INDIVIDUALISATION IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING, FROM A POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Most practitioners in the field of flexible learning seem to be sufficiently aware of the importance of catering to the needs of their students. However, it appears that many are rather more conscious of the needs of the students as a group than as individuals per se. Others seem to be rather more concerned about the technology involved. After touching on the foundationalist and non-, post- or anti-foundationalist approaches to the problem of individualisation in flexible learning, the article discusses a number of guidelines for individualisation from a post-post-foundationalist perspective. This is followed by a section in which these guidelines are presented in practical terms. This outline of guidelines reveals that attempting to individualise from this perspective is no simple and straightforward matter, but that there might be practitioners in the field of flexible learning (open distance learning and blended learning) who already are following this approach as a best practice. A post-post-foundationalist approach to individualisation in flexible learning offers practitioners in the field a whole new vocabulary.

Keywords: flexible learning, open distance learning, blended learning, flexible course design, instructional design, foundationalism, postmodernism, post-post-foundationalism, individualisation

1. HOW TO INDIVIDUALISE IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING: A PERENNIAL PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM

Since time immemorial, a teacher involved in the tuition of more than one student (pupil, learner) at one and the same time has had to cope with the problem of individualisation, because students differ in terms of personality, age, gender, interests, aptitudes, intelligence and ability. This reality has inspired tutors / teachers to apply certain techniques to ensure individualisation such as group discussions, individual interviews, use of information and computer technology (ICT) and video sessions. The problem of individualisation has intensified in recent times due to massification, particularly in institutions of higher education.

Massification and other conditions such as distance from the tutor have led to an expansion of flexible learning. In this article, the term *flexible learning* refers to all forms of learning that (partially) occur beyond the walls of formal classrooms. These include blended learning (face-to-face teaching combined with electronic and other support), open distance learning (ODL: formal learning combined with learning opportunities beyond formal classroom situations), distance learning (learners not physically present in a traditional / formal setting), e-learning (the application of electronic media (ICT) in education, particularly in the context of distance education), m-learning (mobile learning with the aid of mobile electronic and other devices; learning on the move), networked and/or on-line learning (with the aid of the internet or another network, among others web-based teaching and learning), virtual education (with the aid of electronic devices such as computers and cell phones, also print-based), programmed instruction, telematics, self-instruction, auto-didacticism, independent study and/or self-directed learning. The term *flexible learning* covers all of the above, since it refers to the use of instructional technologies that allow for learner autonomy, self-direction, learner choice, convenience and personalisation (cf. Sadler-Smith and Smith 2004, 398).

Experts in the field of flexible learning are aware of the importance of individualisation, and of the fact that tutors / facilitators in this mode of teaching do not always attain the levels of individualisation that might be required by the learners. Sims (2003, 87−103) has, for instance, discovered that interactivity, that is, interaction with individuals so that their learning can be optimised, had not received the necessary attention as concept and as a practice. Peters (2005) also draws attention to individualisation, albeit indirectly. Drennan, Kennedy and Pisarski's (2005) study focuses directly on learners' needs. They found, among other things, that student satisfaction with flexible online learning depends on two key student attributes, namely, positive perceptions of technology in terms of ease of access and the use of online learning materials, and also – important in the context of this article – the learning styles of the participants. Nikolova and Collis's (2002, 59−72) study is also aimed at promoting individualisation in flexible instructional modules, that is, discovering models that are easily adaptable to different learners' needs and allow learners' choices. Angelopulo's (2013, 24,25) study confirms the importance

of individualisation; the diagnostic process that was used in this study identified, among other things, student points of view and reasoning and yielded nuanced insight into the very complex motivations that students have for enrolling with a particular academic institution and remaining with that institution for the period of their studies. Khoza (2013, 66) also draws attention to the needs of the students in saying that facilitators have to begin by defining their students' characteristics.

Despite all this awareness of the importance of individualisation in flexible learning there remains a tendency among flexible learner practitioners to focus too much on technology per se and not on the learning process. In Marjanovic and Orlowska's (2000) opinion, the technologies are task-oriented rather than process-oriented, and as such are not capable of effectively supporting an integrated study process. Sadler-Smith and Smith (2004, 395) are outspoken about the problem:

> There has been a considerable growth in the use of flexible methods of delivery for workplace learning and development. However, in designing programmes of flexible learning there is often the assumption that learners will exhibit uniformity in the ways in which they process and organize information (cognitive style), in their predispositions towards particular learning formats and media (instructional preferences) and the conscious actions they employ to deal with the demands of specific learning situations (learning strategies).

They correctly conclude 'that it is perhaps ironic that the laudable aspirations that flexible learning has in providing learner-centeredness through time, place and pace of delivery may, to a degree, be undermined if due consideration is not given to individual differences in styles, preferences and strategies' (Sadler-Smith and Smith 2004, 396, 397−398). Their point of view was recently vindicated by studies reported by Machika (2013) on the basis of which she concluded that institutions of teaching and learning were not always aware of the specific needs of their students. While Van Zyl and Spamer (2013, 246) concentrated on the students as a group, they did not neglect to stress the importance of being aware of students' personal circumstances. In their opinion, open-distance learning (ODL) should be student-centred.

In view of the above, the research reported in this article is focused not so much on the *need* to individualise in flexible learning (ODL, blended learning) per se but rather *on how to contribute to best practice with regard to individualisation* in situations where lecturers / tutors have to deal with the individual needs and aspirations of large numbers of students with whom they might seldom, if ever, come into personal contact.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE

The purpose of this article is to theorise about how best to individualise in flexible learning. This exercise, undertaken in the following sections, will be done from a post-post-foundationalist perspective, that is, an epistemological orientation that allows the researcher to investigate a field of study − in this case, flexible learning − and the best

practices associated with it and then arrive at a number of indicators for strengthening those practices. Post-post-foundationalism has shown great promise in helping us understand the intricacies of creating a safe pedagogical space for an individual learner where the tutor / facilitator cannot (always) be physically present, as in flexible learning.[1]

3. THE POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST ORIENTATION: BACKGROUND

The *foundationalist approach* takes it for granted that absolute truth is available to all of us, that we all have a rational 'god's eye view' of matters, and hence share what could be referred to as 'universal rationality'. In terms of this orientation, there can be only one correct view or theoretical truth and that must be pursued. With this approach, the ideal is a unified perspective, with the aim to achieve and strengthen a universal rationality (Muller 2011, 2). The implication of this orientation for how to individualise in a flexible learning context is clear: it is assumed that all practitioners share a common or universal rationality and, therefore, would have (innate) knowledge of how to individualise correctly and appropriately in flexible learning. The question now becomes, how will they know what to do? According to Schults (1999, 2), the foundationalist will be inclined to think in terms of a universal System (with a capital 'S') or systems with local application (with a lower-case 's'). The foundationalist approach to individualisation is, therefore, typically based on some or other universal System or on some or other local system. The eco-systemic theory, behaviourism and 'one size fits all' types of Learning Management Systems come to mind as examples of systems with a capital 'S' that might serve as a foundation for facilitating learning in a flexible learning environment.

The *non-, post- or anti-foundationalist perspective* can be regarded as the opposite of the foundationalist perspective. Whereas the latter approach works with the ideal of universal rationality and systems thinking that provide generic answers to all problems, the non-, post- or anti-foundationalist orientation is built on the assumption that foundations of that nature do not exist and that we only have a diversity of opinions and didactical approaches, a scheme of multiple rationalities (Muller 2011, 2). Each identity in this (postmodern) context, Prinsloo writes (2013, 1), brings with it its own meanings. The emphasis is on individuals as their own meaning-makers, not as objective and aloof observers of events, but as personal and individual participants in what transpires. Each participant's personal narrative positions him or her within the project that s/he is part of. Since the non-, post- or anti-foundationalist orientation works with an 'ultimately groundless world' (Bloom 2009, 1), there can be no general agreement among experts in the field of flexible learning about how to individualise in flexible learning. No systematic theory about how to effect individualisation exists, only disparate opinions, which can be tested experimentally for effectiveness (cf. the pragmatic approach propounded by Rorty 1996, 27–31).

Non-, post- or anti-foundationalism has in the recent past understandably been criticised for its perceived lack of theoretical grounding (Bloom 2009, 1). As will emerge in the discussion of the post-post-foundationalist orientation below, the non-, post- or anti-foundationalist approach tends to be relativistic and hence to suffer from a lack of direction. It suffers from 'transgressive rationality' instead of applying the tenets of transversal rationality (Van Huyssteen 1999, 138).

Post-post-foundationalism, as a third approach to how to individualise in flexible teaching, is sceptical about both the 'universal rationality' of foundationalism and the 'multiversal rationality' of non-, post- or anti-foundationalism. Post-post-foundationalism is aware of the dangers associated with both the system-rigidity of foundationalism and the relativity and subjectivity of non-, post- or anti-foundationalism (Muller 2011, 2; Schrag 1992, 75). The post-post-foundationalist orientation[2] attempts to steer through between foundationalism and non-, post- or anti-foundationalism. It is a common sense approach that attempts to listen to the stories of real people in real life situations. It does not aim to describe a general (universal) context, but confronts us with specific and very concrete situations (Muller 2011, 3). Embodied persons are seen as the locus of rationality, persons that are, as rational agents, socially and contextually imbedded in concrete situations (Van Huyssteen 2006, 10). According to Muller (2011, 3), this way of thinking is always concrete, local and contextual, but at the same time reaches beyond local contexts to more general meaning and concerns. It is contextual, but at the same time acknowledges the way in which our epistemologies as rational beings are shaped by tradition. Put differently, in the words of Van Huyssteen (2006, 22), the post-post-foundationalist orientation is a form of compelling knowledge that seeks a balance between the way our beliefs are anchored in interpreted experience of concrete situations, and the broader networks of beliefs in which our rationally compelling experiences are already embedded. Marchart (2007, 151) expresses the same thought by stating that post-post-foundationalism does not give in to the temptation of doing away with grounds in the plural and with the process of constant and always necessarily partial grounding. Bloom (2009, 3) correctly points out that both order (foundation) and openness (contingency, possibility) exemplify the post-post-foundationalist position.

4. HOW TO INDIVIDUALISE IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING ON THE BASIS OF A POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

The question that concerns us now is: What should the teacher, facilitator, lecturer involved in flexible learning keep in mind when planning to individualise in flexible learning? The following can be suggested from a post-post-foundationalist perspective.

4.1. Relinquish hope of finding a one for all 'recipe'

The facilitator in a flexible learning module should relinquish all hope of finding a 'recipe' or plan for individualisation that would be systematic and foundational, generally applicable and likely to be universally valid for all learners. Experience in the field has demonstrated that every learner approaches learning material from a personal and rather subjective point of view, and that generalised approaches rarely work. Modern learning technologies present new challenges and opportunities for the accommodation and acknowledgement of individual differences in styles and preferences through the adoption of appropriate instructional design, learning and support strategies. The danger always lurks of using technologies to design and support learning programmes that are 'quite invariant across different learner groups and individuals, and that are conceptualized more as 'broadcasts' than as individual learning experiences' (Sadler-Smith and Smith 2004, 408). So, how does one then provide for all possible needs among the students when designing a single course that will be used for all the students? A possible solution is to design and facilitate the course/module in such a way that it presents a variety of learning experiences that would, through a number of possible configurations, cater for the needs of different individuals. Particular non-negotiable teaching-learning outcomes have to be achieved, but the ways in which different learners reach those outcomes will be different. Provision has to be made during the course design phase and the facilitation for those different styles of learning and instructional preferences in mastering learning content.

4.2. Attend to the stories of real-life people

According to a post-post-foundationalist orientation, a facilitator can no longer base the composition of a course document or programme on his or her general understanding of 'the learner' as a human being. Put differently, teaching can no longer be based on a general anthropology, that is, a theory or view of 'the human being'. Instead of envisaging 'the average learner' the facilitator has to envisage hundreds if not thousands of individual learners, each in his or her local context, and most of them personally unknown to the tutor.

4.3. Each learner experiences and interprets in his or her unique manner

Course design requires the course designer/facilitator to envisage a learner who experiences and interprets those experiences from a localised, contingent, personal and individualised perspective. It is one of the basic tenets of post-post-foundationalism that interpreted experience engenders and nourishes all beliefs, in this case, about the learning materials and their value for the life and existence of the individual. A network of such beliefs informs the interpretation of experience (Schults 1999, 4). Therefore,

the learning materials and experiences offered in the course must be of such a nature that they allow each individual learner to experience the materials in his or her unique manner and to attach unique meaning to those experiences on the basis of his or her unique interpretations.

4.4. Also reach beyond the local and contextual to more general meanings and concerns: the contingency principle

The facilitator should be aware of the fact that the mastery of knowledge should also go beyond the local and parochial. While individualisation and personal mastery of knowledge are important, the aim of tuition is to guide the learner to transcend the local and contingent towards the more general and universal. It is one of the basic tenets of science that facts, findings and theories may be regarded as universally 'true' or acceptable or generally valid, until and unless they have been refuted by further research (cf. Rorty 1991, 64−65). For this reason, learners cannot be allowed to dwell on in their own personal and individualised understandings of the learning material, but have to be guided to participate in the universal discourse about the scientific facts and theories, among other reasons, for the purpose of understanding how to refute those currently acceptable facts and theories as future scholars (scientists, researchers) in their own right. This 'perennial movement' between the general and universal – the groundedness of scientific fact and theory – and the forever failure of creating such grounds can be ascribed to what Marchart (2007, 57−58) referred to as the necessary contingency principle. There is a constant ontic movement between attempts at some form of grounding (or foundation) and the constant failure of such efforts (due to falsification). Efforts at individualising in flexible learning have to take this challenge into account.

4.5. The 'pedagogical break'

The contingency principle has another effect that the flexible learning facilitator should keep in mind, namely, the 'pedagogical break'. Bloom (2009, 1) describes the 'break' as follows. Education (as a process involving an educator and a learner) is always constituted in the perennial move between attempts at some form of grounding or foundation and the constant failure of such attempts due to the radical contingency underlying all such attempts. There is a constant movement in the mind of the facilitator to ground the learning content and the teaching methods in some or other foundation, usually in the form of generally acceptable theories about various facets of the learning content, learning theory and / or curriculum theory. At the same time, these attempts often fail because of the contingency principle. The grounding is never permanent, since contingency is also a permanent condition for its possibility and a constant presence in its attempted manifestation. Because of this, the facilitator must always be aware of the 'break' between the science underlying the learning materials and the actual mastery of

those learning materials. Course design cannot be based on the nominal level only; it should also be based on empirical experience, that is, on what individual learners on the ground do, think and require (Schults 1999, 4).

4.6. Dislocation and openness: transversal rationality

The ontic principle of necessary contingency is rooted in the local, contextual, personal and individual experiences and interpretations of the learners. The facilitator / tutor should, therefore, avail him- or herself of ontic openness and contingency to create a safe pedagogic space for each and every learner in a flexible learning context. This can be done by recognising the principle of transversality, namely, discovery of an epistemic space that allows critical self-evaluation and optimal understanding (Van Huyssteen 2007, 421−422). The facilitator should approach the lives of the learners as 'works of art'. S/he should be interested in the individual learners as real-life persons, people with senses, desires and thoughts. His/her focus should be on each learner as a specific person in a specific situation, being challenged to deal with real-life problems and confronted with learning materials of which s/he has to make meaning. Muller (2011, 5) appropriately concludes on the basis of Van Huyssteen's thesis about transversal rationality (applied here to the work of the flexible learning facilitator), that the facilitator has to listen to the variety of stories of the learners, particularly where the different storying cultures meet. A safe pedagogical space has to be provided for each story to be told and for the different stories to meet. This allows the facilitator to communicate across the boundaries between him-/herself and the learners, to move transversally from context to context, from one situation to another, from one learner to another. In this wide reflective equilibrium, Van Huyssteen contends, the facilitator finds a safe but fragile pedagogical space, a space for shuttling to and fro between his or her personal convictions (foundations, ground) and those of the learners.

4.7. A holistic, pluralistic, social-constructivist approach

In view of the above, the facilitator of a flexible learning course should concentrate on a holistic social-constructivist approach. The facilitator should have in mind a target group composed of actual, real-life individuals, whole persons in their actual locations and contexts, and provide them with materials that would help each individual to make sense or meaning from the learning experience through a process of interpretivism and social constructivism. The learner should become an active contributor to his or her own learning process and to the success of the course as a whole (Collis and Moonen 2001, 28, 30, 40).

The learning materials should be selected on the basis of their potential to help the learner make individual sense of them for his or her particular context and also to help the learner to go beyond the parochial and contextual towards an understanding

of more general and generic principles, which have been scientifically established. Put differently, in the words of Muller (2011, 3), the learner should be guided and enabled to create for him- or herself a preferred reality that makes sense to him or her. This view ties in with what Boeve (2000, 251−252) referred to as a pluralistic approach: while the learner's personal experience and interpretation of the learning materials form the departure point of the flexible learning programme, the programme should also challenge and enable the learner to relate his or her personal interpretation and experience to the wider world around him or her, to make his or her own experience and interpretation recognisable in the greater context. The learner should be encouraged to test, as it were, his or her experiences and interpretations by entering into a dialogue with the wider world. Only by doing this, will the learner be able to know whether his or her experiences and interpretations have any meaning for him or her. According to Boeve (2000, 256), dialogue and confrontation call the learner to reflect about his or her own learning, and should, therefore, be planned for in the flexible learning design process.

The facilitator should, furthermore, purposely provide for discontinuity between the learner and his or her environment, so that dialogue and confrontation can occur, in order to test the meaningfulness of what has been learnt. The discontinuity or differences from the surrounding world should not be construed by the learner as threats, but rather as challenges to vindicate the meaningfulness of his or her own learning (interpretations and experiences), and hence enrichment of his or her own learning. The purpose of the facilitator in flexible learning is, consequently, not to guide the learner towards consensus (e.g., in the form of having him or her faithfully respond in accordance with a pre-set memorandum when writing exams in the subject), but rather to help him or her find his or her true place in the wider world of knowledge. Rational judgment is an activity of socially situated individuals who attempt to explain their experiences from the vantage point of their particular contextualised positioning, but who at the same time attempt to aim at universal, trans-contextual understanding of the learning material (Schults 1999, 4).

The tuition should be aimed at helping the learner understand him- or herself as self-conscious learner, able to monitor own learning and to test his or her learning against a wider context. In this process, learners should be guided to be more in touch with themselves and their identities as individuals, and also to be able to reach out to other people and to the wider world in which they live as real-life people. Viewed from this perspective, flexible learning experiences ideally become exercises for learners to come to grips with their own learning in wider contexts. To quote Prinsloo (2013, 2) from a different context, the learner is not separate from his or her lived self. As Sadler-Smith and Smith (2004, 407) correctly indicate, whether success will be achieved with this strategy will depend to a certain measure on the learning style and instructional preferences of the learner.

5. THE IMPLICATIONS OF A POST-POST-FOUNDATIONALIST APPROACH FOR HOW TO INDIVIDUALISE IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING

All of the above can be summarised in the following practical terms:[3]

Janice, a tutor with a foundationalist attitude to flexible teaching and learning, that is, at the one extreme of the epistemological spectrum, will be inclined to operate from a fixed and rigid set of systematic rules. Her approach will be characterised by a one-size-fits-all, standardised 'recipe' for presenting learning materials, managing the learning process, the application of ICTs, assessment and interactions with the learners. She will be inclined to think of 'the learner' in preconceived, general, universal and generic terms, and will find queries by individual learners rather bothersome and awkward to deal with. She might be inclined to cater for a general, faceless cohort of students 'out there'.

Peter, a tutor who has positioned himself at the opposite extreme of the epistemological spectrum, sees himself as a post-foundationalist, and might be inclined to apply a more pragmatic, utilitarian and even a radically postmodern 'anything goes' approach to the teaching-learning process. He tends to go with the flow, and applies measures and procedures that have worked in the past. He prefers to have no fixed guidelines or rules for how to individualise in the process of drafting study guides and manuals, for presenting the learning materials, the application of ICTs, assessment and interactions with learners. He also tends to avoid having any preconceived ideas about the learner cohort or about learners as individuals for whose tuition he is responsible, and will handle each case and problem as it arises, without necessarily following any preconceived, clear and definite guidelines for individualisation. His natural inclination in a flexible teaching environment is to see what experience throws at him as far as the needs of students are concerned and to deal with each problem as demanded by the situation.

Sylvia, who has positioned herself somewhere in the middle of the foundationalist to post-foundationalist spectrum, that is, sees herself as a post-post-foundationalist, will be inclined to formulate a personal and private set of guidelines to work with, a flexible collection of guidelines kept *in the back of her mind* as it were. Her guidelines for individualisation will not be rigid and inflexible, as in the case of the foundationalist, nor will they be as vague and indefinite as in the case of the post-foundationalist.[4] When confronted with a learner who is experiencing a problem in mastering the learning content, Sylvia will invoke some of the tacit guidelines in the back of her mind to help her cope with the situation.

This outline of the three orientations brings us to the question: How will I, as a tutor involved in flexible learning (in all its forms, from ODL to e-learning and m-learning) know whether I am a person inclined to think as a post-post-foundationalist with respect to how I individualise for purposes of students whom I do not know personally? Is

there anything in my approach to flexible teaching that would typify me as a post-post-foundationalist, in contrast to the other two approaches? The following can be regarded as ways of individualising in flexible learning that are characteristic of only a post-post-foundationalist approach, and not of the other two approaches:

A post-post-foundationalist tutor tends to address ('target') only a single learner working at a distance, in his or her unique circumstances, and not a group or cohort.

He or she tends to be sensitive and morally imaginative about the personal situation of such a learner, and will attempt to provide in the personal, localised and contingent needs of that learner.

They will not necessarily expect the learner to master certain learning content, but will rather concentrate on helping the learner discover meaning in the learning process for the development of self as individual.

Their tuition will be characterised by a perennial movement between the general and the contingent, between scientific grounding and personal questioning and interpretation. Personal development through learning and mastery of content will be their focus. When planning a flexible teaching-learning situation, they will constantly provide opportunities for the learner, including those involved in ODL, to ask: 'What have I learned "for me"?'

They will make use of transversal reasoning, that is, they will help the learner – through flexible learning – to open him- or herself up to critical self-appraisal and to optimal understanding of self (and will not just concentrate on the mastery of learning materials or a certain set of skills).

They will make use of moral imagination: they have empathy with that individual learner whom they envision or 'target' when planning their tuition.

Each learner, irrespective of how that learner communicates with the tutor (email, cell phone, personal, Skype), is the most important person in the tutor's professional life at that moment in time. The tutor is open to the story of each individual.

A post-post-foundationalist tutor is able to commute from contingency to contingency, while at the same time keeping the larger picture in the back of his or her mind. He or she is able to allow each individual learner to construct meaning for themselves, even at a distance and by means of teaching technologies. The teaching-learning process facilitates meaning-making and interpretation for each and every learner.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear from this brief outline of the practical implications of a post-post-foundationalist approach to individualisation in flexible learning that there might be tutors currently involved in flexible learning who already are teachers with a post-post-foundationalist orientation without realising it. The post-post-foundationalist perspective on how to

individualise in flexible learning attempts to steer through between the rigidity and determinism of a foundationalist approach to individualisation, and the insularity of a non-, post- or anti-foundationalist approach. Flexible learning from a post-post-foundationalist perspective concentrates on the needs of each and every learner in his or her real-life context and situation, and is aimed at helping and guiding each individual learner to come to grips with a personal experience, understanding and interpretation of the learning materials in question. At the same time, the learning experience should also call upon the learner to engage with the wider world, including his or her community and the world of science, to test the validity and meaningfulness of his or her self-constructed knowledge, understanding, experience and interpretation.

To individualise in this manner is not easy or simple (cf. Collis and Moonen 2001, 41). The post-post-foundationalist orientation to flexible learning comes with a new vocabulary embracing concepts of interpreted experience, transversal understanding, the pedagogical break, safe pedagogic space, necessary contingency, wide reflective equilibrium, engagement with own experience and interpretation, and with the wider world through dialogue and conflict and so on. Mastery of this new vocabulary will equip and enable a tutor involved in flexible learning to improve his or her application of best practice regarding individualisation.

Up to now, very little evidence was found in literature of how best to individualise in flexible learning (ODL, blended learning) from a post-post-foundationalist approach to flexible learning. This article might help fill that hiatus.

NOTES

1. Since writing this article the author has published the following article on a post-post-foundationalist approach to education: *Opvoeding vanuit 'n post-postfundamentistiese perspektief* (22 July 2014) (Litnet Akademies 11(2). The article can be accessed through the following link: http://www.litnet.co.za/Article/opvoeding-vanuit--post-postfundamentistiese-perspektief. In another article for publication in December 2014 in the *Journal of Humanities* the author used this approach to examine the situation of minority groups in diverse societies. Post-post-foundationalism can be used to examine a variety of subjects and problems, as in this article where an attempt is made to contribute to best practice with respect to the issue of individualisation in flexible learning.

2. Several of the insights regarding post-post-foundationalism applied in this article were taken from the philosophies of science of scholars in the fields of philosophy, theology and psychology. An attempt was made to rework them for the purpose of contributing to best practice in flexible learning (open distance learning and blended learning), thereby enriching the science of education.

3. In philosophical terms, a foundationalist's approach to individualisation in flexible learning could be characterised as: metaphysical, deterministic, dogmatic, absolutistic, imperialistic and context-independent; that of a post-foundationalist as anti-metaphysical, indeterministic,

laissez-faire, relativistic, egalitarian and context-sensitive; that of a post-post-foundationalist as tacitly metaphysical, negotiating, ontologically, anthropologically and epistemologically balanced, interpretive and socially constructive, characterised by moral imagination and context awareness.

4.   In terms of this epistemology, the more a tutor is inclined to work from a rather rigid and prescribed system of rules and guidelines, the more likely he or she is to be a foundationalist, and vice versa.

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