the construction of the educational self through educational experience opens possibilities for the study of one’s own teacher education practice. Similarly, Kitchen (2020) alluded to the amenability of self-study to the development of introspective self-knowledge, a self-interrogative position to which I particularly subscribe. This entails problematising one’s practice in a public fashion along with a self-scrutiny of learned, taken-for-granted perspectives, with a view to thinking anew and finding ways to advance both teaching and learning (Berry, 2015). While self-study focuses on self-improvement of practice, it should also offer insights for research and teaching to fellow members of the teacher education fraternity (Loughran, 2007). I attempt to offer tentative insights here.

In their review of the extant literature on self-study research from 1990 to 2012, Vannasche and Kelchtermans (2015) observed that teacher education researchers in the study of their own practice have practised improvement as a point of departure as they attempt to validate the nature of the work they do. Given the evolving, qualitative nature of this methodology (and methods), the field continues to struggle with the tension between demonstrating relevance and sustaining rigour; this is an expected tension given the contextual peculiarity of each self-study case. Whitehead (2004) has reminded us that acceptable evidence is a matter of personal perspective. Of importance is the need for self-study research to contribute to educational knowledge, an objective that I hope to achieve since it relates to pedagogy in the field of EBS.

Narrative inquiry as self-study method has appeal; it draws on the contingent nature of experience (Kitchen, 2009) as historic, contemporary, and aspirational, and in which the self-study researcher immerses self (and practice) as object of study. As a self-study researcher intent on constant reflection and improvement of my practice, many aspects of my work as teacher educator present for analysis. I present a narrative account with specific emphasis on how I borrow from philosophy to better understand my practice and help my student teachers consider their aspirational practice as school teachers.

Invoking philosophy to deterritorialise and reterritorialise a pedagogy course

The field of EBS is comprised of accounting, economics, business studies, and economic and management sciences, all teaching specialisations offered in the PGCE programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These teaching specialisations articulate with the specialist school subjects in the South African school curriculum as prescribed by the national CAPS. As mentioned earlier, CAPS takes neoclassical economic principles and the subject knowledge on which these are based as an uncontested given. In other words, established canonical knowledge in the field of EBS is considered valuable, authentic knowledge, despite the fact that traditional economic modelling has manifested in economic failings on a global scale (Raghuram, 2010). I extracted the excerpts below from the CAPS for Economics (Department of Basic Education, 2011, pp. 8–38).

Economic growth: - meaning and importance - methods - constraints on growth - South Africa's recent growth experience

Economic development. • Methods of development • Common characteristics of developing countries: - low standard of living - low levels of productivity - high population growth and dependency burdens - high levels of unemployment - dependence on the primary sector - deficient infrastructure • Developing strategies

The methods of Economics: - positive and normative statements - the Scientific Method - difficulties faced by the social sciences - the use of models

The basic processes: - production - exchange – consumption

These excerpts from the economics curriculum for school learners reflect what might be considered as taken-for-granted economic knowledge (concepts and principles) that have their basis in neoclassical economics. Such principles have become hegemonic in a sense and are used to explain economic phenomena like economic growth and its importance for development. Yet neoclassic economic growth models are largely responsible for uneven global economic growth and inequitable distribution in cases where countries do experience economic growth. South Africa, with the worst Gini coefficient in the world, is a case in point. Invoking Kantian philosophy would suggest a consideration thereof as a criticism of knowledge, as opposed to justifying or merely accepting knowledge as uncontested. This is an approach I attempt as I engage my students in questioning the assumptions upon which current economic knowledge is based.

Typical teaching specialisation courses (pedagogy) have focused traditionally on developing pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), a Shulman-inspired construct that represents a synthesis of subject matter knowledge and teaching skills that teachers develop to teach disciplinary content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). In certain fields research into successful PCK has evolved into what is termed signature pedagogies, an example of which is problem-

based learning, that has been adopted by many medical schools around the world (Charlin et al., 1988). The assumption on which signature pedagogies is based is that the body of subject matter knowledge is generally accepted and uncontested, as in the hard sciences. Certain social sciences like economics have also acquired a rigidity and universality, as can be seen in the distinctly common content taught in level one macroeconomics and microeconomics courses around the world, based exclusively on neoclassical principles (Petkus et al., 2014).

As a student of the discipline of economics, I was taught by economists who accepted the tenets of the discipline as sacrosanct and unquestionable. My own economics pedagogy lecturer never once provoked the idea that perhaps the subject matter that we teach might be contestable. In my first few years as a high school teacher of economics I simply followed the tradition of teaching subject matter as prescribed in school economics textbooks using approaches vetted by the economic education fraternity. Research into the teaching and learning of economics seldom questions disciplinary knowledge, evidenced by research over the last half century as contained in arguably the world's foremost journal in this field, the *Journal of Economic Education* (Hoyt & McGoldrick, 2019). This tightly framed field might be described as highly territorialised (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), laden with scholarship and knowledge reified over an extended period of time. It can be expected that disrupting this territorialised space is likely to be formidable; it requires thoughtful intervention and a processual experimentation with many Deleuzian lines of flight.

As a teacher educator working with student teachers, an important point of departure in the pedagogy course that I develop is to help my students become familiar with the official curriculum policy for economics. This outlines key subject matter knowledge and skills that school teachers of economics should be teaching their learners. Below is an extract of typical course objectives for my module titled Economics Teaching 601.

By the end of the module students should be able to:

- Evaluate theories of teaching and learning in the context of Economics teaching
- Apply theories of teaching and learning to basic lesson planning for Economics teaching.
- Apply critical curriculum theory (philosophy) to develop learning programmes in Economics
- Develop appropriate teaching and learning resources to teach Economics
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills for Economics classroom teaching/practice
- Demonstrate skills of reflection and self-critique as they relate to Economics teaching
- Demonstrate context-specific and context-responsive teaching practices

Along with these course objectives is the need to equip my student teachers with a repertoire of strategies for teaching that may be comprised of techniques and skills informed by relevant theory. In setting up the pedagogy course, I continue to be guided by the lucid account of education philosophy offered by nursing education scholar Nomthandazo Gwele (2005). She suggested that the curriculum we design is usually shaped by questions related to, first, the

purpose of education; second, the role of the student in the teaching and learning process; and third, the role of the teacher in this process. Gwele's first curriculum provocation is powerful since this overarching, profound question elicits wide-ranging responses from novice student teachers. In fact, this kind of question is likely to trigger diverse reactions, even from seasoned educational scholars since they are usually informed by their personal paradigm. The point is that while educators (experienced and novice) have some notion of what their answers to this question might be, they struggle with its precise articulation.

I am certainly not suggesting that there might be only one correct answer. What I suggest is that the question of the purpose of education is a philosophical one that marks the point of departure as to how I might use philosophical insights to help me and my students develop intelligible answers to it. Below is an excerpt from an in-class activity for student teachers of economics that I devised.

Individual Activity 1

Read the questions below and write down your responses (on your own at first):

There are several varying reasons why parents send their children to school, why children feel they need to be in school and why teachers believe they need to teach school learners.

1. Why do ***you*** think children should attend school or get an education for 12–13 years of their lives? Is it really worth the effort?
2. Given the many subjects that are available to learners in the FET phase, why should learners choose Economics as a subject?
3. Given the Gini coefficient data you studied (showing ongoing severe world inequality), why should ordinary and especially poor people still have faith in Economics as a discipline?

In groups of 5 to 6 discuss your answers.

These questions are disruptive and they trigger much debate that serves the purpose of developing deep thinking on issues often taken for granted by novice teachers. I remain acutely aware of the post-structuralist critique (to which I subscribe), that if educators approach education in a deterministic fashion by attempting to precisely plot the coordinates of the outcome (purpose) of education as social intervention, such determinism carries the seeds of its own unravelling. To avoid falling foul of such critique, Deleuzian thought has useful appeal, especially as it relates to the kind of connections we seek and hope to nurture or, as they put it, lines of flight that extend and breach conventional thought. The construct assemblage, in particular, is a powerful heuristic for me to make sense of my location as teacher educator in context. Location and context are more than physical; as a teacher educator of a pedagogy course in economics, I enter into an assemblage as a working part of the PGCE, that is tightly framed by the prescriptions of MRTEQ, the school CAPS curriculum, the university's curriculum rules, the programme development stipulations, and the physical conditions under which the programme is to be delivered. This can be described

as a heterogenous set of interacting components that come together to make the whole work—a collective assemblage of enunciation, of discursive practices in a Foucauldian sense (Lorraine, 2011), a process of enacting rules, and laid-down practices. Assemblages interface with or may be subsumed within other assemblages.

As this extract from MRTEQ (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015, pp. 3–8) on teacher education indicates,

the approach adopted pays close attention to the various types of knowledge that underpin teachers' practice, while encapsulating all of these in the notion of integrated and applied knowledge . . . Competent learning is always a mixture of the theoretical and the practical; the pure and the applied; the extrinsic and the intrinsic; and the potential and the actual. In effect, competent learning in effect, represents the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge. Each type of knowledge, in tum, implies the mastering of specific related skills. The types of learning associated with the acquisition, integration and application of knowledge for teaching purposes are: • Disciplinary Learning • Pedagogical Learning • Practical Learning • Fundamental Learning • Situational Learning.

Of significance for this discussion is that while the notion of theory, practice, and different kinds of knowledge is alluded to by MRTEQ, there is a distinct absence of any reference to deeper theoretical and philosophical tenets that might ground teacher education programmes.

The following is an extract from the programme template for the PGCE programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The PGCE (FET) programme aims to contribute to the development of beginning teachers . . . On completion of the programme the successful student will be able to demonstrate the roles and competences of a novice teacher at the FET phase levels (grades 10 to 12).

Table 1
The overall programme structure would consist of:

Core modules		Electives
		Two Teaching Specialisations
Core Education Studies 701:	16 credits	Teaching Specialisation 1: FET Subject 701 and 702 (2 x 16 credits)
Core Education Studies 702:	16 credits	
School Experience 701:	16 credits	Teaching Specialisation 2: FET Subject 701 and 702 (2 x 16 credits)
School Experience 702:	16 credits	

It might be argued that university programme templates ought not to include high degrees of specificity relating to content. This might be considered a strength since it affords individual academics the potential to introduce module content that speaks to the outcomes of individual courses. When programmes are viewed as assemblages as opposed to tightly circumscribed

prescriptive frameworks, they become amenable to vectors of flight from within that might well include appropriation of philosophy for teaching and learning of pedagogy, as in this case.

The university might be considered as an assemblage within the broader South African higher education assemblage, itself an element of an international (academic) assemblage. Similarly, the PGCE programme is an assemblage within the university programme. My pedagogy course, an assemblage in its own right, is subsumed under the discursive rules of the PGCE programme. Understanding these intersecting articulations is important since it allows for analysis of these assemblages as dynamic spaces of interaction, fluidity, and flux. In recent years, the South African higher education assemblage has been called to account for how it has attempted to embody the notion of transformation, an imperative of the post-apartheid state. Decolonising the university and the curriculum has (re)emerged as part of institutional goals, with impetus given to this agenda by segments of the student body. The Rhodes Must Fall movement that evolved into the Fees Must Fall campaign is a salient macro phenomenon that filters down to the work of rank and file university academics.

That such university academics understand and give effect to the nation's transformation agenda in many different ways, and have different proclivities for the project, is without contention. That South African academics (myself included) and students have the conceptual, theoretical, and philosophical acumen to consider substantive curriculum transformation and decolonisation beyond technical tinkering is a moot point (Maistry, 2021). There is no doubt that expectations of the higher education assemblage have changed, as dynamic systems do, in relation to rekindled stimuli for change that now demand attention.

Two problematics become evident from the above discussion and apply to both me and my students: the first is how to connect the philosophical question about the purpose of education to the macro transformation imperatives that South African higher education now has to engage with; and the second is harnessing appropriate theoretical/philosophical apparatus to give effect to this.

In dealing with the first, I attempt to use my own biography as a key resource to help deepen my understanding of the purpose of education. As a non-white South African who grew up under apartheid, I am clear that education should serve a transformative purpose. I am also aware that a narrow understanding of transformation is unhelpful, especially if the purpose of education is conceived of as merely developing knowledge and skills for vocational purposes. Contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2003, 2006, 2010, 2011) has pointed out the danger of restricting the purpose of education to that of servicing the economy, and has suggested that education ought to serve a broader humanitarian goal, especially as it relates to addressing the needs of the most destitute in society.

The following is an extract of a class activity for PGCE economics students that is intended to initiate deep, complicated discussions about the nature of education.

Class group discussion activity

Discuss the concept ‘neoliberalism.’ How is it related to the teaching of commercial subjects given that such subjects have their basis in capitalism? How would you integrate issues of neoliberalism in your economics lessons? Select specific topics from the CAPS curriculum to illustrate how this integration might occur.

While Nussbaum has not written about classroom pedagogy in particular, her insights are powerful in helping me and my students to develop a disposition towards teaching that moves beyond an instrumentalist preoccupation. This means that the pedagogy project one undertakes as teacher and as teacher educator ought to create the conditions for the learners to empower themselves. This might entail developing and applying teaching strategies that affirm, that humanise (Freire, 1970; Keet et al., 2009; Khene, 2014), and that recognise that gender and sexuality issues are implicated in the assemblage one enters as teacher.

Contemporary American gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler’s (2004) notion of gender is that it is learned behaviour performed on a stage where the script is prewritten and the props are well positioned for the actor to learn to perform socially constructed gender roles and to vilify non-conformers. This philosophical heuristic is powerful since it offers me and my student teachers a conceptual base from which to make sense of how we attempt to do the so-called normal work that teachers do. In fact, it helps the potential teacher to consider how their thoughts and actions as teacher might be further reinforcing the normal, and what alterations they might make to the script, props, and stage. Butler’s insights are particularly powerful as students engage with in-class discussions, an excerpt of which appears below.

Class group discussion activity

What does it mean to be a man?

What does it mean to be a good man?

How does the world of economics, commerce and industry construct the role of women? What are the dominant ideas about women that generally prevail in the workplace, and where have they come from?

My teaching strategies and those for which I advocate through my pedagogy courses have been wholly Western-Eurocentric, shaped by liberal left thinkers, upon whose wisdom I was reared in both my undergraduate and postgraduate training. I appropriated from the work of Foucault (1977, 1978, 2001, 2006), and Deleuze and Guattari (1997, 1984), whose work is central to the theoretical framing of this article, as well as Žižek (2008a, 2008b, 2017). At the heart of the intellectual projects of these critical scholars can be found the analysis and critique of human subjectivity formation in the context of rampant capitalism. Harnessing their critique of neoliberal capitalism alongside making use of insights from the critical pedagogy theorists Giroux (2004, 2011) and McLaren (2003) was particularly useful in

helping me to understand a broader social justice project for education—an understanding that I wished to inculcate in my student teachers.

In the excerpt below from CAPS for economics, topics like poverty—its definition, causes, and consequences—are prescribed.

An analysis and investigation of poverty. • Poverty: - absolute and relative poverty - measuring poverty - causes of poverty - the effects of poverty • The South African Government's measures to alleviate poverty

While CAPS provides a skeletal outline of topics to be taught, schoolteachers rely on textbooks for actual content knowledge. The Department of Education recommends a set of vetted textbooks that schools should use for detailed content knowledge. Content knowledge in subjects like economics, geography, business studies and history, for example, is not neutral; it carries value-laden notions that serve to sustain the hegemony of the powerful (Ramdhani & Maistry, 2020).

When the decolonisation debates began to regain traction in South Africa, I realised that my own scholarship had been entirely influenced by continental philosophers and contemporary liberal left scholars from the West. I recognised that to understand decoloniality meant moving into southern literature. While many of the decolonial theorists whose work I currently draw from (Grosfoguel, 2007, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2007, 2011; Quijano, 2000) might be regarded as sociologists rather than philosophers, the rich conceptual repertoire they offer is useful to help me consider what and how I choose to teach. Similarly, the work of the influential philosopher, Frantz Fanon (1963, 1967) and that of the African theorist, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), constantly inspire my work as teacher educator. Below is an extract of a task with which novice PGCE economics teacher trainees are invited to engage.

Write an essay in which you

- Discuss the concept colonization and how it has contributed to the unevenness of SA school education system. What might be your role as (commerce) teacher in this kind of system?
- Explain the concept 'coloniality' and its effects on what and how you teach in the Economics curriculum.
- Eve Tuck asserts that decolonization is simply a metaphor. Write a response to this assertion. Make specific reference to contemporary issues of land expropriation/appropriation and its economic and political implications. How would you use these ideas in your Economics class?

As previously explained, the economics graduates who come to this pedagogy course have limited or no exposure to social theory or philosophy; their expectations of having to learn value-neutral teaching competences is disrupted. They are also urged to be critical of the economic knowledge that they are expected to teach in schools. Students find this quite

disruptive. They find themselves in a dissonant space in which they recognise the need for contestation and activism but are often overwhelmed by the sheer size of the social justice project and their ability to impact the system. There is a distinct risk, especially for novice teachers who might question the status quo; balancing activism with compliance to structural rigidities, like a prescriptive schooling system and curriculum, is indeed a challenge. We draw on the scholarship of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), in particular her conception of the border, borderland, and border thinking, and the habituation thereof both physically and metaphorically. This has proved invaluable in helping me and my students ground our personal philosophies of teaching and scholarship, locating ourselves at the proverbial border, at the interface of western Eurocentrism, Latin-American wisdom, and African theorising. This has proven to be a powerful space from which to proceed with my perennial contemplation of, and reflection on, the improvement of my practice as teacher educator.

Discussion and concluding comments

The above description of attempts to invoke theory and philosophy into fashioning a pedagogy course for economics student teachers is not meant to be a praise song. I have not attempted to measure the impact of my experimentation on student course outcomes and am reluctant to do so, given the unpalatability of the notion of formally assessing students according to the neoliberal performative that has become the culture of universities. Even self-study, the methodological approach to which I have subscribed, often hankers after what is believed to be the standard of evidence presentation and the rigour demanded by post-positivists. However, through lucid description and tentative claims to any degree of success, I attempt to breathe a level of trustworthiness (Craig, 2009) into this account.

While a Deleuzian deterritorialisation of economics education is the long-term goal, this depends on the ability to develop and harness a critical mass of scholarship. As teacher educator I am nourished by the multiplicities of novel and unpredictable understandings of the economic world and associated pedagogy that lines of flight create and lead towards a “process of becoming” (Due, 2007, p. 141) and a state of constant renewal (of thought) that I and my student teachers have the privilege of enjoying.

While I am loathe to offer recommendations as in traditional papers, in the discussion that follows I reflect on issues that are worth considering when one is attempting a project of this nature.

Novice teacher education students (entering teacher education for the first time, such as my PGCE group), have different proclivities for theory and philosophy. In fact, economics graduates, whose training has been with graphs, statistics, formulae, and numbers generally do not enjoy dense philosophy. However, they find reinterpreted philosophy like, for example, extracts from *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (Gibson, 2011), much more accessible. Fanon’s original texts are in a genre of writing that contemporary economics graduates do not find appealing, but the inspiration he still offers, more than 50 years since his passing, is powerful. Of significance for contemporary students is the realisation that

decolonial initiatives and theorising and philosophising have a longstanding tradition on the African continent.

While some students develop an instant thirst for more, many economics student teachers remain consumed with trying to survive the extensive demands of the PGCE programme. Thus, engaging with readings and literature relating to the purpose of education in the context of the South African societal landscape is likely to happen at a somewhat superficial level.

Another mitigating factor is that many PGCE students in the field of EBS might initially have enrolled for an undergraduate degree in commerce with the aim of joining the corporate world or high-level public sector. For many commerce graduates, teaching as a job option is a last resort after unsuccessful attempts to secure their first-choice careers. Such students are usually visibly unhappy to be in an education faculty pursuing a profession in which remuneration is not comparable to that of the private sector. Hence, deep philosophical questions as to the purpose of education are not likely to be foremost in their mind. A similar scenario might play out with mathematics and science graduates.

It follows, then, that the enthusiasm for philosophy that the teacher educator might have, may not be shared by all novice student teachers. This might also explain why there is minimal transfer of even the rudimentary philosophy offered in philosophy of education courses to other elements of the PGCE assemblage.

It becomes clear that novice PGCE student teachers enter the assemblage of the pedagogy course with many varied lived experiences including once having been school learners themselves, and now as students in their undergraduate degrees. They would have been active learners of particular socially constructed notions of the meaning and purpose of education. They engage in participation in the assemblage with different levels of intensity and different inclinations for embracing the purpose of education as a philosophical question. However, of importance is that teacher educators and teachers consider “what . . . learning actually is, what educational learning is supposed to be about and supposed to be for, and who should have a say in answering these questions” (Biesta, 2020, p. 1023). How might we (as teacher educators) create the conditions for students to recognise a/their truth as opposed to fostering conditions for serving out predetermined truths as Biesta (2014) asked? While teacher educators and student teachers will not be bona fide philosophers, they can aspire to a self-articulated philosophy of teaching through even rudimentary philosophising.

For students who are inspired by decolonial theory and its open contestation of ongoing coloniality, this kind of exposure enables them to undertake a critical gaze on the values embedded in the western-centred curriculum that continues to have a hegemonic hold in the schooling sector. The school curriculum, its content and generally accepted ways of teaching and learning become open to critique and alteration. The notion of understanding curriculum as complicated conversation (Pinar, 2014; Pinar et al., 1995) is salient since it enables the development of dispositions towards curriculum that see it as non-deterministic, tension-filled, and inherently messy—a vehicle for activism. This kind of disposition is in stark contrast to the tightly framed Tylerian orientation (Tyler, 1949) that characterises the current

South African curriculum. Trainee teachers exposed to philosophy and decolonial theory enter the field to practice (as teachers of economics in this instance), and sow the seeds of societal critique and decolonial thinking among their learners. Importantly for the South African and African contexts, through exposure to decolonial theory students come to realise that philosophy is not the preserve of continental Europe. They come to recognise that philosophy has a long history in Africa, despite attempts at its subversion by colonial masters, and that a body of contemporary decolonial literature is now accessible.

Weaving philosophy in any meaningful way into a pedagogy course that competes for time in the broader PGCE programme presents a practical challenge. Running a pedagogy course that is heavily infused with philosophy runs the risk of critique that it remains theoretical and abstract, even when deliberations might be cognitively and conceptually profound. The pedagogy course has to give due cognisance to the machinic assemblage—learning the planning, administrative and assessment aspects—not that these elements of teachers' responsibilities are not also shaped by the broader philosophical question as to the purpose of education.

I conclude with Bell's (2016, p. 123) reading of Deleuze and Guattari's notion that "becoming a philosopher entails a thoughtful, questioning and problematising attitude towards the given such that new forms of thinking or rethinking can emerge by way of a concept." While it may not be possible for my students (or me) to proliferate new concepts in a short capstone pedagogy course, as aspirant Deleuzian teachers we do prompt, trigger, anticipate, and attempt some lines of flight as these relate to constantly embracing the need to (re)conceptualise our work as teachers.

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