

A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service- learning for teacher education in South Africa

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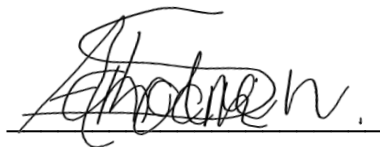
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DECLARATION

I the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation / thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted either in its entirety or part hereof at any university for a degree.

Andri Schoonen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andri Schoonen', is written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Date: 6 December 2021

PREFACE

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the participants who agreed to participate in this study. Thank you for your efforts, time and patience. I am fortunate to now call you trusted friends and fellow agents of social change for teacher education.

To my promotor, Lesley Wood and Corné Kruger, thank you for your guidance, support and motivation to complete this study. Without your expertise and patience, I would have never been able to complete this thesis. I stand in admiration of your wisdom and abilities! Thank you for the lessons I could learn from you during this project and for being scholars that inspire emerging researchers like me.

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Lastly, to the Lord that I pray to, may this study and the actions that emanate from it glorify your Name!

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that generation. Let your greatness blossom.
~Former President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela~

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I present my learning from working collaboratively with an action learning group to develop guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis in teacher education. Pre-service teachers currently lack skills and knowledge about social justice issues, diversity, and social education. This is problematic as the profile of learners in South African schools represent a very diverse population and without knowledge and skills about teaching in diverse circumstances our pre-service teachers cannot develop a social justice praxis.

Service-learning can be one way of helping pre-service and in-service teachers to develop social justice praxis to become teachers that advocate and realise social transformation in schools. The purpose of this study was to explore how social justice praxis in teacher education can be developed through service-learning for the South African context. The participants and I collaborated to identify the knowledge gaps between theoretical coursework and the social realities that teachers face daily. A further purpose was to develop guidelines for critical service-learning in teacher education to, a) infuse teacher education with socially relevant and contextualised local knowledge, and b) create communities of practices for in-service teachers to learn, share and reflect on their current practices and how it can be transformed to be more socially just. Through this study, I aimed to answer the following research question: *How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?*

I drew from action learning theory and contrapuntal reading analysis to conceptualise the theoretical lens that underpinned this study. This study was grounded in a participatory action learning action research (PALAR) design. The research process consisted of three main components: collaborative identification of needs and ways of working to attain mutual goals, deciding on the best course of action, and implementing and evaluating the action, to decide what further actions should be taken based on the participant reflections. The arts-based and reflective data we generated in our action learning group was analysed through a critical transformative lens.

The findings of this study indicated that collaborative methods such as critical service-learning in teacher education can be one tool through which academics, pre- and in-service teachers can reflect and transform their understanding of social justice in education. Through the reflections, they can develop their social justice praxis. This study can help teachers and higher education institutions to use critical service-learning to improve their learning and teaching to make it more socially just and contextually relevant.

Keywords: action learning theory; action research; collaboration; critical reflection; critical service-learning; critical transformative paradigm; injustice; in-service teachers; lifelong learning; participatory action learning and action research; participation; pre-service teachers; social justice; social justice praxis; sympatric metamorphic educational praxis framework; teacher education; transformation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction, defining key terms and background to the study

So as I stand here today I can declare that I am no longer a language arts and social studies teacher, but a self-proclaimed teacher of social justice and the art of communication with words. Looking back, I think that my prior hesitation to talk about race stemmed from a lack of social education in the classroom. A lack of diversity in my own life that is, by no means, the fault of my progressive parents, but rather a broken and still segregated school system. Now that I'm an educator in that system, I've decided to stand unflinching when it comes to the real issues facing our children today, I've decided to be unafraid to question injustice, unafraid to take risks in the classroom — I am changed. And so has my role as a teacher. (Strauss, 2015).

The quote that introduces this study is from the acceptance speech that Mrs Emily Smith, a fifth-grade teacher from Cunningham Elementary School in Texas, gave when she was awarded the 2015 Donald H. Graves Excellence in the Teaching of Writing award at a national teaching convention in Minneapolis (Strauss, 2015). In her speech, she clearly mentions how she needed to change her way of teaching once she realised that she lacked knowledge about the diversity of the learners she was teaching.

Although Emily was speaking about education within the American context, lack of education for social justice also applies in the South African context. I am a young white female lecturer for Foundation Phase undergraduate students, and I teach English Home Language. The values that I hold personally and professionally can be expressed in the following beliefs: all people, irrespective of who they are or where they come from, can add value to society; honesty and transparency form the cornerstone of progress. I also believe the following: co-existence in any society needs co-recognition and valuing one another; it takes a whole village to move forward; money, power, and access to education and resources are not the only things that will help one attain knowledge; having compassion and doing introspection is painful but vital, as it leads you to question and change your own assumptions and beliefs; and, lastly, life is really not about you, but what you can do to improve the lives of others.

I am concerned about the lack of exposure of pre-service teachers to experiences outside their own environment, and the limited engagement they have with fellow students and teachers to critically discuss the differences in their experiences, and I am concerned that our students are

provided with a skewed picture of teaching realities (refer §2, p.5) as highlighted by (Bloch, 2009; Spaul, 2013; Taylor, 2008). I view this as a very large gap between theoretical orientation and the actual practice of teacher education. The students in my classroom come from different backgrounds, they represent different cultures and races, and many of them speak English as only a third or a fourth language. Listening to the experiences of social injustice (such as racism, unequal access, gender inequality, and prejudice) that my students share in our class discussions has changed (and challenged) my beliefs regarding social justice, diversity, and social education within teacher education and current teaching practices in South African schools – in the same way that Emily also views these three aspects differently now. Ideas about social justice are grounded in the belief that people should be treated in a humane way, irrespective of their background and position in society (Van Deventer *et al.*, 2015). Within the landscape of education this entails that all children, irrespective of who they are or where they come from, should be treated with dignity, and should have their diversity acknowledged. For the purposes of this study, diversity refers to the acknowledgement and recognition of differences between human beings (Chisholm, 2011). I believe that through social education, we can achieve social justice awareness and appreciation for diversity in education. When there is a lack of social justice, diversity acknowledgement and social education in a teacher education programme, the students will not be prepared to teach in contexts different from their own, and particularly in contexts of the socially disadvantaged (Francis & Le Roux, 2011). This implies that teachers need to be equipped to embed all teaching and learning activities within a social justice framework.

As I reflect on my own teacher education, I realise that our programme rarely afforded the opportunity to discuss diversity or critically and rigorously reflect on our own experiences. Social justice as a concept was not critically addressed in the programme. Our class discussions about these issues were dominated by and reflected the worldviews of the majority student population, which was mostly white Afrikaans-speaking students from advantaged backgrounds, who had attended well-resourced schools and had been taught in their home language. The lecturers, who were also mostly white Afrikaans-speaking people, did aim to include all students, but often they also had been educated within a western, Christian paradigm and their understanding of diversity was thus skewed. Students who did not fit the 'profile' of the rest of the class and the lecturers rarely had the chance to explain their reality and their experiences. Students from other backgrounds seldom had the opportunity to speak in their home language or explain learning and child development as they had experienced it in the communities they came from. I remember lectures about the theories of Piaget, Skinner, and Vygotsky, which are all very important childhood development theories, but I do not recall significant or prominent discussions exploring theories from developed countries and their relevance in SA schools, based on what teachers experience. Although I believe the lecturers did help us develop pedagogical skills and

knowledge, our programme was lacking in that it was grounded in a Western Christian world view, and we did not have the opportunity to explore other paradigms, which seem to be the norm at other South African universities too (Le Grange, 2016). We had little engagement with diverse teaching settings, and there were not many collaborative learning opportunities in and out of the lecture halls, where we as pre-service teachers could learn how to uphold social justice in a various teaching and learning context different to the contexts that we grew up in. From my own experience, we did not have the opportunity to develop praxis (Freire, 2000 (1972) informed by exposure to different experiences. Praxis differs from practice in the sense that praxis requires one to continuously reassess and reflect on knowledge and actions (Freire, 2000[1972]), and to take action informed by this reflection on theory and experiences (Smith & Eaton, 2012).

As a lecturer now, I want to be an agent of social change, where I create an environment for in-service and pre-service teachers to share experiences of different realities of teaching in South African schools, using our shared knowledge to develop social justice praxis in education. Drawing on teacher Emily's experience, my classroom should be a place where education about diversity, social contexts and social justice becomes just as important as the academic content that is taught. This means that I need to rethink my thoughts about praxis and my role in supporting social justice praxis in education.

Social justice praxis for education entails collaborative action informed by reflecting on learning from real-world experiences, to develop a socially just educational environment (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Van Deventer et al., 2015). For this study, social justice praxis means to reflect, act, and reflect again on the actions taken, adjusting thinking and actions for learning regarding teacher education in a diverse South African context. A theoretical underpinning plays an important role in attaining social justice praxis as theory that informs reflection and actions lead to rigour and depth in the interpretation of theory for practice (Butin, 2015). I believe that addressing social justice issues often requires deep personal reflection and the challenging of one's own beliefs about diversity and injustice.

I am interested to learn more about diversity, social education, and social justice in our context with in-service teachers, since I have only taught in a school for a brief period, after which I furthered my career in higher education. I thus also have a lot to learn about school-based teaching. I need to be a lifelong learner, learning from my own and others' experiences in concurrence with research done by Odora-Hoppers (2013). Only then will I be able to be an engaged scholar and open space in my classroom for my students to become engaged scholars, not focusing only on learning but also to take action on their learning (Kajner, 2013). I want the students in my class to feel empowered to speak openly about current social issues, to reflect on social and diversity influences on their teaching practice, and to build on experiences that are

open to different world views, where diversity is embraced and understood. I believe that service-learning will enable such learning to take place.

In this study, I explored how a service-learning component could be a useful medium to develop social justice praxis within teacher education, to help combat a lack of diversity awareness and promote social education in South African schools, more specifically schools facing adversity,³ “thereby closing the gap between teaching theory and teaching practice. I argue that in-service teachers will also benefit from such collaborative service-learning engagement as it promotes the development of social justice praxis among all participants. Pre- and in-service teachers should learn about and experience teaching in different contexts, and they should be guided to reflect, discuss and learn from one another (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Service-learning can be used to provide opportunities to pre-service and in-service teachers to experience and reflect on the realities of teaching in South African schools (Hammersley, 2012; Chambers & Lavery, 2012). In the following section the rationale for the study is grounded in the relationship between social justice praxis, service-learning, and teacher education.

1.2 Rationale for the study and problem statement

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996) provides that all citizens and government systems (including schools and HEIs) should strive for practices that “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights” for all citizens. Therefore, in the domain of the social sciences, particularly in teacher education and in basic education, we have the responsibility to ensure that what we teach, and the experiences we create for our students, is a true reflection of South African people and South African schools (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015), and that it does not favour any one world view or paradigm. Higher education institutions should not become organisations that promote further segregation and oppression (Heleta, 2016). They should be an environment where students and academics can share knowledge and experiences that are true to the realities of the communities they serve (Le Grange, 2016). This once again

³ I recognise and acknowledge that schools from more developed areas also face unique challenges regarding language barriers, different backgrounds, and communication (Gaikhorst et al., 2016). However, the focus of this study will be the experiences of teachers who teach in adverse circumstances.

⁴ Many young learners in South Africa have been negatively affected by socio-economic imbalances (National Development Agency (NDA), 2009), including malnourishment, and limited access to health care. Learners also do not see the value of their efforts in education as their circumstances will only lead to unemployment in the end. Many learners feel hopeless, subsequently despaired, because they experience the negative impact of unemployment in their own homes (Bloch, 2009).

highlights the need for collaborative praxis, where reflection leads to a shared vision, new understanding, change in practice, and motivation (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Government agencies, institutions, and individuals are the determinants of social justice praxis (Van Deventer et al., 2015), and they should work collaboratively in attaining the constitutional vision of establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice, and advocating for human rights (South Africa, 1996).

The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) policy as published by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) clearly stipulates that newly qualified teachers should be prepared to teach in diverse social, cultural, racial and language backgrounds, which echoes the vision as stipulated in the Constitution (DHET, 2015). Such backgrounds include those where learners are affected by poverty and HIV, as well as a lack of inclusivity and environmental sustainability. Therefore, pre-service teachers need to experience different South African school realities, and they should use knowledge gained from local teaching communities as a vehicle to ensure that their own practices promote social justice. The DHET has devised action plans and the MRTEQ policy to ensure that pre-service teachers are better prepared to teach in diverse circumstances (DHET, 2015). I argue that the requirements to structure more inclusive teacher education programmes should not be vague, however, HEIs must develop capacity to effectively operationalise the guidelines as provided by the MRTEQ. (Thomson *et al.*, 2011). The MRTEQ states that a teacher education programme “brings the importance of inter-connections between different types of knowledge and practices into the foreground, as well as the ability of teachers to draw reflexively from integrated and applied knowledge, so as to work flexibly and effectively in a variety of contexts” (DHET, 2015, p. 8). The DHET cannot be held responsible for the interpretation, or misinterpretation, by HEIs of the MRTEQ document, although I believe the operationalisation of the guidelines is one major challenge in developing effective service-learning programmes (refer §1. 2, p.6). Nevertheless, the capacity to operationalise the guidelines lies within the HEIs and this study, which is rooted in collaborative learning, could help in addressing this challenge.

Ezeonachwusi et al. (2016) found that when pre-service teachers reflect on their experiences of teacher education programmes, they identify the lack of education on diversity in the South African teaching context as one of the shortcomings, which confirms the view of teacher Emily. Her concerns thus seem to point to a wider problem. A study conducted elsewhere in the world also echoes the abovementioned phenomenon, as research by Cevher-Kalburan (2014) reveals, where pre-service teachers reflecting on a practicum period (referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL) in the South African context) indicated that they were not aware of the many cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic differences between the learners in their communities.

The abovementioned challenges identified by pre-service teachers before formally entering teaching practice should act as a warning to HEIs, as they suggest that the education provided to pre-service teachers is not sufficient to prepare them for practice. The onus thus lies with HEIs to offer teacher education to generate clear guiding principles for their qualifications as mandated by the DHET. This can enable the pre-service teachers to be prepared for teaching in diverse communities using their own expertise and experience to plan relevant programmes that can enable socially just praxis.

Research indicates that one way to prepare pre-service teachers for diverse workplaces that they will enter is inclusion of service-learning in their teacher education (Butin, 2010, Butin, 2015 & Hammersley, 2012), subsequently also informing social justice praxis. However, the MRTEQ policy merely states that service-learning “could be” included in the teacher education programme alongside WIL, the teaching practicum period (DHET, 2015, p. 18). Given that WIL is allocated a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 32 weeks throughout the formal BEd qualification, spread over the programme at the discretion of the institution (DHET, 2015), it focuses on learning from classroom lessons and preparation to teach own lessons (DHET, 2015). WIL is not viewed as an opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop social justice praxis and collaboratively reflect on the implications of diverse teaching contexts for practice (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014). Furthermore, most students have the freedom to choose the school where they will complete their WIL period, and they often prefer to choose a school that is similar to the one they attended as learners (Francis & Le Roux, 2011) limiting opportunity for experience learning within diverse teaching contexts. The fact that pre-service teachers have the freedom to choose a WIL partner school potentially hinders them from experiencing diverse teaching contexts. Should HEIs offering teacher education programmes view WIL as the sole opportunity for social justice learning in practice, it could further increase the gap between the realities of teaching and teachers’ competence to adapt their pedagogical content knowledge to whatever context they may find themselves in.

Although service-learning and WIL are viewed in the MRTEQ as interchangeable (DHET, 2015), they are two different concepts, each with separate goals. WIL as part of teacher education programmes provides the necessary opportunity for learning about pedagogy in and from practice, while service-learning has a wider focus on learning through serving, thereby meeting a civic responsibility (Clevenger-Bright et al., 2012). According to Chambers and Lavery (2012), service-learning is focused on addressing real-life needs in the community, which takes students out of their comfort zone, requiring them to question their assumptions and prior learning. Such reflection is the real value of service-learning.

Currently, service-learning is acknowledged in the outcomes for the Foundation Phase-programme at the institution where I teach. However, due to the challenges of phasing in of a new BEd-programme, such as time constraints and multimodal delivery, the service-learning activities of this programme do not provide for achieving the principles and aim of service-learning (refer to section 1.5, page 8). I believe that inclusion of critical service-learning in teacher education, where reflection on learning is a main component, could enable students to reflect on and challenge their own beliefs, that can perhaps enable transformation (Mitchell, 2008), which is the goal of social justice praxis (Van Deventer et al., 2015). If pre-service teachers engage with in-service teachers, it will not only help the learning of the pre-service teachers, but it can also broaden the experience and knowledge of the in-service teachers (Shulman & Shulman, 2004), especially when they engage in reflections on their own knowledge and awareness of social justice and their interpretation and accommodation of diversity in their practice.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, I aimed to develop social justice praxis through service-learning, to narrow the gap between in-service and pre-service teaching. The participants and I collaborated in a critical service-learning activity where we developed a new understanding of what social justice praxis for teacher education mean. Secondly, through this study the participants and I co-generated knowledge to develop guiding principles for inclusion of service-learning in teacher education to enable social justice praxis for teacher education. This study was reflexive in that the participants drew on their own knowledge and experience to co-generate the principles for critical service-learning and to deepen their understanding of social justice praxis to inform their own teaching.

1.4 Guiding research questions of the study

The research question of a study serves to guide the choice of literature sources and provides the focus for suitable data generation (Jansen, 2019a). A research question assumes understanding of the field of study and an interest to learn more (Farrugia et al., 2010). Service-learning as a field of study and the enhancement of the teacher education curriculum are my topics of interest. I aimed to answer the following guiding research question:

How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?

Although this study was conducted in South Africa and for teacher education, it could be applicable to other developing countries and other disciplines. As is typical in any action research study, the participants and I negotiated the final research questions once we established their

needs and purpose for the study (Jansen, 2019a; Stringer, 2014). The following secondary research questions emerged after we agreed on our vision for the study:

- What do we understand social justice, inclusion in education and social justice praxis to be?
- How can stakeholders⁵ in education openly and collaboratively engage to enable authentic learning experiences?
- How can teachers develop skills to teach without fear in a socially just manner?
- What guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process?

While reflecting on the process of facilitating an action learning group as a novice researcher, I realised that I needed to learn how to be a skilful facilitator and the following secondary research question guided my learning in this regard:

- How can I, as a novice researcher, improve my facilitation of a community-based participatory action learning and action research project?

The answers to these research questions can contribute to the development of social justice praxis through service-learning to address the current challenges teachers experience with teaching in South African schools. Guiding principles for the implementation of critical service-learning were generated in this study. As the relationship between the research questions of a study and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks are complementary to each another (Grant & Osanloo, 2014), the following sections explain the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study.

1.5 Conceptual framework

For this study, the conceptual framework was rooted in critical service-learning (CSL) theory, as it informed the purpose of the study. I agree with the explanation of the aim of service-learning as a transformative practice, as given by Mitchell (2008, p.52) that “Critical service-learning must

⁵ The term stakeholders in this study refers to the National Departments of Education, school principals and management, in-service teachers, school governing bodies, higher education institutions offering teacher education qualifications, scholars in the field of education, in-service teachers and pre-service teachers.

emphasise the skills, knowledge and experiences required of students to not only participate in communities, but to transform them as engaged and active citizens.” Service-learning encourages students to become active learners to “bring about change in their environments” (McKay, 2010, p. 6), and it also enables the community they serve to reflect on their own knowledge and assumptions. The goal of a critical paradigm towards service-learning is to “deconstruct systems of power so the need for service and the inequalities that create and sustain them are dismantled” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). The experiences that students take part in form their knowledge, challenge their beliefs, and help to form the basis of social justice praxis, informed by the experiential learning theories of Dewey, Freire, and Kolb (Huisman & Edwards, 2011).

Service-learning should not be too prescriptive, as the effectiveness of such a component depends on learning from and in the community involved (Butin, 2010). Yet there are basic principles underpinning a critical approach to service-learning, as explained by Butin (2010):

- 1) respect for the community’s way of life, circumstances, abilities, knowledge and skills;
- 2) critical reflection on learning that takes place;
- 3) reciprocity (mutual benefit for all parties);
- 4) relevance of academic merit; and the actions in the community

CSL is very much rooted in the ideology that the community’s goals should be accomplished, which highlights the need for reciprocity (Tinkler et al., 2014) and advocating social change through engagement and power sharing (Clark & Nugent, 2011). Doerr (2011) emphasised the importance of reflection for critical service-learning, especially reflection on cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Cognitive dissonance is when people, in this study the participants, perceive contradictory information (Festinger, 1957), such as different social realities people experience. Grounded in the transformative learning theory of Mezirow (2003) it is in the critical collaborative reflection before, during and after service-learning experiences that real transformation takes place, hence the importance of adopting a collaborative approach in this study.

1.6 Theoretical framework

The purpose of a theoretical framework is to provide structure on the philosophical, epistemological, methodological and analytical approaches of the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Action learning and contrapuntal reading analysis (CRA) form the theoretical framework for this study.

1.6.1 Action learning theory (ALT)

The development of action learning theory (ALT) dates to the 1930s, where critical discussions between Reg Revans and his colleagues led to the development of a technique where managers would ask small groups of people to come together to find solutions for challenges they faced (INTRAC, 2011). This philosophy encourages questioning, reflection, group empowerment through discussions in action learning sets, and self-help (emancipation) (Boshyk, 2012; Pedler, 2011). Although it was originally used in organisational management and the health sector (Boshyk, 2012), ALT holds much value for research in the domain of social sciences.

The underlying principles of ALT are the following: learning starts with not knowing; when people take responsibility in situations where they have the best chance of taking actions that will make a difference; learning involves 'programmed knowledge' (what is read and taught) and questioning insight; and learning should be greater than the rate of change (INTRAC, 2011; Revans, 2011). For this study the participants and I drew on these principles by:

- asking questions about the current practices of education and how they enable (or discourage) social justice and its praxis,
- taking shared responsibility to learn and reflect on this challenge to inform our actions,
- learning more about what we already know about social justice and how teachers should adopt praxis to advocate it, and, lastly,
- reflecting on and challenging our current (predetermined) ideas about social justice and how engaging with each other can generate new ideas to inform our praxis.

By drawing on the principles of ALT as described above, this study led to the generation of new co-generated knowledge (Kozubska & MacKanzie, 2012; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015) on social justice praxis for academics, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers, by engaging in a critical service-learning project. The newly generated knowledge and understanding of the implications of diversity for our teaching practices can lead to the development of improved social justice praxis in classrooms.

1.6.2 Contrapuntal reading analysis (CRA)

Contrapuntal reading analysis (CRA) originates from a term used in music to describe a musical piece that has two or more melodic lines or notes played simultaneously (Bilgin, 2016; Hess, 2016), and the fact that each melody has a responsibility towards the other (De Groot, 2005). From this metaphor of contrapuntal music, Edward Said developed a theory of contrapuntal reading analysis for understanding postcolonial education (Hess, 2016).

This theory is often referred to as “orientalism” and “postcolonialism” (Jansen, 2019b). One of the underlying principles of CRA is for a person to understand the mind of both the coloniser (the oppressor) and the colonised (the oppressed), to make sense of reality (Bilgin, 2016). Said had experienced the realities of both the oppressor (through his studies at Harvard and Princeton) and the oppressed (he was brought up in Palestine, a colony of the UK), and he could therefore conceptualise the essence of both ways of living (Siddiqi, 2007). In this study, it helped me to make sense of how participants from diverse backgrounds make meaning of their lives in relation to the lives of others and how they understand their role in promoting social justice for education.

In Said’s view, the focus moves from understanding different viewpoints on colonialism to understanding that all the viewpoints work in harmony, each with their own different responsibility, to deliver a ‘full circle’, or full performance, to use the metaphor of music (Bilgin, 2016) once again. The goal of CRA is not to foreground one narrative (worldview), but for different narratives to be mutually embedded (Chowdhry, 2007), so that communities can co-exist and live interdependently (Rubin, 2007).

I made use of CRA as a lens through which I interpreted the data generated. My own praxis for social justice education was challenged and transformed through emancipating myself from colonised notions and thinking in my own teaching, and my hope was that the participants could also be emancipated from imprinted knowledge that affects their social justice praxis. Although I have never advocated for colonialism or colonial teaching, I come from a background where colonised thinking is seen as the norm of being, the “knowledge in the blood” as Jansen (2009, p.17) coined. One’s background cannot change or be separated from who we are, however, through rethinking and questioning current status quo, we can achieve a place of distancing ourselves from colonisation (Dascal, 2009).

1.7 Research methodology

Research methodology relates to the paradigm informing the study, which, in turn, influences the choice of approach and design, which then influence choice of the methods. This study was grounded in the domain of social sciences, and it has a critical stance. Research that focuses on critical reflection and social change has a qualitative nature (Nieuwenhuis, 2015), and it takes on an open-ended exploratory nature.

1.7.1 Critical transformative paradigm

A research paradigm becomes the lens through which one views the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2015), meaning that the values and aims that I hold for the study determined what paradigm I drew from. The critical transformative paradigm advocates emancipation and social change (Nieuwenhuis,

2015) and empowers the community and researcher to change and challenge their own beliefs through the research process (Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013). Through this study, I believe the participants and I realised our role as critical reflective teachers in a country where we are faced with the challenges of social injustice, a lack of diversity, and limited social education.

It is important to note that a critical transformative paradigm aims to liberate and enable people, rather than making them objects of research (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015). For this study the pre-service teachers, a fellow academic and I learnt *with* the community, *from* the community, and *in* the community, where the community in this study consisted of participating in-service teachers from the identified school. When drawing on a critical transformative paradigm, it becomes evident that the design of the study cannot be anything but participatory (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015), as the participants in the study determined the aims, the process, and the progress made. In the following section I explain the research design.

1.7.2 Research design

This study was grounded in a participatory action learning action research (PALAR) design. PALAR is an integrated form of other action research approaches, namely AL (action learning), PAR (participatory action research), and lifelong learning, with the goal of advocating social change (Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015).

I followed a PALAR process in this study, more commonly known as the “PALAR Figure 8”, developed by Zuber-Skerritt (2002) and adapted by Wood (2020). The process consists of three main components: collaborative identification of needs and ways of working to attain mutual goals (context), deciding on the best course of action (vision), and implementing the action, evaluating the action, and deciding what further actions should be taken based on the participant reflections (practice) (Wood, 2017; Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015). Each of the cycles in this study informed the other, and the learning in the cycles were interdependent, as illustrated in Figure 1-1 below.

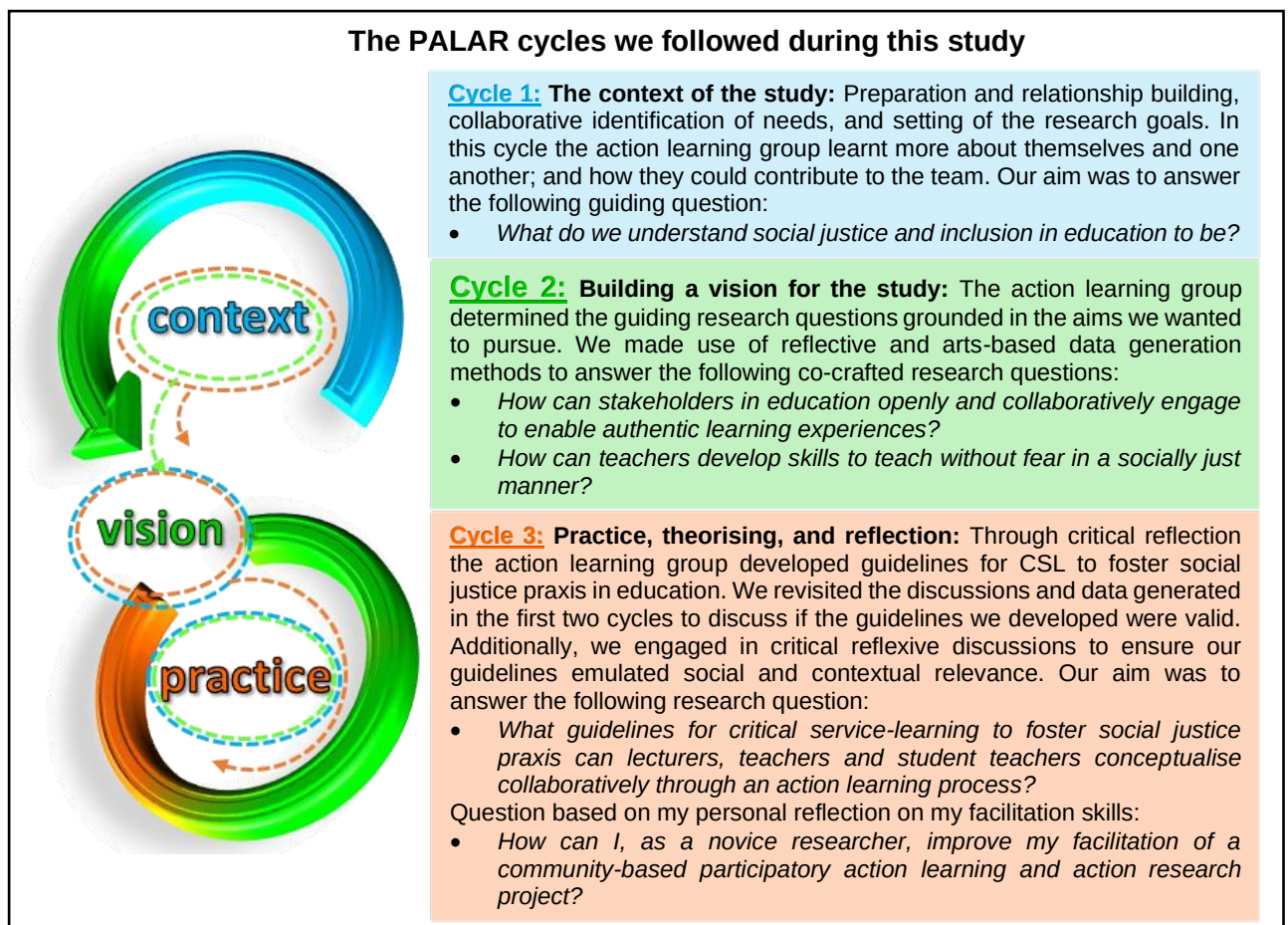


Figure 1-1: The cycles that were followed in this study (own adaptation from Wood (2020) and Zuber-Skerritt (2002))

While the PALAR research process is illustrated in a linear fashion, it is important to note that all previous cycles were revisited throughout the study, and reflection on the learning process took place at every action learning group meeting (this is indicated by broken lines in the figure). The above figure served as a guiding map for this study. I explain the research methods for this study next.

1.7.3 Research methods

The research methods of a study consist of participant recruitment, the data-generation strategies that were employed, and the data-analysis method that were used.

1.7.3.1 Participant recruitment

There are various ways to select participants for a study (Nieuwenhuis, 2015), and for this study voluntary purposeful sampling was considered the most suitable method. Two groups of participants were recruited for this study, namely (a) full-time pre-service teachers that were enrolled for a BEd degree at the institution where the researcher is employed, and (b) practising

teachers from a school in the North-West province. Furthermore, to ensure that the study was relevant and spoke to the diverse setting within the South African education system the following criteria served as the framework for participant recruitment:

- In-service teachers from a primary school in a socially disadvantaged community who have been teaching for a minimum of two years and have basic English competency. I hoped to recruit about four in-service teachers from a school that the university has links with. In the end five in-service teachers agreed to participate in the study, and the school principal and a Departmental official joined the group of in-service teachers.
- Pre-service teachers from different income-level backgrounds and communities were recruited. I hoped to recruit male and female students that speak different home languages (Afrikaans, English, Setswana, and isiXhosa are the dominant languages at the institution). It was possible to recruit diverse participants, as the students in my classroom come from different backgrounds in terms of language, culture, gender, and race. I initially identified 19 students who met the criteria, and they were approached by an independent colleague to ascertain their willingness to take part in the study. Four pre-service teachers agreed to participate in this study and they, unfortunately, did not represent the diverse scope that I hoped for.

Additionally, one fellow lecturer showed interest in the study, and since one of the values of PALAR is inclusivity, we agreed to extend the scope of the participants who joined the study as indicated in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1: Biographical details of the participants

Participant code	Age	Race	Gender	Home language	Professional status of participant
P1	53	White	Female	English	In-service teacher
P2	53	Black	Male	Setswana	In-service teacher (principal)
P3	23	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P4	27	Black	Female	Setswana	University lecturer
P5	28	Black	Female	Setswana	In-service teacher
P6	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P7	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P8 (<i>first author</i>)	29	White	Female	Afrikaans	University lecturer
P9	43	Black	Male	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P10	29	Black	Female	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P11	54	Black	Male	Setswana	Departmental official
P12	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher

Our group comprised participants from various backgrounds that contributed to authentic learning from diverse experiences and knowledge. The data we generated as a group provided new ways

of understanding social justice praxis in education and how critical service-learning can be done between universities and schools within local education communities.

1.7.3.2 Data-generation strategies

Qualitative data generation and data analysis are described as a circular and simultaneous process (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Stringer (2014) identifies that the main aim for data generation in action research is for the researcher to extend their understanding and perspectives of the participants' experiences. However, I believe that data generation does more than just enable understanding; it also involves learning, through listening to the experiences of others. Stringer (2014) emphasises the importance of the researcher remaining unbiased throughout the course of the study, so that the participants' true reflections determine the findings.

Transcribed conversations of action learning group meetings formed part of the data generated. I also kept a reflective journal of my learning as facilitator and participant in the group; the group decided to do reflexive discussions rather than keeping reflective journals. The data-generation strategies mentioned above are typically used in action research, as they enable discussion and mutual learning (Stringer, 2014). During the study, I also used participative arts-based and reflexive strategies to help the participants express their feelings, experiences, and thoughts. These strategies were:

- **Draw-and-talk:** This strategy requires the participants to draw their interpretation of a given topic and to explain their drawing by focusing on the use of colour, the message from the drawing, and the emotions that they experience while drawing (Theron et al., 2011). The focus is not the quality of the drawing, but the message that the drawing conveys.
- **Fear-in-a-hat:** Each member of the group writes down a fear or fears they have regarding a specific topic on a strip of paper. The strips of paper are then folded and thrown in a hat. The strips are then drawn out of the hat at random and the group then critically discuss the fear without identifying whose fear it is (Easter, 2013).
- **Guided photo metaphor:** During this activity the facilitator provides the participants with an image that symbolises the research topic or a prompt. The participants break up into smaller groups and discuss what they see in the image and how it links to the prompt. The participants give a title for the image and explain their interpretation thereof to the larger group through a reflexive discussion.
- **Photovoice:** When using this strategy, participants photograph images that they view as relevant from their perspective on a predetermined topic explained by a narrative that explains the meaning of the photograph they took (Stringer, 2014). This strategy was very

useful for this study when the participants needed to give their view of diversity, social justice, and social education within the South African context.

- **Collage and narrative:** This arts-based data-generation method involves the participants creating a collage from a guiding prompt to make a visual artefact to explain their thoughts. The collage is followed by writing a narrative about the meaning of each picture (Masinga et al., 2016). The collages are showcased and discussed within the participant group.
- **Reflexive discussions:** Reflexive discussions in action research studies is one method through which participants can collaborate in stimulating conversations where their perceptions are shared, analysed and even transformed (Elkommos, 2020). A facilitator guides the discussions and should encourage the participants to all share their ideas (Wood, 2020b) in a shared and safe space.
- **Pantoum poetry:** This creative arts-based data-generation strategy is a form of poetry that can assist with analysing data as a group. A pantoum poem is “a verse form consisting of 4-line stanzas with a set pattern of repeated lines” (Masinga et al., 2016, p. 123).

Table 1-2 below provides an explanation of how each of the abovementioned arts-based and reflexive data-generation strategies were used over the course of the study. It is important to note the purpose of arts-based data-generation methods are not to create aesthetically pleasing artworks but to communicate perspectives and ideas with visual inspirations in a very critical and creative way (Masinga et al., 2016).

Table 1-2: Summary of our action learning group sessions and activities

Description	Prompt and purpose	Documenting of data
Session 1: Start-up workshop and creating our vision for the project <i>Question that guided the session: What are we concerned about?</i>		
Introducing ourselves as project members through a photo-metaphor activity as relationship building.	Guided photo-metaphor activity: The participants used a photograph of objects or scenery to describe how they view themselves as teachers and as part of our project.	Photographs with a narrative that was shared with the rest of the group.
Explaining theoretical framework negotiating the ethical agreement.	Reflexive discussion about key concepts: social justice praxis and critical service learning. Discussing how we would like to work together.	Transcribed recordings of the reflexive discussions.
Building collaborative vision for study.	Draw-and-talk small group activity: The participants drew a symbol that signified their collaborative vision of the study. The shared narratives became the inspiration for setting research questions for the project.	Vision drawings with transcribed narrative reflexive discussions.
Session 2: Discussing what social justice in education means for group <i>Question that guided the session: Why are we concerned about the development of SJP in teacher education?</i>		
Reflecting on data from previous session.	Reflexive discussion: The action learning group reflected on the data generated in the previous session through a group analysis discussion.	Transcription of discussions.

In-depth understanding of current social injustices in participants' teaching contexts.	Fear-in-a-hat activity: Each member wrote down a fear they have regarding social injustice in schools, we then drew the fears from the hat and discussed them critically to understand the fears of others and its possible relation to social justice or injustice.	Transcription of discussions and collaborative summary made through a reflexive discussion.
Session 3: Negotiating an action plan to address the lack of SJP in teacher education <i>Questions that guided the session: What can we do about the lack of SJP as a group and as individuals?</i> <i>What have we learnt thus far?</i>		
Identifying the experiences/ circumstances that contribute to social injustices.	Guided metaphor: Effect of social injustice on own teaching practice (in groups) and reflexive discussion.	Participant notes of metaphor interpretation and transcription of group discussion.
Explaining what a socially just education system looks like.	Photovoice and prompt: Take a photo of the socially just education system you envision and participate in a reflexive discussion.	Photos and narratives. Transcription of discussion.
Envisioning the role of stakeholders to create opportunities to develop SJP.	Individual collages and prompt: Create a collage of your vision for creating social justice praxis in teacher education and reflective discussion.	Collages and narratives. Transcription of sharing and reflexive discussion.
Session 4: Reflecting on our action plan to enable SJP through CSL <i>Questions that guided the session: How do we make the changes towards SJP?</i> <i>How did our perspectives of SJP change through our CSL engagements?</i>		
Reflexive discussion about how we worked together as an action learning group.	Reflexive group discussions, an adaption of a world café: I asked the participants to form groups: in-service teachers; pre-service teachers and academics to reflect on five guided questions on a rotational basis to expand each other's ideas.	Summaries of each question and transcription of the reflexive discussion.
Creating guidelines for CSL by analysing notes from the reflexive discussion.	Pantoum poetry: The participants used the notes from the reflexive discussion to create a structured pantoum poem, highlighting the guidelines for CSL to foster SJP in teacher education.	Participant poems and transcription of the reflexive discussion.
Revising the SMEP-framework (see Figure 2, Manuscript 1) according to our learning.	Dissecting the butterfly: For this activity, I printed out a large copy of the SMEP-framework. I invited participants to write down their contributions to the framework on the enlarged copy as we talked, based on their experiences and what they felt could benefit our agreed-upon vision.	Transcription of discussion and additions added by participants (see Annexure J).

Each of our action learning group meetings started off with a check-in session where the participants shared how they were feeling and what their expectations for the session were. We also checked-in to determine if our group was still working towards our shared vision. Relationship building is paramount in participative research, and we did an interactive relationship building activity as introduction to each session. Thereafter, we revisited the data generated from the previous session as means of co-analysis. At the end of each session, we concluded with a check-out activity that consisted of a group reflection of the activities and how each member felt after the session. We then negotiated what should be done in our following session.

All the data sets from our action learning group sessions were filed and organised according to the dates when the action learning group meetings took place, and the participants were assigned numbers to ensure confidentiality. This method ensured that the data analysis was done with more accuracy. I explain the data-analysis method of this study next.

1.7.3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of sifting through raw data to identify patterns and frameworks of significance (De Vos et al., 2005). In any action research study, the participants collaboratively analyse the data as it is generated to ensure that the voice of the community participants does not become lost in the reporting process (Ebersöhn et al., 2007). Content analysis of transcribed action learning set meetings, reflective journals, and visual arts-based data were done on an ongoing basis. Content analysis entails an inductive view of the data to identify differences and similarities (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Through categorising and coding the data, the experiences and knowledge gathered were summarised, as is typical in any study (Stringer, 2014). Where my own understanding is written into the coding and transcription of the data, I used bracketing to indicate this, as is required to ensure validity of the data (Stringer, 2014). For review of the data, themes were identified, and member-checks were done in the form of a reflective discussion with the participants to ensure that the reported analysis is a true reflection of the perspectives that were shared. Each article's data was co-analysed by the action learning group and conceptualised into findings in collaboration with my critical friends (my promoters). The guiding research questions and the co-generated vision for the study became the focus of the analysis. In the following section the measures that were taken to ensure rigour, validity, and reliability are explained, as transparency is a key element of any action research study (Stringer, 2014).

1.7.4 Rigour, validity, and reliability

Herr and Anderson (2005) linked the goals of action research to five validity criteria that they developed (see Table 1-3). I drew from these goals and criteria to ensure that our analysis remained unbiased and focused on the research topic the group identified.

Table 1-3: Herr and Anderson's goals of action research and validity criteria and their relevance to this study (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 55)

Goals of action research	Quality/validity criteria	Relevance to the study
(1) Generation of new co-generated knowledge	Dialogic and process validity	Peer review and member checks ensured validity of new co-generated knowledge.
(2) Achievement of action-orientated outcomes	Outcome validity	The research problem was identified from the perspective of the participants' knowledge and experiences. My research

		objectives did not determine the outcomes of the project.
(3) Education of both researcher and participants	Catalytic validity	Reflecting on our learning enabled the space where our perceptions could be transformed, which can enable actions to advocate social change in education.
(4) Results that are relevant to the local setting	Democratic validity	Collaborative learning was foregrounded in this study. I became a participant in the study, learning equally with the participants.
(5) A sound and appropriate research methodology	Process validity	The knowledge generated from this study was generated for sustainability and to encourage lifelong learning. The findings from the study are based on experiences and knowledge of the participants and reflections, action and processes increased validity of findings.

I believe that by adopting the criteria explained above and keeping them in line with the goals of action research, the study produced authentic, participant informed, socially relevant, and experience-based social justice praxis-orientated guiding principles for CSL for teacher education.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations entail much more than just stating true facts; they also involved respecting the privacy of the participants, obtaining permission and informed consent, and adhering to procedures that ensured the well-being of the participants, anonymity, and confidentiality (Stringer, 2014).

1.8.1 Permission and informed consent

As a trusting relationship is one of the key components of PALAR (Kearney et al., 2013), I needed to ensure transparency from the outset of the study. An independent person informed the participants about the details of the study, the confidentiality clause, what was expected of them, what they could expect of me, how to withdraw from the study, the suggested time frame for the study, and contact details of my promoters and myself in case they had any further questions before we commenced with data generation (see Annexure A). This informed consent of each participant was given orally and in writing (see Annexure A), and we negotiated an ethical agreement, (Wood, 2017). The agreement of how we chose to work together can be summarised as:

- Our group encourages open engagement by all participants;
- we share real challenges and collaboratively discuss possible solutions to the challenges;

- we contribute without fear of being judged or face repercussions from our employers and colleagues;
- we ask questions to better understand different cultures, traditions and social environments teachers and learners face;
- we do not want power dynamics to negatively influence our group, we participate as equal partners;
- each contribution is valuable, there are no wrong ideas; and
- we meet at agreed upon places, the staff room of the school at first, to make it accessible for all participants (see Annexure K).

Furthermore, the following ethical procedures were also followed:

- After the proposal for this study was accepted, ethical clearance was sought from the faculty's ethics committee and the project was granted ethical clearance (Ethics number: NWU-00783-18-A2). See Annexure B for the ethics approval certificate.
- Permission was sought from the North-West Provincial Department of Education to conduct the research (see Annexure C).
- Permission was sought from the principal and school governing body of school where the research was conducted stating the researcher's intentions, to show that the SGB acted as gatekeepers as well (see Annexure D).
- Permission was sought from the research data gatekeeper committee of the university where the research was conducted for the students and staff member to participate, (see Annexure E).
- Each participant voluntarily signed an informed consent letter (see Annexure A) and confirmed their participation orally. The consent letter encapsulated the researcher's intentions, and they were asked for the teachers involved to be granted permission to participate.
- The data generated is stored on Google Drive, and I locked the hard copies of all data in my office in a storage cabinet. Both are access controlled environments that require either a password or a key to be accessed.

Trust, transparency and honesty are some of the values of action research (Wood, 2020). We thus aimed to work in a socially responsible and ethical manner within our group. All the participants were invited to contribute their ideas to our way of working throughout the study. I discuss anonymity and confidentiality next.

1.8.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

As part of the informed consent agreement, all responses were kept confidential as far as possible by using a numbering system for the participants when I refer to them in the research reporting. I also included a clause in the informed consent letter that asked of the participants to keep the private details that emerged from our action learning group meetings private to protect their fellow participants. The reporting done in this study thus had to be clear, understandable, and true to the knowledge that emerged from our action learning group sessions. In the following section I provide an explanation of how the chapters of this study were divided to ensure coherent and logical reporting.

1.9 Division of chapters

This study is reported on through the article structure. At the institution where I am enrolled for my doctorate degree a student can submit a dissertation as “a single research article or a set of published articles or unpublished manuscripts” (North-West University, 2016, p. 1). Research by Thomas (2015) indicated that following the article structure for a thesis holds the advantages of easing the dissemination of the research as the articles are ready for publication and it authenticates the research process as academic research relies on the researcher to write concise and well-thought articles. The following serves as an outline of each chapter and scholarly manuscript:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction to the study:** This chapter served as an overview of the study, briefly explaining the guiding and secondary research questions, the rationale for the study, the paradigms chosen, the theoretical framework, the research process and methodology, and ethical and validity considerations.
- **Chapter 2: Four scholarly manuscripts**
 - ✓ **Manuscript 1: Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning.** This conceptual paper included a theoretical reasoning of how the different concepts and models relating to social justice in education, social justice praxis, critical service-learning, a critical transformative paradigm, action learning theory and contrapuntal reading analysis can be merged into one theoretical framework that can underpin critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis in teacher education. This was necessary to develop a theoretical framework for the empirical work that followed. The purpose of this manuscript was to provide a theoretical framework for the study.

- ✓ **Manuscript 2: Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis: Setting the stage for critical service-learning in teacher education.** The focus of this article was to explain the imaginings of the participants regarding their experiences of social injustices and what they envision a socially just education system to be. I also provided a discussion of how a participative teaching tool such as critical service-learning can be the vehicle through which stakeholders in education can collaborate to develop social justice praxis. The research questions I aimed to answer with this article were:
 - *What do we understand social justice, inclusion in education and social justice praxis to be?*
 - *How can stakeholders in education openly and collaboratively engage to enable authentic learning experiences?*
- ✓ **Manuscript 3: Transforming service-learning towards social justice praxis: Guidelines for bridging knowledge cultures.** This empirical article comprises evidence-based and contextualised guidelines for critical service-learning programmes in higher education to enhance community-university learning opportunities. The guidelines were developed by the participants in our action learning group with the aim of transforming critical service-learning to be the bridge between knowledge cultures and social justice praxis. The research questions I aimed to answer with this article were:
 - *How can teachers develop skills to teach without fear in a socially just manner?*
 - *What guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process?*
- ✓ **Manuscript 4: Learning to facilitate community-based research: Guidelines from a novice researcher:** This article is a personal account of my learning of how to become a skilled facilitator of an action learning group in community-based research (CBR). The lessons shared are from my reflective journal I kept during the study and reflections from participants that were shared during our check-in and check-out sessions. I decided to include this article as I realised that the process of facilitating a participatory research group was not easy, and the success of the research lies in the knowledge, skills, and values of the group facilitator. In a way, this personal account of my learning answered the question regarding the guidelines we co-generated for CSL to foster SJP as facilitators play a very important role during CBR-projects.
- **Chapter 3: Conclusion.** This chapter serves as a summary of the study, emphasising the most important aspects and key findings. I also provide a reflection on my learning, I share possible contributions of the study, and provide suggestions for further research.

1.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter I introduced the study, provided an explanation of the key terms and background, discussed the rationale for the study, and identified the research problem. The quotation that introduces the study highlighted the lack of diversity, social injustice, and the lack of social education as the three major challenges that educators and learners experience in the contemporary South African schooling system I suggest the collaborative development and implementation of a critical service-learning component to address these challenges through a PALAR approach. Rooted in a critical paradigm, action learning theory and contrapuntal reading analysis as theoretical framework, and aims to answer the guiding research question, namely *“How can social justice praxis for teacher education in the South African context be developed through critical service-learning?”*

The guiding research question served as basis from which secondary research questions were negotiated in our action learning group and it informed our vision of the study. I explained the methodological considerations which included the PALAR research design, the purposeful participant recruitment strategy, the reflective arts-based data-generation methods, the content data analysis strategy, the validity measures, ethical considerations, and the chapter division of the study. In the following chapter I present the scholarly manuscripts comprise the body of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

FOUR SCHOLARLY MANUSCRIPTS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the four scholarly manuscripts⁶ of this study. Each of the publications were conceptualised to address one of the research questions the group set out to answer. Although the manuscripts do share an overarching theme of concepts related to social justice praxis, critical service-learning, and participatory community-based action research, each academic publication is an independent manuscript. I was the principal author for each of these publications and my promoters helped me to conceptualise, write and refine the articles.

Manuscript 1 is published in a scholarly book and manuscript 4 is published in an accredited journal, while Manuscripts 2 and 3 are still under review in accredited journals. I provide proof of the publications and submissions in the Annexures F-I of this thesis. The following serves as a summary of compilation of the manuscripts:

2.1.1 Manuscript 1

- Full reference: Schoonen, A., Wood, L. & Kruger, C. (2021). Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning. In C.C. Wolhuter (Ed.), *Education studies in South Africa: The quest for relevance, rigour and restructuring* (pp. 195-224). AOSIS. <https://doi.org/10/4102/aosis.2020.BK155>

2.1.2 Manuscript 2

- Title of unpublished manuscript: Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis: Setting the stage for critical service-learning in teacher education
- Submitted to: Journal of Education
- Manuscript ID: 1547 (see Annexure G)
- Date of submission: December 2021

⁶ The formatting and reference style of each publication was done according to the publishing guidelines of the journal. The complete reference list at the end of Chapter 3 of this study contains a reference list that included the references from the academic publication in APA 7th format.

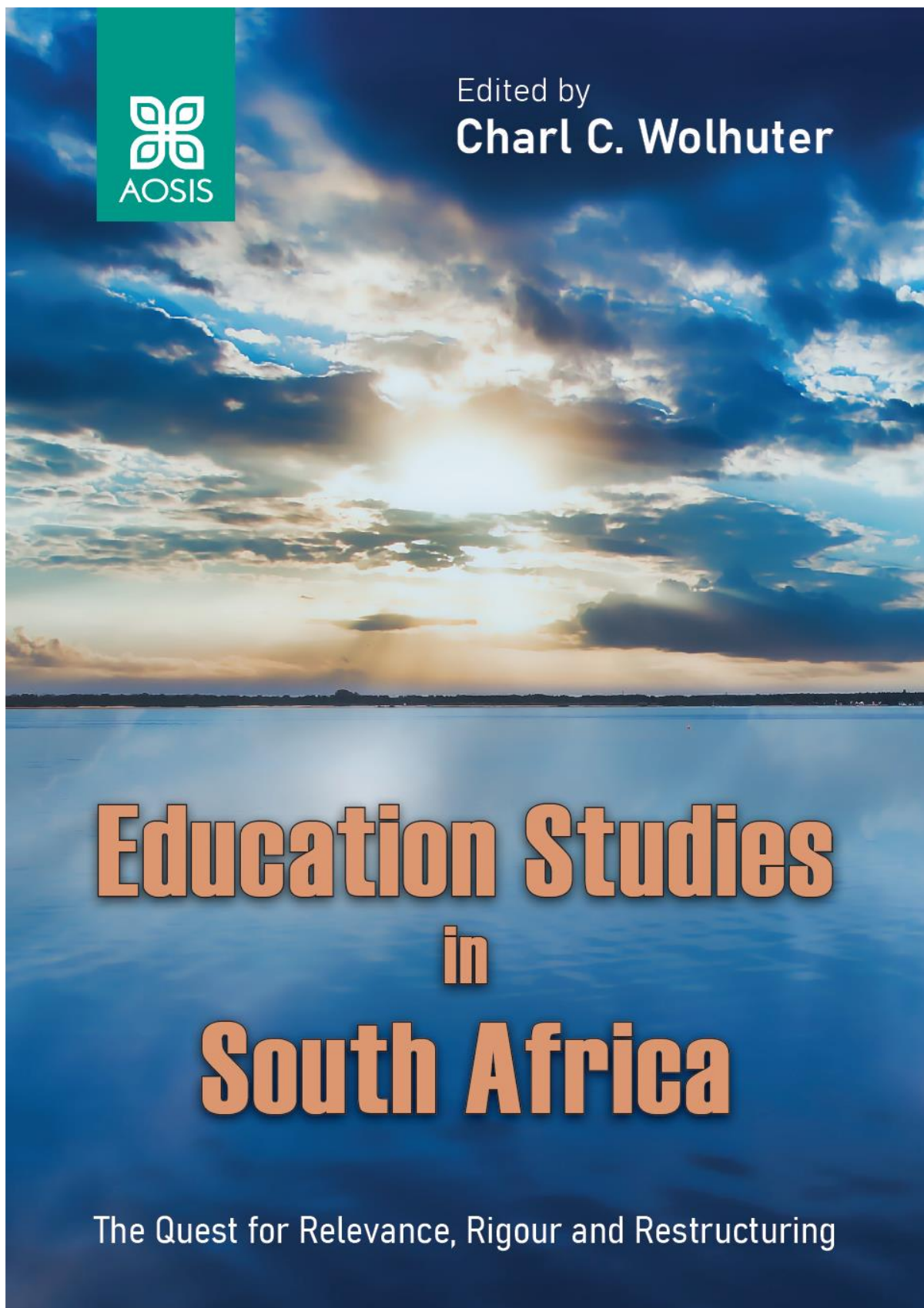
2.1.3 Manuscript 3

- Title of unpublished manuscript: Learning to facilitate community-based research: Guidelines from a novice researcher
- Submitted to: International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
- Manuscript ID: 1547421 (see Annexure H)
- Date of submission: December 2021
- Status of article: Accepted by editor for peer review

2.1.4 Manuscript 4

- Full reference: Schoonen, A. Wood, L. & Kruger, C. (2021). Developing facilitation skills for community-based participatory research: Reflections of a novice researcher, *Educational Research for Social Change*,10(1), 16-32,. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2221-4070/2021/v10i1a2>

2.2 Manuscript 1: Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning



Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning

Andri Schoonen

COMBER Research Niche,
English Home Language for Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Education, North-West University,
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CHAPTER 8

Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning

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Chapter summary

The primary role of education (on all levels) is to help learners understand the world that we live in and equip them with skills and knowledge to enable them to reach their potential within society, including the ability to live peaceably with others. Yet, our programmes in teacher education continue to foreground content knowledge and the transfer of pedagogical skills in a vacuum, where students do not engage with current social issues or experiences outside of their own middle-class reality. Living in a country like South Africa, where the gap between haves and have-nots is the largest in the world, this lack of critical engagement with social justice issues is a blatant weakness in pre-service teacher education programmes.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how this problem could be addressed, through incorporating critical service-learning (CSL) as a pedagogical strategy to help student teachers develop social justice praxis. Grounded in literature, the inclusion of a CSL component into teacher education programmes will prepare better students for teaching in a world where social inequities impact negatively on the schooling of children, requiring the teacher to deal with myriad psycho-social barriers to learning related to poverty. An emerging framework for the development of social justice praxis through grounding in the principles and mechanisms of CSL will be discussed.

The development of social justice praxis is important not only in developing countries, but also in the global North as the shifting human demographic and other social factors lead to the emergence of similar problems in developed countries, resulting in unequal access to quality education and/or less success within the schooling system. This situation demands teachers who are socially aware and sensitive to such issues,

empathic in their approach and able to adopt inclusive and socially just education practices in diverse teaching settings.

To be true to the teaching–research symbiosis as a hallmark feature of a tertiary institution, educational research needs to inform teacher education programmes. Student teachers who will practise in an increasingly diverse and unjust society need to be given the opportunity to engage with social justice issues to enable the development of contextually relevant practice. This chapter outlines just how CSL as community-based research can be used to attain this end.

Keywords: service-learning; social justice; teacher education; collaborative learning; diversity; social justice praxis.

Introduction

I believe that education is the civil rights issue of our generation. And if you care about promoting opportunity and reducing inequality, the classroom is the place to start. Great teaching is about so much more than education; it is a daily fight for social justice. (Duncan 2009:1)

This quote is from a speech delivered by Secretary Arne Duncan during an address at the Summer Seminar for Teachers at the University of Virginia (Duncan 2009). With these words, Duncan stressed the immeasurable value of school classrooms as an ideal place for the pursuit for social justice in education. I agree that great teaching is indeed a fight for social justice. However, as a young, white, female academic teaching English home language to pre-service teachers specialising in early childhood education, I often witness a lack of awareness and acknowledgement of diversity, especially where students also come from privileged backgrounds. Within South African schools, specifically those in disadvantaged communities, many poverty-related social injustices prevail. This situation gives rise to significant barriers to learning, as the consequences of living in such adverse circumstances enter into the classroom with the child. For example, children, about 60% in the 0–6-year-old cohort (National Development Agency [NDA] 2012) may come to school on an empty stomach (The World Bank 2018), have limited access to facilities for personal hygiene (UNICEF 2017) and may be experiencing different forms of personal trauma at home (Munene 2015:1–6; NDA 2012). Added to the problems children face, many schools lack teaching resources and have to contend with poor infrastructure (Rousseau 2015). These factors often contribute to high absenteeism and lack of engagement, on the part of learners (Hlalele 2012:111–118; UNICEF 2017). Yet, many pre- and in-

service teachers come from privileged backgrounds where they have not yet experienced social injustice (or the consequences thereof) and may be unaware of the realities that many children face daily to obtain education, a basic human right of all citizens (Van Deventer, Van der Westhuizen & Potgieter 2015:24–35). However, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) stipulates that newly qualified teachers must ‘understand diversity in the South African context for teaching’ (DHET 2015:62).

I understand social justice praxis in education, a key concept in my argument, to be the quest to develop, through ongoing critical reflection, educational environments that foster diverse thinking and celebrate diversity (De Sousa Santos 2014). Critical service-learning (CSL) is one way of mediating critical reflection on social justice issues to develop a social justice praxis. Judgement informed by *critical reflection* on own previous assumptions as well as cultural, affective and normative considerations could advance social justice praxis (Rousseau 2015; Tan 2017:988–1002). Critical service-learning proceeds from a transformative paradigm that advocates social change, works to reduce power struggles, develops meaningful relationships between all participants and enables students to view themselves as influencers of social change through their teaching. Through critical reflection on their experiences, the participants become more aware of, and sensitive to, the social justice issues that impact on the learners and their education and can make appropriate accommodations in their teaching to minimise the barriers and provide appropriate support (Kember et al. 2008:369–379; Mitchell 2015:20–28).

However, the failing South African schooling system requires a critical review of teacher education programmes as they currently ‘set teachers up for failure long before they even enter the classroom’ (Smuts 2018:1). The contribution of in-service (practising) teachers has been set aside for too long (Kwenda, Adendorff & Mosito 2017:139–159), and higher education institutions (HEIs) have neglected the opportunity to develop teacher education programmes that are more socially relevant by excluding these contributions (Cherrington 2017:72–86). Furthermore, the absence of learning opportunities for in-service teachers for continued practice development contributes to a low morale and a lack of feeling in support for teachers (Mashau & Mutshaeni 2015:428–434). The focus of teacher education should not only rest on the acquisition of pedagogical content for pre-service teachers but should also

include a space for critical dialogue, co-creating knowledge and refocussing pre- and in-service teachers' development on learning to teach as agents of social change (Higgs 2016:87–101). South Africans need a teaching community (consisting of pre- and in-service teachers on various levels) that is dynamic, critical, engaged and relevant, and the most important is conversation with one another to develop praxis that will enable learning (Cherrington 2017:72–86).

The need for coherent and relevant teaching content and techniques is long recognised (Mashau & Mutshaeni 2015:428–434), yet, hardly visible in current programmes for teacher education. Currently, educational theories and the actual teaching practice in South Africa are polarised (Benade 2015:42–54; Ragpot 2017:a501). Programmes are still developed and presented in a contextual vacuum, mostly by academics from privileged backgrounds with little or no experience of poverty, social injustices or the lived experiences of those they are teaching. Service-learning is incorporated into some programmes for teacher education; however, the aim and assessment thereof are not aligned with the educational purpose and processes of CSL (Petersen & Petker 2017:a479). There are only few reports on successful integration of service-learning in teacher education programmes in South Africa (Petersen 2018; Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135). Internationally, the inclusion of service-learning components into teacher education results in more engagement and participation by student teachers, contributing to the improvement of teacher education practices (Mitchell 2015:20–28).

Drawing from the successes of other service-learning programmes and the above ideas of developing social justice praxis for teacher education to make it more relevant to the South African context, the guiding research question for this chapter is: *how can critical service-learning in pre- and in-service teacher education enable the development of a social justice praxis?* I will argue for the development of a shared vision for a service-learning project rooted in the principles and values of CSL and social justice praxis through participatory methods. Firstly, I will explain the concept of social justice praxis and the role of CSL in teacher education. Next, I will present an argument as to how CSL could be used to promote social justice praxis in pre- and in-service teaching. The significance of the conceptual framework I present is that it has the potential to operationalise the theory about social justice through a service-learning model by providing opportunity for collaborative action. These

actions must inform teacher education by reflecting on learning from real-world experiences, so as to develop a socially just educational praxis.

Social justice praxis as conceptual framework

It is not unusual for the term 'social justice' to appear in policy documents or to be used in discussions about diversity and equality (Arao & Clemens 2013). However, it is difficult to provide an exact definition of the term. The absence of social justice implies that people have lesser social value because their person, abilities and living environment seem inferior to those of others (Manstead 2018:267–291). Yet, social justice can also be used in a positive denotation to imply equality (Rambiritch 2018:46–60). In the following section the interpretation of social justice for this chapter will be discussed.

Defining social justice praxis

To understand social justice praxis, we first need to determine what **social justice** within the South African context refers to. As a developing country, South Africa faces challenges in providing all citizens with access to food, housing, safety and quality health care (The World Bank 2018). Secondary to this, South Africa also faces challenges and inequalities pertaining access to basic, as well as higher education and job opportunities (Lorraine & Molapo 2014:900–907). South African citizens should also enjoy the freedom of a non-discriminatory society in a post-apartheid South Africa; however, many people still experience inequalities and discrimination in their daily lives because of the economic, social, racial and political consequences of years of racialised oppression under the apartheid regime (Phasa & Moichela 2011). South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, according to the World Bank, with polarisation between the advantaged and disadvantaged being the highest globally (The World Bank 2018).

People who are seen as disadvantaged within the South African context are people who are affected by chronic poverty, poor health care, limited or no access to education; are viewed as illiterate because they cannot express their thoughts in written English (global language) (Bennett 2007:151–169), live in rural or underdeveloped neighbourhoods; and are unemployed or work for minimum wage (The World Bank 2018). Consequently, people who were previously (pre-1994) seen

as advantaged (mostly white people) disregarded people who were disadvantaged (mostly people of colour) as helpless, unknowledgeable and the underclass of South Africa. Sadly, these perceptions still tend to prevail in South Africa today, including in education (Spaull 2013). The disregard of people living with disadvantages is consistent with abyssal thinking (De Sousa Santos 2014). Abyssal thinking refers to the socio-political and prominent divide between the global North (developed countries) and the global South (underdeveloped countries), with the global South being viewed as the 'side of the line that vanishes and becomes non-existent' (De Sousa Santos 2014:189). South Africa, as a hybrid of developed North and underdeveloped South, also displays this divide between 'relevant' and 'irrelevant people' (Phasa & Moichela 2011, De Lange, Khau & Athiemoolam 2014:748–766). Spaull (2013) explains that the South African public-school system is still split into two. The smaller and better performing system accommodates 20% – 25% of South African learners, also the wealthiest. The majority (75% – 80%) of learners have limited access to educational resources, and thus the divide is perpetuated and worsened over time, as these learners are unable, for the most part, to escape from the cycle of poverty (Moses, Van den Berg & Rich 2017). As a marginalised section of the community (parents and learners), they are seldom included in policy decisions (Botman 2016:48–67; Department of Education 1996; Teise 2013). Such a divide in public education is unacceptable as learning and living in a marginalised group further increase inequality and decrease connectedness (Botman 2016:48–67), resulting in a form of epistemicide (De Sousa Santos 2005, 2014). Bennett (2007:151–169) explains that epistemicide occurs when knowledge based on ideologies different to the dominant epistemology is silenced; such knowledge remains untaught in schools, universities and society. The continuous disregard of people because of their socio-economic status results in the rejection of their knowledge, skills and suggestions for the improvement of education and other social issues. Consequently, this leads to the development of learned helplessness – the repeated exposure to uncontrollable events (Maier & Seligman 1976:3–46). Learned helplessness results in decreased resilience and lack of self-determination and instils notions of reliance (Mohanty, Pradhan & Jena 2015:885–895). The people who are seen as the *underclass* in South African education are those who do not hold 'valid' or 'accredited' qualifications, causing an unspoken divide between who can contribute to improvement in education and those who cannot – resulting in feelings and stereotypes of subordination (Jansen 2009; Botman 2016:48–67).

The South African history of colonisation since 1652, the years of British authority from 1806, the apartheid-regime from 1948 and the years of democracy and recovering from apartheid since 1994 (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Beukes 2017:3) perpetuated this abyssal worldview in the governing, policies and practices of the country (Ntuli & Van der Westhuizen 2017). Within South African education, the experiences, local knowledge and abilities of people are still viewed as irrelevant and unvalued, which is not an uncommon phenomenon in many societies the world over (Owen 2016). As the deliberate exclusion of knowledge based on the idea of social class and superiority conforms to colonial notions, our education system creates further inequalities and isolation (Cochran-Smith 2010; Bondy et al. 2017). Hence, social justice, in terms of education and for the purpose of this chapter, refers to the advocacy for acknowledging and infusing our education programmes with diverse knowledge, experiences and worldviews to create equal, open, peaceable and enabling learning spaces (De Sousa Santos 2014; Van Deventer et al. 2015:24–35).

The next main concept that will be discussed is **praxis**. Freire (2005 [1970:51]) defined praxis as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to change it'. The combination of reflection and action is what differentiates praxis from practice. *Reflection* on action enables the generation of new knowledge informed by thinking through making connections with existing knowledge and experience. This allows us to develop new understandings and imaginings of the world and our place in it (Austin & Callen 2018). *Action* as part of praxis refers to change that advocates for social transformation, informed by the reflection on experiences and knowledge (Mezirow 1990). The aim of praxis is to generate new, authentic, socially relevant and contextualised theories (Botman 2016:48–67; Furman 2012).

Therefore, **social justice praxis** can be described as critical reflection on experiences of social (in)justice to inform relevant, sustainable and contextualised action (change and transformation) (Van Deventer et al. 2015:24–35). Critical reflection in this context refers to challenging the authenticity of pre-determined assumptions (Mezirow 1990) of diversity, social injustices and presumptions of people from different backgrounds. Critical teaching praxis grounded in social justice is more than just being aware of social justice; it is rooted in a social justice intent and informed by reflexive thinking about happenings in the schools and classrooms, understanding 'competing agendas', making educational decisions and the formation

of relationships with colleagues, learners, families, communities and social groups (Cochran-Smith 2010:454). Through the development of social justice praxis in education, power relations can be made more equal, access to education widened and local knowledge acknowledged and valued (Ntuli & Van der Westhuizen 2017). For knowledge to be useful, relevant and responsive to situated needs, it has to be generated by those living in specific contexts, as Botman (2016:51) suggests: 'Teacher education programmes should prepare teachers to engage in processes of knowledge and knowledge creation with their learners and communities'. Therefore, I advocate for the advancement of social justice praxis for teacher education in South Africa.

The significance of social justice praxis in South African education

Stakeholders in South African education are calling for more relevant and socially just education practices (Botman 2016:48–67; Geduld & Sathorar 2016), as many of the global approaches are not suitable for developing countries (Spaull 2013). Education, as one of the public service sectors whose mandate is to provide quality education to all, irrespective of the level thereof, lends the opportunity for educators to advocate for social justice in their classrooms and lecture halls. In South Africa, equal and free access to basic public education (grades 1–9 of public schooling) is mandated as a basic human right (South Africa 1996). The right to free and quality education necessitates teachers to be critical and reflective about their own beliefs and bias to enable them to be teachers who infuse their teaching with relevant and contextualised knowledges and social justice praxis (Bondy et al. 2017). Currently, South African pre- and in-service teachers seldom (if at all) partake in opportunities to reflect on their practice and to discuss what they learn through experiences (Geduld & Sathorar 2016) even although reflective practices have shown to be advantageous (De Lange et al. 2014:748–766; Petersen 2018; Petersen & Petker 2017:a479). The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) policy stipulates that teachers should learn *from* practice, *in* practice and *for* practice (DHET 2015), although the provisions for this learning are not fully utilised by current teacher education institutions (Geduld & Sathorar 2016). Higher education institutions are critiqued for implying transformation through technical compliance (meeting requirements on paper but not in actual practice) in their teacher education programmes, rather than drawing from the experiences and

knowledge the students and community teachers bring to class (Maistry 2011). Wilmot (2017) notes that the cause of poor teaching in South African schools lies with the undemocratic and untransformed teacher education system that produces teachers. Technical compliance should not be the objective for meeting transformational and socially relevant needs in education, as South Africa is in dire need of contextualised teaching programmes (Pillay 2017).

I believe technical compliance with policy as opposed to real transformation in teacher education programmes contributes to the disconnect between theory and practice in South African education. With the traditional banking method of learning (Freire 2005 [1970]), theoretical assumptions inform the practices of teachers. In South Africa, many teachers enter practice reliant on educational theories and with limited experience of practical teaching, especially in contexts different from their own background (Chambers & Lavery 2012). The reliance on theory can be because of the overemphasis on theoretical underpinnings about teaching rather than the contextualisation, adaption and development of theories for education informed by authentic teaching experiences (De Lange et al. 2014; Romm 2018). To enable the development of educational social justice praxis, teachers need to understand and question their own presumptions and limits of their knowledge to develop and strengthen their own practice (Butin 2015). In relation to social justice praxis, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identified three schools of thinking within democratic education:

- *Conservative-individualistic focus*: emphasis on individual responsibility and accountability in reaching own goals for education.
- *Progressive-participative focus*: emphasis on collaboration and contributing to general civic and societal goals.
- *Leftist justice-orientation for societal change*: emphasis on advocating for justice and delivering of critique to enable social and societal change.

The experiences, realities and knowledge (or lack thereof) will determine the view an individual has on democratic education, consequently informing their pedagogical practices (Dover 2015). Teachers and teacher education programmes that advocate for a sole, universalised and global teacher preparation programme that will advance their individual goals of democracy are uninformed about teaching in a diverse society and the importance of social justice (De Lange et al. 2014:748–

766). Hence, holding a single worldview and frame of reference as the only truth limits the opportunity for learning from and with other people, as is the case currently in South African education (Romm 2018).

Diversity, social education and social injustices

South Africa according to the constitution (South Africa 1996) is a multilingual, multicultural, multireligious, multinational, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, country, where freedom of choice is paramount (The World Bank 2018). I believe there is no singular definition of South African citizen. Nevertheless, as a white, Afrikaans girl born in the early stages of transitioning from Apartheid to a democratic South Africa, I grew up in a privileged middle-class environment where it was common for people to be stereotyped for example: *illiterate black people; confused and impoverished coloured people; rich and materialistic Indian people* – and they were terms commonly used in the social spaces I frequented. For many people these stereotypes became part of how they perceive themselves and other people around them (Jansen 2009). I experienced (and still experience) a challenge with being white in South Africa; it is generally assumed by other white and non-white people that you resonate with the mentioned stereotypes; and other white people experience this as well (Romm 2018). Since I can remember, I have rejected these stereotypes as they are outdated and unacceptable in 21st-century educational spheres, as literature also suggests (Arao & Clemens 2013; Botman 2016:48–67). Schools are the ‘contexts in which social class inequalities are reinforced’ (Manstead 2018:271). Not only do such predispositions favour the learners from middle-class backgrounds in terms of social expectations, a recent study indicates they also negatively affect the academic performance of learners from low-income backgrounds (Darnon et al. 2018). Yet, we are still educating for a homogeneous, idealistic context where all learners speak the same language and operate from a middle-class set of values and life experiences. The exclusion of locally generated knowledge and skills for teacher education in South Africa leads to further isolation from the lived reality on the ground. Consequently, this enlarges the gap between the curriculum for teacher education and the realities of teaching in South African communities.

The socio-economic circumstances, living spaces, political views and access to services for people living in South Africa are very diverse (Scheepers 2010), which suggests that South Africans will have different lived realities. A person with limited

experience with diversity is more likely to develop a myopic and isolated understanding of the world. Chisholm (2015) proposes that the myopic discourse in education should be questioned as it disempowers democratic practices that challenge conditions of oppression and exploitation in education. Therefore, the citizens of South Africa cannot afford to be taught in an education system that is rooted in a singular worldview (Francis & Le Roux 2011). Teacher education institutions cannot risk that their programmes exclude the local knowledge and experiences of the diverse communities they serve. If the prevalence of epistemic knowledge (refer section 'Defining social justice praxis') in teacher education continues to enlarge the gap between theory and practice, it will reduce the quality of the teachers HEIs produce, consequently withholding young learners from learning experiences that are contextualised and advance the notion of social justice (Botman 2016:48–67; Chisholm 2015; Sayed 2016).

Many South African teachers report insufficient preparation for teaching in multicultural and diverse teaching landscapes during their initial teacher training (Ezeonachwusi, Chimbala-Kalenga & Jaffe 2016). Some teachers also indicate that even though they had experience with social injustices such as prevailing discrimination, poverty and inequalities at schools during their initial teacher training, they feel uncomfortable and inadequate to teach learners who face such challenges (Sayed 2016). This is because of their own lack of social education and pressure to conform to societal expectations (Sayed 2016). The often-unspoken norms and expectations of society determine socially (un)acceptable behaviours that influence the decisions we make (World Health Organization [WHO] 2009), including ideas on acknowledging diversity and whom we should engage with (Jansen 2009). Discomfort with diversity and the lack of skills to teach in diverse circumstances lead to further segregation and disconnect with the realities of other people. Unsurprisingly, this results in inaccurate dispositions (Bondy et al. 2017), further inequalities and prejudices in the understanding of access to basic human rights (Manstead 2018:267–291), of which education on all its levels is the biggest (The World Bank 2018). Apart from the immediate implications, further isolated 'existence' of people in a shared geographical space (South Africa) limits the opportunities for honest and respectful sharing of knowledge about sensitive and controversial issues (Arao & Clemens 2013) and encourages discriminating behaviour.

Role of teachers and teacher education for developing social justice praxis

Cevher-Kalburan (2014) suggests that teacher education programmes should not only include experiences of teaching at the schools close to the university or institution, but in the broader communities as well, including schools situated in unfamiliar contexts for the pre-service teachers. Teaching practice should also be informed by the lived realities of community schools, which should serve as guide for theoretical underpinnings in education. 'Post-abyssal thinking' (De Sousa Santos 2014:57) requires a person to construct knowledge in such way that it enables social justice through the inclusion of various epistemologies. I believe the basis for generating socially relevant knowledge and theories for teacher education in South Africa is to acknowledge that there are myriad experiences to learn from within our diverse communities of teacher education.

The role of teachers and teacher education to enable the development of social justice praxis relies on the acknowledgement and acceptance of diversity. I will explain the acknowledgement of diversity by drawing on contrapuntal reading analysis (CRA), a term used in music to indicate two harmonious melodies played at once (Bilgin 2016:134–146). Edward Said, a philosopher and scholar in the field of postcolonialism, developed the idea of CRA (Jansen 2015 & Hess 2016) to explain the need for inter-existence of the oppressor and the oppressed. Contrapuntal reading analysis is rooted in the notion that people within society, with its social groupings, should transform themselves and their livelihood by living interdependently (Bilgin 2016:134–146), tapping into the knowledge and skills they can collaboratively create. Said (2007) advocated that – as different melodies are played simultaneously in music and deliver harmonious sounds – people with different worldviews, ways of living and experiences should not only coexist, but should work in harmony to generate knowledge by learning from each other's realities. 'Connectedness' and intertwined knowledge are important to reflect and learn from experiences.

With regard to the role of teachers and teacher education to develop social justice praxis, the shared experiences of teachers from various backgrounds and different ecologies of knowledge should inform teacher education. By integrating local knowledge with propositional theories pre- and in-service teachers could be more

prepared to teach learners whose realities are indifferent from their own (Sayed 2016) and develop social justice praxis for their own teaching practice.

Although the above discussion answers the question of what knowledge should be included in a teacher education programme, the burning question remains the 'how' part. In the next section, CSL as theoretical framework will be discussed in attempt to provide some insight into this question.

What is critical service-learning in the South African teacher education context?

Critical service-learning is a transformative pedagogical strategy (McKay 2010) stemming from Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory with a focus on experience, reflection and action on reflection (Lund 2018). In this section I will discuss CSL as a pedagogical tool that can advance a social justice praxis and comment on the current practices of CSL in higher education.

Historical development of service-learning as pedagogical tool

Service-learning as a pedagogical tool for universities originated in the early 1940s to 1960s in America (Kenny 2011). Traditionally, dictatorial (autocratic) decisions were made on the type of service to be rendered without consultation with the party (usually community members in an underserved setting) who was in need of the said service (Butin 2015). Academic courses and service-learning projects were often not related to each other and service-learning was seen as a time-consuming task and an *add-on* to course outcomes (Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135). Feedback from community partners in service-learning projects also indicated that community members did not see themselves as vulnerable or that in need of the services of universities to sustain their lives (Petri 2015). This type of feedback can be because of universities overstressing *service* to communities and neglecting to consider the service, in the form of *contextualised learning*, the communities could render to them.

In more recent developments of service-learning, the focus is placed on the two-fold meaning of the word – there is *service in learning* and *learning from service*. Typically, the participants of a service-learning project comprise university students and community members who are both receivers and givers of service; simultaneously both are learners and teachers in the project (Mitchell 2015:20–28).

Including service-learning as pedagogical tool means learning becomes more collaborative, critical and educational for all parties (Petersen 2018) as participants become engaged in the search for academic depth and relevance (Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135). For many public service disciplines globally, especially health care and education, service-learning has become a requirement of degree programmes as students become influencers of social change by drawing on their ‘experiences of service to address and respond to injustice in communities’ (Mitchell 2015:21). The following section provides a rationale for service-learning as part of a transformative paradigm, which enables social change as explained above.

Rationalising critical service-learning as part of a transformative theoretical framework

Rooted in the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (Freire 1998) who advocates social change through engagement and power sharing (Clark & Nugent 2011) as the ‘correct method of approaching reality’ (Freire 2005:20), CSL is also very much rooted in the ideology that the community’s goals should be accomplished, highlighting reciprocity (Tinkler et al. 2014). In recent times service-learning encouraged the general academia to adopt it as a pedagogical tool to enable engaged scholarship (Butin 2006; Petersen 2018). Although there are many definitions and applications of CSL (Chong 2014), the four principles of service-learning, namely respect, reciprocity, relevance and reflection, provide guidance for service-learning projects (Butin 2010; Hammersley 2012). Table 1 provides an explanation to these principles.

TABLE 1: The four principles of service-learning and implications thereof for teacher education.

Principle of service-learning and description thereof (Butin 2010)	Implications for teacher education
Respect: Outside participants should remember to respect the communities’ way of life, circumstances, abilities, knowledge and skills.	Participating pre-service teachers and academics should know that they enter the communities to learn and not to criticise the local knowledge of the participating teachers.
Reciprocity: Service-learning components should be mutually beneficial to the involved parties.	There is of course a danger of over-exhausting communities, and therefore there should be very careful consideration in planning the service-learning component always to be the benefit of the pre- and in-service teachers.

Reflection: Participants reflect on their learning experiences while engaging in service-learning activities. Reflections should include reflecting critically on learning and on the service-learning component itself.	The participating teachers in community schools, the pre-service teachers and academics reflect on service-learning activities and share their reflections with one another to generate new knowledge based on authentic experiences.
Relevance: Service-learning activities should contribute to a deeper understanding, experience and reflection on the academic course that it is planned for. The relevance of the service-learning component to the community is included in this principle (Bowie & Cassim 2016).	This echoes the requirement set out by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) (2006) that service-learning should be 'relevant in improving the quality of life for the community' while achieving the learning outcomes of the course or module.

Critical service-learning experiences are based on the principle of co-investigation by participants who subsequently lead to power sharing and equal contributions by all (Butin 2006; Clark & Nugent 2011; Doerr 2011). This echoes the reciprocal principle of service-learning. There is mutual benefit for all stakeholders in participating in the service-learning experience and it prevents the possible 'server' and 'being served' power sharing related to volunteerism (Clark & Nugent 2011:10).

Mitchell (2008) identifies three key elements of CSL as social change orientation, working towards the redistribution of power and the development of authentic relationships. The element of *social change orientation* refers to reflective learning and individuals challenging their own stereotypes and attaining social change in the communities. This entails that participants must be guided towards understanding the possibilities and consequences of service rather than merely delivering acts of service without conscious reflection thereof (Mitchell 2008).

Working to redistribute power entails the disempowered and non-dominant members in the society to regain their voices and be encouraged to share their knowledge and practices (Bruce & Brown 2010; Pompa 2002). This is often one of the biggest critiques to service-learning activities (Bruce 2013:35) and unless effort is made to restore power imbalances where the community is usually portrayed as the minority group; CSL will remain in the ecology of server-served relationships.

The *development of authentic relationships* refers to the reciprocal principle of service-learning (Butin 2010) where all participants collaborate to identify needs and the structure of the service-learning activities. The different roles of communities,

researchers and students in one project are based on the way the roles connect to each other to form a complete cycle (Mitchell 2008). This forms a sense of interdependence within the group dynamics and each participant is equal in their role and contribution to the group. Collaborative and equal relationships do not mean that the participants need to *place themselves in each other's shoes*; it merely means that there will be a greater understanding of each other and being valued (Bruce 2013; Mitchell 2008).

Mitchell (2008) further identified that each of these abovementioned elements addresses two components of service-learning: the community component (participant teachers and schools in communities; site where practical experiences take place) and the classroom component (students/pre-service teachers and researcher as participants; reflection and theoretical development of service-learning components). Figure 1 shows a visual presentation of Mitchell's (2008) interpretation of CSL.

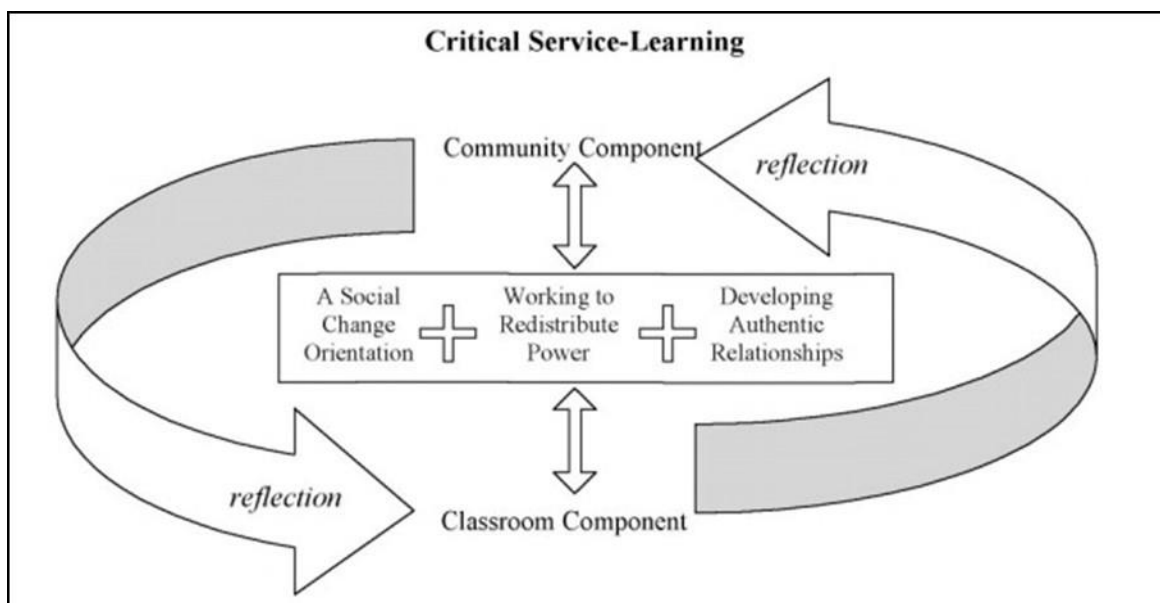


FIGURE 1: Visual representation of critical service-learning.

Source: Mitchell 2008:53.

As Figure 1 illustrates, the three elements of CSL are central and inform the community and classroom components of service-learning experiences. Although reflection as principle of service-learning is incorporated into Mitchell's model, the other three elements are still missing. I envision the principles of service-learning (4 Rs), respect, relevance, reflection and reciprocity (Butin 2010), to be incorporated

with the model of Mitchell, which will be presented in the section 'The envisioned framework for developing social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning' of this chapter. In the next section, I will provide a brief overview of the current practices of service-learning within teacher education.

Overview of past and current practices with regard to service-learning within education

Internationally, service-learning components form part of academic and credit-bearing coursework for disciplines that serve the public sector, including public education (Petri 2015). Sustainable development, reciprocal relationships between participants and the closing of the gap between theory and practice remain the prominent motivations for the inclusion of service-learning into graduate programmes (Mitchell 2015:20–28). The ethical engagement with communities has become crucial for service-learning projects, as the validity of service-learning in the mid 1900s was questionable because the aim of 'banking' knowledge in communities was of more importance and service-learning soon became charity work rather than academically motivated engagement (Butin 2010).

In South African education, service-learning has taken on many forms since its initial introduction into teacher education in the early 2000s (Mouton & Wildschut 2005), with the pressure on HEIs to deliver more socially engaged programmes (O'Brien 2005). During this time, service-learning programmes were primarily conceptualised by the academic providers (universities) with little engagement and decision-making on the part of the communities who received services (Mouton & Wildschut 2005). Since the inclusion of service-learning in the MRTEQ policy (DHET 2015) it developed into engaging and collaborative learning experiences for all involved parties (Petersen & Petker 2017:a479) within South African education. The envisioned future for service-learning by academics in South African education (Petersen 2018), especially for teacher education, is for programmes that will enable collaboration between academics, community partners, researchers and the governmental departments (Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135) – enhancing learning *in* and *from* practice as stipulated by the DHET (2015). Looking towards this future vision, the following section includes a critical discussion of the advantages, disadvantages and challenges of implementing service-learning into teacher education programmes.

Advantages, disadvantages and challenges of including service-learning components into teacher education

Although the inclusion of service-learning components into teacher education seems advantageous, being aware of and planning for the possible pitfalls and challenges increase the success of the development of such components.

Disadvantages/challenges

One challenge of service-learning engagements, although a possible revelation to some, could be when students realise that they have been oppressive towards other people, or that they have unfairly benefited from the disadvantaged (Lund 2018), yet, grappling with discomfort is very common in service-learning. What will distinguish a disastrous reaction from an enabling one is the maintenance of trust and honesty of the relationship between participants (Mitchell 2015). Another great challenge is to motivate academics on programme level to participate in service-learning initiatives and to show continuous enthusiasm for participating (Butin 2015). Some teachers are also hesitant to participate in service-learning components as they require volunteered time that might not deliver immediate results (Petker & Peterson 2014:122–135).

Advantages

Research indicates that the inclusion of service-learning into teacher education enables the development of civic responsibility to 'develop and practice the skills that embody commitments to diversity, solidarity, and justice...' (Mitchell 2015:27). Barnes (2016:238–253) also notes that teachers in the 21st century are diverse and not set in a traditional paradigm of our postmodern society, which enables the generation of knowledge from various experiences and expertise. Other advantages include the positive effect of participants' personal development, collegiality among participants, improving of leadership and communication skills, and authentic application of knowledge, and it challenges cultural and racial stereotypes (Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135).

By being aware of the challenges in the development of a service-learning component, researchers and community members can negotiate possible solutions

for the identified challenges and draw from the advantages for motivation and reaching the purpose of the project. The following section comprises the envisioned framework for the development of social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning.

The envisioned framework for developing social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning

Educational practices should be informed by the people it serves (Romm 2018), signifying that members of local communities should have the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and skills to learning programmes offered on basic and higher education levels. Gillis (2018) stresses the urgency for community partnerships in basic and higher education within South Africa as the current system is not preparing learners or students at HEIs to think critically, solve problems or reflect on research to construct their own ideas. The need for collaboration across departments, communities and institutions of both the public and private sector is recognised (The World Bank 2018); however, the way forward in doing so is still unclear.

To address the above-mentioned need for partnerships in educational development, I suggest a framework in which the sharing and generation of local knowledge (Botman 2016:48–67) to develop social justice praxis for education through critical reflection (Mezirow 1990) can be realised by drawing on the mechanisms (Mitchell 2015) and principles of service-learning (Butin 2010). Educational practices and syllabi should transform continuously to enable sustainability for education; therefore, I believe the framework that informs the development of curricula should be flexible, accessible and transparent. The suggested framework will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Envisioned emerging framework: Sympatric metamorphosis framework for social justice praxis – a butterfly effect

I will draw from three natural science terms to explain the grounding of my vision for social justice praxis and service-learning: *sympatry*, *metamorphosis* and *the butterfly effect*. Table 2 shows a definition of each term as used in its scientific denotation and the interpretation of the term for education practices in South Africa.

TABLE 2: Explanation of educational relevance of natural science terminology for social justice praxis.

Scientific term and definition	Interpretation for educational practices in South Africa
Sympatric: The state of related species sharing the same geographical space and frequently encountering each other (Fitzpatrick, Fordyce & Gavrilets 2008).	Diverse local communities that share the same geographical living space (Said 2007), resources and knowledge systems. Within these geographical spaces, there should be no room for 'abyssal thinking' (De Sousa Santos 2014:53), which leads to one community developing feelings of inferiority and learned helplessness (Maier & Seligman 1976:3–46).
Metamorphosis: The transformation process (which is influenced by the environmental factors) of larval insects such as butterflies, moths, beetles, flies and bees, during their life cycle (Hammer, McMillan & Fierer 2014). The dietary choice of butterflies is the environmental factor that causes the most discrepancy in the transitional process of metamorphosis (Hammer et al. 2014).	Pedagogical tools such as critical service-learning (Butin 2015; Mitchell 2015:20–28) should inform the transformation of educational practices and syllabi as critical transformative paradigms advocate for relevant social change (Butin 2010) that is contextualised for a specific environment (Petersen 2018).
Butterfly effect: A term borrowed from chaos theory (Filipe & Ferreira 2013), which depicts that meaningful change results from making many minor changes. The <i>butterfly effect</i> is a metaphor originating from notions that the flap of a butterfly's wings in one geographical area generates the force to cause a tornado in another area (Lorenz 1994; Dooley 2009).	Locally generated knowledge through critical reflection on service-learning activities renders minor changes in the preparatory programmes for teacher education (one space); the later effects (different space) thereof can contribute to societal change as more learners and pre-service teachers can engage with content developed for social justice praxis.

I propose a working theory based on an emerging framework that I call the *Sympatric Metamorphic Educational Praxis framework* (SMEP). The rationale behind this emerging framework is rooted in my belief that HEIs for teacher education, local communities, in-service and pre-service teachers as well as the national Departments of Education have an equal responsibility for the generation of an education system that is socially relevant, acknowledges diversity and ultimately prepares citizens for their societal roles. Figure 2 shows a visual representation of this framework.

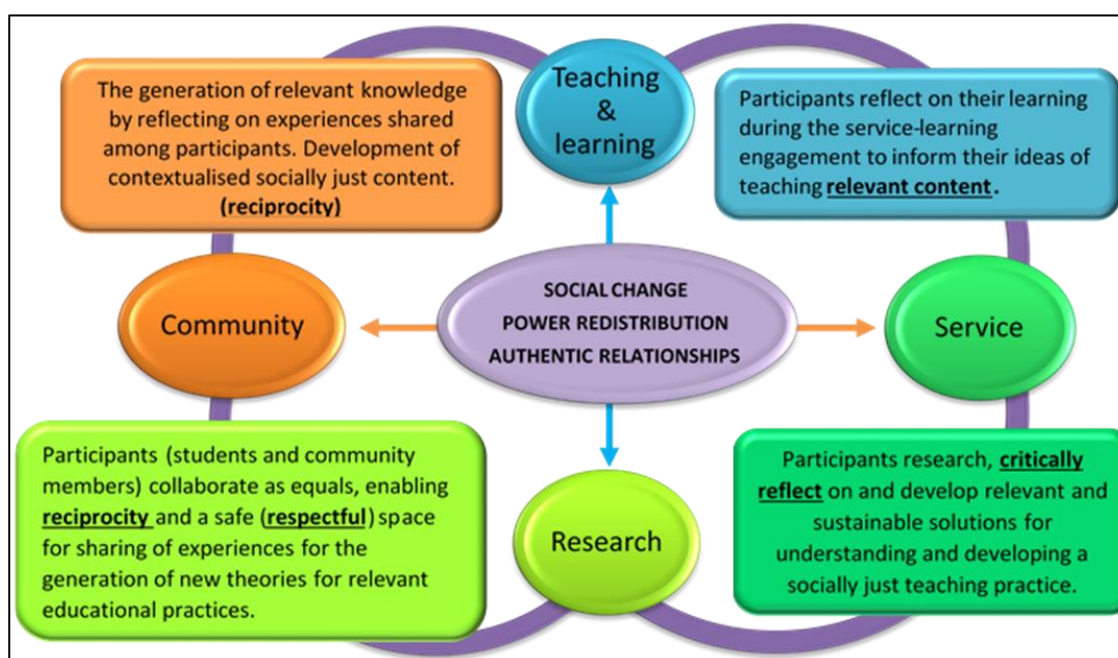


FIGURE 2: Sympatric metamorphotic educational praxis framework.

Source: Adapted from the critical service-learning model of Mitchell 2008:53 and the 4Rs for service-learning Butin 2015.

The SMEP framework embodies the outline of a butterfly as metaphor for the interrelatedness of the principles (Butin 2010) and mechanisms (Mitchell 2008) for service-learning: teaching, community, service and research as the informants of socially just educational practices (Austin & Callen 2018; Candua 2016; De Sousa Santos 2014). Each of the four wings of the butterfly framework is symbolic for relevance, reciprocity, critical reflection and respect as guiding principles (Butin 2015) throughout discussion about social (in)justices in education that need to be addressed (Chisholm 2015; The World Bank 2018). Just as the butterfly cannot fly without all four wings, I envision that the absence of any one of the four principles of service-learning will lead to ineffective service-learning practices. The four connecting terms (community, research, service and teaching) are those that enable coherence, *connectedness* (Botman 2016:48–67) and the need for inter-existence (Said 2007) among people in a society to live in equal, open, peaceable and enabling spaces (De Sousa Santos 2014; Van Deventer et al. 2015:24–35). The three mechanisms for service-learning, social change, power redistribution and the building of authentic relationships (Mitchell 2015:20–28), are central to all the components of the emerging SMEP framework, as in the absence thereof actual learning by all will be hampered (Petker & Petersen 2014:122–135) because the prevalent legacies of inferiority and

power relations will consequently regulate participant engagement (Bondy et al. 2017).

Lastly, drawing on the metaphor of the butterfly effect, changes which seem minor, for example inviting students and teachers to participate in critical discourse about diversity and social justice in teacher education, can lead to the development of improved social justice praxis in education. The results of these minor changes will however not be immediate but enable bigger changes in a different space (time) as with the butterfly effect. I suggest the initial step towards social change for the failing education system in South Africa (Gillis 2018; De Lange et al. 2014:748–766; The World Bank 2018) to be that stakeholders in education (refer the section 'Envisioned emerging framework: Sympatric metamorphosis framework for social justice praxis – a butterfly effect') critically reflect (Benade 2015:42–54; Mezirow 1990) on their own bias about diversity, social justice experiences (or lack thereof) and the perceived stereotypes they hold (Jansen 2009; Romm 2018).

Significance and possible contributions of the suggested emerging framework for teacher education in South Africa

South Africa faces challenging demands for the rethinking of current higher education practices as prospective employers identify skills gaps of HEI graduates in the private business and public services (education and health care) sector (DHET 2018) that drastically affects the employability of the prospective workforce (Gillis 2018). The consequences of the absence of social justice praxis in teacher education specifically (Chisholm 2015) calls for the development of programmes that will deliver teachers who are socially aware, acknowledge diversity and adopt teaching approaches that will enable contextualised and relevant learning (Botman 2016:48–67).

Furthermore, graduate programmes are failing to prepare students for the workplace in terms of contextualised problem-solving skills, interpersonal communication skills, comprehension skills and reasoning skills (The World Bank 2018). Attitudinal skills and dispositions are also emphasised as areas for development (DHET 2018).

Apart from the skills shortages mentioned above the lack of community partnerships and unresponsive (outdated) curriculums form part of the concerns for the future of higher education (DHET 2018). Teacher education in South Africa is one

of the domains that does not deliver a workforce that can fulfil the needs of its learners (Smuts 2018), and the quality of education, access thereto and relevance of the syllabi remain a concern (Mashau & Mutshaeni 2015:428–434).

The suggested framework (SMEP) can address the need for the aforementioned transformation of teacher education programmes to enable social justice praxis through critical engagement with all the stakeholders for education (refer the section 'Envisioned emerging framework: Sympatric metamorphosis framework for social justice praxis – a butterfly effect') in service-learning activities (Botman 2016:48–67; Butin 2015; Peterson 2018). This theory now needs to be implemented into practice to develop a research-based framework for the inclusion of service-learning components on programme level at HEIs. I will embark on an empirical study to validate the framework.

Conclusion

South Africa, along with other developing countries, faces major challenges with entrenched inequalities as a result of poverty, social injustice and a clear divide between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups across the country. The unequal delivery of education, lack of diversity education in teacher preparation and systemic epistemicide lead to further divide.

I have argued the need for HEIs to reconsider the current curricula for teacher education as the local knowledge and experiences from communities are still excluded on the basis that its academic relevance is still not recognised. The majority of learners in South African schooling system is taught from a curriculum that has little to no relevance to their immediate realities, mostly by teachers who do not have experience with diversity and coming from backgrounds different from their own.

In this chapter I advocated for the development of social justice praxis through including a service-learning component into teacher education. By collaborative participation, sharing of knowledge and expertise and critically reflecting on locally generated knowledge, HEIs can be equipped to develop socially relevant teacher education programmes that can continue to transform through the establishment and maintaining of authentic relationships with local teaching communities. South African institutions cannot afford to disregard the local knowledge and skills in a time of global education crises. The onus lies with HEIs to address the basic human right of

South African learners to attain knowledge and skills through schooling to become citizens who can access opportunities to realise their full potential. As a teacher of teachers, my role is to be socially aware, responsive and engaged. I have to continuously reflect on my own assumptions and teaching practices, if my goal is to help teachers to develop a social justice praxis.

I conclude by reiterating the words of Duncan (2009) – if we care about reducing societal inequalities the classroom is the place to start. Teachers instil and help develop so much more than pedagogical content; their approaches should contribute the daily fight for social justice.

To be true to the teaching–research symbiosis as a hallmark feature of a tertiary institution, educational research needs to inform teacher education programmes. Student teachers, who will practise in an increasingly diverse and unjust society, need to be given the opportunity to engage with social justice issues to enable the development of contextually relevant practice. This chapter outlines just how CSL as community-based research can be used to attain this end.

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2.3 Manuscript 2: Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis: Setting the stage for critical service-learning in teacher education

Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis: Setting the stage for critical service-learning in teacher education

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Abstract

Teacher education programmes in South Africa often fail to prepare teachers for the unequal and unjust teaching landscape. We propose that it would be helpful for pre-service and in-service teachers to reflect on their ideas and experiences of social justice to build an understanding of how social justice issues can be addressed in teaching. The first author engaged academics, pre- and in-service teachers in critical discussions, facilitated by arts-based activities, to generate a shared understanding of the knowledge, experiences and skills needed to underpin a social justice praxis (SJP). Thematic analysis revealed the participants' collaborative understanding of social justice praxis, based on values of inclusion, care, and transparency. The findings highlight how critical service-learning can promote the embodiment of social justice praxis in education. The collaborative and participative set the stage for CSL as a vehicle through which contextually relevant SJP can be operationalised.

Keywords: participatory methods; community-university partnerships; service-learning; social inequalities; teacher education

Introduction

South Africa celebrated a quarter century of democracy in 2019 yet remains one of the most unequal countries in the world (Chisholm, 2019). The democratic and socially just education system that the late Nelson Mandela and other freedom activists envisaged eludes the majority

who still live in the former racially segregated, predominantly Black and under-served areas (Gebremedhin & Joshi, 2016). Considering the above, I feel compelled to explain my positionality. This article is an account of my⁷ experiences in working within a research group to co-generate guidelines for CSL in teacher education to enable the development of a social justice praxis for teachers. I grew up in a privileged, yet racially, economic and language diverse community, which provided me with opportunities to embrace and embody values of respect, inclusivity and. I do, however, acknowledge my privilege and power as a young, white, female academic at a well-resourced university, where the co-authors are based as well. We, the authors, further do not deny that our⁸ collective middle -class backgrounds might have provided us with limited experience of social injustice to a certain extent. However, we are committed to becoming more aware of how our (white) privilege (Murdoch & McAloney-Kocaman, 2019) influences our understanding of social justice praxis.

Most institutions in South Africa are still divided by social class, race, and language, with sugar-coated discriminatory practices professed behind transformational agendas (Chisholm, 2019). Transformation is an elusive concept in a society where the poor are becoming poorer, and the rich richer. Families with the financial means can access quality and better education (Spaull, 2015), which further lessens the chances of children from poor areas becoming upwardly mobile.

⁷ The first author conducted the research; the co-authors assisted in conceptualising the paper, analysing the data and writing the various drafts.

⁸ In our respective practices we strive to develop socially aware and empathic teachers, who respect and recognise the experiences and knowledge that learners bring into the classroom, regardless of their race, class, or culture (Reygan & Steyn, 2017) and who can adapt their teaching to make it more inclusive of all learners.

Though poverty-stricken communities undeniably do face more systemic challenges (e.g., insufficient resources, inefficient administration, and overcrowded classrooms) and social problems (e.g., children coming to school hungry, gang-related safety threats and a lack of parental involvement) (World Bank, 2018), it is not necessarily an indication of the quality of education in comparison to the context of well-resourced schools (Christie, 2020). However, the prevailing performative norm (Perryman & Calvert, 2020) in South Africa leads to standardisation of expectations, where schools in low-resourced areas are judged by the same yardsticks as their perceived ‘better’ counterparts in more privileged settings – equity is thus not a predominant feature of the current education system in South Africa (Christie, 2020).

The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) policy mandates HEIs to include diverse and contextualised opportunities in teacher preparation programmes (DHET, 2015) to ensure teachers are prepared to live and work in all contexts. Student teachers can learn to be more socially aware and empathic by being exposed to social environments different to what they have experienced in their own schooling, thus expanding their possibly limited understanding of social injustice.

The role of teacher education in developing social justice praxis

To bring about understanding of the social inequalities that riddle underprivileged settings, it is necessary to question and disrupt existing assumptions (Freire, 1998). While much literature in education identifies what the problems are and makes suggestions as to how things could be improved, very little empirical research starts from the ground up, involving pre- and in-service teachers in interrogating their own understandings of how they could embody a more socially practices. Meaningful, collaborative, critical and dialogical engagements around social issues in education between such stakeholders are mostly absent. The absence of these reciprocal learning opportunities (Matthews, 2019) means that, in general, teachers fail to be aware of their own

misconceptions, biases, prejudice, and imprinted knowledge about what constitutes a socially just education system (Preece, 2016).

We argue that, when provided with opportunities to critically reflect on such issues with fellow stakeholders, both aspiring and existing teachers can come to a new understanding about how to address the social challenges in education (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). In other words, they can develop a social justice praxis. We understand social justice praxis (SJP) as “critical reflection on experiences of social (in)justice, to inform relevant, sustainable and contextualised action” (Schoonen et al, 2020, p. 198) to enable the creation of equitable and fair opportunities for learning. This conceptualisation of SJP implies that teacher education programmes should integrate opportunities for collaborative, contextualised and reflective disruption of imprinted knowledge. Complex social structures are difficult to change and require transformation across various sectors, but we argue that critical reflection on practice by small groups of academics, pre- and in-service teachers can change their perspectives about socially just education from within; and inspire them to be more critically aware (Ritter et al., 2018) by reflecting on how their teaching is contributing to social inequity within the classroom.

Setting the stage for developing social justice praxis through critical service-learning

Critical service-learning (CSL) is but one vehicle which has been successful in raising pre-service teachers’ awareness of the differing needs of learners in challenging educational contexts (Mitchell, 2015), inspiring them to find ways to adapt their practice to better suit the context (Pillay, 2019) through adopting a critical approach to teaching. A critical approach to SL “embraces the political nature of service and seeks social justice” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 52). CSL aims to bring about social change (Petersen & Osman, 2014) by bringing together stakeholders to co-create pathways to address social problems and injustices impacting on education.

However, there is little literature that shows how reciprocity, a fundamental principle of CSL, is embedded into the process, which could give rise to resistance from community partners (Silbert, 2019). Silbert (2019) cautions that asymmetrical reciprocity, where groups of people coming together are not truly equal regarding social or economic status, may lead to the domination of specific views over others.

We are not suggesting that CSL alone will mitigate unequal power relations, however, it can enable communities of pre-service and in-service teachers to collaboratively work towards understanding better how to teach in a socially just way. When a group of people pursue a common goal, such as developing a social justice praxis, they create a space for dialogical communication and connectedness (Wood, 2020). The different histories, positionalities, and experiences of in-service teachers working in socio-economically challenged contexts and pre-service teachers how such social injustices play out in the classroom, adds to the rich diversity of knowledge to address the identified issues. Furthermore, the young pre-service teachers mostly grew up in a post-Apartheid South Africa (Christie, 2020) and were the first generation to experience the effects of democracy as learners in the schooling system. Their knowledge and experiences can offer a fresh perspective on the topic (Christie, 2020).

CSL requires reflection on experiences to inform subsequent action (Tinkler & Tinkler, 2018), and as the stakeholders collaborate to find socially relevant solutions to complex societal problems, the focus moves away from who holds the power, to true reciprocity and social change. In our experience, service-learning engagements still tend to be of more benefit to the student than the community stakeholders. At our institution, for example, students have gone to schools armed with paint and other resources to 'improve' classrooms which they decided were not up to standard (rather an insult to the school), instead of learning from and with the teachers how to teach in under-resourced contexts. As this does not speak to the real objectives of SL to enable social change (Petersen & Osman, 2014), we suggest that the first step to building reciprocal relationships

with community partners, is to develop a shared understanding of the social challenges faced by teachers in schools where the students will be involved. Christie (2020) argues that in our quest to seek sameness in schools in South Africa, we have neglected that the social contexts, needs, and the learners are, indeed, very different; and in denying this rich diversity the learners and teachers are set up for failure. To be an agent of social change in the education system, it is necessary to use teaching tools to mitigate misconceptions about teaching within South African education landscapes (Silbert, 2019).

The aim of this study was thus to enable pre- and in-service teachers to collaboratively imagine a socially just praxis and create a contextualised and socially relevant understanding of how they can embody social justice into their practice as a precursor to embarking on CSL. We now explain the theoretical underpinning of our argument and justify the research methodology. Thereafter, we present a discussion of the emergent themes that led to our conclusions in response to the research question: *What are pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of developing social justice praxis in teacher education through critical service-learning?*

Critical transformative theory as theoretical framework

Critical Transformative Theory (CTT) underpinned this study to enable transformation in the perspectives of the researchers and participants to create shared understanding and vision (Romm, 2015) of social justice praxis. The participants formed an action learning group where they each shared their ideas and reflected on their knowledge and experiences of social justice and social injustices in education with the aim of imagining positive change (Pedler, 2016). The ontological standpoint was relational, with emphasis on the relationship between the participants and critical introspection, where knowing, doing and personal experience of social (in)justice in education became deeply interconnected and inseparable (Bellefeuille & Bekikoff, 2020).

The group adopted a critical transformative epistemology to develop a philosophical and more diverse understanding of social justice in teacher education as a social construct (Mertens, 2017), without persuading or imposing perspectives onto each other. Though the ideas of CTT are very similar to Action Learning Theory (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018), the focus in critical transformative theory is to view learning through a lens of generating and shifting ideas to better understand a construct, without evaluating the actions that transpire from the paradigm shift (Bellefeuille & Bekikoff, 2020). CTT calls for a participative understanding, where self-reflection (Mezirow, 2003) and reflexive dialogue lead to collaborative inquiry with a deeper focus on self-awareness. We hypothesise that before action to improve teaching can be taken, the participants first must come to a joint understanding (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018) of why and how the change should ensue. In the next section the methodology used to attain this aim is explained.

Participatory action learning and action research as research design

Participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) requires the creation of a collaborative and reflective learning environment (Zuber-Skerritt & Wood, 2019) where participants share their knowledge and experiences to develop an understanding of the research topic in a communicative space (Kemmis et al., 2014). To create such a space, the participants form an action learning group (Wood, 2020) that meets regularly to engage in reflexive activities to generate new and locally constructed knowledge based on the experiences, ideas, knowledge, and skills they bring to the group. In this case, the action learning group drew from and collaboratively reflected on their experiences of social (in)justice in education to construct imaginings of SJP and how it could be embodied through CSL.

Seven teachers from an under-resourced school were joined by their principal, as well as a subject advisor from the provincial Education Department. Four white pre-service teachers from the first author's class of 19 Foundation Phase students volunteered to participate, although the

class comprised multicultural and multiracial students. A fellow lecturer expressed interest to be part of the study and, since inclusion is a core value of PALAR, we agreed to widen the group-membership. Our action learning group was mixed in terms of gender, race, socio-economic and language backgrounds, positionality, and age. In participative research there is always a risk of unequal power relations (Wood, 2020). This action learning group used arts-based data-generation methods and critical reflective discussions to co-create new understandings of social injustices in South Africa and social justice praxis in teacher education. The arts-based activities enabled participants to be creative, find inspiration and express themselves more critically (Masinga et al., 2016). Each arts-based activity had a prompt related to our research question and the reflections during each session informed the planning and activities for the next session.

Table 1: Summary of our action learning group sessions and activities

Session	Description	Prompt and purpose	Documenting data ⁹
Session 1 20/05/2019 3 hours	Introducing ourselves as project members through a photo-metaphor activity.	Photo-metaphor activity where participants used a photograph of objects or scenery to describe how they view themselves as teachers and as part of our project.	Photographs with a narrative that was shared with the rest of the group.
	Explaining theoretical framework negotiating the ethical agreement.	Reflective discussion about key concepts: social justice praxis and critical service learning. Discussing how we would like to work together.	Transcribed recordings of the reflective discussions.
	Building collaborative vision for study.	Draw-and-talk small group activity where the participants drew a symbol that signified their collaborative vision of the study. The shared narratives became the inspiration for setting research questions for the project.	Vision drawings with transcribed narrative discussions.
Session 2 29/05/ 2019 3 hours	Reflecting on data from previous session.	The action learning group reflected on the data generated in the previous session through a group analysis discussion.	Transcription of discussions.
	Relationship building through personal reflections	Participants took off one shoe, took another from a crate and then identified the owner of the shoes. Each participant then shared what it took to walk in their shoes as an academic, teacher or aspiring teacher.	Transcription of discussions.

⁹ Link to arts-based data generated for this study:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NJiHLom4lhbl8cine7pcN4IERTIhiiU?usp=sharing>

Session 3 17/08/2019 8 hours	In-depth understanding of current social injustices faced by the participants in their teaching contexts.	Fear-in-a-hat activity: Each member had to write a fear on paper and put in a hat? They were then drawn out and discussed critically to understand the fears of others and possible relation to social justice and social injustice.	Transcription of discussions and collaborative summary made through discussion.
	Identifying the experiences and educational circumstances that contribute to social injustices.	Guided metaphor- Effect of social injustice on own teaching practice (in groups) and reflective discussion.	Participant notes of metaphor interpretation and transcription of group discussion.
	Explaining what a socially just education system looks like.	Photovoice and prompt: Take a photo of the socially just education system you envision and participate in a reflective discussion that follows.	Photos and narratives. Transcription of discussion.
	Envisioning the role of academics, teachers, and students in creating opportunities to develop SJP.	Individual collages and prompt: Create a collage of your vision for creating social justice praxis in teacher education and reflective discussion.	Collages and narratives. Transcription of sharing and reflecting discussion.

By engaging in the reflective arts-based data generation activities the participants could find common ground and it deepened the discussions around the issues of the research questions (Van de Vaart et al., 2018). An initial thematic analysis was done within the action learning group during the reflection sessions and then the transcriptions and visual data were analysed (Krippendorff, 2013) by the authors of this paper through a social justice lens.

As trust, respect and reciprocity form part of action research studies, member checks and group analysis through discussion were done to ensure accurate and truthful reporting of the findings (Wood, 2019), which strengthened the trustworthiness and validity of the coded data. Critical reflexivity (Cypress, 2017) during our check-in and check-out sessions was another method used to ensure that researcher bias did not influence the data.

Ethical clearance for this project was sought from the relevant ethics committee of the university concerned (Ethics number NWU-00783-18-A2) which adhered to the Belmont principles of justice, respect for persons and beneficence (United States, 1978). Permission was obtained from the gatekeeper committee of the university to invite pre-service teachers to participate. Our action learning group also drew up an ethical agreement (Wood, 2020) of how we chose to collaborate as a group.

Discussion of findings

Three major themes emerged from our data, namely 1) developing a new understanding of social justice praxis in teacher education; 2) a socially just education system is informed by values of inclusion, care, and transparency; and 3) approaches in which engagements such as critical service-learning can enhance the embodiment of social justice praxis in teacher education.

Theme 1: Developing a new understanding of social justice praxis in teacher education

There is no precise definition of social justice in education, however, in some way the group could describe what they view as social justice by a) drawing from their experiences of injustice in education, b) reflecting on how the socio-historical backgrounds of education influence ideas about social justice, and c) emphasising the role of systemic pressures linked to performativity to embody the values of a socially just education system into their teaching.

Experiences of injustice shape our ideas about what social justice in education can be

Perceptions of what social justice is are different for each person. Context, social background, and opportunities for people to share their experiences honestly and safely can have an influence on what individual people see as social justice in education. Our knowledge is shaped by our experiences, and the participants shared a bleak reality of how they experience social justice in education. Figure 1 below encapsulates how P9 viewed social justice in education:

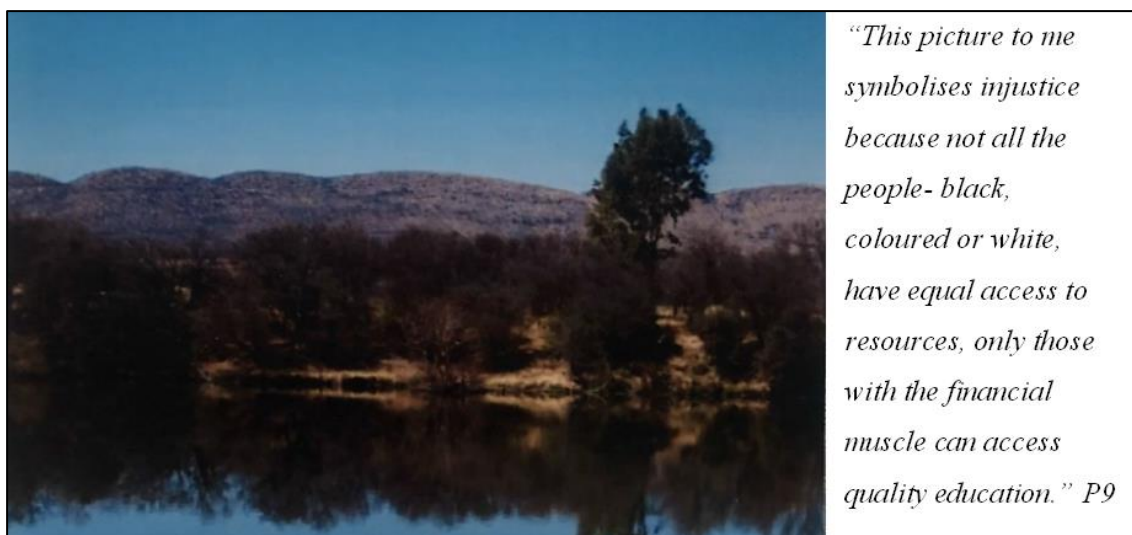


Figure 1: Photovoice- Participant 9's interpretation of social (in)justice in education

From the narrative P9 shared, it became evident that there are still two prevailing education systems in South Africa, one system for the people who have monetary means and the other for people who are affected by poverty, leading to further inequality for schooling in South Africa (Chisholm, 2019).

By acknowledging that there are social inequalities in our education system stakeholders can work collaboratively to create sustainable and socially relevant solutions to the complex problems they face. Currently, the efforts to mitigate social injustice in education seems to be one-sided and rather insulting to teachers in under-resourced settings, as P2 shared:

They will train the school in the township in the culture of the school in town. They paint the picture that there [at town schools] you smell the roses and when you get back here [township] you 'smell' the brain of the children who are tired and do not work properly. You know, the reality is not nice for all of us, but this reality shouldn't be covered up ... or sugar-coated. People should read about this reality ... the objective is not to level the playing field, it is to absorb one culture into the other, like saying our context is not real or right. People don't want to realise the real problems. They just want the shortcuts.

In agreement, P8 said: *"Socially just education should not make learners or teachers feel trapped behind barb wire but should embrace differences like threading different pieces of wool together*

to make one unique scarf”. Christie (2020) argues that in the quest to make teaching equal to the current structures through efforts such as pairing up low-performing schools with better performing schools, we are furthering the injustice as these measures still predominantly favour the context, experiences and knowledge of the people living in the upwardly mobile areas. The needs and experiences of the learners and teachers from educational settings that are still entrenched with poverty, inequality and unemployment are dismissed.

The influences of the socio-historical contexts of educational landscapes on developing social justice praxis

The socio-historical background of universities does have an influence on how students engage with communities and how pre-service teachers are encouraged to reflect on their perspectives of social realities. One of the pre-service participants expressed her concern that the education students were not encouraged to do their practical work at a diverse range of schools, whereas students in the health sciences were placed to do practical components at various community institutions:

I feel the same should count for us- we should be encouraged like they [nursing and pharmacy students] are encouraged. Why is the University not encouraging us to go to the township schools? It's not taught to us, we don't know. I didn't even know this school [participating school] existed before we started with this project... P3

Teacher education programmes strive to enable pre-service teachers to be skilled teachers (DHET, 2015), which implies the programmes should include experiences of diversity and inclusion, yet students reported that this is not the case. Participant 2 echoed his concern about the role of the university not placing the pre-service teachers at schools where they experience an array of social realities:

They stay uncooked... unchanged and mostly unaware of the social problems they will face when they start teaching. The placement of student teachers for practical teaching...I just got

the list for student placements here...the names I see here... [reads names, can hear it is of black students] they won't learn anything here, they know these kids and how they live ... while some other students could have learnt so much more...but they will stay uncooked as long as they keep going back to the schools they are familiar with. Is the university placing the students with integrity? P2

From the perspectives the participants shared, it became evident that they realised their agency in changing the way they perceive teaching is hampered if they have limited experiences with diversity. Silbert (2019) confirms that the experiences pre-services teachers have at university are failing to instil the relevant skills and understanding of the diverse realities of South African learners, and this leads to limited opportunities for the pre-service teachers to reflect on and challenge their practices (Zamir, 2018).

Young teachers, and even more experienced ones, are often faced with questions and challenges emanating from their teaching environment and the learners in their classroom, as found by Botha and Rens (2018). When a teacher is faced with a completely new teaching context it can also happen that the demand for them to conform to the ethos of the specific schools is too much; and that the expectation is for them to lose their individuality and unique knowledge and skills they can contribute to the school, as Participant 8 emphasised:

Schools are known by their culture...and I think for beginner teacher and even an experienced one to come into a new place, how challenging and demotivating it must feel to have to adapt to the 'culture' of that school. And what if it's in conflict with what you believe in? P8

Teacher-educators can assist in empowering pre-service teachers to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and competence to enable them to autonomously make decisions about contextualising their teaching, contributing to teaching in a socially just way. Social justice praxis should become part of teachers' identity, especially in a diverse country such as South Africa (Chisholm, 2019). To enable the emergence of a fairer society teachers should not only be equipped with skills to

accommodate learner diversity but they themselves should be supported to bring about social change (DHET, 2015) as teachers through their unique set of teaching skills.

Systemic demands that contribute to injustices in education

Teachers are fearful that they are not meeting the demands of the education system and performativity requirements set out by the national and provincial departments of education (Walls, 2020). The participants felt strongly that these pressures to meet standards are hindering them from teaching confidently and in a socially just manner, as evident from the following reflections from the participants: *“The Department wants results. They don't care about the relationship you have built with the learners, and teachers are scared to try something different from the department mandates.”* (P9). This fear is very common, as many newly qualified teachers report that they enter the teaching practice with limited understanding of what will be expected of them (Walls, 2020) and fear that their theoretical preparation will not meet the demands of their profession (Spaull, 2015). Teachers should be afforded the opportunity to embody an ethic of care and hope in their classroom without the looming stress of Departmental pressures limiting them, as P2 pointed out: *“Fear is the order of the day in a system where we impart knowledge like parrots for fearing the authority figures as big birds with long beaks threatening small birds.”*. In addition to the fear of performativity as discussed above, teachers may transfer the pressure and fears to meet demands of the Department onto the learners, resulting in learners experiencing their teachers as uncaring. One participant shared:

Now, it brings us to a fear- why teachers do not want to tolerate differences because of fear of meeting the expectations of the Department. You see, the Department has got a work schedule that in this month, by the end of this week, you must have covered one, two, three, four, by the second week this ... and then they have the old, standardised tests. You see, so this system teaches us fear to tolerate. Because when the Department comes, they do not tolerate the teacher or our ideas. You don't tolerate the teacher, you know, the whole thing is a chain of reaction. P11

Cherrington (2017) emphasises the importance of creating a practice of hope for teacher education, where learners and teachers can feel safe to share and learn with each other. When teachers and learners experience the kind of pressure as Participant 11 explained, it hinders the development of this practice of hope and socially just education (Christie, 2020).

Where teachers (in-service and pre-service) are not encouraged to make informed choices or be provided the opportunity to reflect on their practices, they can become stagnant or less alert to the needs of their learners. The general message that emerged from the group was that if teachers are not entrusted with the autonomy to make informed choices, they will also be less motivated to reflect on their practices. Participant 2 mentioned the awareness of the socio-economic circumstances as example of how teachers should be aware of the needs and circumstances of the learners in their classroom:

The socio-economic factor, children in the other side of the town, if a child has forgotten about the homework, he can just wake the mother up at 11 o'clock, 'Mommy I forgot' and the mom will just go to the phone in Google and find the answers. But in the other side of the town, they don't even have a candle. There's not even a mom. P2

Asking questions, being open and knowing the learners in their classrooms can help teachers to become sensitive towards the needs of their learners and to learn to adapt their teaching practices to be a true reflection of contextualised social awareness. Continuous self-reflection will help teachers to make informed decisions (Ritter et al., 2016) in their teaching approaches. If the teacher education programmes provide learning opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop social awareness, continuous reflection on teaching practices can be developed as a skill, enabling newly qualified teachers to review their practices to adapt to the needs and social realities of the learners. Educational managers can realise the role they play in motivating teacher agency through critical reflectivity for enhanced social justice praxis practices (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020). Universities and community schools should join forces to reflect on current social problems in education. Such

spaces should be underpinned by life-enhancing values where leaders in education are involved in reflections to work towards transformational leadership (Thoonen et al., 2011).

Participants emphasised the importance of value-driven education to enable a socially just education system. The analysis of the collages revealed that the participants imagine that socially just educational practices are rooted in the values of nurturing and care, inclusion, and transparency.

Value 1: A system rooted in nurturing and care

The values of nurturing and care as keystones of social justice praxis strongly came to fore in the collages and narratives the participants shared.

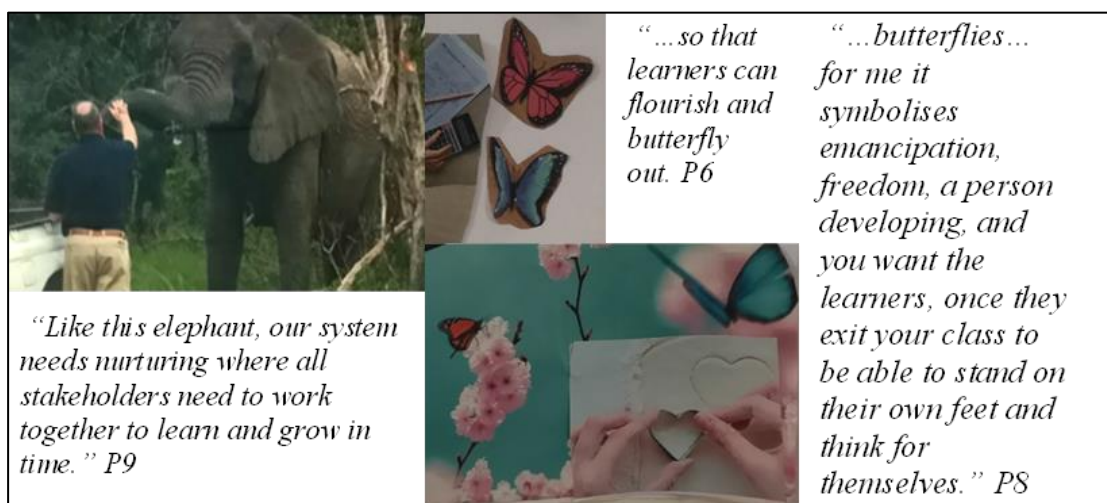


Figure 2: Collage snapshots of our vision for a socially just education system: nurturing and care

The snapshot of the elephant being nurtured (P9) symbolises a culture of care for learners that is desperately needed in South African schools. In an unjust society, teachers should care for and nurture learners, irrespective of their background or socio-economic status (Noddings, 2013). Participant 6 emphasised that nurturing also entailed that teachers should be like *"pollen [which] signifies how I want my children [learners] to feed from me ... and come to the flower and then develop"*. Participant 8 concurred by saying that *"once learners exit your class... [they should be] able to stand on their own feet"*. The group also imagined that learners should be enabled to

challenge their own thinking, spreading their wings like butterflies to generate and construct their own knowledge through diversified experiences, “so that learners can fly and butterfly out” (P6). By challenging beliefs, we broaden our understanding of others, becoming more aware of the different realities people face – a crucial skill newly qualified and practising teachers must have (DHET, 2015) to develop social justice praxis. Social justice requires the inclusion of diversity (Christie, 2020, p. 2) that will prepare learners to “contribute to a shared world and, hopefully, change it for the better”, which is the next sub-theme that emerged.

Value 2: A system that enables and promotes inclusion

In the context of education transformation, inclusion focuses on accommodation of diversity and different ecologies of knowledge (Sayed, 2016) to enable more socially just practices in education to address past inequalities (Christie, 2020). Participant 8 stated that “education is not only for the elite”, indicating that the participants see the urgency of a more accessible and equal education system, the socially or economically disadvantaged.

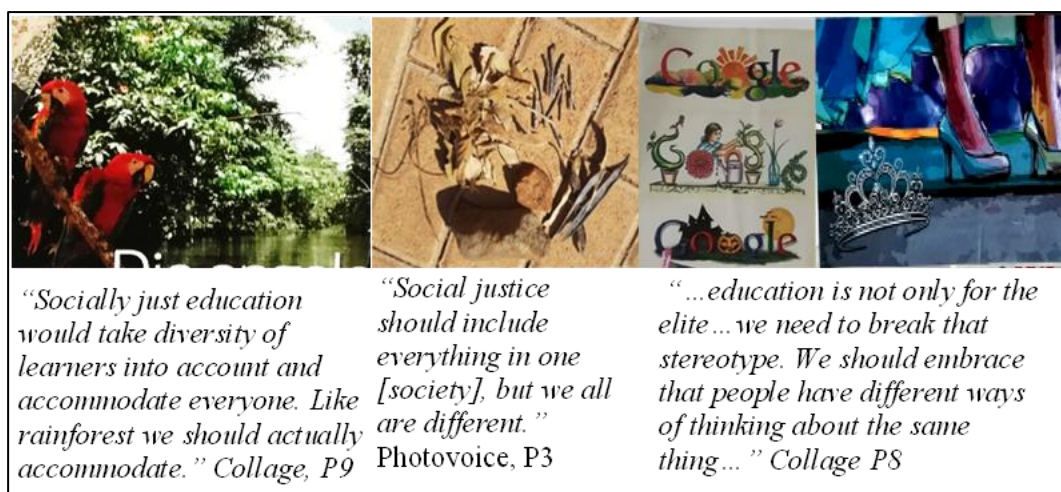


Figure 3: Collage and photovoice snapshots of our vision for a socially just education system: Inclusion

Using a biodiversity metaphor, Participant 9 highlighted that a rainforest (education system and teachers) should accommodate the different animals (diverse people) without expecting the animals to all become the same. Inclusion also entails that diverse and especially local knowledge

is included in education, as Participant 3 indicated: *“Social justice should include everything in one [society].”* Participant 8 concurred by saying that *“we should start to embrace that people have different ways of thinking about the same thing.”* Allowing for multiple perspectives will not only increase diversity awareness but also improve stakeholder relationships among schools, teachers, caregivers, universities, and the national education departments (DHET, 2015). Transparency, as the final value emerging from the participants’ imaginings of social justice praxis, is an important principle to ensure that people feel included in decision making.

Value 3: A system that enables collaboration and transparency

The need for an education system guided by the principle of collaboration emerged from the findings. Participant 6 highlighted that *“socially just [inclined] learners and educators need to face challenges and then work together to overcome them and find their obstacles as they go.”*. Participant 2 added that if we *“still have this type of uncoordinated type of system, we are going to burn out and our efforts are going to be fruitless and our products are going to be useless”*. An uncoordinated system leads to confusion, frustration, and injustice, which, in turn, engenders distrust among stakeholders. Transparent, trusting relationships are more likely to enable the development of a shared vision for teacher education to promote sustainable social change (Butin, 2015). To work towards transparency in the education system, the implications of how such a system can be operationalised should be considered.

Theme 3: How critical service-learning can enhance the embodiment of social justice praxis in teacher education

While reflecting on how they imagined a socially just education system, the participants suggested how universities and surrounding schools can collaborate to share knowledge and experiences. The ideas from the group highlighted that collaborative learning engagements could perhaps include a) a safe space where different perspectives can be shared openly and respectfully; b)

critical discussions that challenge and disrupt imprinted stereotypes; and c) opportunities for critical self-reflection.

Creating a safe space where different perspectives can be shared openly and respectfully

Despite the calls for teacher education to be more engaging and contextually relevant, the actual sharing of experiences and knowledge from in- and pre-service teachers appears to be challenging to do as many teachers have not yet participated in community-led university projects. Learning to voice our ideas, experiences and concerns can be difficult, yet it is necessary for transformational learning, as P4 pointed out in the narrative of their collage in Figure 4.

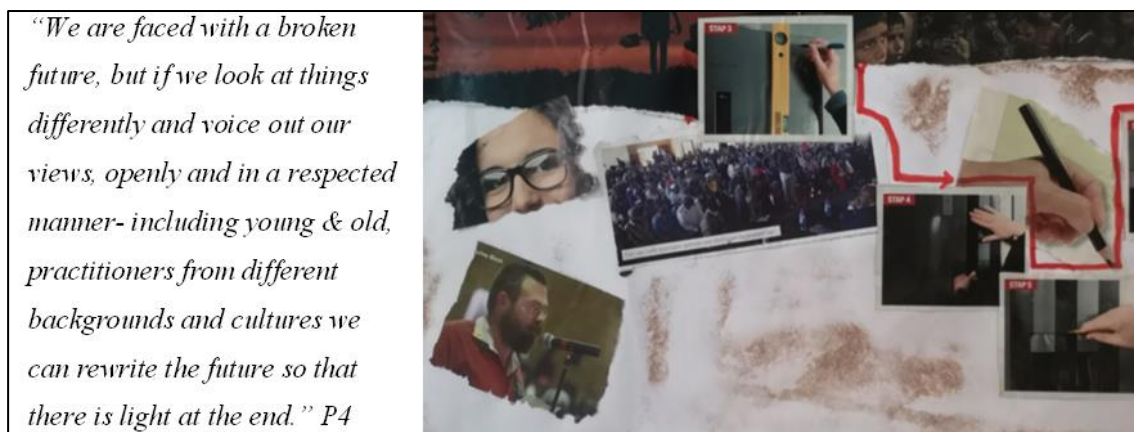


Figure 4: Listening to and respecting the diverse perceptions about education (Participant 4)

For real understanding, and the opportunity to transform the education system, pre- and in-service teachers should be enabled to share their ideas honestly and know that differences in opinion will be respectfully discussed. Respecting the community's way of life is one of the key aspects of CSL (Mitchell, 2015). All contributions should be regarded as valuable and accepted as individual truths. Individual experiences should not be dismissed or devalued, otherwise asymmetrical reciprocal learning takes place (Silbert, 2019), where not all stakeholders benefit or participate equally.

Individual teachers or student teachers cannot change the unjust educational system. However, small changes that emanate from critical discussions on how to teach in different

circumstances can create a communicative space where all stakeholders share their ideas and help each other to understand better the different contextual problems. Participant 9 emphasised the importance of all stakeholders playing an active part in these discussions:



Figure 5: Collaboration between all stakeholders in education to create a safe learning space (Participant 9)

Teachers on all levels can benefit from learning and reflecting together to enable the development of agency, as found by Pillay (2019) where pre-service teachers developed their teacher identity through reflecting on their engagements with in-service teachers. A critical transformative paradigm in teacher education calls for reflexive dialogue between different stakeholders for individuals to become socially- and self-aware (Mezirow, 2003) and to disrupt imprinted knowledge.

Encouraging critical discussions that challenge and disrupt imprinted stereotypes

Critical discussions cannot be meaningful if there is inactive or unequal participation. The goal of critical participatory research is not to determine who is at fault and why, but rather to focus on deeper discussions about how misconceptions can change and what solutions can be co-generated for the social problems teachers face (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020). Participant 3 emphasised the importance of authentic dialogue where critical and collaborative reflection lead to transformational thinking:

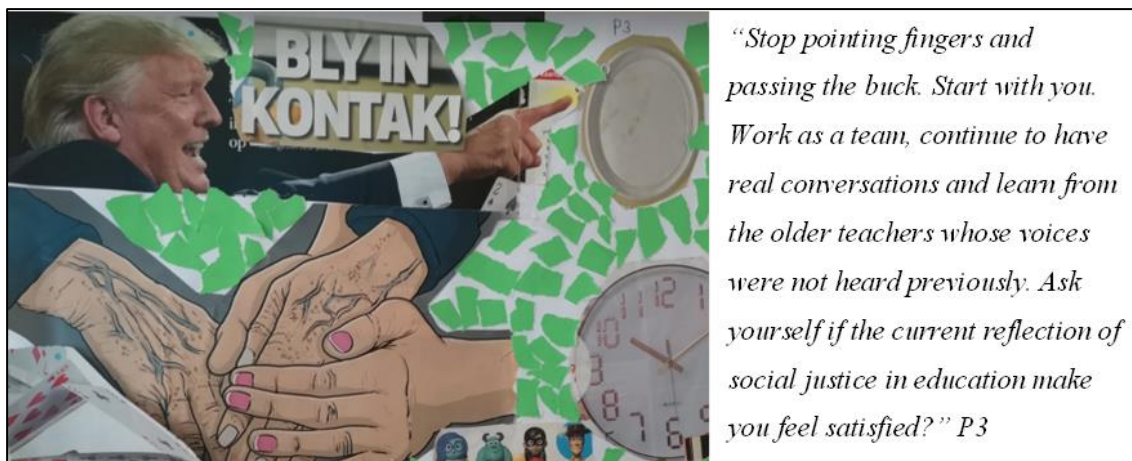


Figure 6: The role of critical and collaborative reflection for transformative thinking as imagined by Participant 3

Peterson and Osman (2014) emphasised the role of CSL to help in- and pre-service teachers to co-generate new knowledge that offers fresh perspectives about teaching in a system fraught with inequalities, rather than observing and duplicating destructive behaviours (Zhou & Brown, 2017). Participant 3 also indicated the importance of asking self-critical questions that can evoke disruption or discomfort (see Figure 6) to contribute to transformation of our individual or collective perspectives about socially just education. Through reciprocal learning opportunities, another aspect of CSL (Mitchell, 2015), all the stakeholders in education can develop an unbiased, authentic, contextually relevant, unprejudiced, and socially just understanding of teacher education (Preece, 2016) and collaboratively designed action plans to develop a social justice praxis (Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Opportunities for critical self-reflection

Participative research holds the objective of social change that emanates from collaborative learning; however, a second goal is for individuals to transform their own thinking by reflecting and challenging their own biases and beliefs. While participants collaborate with peers in critical reflexive activities, they are also enabled to disrupt their own perspectives about social realities and how authentic knowledge is constructed. Though it can be painful, true emancipation from

imprinted knowledge requires people to become vulnerable and recognise that what they know is not the only truth. Participant 8 explained that they had come to realise this:

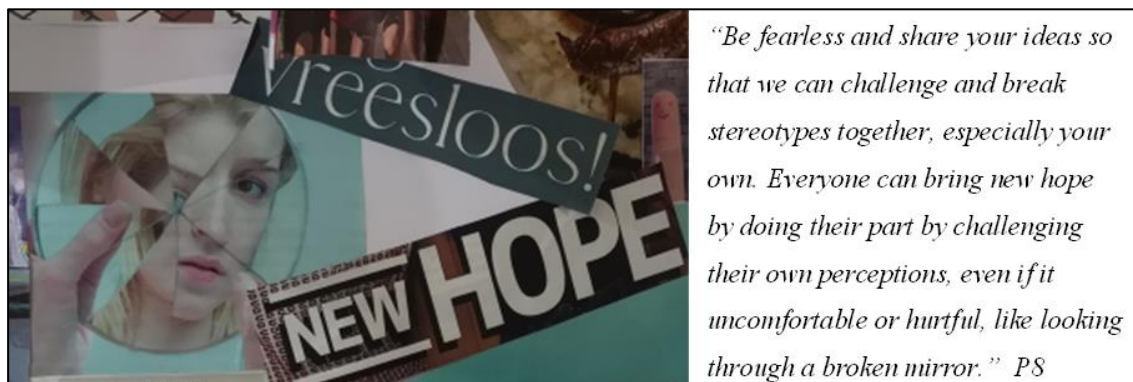


Figure 7: Critical self-reflection to disrupt perceived stereotypes (Participant 8)

When our perspectives are disrupted and we accept that our limited knowledge about social justice is an enabling vulnerability rather than a weakness, we begin to learn; and developing SJP for teacher education becomes interconnected with a process of gaining knowledge, reflecting on that knowledge and then taking action (Bellefeuille & Bekikoff, 2020). Critical service-learning can become the vehicle to create a communicative space (Kemmis et al., 2014) to develop new knowledge through critical reflexive dialogue, to attain the learning goals of justice and relevance (Mitchell, 2008).

Conclusion

In a country where most learners are still subjected to an unequal education system, teacher education institutions should enable learning opportunities that are socially and contextually relevant. Furthermore, in-service teachers should be encouraged to participate in learning opportunities where they can share their knowledge and experiences with peers and transform their own teaching practices.

This paper explained how a group of academics, in- and pre-service teachers collaborated to generate a contextually relevant understanding of a social justice praxis for teaching. The action learning group collaboratively imagined what a socially just education system can be and how the

different stakeholders in education can work together to embody the values of social justice praxis into their teaching practices.

The findings firstly indicated that there are multiple understandings of social justice which are predominantly shaped by individuals' experiences of injustice. The main ideas about social injustice in education that emerged from the findings are: 1) that current teacher education programmes offer limited opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience diverse teaching contexts; the sociohistorical influences regarding the development of social justice praxis; and systemic demands limit the opportunities for in-service teachers to fully understand their learners and to adapt their teaching practices to the learners' needs. 2) values of inclusion, care, and transparency should underpin the interaction between university and community participants in the CLS initiative; these same values should be embedded in all teaching practices, which will better enable them to become agents of social change. 3) to enable social justice praxis for teacher education, CSL engagements should allow for those involved to openly share their perspectives; participate in critical and collaborative reflexive dialogue to disrupt imprinted knowledge and generate new knowledge through reflection and action. We conclude that social justice praxis can become the norm rather than the exception when pre- and in-service teachers engage in CSL based on a participatory paradigm.

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2.4 Manuscript 3- Transforming service-learning towards social justice praxis: guidelines for bridging knowledge cultures

Transforming service-learning towards social justice praxis: Guidelines for bridging knowledge cultures

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Service-learning (SL) has been promoted as a teaching method to contribute to the global educational aim of transformation in higher education. Higher education institutions are criticised for the theory-practice gap in various disciplines, both nationally and internationally. Different forms SL have been adopted into the discipline of teacher education; however, the SL-engagements often lack reciprocal learning and ethical engagement. In most instances, student-learning and institutional mandates are foregrounded while learning and professional development for in-service teachers are often neglected. To counteract this, we (lecturers, students, and in-service teachers) formed an action learning group to collaboratively develop contextualised guidelines for critical service-learning (CSL) within teacher education programmes through reflexive and arts-based methods. Thematically analysed findings emphasised that CSL should be value-based, grounded in principles of inclusion, respect, and life-long learning to enable ownership and bridge knowledge cultures through cycles of reflection and action. The co-developed guidelines can enable the adoption of a CSL-approach to foster social justice praxis in teacher education. The guidelines can be adapted, in consultation with community partners, for any discipline where SL takes place.

Keywords: critical service-learning; knowledge culture; knowledge democracy; participatory action learning and action research (PALAR); social inequalities

Introduction

In this paper we argue that critical service-learning (CSL) is an effective teaching strategy to promote social justice praxis (SJP). CSL is based on the principles of reciprocal and contextually relevant learning within trusting relationships to foster critical reflection and generate mutually

beneficial knowledge to bring about positive change (Butin, 2010; Mitchell, 2015). If implemented according to these principles, CSL heightens social awareness and develops more inclusive mindsets among participants, leading them to question their worldviews and assumptions. This in turn encourages actions to address inequalities and injustices, informed by theoretical understanding and contextualised research-based plans (Schoonen et al., 2020). Petersen and Petker (2017) found that successful CSL required collaboration of multiple stakeholders. We suggest that CSL should be mediated by means of groups of lecturers and pre- and in service teachers, working collaboratively to explore and find ways to reduce the educational inequalities that negatively impact on so many learners (and teachers) in South Africa (Chisholm, 2017; Spaull, 2015).

According to the mandate from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), contained in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), curricula for teacher education programmes should be contextualised and inclusive, promoting an understanding of diversity and grounded in the tenets of transformational learning (DHET, 2015). Most South African learners and teachers learn and work in contexts where the basic human rights to health and dignity are denied, resulting in high levels of trauma and violence stemming from malnutrition, gender-based violence, crime, substance abuse and poverty in general (Munene, 2015). These circumstances, in turn, impact on education, leading to absenteeism and disengagement of both teachers and learners, that perpetuates the cycle of deprivation (Hlalele, 2012). Lower quality education impacts learners from disadvantaged backgrounds as they face such social challenges, while having to meet the same academic expectations as learners coming from more privileged backgrounds (Spaull, 2015). This results in unequal educational outcomes between learners coming from privileged backgrounds and those who carry the burdens of poverty, subsequently separating the *'haves'* from the *'have nots'* (Aktaş, 2021). Thus, social injustice is endemic in the South African education system.

To create more socially just teaching contexts, we agree with Stith et al. (2021) that continuous critical and reflective thinking is essential to ensure learning spaces are inclusive and equitable. We understand social justice praxis as “the quest to develop, through ongoing critical reflection, educational environments that foster diverse thinking and celebrate diversity” (Schoonen et al, 2020, p. 198), giving each child the opportunity to learn irrespective of their background. However, social justice praxis is not established through top-down enforcement, but rather instilled through a deliberate choice made by individuals. The current divide means that lecturers, mostly of a privileged status, are often not in touch with the realities of teaching in disadvantaged contexts and thus teacher education programmes do not prepare student teachers to embody a social justice praxis that would help, over time, to close the theory-practice gap and make education more inclusive, as mandated by policy (DHET, 2015).

Amongst various other teaching competencies, the MRTEQ specifically envisions newly qualified teachers to also have a sound understanding of diversity as well as the knowledge and skills to identify and meet the diverse learning and social needs of learners in the different South African education contexts. The MRTEQ references competencies relating to positive work ethic, appropriate values, and professional conduct, as well as teachers’ ability to “reflect critically on their own practice in theoretically informed ways and in conjunction with their professional community of colleagues” (DHET, 2016, p. 62). The above competencies/attributes are of specific interest for this article since they play a core role in the inculcation of SJP through a mindful choice made by individuals. Critical reflection by individuals to challenge their unsubstantiated assumptions of what socially just education should be is vital for transformational learning and to discover new ways of thinking.

Nerland and Jensen (2014) emphasise the need for creating knowledge cultures for professional learning and development within teacher education. Knowledge cultures develop when new knowledge is generated within different types of work settings, such as school settings

within the contexts that in-service and pre-service teachers will work in. Bridging knowledge cultures for teacher education will thus include not only generating new ways to teach in diverse contexts, but also new ways of thinking about how knowledge is generated (Nerland & Jensen, 2014). Subsequently, there is a shift from traditional theoretical teaching in higher education to “epistemic fluency” which involves a “set of capabilities that allow people to recognize and participate in different ways of knowing” as coined by Markauskaite and Goodyear (2017, p.146). For teacher education, epistemic fluency thus infers educators on all levels should learn how to solve complex social problems through engagement and reflection and make their knowledge accessible, thus enabling knowledge democracy.

The DHET requires HEIs to prepare teachers as critical and reflexive professionals equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners and thereby address the inequalities of the past. Yet, teacher education programmes often tend to be developed for an ideal educational scenario, in which all teachers and learners have access to the necessary resources and social support (Spaull, 2015). Although work-integrated learning (teaching practicum) is a compulsory component of teacher education in South Africa, it is mainly used to develop and assess the teacher as subject expert and teaching skills rather than their ability to embody the envisioned competencies mentioned in the MRTEQ (Chisholm, 2017). For this reason, we decided to explore how guiding principles for CSL can be established through critical and reflexive collaboration between lecturers, student teachers and in-service teachers, to minimise the gap between theory and practice and bring about more socially just teaching, thus bridging knowledge cultures. Cycles one and two of this study focused on collaboration to collectively visualise social justice praxis. This article reports on the third cycle, where the participants conceptualised guiding principles for CSL that emerged from their shared understanding of a SJP within the South African context to bridge knowledge cultures.

During this cycle the participants collaborated to answer the following question: *What principles for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis emerge through collaborative conceptualisation by lecturers, teachers and student teachers through an action learning process?*

Firstly, we discuss action learning as a theoretical paradigm. We then explain participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018) as the methodology we adopted to answer the research question, before discussing the findings that served as a basis for the guiding principles for CSL to foster SJP in education.

Action Learning as theoretical underpinning

Action learning implies “learning from and with each other in small groups ... from action and concrete experience in the workplace or community situation” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, p. 5). Action learning groups collaboratively design a vision to address complex social problems about which they share concerns (Pedler, 2016). At first, action learning group meetings require a facilitator (usually the academic researcher) to guide the group in discussion, encourage participation by all and to address power relations through negotiating and later revisiting the ethical agreement for how the group decides to work together (Brydon-Miller & Coghlan, 2015; Wood, 2020). Action learning focuses on real-time experiences and knowledge generation, through critical reflection on learning within the group to lead to contextually relevant action by the group (Dick, 2015). During the process of action learning, participants share their own perspectives and, in the safe learning space, critically discuss each other’s perceptions to generate collaborative and dynamic understanding of the social problem(s) the group intends to address, a phenomenon referred to as “worldview transformations” (Bawden & Williams, 2017, p. 74). Argyris (2003) refers to this process of value-driven decision making as double-loop learning. Double-loop learning implies addressing inner-contradictions of learnt behaviour or thoughts through critical reflection, which in turn helps participants to translate their newly generated knowledge into practice (Wood, 2020). Action learning is a suitable theoretical underpinning for this study since it creates the opportunity

for individuals coming to a shared vision to develop skills to emancipate themselves and actively contribute to knowledge for positive change (Pedler, 2016). Through critical reflection within the group participants are enabled to cultivate resilience toward creating, implementing, and sustaining contextually relevant solutions themselves (Dick, 2015). The guidelines for CSL to foster SJP we conceptualised from our action learning group sessions evoked thought-provoking discussions and all participants were involved in decision-making, regardless of their positionality or power (Parson, 2019). In the next section we discuss the PALAR design followed in this study.

Participatory action learning and action research as research design

This paper is grounded in a PALAR design. Zuber-Skerritt (2011) conceptualised PALAR as an integration of ALAR (action learning action research) and PAR (participatory action research), with the outcome of lifelong learning. Since 2011 PALAR has continued to evolve as a methodology, approach, and a paradigm to foster sustainable positive social change (Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). PALAR studies comprise iterative cycles of reflecting and action, but with a more pronounced focus on action learning than traditional PAR (Wood, 2020). Both relationship and research issues are revisited throughout the project as the needs or objectives of the study advances through critical reflection within the action learning group (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Our project unfolded in three cycles, namely 1) creating **context** through relationship building, discussing who can contribute what and negotiating roles and setting up an ethical agreement (2) co-creating a **vision** for the project, and 3) putting the learning in the first two cycles into **practice** by taking action (Wood, 2020). Figure 1 below further explains cycles followed in this study by the action learning group to develop guidelines for CSL to promote a social justice praxis. In this article, the focus is on Cycle 3.

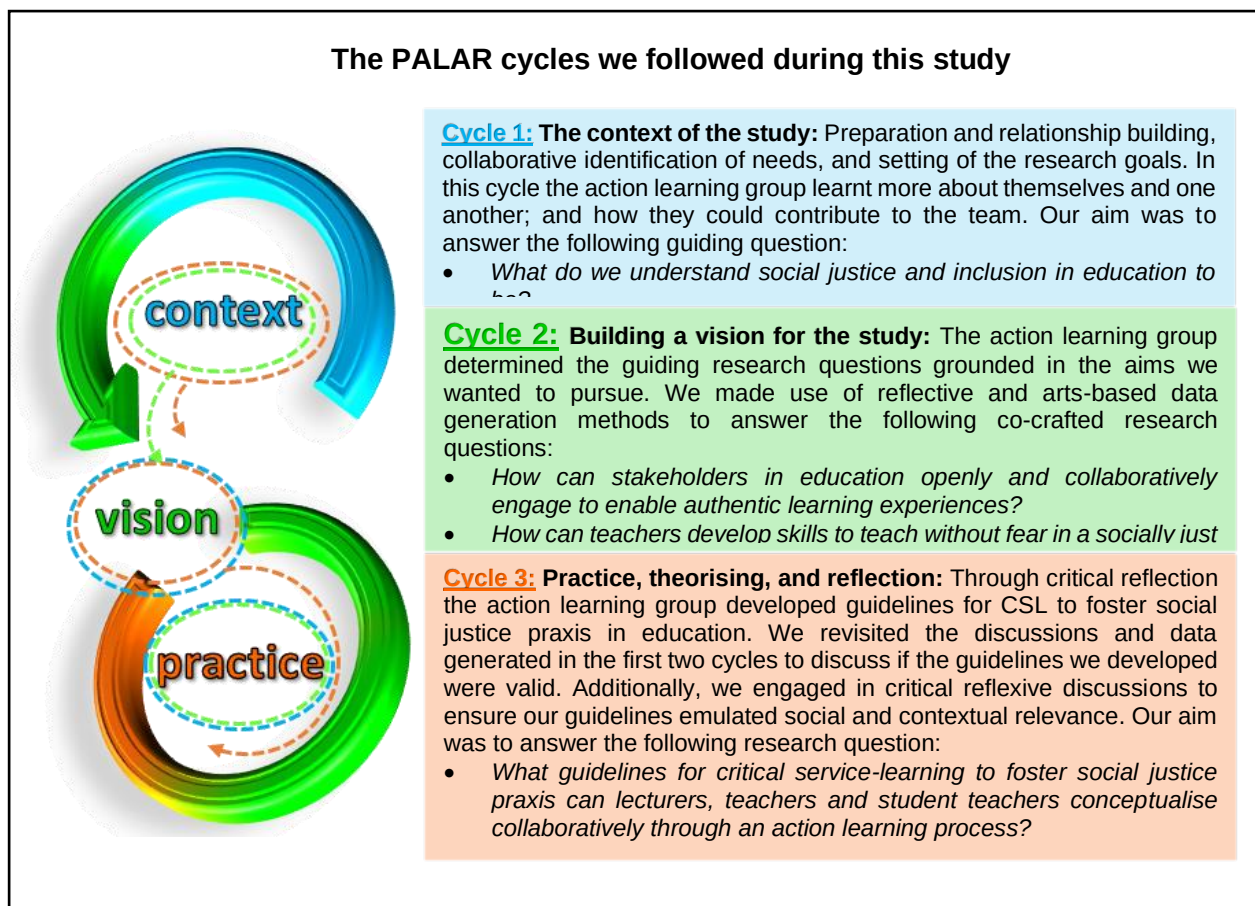


Figure 1: The PALAR cycles followed in this study (own adaptation from Wood (2020) and Zuber-Skerritt (2002))

The initial introductions to each other in cycle one led to extended and spontaneous discussions of the groups' experiences and fears relating to social justice. After the participants shared their experiences, setting a shared vision for the project followed through guided activities. The discussions we had during cycle two helped us to craft a vision based on an understanding of each other's perceptions and fears to challenge imprinted misconceptions about social justice. During this third cycle we drew from the knowledge we co-created in the previous sessions to develop guidelines for critical service-learning to enable the development of social justice praxis. Each cycle of the study included planning, acting, evaluating, and reflecting to inform the next steps; thus, the cycles of the study are interrelated and are revisited throughout the study.

As facilitator of the action learning group, the first author¹⁰ set out to purposefully recruit participants who were diverse in terms of language backgrounds, teaching experience, professional development, age, race, gender and social backgrounds, Table 1 below provides an overview of the participants who voluntarily chose to form part of the action learning group.

Table 1: Action learning group biographical details

Participant code	Age	Race	Gender	Home language	Professional status of participant
P1	53	White	Female	English	In-service teacher
P2	53	Black	Male	Setswana	In-service teacher (principal)
P3	23	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P4	27	Black	Female	Setswana	University lecturer
P5	28	Black	Female	Setswana	In-service teacher
P6	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P7	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher
P8 (<i>first author</i>)	29	White	Female	Afrikaans	University lecturer
P9	43	Black	Male	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P10	29	Black	Female	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P11	54	Black	Male	Setswana	In-service teacher (former principal)
P12	22	White	Female	English	Student teacher

The data-generation methods were collaborative, in that action learning group meetings were recorded, transcribed, and collaboratively analysed as introductory activity during the next ALG-meeting. For the data of which this paper is based on, the pre- and in-service teachers formed separate groups (for this activity the lecturers rotated between the groups) to discuss the following

¹⁰ This paper is an account of the first author's research study. The co-authors were critical friends (PhD-promotors) who helped to analyse the data, conceptualise, and write the paper.

questions that served as prompts to reflect on how we answered the research questions for the study (refer to Figure 1):

1. How do we understand critical service-learning?
2. How should student teachers be prepared to participate in CSL with in-service teachers?
3. How should in-service teachers be prepared to participate in CSL with student teachers?
4. For South African teachers, what social justice and diversity challenges should be the focus of CSL-experiences?
5. How have our CSL-experiences helped us to think differently about our practice?

The answers to these questions were then used to construct pantoum poems¹¹, and each group recited their poem to the other ALG-members. We discussed the poems to analyse the content to develop the guiding principles for CSL to foster SJP. Lastly, we made adaptations to the initial conceptual framework based on our learning throughout the research process.

We used Habermas' (1967) criteria to mitigate researcher bias and unethical reporting. The criteria can be summarised as 1) **comprehensibility** (are we reporting in an understandable way?); 2) **authenticity** (are the guidelines for CSL we suggest reachable and supportive of the values/ethical agreement we set up?); 3) **socio-historical and sociocultural influences** (did we reflect and learn together in a contextualised and inclusive way?); and 4) **truthful** (justifiable) **reporting** (do we have evidence to support the findings and the discussion thereof?). The ethical process included applying for ethical clearance through a rigorous process at the university (Ethics number: NWU-00783-18-A2); voluntary and informed participation; and setting up an ethical agreement (Wood, 2020) with the action learning group. In the following section we critically

¹¹ A pantoum poem is "a verse form consisting of 4-line stanzas with a set pattern of repeated lines" (Masinga, Myende, Marais, Singh-Pillay, Kortjass, Chirikure & Mwel, 2016, p. 123).

discuss the findings that emerged and support our analysis thereof with evidence from the data the group generated.

Discussion of findings

We now report on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. We identified four major themes, namely a) CSL-engagements should be value-based; b) collaboration between stakeholders should be inclusive and well-defined; c) preparation that leads to the participants taking ownership of the CSL-engagements; and d) critical and open reflection should be encouraged. Figures 2 and 3 are the pantoum poems that the participants wrote, we refer to them throughout the discussion of findings.

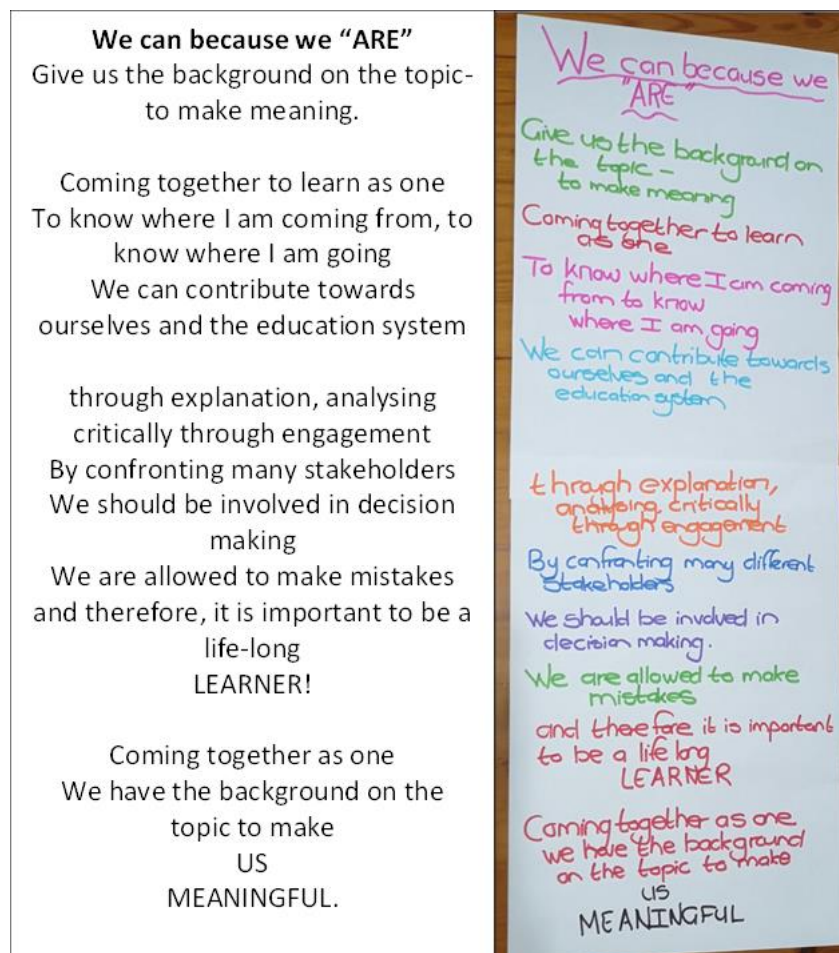


Figure 2: Poem 1 written by in-service teachers: We can because we are

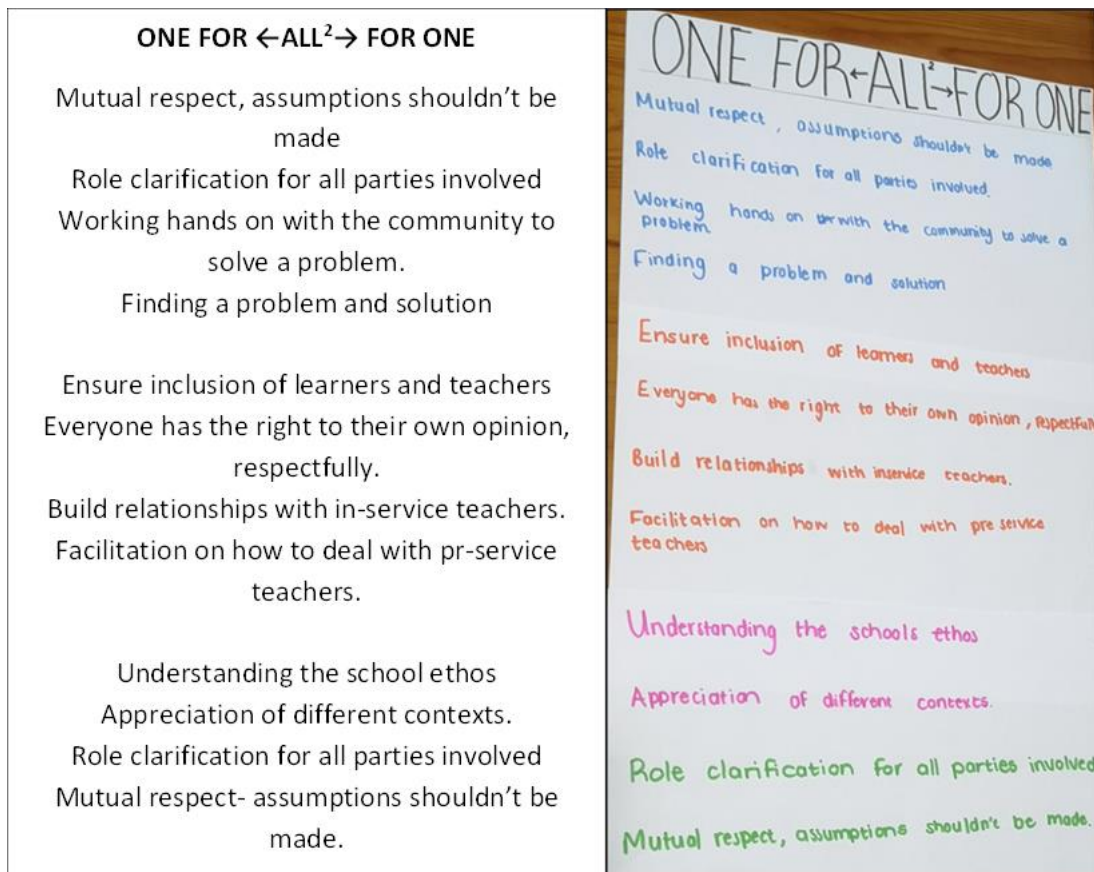


Figure 3: Poem 2 written by pre-service teachers: One for all, all for one

Theme 1: CSL-engagements should be value-based

Value-based CSL engagements require the participants to agree on how they wish to work together. Factors such as unequal power relations, unfamiliar contexts, language barriers and the lack of consideration for one another can affect the relationship the group members form with each other. We discuss each of the identified values below.

Respect for each other's perspectives

Respecting different perspectives as a value for CSL suggests that the group became a place where participants could freely share their ideas without being judged or dismissed. Participant 7 said that “*you are more open to share about yourself or your ideas, you know, you are not going to be judged.*” This sentiment was echoed by P2, who said that respect for different ideas within the

group meant “...being able to think independently and share those ideas in a space that is safe, in a space that you know that you will not be judged. Respect each other’s views, embracing everyone’s contribution.” Mitchell (2015) identified respect for the community’s way of living as one of the principles of service-learning, thus, through CSL a community of practice is formed among the participants, and new knowledge is generated based on the experiences and ideas that are shared. From the poems, it also became clear that the participants embraced differences in opinion as an important step in creating socially relevant knowledge when they wrote “*Everyone has the right to their own opinion, respectfully.*” (see Figure 3, Poem 2). Nerland and Jensen (2014) suggests that linking different ways of thinking with working settings leads to the generation of knowledge cultures that foreground reflecting on knowledge ontology and epistemic fluency as part of the process. Generating new understandings implies a commitment to lifelong learning (Wijnen-Meijer, 2020), which is the next value that the group identified.

A commitment to lifelong learning

Reciprocal service-learning engagements in teacher education should not foreground student-learning only. Each participant’s contributions should be acknowledged as important. Participants experienced that this process had challenged them to rethink their previous assumptions and knowledge, as P4 and P9 shared:

And I’ve learnt that we can learn also as educators through mutual understanding and reciprocating. That means education is not just a one-way traffic street. It’s something like: you teach, you learn. P4

I also think, because in a certain sense, we as teachers tend to stagnate, because we are always in the same environment and would go and come to school and go home. It’s always the same. We don’t always really get the opportunity to get out to do something like this [critical service-learning]. This

helps us to keep us on our toes. To say, 'listen all this changing around us, we must up it'. We must keep up to what is changing and what is happening around us, knowing what is going on in the school. And knowing what is going on with our student-teachers. Notice what they bring into the school. P9

The MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) mandates that teachers should form communities of practice where they can reflect on their own ideas and learn from one another, thus creating a space for lifelong learning. In this group the participants were enabled to engage with each other critically and reflectively which helped them to create a shared understanding of social justice praxis and CSL. Another participant valued the fresh perspective that students brought and how reflection on these new ideas helped them to consider introducing changes in practice: *"You learn from one another. I mean you can even learn from a student that walks in here. I mean, you sit and listen, watch and listen and say okay, I never thought about that, let's try that next time."* P5. Acknowledging that there are different approaches to learning in a professional social setting, is the aim of creating a culture of knowledge generation in higher education where the process of knowing for students and teachers become rooted in critical reflection in real-life learning spaces (Maassen et al, 2018). The action learning group thus created learning opportunities for themselves and began to see the value of this form of continual professional engagement for their current and future development. As P2 shared: *"...they [student teachers] can also bring something to the table so that we can learn. It gives an opportunity for everybody to learn."* Educators with differing levels of experience can benefit from engaging in opportunities where they share their knowledge and expertise with each other. Pedler (2016) suggests that participation in an action learning group helps people to co-create solutions for collaboratively identified problems, which emphasises the need for lifelong learning.

Learning does not come without challenges or failure but adopting a perspective of "failing forward" (Maxwell, 2007, p.78) leads to real learning, as the participants wrote in their poem *"We*

are allowed to make mistakes and therefore, it is important to be a life-long LEARNER...” (see Figure 2, Poem 1). Drawing from aspects of double-loop learning (Argyris, 2003) we can argue that learning through reflection entails critical self-reflection on processes of knowing (Nerland & Jensen, 2014) and not only reflecting on newly generated knowledge, which strengthens lifelong learning. Thus, real learning requires honest reflection about failure in the learning process as well as the successes for sustained and continuous expanding and renewing of ones' knowledge (Gauthier, 2016). For action learning groups to work well together and learn with and from each other, there must be trust and open communication (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018); which is the third value the group identified; as being important for equal participation and knowledge democracy within the group.

Relationships rooted in trust and open communication

Sharing experiences, ideas and knowledge about social injustices can be very difficult, especially if a trusting relationship has not been established. People are cautious to reveal their true feelings and share fears when they do not feel safe. Participant 3 shared how the group learnt to trust each other by listening and engaging in open discussion: *“Obviously, people didn’t know each other fully, but I think there was trust in what a person says.”* Participant 2 elaborated on the importance of learning to trust each other, especially since collaborating in an action learning group was a new experience for all the participants: *“I’ve never been engaging in a setup like this, a project like this before, it has made me realise that even a little I can contribute, is valuable.”* P2. Pedler (2016) advocates that the experiences shared in action learning groups should form the platform from where contextualised changes can be crafted, rather than waiting for someone else, perhaps external to the context, to initiate changes. Though it takes time for the trust relationship to be established, the facilitator can expedite this through relationship building activities and help the group to work through conflict. Participant 6 shared that trust is built through *“genuine*

relationships where you are able to talk freely, not faking. Communication from all sides is important.”. The facilitator should be actively aware of all the participants’ voices to be heard, and to mitigate domination by authority figures (Parson, 2019) to ensure that the participants all feel that they can, and perhaps must, contribute actively to research activities and reflexive discussions.

The values for CSL as discussed requires a sense of togetherness, collaboration, and inclusivity, as the participants’ poem read *“To know where I am coming from, to know where I am going”* (see Figure 2, Poem 1), which draws from the well-known African ideology of ubuntu, with a widely accepted explanation of *I am because we are* (Nkondo, 2007), which compliments the title of the participants’ poem *“We can because we ARE”* (see Figure 2, Poem 1). The participants’ writing communicates a central idea of learning and creating new understandings through shared experiences and embracing sociohistorical backgrounds, creating the space to work towards equity in educational settings fraught with inequalities (Stith et al., 2021). In the next section we discuss inclusivity between stakeholders as the second theme that emerged from the data.

Theme 2: Collaboration between stakeholders should be inclusive and well-defined

Inclusivity is synonymous with being part of something, with being heard and collaborating meaningfully. Inclusive collaboration implies that all participants play an active role (Brydon-Miller & Coghlan, 2015) in achieving the vision the group developed. The participants emphasised two important aspects of inclusivity, namely: 1) inclusivity in contributing to decision-making in the project, and 2) inclusivity in terms of defining the roles of stakeholders in the CSL-engagement clearly.

Inclusivity towards the sharing of experiences and decision-making in the project

Irrespective of the efforts to promote transparency and inclusion in decision-making from the

governmental structures in South African education, it became clear that the in-service teachers and students felt rather excluded and feared that their knowledge would be seen as irrelevant when compared with universally acknowledged ideas about what education should be. Participant 2 pointed out how they had been reluctant to participate in research because of their past experiences of participating in projects. His contribution heeds the importance and desire for our community partners to be involved and acknowledged in decision-making: “...*participation in research studies, people are reluctant in that. People are reluctant in that, by virtue of not giving back of what they have contributed.*” (P2). Brydon-Miller and Coghlan (2015) emphasised the importance of reciprocity in community-based research. The knowledge generated throughout the project should not only serve the researcher or universities but should be disseminated to all the stakeholders who participated in the project, true to the values of PALAR (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). More so, reciprocal learning is a principle of CSL (Mitchell, 2015), therefore, all stakeholders should be encouraged and enabled to implement co-generated action plans from the project. Similarly, when the group reflected after they wrote their poem, the participants realised that they had more to contribute than what they initially thought and that their contributions were valuable. Participant 12 shared the following: “...*we underestimated how much knowledge we actually can contribute, just because we are young and inexperienced it doesn't mean we cannot contribute anything meaningful.*”. Peterson and Petker (2017) highlighted that true learning takes place when there is collaboration between multiple stakeholders in CSL where participants are seen as equal contributors. However, it is not uncommon for authority figures to dominate discussions, especially where employer-employee and lecturer-student relationships pre-exist between the participants before the CSL-project. Interestingly, one of the student teacher participants, shared a fresh perspective about why she chose to, at first, be an active listener before becoming an active speaker during our sessions:

I think it was more like a sponge context. It's like I knew he had experience, so okay, yes continue... please, educate me more. Tell me about what I haven't like learnt or experienced, please. I learnt from his experiences rather than giving him power. P6

The pre-service teacher participants rightfully indicated in their poem “...assumptions should not be made...” (see Figure 3, Poem 2). At first, as the facilitator, I assumed that the pre-service teacher participants were cautious to engage due to the power distribution, but as P6 pointed out, she chose to draw from the experience of P2 rather than seeing him as an authority figure. To strengthen this observation, P2 echoed how experiences can be shared: “*So one has a lot of ideas, but you do not know how to disseminate them, but by engaging with the university, it has put me at another level in terms of sharing ideas.*”. The experiences shared above resonate with worldview transformation, which requires the rethinking of our ideas about how knowledge is generated (Nerland & Jensen, 2014) and diverse perceptions by considering the views of others, as Bawden and Williams (2017) found. PALAR studies also advocate for participant-led decision-making and for the group to collaboratively take ownership of the project. The participants’ poems further emphasised the need for collaborative and reflective decision-making: “*through explanation, analysing critically through engagement. By confronting many stakeholders. We should be involved in decision making.*” (see Figure 2, Poem 1). Inclusive sharing of knowledge and experiences further entails that the facilitator, usually a researcher, should be cautious not to coerce the participants or to keep only their goals for the project in mind. Participant 1 shared her experience of how she experienced the openness in the group:

But like I said in the discussions that we had further on is that you always allowed that space for inclusion. And it was never about your study. It was never about your contribution alone, so that is why I think as we went on, I could actually start talking, adding and things like that. P1

Zuber-Skerritt (2011) conceptualised PALAR with the aim of lifelong learning for all, including the academic researcher. As the relationship between the participants is paramount, the researcher enables trust by listening to the real social problems the participants want to address (Dick, 2015). Facilitators may perhaps prepare inclusive and reflective learning opportunities for the action learning group with the goal of knowledge generation and participant-led activities to enable the participants to determine, understand and fulfil their role in the project, which is the next subtheme that we discuss.

Inclusion by virtue of role clarification in critical service-learning

Participants perhaps need to feel that they know their contribution to the group is purposeful and that they are meeting the expectations of the group. Initially, I felt that it would be too prescriptive to explain my research goals, although the participants shared that they would have appreciated a more formal introduction to the project, as P1 pointed out *“We did not know what to do at first, or even what we could contribute, I wanted to learn even though I did not understand what.”* P6 also anticipated a more directive approach from the me as researcher by providing *“...a breakdown of the topic and what is expected from us as participants, from there we will know what to do.”* Schiller et al. (2018) emphasised the need for scaffolding in participative research projects in higher education, as participants need more guidance at the outset to know what is expected of them as co-creators of new knowledge in the project. My initial perception of not imposing my research goals onto the participants caused uncertainty, and in the final reflections it became clear that I should have encouraged more critical discussions of what the purpose of our group was at the beginning of the project.

One critique of our project was that the participants would have preferred role clarification and a clearer understanding of the research topic when the project started, as P2 shared: *“So, if it can be explained before and then maybe generate that enthusiasm in – you know, sometimes people, we get scared by just a topic there.”* As a novice facilitator, I had to learn how to

effectively guide an action learning group and spend time initially to discuss the project in more detail, though caution should be heeded to coercing the participants to adopt the view of the researcher (Schoonen et al, 2021). Participants in CSL-projects need sufficient preparation to know what CSL is and how the different groups of participants can collaborate, as pointed out by P7: *“Role clarification for all parties involved, like a short course or preparation course...”*. Resch and Schrittester (2021) found that many pre- and in-service teachers experience CSL as a new way to bridge solutions to complex social problems with academic course material, however, knowing how to engage with each other is difficult. Thus, preparation for how to participate actively in CSL can be beneficial as the academics, pre- and in-service participants step into their new roles as reflexive learners rather than their perceived role as instructors of knowledge (Resch & Schrittester, 2021). Perhaps more formalised preparation for CSL can help all stakeholders to value the engagements as learning opportunities where they are enabled to develop professionally and take ownership of their learning.

Theme 3: Preparation that leads to the participants taking ownership of the CSL-engagements

Ownership is linked to commitment and accountability. While discussing challenges that arise due to social injustice may come relatively easy to most participants, crafting an action plan to address the social problems in education requires participants to develop agency and to reflect on their actions. Participant 4 shared her experience of being part of generating guidelines for CSL to help teachers develop a social justice praxis: *“The fact that I was part of generating the guidelines, which was a very big part of the goal of the study is also a very – you know it’s something to be proud of. Humbling and proud.”*. Participant 2 resonated this sentiment: *“And, you know what felt good... being able to generate information [knowledge] like this without having to consult articles, without having to consult a journal. Or consult Google!”*. Wood (2020) emphasised the importance of generating local knowledge, where participants can emulate successful ideas from action learning group discussions. Local knowledge is enabling, contextually relevant and

sustainable by nature (Tinkler et al., 2019). Participant 1 contributed further towards the sustainability and ownership of local knowledge by adding how the group's plans can turn into action: *"You see it really showed how through our different thinking it can be interconnected. It means we want to go somewhere but how; we don't know. This is the platform to say, let's create where we are going."* P2 also highlighted the importance of in-service teachers being able to incorporate what was shared within our action learning group into school-based learning engagements for pre-service and in-service teachers:

I'll be proud if students come to my school and practice of what I was a designer of. It will be so amazing because I will even be able to guide them. To say 'according to the model that we developed, this is what I'm expecting of you. This is what we need to take this, this is how we want to take this one further'. You know to - not everybody will have this opportunity. P2

Dick (2015) alludes that the role of ownership and accountability to implement the action plans an action learning group sets up become more attainable if the group was part of the decision-making from the onset of the project, and that active participation increases sustainable and reachable change. Negotiating the vision and research questions of the project is not always an easy task, especially if the participants have not yet participated in a CSL or community-based project. One important role of the facilitator is to encourage ongoing and critical reflection throughout the project. We discuss this theme in the next section.

Theme 4: Critical and open reflection should be encouraged

Critical reflection is a skill that develops as a project unfolds. The participants initially relied on my prompts and the reflection was surface based, mainly with yes and no answers. As the project evolved, the reflexive discussions between participants became deeper, moving from *what* questions to *why, how* and *implication* questions and answers, as P1 shared: *"We said it's a curious*

type of learning where we participate in asking questions and challenging the ideas and information that one has.” Participant 7 added to this by sharing how she views the role critical reflection plays in learning: “...critical reflection is the beginning of giving you the means of how to go about for your- whatever you learn from it. For me it’s not the end, it’s actually the beginning.” Realising that learning starts through collaborative and critical self-reflections, the participants developed the skill of double-loop learning (Argyris, 2003). Critical reflection leads to questioning our own actions, and in action research, we advocate for “failing forward” (Maxwell, 2007, p.78), as P5 pointed out: “I’ve also learnt that belief can, beliefs can also be changed through active engagement.”. By acknowledging and embracing that we are lifelong learners, despite our positionality or experience, we can continuously reflect on our actions and make adaptations where needed. We learn to also reflect on how our praxis can be improved: “I think if we had more exposure to service-learning like this while we studied, we would have understood social problems better. We only did this project for a few months, and in our final year.” (P12). PALAR projects have a cyclical nature that includes revisiting and revising our research questions, continuously *reflecting*, and transforming perceptions to make changes that are contextually relevant and sustainable (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). The reflection from this participant evidently showed how the reflections became more critical as the participants took ownership of their learning and honesty in their experience; the lessons learnt can be unexpected when the participants are encouraged to be immersive learners (Tinkler et al., 2019). Immersive learners are committed to the learning process, and they engage on a deepened level. The participants did not only share what they hoped the researcher would want to hear, but their true feelings. And finally, linking to lifelong learning, as we cannot cease to learn and grow, our CSL-guidelines need continuous revision to be truly contextualised and relevant, as P7 pointed out: “Dedication is important. It’s beneficial if you start seeing how you have adapted your teaching practice. Generations are changing, society is changing, you’re growing and I feel the education system

should grow with it.”. Critical reflection enabled our group to share knowledge and gain new perspectives. Educational contexts are ever-changing. Teacher education programmes and professional development opportunities for in-service teachers should remain relevant, and we should not stop asking critical questions to determine how our social justice praxis and teaching tools, such as CSL, can be improved (Schoonen et al, 2020).

The implications of our findings for critical service-learning to enable social justice praxis in teacher education

In this section, we discuss the implications of our findings for the development of CSL-engagements to enable the embodiment of SJP in teacher education. The voices of the in- and pre-service teachers, along with the ideas of the academics, led to the following co-created guidelines for CSL-engagements:

6. All stakeholders in education should be consulted in decision-making, vision setting, learning and dissemination processes of CSL-programmes. Academics, pre-service and in-service teachers should discuss the needs and objectives they would like to achieve through CSL, especially where the objectives include finding contextually relevant and sustainable solutions to complex social problems. The context and needs of the specific learning community should become the determinant of how and why the participants choose to collaborate.
7. Everyone’s contributions are important, regardless of positionality or experience. The suggested preparatory course can perhaps include learning facilitation skills and how to be active listeners who can critique and interrogate various perceptions without dismissing the experiences of individual participants.
8. Contextual relevance of CSL-engagements to foster SJP should be continuously revisited and revised where needed. Lifelong learning demands continuous reflection on the ways in which

knowledge is created. CSL-engagements should be evaluated annually as the needs and learning objectives of participants change or develop.

9. Reciprocal learning is paramount and there should be benefits for all stakeholders that contribute to the CSL-engagements. The established relationships between community partners and universities need to be maintained and deepened. Ethical engagement by the university is important, thus the roles of the pre-service teachers can include mentorship by senior students for the junior students who participate in CSL as newcomers. CSL-engagements should be rooted in values of respect for each other's views, a commitment to lifelong learning and trusting professional relationships, where all participants can learn from and with each other, in a safe communicative space.
10. Roles should be negotiated, clarified, and revisited as the CSL-engagement unfolds. The participants can be encouraged (by means of skilful facilitation) to collaboratively craft the needs of the group on an ongoing basis and as the social needs of the real-life learning environment (mostly schools) change. The outcomes of the CSL-engagement can thus be flexible with reflexive learning outcomes rather than stringent and binding learning outcomes.
11. Critical reflection on learning, the process and personal lessons learnt should be encouraged and discussed in the group as they become the starting point of real change. CSL should not be viewed as a teaching tool to broaden the knowledge base of the participants only but can include objectives relating to personal and professional development. Through critical engagement the participants can be enabled to develop agency and to embody social justice praxis into their teaching practices.
12. The facilitator should not let presumptions, their goals or power dynamics influence the process of the CSL-engagement. This guideline relates to role clarification and preparation for CSL. The participants and facilitator should set an objective to keep each other

accountable for ethical engagement as part of the ethical agreement at the onset of the project. Critical reflexive discussions on the processes of learning in the group at the start and consolidation of each session should be encouraged, and not only reflection on disciplinary learning.

The guidelines for CSL as discussed above were developed from the findings of this study. They are emerging and we invite scholars and teachers to add, adapt and critique our guidelines to further contribute to the scholarship of transforming higher education to respond to the need for contextualised and socially relevant learning.

Conclusion

The education system in South Africa is fraught with social injustices and in many cases teacher education programmes are failing to prepare student teachers to adapt their practice to the social realities of learners and schools in our diverse educational contexts. Similarly, in-service teachers are rarely afforded the opportunity to reflect on their practices with peers or other stakeholders in education. The DHET mandates that teachers should be able to critically reflect on their practice and make changes that are informed by theoretical considerations and through consultation within their professional communities of practice. Among other competencies, teachers must demonstrate knowledge and skills to teach in and to accommodate the diverse social needs of learners.

We argued that CSL could be a possible teaching tool to mitigate social injustices in education. The guiding research question for this paper was: *What principles for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process?*

We believe the guidelines we created can assist HEIs to develop engaging and relevant CSL-components for teacher education, or other disciplines, to ensure that the gap in theoretical

and practical preparation of our aspiring graduates is lessened, and that continuous professional development through engagement with peers can help in-service teachers to become lifelong learners. Through CSL educators on all levels can collaborate to bridge knowledge cultures towards social justice praxis in education.

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2.5 Manuscript 4- Learning to facilitate community-based research: Guidelines from a novice researcher

Learning To Facilitate Community-Based Research: Guidelines From a Novice Researcher¹²

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Abstract

The diversity of South Africa's population calls for authentic and contextually relevant participation in research that is community based. For novice researchers and researchers transitioning to participative methods, it can be challenging to facilitate a community-based research (CBR) project if they lack the necessary facilitation skills or experience. These skills are crucial to enable collaborative and participative learning. In this paper, I explain how I learnt to facilitate a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) project through critical reflection on self and process. I generated data from my personal reflective journal entries and transcripts of our action learning group sessions, and I validated my claims to knowledge by recoding the data with two critical friends, my co-authors of this paper. The claims to knowledge I share in this paper are twofold. Firstly, I have come to know how to improve my facilitation skills and, secondly, I have learnt to use continuous critical self-reflection to guide my actions in conducting more ethical CBR, underpinned by the principles of PALAR. I believe that my account of learning may help other researchers improve their facilitation of community-based participatory research groups to become more confident, critically reflective, and ethical researchers.

Keywords: action research, living theory, critical reflection, facilitation, participatory action learning and action research (PALAR), self-reflection

Introduction

In South Africa, researchers in the social sciences and humanities are starting to use more participatory methods to conduct research in response to the country's diverse population and educational settings

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(Wood, 2020a). This is also the case globally. Community-based research (CBR) is based on the principle that “people are brought into the research as owners of their own knowledge and empowered to take action” (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1760). This has required researchers to be participative and ethical facilitators of research groups, to conduct research *with* (community-based) rather than *on* community partners (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). However, traditionally trained researchers tend to lack facilitation skills to the degree needed to ensure that the research they conduct is authentically participative (Tandon et al., 2016; Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2020), especially if they follow a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) design where the core project group meets regularly to critically reflect on the process and the progress of the project.

As a novice researcher, I realised that I did not have the necessary skills to facilitate a CBR project because most of my previous research training had been rooted in positivist traditions. To be able to conduct CBR in an ethical way, I had to learn how to facilitate a diverse group of people towards reaching a common goal, which included learning to critically self-reflect on how I was influencing the research process. If my facilitation skills discouraged participation, critical reflection, and community-based knowledge generation, I would compromise the authenticity of the learning and knowledge generated by the core project group. Our action learning group (ALG) comprised six in-service teachers, including the school principal and a department official, four pre-service teachers, a fellow lecturer and me (first author). We were diverse in terms of race, age, gender, language, experience of teaching practice, and social background. This diversity, while welcomed in terms of the different paradigms, experiences, and knowledge it brought to the group, also created the possibility that misunderstandings and skewed power relations might threaten the democratic and inclusive process if it was not facilitated skilfully.

I explain the lessons learnt from my experience in setting up and maintaining an ALG, which led to the development of the guidelines for facilitation I present in this paper. My guiding research question was “*How can I, as a novice researcher, improve my facilitation of a community-based participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) project?*” Firstly, I discuss the theoretical positioning of PALAR for CBR, followed by a clarification of the facilitator’s role in maintaining an ALG. I then motivate the practitioner self-study methodological processes followed for this paper. Next, I explain my concerns about facilitating an ALG and how I addressed these. I use the guiding principles of PALAR as standards of judgement against which to evaluate and improve my facilitation skills. The extrapolated guidelines that emerge as my living theory may prove useful to other researchers new to participatory forms of CBR to improve their facilitation of the collaborative work demanded by such designs.

Theoretical Positioning of PALAR for Community-Based Research

PALAR is a qualitative paradigm, methodology, and facilitation process (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015) for research that contributes to transformational and emancipatory learning in various social contexts (Kearney, 2015). PALAR is a form of action research that foregrounds learning through cycles of action and reflection, grounded in overarching values of care, inclusion, and collaborative learning (Zuber-Skerritt, 2019). Participants in the project become active producers of knowledge rather than informants and recipients (Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). Continual critical reflection and dialogue develop the agency of participants to become advocates and enablers of change.

PALAR aims to emancipate participants to think critically and for themselves so that they can make decisions about their own lives and work to create more socially just environments (Zuber-Skerritt, 2019). In community-based PALAR studies, the participants determine what they need to learn and why, and they work together in an ALG to regularly reflect on the progress and the process of the project (Zuber-Skerritt, 2019). Revans (2011, p. 74) stated that “there can be no learning without action and no (sober and deliberate) action without learning.” Action and learning are thus equally important in a PALAR process (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). The role of the facilitator, normally the university researcher, is to create a safe space, in the form of an ALG, for learning and development to unfold. Action researchers can draw

from the key principles of PALAR (Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013), namely the 7Cs and 3Rs, as standards of judgement to evaluate their competence to facilitate the core project group. These principles are communication, commitment, compromise, collaboration, competence, critical self-reflection, and coaching—operationalised by the concepts of relationship, reflection, and recognition (Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). Each of these principles, and the role it plays in the facilitation process of an ALG, is outlined in Table 1. I include examples of questions that I asked myself throughout the research process to help me continually evaluate and improve my facilitation of the ALG.

Table 1

The Principles of PALAR and Their Roles in the Facilitation Process of Action Learning Groups (adapted from Wood, 2020b; Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013)

Principle	Role in facilitation process	Am I being self-reflective? Questions to improve my practice
Communication	The facilitator guides the discussions so that participants can engage through inclusive, dialogical, and symmetrical communication.	–How am I ensuring that our communication is symmetrical, dialogical, and inclusive?
Commitment	The facilitator creates opportunities to maximise commitment to the study and to take responsibility for the research activities.	–How am I creating opportunities for the participants to take ownership of the project?
Compromise	The facilitator and the participants need to be willing to sacrifice some personal goals for the greater good of the project; the facilitator must monitor that the compromise does not outweigh the benefits of the study.	–How am I guiding participants to work together for the greater good of the project?
Collaboration	Participants need to work together to attain a shared vision or goal. The facilitator needs to be aware of possible power relations, and how individual personalities and cultural roles might influence power.	–How am I encouraging participation by all members? –How are power relations affecting collaboration and participation?
Competence	Throughout the study, the facilitator reflects on their own practices and makes changes to build competence. The facilitator should also create opportunities for participants to utilise and develop their skills. Experts should be brought in or consulted where needed.	–How do I create opportunities for the participants to use and develop their strengths within the group?
Critical self-reflection	The facilitator should reflect on not only the new knowledge to answer the research questions, but also on the learning processes and how they influence the group process.	–How are my actions, predispositions, and prior knowledge influencing the group? –How well am I creating opportunities for the group members to self-reflect?

Coaching	The facilitator should learn how to facilitate effectively, through being mentored or by consulting with critical friends. There should also be supportive coaching for the group members.	– How well am I consulting with more experienced researchers? – How well am I coaching the participants?
Relationship	The facilitator should create opportunities for relationship building. The relationships between the group members should be strengthened and nurtured throughout the study, grounded in values of trust, honesty, democracy, and transparency.	– How am I nurturing the relationships between the participants to maintain open and trusting communication?
Reflection	Sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experiences is essential for generation of new knowledge. The facilitator should ask questions that encourage discussion.	– How well do I model and support critical reflection within the group?
Recognition	The facilitator and participants should affirm and celebrate each other's learning and participation in the group.	– How do I acknowledge and raise awareness of personal and professional growth and contribution to knowledge?

The 7Cs and 3Rs of PALAR, as illustrated in Table 1, are interrelated and are contingent on each other, for example, without relationship building, it will not be possible to effectively collaborate as a group (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Facilitating an ALG requires a deepened understanding of PALAR concepts and reflection on the influence of the facilitator throughout the research process (Wood, 2020a).

The Importance of Skilful Facilitation of the Action Learning Group

The participants in PALAR studies form a group with a shared vision, referred to as an action learning group (Zuber-Skerritt, 2019). Action learning sessions are focused meetings where the members learn from and with each other through sharing their experiences, knowledge, and skills in relation to the topic being explored and the process and the progress of the project (Wood, 2020a). New ideas are evaluated and discussed critically to enable transformation in learning to meet the joint vision of the group.

The purpose and tasks of an ALG are divided into four main objectives, as listed below (Wood, 2020a):

- *Relationship building*: Learning to share, trust, and support each other to create the space where everyone can share their knowledge and experiences, even when participants hold opposing views.
- *Critical reflection on self*: Increasing self-knowledge to determine learning needs and improve personal and professional skills.
- *Critical reflection on process*: Continuous reflection on the research process during each ALG meeting, to ensure that the project is on track.
- *Developing a shared vision, and determining how to reach it*: Crafting a joint vision for the project and determining the questions, goals, and processes that will help reach these goals.

The facilitator's role in forming and maintaining an ALG is to create an environment conducive for open and transparent dialogue, to generate understandings of the social issue in question, and to implement action to address it (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Effective facilitation enables participants to actively contribute during ALG meetings, to address issues of power relations, and to ensure that all participants, regardless

of their authority status, have the opportunity and the motivation to participate (Kearney, 2015). The facilitator must be sensitive to the social context of the ALG members, providing opportunities for skills development and/or building the confidence of participants (Wood, 2020a).

In contrast, if a facilitator does not maintain open and trusting communication or create a supportive environment, people will be less likely to participate, and PALAR then devolves into a traditional, researcher-driven study where participants miss out on the developmental and educational benefits inherent in the process (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Without refined facilitation skills, a researcher can easily reinforce unequal power relations, compromise the ethicality of the research, let their own biases control the discussions and results and, ultimately, damage partnerships between the university and the community (Giatti, 2019; Wood, 2020a). In summary, the role of the facilitator is to manage the group dynamics of the ALG empathically and democratically through open and transparent communication, enabling critical reflection free from bias or coercion (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018).

Methodology

For the purposes of this article, I followed a practitioner self-study approach (McNiff, 2013), a genre of action research where the researcher explains how they improved their practice, through conducting iterative cycles of action and learning. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011), self-enquiries start with the researcher experiencing a sense of dissonance that they are not living out their professed values in their practice and, thus, are not being as effective as they could be. They then identify actions that they believe will improve their practice, they implement these improvements and reflect on their efficacy in terms of reaching their stated goals, and they then present this learning as a set of claims to knowledge, which constitutes their living educational theory (Whitehead, 2018). The theory is living because it is continually changing in response to the dynamic context in which the practitioner lives and works. Putting research into practice is a lifelong pursuit of professional development and is, therefore, not finite. This process of continual reflection and action is portrayed in Figure 1. The *reflection* component of a practitioner self-study encompasses critique of one's personal knowledge, behaviour, and perceptions (McNiff, 2013). The *action* component concerns the changes, informed by the reflection, that the researcher makes to their own practices (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

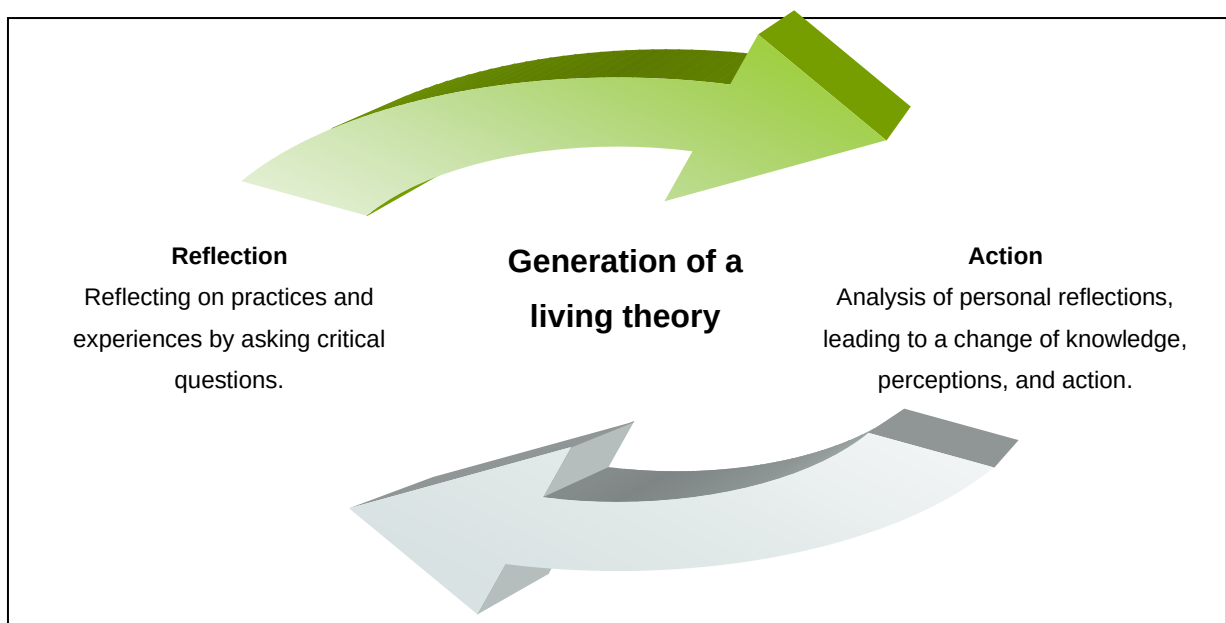


Figure 1
Generating a Living Theory Through Cycles of Action and Reflection (adapted from McNiff, 2013; Whitehead, 2018)

To generate evidence to support my claims to knowledge, I kept a personal reflective journal throughout the fieldwork (McNiff, 2013), and I supplemented this with evidence from transcripts from the ALG meetings. Before and after each session I reflected on the aims, the activities, and the process by asking myself questions such as those outlined in Table 1. These reflections helped me plan for future sessions and to become aware of potential barriers that could affect the group process towards reaching our goal of crafting guidelines for developing a critical service-learning programme for pre-service teachers. I evaluated my learning by analysing my journal entries and the transcripts of the sessions against the 7Cs and 3Rs of PALAR as guiding principles (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). To validate the data, my co-authors recoded the data individually. We then negotiated consensus of meaning, a process referred to as peer validation (McNiff, 2013). I also presented my learning to peers at a conference, where my claims to knowledge were critiqued by experts in the field. I draw from Habermas's (1978) four criteria to enhance social validity, namely, that my claims to knowledge are *comprehensible* to the reader, that the evidence provided suggests that my explanation is *truthful*, that my actions to attain the aim of improving my practice are *appropriate* given the key principles of PALAR, and that the conclusions are *sincere* and align with the norms and traditions of the context in question. I obtained ethical clearance from the university ethics committee for the larger project that this study formed part of (NWU-00783-18-A2).

Learning To Facilitate a Community-Based Research Project: Validating My Claims to Knowledge

When I first started the project, I was overwhelmed by the prospect of facilitating the ALG. Being a novice researcher, I was unsure of my ability to do this, and I did not want to jeopardise the potential beneficial outcomes of the process for the participants because of poor facilitation. As I wrote in my personal reflective journal (PRJ):

When I first started to plan this session, I felt so overwhelmed. I was negative, because I had difficulty finding participants, and it felt as if I was just going to make one big mess out of my study. (PRJ, 23 May 2019)

My strong belief in the value of participatory research in generating knowledge for social justice praxis motivated me to face my fears. I strived to embody the values of honesty, transparency, and democratic participation, and to encourage the other participants to feel free to voice their opinions and share their knowledge. I was also aware of the potentially constraining effect of power relations in the group given that it included a diverse mix of people used to hierarchical systems of interaction in their respective institutions. Table 2 provides an overview of the biographical details of the ALG.

Table 2

Action Learning Group Biographical Details

Participant code	Age (Years)	Race	Gender	Home language	Professional status of participant
P1	53	White	Female	English	In-service teacher
P2	53	Black	Male	Setswana	School principal
P3	23	White	Female	English	Pre-service teacher
P4	27	Black	Female	Setswana	Academic
P5	28	Black	Female	Setswana	In-service teacher

P6	22	White	Female	English	Pre-service teacher
P7	22	White	Female	English	Pre-service teacher
P8 (first author)	29	White	Female	Afrikaans	Academic
P9	43	Black	Male	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P10	29	Black	Female	Sesotho	In-service teacher
P11	53	Black	Male	Setswana	Departmental official
P12	22	White	Female	English	Pre-service teacher

I thought I was equipped to facilitate such a diverse group but my lack of competence made me nervous in completing this task. I now explain how I learnt to overcome my fear and improve my facilitation skills, using the interrelated foundational principles of PALAR as living standards of judgement against which to validate my learning. I start with the first lesson because it was pivotal for the remainder of my learning.

Learning To Accept Critique: Enabling Critical Self-Reflection and Embracing the Knowledge of Others

Initially, I was not comfortable with accepting critique and I was thus not open to coaching or critical self-reflection, which, in turn, hampered my development of competence. I thought I was a good facilitator, even though I was anxious. As a lecturer, I had skills to engage with students but I did not realise that facilitating a PALAR group would be so different from and more complicated than lecturing. I was disillusioned and demotivated when I received feedback from my critical friends after the first session. I was also hesitant to admit that I did not have sufficient knowledge or skills to facilitate a CBR group because I thought it would mean that I was undeserving of doing research at doctoral level. The following excerpt from my reflective journal reveals the revelation I came to about the need to change my practices:

I had time to reflect on this [negative feelings about doing research], and I think that I need to change my perception of learning while doing research. The skills to conduct research will develop as I become a more experienced researcher, but nothing will change if I refuse to let go of the fears I have . . . I have to be honest about my learning, and I need to embrace the growth. (PRJ, 29 November 2019)

When I read my journal entries later, I realised that my attitude was the greatest obstacle to the progress of the project. If I remained unaware of the need to learn through reflection and being self-critical, I would remain an unskilled facilitator. In fact, I was negating the principles of coaching and critical reflection in my own practice while expecting the other members of the ALG to adhere to them. The gap between theory and practice is one of the tensions inherent in participatory research (Fals Borda, 2013). Initially, I was not aware of the theory–practice gap in my own interaction. I was too busy trying to get through the session so I did not fall behind with the academic schedule I had set myself. In effect, I was being hypocritical because I was not practising what I was preaching. Traditional ways of researching were ingrained in me, resulting in a lack of willingness to acknowledge my vulnerability. Argyris (2003) asserted that people in professional positions, such as academic researchers, tend to avoid critical self-reflective learning because they do not want to appear incompetent and vulnerable. However, Fals Borda (2013) claimed that researchers build competence for participatory research when they are honest about their vulnerability and embrace critique of their actions. Transformative learning follows when we reflect on

why we behave, feel, and think the way we do, and not merely on *what* we are doing (Mezirow, 1990). Argyris (2003) called this double-loop learning, which leads us to question our assumptions, rather than focusing on what happened, and which enables us to separate ourselves from the actual event. To remedy this, I had to embrace learning on two levels, namely, learning about being a facilitator and learning about why I had certain fears that hindered a positive and open attitude towards learning.

I changed the way I viewed feedback from my promoters as critical friends. Their feedback was not intended as personal criticism but as guidance based on their experience. I realised the crucial role a detailed planning of a session¹³ plays, in that it helps the facilitator to reflect on the process and their assumptions about both the process and the participants. My critical friends helped me choose activities that would better reflect the participatory principles for knowledge created required in a CBR project.

Before engaging in a session, the facilitator needs to have clear in their mind a guiding research question for the aim of that stage of the process. Every session needs to start with a relationship-building activity, followed by a check-in to enable group reflection. The facilitator benefits from guiding questions to enable participants to share openly, and they should ideally model this first. I learnt that the session planning is not merely an administrative task; it was a learning tool where critical friends were able to coach me to improve my ability to engage in double-loop learning (Argyris, 2003). Although at first it was challenging to learn to accept and welcome this critique, I had to open myself to this learning because it helped me become comfortable in accepting my own learning needs.

I learnt to engage with feedback on a more reflexive level and to learn from the expertise of others. Critical reflection on our own practices leads to transformational learning (Mezirow, 1990), while keeping hidden our fears, uncertainties, and anxieties prevents deep learning (Brookfield, 2017). One of my later reflections validated this learning:

When I did my first session in May I did not understand why I had to submit such detailed planning of the sessions to my promoters prior to the session. I thought an outline planning is enough. I am now starting to realise that the session planning is my learning tool. It is how my promoters teach me how to be a facilitator... The life-enhancing values of PALAR are starting to become part of me—care, compassion and lifelong learning. I found it difficult to be open about my shortcomings at first, but I am starting to see that I cannot move forward as a researcher if I do not acknowledge how much I still need to learn. (PRJ, 17 August 2019)

McNiff (2013) emphasised that our worldview underpins what learning and development we foreground. Thus, to really grow as a facilitator, I had to acknowledge my shortcomings and reap the benefits of *failing forward*, as Maxwell (2000) reminds us. I learnt to accept that I was not a failure as a researcher just because I failed to recognise my own weaknesses from the start. Having understood my own shortcomings and need for learning, I was in a better position to facilitate the same in the group.

Starting Where the Group Is, and Responding to Their Needs

I was initially concerned that participants might not see the value of the project for in-service and pre-service teacher education but, rather, consider it merely a means for me to gain a qualification. Traditionally, teachers have been used as sources of knowledge by researchers, rather than being invited to coproduce knowledge with them. It was therefore not surprising that participants were unsure of their

¹³ Link to a detailed planning of a session:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/17BxPCkGV_lg6GmwkgPnFmnVD9d0pTMgg/view?usp=sharing

role in the project and were hesitant to participate in critical discussion. I realised I would have to find a way to shift this understanding of research as being not merely for a doctoral qualification to benefit me but as a means of improving teaching and learning in socially disadvantaged contexts that would benefit all participants and ultimately their learners.

Comments such as the following validated my concern and helped me in my quest to encourage participants to see themselves as knowledge producers:

In the beginning, I didn't see us being able to contribute anything besides what was already there. But as soon as we started engaging and communicating and talking, even just one word, you know, or just a short sentence, then it started, more ideas started erupting. And maybe I can also say the reason why I felt in the beginning that I personally didn't have anything to add on to the framework [project] was because it was already there. But like I said in the discussions that we had further on, is that you always allow that space for inclusion. (P2, Check-out session, 16 November 2019)

The framework referred to was the theoretical framework that I had designed for my doctoral study. I had combined aspects of several existing theories of service learning, but it was an emerging framework, and the aim was that our project group should develop it to formulate guidelines for service learning. However, I realised that by sharing the visual of the framework in the first session, I had intimidated the members of the group rather than encouraging them to participate. On reflection, I used this framework because I wanted to show the group that I was knowledgeable—stemming from my anxiety about working with such a diverse group. As a young white female academic, I was not sure how the black male school principal would regard me, and I was keen to show that I was knowledgeable about the topic under discussion. By presenting a “finished” work, I prevented the participants from drawing on their own considerable experience and local knowledge of the challenges they face in teaching, and ideas of how they could begin to address some of these challenges through engaging with pre-service students doing service learning. From this experience, I learnt to not foreground my own knowledge and ideas but, rather, to let them emerge as part of the group discussion along with ideas from every other participant. As a participant in the project, I was fully entitled to share these ideas with others but, by presenting them from the outset as the theoretical framework, I inhibited interaction rather than facilitate it.

The choice of venue and time was also not ideal for encouraging full participation. We had agreed to meet at the school after teaching ended so that the teachers would not have to travel. However, staying at their place of work hampered their ability to disengage from the stresses of the day. It also put me under pressure because I had to rush to the sessions after my lecturing duties. On sharing this concern with my critical friends, they advised me to ask the group if they would prefer a whole-day breakaway at a neutral venue—so the participants could have more time to engage, with limited distractions, and to enable them to relax and give their full attention to our discussions.

I chose a scenic riverside venue for the full-day session. The neutral location and relaxing environment away from the school and our normal day-to-day tasks brought a new dimension to the discussions, as is evident from the comments shared after the first session:

P2: I think we had quite a very relaxed day. No one is tired, even though we came up early in the morning. So, if we have any opportunity of any Saturday, I think that is best.

P8: So, I will ask everyone to indicate on the WhatsApp group which Saturday they are available. [Silence for 6 seconds]. Do you want to come to an environment like this again?

P2: Yeah! [followed by excited laughter from the group].

P3: I like this. It's different. And what we are doing is different.

P6: This is calm. (Check-out session, 17 August 2019)

I also included an affirmation exercise (see Wood, 2020a, p. 73, for example) to acknowledge the knowledge, skills, and values participants contributed to the project. This was done to help the participants see themselves as co-constructors of knowledge, and to recognise the value each brought to the project irrespective of their position outside the group. Tandon et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of recognition of the participants' knowledge in CBR to encourage democratic engagement. Martin (1981) stressed that researchers should be heedful of the power they deliberately exercise. Thus, I had to be mindful of how my facilitation affected the dialogue in our sessions, and how I was affirming the contributions of the group members. I believe I was successful in helping participants feel they were making an important contribution, based on the following excerpt:

It made me feel worthy to feel that I can actually accomplish something, or that I am in the process of helping a system to become better. (P4, Reflection, 16 November 2019)

During our final reflection session, I asked participants how they had experienced our way of learning and collaborating, and P2 shared the following:

It has made me realise that even a little I can contribute—it's valuable. So, sometimes one is seated there, pregnant of ideas, but not being able to deliver. So this has made me realise that I can deliver...So one has a lot of ideas, but one does not know how to disseminate or cascade this or share this, but by engaging in the group it has put me at another level in terms of sharing ideas. (P2, Check-out session, 16 November 2019)

I noticed that the group started to participate more critically when they eventually realised that it was their contributions on how we could create a socially just education system that would become the guidelines for teacher education. This, in turn, enhanced commitment. Burns and Worsley (2015) explained that increased participation occurs when participants become aware that their involvement in the project becomes the product of the research. During our last session, we reflected on how we felt about our newly cogenerated knowledge, and P2 shared the following:

As a school principal, I'll be proud if students come to my school and practise what I was a designer of. It will be so amazing because I will even be able to guide them. You know, not everybody will have this opportunity. (P2, Group reflection, 16 November 2019)

This reflection indicates a deeper awareness that participants' contributions would enable them to feel more confident and knowledgeable in their future practice when students come to do service learning. They now realised they could design programmes rather than just be recipients of the university "service." Commitment to, and ownership of, the project was thus enhanced once I provided the opportunity for them to identify and implement the knowledge, values, and skills they had contributed to the group.

Learning To Equalise Power Relations to Enhance Participation

At the start of the project, I was not mindful of the way my approach (namely, sharing my theoretical framework) could be experienced by some participants as exclusive, and that it might have been experienced as reflective of a position of authority, or even superiority, on my part. All participants should be able to communicate with each other as equals (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018), and I had to learn how to facilitate this and be mindful of power relations that might jeopardise symmetrical and inclusive communication.

During the first two sessions, the discussions were dominated by the principal and me. I only realised this when reading the transcript later. The privilege and power incurred by our positions as leaders unintentionally influenced the group dynamic, even though my planning was aimed at preventing this. I learnt that planning must be accompanied by critical self-reflection on how I might influence the group through my decisions as to how I introduce a topic, the instructions I give for engaging, and so forth. I wrote the following in my journal:

The principal invited another principal (and departmental official) to the session, and I was a little concerned, because a lot of the discussion came from these two participants and myself, although the other participants later started sharing more as well... I should draw the participants in by asking questions that will enable everyone to join in the discussion, not only the natural leaders, though I was guilty of this myself. (PRJ, 29 May 2019)

Burns and Worsley (2015) cautioned that we should not identify research as participative simply because a few people are actively sharing; they maintained that truly participative research should meaningfully engage all the participants. I admitted to myself that I had been blaming the group members for their lack of participation, attributing it to “shyness” or “lack of knowledge,” rather than accepting my responsibility to create a safe and welcoming communicative space. Communicative spaces are “social contexts [that] may be thought of as spaces where people communicate and via the communication develop certain perspectives upon the world” (Roxå, 2002, p. 575). Teachers are used to transmitting knowledge, expecting learners to listen and agree with everything they say. It is thus not surprising that they transferred this perspective to our situation where they saw themselves as the learners, and the principal, the departmental official, and me as the experts. Although asymmetrical communication is not uncommon in traditional approaches to research (Bergmark, 2020), it is, of course, the antithesis of what PALAR and other forms of CBR espouse.

To counter the lack of engagement, I asked each participant to take the lead in an aspect of the reflection. At the start of one session, I recapped what we had discussed in the previous session and asked the participants to respond to and lead the discussion on that particular aspect. This enabled individuals to add to and elaborate on, for example, the fears we shared about teaching in a system fraught with injustices. The following excerpt from my journal explains this strategy to improve the level of participant engagement:

Instead of just reading the summary of the session aloud, I asked all the participants to take charge of a section ... The participants shared their views on what they read, like a group reflection activity. (PRJ, 17 August 2019)

Recognising how the group’s participation increased through this sort of activity, I was encouraged to introduce more activities. I made use of arts-based research activities such as photovoice, making collages, and constructing a group poem,¹⁴ to share their knowledge and experience of how they envisaged social justice praxis for teacher education, and how we could create a critical service-learning programme for teacher education programmes. I adopted this strategy because arts-based research activities increase critical thinking and capture the narrative of participants more accurately; the creative demand enables participants who might have felt too intimidated to reflect verbally to express themselves better (Leavy, 2020). Arts-based methods are not only used to generate data but also as artefacts to generate discussion leading to collaborative knowledge production (Mitchell et al., 2017). Through our

¹⁴ Link to arts-based data:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y5Ae84VnxY9H2ROGPjkNt7tJJ80LZQCe/view?usp=sharing>

collaborative engagements in our ALG, we could draw on each other's expertise and create a space where we could cascade our ideas:

Your approach and the manner in which you engaged with the team was very inclusive. There was no point where I felt a bit excluded or I feel like this is A's study and she's taking control of everything that has been generated. The fact that I was part of generating the guidelines, which was a very big part of the goal of the study, is also a very, you know ... it's something to be proud of. (P4, Check-out session, 16 November 2019)

Another strategy I thought would be suitable to mitigate possible power relations was to encourage the group to address each other by their first names. I asked the participants how they would like to address each other, which immediately caused discomfort as the following dialogue from our ethical agreement discussion illustrates:

P8: What about titles, or how we address one another? Are we on a first-name basis?

[Uncomfortable laugh from pre-service teachers]

P2: [Clears throat] Come again?

P8: Is it OK if we call one another by our first name? I know that the students might be uncomfortable with that, as they know me by my surname ...

P2: You know, for some of them [teacher participants] it will be wrong in their culture to call me by my name. They call me Sir. (Negotiating ethical agreement, 29 May 2019)

The apparent uneasiness indicated that participative and democratic forms of research were new to the group, especially departure from accustomed hierarchical social structures. I realised that I should not cause more discomfort, or impinge on the cultural beliefs of the participants, and so we agreed to address each other in whatever way we felt most comfortable. I again learnt the importance of checking in with the group before making changes, given that the diverse perspectives of the participants should inform how project groups are maintained (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Facilitating a group is a difficult process and it was made even more so by the multiple roles I had to juggle.

Wearing Multiple Hats: Communicating as Facilitator, Researcher and Participant

To grow as a facilitator of PALAR meant that I had to be aware of how my biases, privileges, and personal goals for the project were influencing the participants (Coghlan, 2013). I was concerned that I might unduly influence the group if I provided a one-sided account of what my intentions for the project were. This fear caused me to withhold crucial information during the initial start-up session in which I introduced the project. I planned activities such as relationship building and setting up an ethical agreement, but I neglected to engage the group in setting a clear vision and purpose from the outset. I did not brief group members on a very important step in the PALAR process, namely, crafting a collaborative vision from which the group could extrapolate their goals, rather than assuming that the research questions I had for my doctorate would guide the project. Thus, I lost a good opportunity to build ownership and commitment among the group members. During one of our final reflection sessions, I asked the group how they thought we could have engaged differently from the start of our project. One participant shared the following:

So, if it can be explained before and then maybe generate that enthusiasm, sometimes people ... we get scared by just a topic there. And we started to say that "Now what about that? What is it I'm going to do? I know nothing about it." But if we have a little

bit background of your intentions, then maybe people will be more willing to participate. (P2, Group reflection, 16 November 2019)

I learnt that I needed to ask more critical questions and allow time for thinking, reflection, and discussion before moving to the next research activity. I was expecting the participants to critically reflect on our project without me being critically reflective myself (Brookfield, 2017), or facilitating a critical discussion. After the second session, I wrote this in my journal:

I learnt that I should draw the participants in by asking questions that will enable everyone to join in the discussion, and guiding the conversation so that everyone gets a fair chance to contribute. (PRJ, 29 May 2019)

Researchers in CBR projects need to become skilful facilitators (Tandon et al., 2016), and they need to continue to develop their skills. Through reflection after action, I did learn to be a more active listener and to pose critical questions to deepen thinking. I also learnt to know when to act as facilitator and when to participate more and let others lead—this only came with time, practice, reflection, and hindsight. What I realise now is that during fieldwork, the academic project should be put aside—otherwise the researcher's needs tend to dominate rather than the project being guided by the participants at their pace. However, painful as it is to admit my many mistakes to the wider academic community in this article, the lessons I learnt in this section helped me to develop guidelines for novice facilitators, which I discuss in the following section.

Guidelines for Novice Facilitators: Presenting My Claims to Knowledge

As a novice facilitator in a CBR project, I realised that my lack of competence in facilitating participatory research was actually an ethical issue (Wood, 2017). Before ethical clearance is granted, researchers must prove their competence by undergoing ethical training. However, such training does not equip them to facilitate participatory research where they cannot make ethical decisions without the input of the participants. And the participants will not feel free to make such input unless the facilitator takes the time to build a safe communicative space, which requires a certain degree of skill. However, I did learn from experience, and I share that experiential knowledge in this section. The lessons I learnt, supported by evidence from the data I presented, are listed below in the form of guidelines to enhance the capacity of novice facilitators of community-based research groups, which they may adapt to suit their own context:

- Good facilitation requires a commitment to critical self-reflection after each session on how you are influencing the working of the ALG. Immediately after each session, write or make a voice recording of your observations and actions during the session, and analyse your reflection against the foundational principles of CBR.
- Be honest about your experiences, even if you are learning things that are painful to admit. Growth only happens when you move beyond your comfort zone and become aware of your own biases and learning needs. Share your reflections with critical friends, and be open to their feedback. See it as an opportunity to learn from fellow academics in your field.
- Use detailed planning for each session informed by the transcripts, videos, and reflections from the previous session. Focus especially on the connections between group members, and how you can deepen these relationships. Critical self-reflection on your planning before and after sessions can help you anticipate potential barriers and plan to prevent them.
- Work at the pace of the group and focus on the joint vision. If you focus on the academic product (your qualification), you will panic and push the group too quickly, and all will lose out on the benefits of action learning. This can also jeopardise the ethicality of your project.

- Recognise your power and the privilege it brings. For many participants, this might be the first time they have been expected to participate in research with academics rather than being researched by them. How skilfully you facilitate will influence how they respond in terms of commitment and participation. Create opportunities for participants to take leadership so that you can gradually reduce your role as facilitator—to enhance sustainability of the project once you withdraw.

Inexperienced facilitators can use, adapt, and add to these guidelines as they continue to build competence to conduct ethical CBR. I offer them in the knowledge that, through sharing my experiences, I can help novice researchers to more ethically facilitate CBR projects.

Conclusion

In this paper, I shared lessons learnt from facilitating a CBR project. This practitioner self-inquiry helped me to create a “living theory” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) informed by reflection and action (McNiff, 2013). Critical reflection on the learning processes and experiences of this study enabled me to learn how to improve as a facilitator of CBR, and thus become a more ethical researcher, by ensuring that I live out, as well as enable, the foundational principles of participatory research. Robles Lomedi and Rappaport (2018, p. 606) warned that “if grassroots and external intellectuals do not understand the dynamics of this collaborative exercise, the transfer of authority that these methodologies advocate cannot take place.” And these dynamics depend on skilful facilitation of the group process. I believe these guidelines can help other researchers who do CBR to contribute to a more socially just society by enabling authentic participation by those most affected by the pressing educational and social issues that we seek to address.

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2.6 Summary of chapter

The first scholarly manuscript in this chapter provides a theoretical and conceptual argument of the paradigmatic lens through which I analysed and understood this study. The other three manuscripts answer the research questions of this study, which were:

How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?

Although this study was conducted in South Africa and for teacher education, it could be applicable to other developing countries and other disciplines. As is typical in any action research study, the participants and I negotiated the final research questions once we established their needs and objectives for the study (Jansen, 2019b; Stringer, 2014). The following secondary research questions emerged after we agreed on our vision for the study:

- What do we understand social justice and inclusion in education to be? (Manuscript 2)
- How can stakeholders in education openly and collaboratively engage to enable authentic learning experiences? (Manuscript 2)
- How can teachers develop skills to teach without fear in a socially just manner? (Manuscript 3)
- What guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process? (Manuscript 3)
- How can I, as a novice researcher, improve my facilitation of a community-based participatory action learning and action research project? (Manuscript 4)

In the following chapter I conclude the study and discuss how the guiding research question was answered.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

3.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I provide a summary of the key research findings in relation to the research aims and questions of this study. I reflect on my learning as means to highlight the value and contributions this study can add to the body of scholarship regarding social justice praxis in teacher education. I conclude how CSL can be a vehicle through which academics, pre- and in-service teachers can collaboratively transform their teaching practices to be more equitable and socially relevant.

3.2 Research purpose and aims

The overarching purpose of this study was firstly to enable academics, pre- and in-service teachers to develop social justice praxis to embody the values of a socially just education system in their teaching practices. Secondly, the participants and I co-generated guidelines for including a critical service-learning component into teacher education programmes to foster authentic and reciprocal university-community partnerships.

As this study followed a participatory design, the participants and I co-generated the vision for the study (refer to Manuscript 2), which led to the development of our guiding research questions and the subsequent secondary research questions for each cycle of the study. Our vision for the study was to infuse teacher education with real teaching realities from community schools to create a sense of unity through diversity. We envisioned creating a safe space for students (pre-service teachers), practitioners (in-service teachers) and academics (university lecturers) to share our experiences and thereby grow in our profession. Our engagements included critical discussions on how to resolve the social problems teachers and learners in South Africa face to enable socially relevant and contextualised teacher education programmes.

From our co-generated vision, we developed guiding research question: *How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?* which led to the development of the following secondary research questions that we aimed to answer throughout the study:

- *What do we understand social justice, inclusion in education and social justice praxis to be?* (Manuscript 2)

- *How can stakeholders in education openly and collaboratively engage to enable authentic learning experiences?* (Manuscript 2)
- *How can teachers develop skills to teach without fear to teach in a socially just manner?* (Manuscript 3)
- *What guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process?* (Manuscript 4)

The vision and research questions we created informed our action learning group activities, which included arts-based and reflexive data generation methods. I analysed the visual data and transcriptions of our action learning set meeting recordings through an action learning lens with the objective of social justice and collaborative learning.

3.3 Reflection of how the research questions were answered

In this section I explain how each of the scholarly manuscripts were compiled. Firstly, I discuss the contributions of each author to the manuscripts and then provide a brief overview of each manuscript.

3.3.1 Author contributions to each publication

I am the principal researcher for this study and my promoters are the co-authors of the manuscripts as well as my critical friends who co-analysed the data with me to ensure unbiased reporting. Our individual contributions to each manuscript are as follows:

Table 3-1: Individual contributions of each author to the scholarly manuscripts

Manuscript	Principal researcher	Promotor of study	Co-promotor of study
1	– Conceptualisation of Sympatric Metamorphic Educational Praxis Framework – Writing of initial chapter and drafts thereafter – Technical editing of chapter – Submission to editor – Editing final chapter after peer review	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Assisting with improvement of writing skills – Content guidance on service-learning and social justice aspects	– Content guidance on critical reflection and social justice aspects
2	– Fieldwork and data-generation – Initial data analysis with participants – Conceptualising article – Writing of initial article and drafts thereafter	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Assisting with improvement of writing skills	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Content guidance on critical reflection and social justice aspects

	– Technical editing of article – Submission to journal	– Content guidance on service-learning and methodological aspects.	
3	– Fieldwork and data-generation – Initial data analysis with participants – Conceptualising article – Writing of initial article and drafts thereafter – Technical editing of article – Submission to journal	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Assisting with improvement of writing skills – Content guidance on service-learning, critical reflection and social justice aspects and methodological aspects.	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Content guidance on critical reflection and social justice aspects
4	– Fieldwork and data-generation – Initial data analysis with participants – Conceptualising article – Writing of initial article and drafts thereafter – Technical editing of article – Submission to journal – Editing final draft after peer review process of journal	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Assisting with improvement of writing skills – Content guidance on service-learning, critical reflection and social justice aspects and methodological aspects.	– Conceptualising and developmental critique – Content guidance on critical reflection

I believe the scholarly manuscripts we co-authored for this study contributed to our perspectives about what social justice in education means and the role we as individuals in our respective positions can play to contribute to a fairer education system. Next, I provide a brief overview of each of the four scholarly manuscripts; and how they are answered the guiding and secondary research questions of this study.

3.3.2 Manuscript 1: Building a vision for social justice praxis for teacher education through service-learning

This manuscript was published in a scholarly book. I argued a conceptual and theoretical framework that could guide the study and towards the end of the study the participants and I revisited the Sympatric Metamorphic Educational Praxis framework to adjust it after our CSL-engagement.

Guiding research aims and question

The purpose of this chapter was to develop a framework to enhance CSL in teacher education to foster SJP. I drew on the principles, elements and mechanism of critical service-learning; the aspects of social justice praxis and the values of action learning.

The aims were:

- Conceptualising a definition of social justice praxis in teacher education.
- Rationalising how CSL can be a vehicle through which SJP can be advanced in teacher education.

The main research question for the project guided me in writing this manuscript:

How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?

Answering the guiding research question for this manuscript:

With this manuscript I argued that HEIs have the responsibility to reconsider their teacher education curricula against its social relevance, opportunities for students to learn from and engage with teachers within the contexts they are going to teach in, what is considered as knowledge, how local knowledge informs the teacher education curricula and how social justice is advocated for in teacher education programmes. I also presented an emerging model for critical service-learning that I conceptualised from the *principles of service-learning*: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and reflection (Butin, 2010); the three *elements of service-learning*: social change orientation, working to redistribute the power, and the development of authentic relationships (Mitchell, 2015); and the *four mechanisms of service-learning*: teaching and learning, research, community, and service (Mitchell, 2008). I drew on aspects such as lifelong learning, worldview transformation, advocacy, and participative learning of *action learning theory* (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018); and the critical reflection objective of *critical transformative theory* (Mezirow, 2003) as theoretical underpinning. I argued that the four mechanisms of service-learning enable coherence, connectedness, and a need for inter-existence, like Edward Said (2007) imagined through Contrapuntal Reading Analysis (CRA). The theoretical arguments, as stated above, led to the development of the emerging model for CSL we coined as the Sympatric Metamorphic Educational Praxis Framework (SMEP-framework) (Schoonen et al., 2020). I borrowed a few butterfly-biological terms for this model: sympatry, metamorphosis; and the term “butterfly effect” from chaos theory. Briefly put, the SMEP-framework can be described as: A model for critical service-learning that includes all stakeholders in the discipline to collaboratively identify the

contextual and social challenges that hinders social justice in practice. Through reflection new knowledge to solve complex social problems is co-generated and small actions by individuals can enable learning spaces where real social change can be actualised to contribute to a society where there is inter-existence and connectedness among people living in diverse contexts.

To answer the guiding research question to test the SMEP-framework, the action learning group and I discussed this framework during our first meeting. After all our sessions we reflected on the relevance of the framework and made revisions after our CSL-project. I discuss the changes to the SMEP-framework that emulated from experience at the end of this section (See Annexure J).

3.3.3 Manuscript 2: Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis: Setting the stage for critical service-learning in teacher education

In this empirical article, I reported on how the participants and I understand social justice in education. I made use of arts-based and reflexive data-generation activities to support critical and creative thinking.

Guiding research aims and questions:

The aim of this paper was for the participants of the action learning group to co-generate a contextually relevant understanding of social justice and what social justice praxis in education means. Secondly, the aim for the paper was to discuss how CSL can serve as a precursor to embody the values of SJP into teacher education programmes and in-service teachers' practices. We aimed to answer the following secondary research questions:

- *What do we understand social justice, inclusion in education and social justice praxis to be?*
- *How can stakeholders in education openly and collaboratively engage to enable authentic learning experiences?*

Answering the research questions for this manuscript

The action learning group engaged in arts-based and reflexive research activities to create visual representations of how they view social justice. Each participant took a photo of what symbolised social justice or social injustice for them and wrote a narrative to support their thinking. The findings from this article also revealed what the participants viewed as social justice praxis and how collaborative learning between different stakeholders can be a vehicle through which SJP

can be enabled in schools and higher education institutions. The major findings answered the research questions of the article, in summary:

- There are multiple understandings of social justice which are predominantly shaped by individuals' experiences of injustice.
- Values of inclusion, care, and transparency should inform teachers' SJP to enable teachers to develop agency.
- CSL engagements should allow for those involved to openly share their perspectives, participate in reflexive dialogue to disrupt perceived knowledge and to co-generate new knowledge through reflection and action.

3.3.4 Manuscript 3: Article- Transforming service-learning towards social justice praxis: guidelines for bridging knowledge cultures

This article was part of the group's final reflection on our learning. I present the co-generated guidelines for CSL for teacher education to foster SJP in this article.

Guiding research aims and questions

The aim of this article was to conceptualise guiding principles of CSL to foster SJP in teacher education by the action learning group reflecting on our service-learning engagement in the project to evaluate what worked well. In this article I aimed to answer the following research questions:

- *How can teachers develop skills to teach without fear in a socially just manner?*
- *What guidelines for critical service-learning to foster social justice praxis can lecturers, teachers and student teachers conceptualise collaboratively through an action learning process?*

Answering the research questions for this manuscript:

The thematically analysed findings emphasised that CSL in teacher education should be value-driven, rooted in principles of inclusion and transparency; enable ownership for the participants to encourage sustainability, and bridging knowledge cultures emanating from engaged participation; and enable participants to embody transformational and socially just education into their teaching practices.

The co-developed guidelines can serve as starting point for enabling universities and local community schools to adopt a CSL-approach into their education and professional learning

opportunities to foster SJP. I present the following seven guidelines to answer the research questions for this article:

1. All stakeholders in education should be consulted in decision-making, vision setting, learning and dissemination processes of CSL-programmes. The contexts and needs of the community should guide the actions of the project.
2. Everyone's contributions are important, regardless of positionality or experience. Preparation for CSL can perhaps include learning how to participate in and facilitate participatory research groups.
3. Contextual relevance of CSL-engagements to foster SJP should be continuously revisited and revised where needed. Lifelong learning demands continuous reflection on the ways in which knowledge is created. CSL-engagements should be evaluated annually as the needs and learning objectives of participants change or develop. Revisiting and making adaptations to the CSL-projects can enable continued social and contextual relevance.
4. Reciprocal and lifelong learning is paramount for all the parties involved in CSL-projects. and there should be benefits for all stakeholders that contribute to the CSL-engagements. Open and trusting relationships need to form among communities and universities, with a clear plan being negotiated for all involved.
5. Roles should be negotiated, clarified, and revisited as the CSL-engagement unfolds. The outcomes of the CSL-engagement can thus be flexible with reflexive learning outcomes rather than stringent and binding learning outcomes.
6. Critical reflection on learning, the process and personal lessons learnt should be encouraged and discussed in the group as they become the starting point of real change. Through critical engagement the participants can be enabled to develop agency and to embody social justice praxis into their teaching practices.
7. The facilitator should not let presumptions, their goals or power dynamics influence the process of the CSL-engagement. Keeping each other accountable through critical reflection is important.

3.3.5 Manuscript 4 - Learning to facilitate community-based research: Guidelines from a novice researcher

Guiding research aims and question

My research aim for this article was to reflect on my development as a research and lecturer in facilitating an action learning group. I realised that I needed to develop facilitation skills to conduct ethical research and to be true to the values that I stand for. The guiding research question for this article was:

How can I, as a novice researcher, improve my facilitation of a community-based participatory action learning and action research project? •

Answering the research question for this manuscript

This paper reported on the learning experiences and processes followed to facilitate the action learning set in a way that is true to the dialogic and democratic principles of PALAR. To encourage facilitation and collaboration I used visual arts-based methodologies such as photovoice, collage and metaphor discussion to enable all participants to share freely and equally. As this manuscript focused on the facilitation process, I analysed the transcriptions of the sessions and reflective journal entries through a critical transformative lens to report on the experiences of the facilitation process of the sessions. Firstly, I learnt how to improve my facilitation skills for action learning groups, and secondly, I learnt how to use continuous critical self-reflection, underpinned by the principles of PALAR, to guide my actions to conduct more ethical community-based research projects. The lessons learnt can help other researchers to become more confident and skilled in using PALAR as method of facilitation in action research studies.

3.3.6 Answering the guiding research question

The guiding research question of this study was: *How can critical service-learning help to develop social justice praxis in the context of South African teacher education?*

When I first started with this study, I constructed the SMEP-framework to rationalise how the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework and methodological approaches that informed and underpinned this study can be merged into one. Social justice, service-learning and participatory approaches to research has overlapping objectives of enabling social change, lifelong learning and collaboration among participants. To answer the primary guiding research question of this study, the participants and I revisited the initial SMEP-framework (Manuscript 1) to adjust it after our CSL-project. We reflected on our learning and made adaptations according

to our experiences as we engaged in this project. Figure 3-1 below is an illustration of our group's reimagined SMEP-framework titled: *Sympatric Metamorphic Educational Praxis Framework: A framework for critical service-learning and social justice* (see Annexure J).

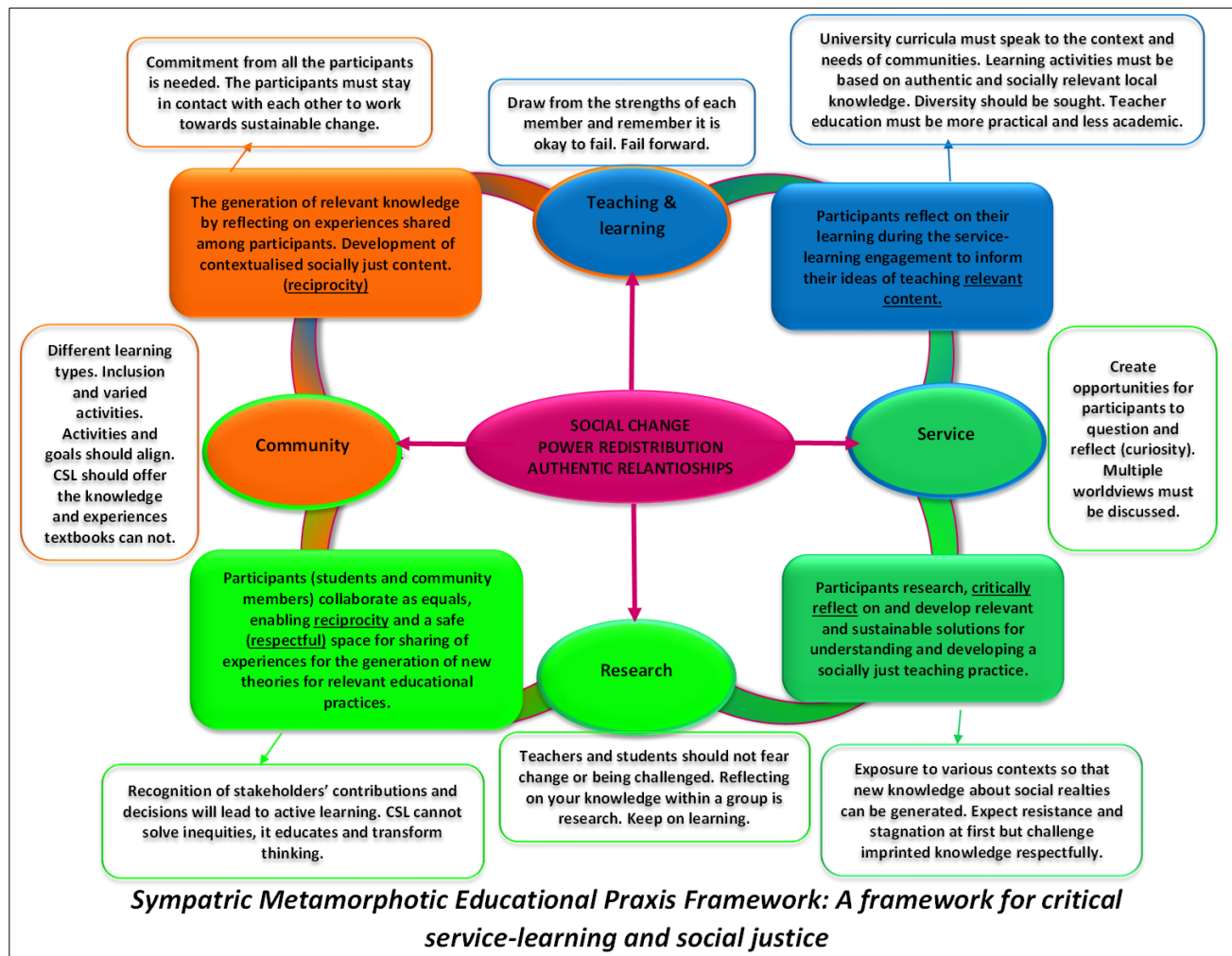


Figure 3-1: Reimagined SMEP-framework of action learning group

The reimagined SMEP-framework addresses the practical ways in which the CSL can be implemented. The participants highlighted the importance of collaboration without fear, recognition of all the stakeholders; inclusion; varies experiences of diversity; critical reflection of worldview and worldview transformation; offering fresh and authentic experiences of teaching realities; reconsidering the social and contextual relevance of teacher education curricula; learning through mistakes; and aligning the goals and activities of CSL engagements with each other. In the next section I conclude this study.

3.4 Conclusion and reflection on my learning

“Any attempt to disturb the deadly routine of instruction is looked upon as sabotage. And the notion that the aims and functions of education should be determined in the local community by a close and continuous discussion among students, faculty, administration, and citizens is so visionary that it is not even seriously considered.” –Charles Ferguson (Equity Literacy Institute, 2017)

3.4.1 Reflection on my learning

My personal learning journey throughout this study resonates with the above quotation. Initially I was the person who self-sabotaged my learning. I found it challenging to be comfortable with the feelings of uncertainty and was fearful of failure. As a young academic I often felt conflicted about my teaching strategies as I used to teach in a traditional lecturer-centred way. As I developed as an academic, I did not feel comfortable to teach in ways that did not speak to values of inclusion, social justice, and transparency anymore. The students were reluctant to acknowledge my point of view when I first started to challenge the *way* I teach, *what* I teach and *how* I chose to assess their learning, although they engaged in classroom discussions. From my experience, their objective for learning was still to meet the module outcomes rather than to challenge their ideas about teaching.

Though it was very difficult to engage in a process of critical self-reflection, I now realise the importance of revisiting what I know and what I stand for as a teacher. I realised that I had to transform my ideas of what knowledge is and how we come to know things because neglecting the social realities of the South African educational landscapes was not helpful for my students to develop autonomy, social awareness, and to prepare them for social justice praxis.

One of the lessons I learnt from this study that stands out above the personal learning, is the value of collaborative learning in professional environments. Working in a small group, or community of practice, brought about benefits of creating trusting relationships; learning from each other's experiences; breaking down stereotypes about teaching and social realities of people by asking critical questions; reflecting and voicing ideas with peers; and to change our own perceptions through active listening.

Through this study I developed my own voice as an agent of social change. Though painful at times, I chose to acknowledge that my biases and privileges limited my understanding of social injustice. I also learnt to acknowledge my failures and use the life experiences as learning opportunities. I became comfortable with the disruption of my thoughts, and I learnt how to adapt

my teaching practices to be more inclusive and informed by local and contextualised knowledge. The most challenging thing I learnt was how to redefine myself as a teacher, researcher, and agent of social change. Figure 3-1 provides a visual representation of how I envision my new identity as an advocate for social justice in education.



Figure 3-2: Collage that showcase my learning through this study

I now explain each of the images of the collage according to their numbers as indicated on the artwork. This reflects my learning and development throughout this study.

1. **I stand for:** I devote my teaching, learning and research to enable a critical and reflective space where social justice is foregrounded. I view myself as a critical and creative thinker and aim to employ these skills to encourage open and honest reflections of people's ideas. I am optimistic that we can contribute to a more equitable education system through collaboration between universities and community-partners rooted in reciprocal learning.
2. **My goal:** I want to be part of learning opportunities that will challenge imprinted knowledge to enable the generation of contextualised and socially relevant knowledge to inform teacher education.
3. **The process of reaching my goal:** I view lifelong learning as a process of discussing, planning, taking action, reflecting on actions and the transformation of ideas. I believe we need to acknowledge and include diverse experiences into teacher education through tools such as CSL as there are different social contexts in which we live, learn, and teach. When we collaborate instead of working in silos, we can all contribute our knowledge to the larger 'puzzle' of understanding ourselves and one another.

4. **My role to achieve the goal:** Advocating for social justice in education is a deliberate choice and it is informed by our values. I learnt that you cannot advocate for social justice in education if you are not truly committed to social change, starting with challenging your own thinking. Challenging the status quo is a work from the heart.

The reflection on my learning throughout this study encourages me to stay a lifelong learner and to advocate for the students, teachers and fellow academics I engage with to be agents of social change and to continuously reflect on their perspectives and imprinted ideas to create a new understanding of different concepts.

3.4.2 Significance of this study

This study was a community-based research study that included various stakeholders in basic and higher education. I believe our learning was authentic and can show how CSL can be used to develop understandings of SJP. Theoretically, this study can contribute to understanding of diversity, social justice and social education from a South African perspective by academics, pre- and in-service teachers. The development, implementation and evaluation of a collaboratively developed CSL guidelines for teacher education can also serve as the basis for universities and schools to implement and develop service-learning programmes from this study. Methodologically, this study can create further space for the use of PALAR and other action research methods to be used for research in the social sciences, to truly advocate sustainable social change.

3.4.2.1 Significance for in-service teachers

The participatory nature of this study created a space where the in-service teachers could share their knowledge and experiences with each other. By participating in this study, the teachers could learn more about how to address social issues by engaging in discussion of contextualised experiences with other colleagues. The participants agreed that the guidelines that emerged from this study can be written into a manual for critical service-learning for schools to help teachers and school leaders to prepare and participate in critical service-learning opportunities for professional development. The in-service teachers benefitted from this study by forming a community of practice where they could share their experiences of teaching in the current educational landscapes of South Africa. The engagement with pre-service teachers offered a fresh perspective of how learners from a post-Apartheid and democratic South Africa think and learn. I believe that participating in CSL-engagements such as in this study other in-service teachers can also reap the benefit of professional development and lifelong learning.

3.4.2.2 Significance for teacher education

The pre-service teachers who participated in this study had the opportunity to learn and share their experiences of social justice and they were enabled to generate a new understanding of social realities of teachers face daily. Through their participation, the pre-service teachers also offered fresh perspective about what learning in a post-Apartheid South Africa is like, and how perspectives around education shifted since South Africa became a democratic country. The pre-service teachers could develop their social justice praxis by reflecting on the experiences shared within the group and they could apply this newly generated knowledge into their teaching practice. I believe that the findings of this study can assist pre-service teachers to develop the competencies of becoming critical reflexive teachers that can adopt their practices according to the needs and diverse circumstances of the learners as set out in the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015). To bridge the gap between theory and practice teacher education institutions can draw on the co-generated guidelines of CSL to foster SJP when planning community engagement activities to enhance pre-service teachers' learning.

3.4.2.3 Significance for teacher education and higher education institutions

This study provides evidence-based and community-driven guidelines for CSL that universities and other higher education institutions can adopt into their programmes to enable transformational learning. The guidelines for CSL can serve as the starting point for lecturers to adapt their teaching practices to infuse their curriculum with socially and contextually relevant content. Furthermore, the methods followed in this study can help bridge the partnerships between stakeholders in education as community-based research foregrounds transparency and reciprocity. The stereotype that research is only academic and meant for academia can be challenged when higher education institutions engage in community-based research projects. When applied according to the principles of CSL, engagements as envisioned through this study, can respond to the governmental mandates of transforming higher education (DHET, 2015).

3.4.3 Limitations of this study

In this section I provide a description of the limitations of this study as part of my reflection on my learning that took place throughout the study. The limitations are categorised into two types of limitations, one being the methodological limitations and the other as researcher limitations.

3.4.3.1 Methodological limitations

The following methodological limitations were identified and efforts to mitigate the limitations were made where possible:

- (i) **Recruiting pre-service teacher participants for the study:** Though I tried to recruit a group of pre-service teacher participants that represented more diversity in terms of gender, race, language-background and age, the only pre-service teachers who agreed to participate in this study were young, white, female pre-service teachers. There were some diversities in terms of language and social backgrounds among the larger group of pre- and in-service teachers.
- (ii) **COVID-19 and the national lockdown:** Though most of the empirical work for the study was done prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the lockdown did affect the opportunity for me to arrange a collaborative follow-up session with the group. This delayed writing up some of the work as I needed to consult with participants individually to attain clarity of what they shared during our meetings. The strain on educators during the pandemic also made it difficult to communicate with participants in face-to-face interactions or live meetings as we had conflicting schedules.
- (iii) **Time constraints:** The pre-service teacher participants were in their final year of studying towards their teaching degrees when the fieldwork commenced. We had to plan four sessions according to the time the pre-services teachers had left before they concluded their studies.
- (iv) **Death of a participant:** Towards the end of 2020 one of the in-service teacher participants passed away due to Covid-19 complications. I could not verify any of his contributions with him personally, although we did reflect on all sessions and co-analysed the data within the group during 2019.
- (v) **Reporting on my living theory:** I had to be careful not to report in a biased way when writing the practitioner self-study article. To mitigate possible bias, the co-authors of the paper analysed the data with me, and we made use of Habermas' (1978) criteria for ethical reporting. I had to be mindful to not let selective memory and exaggeration of events influence my writing.
- (vi) **Past experiences of research studies:** I had to be cognisant that not all the participants had positive experiences of participating in research studies prior to this one. Initially the participants were hesitant to share their experiences and knowledge freely as a participatory

approach to research was new to most of them. My promotor offered guidance in how to facilitate an action learning group skilfully.

3.4.3.2 Researcher limitations

The following methodological limitations were identified and efforts to mitigate the limitations were made where possible:

- (i) **Cultural and social bias:** As I became a participant in the study, I deliberately chose to challenge my biases before I commenced with the fieldwork. Before each session with the participants, I reflected on how I felt, what challenges I was experiencing in terms of the research project, and how my own experiences and perspective may influence how I facilitate the session. Initially, I fell back to dominating the discussions as I was nervous when the participants were unsure of how to participate. My promotor guided me to become a more active listener than speaker when I shared this concern with them.
- (ii) **Academic fluency:** As a novice researcher I had to learn how to write academically as I did not have advanced skills in academic reporting when I commenced with this study. With guidance from my promotor and attending an academic writing course I obtained a few strategies to improve my writing to not confuse the readers and to be less assertive in my writing style.

Acknowledging that this study did have limitations was a very important reflection for me. I am a perfectionist and being honest about the shortcomings of the study and my research skills was a very difficult task as I feared failing the participants of the study. I now end off this study with a few final remarks.

3.5 Concluding remarks

I introduced my study by drawing from a quote that emphasised the need for teachers to develop an understanding of the social problems and diversity of the learners in their classrooms, and how to adapt their teaching practices in such way that they become agents of social change in an education system that is fraught with various social injustices. What stood out for me from the outset is that the teacher who shared this wisdom started by emphasising that real social change starts with challenging our own thoughts.

The values we aim to uphold become our standards of measurement in our professional and personal lives. I wish to reiterate the values that I aim to embody in my teaching and life in general. They are: *all people, irrespective of who they are or where they come from, can add value to society; honesty and transparency form the cornerstone of progress. I also believe the following:*

co-existence in any society needs co-recognition and co-value; it takes a whole village to move forward; money, power, and access to education and resources are not the only things that will help one attain knowledge; having compassion and doing introspection is painful but vital, as it leads you to question and change your own assumptions and beliefs; and, lastly, life is really not about you, but what you can do to improve the lives of others.

Through this study, I aimed to remain truthful to the values I stand for. My sincere hope is that the knowledge and skills that our action learning group created serve the purpose of bringing about real change in our respective teaching practices. Throughout all our discussions and activities in the group it became evident that the guidelines we co-generated for critical service-learning already had changed the way we saw ourselves as teachers; what we view as our role in society as agents of change; how we can adapt our teaching practices to be inclusive, socially just and contextually relevant; how we view collaborative learning opportunities by creating communities of practice among stakeholders in education; and, lastly, how we want to disseminate our ideas to create safe spaces that foreground lifelong learning.

My recommendation for further research firstly includes that scholars and fellow teachers use the guidelines for CSL that we created in their practices to establish if it is plausible; and secondly, that we focus on including a CSL-component into teacher education programmes where the community partners also determine the content and goals. I further suggest to fellow scholars and all who are interested in community-based research through participatory methods to consider learning more about their discipline from real-life environments.

With the outset of this study I realised that many scholars write about the need for CSL and socially relevant education, however, not many articles offer ways in which reciprocal CSL can be done. We need to do more research to address this gap since the learning for in-service teachers is rarely considered. In our efforts to leave the world better than how we found it, we must critically reflect on if we, as individuals and a collective, are becoming the teachers and researchers that our world, learners and communities need.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: PARTICIPANTS



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

**Community Based Educational Research
(COMBER)**

Tel: 018 299 1871
Email: andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za

May 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves teachers from primary schools. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa.

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Prof. Lesley Wood
CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. Corné Kruger
ADDRESS: Office building C6, Room 218, Faculty of Education, North-West University, 11 Hoffman Street, Potchefstroom, 2520
CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 4770

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM Phd-student: Mrs. Andri Schoonen
ADDRESS: Office building B10, Room G37, Faculty of Education, North-West University, 11 Hoffman Street, Potchefstroom, 2520
CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 1871/ 082 254 4065

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also asked from the Department of Basic Education as well as the school principal.

What is this research about?

The aims/guiding research questions I hope to answer with this research are:

- Determining how social justice praxis in teacher education can be developed for the South African context through service-learning.
- Determining and developing solutions for the current gaps between theoretical coursework and practice that pre-service and in-service teachers can identify based on their knowledge and experiences of social justice issues resulting from diversity in education.
- Developing, implementing and reflecting on a service-learning to address the identified gaps regarding social justice praxis for teacher education in the South African context.

Participants

- For this study there are two types of participants we wish to recruit:
 - In-service teachers from schools facing challenges and being part of previous disadvantaged communities.
 - Pre-service teachers from different income-level backgrounds studying towards a BEd-degree in Foundation Phase teaching.

What is expected of you as participant?

During the data generation it will be expected of you to attend action learning set meetings regularly and during the sessions to participate in discussions, visual activities such as draw-and-talk and photo-voice. You will be asked to keep reflective journals throughout the duration of the study to reflect on experiences and their own learning or personal development through the study. You will also be expected to analyse the data with the researcher to ensure that the analysis is a true reflection of their contributions.

The duration of the data generation process will be about 3 months with regular meetings between the participants at a venue that is easily accessible and agreed upon.

Benefits to you as participant

- Knowledge about community realities for undergraduate students.
- Collaborative relationship building between in-service and pre-service teachers.
- Service/help between participants for challenges identified.

Risks involved for participants

I would say I foresee no risk for you but we will be drawing up an ethical agreement in which you will be able to say what protection you would like, if any.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Research studies like this are focused on collaboration and learning together. The space we create is safe for sharing feelings, experiences and thoughts. You will also be able to choose if you want to be part of the WhatsApp-group for communication and support and you will be able to choose if you would like to make your identity known.

When we share transcriptions and the analysing of the data you will be able to make contributions, add comments and check the accuracy, validity and confidentiality (where applicable) of the transcriptions and findings made.

Dissemination of findings

I will disseminate the data in articles and conference presentations. You will decide how you would like to disseminate your data e.g. in booklet form, at a workshop, during a dissemination function when we set up our ethics agreement.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa.

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

I, the participant, wish to be known by my real name:

YES	NO	Signature:
-----	----	------------

I have no objection to my photographs being used in academic publications with prior consultation:

YES	NO	Signature:
-----	----	------------

Signed at (place) _____ on (date) ____/____/20____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

ANNEXURE B: ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 19/07/2020, this committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof L Wood

Student / Team: A Schoonen (PhD student - 21616744), Dr CG Kruger

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	0	7	8	3	-	1	8	-	A	2
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Project

Commencement date: 29/10/2020

Risk: Low

Expiry date: 29/10/2021

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor/principal investigator/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EduREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EduREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EduREC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;

- *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof JAK Olivier
Chairperson NWU Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS1\8533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: RESEARCHER DATA GATEKEEPER COMMITTEE



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
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Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and Lecturer
Faculty of Education
Community Based Educational Research
(COMBER)
North-West University

Tel: 018 299 1871/0822544065
Email: andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za

7 January 2019

The Registrar
North-West University
Potchefstroom Campus
Potchefstroom
2520
018 299 2605

Dear Prof Verhoef

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

My name is Andri Schoonen, student number: 21616744, ID-number: 9012200139083, and I am a PhD-student and lecturer in Education at the North West University (NWU). I am conducting my doctoral research under the supervision of Professor Lesley Wood and Dr Corné Kruger (contact details provided).

The title of my research project is: **A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa.**

My research proposal was approved by the MEd and PhD Committee of the Faculty of Education and my research project has been for review at the Education Research Ethical Committee meeting of 26 October 2018.

I hereby request your permission to conduct the field work of this project at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Faculty of Education. The aims/guiding research questions I hope to answer with this research are:

- Determining how social justice praxis in teacher education can be developed for the South African context through service-learning.
- Determining and developing solutions for the current gaps between theoretical coursework and practice that pre-service and in-service teachers can identify based on their knowledge and experiences of social justice issues resulting from diversity in education.

- Developing, implementing and reflecting on a service-learning to address the identified gaps regarding social justice praxis for teacher education in the South African context.

This research will comprise pre-service foundation phase teachers who will be invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. All sessions will take place outside academic programme hours. I hope to recruit pre-service teachers whom I teach in the BEd Foundation Phase programme. To start off, I will invite the prospective participants to an information session where an independent informant will inform them about my research project. After the information session, I will extend an invitation to the attendees to participate on a voluntary basis in the research project. Thereafter the voluntary participants and I will meet to have discussions about their own perceptions of social justice (or lack thereof) in education and how we can collaborate to inform our teacher education programmes to address the social justice issues learners and teachers face through a service-learning component, teachers from local schools will also be invited to be participants in this study.

All our sessions will be interactive and these sessions will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. The research will adhere to the ethical prescriptions of the Research Ethics Committee of the NWU. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the university nor individual students will be identifiable in any publications stemming from the research, unless they prefer to make their identity known. The role of the participating students are voluntary and the participants may decide to withdraw at any time without any fear or penalty. In the unlikely event that a participant may require any type of psychological support as a result of their participation in the research project, the researcher will take the necessary professional action to support the students.

Should you need more information about the research you are very welcome to contact me at 082 254 4065 or Prof Lesley Wood at 018 299 4770.

Thank you very much for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and NWU-lecturer
North-West University

ANNEXURE D: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and Lecturer
Faculty of Education
Community Based Educational Research
(COMBER)
North-West University

Tel: 018 299 1871/0822544065
Email: andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za

7 February 2019

Dr Monale
Department of Education, North West
Province Dr Kenneth Kaunda District
Potchefstroom
bmonale@nwpg.gov.za
018 299 8216

Dear Dr Monale

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

My name is Andri Schoonen, student number: 21616744, ID-number: 9012200139083, and I am a PhD-student and lecturer in Education at the North West University (NWU). I am conducting my doctoral research under the supervision of Professor Lesley Wood and Dr Corné Kruger (contact details provided).

The title of my research project is: **A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa.**

My research proposal was approved by the MEd and PhD Committee of the Faculty of Education and the Education Research Ethical Committee (Project ethics number: NWU-00783-18-A2). I now need to seek permission from the North West Department of Education to conduct the field work at the identified schools.

I hereby request your permission to conduct the field work at [REDACTED] school. The aims/guiding research questions I hope to answer with this research are:

- Determining how social justice praxis in teacher education can be developed for the South African context through service-learning.
- Determining and developing solutions for the current gaps between theoretical coursework and practice that pre-service and in-service teachers can identify based on their knowledge and experiences of social justice issues resulting from diversity in education.
- Developing, implementing and reflecting on a service-learning to address the identified gaps regarding social justice praxis for teacher education in the South African context.

This research will comprise foundation phase teachers who will be invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. All sessions will take place after school hours, so teachers' participation in the research project will not have an effect on their teaching responsibilities in any way. To start off, I will invite the Foundation Phase teachers to an information session where I will inform them about my research project. After the information session, I will extend an invitation to the attendees to participate on a voluntary basis in the research project. Thereafter the voluntary participants and I will meet to have discussions about the teachers' own perceptions of social justice (or lack thereof) in education and how we can collaborate to inform our teacher education programmes to address the social justice issues learners and teachers face through a service-learning component.

All our sessions will be interactive and these sessions will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. The research will adhere to the ethical prescriptions of the Research Ethics Committee of the NWU. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the school nor individual teachers will be identifiable in any publications stemming from the research, unless they prefer to make their identity known. The role of the participating teachers is voluntary and the participants may decide to withdraw at any time without any fear or penalty. In the unlikely event that a participant may require any type of psychological support as a result of their participation in the research project, the researcher will take the necessary professional action to support the teacher.

Should you need more information about the research you are very welcome to contact me at 082 254 4065 or Prof Lesley Wood at 018 299 4770.

Thank you very much for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and NWU-lecturer
North-West University

ANNEXURE E: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and Lecturer
Faculty of Education
Community Based Educational Research
(COMBER)
North-West University

Tel: 018 299 1871/0822544065
Email: andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za

23 April 2019

The Principal and SGB [REDACTED] School
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir and members of the SGB

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

My name is Andri Schoonen, student number: 21616744, ID-number: 9012200139083, and I am a PhD-student and lecturer in Education at the North West University (NWU). I am conducting my doctoral research under the supervision of Professor Lesley Wood and Dr Corné Kruger (contact details provided).

The title of my research project is: **A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through service-learning for teacher education in South Africa.**

My research proposal was approved by the MEd and PhD Committee of the Faculty of Education. The ethical clearance of this project has been approved by the Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC) and the Researchers Data Gatekeeper Committee (RDGC) of the North-West University.

Edu-REC ethics number: NWU-00783-18-A2

NWU RDGC reference number: NWU-GK-2019-007

I hereby request your permission to conduct the field work at [REDACTED] school. The aims/ guiding research questions I hope to answer with this research are:

- Determining how social justice praxis in teacher education can be developed for the South African context through service-learning.
- Determining and developing solutions for the current gaps between theoretical coursework and practice that pre-service and in-service teachers can identify based on their knowledge and experiences of social justice issues resulting from diversity in education.
- Developing, implementing and reflecting on a service-learning to address the identified gaps regarding social justice praxis for teacher education in the South African context.

This research will comprise foundation phase teachers who will be invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. All sessions will take place after school hours, so teachers' participation in the research project will not have an effect on their teaching responsibilities in any way. To start off, I will invite the

Foundation Phase teachers to an information session where I will inform them about my research project. After the information session, I will extend an invitation to the attendees to participate on a voluntary basis in the research project. Thereafter the voluntary participants and I will meet to have discussions about the teachers' own perceptions of social justice (or lack thereof) in education and how we can collaborate to inform our teacher education programmes to address the social justice issues learners and teachers face through a service-learning component.

All our sessions will be interactive and these sessions will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. The research will adhere to the ethical prescriptions of the Research Ethics Committee of the NWU. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the school nor individual teachers will be identifiable in any publications stemming from the research, unless they prefer to make their identity known. The role of the participating teachers is voluntary and the participants may decide to withdraw at any time without any fear or penalty. In the unlikely event that a participant may require any type of psychological support as a result of their participation in the research project, the researcher will take the necessary professional action to support the teacher.

Should you need more information about the research you are very welcome to contact me at 082 254 4065 or Prof Lesley Wood at 018 299 4770.

Thank you very much for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Andri Schoonen
PhD-student and NWU-lecturer
North-West University

ANNEXURE F: MANUSCRIPT 1: ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Andri Schoonen - Your chapter for the 2018 SAERA Conference Book

From: Charl Wolhuter
To: Carolina Botha; Deon Vos; Lesley Wood; Andri Schoonen; Corné Kruger
Date: 2019/09/28 16:08
Subject: Your chapter for the 2018 SAERA Conference Book
Attachments: Chapter 9 Schoonen et al.docx

Dear Andri, Corné and Lesley,

Thank you for your submission for the above volume. AOSIS publishers has circulated your submission for peer review. I am pleased to inform you that the reviewers recommend publication, but I was asked to insert a few paragraphs linking your chapter with the overall theme of the book. Attached please find your chapter with where I have worked in blue font. Kindly check and alter as you judge good and send back to me asap. As I am under tremendous pressure, time-wise, from the publishers, if I hear nothing from you I shall assume you are satisfied with the chapter as edited by me.

Yours faithfully,
CCW



Prof. C.C. Wolhuter
Vergelykende en Internasionale Opvoedkunde
Skool vir Professionele Studies in Onderwys
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Tel: [+27 \(0\)18 299 1881](tel:+270182991881)
Potchefstroom

Prof. C.C. Wolhuter
Comparative and International Education
School for Professional Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Tel: +27 018 299 1881
Potchefstroom

Vrywaringsklousule / Disclaimer: <http://www.nwu.ac.za/it/gov-man/disclaimer.html>

ANNEXURE G: MANUSCRIPT 2: SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

Andri Schoonen - [JE] Submission Acknowledgement

From: Rosemarie Milburn <rose@saera.co.za>
To: Andri Schoonen <andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2021/12/04 03:44
Subject: [JE] Submission Acknowledgement

Andri Schoonen:

Thank you for submitting the manuscript, "Pre-service and in-service teachers' collaborative imaginings of social justice praxis" to Journal of Education. With the online journal management system that we are using, you will be able to track its progress through the editorial process by logging in to the journal web site:

Manuscript URL: <https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/authorDashboard/submission/2531>
Username: andri_schoonen

If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you for considering this journal as a venue for your work.

Rosemarie Milburn

Journal of Education

Journal of the SA Education Research Association (SAERA)

Transforming service-learning towards social justice praxis: Guidelines for bridging knowledge cultures

Submitted on Dec 03, 2021 - Manuscript ID: 1547421

Successfully Submitted

- Successfully Submitted
- Reviewers Invited
- Reviewers Confirmed
- First Review Submitted
- Decision Made

Manuscript Details

Author Details

Corresponding Author

Andri Schoonen, andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za
Faculty of Education, COMBER, North-West University
ORCID iD:
[0000-0003-3171-9221](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3171-9221)

All Authors

Authors displayed in the order provided during submission

- Andri Schoonen, andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za
Faculty of Education, COMBER, North-West University
ORCID iD:
[0000-0003-3171-9221](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3171-9221)
- Lesley Wood, lesley.wood@nwu.ac.za
Faculty of Education, COMBER, North-West University
ORCID iD:
[0000-0002-9139-1507](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9139-1507)
- Corné Kruger, corne.kruger@nwu.ac.za

Help

ANNEXURE I: MANUSCRIPT 4: ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Andri Schoonen - FW: ERSC Ed 19.10

From: "ED Journal (Nelson Mandela University)" <edjournal@mandela.ac.za>
To: Andri Schoonen <andri.schoonen@nwu.ac.za>, "lesley.wood@nwu.ac.za" <le...>
Date: 2021/03/06 16:06
Subject: FW: ERSC Ed 19.10
Cc: "Poisat, Carol (Ms) (Summerstrand Campus South)" <Carol.Poisat@mandela.a...>

Dear Andri Schoonen

Your article has been accepted for publication in our **April 2021** themed issue. It has been forwarded to our language editor who will liaise with you.

Kindly ensure that your details on the attached letter are correct, fill in the necessary information and sign. Thereafter, please email this letter back to me.

Kind regards

Amina Brey (on behalf of Prof Mariette Koen, Dr Stef Esterhuizen and Dr Marinda Neethling, editors of the special issue)

Research & Administrative Assistant: ERSC
to the following Editors-in-Chief:

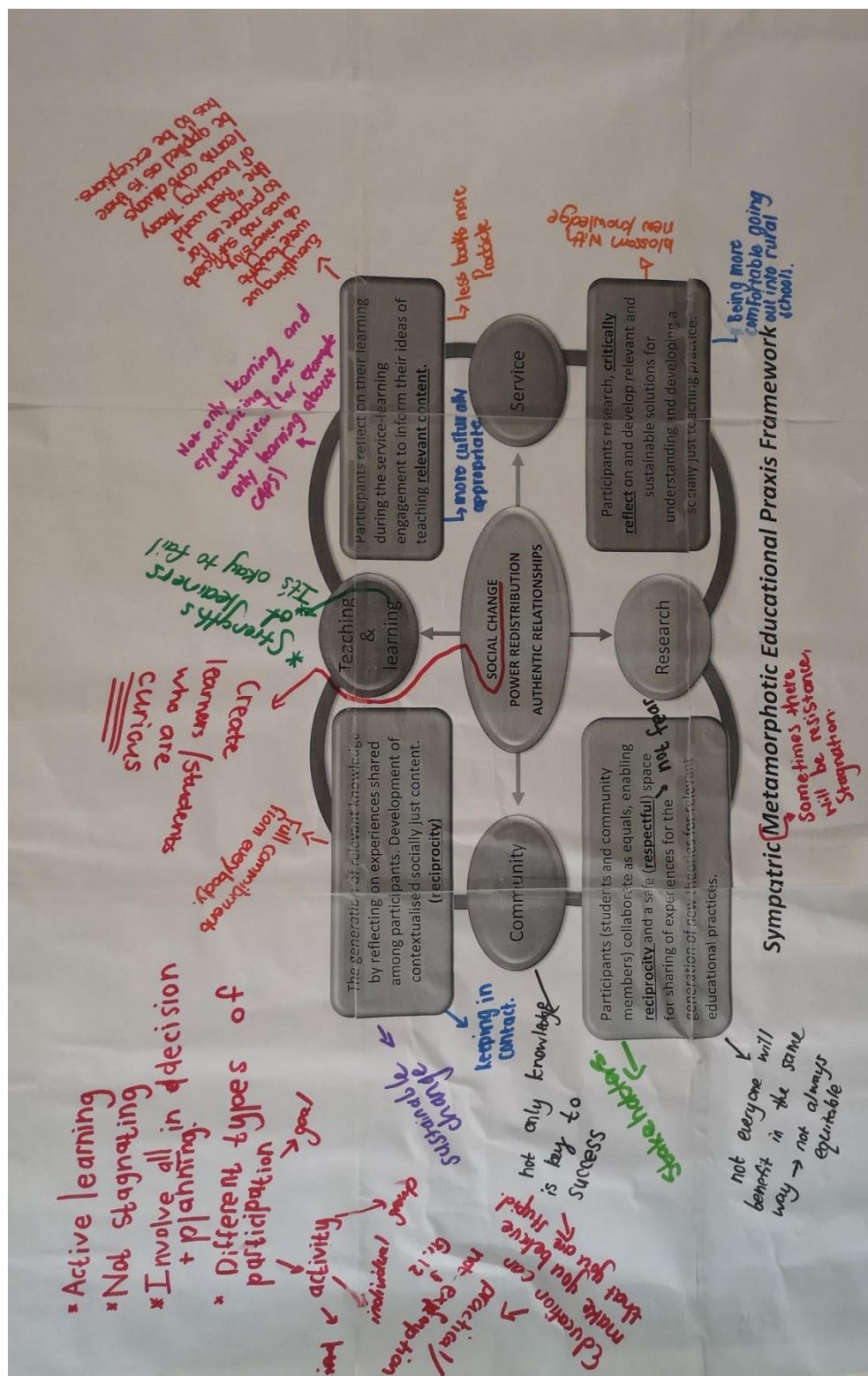
Prof Lesley Wood

Prof Andre du Plessis

Prof Mathabo Khau

ERSC is indexed in Scopus, IBSS and Scielo

ANNEXURE J: REIMAGINED SMEP-FRAMEWORK



ANNEXURE K: ETHICAL AGREEMENT

Agreement

- * Open engagement
 - Share real challenges and find ways to deal.
 - No fear
- * Really understand where ^{, culture, traditions} (T) + (L) come from
 - ↓ by asking questions
- * No power-figure
- * No contribution is wrong
- * Meetings in staff room at school

ANNEXURE L: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATES

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Dr. L. Hoffman

Kroonstad

BA, BA(Hons), MA, DLitt et Phil, Certificate (English Grammar for Editors)

Member of South African Translators' Institute – No. 1003545

Cell no: 079 193 5256

33 Blesbok Place, Kroonstad, 9499

Email: larizahoffman@gmail.com

DECLARATION

To whom it may concern

I hereby confirm that I have edited and proofread the abstract and chapter 3 of this thesis, including the reference list.

Title of manuscript

A collaborative approach to developing social justice praxis through
service-learning for teacher education in South Africa

Authors

A. Schoonen, L. Wood and C. Kruger



Lariza Hoffman
Kroonstad



Director: CME Terblanche - BA (Pol Sc), BA Hons (Eng), MA (Eng), TEFL
22 Strydom Street
Baillie Park, 2531
Tel 082 821 3083
cumlaudelanguage@gmail.com

DECLARATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Christina Maria Etrechia Terblanche, hereby declare that I edited the abstract and biographical information accompanying the article titled:

Transforming higher education towards social justice praxis: bridging knowledge cultures through critical service learning

for Andri Schoonen for the purpose of submission as an article for publication. Changes were made in track changes and application was left up to the author.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CME Terblanche', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CME Terblanche

Cum Laude Language Practitioners (CC)

South African Translators Institute accr nr: 1001066

Full member of the Professional Editors Guild



Director: CME Terblanche - BA (Pol Sc), BA Hons (Eng), MA (Eng), TEFL
22 Strydom Street
Baillie Park, 2531
Tel 082 821 3083
cumlaudelanguage@gmail.com

DECLARATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Christina Maria Etrechia Terblanche, hereby declare that I edited the abstract and biographical information accompanying the article titled:

Transforming higher education towards social justice praxis: bridging knowledge cultures through critical service learning

for Andri Schoonen for the purpose of submission as an article for publication. Changes were made in track changes and application was left up to the author.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CME Terblanche', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CME Terblanche

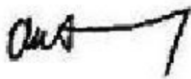
Cum Laude Language Practitioners (CC)

South African Translators Institute accr nr: 1001066

Full member of the Professional Editors Guild

Language editing of Manuscript 1 and 4:

Anthony Sparg and in-house editors of publishers of AOSIS and the ERSC

ANTHONY SPARG Freelance language practitioner <i>MA cum laude in African Languages (isiXhosa), MA cum laude in Linguistics</i> <i>English language editing, isiXhosa-English and Afrikaans-English translation, and transcription</i> 14 Nahoon Valley Place Nahoon Valley East London, 5241 South Africa Tel.: +27 43 735 4397 Cell: +27 79 106 8179 Email: p.a.sparg@telkomsa.net 4 December 2020 To whom it may concern ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING DECLARATION I, Anthony Edward Sparg, freelance language practitioner, hereby declare that I language-edited the journal article titled "Learning to facilitate community-based research: Guidelines from a novice researcher". Yours sincerely  Anthony Edward Sparg
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