Practising postcolonial pedagogies in higher education teaching and research

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Abstract

Teaching about global development challenges is a complex and demanding process both for students and teachers. In this article, I examine the potential of postcolonial pedagogies in facilitating the process of learning to unlearn and in developing learners' agency in reading the world. I focus on two teaching encounters to examine the potential of postcolonial pedagogies; one is a Sustainable Development module, part of a degree programme in formal higher education and the second teaching encounter are preparatory sessions for overseas volunteers.This paper examines the process and implications of utilising postcolonial pedagogies in these settings and is written from my perspective as a self-reflexive teacher and researcher. This form of teaching and learning raises three particular tensions for me: structural concerns in the Irish education system, pedagogical questions as well as personal implications for me as a teacher and my knowledge base. This article concludes with a summary of these identified tensions, outlining continuing questions rather than presenting solutions. Teaching about global development challenges is difficult, challenging and emotional work, demanding vigilance and reflexivity by the teacher.

Keywords

Introduction

> to learn logically precedes to teach... to teach is part of the fabric of learning (Freire, 1998, p. 31).

This paper examines the possibilities for social and political change arising from two specific teaching and learning encounters. It examines the implications of this form of teaching and learning encounters from my perspective as a self-reflexive teacher. In this paper, I draw on two specific examples; one in a formal higher education module called Sustainable Development while the second is an informal education setting of preparatory weekends for overseas volunteers. For four years I lectured and tutored on the Sustainable Development module, while my Ph.D. research was a case study of an Irish based NGO which recruits volunteers annually to work overseas in their professional context. Both teaching encounters have the potential to stimulate significant social change in areas such as lifestyles or consumption habits as well as political change through enhanced understanding of global relations and developing country's needs. Essentially both teaching encounters are purposively designed to engage learners in perspectival change as well as action for positive social change.

My teaching philosophy centres on teaching as a questioning process leading to change; challenging leaners to think and consider new perspectives and awakening and opening minds to diverse attitudes and alternate behaviours. This form of learning can engender a range of emotional effects for the teacher based on how the teacher perceives student learning, comparable to a performance feedback from the audience. Teachers can be pleased with the interest and progress of learners through their engagement with materials and discussions; they can become frustrated with content-focused questions or by student disinterest with the overall topics. The question then arises as to the potential for the transformative learning and changes to occur within such conditions.

This paper explores some of the tensions arising for me as an educator. It does not present findings or results arising from my educational practices nor does it summarise participants learning from either teaching encounter; rather it examines my thinking and reflections on my work as an educator. Firstly, I describe my education philosophy and approach to teaching, then describe two examples of where this is applied, and conclude with three tensions from these experiences. The emphasis is on me as an educator and reflection on my practice, rather than student learning or results.

My teaching philosophy

I see my teaching work as broadly inspired by development education (termed global citizenship education under the Sustainable Development Goals). The inclusion of global development topics in education aims to engage learners in recognising global responsibility and lack of global justice in political and economic condition and policies (Bourn, 2014). In the Irish context, development education

> …enables people to understand the world around them and to act to transform it. Development Education works to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality, globally and locally. The world we live in is unequal, rapidly changing and often unjust. Our everyday lives are affected by global forces. Development Education is about understanding those forces and how to change them to create a more just and sustainable future for everyone (Irish Development Education Association, [IDEA] nd).

This definition centres on principles of human rights and solidarity with global others. Ideally it is an educational process creating informed, motivated and able learners, aware and empowered to campaign for change. The above definition names central planks to development education; global solidarity, participatory learning, and action for social justice. A review of development education and research in Ireland described the current 'integration and acceptance of development education into the mainstream [education system] ... as a major strength' (Fiedler et al, 2011, p. 49).

Development education often cites Freire's (1979) work on critiquing banking forms of education and highlighting the need to move to transformative education. By this Freire means education should become a process of transforming the learner and 'the practice of freedom'. Analysis of the implementation of development education has contrasted 'critical' forms of learning with 'soft' approaches to global development education (Andreotti, 2006) which can work to endorse and reinforce negative and stereotypical views of the developing world. These soft forms could be read as education about development where learning centres on facts and information about the developing world (Liddy, 2013), for example global inequalities, poverty and hunger, gender and maternal health. A soft approach arguably can engender moral commitment to the developing world by focusing on the human and social aspects to the global development story, but key underlying issues of power and dominance through economics or culture are rarely questioned.

Andreotti (2011) argues for critical approaches to development education, utilising the term actionable postcolonial theory for education. Postcolonial theory challenges the universalism of dominant Western political and cultural theorising, by highlighting the epistemic violence of colonialism and redressing European cultural supremacy through the voice of the oppressed and subaltern (Young, 2003; Loomba, 2005). These theories have made vast contributions to political theory and to cultural studies, highlighting the unequal distribution of wealth and labour in the world, the flow of capital and resources from developing to developed through migration. They engage with structural accounts of poverty and economic, but also with cultural forms of inequality and exclusion. This reflects the analysis of power and knowledge relationship which Biccum (2018) suggests has been central to critical scholarship in twentieth century social sciences. Development education requires a critical stance in questioning and challenging human development knowledge, with an attendant politically informed and socially just aware stance on the causes or the structures which work to maintain global poverty. Selby and Kagawa argue that 'sustainability educators... call for a stretching of epistemology so that unsustainable practices are challenged, taken-for-granted thinking and assumptions disrupted, root causes of global dysfunction interrogated, values subjected to critical scrutiny, change potential of socio-affective learning unleashed, and paradigm shift thus catalyzed' (2018, p. 302). This interrogation and disruption is a complex process in education and learning.

These perspectives inform my approach to teaching. The Sustainable Development module utilises active and participatory learning where students discuss, debate and perform role-plays throughout the 12 weeks of lectures and tutorials addressing a range of sustainable development topics from energy, food, corporate social responsibility and sustainable production. Formal assessment is through an online learning journal and project work including a personal account of change towards sustainable living. This module fulfils the definition of development education by addressing global interconnectedness in its lecture content, active learning in its learning approach and encouraging activism though the assessment process. It also aims to meet the four key elements in education for sustainable development: namely imagining a better future, critical reflection, participation and systemic thinking (Tilbury and Wortman, 2004).

Preparatory workshops with overseas volunteers are part of a six-month programme which addresses many practical issues pertaining to living in a developing country, travel health and safety issues as well as preparation for the actual work they will complete and beliefs about their volunteering role. Broader cultural and social differences are considered within an open framework of questioning values such as ethnocentrism. While this element of the preparatory programme is development education, these workshops are strongly informed by postcolonial forms of global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2011). They provide the opportunity for volunteers to examine their motivations for volunteering overseas, understand theories of social and economic development, and consider new ways of thinking of development and poverty. Furthermore, volunteers are asked to identify ways of engaging more with development issues on their return to Ireland.

Rucksack as metaphor

My teaching philosophy centres on teaching as a questioning process leading to change; challenging leaners to think and consider new perspectives and awakening and opening minds to diverse attitudes and alternate behaviours. This form of learning can engender a range of emotional effects for the teacher based on how the teacher perceives student learning, comparable to a performance on the stage. Teachers can be pleased with the interest from and engagement of learners, or displeased with their own performance, even frustrated with the lack of critical thinking and analysis by students.

I employ a metaphor as an attempt to understand where perspectives are coming from and where they are leading to (Andreotti and de Souza, 2008), calling upon the poststructuralist tool of deconstruction and challenging our preconceived notions of the developing world. This approach embraces a postcolonial orientation and engages in four types of learning: learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out. The image of a rucksack is employed to challenge participants to unpack their values and beliefs about the developing world, notions of poverty and development and to question their assumptions. This idea is taken from *Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry* (Andreotti et al, 2006). This rucksack highlights the burden we carry in our global responsibilities, but it also stands in contrast to the assumption that the world is in our hands (that would be Western hands). I find this metaphor of unpacking a rucksack a particularly valuable tool in teaching, and very apt for the setting of the preparatory weekends for overseas volunteering. It is also useful in the Sustainable Development module as it challenges students to reflect on their consumerist lives, the impact of advertising and question taken-for-grated ways of doing things. On a personal level, unpacking my rucksack is a useful approach to self-reflexivity on my professional role.

Thinking in this way leads to pedagogic interventions which are designed to question and challenge volunteers' perceptions of poverty and development, and to question their positionality as do-gooders and as experts. This form of questioning is inquiry based; it is not an attempt to change or de-legitimise perspectives or to demean beliefs. It is to raise questions often not asked, querying taken-for-granted notions, and to include different and Other voices on concepts such as poverty and development. It works to unsettle the reliance on internalised and embedded ways of acting and behaving, questioning the ease of global movement for Westerners. Cook (2008) describes this learning as aiming to turn helping into self-reflexive learning, from attitudes of charity to empathy and solidarity, and from cynicism to empowerment and appropriate action.

My two teaching examples

International volunteering preparations

International volunteering has a history reaching back to military times (Simpson, 2004; Devereux, 2008); in more recent times the first overseas volunteering organisation was Service Civil International founded in France and Switzerland after World War One to promote peace. This was followed in the UK by the establishment of Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) in 1958 which took young people abroad for year-long projects. State supported organisations were established next, following President Kennedy example of the Peace Corp founded in 1960; the British Volunteer Programme provided funds and support for half a dozen overseas volunteering agencies, while the Canadian Executive Service Organisation followed in 1967. Here in Ireland, APSO was launched in 1974 with the mission to promote the sharing of skills and the building of local capacity in developing countries (Fiedler et al, 2011). In recent times, overseas volunteering has become an increasingly visible and attractive option for young people; for example, the UK Gap Year phenomenon has grown and developed into many commercial volunteering enterprises (Ansell, 2008; Simpson, 2004), whilst in Ireland Irish Aid established their Volunteering and Information Centre for information and advice on overseas volunteering in the early 2000s (Irish Aid, nd). Comhlámh is the main support organisation for returned overseas volunteers in Ireland and it carried out an informal research exercise on 40 volunteer sending agencies based in Ireland. Comhlámh's (2013) research report found that the majority (65%) of Irish-based volunteer sending organisations were founded or established in Ireland since 2000 demonstrating volunteering as a dynamic sector. In 2012, there were almost 3,800 applications received by 40 Irish volunteer sending agencies, while there were 3,021 overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2011 (Comhlámh, 2013). Several reasons for its popularity are noted in tourism literature; Lyons et al. argue that the 'valorisation of cross-cultural understanding and promotion of an ethic of global citizenship are at the forefront of the recent the proliferation of international 'gap year' travel programs and policies' (2012, p. 1) while O'Reilly (2006) suggests that travellers are looking for new arenas for international adventure and exploration. Butcher and Smith (2010) suggest the phenomenon is beyond an impulse to travel; rather it reflects 'life political' forms of agency and the desire to make a difference in an era where grand narratives have declined.

The positive impacts of overseas volunteering can be seen in the accounts of returned volunteers. The primary benefit to volunteering is reported as focused on the volunteer in terms of their personal and professional skills, and knowledge. In a review carried out for The Department for International Development in the UK, Machin (2008) reviewed research highlighting the positive impact of overseas volunteering on interpersonal skills, communication skills and management, problem-solving, leadership and team-working skills. Certainly, volunteering adds to the participants' CV, and can give prestige and portray positive civic engagement to potential employers. This individualised benefit is notable in the research; however, the evidence is mixed with regard to deepening understanding of aid and development issues. Machin (2008) noted that it can facilitate a stronger sense of global citizenship and solidarity and can lead to greater awareness and understanding of development issues, poverty and cultural diversity. But there is some scepticism about the transformative potential of the volunteering experience with some volunteers returning disillusioned after experiencing corruption and inefficiencies. An American study found that one in five (18%) returned volunteers believed their presence might have caused problems in the community (McBride et al, 2007, cited in Comhlámh 2013).

While overseas volunteering has become an increasingly visible and attractive option for young people, it is not without critique. Volunteer tourism is defined as a form of tourism where the tourists

volunteer in local communities as part of their travels (Sin, 2009, p. 480) while Simpson (2004) says it is an attempt to combine the hedonism of tourism with the altruism of development work. Much of what is written on this topic comes from journalism; Sin states there is a dearth of academic work in this area, saying there 'is a critical need for research to provide a firm foundation for a deeper understanding of volunteer tourism- in both its positive and negative aspects' (Sin, 2009, p. 482). A common critique of Western volunteers is their cultural deficit approach and understanding of the communities they go to work with (Jefferess, 2008; 2012). These accounts emphasise a simplistic binary division of them and us, developed and developing, and reinforce the sense of responsibility that Westerners have to 'save the world'. Of particular concern to postcolonial theory is 'the reinforcement of White man's burden', as the Indian journalist writing in The Independent (Jan. 2013) describes it. Simpson (2004) criticises gap year projects as perpetuating a mythology of development, based on concept of a 'third world', where there is 'need', and where European people have the ability to meet this need. Baillie Smith and Laurie (2011) examine the discourses of citizenship, professionalization and partnership in overseas volunteering suggesting these ideas exemplify the neoliberal focus on individuals and their responsibility rather than encouraging collective solidarity or activism. Simpson concludes that the

> 'public face of development' comprises simplistic, consumable and ultimately 'do-able' notions of development which turn allows material inequality to be excused, and even justified, on the bases that 'it doesn't bother them' (2004, p. 690).

The evidence from the studies cited provides some evidence of dominant charitable discourses and colonial-informed perspectives amongst overseas volunteers, whilst also demonstrating the volunteers path to greater understanding of global development. These are not easy topics; they call upon knowledge of economics and politics, cultural studies and anthropology, as well as personal awareness and reflexivity. Research suggests that the preparatory programme can assist participants in being more self-aware of the positive and negative impacts their presence and role in communities. Utilising a postcolonial global citizenship education framework is arguably a way of encouraging critical analysis and consideration of these issues in advance of their travel. A postcolonial global citizenship education framework is employed in *Open Space of Dialogue and Enquiry* (Andreotti et al, 2006) where learners are encouraged to learn by unlearning. Andreotti (2011) suggests the role of the teacher is to support learners to develop a reflexive ethic and to equip learners to analyse how social mechanisms up to now have been able to work. Bhabha suggests that the postcolonial critique

> bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order... [and that learners can] formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the rationalizations of modernity (Bhabha, 1994, p.171).

Sustainable Development lecture module

Likewise, in the Sustainable Development module, students are asked to consider ways to change their behaviours and ways of being towards sustainability and greener options. As Sterling argues, most mainstream education 'sustains unsustainability, through uncritically reproducing norms... and by servicing the consumerist machine' (Sterling, 2001, p 14). In this module the course material deliberately present alternatives in an optimistic frame rather than negative which can engender cynicism and fatigue (Hicks, 2006). The assessment deliberately asks students to engage with

change in their personal lives and to write a reflective piece on how this change has impacted on them and their lives. The second assignment is an organisational change piece, which tends to be more suggestive of change rather than actual implementation. It requires students to examine the possibilities for change within their chosen organisation and to research how this change could impact on energy bills, reduce carbon emissions or alternative procurement policies. Module participants engage in a process of reflection on the possibilities for change based on the teaching and learning encounter. The assignments are established in ways to ask for reflexive studying of their lives and behaviours (engage in analysis and reflection), to reflect on the social, cultural, political and economic structures and to manifest change and action for social for local and global citizenship and participation (to paraphrase the IDEA definition of development education given earlier).

These ways of learning, postcolonial pedagogies are strongly informed by our emotional responses. Inspired by Spivak concept of hyper- self-reflexivity as a strategy that acknowledges everyone's complicities, Andreotti describes the effects of colonial power on her skin as well as her education advantage. She states that this privilege afforded to her 'commands the responsibility of thinking my way through and out of the pain and anger... that come out of understanding the injustices of one's own and Others historical conditions' (Andreotti, 2011, p.176). She goes on to describe this as hard and painful work, not about feel good or emancipatory education and where the process involves

> poking, prodding, disrupting certainties, provoking crises and realisation of complicities, and worst of all, not providing any definitive answer for what people should think or do with their lives (Andreotti, 2011, p. 176).

Postcolonial pedagogies ask learners to rethink their positionality within a global context, or as Andreotti and de Souza (2011) term it, imagining education otherwise. It identifies barriers which prevent reciprocal learning, mutuality and ethical engagement which is often the stated aim of global development education. Overcoming these barriers aims to expose contractions within power structures and neoliberal discourses, to enable informed action through exposure of bias and thus facilitate social political change to redress inequalities. Postcolonial pedagogies aim to compel Western learners into unlearning and relearning identities and global positionality (Andreotti, 2006; Bryan and Bracken, 2012; Martin, 2012) as essential for global understanding and working towards equality. Postcolonial theory present education as otherwise allows for emergent and unknown understandings of the work to emergent. It does not define any post-agenda for education or for global politics. It is a space for questioning oneself and unsettling taken-for-granted, where feelings and emotional responses are central to learning.

Tensions arising

In this section I briefly describe my thoughts on the two teaching encounters. As I stated earlier, the emphasis is on my practice as a teacher rather than reporting on students learning or results. The use of postcolonial pedagogies raises challenges for me as an educator and I address these tensions in the following section. Rather than presenting answers to these challenges, this section outlines my thinking and questioning in a critically reflective manner. These are not the only tensions or challenges that could be identified, but the primary themes that arise for me when reflecting on my use of postcolonial pedagogies in my teaching work.

Tension 1: Structural questions on the Irish education system

The learning by unlearning approach is particularly challenging in the Irish education system. Particular structural barriers to positive promotion of social inclusion are recognised in Ireland. The demographic profile of Irish teachers in Ireland is overwhelmingly homogenous i.e. white, female, middle-class and of Irish ethnic origin (Leavy, 2005; Devine, 2005; Heinz and Keane, 2018). Heinz and Keane study of diversity in undergraduate primary initial teacher education students found that 99% identified as White Irish Settled; 100% specified either English or Irish as their first language; and 90.4% identified as Roman Catholics (2018, p. 535). They conclude their research findings

> points to its homogeneity in terms of nationality/ies, ethnicity/ies, and first language as well as to the underrepresentation of people with disabilities and of minority religious (or non-religious) groups (Heinz and Keane, 2018, p. 536-7).

Furthermore, in her classic account of dominant discourses in Irish education system, Lynch (1987) identified a prevailing discourse of consensualism in Irish education which prevents strong social critique and analysis of difference. Within a consensualist society there is a belief that society is an undifferentiated whole, based on a failure to recognise difference in terms of class, gender or race and ethnicity. Where subject matter and knowledge is based upon acknowledging difference and celebrating diversity, content can clash with the dominant thinking and culture of the system. These structural factors can act as a barrier to the promotion of positive attitude to social inclusion and ethnic diversity (Liddy, 2011). This is further reinforced by teachers' lack of political and sociological knowledge (Liddy, 2015) and the lack of humanities subject in senior cycle of post-primary education system.

Likewise, dominant social and economic beliefs can prevent or inhibit learning from global encounters such as international volunteering (Liddy, 2015). While the international travel breaks down geographical and social divisions, dominant ideas can prevail. Both my students and the teacher-volunteers are success stories in the Irish education system; moreover the teacher-volunteers work within the existing system. In light of these structural concerns, questions can be asked on the capacity of one educational intervention to challenge dominant views and beliefs on the way the world works? Can a teaching and learning encounter confront unsustainable lifestyles and practices that are widespread in society? Is perspectival change possible?

Teachers and teaching interventions play a limited role in prompting change when faced with robust structural barriers. However, there are some possibilities as teachers can use the context of their work to inspire other ways of thinking. Active and experiential based learning is often acknowledged as leading to self-reflection on behaviours and leading to possible change (Sterling, 2001; Liddy and Tormey, 2020). The Sustainable Development module asks students to do this in the assignments where the students must design and implement a change towards sustainable living appropriate and relevant to them. This assessment means they must examine their existing lives for opportunities, implement changes and reflect on the impact of the change as a learning process. The volunteer experience centres on participative learning and provides an experiential learning space for participants to innovate and learn. There are opportunities and gaps where learning, innovation and change can occur, but the potential for change and unlearning is questionable where dominant structural patterns exist to maintain the status quo.

Tension 2: Pedagogical issues arising from learning by unlearning

Learning by unlearning is a complex and emotional activity (Andreotti, 2011), with challenges for me as a teacher. One such challenge is how much needs to be unlearned, especially when the learning topic centres on questioning one's beliefs and behaviours. I am drawn to constructivist theories on learning, where students can build on prior knowledge and experience, rather than viewing the learner as a blank state or empty jug waiting for knowledge to be poured into (Freire, 1979). I want my students to see the relevance of sustainable living to their everyday lives, to question simplistic accounts of geopolitical conflicts, and to criticise portrayals of the developing world needs. Many of these issues require reflection on their life experience to identify how inaccurate stereotypes are formed and how unsustainable behaviours are maintained. Analytical and critical thinking is required for deep engagement and self-exploration. A recent publication by UNESCO (2020) states that transformation necessitates 'a certain level of disruption, with people opting to step outside the safety of the status quo or the "usual" way of thinking, behaving or living' (Para 4.2, Framework for the implementation of ESD for 2030).

Learning to unlearn involves a rejection of prior knowledge and ways of doing things; it entails rejecting existing personal convictions and feelings of what is right. I am uncertain of unlearning as learners' prior experiences and behaviours can be a valuable motivator for change towards sustainable living and social justice actions as they recognise the need (or cultivate the desire) to do something to change the world. Plus the skills and capacities that I have developed from my privilege and education inform my choices and decisions. Furthermore, as argued in Tension 1, if learners are caught in a web of structures and cultural systems which reinforce and perpetuate the same, then how can they learn to question and resist whilst still within these webs? Andreotti's work suggests a way forward utilising post-colonial pedagogies; however, the risk remains that learners (and teachers) are enmeshed in these webs of power and privilege, unwilling to poke the certainties and status of their lives. Stein brings the focus onto embedding skills for the future and suggests an educator's role is to:

> prepare students with the self-reflexivity, intellectual curiosity, historical memory, and deep sense of responsibility they will need in order to collectively navigate an uncertain future for which there are no clear roadmaps (2018, p. 2).

An emphasis on learning skills to engage with the complexity of sustainable global development also addresses the lack of answers and solutions; rather learning about complexity of issues can lead to more confusion and questioning (Hicks, 2006). This lack of answers can lead to frustration and angst amongst learners. As a teacher who is facilitating their learning, I want to guide my students to learning, to new understandings and I feel disappointment when this does not occur. This could be read as egotistical of me to expect any impact. But it is also a pedagogical and ethical question-what about my responsibility towards my students and learners? If I bring them to the point of unlearning and facing uncertainty without any guarantees, what are the implications of this? I am their lecturer for a 12-week semester, working within a system requiring pre-determined learning outcomes.; what happens when teaching ends? When volunteers return from overseas work, where do they find answers?

Working within a formal education system and its demands and requirements sets up challenges for me as an educator and as an educational administrator. I must learn to work within the system, finding entry points for change. Setting open and flexible forms of learning outcomes can be one entry point. Action component to assessment allows for this, as the action project is decided by the student themselves in order to be relevant to their lives. Allowing for student collaboration and

participation in class design is another route. Finding more opportunities and entry points is a constant process for me to reimagine education as otherwise (Andreotti and de Souza, 2011) within formal education systems.

This works to challenge me to teach better and be attentive, but it also asks me to consider questions on myself which is the next tension to be addressed below.

Tension 3: Reflexivity issues arising in unpacking my rucksack

The final challenge and tension centres on me and my teaching philosophy. I view a teacher as a facilitator of knowledge rather than presenter of facts, and in line with my rucksack metaphor, I need to unlearn, address my subjectivity and biases. I am a sociologist with background in development studies and international relations. I work in higher education and have been successful in academic achievements in education. I am White, settled and English-speaking and part of the dominant structural systems. But my work, travel and life experiences also play a role in developing my knowledge and how I read the world. Is this enough? My learning metaphor also needs to be applied to me as to unpack my assumptions and values as a teacher. Below I outline three points that arise for me in considering these issues.

Firstly, I can easily become disappointed and frustrated with the lack of student responsiveness to the teaching encounter. Yet this is quite egotistical of me in my expectations of the impact I can have. I cannot force understanding, despite my personal beliefs in the urgency for change. I can rely on research which demonstrates the long-term impact of learning experiences (McCormack and O'Flaherty, 2010) which suggests reasons such as their youth and lack of life experience, the lack of opportunity for change, or their more immediate career needs which impede immediate engagement. This is some consolation for me as a teacher, but I wonder if the urgency of climate change, forced migration and other global challenges affords us the luxury of time. This tension could be turned on its head with the entry of the climate school striker generation into higher education, and the demand for change and more radical perspectives may come more from the students, which would be a welcome development.

Secondly, Freire (1979) argued there is no neutral knowledge where education can either function as an instrument for conformity or freedom. This insight requires me to be constantly vigilant- am I falling into presenting solutions and leading my students in a particular way rather than letting them find their own path. I sense the urgency of the need for social and political change. I have a particular view and experiences of global relations, sustainable development policymaking and developing country needs. Yet Andreotti says that predetermined learning outcomes or beliefs could be interpreted as a transmissive or banking concept of education that assumes 'the authority invested in teachers by institutions they can 'input' something directly into the minds of learners' (2011, p. 209). I understand this view of learning outcomes as dogma and imposition. Utilising knowledge to bring about freedom requires dexterity and alertness as an educational administrator not co-opted into the system, but working to discover entry points as said above. This is described as working with the limits of the conditionality of inclusion (Stein, 2018).

Thirdly, I need to engage in more personal work, reflections and being relentlessly self-reflexive. Using postcolonial pedagogies raise both personal and professional questions of myself. For example, I am successful in my education and am now an employee of the formal education system. Does unlearning deny my success or require me to reject my achievements? Also I must constantly question my pedagogic practice and interrogate my knowledge base. I have gained much from an education system that is exclusionary and biased. Engagement with other outlooks, philosophies and ways of being are key to this decolonisation of knowledge. The challenge is to 'develop a degree of

comfort with uncertainty, plurality, and conflict, and to respect and encourage the emergent and collaborative dimensions of learning' (Stein, 2018, p. 11) and to view knowledge as 'a site of politics, scholarship a field of activism' (Biccum, 2018, p. 121).

Conclusion

Teaching is a complex activity; there is the skill and experience to design learning encounters, lesson planning skills, and preparing appropriate learning supports. There is the subject knowledge of the topic, choice of reading materials and assessment strategies. Management of the student-teacher interaction is also a skill in establishing effective communications with the learners and facilitating an encouraging and engaged learning environment. Emotional responses by both the teacher and learner also play a role. All of these factors are key elements in successful teaching, particularly when the teaching and learning encounter is aimed at social awareness and attitudinal change. Fundamentally the teaching process is influenced by a teachers' educational philosophy and their value system. Believing in the potential of a teaching and learning encounter as enabling change through questioning perspectives and presenting alternative views and approaches to understanding is central to my teaching philosophy.

For perspectival change to occur and be maintained, changes need to go beyond the individual and their beliefs. Change must be supported within the wider community and society as there often is a lack of context and critical frameworks for interpretation or engaged debate on the purpose of human development. This paper does not address these factors. But the need for more reflection and discussion on global development is timely as it is not an issue facing far away developing countries but relates to our local and national context. I suggest that postcolonial pedagogies are one possibility for developing learners' agency in reading the world while acknowledging the limits and tensions. There is no easy, quick solution, but difficult, challenging and emotionally demanding work to be undertaken by both students and educators.

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