# Opening Up a 'Third Space' To Innovate Curricula

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**Abstract: Problem statement:** Against the background of innovating learner experiences in South African schools and higher learning institutions in the 21st century, it is crucial to determine, in the analogy to the words, 'what holds a place together'. It is necessary to know how to create that sense of belonging, what the vision and mission are, what is valued and expected, what one can identify with and what will make educators move collectively towards taking united ownership of the future and create the next best learning and teaching practice. **Approach:** Appreciate inquiry, as research method for this study, searches for the identification and enhancement of the life-giving forces as it explores what should be present or need to be present in a uniquely constructed third space. Appreciative inquiry is crafted in a post-positivist tradition grounded in affirmation and appreciation. True to the vision of the creators of this method who regard it as an inquiry to uncover profound knowledge entities of human systems in order to co-construct the best and highest future of that system, this investigation focuses on uncovering past, present and future learning and teaching practices to innovate the next curricula. **Conclusion/Recommendations:** In this study we argue that when innovating curricula, South African educators have to elicit local pre-knowledge and experiences to shape them into a leveled playing field before they can add on global international knowledge. South African educators have to construct the next practice in learning and teaching by integrating local and global knowledge in a unique space (what Bhabha refers to as a 'third' space).

**Key words:** Curriculum innovation, third space, south africa, appreciative inquiry, next practice of learning and teaching

## INTRODUCTION

In their book, In search of 'Best Practice' in South African desegregated schools, Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) highlight local success stories of those educational institutions that have achieved some social cohesion during the short time democracy has been in place in South Africa. The research provides evidence that our rainbow dream of a racially integrated South Africa is actually coming true in the country's classrooms and playgrounds. The monograph reports that a few schools have already managed to achieve social cohesion in a unique third space. A small survey of stakeholders' perceptions about what constitutes 'best practice' in a desegregated school environment, supported by classroom observation, interviews and focus groups, forms the basis of this analysis of emergent patterns in good school practices. The research project exemplifies how to foster multiple identities and spirituality in learners in school to build an integrated South African society. Some of the most encouraging findings are that over 80% of learners felt their schools offered equal opportunities to all race groups, while 75% said that all race groups played happily together between classes. Almost 90% of parents were satisfied with the racial integration at their children's schools. Such positive research findings show that schools can change in the direction of their inquiry. In South Africa, good practices in schools have progressed from the days of cosmetic changes, such as being accessible for learners and educators of all races, to a more significant shift among learners and educators toward celebrating more diversity friendly caring curriculum futures. 'Why we care', as well as 'how we know' and 'what we do' are closely interwoven in curriculum futures and should be framed in living curriculum frameworks for learning and teaching. An Appreciative Inquiry lens gives us insight into current good learning and teaching practices which could be amplified in the next practice.

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**Appreciative inquiry lens into current good practices:** Appreciative Inquiry is an organisation development philosophy described by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) that can also be applied to educational institutions. Appreciative Inquiry used in curriculum renewal is based on the premise that educators can innovate through reflective inquiry and practices. One of the main assumptions of the Appreciative Inquiry approach is the premise that researchers inquiring into problems in their own and others' practices most probably will find more problems, but researchers attempting to appreciate what is best in current practices, will more likely keep on discovering more and more of what is good for a next practice. Appreciative Inquiry research findings can be used to reconstruct actual good practices into a better next practice. Table 1 shows the distinctions between the traditional and appreciative inquiry research approach when applied to the curriculum development process. Our good practices and conditions and create new ones, we can open up third spaces to innovate curricula in South Africa.

**Curriculum landscape of change in post apartheid South Africa:** There is no such thing as a neutral education process, says Freire (2000). Freire believes that education in stable times actually functions as an instrument to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system, or it becomes the practice of freedom by which men and women participate in the transformation of their world. Christie (2008) reports on the landscape of change overseen by the National Department of Education (DoE). To transform society, curriculum change in post apartheid South Africa started immediately after the election in 1994, when the National Education and Training Forum began a process of syllabus revision and subject rationalisation. The purpose of this process was mainly to lay the foundations for a single national core syllabus, in addition to the rationalisation and consolidation of existing syllabi. For the first time, curriculum decisions were made in a participatory and representative manner. The white paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) required education and training to be coupled together in order to achieve unity between theory and practice, in and outside school, academic and vocational, knowledge and skills and head and hand, thus overcoming the school's tendency to reproduce social class distinctions. The South African Schools Act 84 or 1996 (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1996) sets out the powers of the national and provincial DoE in post apartheid South Africa. This act had a transformative democratic mission and ethos aimed at building a just, equitable and high quality education system for all. The Lifelong learning through a National Curriculum Framework document (DOE, 1996a) was the first major curriculum statement of a democratic South Africa.

Table 1: Traditional curriculum development versus appreciative inquiry processes

| Traditional Curriculum Development Process | Appreciative Inquiry Process |
|---|---|
| Define the problem | Search for solutions that already exist by appreciating the best of 'what is' |
| Analyze the causes | Envision what might be |
| Fix what's broken | Amplify and adapt what is working |
| Focus on decay | Focus on innovative life-giving forces |
| What problems are you having? | What is working well around here? |
| Action planning treatment | Innovating what will be better |

Adapted from: James Henderson and Rosemary Gornik (2007)

The preamble to the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) envisages a new national education system that will redress past injustices in educational provision by providing an education of relevance and quality for all learners, thus developing our people's talents and capabilities, while eradicating extreme poverty and high employment. The South African Schools Act (DOE, 1996b) protects and advances South African cultures and languages and upholds the right and responsibilities of learners, parents and teachers to govern and fund schools in partnership with the government and communities. While the popular concept of reality in the 20th century has been mechanical, the metaphor for the 21st century is likely to be organic, rooted in local culture. When individuals recognise and value their own culture, beliefs and traditions, they can better understand and respect how others develop and have developed their identities. Answering these kinds of life-giving questions has created a new desire in South Africa to get in touch with the cultural and spiritual dimensions of life, to rediscover community and values, to make new commitments and to take responsibility for what really matters.

**Opening up curriculum spaces:** Hakkarainen (2004) suggest the following three learning metaphors as a way of opening up spaces for reimagining futures oriented curricula, namely, knowledge acquisition, knowledge participation and knowledge creation. Over the years the traditional focus of the curriculum on knowledge acquisition has been complemented with knowledge sharing in and out schools and lately knowledge creation has become a key outcome of learning and teaching Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2008). However, no one metaphor, theory or model represents an all encompassing ideology or body of thought that should be used to re-imagine practice. Instead, each model functions more as a complementary organising tool for curriculation. Curriculum Studies is a young discipline and yet it has produced several lenses for curriculum planning, implementation and renewal. Together these curriculum theories are helpful lenses to understand

the complexities of a curriculum and help us to find out what the next practice of teaching and learning in South Africa will be.

**Curriculum studies:** Curriculum studies includes the study of curriculum varieties and is a recognised study field throughout the world and is regarded as being a part discipline of Education. Curriculum Studies is a relatively young professional field. In 1918 John Franklin Bobbitt, the Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Chicago, wrote the first book on the curriculum, entitled *How to make a curriculum* (Bobbitt, 2012), which popularised the curriculum as a learning and professional field for educators. The first constructed curriculum models were intended to establish what learners are expected to learn and focused on the 'what to learn', that is what knowledge is most worth acquiring. Bobbitt analysed the 'life functions' and split these up into 10 areas of activity. One of these, 'inter human relations', Bobbitt divided into 821 goals, which again could be subdivided. Bobbitt's work resembled a comprehensive hierarchy, in which numerous precise outcomes were described. Tyler (1949) altered Bobbitt's curriculum model by stating that learning outcomes should be negotiated with the stakeholders (subject experts, society leaders and students) to become 'standardised'.

Since the first all race elections in 1994, South Africa has been faced with the challenge to find standardised learning outcomes for the tremendous cultural diversity of its peoples. For the first time in South African history, the choice was democratically made to look at future prospects within a co-development people centred approach, rather than the separate development (apartheid) approach that used to prevail. As far as curriculum design was concerned, a single curriculum framework, the National Qualification Framework (NQF), was established in 1996 to record learning achievements, that is, standardised learning outcomes in either whole qualifications or unit standards. The roots of the first curriculum model in a democratic South Africa, called *Curriculum 2005*, launched in 1997, can be found in Bobbitt and Tyler's curriculum models. *Curriculum 2005* introduced an outcomes based curriculum for general education phased into schools from 1998, in 2000 reviewed and replaced by revised *National Curriculum Statements*. For the first time, at the end of 2008, Grade 12 learners have written the new *National Senior Certificate* examinations. Gultig *et al.* (2002) state that South Africa has adopted the Australian and British models of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) following global innovative trends of standardisation,

accountability, devolution and choice. In the late 20th century many countries worldwide, introduced the concept of a 'national curriculum' usually with the aim of increasing government control to gain social justice for all inhabitants. Politicians blamed the country's economic underperformance on poorly skilled and poorly educated workers.

In post apartheid South Africa learners have often score mediocre in comparative achievement tests (Christie, 2008). Mediocre scoring is often mentioned by politicians as proof that education systems are not performing well believing that greater central control is needed to achieve excellence in education. National test results show South African learners having exceptionally low levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills compared to learners in the other countries that participated. To improve schooling teachers were seen foremost as 'civil servants' having to teach as prescribed by the government of the day while big brother was constantly looking over their shoulder. Schools were audited like banking firms limiting teachers' professional freedom to teach. In South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) government (ANC, 2008) has introduced various information management systems. Governments expanded their bureaucratic machineries and produced numerous green and white papers, acts, bills, policies, forms and manuals, e.g. for inclusive education, for graduating, disciplining or counselling learners. Teachers were burdened with endless reforms and extra administration tasks to devolve 'management' of learning and teaching to the micro level. However, politicians' calls for excellence in education are often in contrast with the poor support and salaries offered to educators, the funds allocated for improving the educational infrastructure and/or for downsizing learners to teacher ratios.

Many staff felt overstretched, underpaid and underappreciated and left the education profession, once a highly desired job. Teacher attrition rate is currently estimated at 17 000 and 20 000 teachers lost to the system each year (ANC, 2008). There is likely to be a shortage of teachers in the future based on the anticipated effects of the impact of HIV and Aids on educators and the fact that fewer candidates entering the teaching profession (ANC, 2008). Currently schools in South Africa battle to cope with the teacher shortage, especially in African languages, mathematics and science as well as in the Foundation Phase. The government offers bursaries to attract quality student intake into teacher training institution and offer student loan repayments to attract young graduates into teacher contracts. Tyler's curriculum rationale, focusing on

which minimum or basic knowledge, skills and values (standards) are to be learnt, is usually applied to design and implement the new national curriculum.

**Tyler's objectives driven curriculum lens appropriate for the 'what' of knowledge acquisition:**
In his book *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction* (1949), Ralph Tyler (1902-1994) expands on the ends means ethos in curriculum development, first suggested by Bobbitt. He formulated four key questions appropriate for knowledge acquisition which are now commonly referred to as the 'Tyler rationale' or 'Tyler's objectives driven curriculum model:

- What educational objectives should the school attain?
- How can learning experiences be chosen that are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives?
- How can learning experiences be organised for effective instruction?
- How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

Tyler's curriculum model has a subject centred production model or 'what' orientation focusing on learners gaining mastery of subject matter predetermined by a set of subject matter experts. The curriculum is organised around content units and the sequence of what is taught follows the logic of the subject matter. Tyler's curriculum approach is perceived as being a science or technology rather than an art. Tyler's production model borrowed some ideas from the scientific management theories of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915). Tyler's objectives driven model mirrored factory efficiency in terms of time and motion studies and concluded that each worker should be paid on the basis of his or her individual output as measured by the number of units produced in a specified period of time. Efficient and effective operation of an education institution and other social systems is called the 'machine theory or factory model' by its critics (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). The Tyler curriculum stance is appropriate in a situation in which qualified staff and/or resources for staff development are scant. The managerial part of this factory system tends to focus on the supervisory and administrative aspects of the curriculum (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Education managers prefer Tyler's rational planning models and used to foreground alignment principles between learning objectives, activities and assessment.

Tyler's curriculum, notes Prevedel (2003), lends itself well to mass production of learning material. Publishers can produce textbooks that break down subject matter into sub skills and processes which can be easily navigated by teachers and learners. The South African Department of National Education introduced a program aimed at supporting learning, teaching and school leadership at 3 500 low performing primary schools in poor areas (Nzimande, 2008). However, not everyone is given the same chance to succeed in test driven systems. Instead of equity, schools in a high stakes assessment system might opt for 'cream skimming', getting their best learners to obtain good marks in national tests. Educators are inclined to seek work in private urban schools as the provision of ample learning resources in and out school will help their learners do better in tests. Some teachers may be encouraging pupils to take lower level (easier to teach) subjects (ANC, 2008).

Prevedel (2003) says that in its most extreme, the Tyler model omits the importance of learner experience and reflection, requiring a learner to accept, rather than challenge, the information being transmitted. Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) complemented Tyler's outcomes model with a process curriculum model. Here standardised learning outcomes are seen as 'minimum' results, each learner is challenged to do better and develop his/her full potential. Stenhouse's idea is to develop a curriculum which nurtures each learner's motivation and success to enable each individual to participate in his or her own learning to discover and develop his or her own talents, going beyond the bare minimum effort.

**Stenhouse's process curriculum lens appropriate for the 'how' of knowledge participation:** Stenhouse (1975) perceives the overall professional goal of educators as facilitating learner participation or engagement in the curriculum process to develop to the full. Stenhouse (1975) suggests that a curriculum is rather like a recipe in cookery, which is first imagined as a possibility and is then the subject of experiment. Within limits, a recipe can be varied according to taste and so a curriculum can be underpinned with minimum standards (developed by Tyler's model). Stenhouse (1975) says that, in a process curriculum approach, the classroom is rather like a pre-prepared laboratory in which students and educators act as co-researchers and experiment with well or ill defined tasks in familiar or unfamiliar contexts. The crucial point is that the curriculum proposal is not to be regarded as a prescription, but as a provisional specification that claims no more than to be worth putting to the test of practice. Teaching becomes research led. Governments monitor the quality of learning and teaching through validating self studies in which educators show 'how

well' the quality rigor in their learning institution is implemented. Planned learning experiences are usually built around generative themes and minimum standards, preselected by educators and redefined by student interest, experience and reflection so that they are eager to participate in the curriculum process. Learning how to learn and the interest to develop oneself to the full become as important as the 'what' to learn.

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) as introduced in the South African national curriculum draws heavily both from the Tyler product model and the Stenhouse process model (1975). OBE in our context refers both the learning content (the 'what') and to learning the 'how to learn'. The inclusion of critical cross field learning outcomes reflects to knowledge participation competencies emphasising learning and problem solving skills, critical thinking, teamwork and communicating effectively. OBE sees individual learning and development as important part of the curriculum and uses the term 'learner driven' to describe the dynamic spirit learners bring to curricula and learning. Learner driven approaches, according to Prevedel (2003) draw upon constructivism, which is a theory of learning which assumes that people learn by relating new information and skills to what they already know and can do, actively practicing new information and skills in a supportive environment and then getting feedback on their performance. The educator advices the learner and does not force his/her opinion but rather encourages the learner to think and take own decisions becoming a self directed learner.

The most effective learner driven learning environments, according to the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (OECD, 2008) promote customised learning experiences, make diverse knowledge sources available such as books, web sites and experts around the globe, encourage learning collaboratively on authentic, inquiry oriented projects and assess for deeper conceptual understanding, that is the extent to which knowledge is integrated, coherent and contextualised. An OBE approach, notes Prevedel (2003) often relies on the teacher's ability to create or provide access to materials appropriate to learners' expressed needs. Curriculum 2005 expected from teachers to generate their own content and learning activities to achieve set learning outcomes. This requires subject knowledge on the part of the teacher and a degree of resources. Currently there are considerable inefficiencies, e.g., textbook procurement, feeding schemes, scholar transport in particular in rural and township schools (ANC, 2008). At a minimum, it requires texts brought in from real life, a wide pool of commercially available materials

from which to draw, computers, internet, a reliable photocopier and plenty of paper. Given the reality of the South African teachers' professional preparation, working conditions and the general lack of time, resources and even electricity it is difficult to create an outcomes based curriculum using Stenhouse's approach. Since the OBE curriculum is also based on Tyler's production rationale, teachers who are pushed to produce concrete outputs such as test scores may feel that the creation of learner driven curricula is a luxury that they simply cannot afford.

A major weakness and, indeed, strength of the process model is that it rests upon the quality of teachers and their training. If there is a lack of qualified or prepared educators as well as suggested educational infrastructure and resources from which teachers and learners can select activities and we then add the language issue to this, there will be severe conditional limitations on what can happen, educationally, in a process curriculum approach. This problem can be recognised in the South African situation where sudden political change required also radical change in the country's education system. Curriculum 2005 was an interim step implemented without sufficient input, preparation for the teachers to understand and to implement the new national curriculum.

Newspaper headlines of December 2008 announced the results of the country's first ever OBE curriculum implemented 12 years ago, as "Minister steadfast but experts slam OBE as pass rate dips again" (Serrao, 2008) and "The blame game". Education authorities say that staff issues are responsible for the many low Grade 12 pass rates, but teacher unions do not agree (Govender, 2009). Serrao (2008) reports that while others slammed the controversial OBE curriculum, the minister followed an appreciative approach and celebrated the incremental gains the OBE curriculum had made. The minister defended OBE saying that it was a good curriculum and that it was the inability to implement and interpret the new system that has elicited critique. In 2008 for the first time learners wrote the same national curriculum, called the National Senior Certificate (NSC) and candidates had to take besides literacy also numeracy as a compulsory examination subject. It is expected that learners skilled in multiple literacy's will study further to become highly skilled professionals and entrepreneurs to relieve the skills gap and reduce the over 30% unemployment. Therefore, OBE curricula in South Africa also pay attention to 'why care' aspects.

Freire (2000) has complemented Stenhouse's curriculum model by adding on a 'why care' perspective in curriculum design. OECD (2008) states

that the focus on intense economic competition and growing social power of individualism have led to collective resource shortages: climate, water, oil, population pressures, urban growth, generational change; greater interconnectedness, communication, mobility, growing distance from traditional identities, institutional categories and an explosion of knowledge and information. Freire drew upon the work of contextual theorists, assuming that effective learning and teaching is situated within the social context of real surroundings, conditions and cultures. Freire believed that a curriculum design is living and thus never final; it is a dynamic social construct made by people, for people, with a view to care for and change the world in which they live for the better.

**Freire's transformation curriculum lens appropriate for the 'why care' of knowledge creation:** Freire (2000) believed that a curriculum design is a living organism assuming that it takes a whole village to educate a child. Teachers on their own cannot create miracles; parents, community leaders, business leaders and church leaders and experts from provincial and national government need to show that they care and want to make a difference by getting involved. This concept was echoed by former South African president Nelson Mandela when he promoted the notion of 'each one teaches one'. Democracy promotes social capital, with all citizens invited to shape the community into a better place for themselves and others. A curriculum, according to Freire, should therefore be planned collaboratively by and for its actors (teachers and learners) and role players (parents). The latter should also be actively engaged in implementing the curriculum, that is, in teaching and learning (e.g., assisting with work integrated and community service learning), as well as in evaluating the quality and impact of education in uplifting the community an institution serves.

Freire suggested four emancipatory steps for developing a 'critical consciousness' in learners:

- Engaging with a set of 'generative themes'
- From which subthemes are derived and used in 'culture circles' (which will lead to praxis)
- Reflection on theories and actions to
- Transform reality

Freire adopted the term 'conscientisation' to describe the socio-cultural learning process whereby people come to understand that their view of the world and their place in it (their consciousness) is constructed and shaped by social and historical forces, which may work against their own interests. Conscientisation leads to a critical awareness of the self as a subject who can reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it. Freire argued that oppressed and subjugated people lack a critical understanding of their reality. To them the world is something which is fixed and to which they must adapt. Freire believed that the purpose of education is to question and transform a situation as well as to challenge information, rather than accept it. For Freire, education offered opportunities to change ways of thinking, feeling and behaving and is action oriented; in other words, education involves social and political commitment and action in order to move people to transform themselves in the world in which they live. Freire maintained that learning (the exploration of new ideas, skills, knowledge and values) does not take place in a vacuum, but in the context of learners' past and present experience and future dreams shaped by class, race and other social categories.

Increasingly, schools are being blamed for intractable social problems they did not create and cannot be solved by schools, therefore, must be linked with community action and should form part of the cultural practices in which learners and their families are involved. In the process of community construction, an essential role is played by the school itself together with other social structures such as neighbours, family, traditional leaders, nongovernmental organisations, voluntary associations and teachers' associations. OECD (2008) states that humans are programmed to learn. Persons shape their dispositions and learning capacities through repeated encounters with the world. School systems are one small slice. We need to boost the motivation, resilience, ability of our learners and we need systems (and innovations) that connect learners to more powerful, plentiful and flexible learning resources. The most important reform strategies will be those which integrate most resources around the learner, not those that refocus the school. Schools need to combine internal and external resources, the core curriculum and extended learning program; face to face and online community, school learning and work based practice, home and library or museum and family and teachers (OECD, 2008).

Quality is monitored by peer review of interested role players and independent quality assurance bodies. In South Africa UMALUSI is meant to be an independent quality assurance body government. Freire's curriculum model is embedded in 'situated' pedagogies which are diversified and emancipatory, taking advantage of grassroots educational experiences and local commitment of a particular culture and/or community to add value to education. Freire

foregrounded problem posing education instead of banking education as a way to develop critical consciousness. Only through problem discovery education can learners be empowered to recognise their own and other people's positions in a certain society, to act and change their own situation and that of others to benefit all. Conscientisation, bringing fresh perspectives on issues of race, gender, culture, identity and power, is fundamental to Freire's ideas, in which people learn how to liberate themselves by engaging in the process of doing so or, as Freire put it, 'learning to do it by doing it'. Freire argued that we have the 'freedom' to change social power relations if we make a conscious decision to do so by inquiring into it. Freire's theories promote critical thinking, dialogue, decision making activities, value adding networks that support diverse, critical and transformative minds. Curricula must entail important social knowledge, skills and values embedded in indigenous knowledge relevant to their students' lives. Ultimately, learning and teaching should become means of transforming learners' lives and communities. Often, a unit of curriculum ends with meaningful in and out school action that addresses a society's need together with concerned community members.

Education is seen as the key to democracy. However, teachers in township schools spend 3.5 hours per day on instruction, compared to 6 hours per day in suburban schools. Much of time is spent on form filling (28%), absenteeism, disorganisation, failure to enrol students in time, logistical problems in the delivery of books, lack of discipline among learners, external interruptions and inactivity. Furthermore, in 2007, 77% of children in South Africa schools did not feel safe in the classroom. Parents, at great cost, are sending their children from township to schools in suburbs (ANC, 2008). In South Africa, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) focused on the impact of Curriculum 2005 and revised it, appreciatively drawing heavily from Freire's theories while still using the best of Tyler's and Stenhouse's curriculum theories. The NCS gives due attention to indigenous knowledge as a means of developing in learners diverse academic and social African identities. The NCS will be further developed as the next curriculum in a unique or 'third' space, which innovates the well known worldwide curriculum model generations developed by Tyler, Stenhouse and Freire to become a truly innovative next South African curriculum platform for the next learning and teaching practices.

**Creating the next curriculum practices in a 'third space:** Bhabha (1994) advocates the reimagining of curriculum designs and practices as a third space. His concerns emerged from living in Canada as an adult educator. Bhabha questioned the assumption that education can develop unity (e.g., c0reating a homogenising Canadian identity or culture between Aboriginal, Francophone and English language speaking learners). Bhabha pleads for creating a 'third space' when can be used to re-imagine curriculum futures. A 'third space' is an 'in between' place where we negotiate identity and become neither this nor that but our own. To renew curricula we should explore and compare the goodness of current best local and global educational practices and go beyond these good practices to create the next practice in learning and teaching for South African curriculum futures in a unique third space. Contemporary South Africa, similar to Canada and many other countries in the world, consists of a wide range of ethnicities, cultures, languages, beliefs and religions, which are constantly changing and fusing. It is impossible to try to achieve 'common imagining' of a common identity, simply because people do not all fit into the same size. In fact, a one size fits all approach assumes a monolithic community for which one formula can be applied to all. A 'third space' denotes the place where dialogue negotiation takes place about meanings, where multiple identities and social responsibilities are democratically constructed, de and reconstructed, where life in its ambiguity, complexity and hybridity is played out.

The curriculum narratives written by Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) display unique innovative ways of committed schools to forge ahead in the complex processes of dismantling the legacies of the past and creating people centred inclusive paradigms for our schools and classrooms using a third space. Curricula in these desegregated schools cherish the emergent situated curriculum in which the educators, learners, learning materials and environments interact in the context of dialogue and care. The focus of such constructive emergent curricula departs from the idea that 'everything is strictly predefined' and foregrounds the 'enacted' curriculum, with similarities as well as differences, in which 'everything is developing' through action, reflection, reciprocal dialogue and trust. The government proposals (ANC, 2008) announce that new proposals will be based primarily on strengthening or refining what already exists. The government acknowledges that education complexity requires social compact (sufficient consensus), public participation and ongoing evaluation. A curriculum became a negotiated process between stakeholders and embedded in the multiple possible relations between them. Henderson and Gornik (2007) acknowledge the rich history behind curriculum decision making and they argue that education innovation can go in different ways and could

be coherently. For them curriculum designing, planning, implementing and evaluation are complex and multidimensional issues involving '3S' (Subject/Self/Social) lenses in a holistic journey of understanding. A lens is a frame of reference which includes and also excludes issues.

Henderson and Gornik (2007) see the curriculum as a complicated conversation involving multiple modes of address and conditions. Curriculum discourses should build a curriculum platform (a shared set of agreed values and commitments) which role players can use to negotiate the 'what' specified by received standards for knowledge acquisition of the Subject; the 'how' enacted by learners and teachers as co-researchers embedded in constructivist good learning and teaching practices for knowledge participation pointing to the 'self'; and the 'why' of curriculum wisdom answered in the context of a social approach leading to democratic understanding of the self and others as a complex whole. Curriculum debate conceived in a 'third space' can be defined along several dimensions leading to unique solutions embracing:

- The 'what' ('Subject' outcomes and contents) to be learnt (knowledge acquisition) emphasised in Tyler's Objectives driven curriculum model
- The 'how' (pedagogical infrastructure for learning and teaching appropriate for 'Self development') to be in place, as well as the enactment or engagement in lived experiences of the learning and teaching process (knowledge participation) emphasised in Stenhouse' Process curriculum model and
- The reasons 'why care' (political social values referring to the 'Social' approach), that is, reflections on the learning results and their power to transform the learners and their future worlds (knowledge creation) emphasised the in and out school mix characterising Freire's Transformation curriculum model

The curriculum requires collective responsible action as a complex adaptive system, which is more than the sum of parts, defined by relationships and interdependences. Such as curriculum is both capable of sustaining flexibility and coherence as well as able to adapt continuously over time in response to environmental change in conditions (OECD, 2008) and composed of many different autonomous members. Discourse on curriculum futures in South Africa call for an Appreciative Inquiry lens into the current local and global good practices to create the next practice of

learning and teaching. The Appreciative Inquiry approach allows futures oriented educators to identify good curriculum approaches that offer the promise of making incremental and/or quantum innovation leaps. Like the success narratives of Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) we can be appreciative of the improvements in the current South African learning institutions acknowledging the fluid, heterogeneous and democratic nature of education and its contexts. We build the future through decisions and actions we take today. Yes, we can take these decisions and actions today as informed and committed role players when inquiring into our curricula futures to co-create a better reality, now and in the future for South Africa, Africa and indeed for the whole world.

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